

Congruences and Differences between Mainstream and Extremist Discourse amongst University

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Congruences and Differences between Mainstream and Extremist Discourse amongst University Students in Jordan

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Declaration

I, Sabah A.M. Harahsheh declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this university.
- Where no part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this university or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
- Where I have drawn upon or cited the published work of others, is always clearly attributed.
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
- Where the thesis or any part of it is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.
- None of this work has been published before submission, nor parts of this work have been published as indicated.

Notes on style and transliteration

In order to increase the readability of this text, I have deliberately used a simplified transliteration of Arabic and have avoided using Arabic diacritics except in the glossary list. I have adopted a simple transliteration of commonly used names as used in mass media such as Sharīʿa, *Jihād*, and Salafism, as well as names of declared terrorists and extremist groups such as al-Qāʿidah and Zarqawi. The bibliography includes some Arabic-language sources, and these are transliterated in simplified style without diacritics. The definite article 'al' (the) is not capitalised unless it is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Due to the limited length of thesis (not to exceed 80,000 words excluding references and notes), I have slightly shortened some of the very lengthy quotes in the rhetorical analysis.

Finally, I have used the MHRA system in that I have not inserted in-text references and instead used footnotes to cite to the respective reference/reading. All references in the notes were then compiled in the bibliography at the end of this thesis, cited in accordance with the Harvard System.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother, and to the soul of my father, my first teacher who illuminated my path and the paths of many, and carried the torch of knowledge even after the light in his eyes went out. He did not stop offering his wisdom until the last day of his life.

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My sincere gratitude goes to all the participants in this project; without their contributions this thesis would not have been possible.

Abstract

This qualitative study deconstructs ISIS's narrative in order to identify some of its main rhetorical tactics, before assessing whether such ideology and rhetoric appeal to Arab Muslim youth. This project depends on the rhetorical analysis by taking all speeches written and delivered by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, ISIS's media spokesman from 2011 until 2016, as a case study. The rhetorical analysis aims to demonstrate how ISIS appropriates the past, interprets the present, and visualises the future for Arab Muslims. The analysis of four focus groups reveal how young Arabs interpret extremist's messages to demonstrate the convergence or divergence of extremist rhetoric with that of a sample of Arab youth living in Jordan.

ISIS's rhetoric shows that the group has been frozen in time and space; it relies on opposite dualities in managing the affairs of life, and puts the laws of God against the laws of man as a belief to establish the Caliphate. To do that, it borrows heavily but selectively from the Islāmic laws based on the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and Sunnah, and imposes the past on the present to reach the utopia it promises to establish. There is a congruence between the view of some youths and the vision of ISIS in terms of the audience's interpretations of such extremist ideology regarding the 'other'; some youths also believed that Sharīʿa should be applied to the letter because it is suitable for every time and place. The example provides a relational analysis or one that acknowledges the intricate and complex network that connects extremist ideas and ideologies with existing, mainstream ideas such as the anti-Shi'ite sentiment. The analysis demonstrates the need for developing a **participatory communicative space** for dialogue among youth and between youth and other actors, be it state, international organisations, or civil society.

keywords: extremism; ideology; myth; persuasion; rhetoric; youth.

Glossary

Ansār	local inhabitants of Madīnah who supported the Prophet and his followers when they emigrated from Mecca/Makkah to Medina.
Al-Qāʿidah	A transnational extremist Salafist militant organisation founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abdullah Azzam, and several other Arab volunteers during the Soviet–Afghan War.
Dāʿish	The Islāmic State of Iraq and Syria.
Eīd al-Aḍḥā	Last of two Islāmic holidays celebrated worldwide each year
Eīd al-Fiṭr	Festival after breaking the fast of *Ramaḍān*.
Ḥadīth	Narration or tradition according to Prophet Muhammad.
Ḥajj	Islāmic pilgrimage.
ʾIftaāʾ or *Fatwā (pl. Fatawā*)	Verdict; Islāmic religious ruling.
Jihād	Struggle; striving; or fighting for the cause of *Allah.*
Muhajirun	Supporters of the Prophet who emigrated with him from Mecca to Medina
Mujāhid/ Mujāhidīn	A Muslim engaged in what is considered a personal *jihād* or struggle.
Ramadān	A holy month of fasting, introspection and prayer for Muslim
Rawāfed	rejectionist (used in extremist discourse to refer to Shi'ite)
Riddah	Commonly defined as conscious abandonment of Islām by a Muslim in word or deed.
Shi'ite/Shia/ shi'i	Follower; refers to the followers of Ali, Prophet Muhammad's cousin.
Sunnah	The sayings and practices of the Islāmic prophet, Muhammad, that constitute a model for Muslims to follow.
Sunni (singular)or Sunnah (plural)	Largest branch of Islām.
ʾUmmah	Collective term for all Muslim communities.
Wahhābism or *Wahhabi*	Religious movement of Islām developed in Saudi Arabia in the 18th century.
Zakāt	Obligatory Muslim charity (third pillar of Islām).

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In November 2005, Jordan witnessed a series of terrorist attacks targeting three hotels in the capital Amman. The attacks claimed at least 60 lives, of which more than half were Jordanians. As a result of these attacks, the government initiated a series of counter-terrorism measures including launching specialised centres to study the phenomenon of terrorism and provide strategies to combat extremist ideologies. Above all, the attacks spurred the debate about the need for the so-called renewal of religious discourse, and this debate is still ongoing not only in Jordan but in many other Arab states. The renewal of religious discourse means reconsidering the Islāmic traditions and jurisprudence with the view of adapting those traditions to modern interpretations and needs.

However, the debate has not produced a clear definition of this renewal process. For instance, should this renewal process be led by (mainstream) religious institutions and clerics, or should those institutions aim to educate individuals to revisit their own religious beliefs and apply their own common sense in interpreting the religious texts? Some Jordanian officials preferred to entrust official religious institutions with leading this process claiming that only educated clerics are capable of guiding others while acknowledging the role of religion in the Jordanian society and warning against the call to separate religion from the state.[1] Others, however, argue against entrusting this renewal or reform process with official religious authorities contending that those authorities are unlikely to surrender their authority in shaping individuals' lives and society as a whole. Those authorities, the argument goes, cannot "stop stuffing the nation's mind with myths that keep it out of the march of human civilization", while controlling people's lives by dictating what people should

[1] Al-Azouni, Asaad (2015) Controversy over the renewal of religious discourse. *Al-Raya,* 11 Sept. 2015. Available at: https://www.raya.com/2015/09/11/ Accessed on November 25, 2021.

do in all aspects of their lives, from prayer to marriage and who they should like or hate.[2] Seen through this critical lens, the religious reform may be a "false demand" that will never materialise.[3]

The Jordanian state's counter-terrorism efforts were also criticised by human rights campaigners who saw those efforts as a pretext to restrain freedom of speech in the kingdom while obstructing any meaningful political opposition. One report, for instance, argues that the state in Jordan brought charges on many activists, academics, and journalists under the Anti-Terrorism Law.[4] Post-2011 uprisings that began in Tunisia and Egypt, Jordan witnessed several demonstrations calling for reforms triggering a government reshuffle and a new set of what was regarded as "superficial constitutional amendments"; however, by 2014, the Anti-Terrorism law was amended to restrict public gatherings.[5]

This study looks into the phenomenon of extremism in Jordan by closely examining the potential impact of extremist discourse (such as ISIS') on Jordanian youth, who are the main recipients of the Jordanian state's counter-terrorism initiatives.

The term 'terrorism' is often used to distinguish barbaric and politically-motivated acts of violence from other forms of violence.[6] Archetti and Hoffman's[7] definition of terrorism as a politically-motivated act of violence aimed at innocent targets, conducted by non-state groups is appropriate for this study. There are terrorist acts that are orchestrated by states[8] but this is beyond the scope of this project. Hoffman[9] argues that terrorism is essentially political: it is about pursuing power through acts of violence, and using this power to impose political change. Terms such as 'terrorism', *'jihād'*

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[2] Abu Qamar, Mohamed (2019) The illusion of reforming the religious discourse. *Ammannet.* Available at: https://tinyurl.com/tj6rr37 Accessed on Dec. 19, 2019.
[3] ibid.
[4] Alkarama Foundation (2017) *Report submitted to the Human Rights Committee in the context of the review of the fifth periodic report of Jordan*. Geneva: Switzerland, 18 September 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/JOR/INT_CCPR_NGO_JOR_28931_E.pdf
[5] ibid.
[6] Archetti, 2013, p. 17
[7] Archetti, 2013, p. 17; Hoffman, 2006, p. 40
[8] Hoffman, Bruce (2006) *Inside Terrorism*. NY: Columbia University Press
[9] ibid. pp 2-3

and ‘extremism’ tend to be dynamic and can change their meaning over time.[10] It is also important to define the term ‘radicalisation’. This thesis adopts the definition of radicalisation as an ‘escalating process by which a person begins accepting or promoting violence to change the ideological norms of their surrounding society’; violence here can be physical or structural in that it aims to deny certain communities their rights.[11]

The recent studies of terrorist movements (such as al-Qāʿidah and ISIS) tend to rationalise their existence as counter-hegemonic to despotic regimes - particularly in the Middle East - by drawing on theories from Political Science such as social movements. Research into the narrative, theory, and discourse of terrorist groups, combined with analysis of the audience’s understanding of this discourse or ideology is still rather under-represented. This study aims to fill this research gap as it deconstructs ISIS’s narrative in order to identify some of its main rhetorical tactics, before assessing whether such ideology and rhetoric appeal to Arab Muslim youth. The latter analysis is based on the results of four focus groups among a representative sample of young Arabs of diverse nationalities, residing in Jordan. This study provides an interdisciplinary approach that integrates Media Studies and Rhetoric, thus presenting a fresh analysis of the terrorist rhetoric, drawing on scores of ISIS speeches delivered by its media spokesman, al-Adnani. The study will, therefore, demonstrate how ISIS appropriates the past, interprets the present, and visualises the future for Arab Muslims. The study will also demonstrate the convergence or divergence of extremist rhetoric within a sample of Arab youth.

1.2 Research objectives

This research intents to uncover the rhetorical strategies that are used by ISIS to persuade youth to execute extreme actions, and to generate support for such actions. This research foresees to reveal the rhetorical use of the ideological religious discourse, particularly that which serves the political

[10] ibid. p. 3
[11] UN, 2016, p. 11

aims of extremist movements such as ISIS, in order to maintain their existence. To achieve this goal, this qualitative study depends on the rhetorical analysis of all speeches written and delivered by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, from his position as ISIS media spokesman from 2011 until his death in 2016. The study also aims to analyse how young Arabs interpret extremists' messages through conducting focus groups with a sample of Arab youth (18-24 years old) residing in Jordan, including Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian, and Jordanian nationals. The overall aim is to study whether the influence of ISIS discourse may be facilitated by its closeness to some elements of mainstream public discourse in the region. In other words, the study aims to understand the basis of potential rather than actual impact of extremists' discourse on youth, while exploring the perceptions of a sample of Arab youth regarding selected religious concepts like martyrdom, *jihād*, and the Islāmic state.

This project seeks answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: What rhetorical strategies did ISIS use to appeal to Arabic-speaking audiences?

RQ2: How does this rhetoric mix religion with politics?

RQ3: How do ISIS leaders define *Jihād,* Martyrdom, and the ideal state?

RQ4: How does the audience, particularly youth, respond to such rhetoric?

1.3 Context

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy liberated from British protection in 1946, and became known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The word 'Hashemite' highlights the line of ancestry of Jordan's kings which is claimed to go back to the Prophet. The current king is Abdullah II who has ruled over Jordan since the death of his father, King Hussein, in 1999. The country is host to 10 million inhabitants, and its GDP was $45 billion in 2019.[12] It should also be noted that Jordan is host to more than 2.4 million Palestinian refugees who fled to Jordan following the Arab-Israeli conflicts in the

[12] World Bank data, Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/country/JO Accessed on Sep. 19, 2021.

years 1948 and 1967.[13] Jordan is also one of the countries most affected by the Syria crisis, hosting the second-highest share of refugees per capita, globally. Jordan currently hosts 753,282 refugees from 57 nationalities, of which the majority (83 per cent) live in urban areas, and the rest (17 per cent) in refugee camps. The refugees from Iraq are estimated to be 66,760, from Yemen about 13,902,[14] and more than 670,000 from Syria.[15]

The categorisation of youth in this study focuses on those between 18 and 24 years of age, which corresponds to the average age of university students in Jordan; this comes close to the U.N. definition of youth as those between the ages of 15 and 24. The youth constitutes 82 per cent of the population in Jordan, the highest record in the region.[16] This choice is in order to avoid the ethical challenges of fieldwork among youth under the age of 18.

The Jordanian government set up the 'We Are All Jordan Youth Commission' on 5 October 2006, as one of the initiatives of King Abdullah II. This Commission was funded by the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD). It was open to all youth in Jordan between 18 and 35 years. One of the Commission's declared aims was to acknowledge the role of youth in society, and to help integrate them into civil society initiatives through voluntary work and capacity-building. The authority also declared that one of its aims was to explore youth's views and various issues.[17] Jordan has a dedicated Ministry of Youth (MOY) which has recently published the national youth strategy 2019-2025.[18] The MOY was established as a successor to the previous Supreme Council for Youth. One of the aims of the Jordanian National Youth Strategy (JNYS) is to 'disseminate the culture of tolerance and acceptance of others among the youth, thus promoting social security and peace, and

[13] Feras al-Ahmad (2021) 200 million to support refugees in Jordan. *Sputnik News*, 19 August. Available at: https://arabic.sputniknews.com/arab_world/202108291049970890
[14] UNHCR (2021) *The UN Refugee Agency Jordan.* 30 February. Available at: https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Jordan%20country%20factsheet%20-%20February%202021.pdf
[15] UNHCR (2021) *OPERATIONAL DATA PORTAL. Refugee situations.* Available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36 Last updated 31 Aug 2021
[16] UNDP, 2016, pp 14-15
[17] See http://www.ajyc.jo/
[18] See https://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019-2025_english_compressed_1.pdf

rejecting extremism and violence.'[19] According to the MOY, there are nearly 200 youth centres in Jordan unevenly distributed across the kingdom.[20] It is worth noting that youth, according to the MOY, are defined as those aged between 12 and 30; however, this study adopts the definition of youth as between the ages of 18 and 24 which matches the target groups of this study of university students. Those aged between 12 and 18 may have a different set of problems relating to schooling, parenting, and other factors beyond the scope of this study.

Jordan is host to different religious minorities; however, the majority of the population is Muslim. Jordan, both historically and until the 1970s, was distinguished by its belonging to the Sufi, Hanafi or Shafi'i Islāmic traditions; conservative Salafism (see below) was represented by a group of individuals who had no prominent presence or significant influence in society. The major turning point was in the 1980s, when one of the most prominent figures of contemporary Salafism, Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, settled in Jordan. There are several factors that contributed to strengthening the influence of al-Albani; the most important being the Iranian revolution (1978-1979), and the accelerating rise of the so-called 'Islāmic awakening' in the region, coinciding with the events of the Hama Uprising in Syria (1982), and a large proportion of the Syrian Salafist movement seeking asylum in Jordan. The Oil Revolution in the 1970s greatly contributed to the increase in the influence of Salafist thought. The Salafist call is strong and present due to the high number of Jordanians working in the Gulf in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular. The 1980s was the golden decade for Salafism, and due to the aforementioned factors, it was exported from the Gulf to Jordan.[21] The Salafists' interest centred on religious rituals at first, but this soon changed; some Salafist groups emerged propagating a new political vision of an Islāmic state, influenced by political

[19] Ministry of Youth (2019) National Youth Strategy 2019-2025, p. 64, available at: https://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019-2025_english_compressed_1.pdf

[20] ibid. p. 8

[21] Abu Rumman, Muhammad (2017). The Future of the Salafist Phenomenon in Jordan: The Rise of Radicalism and the Disintegration of Traditionalism. *Center for Strategic Studies*. 24 January. Available at: https://jcss.org/?p=574

Islāmist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood.[22] There was a noticeable presence of the theorists of the Salafi movement by the end of the 1980s. The Salafi culture was no longer new or strange; it was able to become the prevailing culture at the beginning of the 1990s, The Sufi presence declined and dissipated, as the role of traditional religious institutions became less popular, especially the *fatwā* (ruling) issued by the armed forces and the Ministry of Islāmic Endowments. The Salafi trend also emerged among academics who worked in Saudi Arabia. They adopted the Salafi interpretations of Sharīʿa, and formed a broad class taught in Sharīʿa faculties in Jordanian universities.[23]

There was a rise of radical groups in the mid-1990s as one result of the setbacks to the 1991 Gulf War. The trends were initially influenced by the ideas of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) and those of the Saudi Salafist reformists. The emergence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi - who would become one of the most prominent ideologues of *jihādist* Salafism in the world - advanced the *jihādist* Salafi trend to crystallise and rise in Jordan. Al-Maqdisi, who came from Kuwait following the Gulf events in 1990, had a revolutionary Salafist ideology against the governments and rulers, in harmony with the radical trend of the angry and frustrated youth. The reaction of the youth was not only due to what was happening in the region, but also as a result of Jordan's involvement in the peace process negotiations. The arrest of al-Maqdisi or one of his students, Ahmed al-Khalayleh (also known as Abu Musab al-Zarqāwī) did not affect the spread of the movement, but rather strengthened it, both in and outside the prison: there were hundreds of followers of the Salafi-*Jihādi* disciples.[24]

Jordan had three Salafi trends in the second half of the 1990s. The first one was the traditional Salafis, who refused to engage in political and partisan work: their activities were limited to preaching. The

[22] Lacroix, Stéphane (2012). *The Time of Awakening: Contemporary Islamic Movements in Saudi Arabia.* The Arab Network for Research and Publishing, translated by Abdel Haq Al-Zamouri, pp. 61-68

[23] Abu Rumman, Muhammad and Abu Haniyeh, Hassan (2011) The Islamic Solution in Jordan: Islamists, the State, and the Challenges of Democracy and Security. *Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation*. Amman, 2nd Edition. P. 244. Available at: https://jcss.org/?p=574

[24] ibid. pp. 296-298

second trend was the reformist Salafi, represented by the *Association of the Book and the Sunnah*. It did not encourage fighting the Islāmists: it was closer to the mood of opposition to the policies of the state, but far from any armed action. The third trend was the emerging radical, influenced by the ideas of extremists such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and al-Zarqawi who believed that the Arab political rulers were infidels; as such, the only way to deal with them was armed confrontation between the two parties (the *jihādists* and the regimes). It rejected the peaceful and advocacy methods of other groups for change.[25] The differences and fissures within each of the previous Salafist trends began to emerge by the beginning of the new millennium (2000): each one was divided within itself, and they were distributed over a more complex and diversified map.

Salafism is roughly defined as the return to the teachings and practices of the first four generations of Muslim rulers in the early Islāmic era. This includes returning to the literal meanings of the *Ḥadīth* and practices at that time. Henri Lauzière[26] argues that the concept of Salafism is vaguely used in contemporary studies. The term 'Salafism' tends to be divided between a purist form focusing on orthodox teachings, and a political form such as the Muslim Brotherhood movement that works towards a political goal. Lauzière argues that Salafism, as used today, is a modern ideology enforced since the 1970s with the rise of political Islām. He does not explain the tenets of Salafism, however, nor its practices in Saudi Arabia, for instance, compared to other countries such as Egypt, Jordan, or Tunisia. The concept of Salafism is usually defined as the return to the Islāmic practices of the early Islāmic era or the first four generations of Muslims. The Salafists' interpretation of the return to the Islāmic practices and traditional texts chronicling the era of the early *Rashidun* ('perfect') caliphates varies in Muslim-majority countries. There are some Salafist clerics who support the *jihādist*

[25] Abu Rumman, Muhammad (2014). *I am Salafi: Research into the real and imagined identity of the Salafists.* Friedrich Ebert Foundation. 1st ed. pp. 36-40.
[26] Lauzière, Henri (2010) The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (August 2010), pp. 369-389

ideology in as much as they believe in violence as a legitimate tool for defending Islām or their concept of Islām.[27]

The adoption of Olsson's definition of Salafism is considered the most appropriate description for the purposes of this study: 'an umbrella term that frames something rather fragmented and contradictory, albeit with some characteristics in common. It is used as a self-designation by Muslims claiming authenticity'.[28] Moreover, Wiktorowicz[29] divided Salafis into three different groups, namely purists (who are apolitical), political, and *jihādists*. This categorisation has been influential, but has also faced some criticism (such as Wagemakers).[30] This categorisation is considered helpful for this study, and the term *jihādists* will be used to refer to militant groups such as ISIS which adopts violence to achieve a political aim.

The Salafi-*Jihādi* movement suffered from internal division. Al-Maqdisi and Al-Zarqawi were released from prison in late 1999. Al-Zarqawi moved to Afghanistan, and then to Iraq at the beginning of the U.S. occupation in 2003. He established his group there known as *Al-Tawhid and Jihād*, and affiliated his group to al-Qāʿidah in 2004. He later became one of the most wanted men by the U.S.A., and was killed in 2006 by an American raid. Al-Zarqawi's group did not disband after his death, but became the nucleus of what is known today as the 'Islāmic State' (ISIS), which remained faithful to al-Zarqawi's ideas. His approach was more extreme than that of al-Qāʿidah itself.[31]

[27] Nielsen, Richard A. (2014) *Networks, Careers, and the Jihādi Radicalization of Muslim Clerics,* July 1, 2014, pp 3-4
[28] Olsson, Susanne. (2014, p. 176) Proselytizing Islam — Problematizing "Salafism", *The Muslim World*, Vol. 104: 171-197.
[29] Wiktorowicz, Quintan. (2006) Anatomy of the Salafi Movement, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29:3, 207-239, DOI: 10.1080/10576100500497004
[30] Wagemakers, Joas. (2017) Revisiting Wiktorowicz Categorising and Defining the Branches of Salafism. In Francesco Cavatorta & Fabio Merone (eds) *Salafism After the Arab Awakening: Contending with People's Power*. Oxford University Press.
[31] Abu Rumman, Muhammad and Abu Haniyeh, Hassan (2011), pp. 316-327.

The Salafi-*Jihādi* movement, in turn, witnessed considerable developments and transformations since the 2011 uprisings. It co-ordinated a series of 'peaceful marches' with hundreds of participants in several cities in Jordan, the majority were supporters of al-Maqdisi; however, al-Zarqawi's supporters did not agree to the marches, because these did not reconcile with their approach of endorsing armed action to achieve reforms.[32]

There are many important signs which indicate an increase in the number of those affected by *Jihādist* Salafism, especially among the followers of the ISIS ideology in Jordanian society. The rise and spread of the current behaviour are linked to the political, economic, and social conditions. The political angle is based on the geographical space, Geography plays a large role on more than one level: the Sunni-Shi'ite crisis in Iraq and Syria, the regional chaos, and the Palestinian issue. The demography of the region also plays a part, given the presence of a large percentage (nearly half) of Jordanians of Palestinian origin which not only fuels the question of identity, but is also one of the sources of recruitment and propaganda for these groups.[33]

During the 1990s, the state agencies used the traditional Salafist movement to provide them with acceptable *fatawā* against political opposition, whether peaceful or armed, to confront the Brotherhood and the rise of *Jihādist* Salafism. The state had taken a strict stance against the Salafi-*Jihādi* movement since the beginning of its rise; however, between 2015-2016, it tried to employ Salafi-*Jihādi fatāwā* against ISIS and its supporters. The new development at the level of the state's relationship with these groups, in general, was to hold them responsible for incubating *fatawā* and extremist ideas, especially with the rise of ISIS, and the link between what it was (is) doing and its Salafi intellectual roots, an anti-Salafi political voice appeared.[34]

ISIS, established in 2014, declared war on the ground and online. ISIS utilises social networks as its primary tool for achieving publicity and propaganda objectives. This organisation depends on luring

[32] ibid. pp. 383-389.
[33] Abu Rumman, Muhammad (2017)
[34] ibid.

the youth to adopt the ISIS version of Islām by using a seemingly effective online media discourse. ISIS 'quickly took control of large parts of Iraq and Syria, raising its black flag in victory, and declaring the creation of a caliphate and imposing strict Islāmic rule. The group is sometimes also referred to as ISIL — for the Islāmic State of Iraq and the Levant — or by its Arabic acronym, *Dāʿish*.' [35]

There are many Arab countries that are suffering from serious problems at the moment. The reasons are several. They include the loss of confidence in the political systems governing a large number of these countries; the desire for change; the aspirations of young people towards a society that achieves social justice and equal opportunities; the constant increase in poverty and unemployment in a large number of Arab states; and other political, social, and economic difficulties. Taking advantage of this situation, ISIS is trying to present its state as an alternative to a civil state, democracy, and Arab nationalism which can be considered as goals that Arabs have failed to achieve for a long time.

ISIS, by announcing itself as an 'Islāmic State', and other organisations have played a considerable role in enforcing the Muslim and Arab stereotypes as the 'irrational Other', as demonstrated, for example, in the analysis of American popular culture.[36] This kind of stereotype supports the idea that the West needs to liberate Arab countries, fight terrorism, and bring democracy and freedom to Arabs, even by the use of military force.

ISIS is now not as strong as it was before regarding a military force on the ground, but its ideology still lives. A recent survey of a sample of Arab Muslims, among others, for instance, argued that significant Muslim populations hold unfavourable views of ISIS compared to those who hold favourable views - three per cent in Jordan, and six per cent of Palestinians; on the other hand, those who justify suicide bombing to some extent, are about 40 per cent in the Palestinian territories, and

[35] Elbaum, R. (2018) What is ISIS? What you need to know about Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: The Islamist terror group tactics are so brutal that it was even disowned by al-Qaeda. *NEWS*, April 18. available at: https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/smart-facts/what-isis-what-you-need-know-about-islamic-state-iraq-n859996

[36] Shaheen, J. G. (2015) *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Interlink Publishing.

29 per cent in Egypt[37]. This project aims to analyse the tenets of this ideology and its potential impact on youth.

1.4 Methodological consideration

This study approaches ISIS' speeches as the artefacts of an interpretive community: they represent the group's values, communicate their aims, and fundamentally aim to persuade a certain group of the audience – in this case, Arabic-speaking audiences; likewise, those audiences can be analysed as an interpretive community who decode ISIS' messages, and react to them in various ways.[38] The audience, argues Tuman[39] is 'the public character of terrorism' which aims to direct the audience's emotional state, and generate a feeling of urgency and anxiety. Audiences of such messages can either have an immediate or direct effect as 'the target of physical violence' or as indirect audiences.[40] The focus in this study is on the **indirect audiences**, or those who are not victims of radicalised acts but are targeted by radicalised groups as potential recruits or at least sympathisers. ISIS's messages are analysed as a means to encourage audiences to identify with the messages including sharing ISIS's justification for their violence. Studies of terrorism have highlighted the appeal of radical messages to some audiences, thereby 'contributing to sensations of helplessness, terror or anger'.[41] It is clear that other audience segments either do not identify with the messages at all or identify with portions of them. Audience analysis is still a limited method in Terrorism studies, hence, the aim of this study. This project's main contribution is to assess the assumptions made in previous studies which have highlighted the power of extremists' messages, and consequently, the vulnerability of recipients.

[37] Lipka, M. (2017) Muslims and Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world. *FACTANK News in Numbers*, 9 August. Pew Research. Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/
[38] Tuman, Joseph S. (2010) *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism. Terrorism as a Communication Process with Rhetorical Dimensions*. London: Sage, p. 77
[39] ibid. p. 78
[40] ibid. p. 79
[41] ibid. p. 90

Rhetoric and narrative are not only instrumental in the extremist discourse, but also in understanding radicalism as an ideological discourse. This study intends to open a new research agenda by focusing on the role of the radicalisation rhetoric in appealing to Muslim youths. The study does not see ISIS as similar to its predecessor al-Qāʿidah as a mother movement from which several new movements branched out; instead, **this study approaches the discourse of ISIS as representative of radicalised speech which can be replicated by similar or even other non-violent groups across the MENA region and the world.**

To focus on the rhetorical analysis goal of this study, a section of research material dealing with the relationship between terrorism and mental illness has been excluded; another section handling the roles and attitudes towards recruitment of women online, the importance of understanding the operation of gender in *jihād's* production of violence, and the roles for men and women. Images have also been omitted as they warrant a separate study to analyse those of ISIS in both Arabic and English publications. The choice not to focus on social media discourse such as 'tweets' is because these are extensively analysed in other studies, especially with a focus on those concerned with the so-called 'foreign fighters' (see ICSR report).[42] Finally, the focus remains only on Arabic-language ISIS material in acknowledgement of most extremist material being published in Arabic.[43]

The choice of recruiting participants from the Arab region is justified by the fact that the region has been the centre of recent conflicts and war, not to mention that several extremist groups originated from the region. According to the UNDP[44], the Arab region, which is home to five per cent of the world's population, has more than 57 per cent of the world's refugees, and 47 per cent of the world's internationally displaced persons. MENA has seen more than 68 per cent of the world's related

[42] Carter, Joseph, Shiraz Maher & Peter Neumann (2014) *#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks*. ICSR, King's College London. Available at: https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ICSR-Report-Greenbirds-Measuring-Importance-and-Infleunce-in-Syrian-Foreign-Fighter-Networks.pdf

[43] Archetti, Cristina (2013) *Understanding Terrorism in the Age of Global Media. A Communication Approach*. Palgrave, p. 58

[44] UNDP (2016) *Arab Human Development Report 2016*. NY: UNDP, p. 32. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/2699/ahdr2016en.pdf

deaths. This means that 'what happens in the Middle East does not stay in the Middle East' as reported in the House of Lords' evaluation of the situation in the Middle East.[45]

It is also important to note that the focus of this study is on university students or educated youth. This was done for several reasons: the convenience of sampling since access to the university sector is available; the topic is sensitive, and it may be difficult for less privileged groups to articulate their views not to mention that researching such disadvantaged groups must be approached with a different set of ethical considerations; there is also no definite evidence that ISIS followers or supporters come solely from deprived groups. Youth, moreover, are usually seen as more inclined to violence, and prone to accept simplistic ideological justifications:[46] Jordan's policies seem to focus on this cohort as articulated in the Ministry of Youth's plans cited above.

1.5 Contribution of this study

Sociological analyses of terrorism tend to rely on the 'rational actor' theory, seeing the act of supporting violence and violent groups as a reflection of the rational calculation and personal interest of individual supporters while disregarding emotionality which, conversely, plays a stronger role in influencing the perception of individuals. This study fills this gap to elucidate the use of discourse and narrative, focusing on the 'interplay between narratives as structuring and narratives as tools of agency', as an alternative to the rational actor model.[47] A previous example is provided by Mellor[48] who analyses the Muslim Brotherhood movement, arguing that the rational actor model cannot be solely used to account for the appeal of political Islāmist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood; emotionality also plays a role in order to appeal to potential supporters. Archetti[49] argues that there is a need to analyse terrorism and radicalisation as 'a reading of society as

[45] House of Lords (2019) The Middle East: Time for New Realism. *Select Committee on International Relations*, 2 May 2017, HL Paper 159

[46] Sukarieh, M., & Tannock, S. (2018) The global securitisation of youth. *Third World Quarterly,* 39(5), 854-870

[47] Miskimmon, Alister, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle. (2013) *Strategic Narratives - Communication Power and the New World Order.* London & NY: Routledge, p. 20

[48] Mellor, Noha (2018) *Voice of the Muslim Brotherhood*. London: Routledge

[49] Archetti, 2013, p. 3

relational', and seeing extremist groups as belonging to social, overlapping networks. This study adopts the emotional theoretical framework as will be explained in the following chapters.

1.6 Outline

This thesis consists of eleven chapters. The Introduction provides an overview of the context and the aim of this study, namely, the potential impact extremist rhetoric has on Arab youth. Chapter Two provides a literature review of studies about mainstream and extremist religious rhetoric and the role of rhetoric in shaping ideologies. The focus of Chapter Three is on the theoretical framework, assessing the links between ideology and rhetoric, with the aim of persuading audiences to adopt certain visions. The chapter is a discussion on the role of the language as a vehicle of ideology, and as a means of understanding the world. Chapter Four elaborates on the selected research methodology and methods used to provide an overview of the primary data. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven present the rhetorical analysis of ISIS speeches. These chapters will present the findings of two inter-connected approaches: ISIS's official speeches in Arabic in order to demonstrate the values and ideologies embraced by ISIS such as excluding the 'Other', and representing an ideal state or utopia, and the group's perception of *jihād*. Chapters Eight and Nine present an assessment of the youth's interpretations of religious norms**.** Chapter Ten provides a discussion of the findings linking them to the main theoretical concepts explored in this study, and Chapter Eleven provides an overall conclusion.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Terrorism has been the subject of many studies in the recent past. However, the topic of studies that have focused on ISIS ideology through rhetorical analysis is still under-researched. This study intends to fill the gaps that have not been fully addressed by previous research regarding ideological rhetoric analysis. This rhetorical analysis, as mentioned before, will be supplemented with interviews with a sample of Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian university students in Jordan as representatives of the mainstream Muslim community. The aim is to juxtapose mainstream and extremist religious norms to see the extent of congruence, if any, between the two sides.

This chapter, therefore, is divided into two parts: the first part provides a focused review of selected studies that address rhetoric in Western and Arabic-language scholarship. The Arabic rhetorical studies are further sub-divided into studies that addressed 'mainstream' religious rhetoric, i.e. speeches by mainstream clerics who are not banned from the public sphere in any of the Arab countries, and those studies that looked specifically into extremist rhetoric. The second part of the chapter reviews selected studies that explicitly addressed the issue of Arab youth and radicalisation. I begin with defining 'rhetoric' and its aims.

2.2 Rhetoric

Language has phrases that may be interpreted differently by different groups or cultures. Producers of ideology are often aware of the power of language; consequently, they may choose phrases that are already ideological to achieve particular objectives. Rhetoric - as the art of using languages - is exploited to articulate and spread the ideology. Berlin describes the relationship between ideology and rhetoric as: 'Ideology is problematised in a way that situates rhetoric within ideology, rather than ideology within rhetoric. In other words, instead of rhetoric acting as the transcendental record or

arbiter of competing for Ideological claims, rhetoric is regarded as always already ideological. Rhetoric can never be innocent, can never be a disinterested arbiter of the ideological claims of others because it is always already serving ideological claims'.[50]

Rhetoric has so many definitions, but this thesis will consider the following ones: 'rhetoric is the art or study of using language effectively and persuasively, or it is a skill in using language effectively and persuasively'.[51] Rhetoric is also defined as a 'study of producing discourses and interpreting how, when, and why discourses are persuasive'.[52] This shows how rhetoric represents the relationship between language and persuasion: 'people are being persuaded to act, think, and do certain things through language and symbols'.[53]

Burke considered rhetoric as a primary force in an individual's social life. Rhetoric, said Burke, 'is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic and continually born anew: the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols'. [54]

The ultimate goal of rhetoric is to persuade people to adopt certain points of view, although people respond to persuasion that promises to help them in some way by satisfying their wants or needs. That is why the persuader must think in terms of the needs of the persuaded, as well as his or her own. Burke explains that 'you persuade a man only insofar as you talk his language, identifying your ways with his.'[55]

The Athenian Sophists taught people how to speak persuasively via public speeches, arguments, and legal cases in the 5th century BCE. Speakers need to provide audience members with reasons to

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[50] Berlin, J. (1988) Rhetoric and Ideology in the writing Class. *College English*, 50, No. 5, p.477. Available at: http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/moser/eng%207506/Rhetoric%20and%20Ideology.pdf
[51] *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed., s.v. "Rhetoric,"*. Available at: http://www.bartleby.com/61/80/R0218000.htmi
[52] Keith, W. M. and Lundberg, C. O. (2008) *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*. 2nd edn. Bedford/St. Martin's in Boston and New York. P.3
[53] Ibid, p.4
[54] Burke, K. (1974), p.43
[55] Burke, K. (1974) *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.55

adopt a certain point of view. These reasons or ways of creating a change in peoples' minds are called 'proofs'.[56] Aristotle identified three rhetorical appeals: **ethos**, **logos**, and **pathos**. He argued that the speaker has to establish credibility, support his or her argument with logical reasoning, and appeal to the audiences' emotions through language.[57]

Keith & Lundberg describe the relationship between rhetoric and persuasion. Persuasion, they argue, is the attempt to influence others without using force; while rhetoric is an explanation of how persuasion works.[58] They also discuss Burke's view of persuasion which considers identification as a fundamental element of persuasion. This view is different from Aristotle's model that sees persuasion as a form of argument. They argue that Burke's theory appears better adapted to modern media, and also explains how people relate to language. A person who is found to be similar to another will be more willing to accept his speech and his conclusions.[59]

Speakers regularly seek to accomplish a certain goal through language and communication by matching their speech to special characteristics of the audience, and taking into consideration the fact that the audience consists of different people with different beliefs, values, and life experiences. Here emerges the importance of the means of persuasion that Aristotle talked about; **ethos** to establish the speaker's authority, **pathos** to provoke the feelings of the audience, and **logos** to present them with convincing arguments. The speaker wants to seize the audience's attention in an attempt to change their minds or actions. The speaker therefore needs to know his (or her) audience before seeking to produce the topic or the speech. The speaker attempts to connect with his audiences by considering their experiences, knowledge, and interests.[60] Speeches in this case address different needs for different audiences at a given time in a given place, all within a certain situation. The rhetorical

[56] ER services. *Principles of Public Speaking, Ancient Greece*. Available at: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-publicspeakingprinciples/chapter/ancient-greece/
[57] Van De Wege, M. (2013) *Arabic Rhetoric: Main Idea, Development, Parallelism, and Word Repetition*. Master Thesis. Eastern Washington University Cheney, Washington. p.51
[58] Keith, W. M. and Lundberg, C. O. (2008), P.35
[59] ibid. P.53
[60] Keith, W. M. and Lundberg, C. O. (2008), p.18

situation, moreover, includes 'considerations of who the speakers are, what they are saying, who the audience is, what the context is, why the speech is happening, and what goals and interests all sides bring to the table'.[61] The rhetorical situation determines whether a speech is appropriate and convincing, or inappropriate and unsuccessful.

Speakers may also use different tropes in their communication. They can exploit them to create a persuasive communication that built on the **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos** aspects. A trope is a significant element which includes 'the different ways that a speaker can play with language by using metaphor, vivid images, repetition'.[62] A metaphor is a significant rhetorical tool capable of creating new perceptions of the text because it provides concepts with interpretations that can be understood from a perspective related to other concepts bearing their own connotations. The speaker's use of specific words and images creates a certain influence related to the audience's perceptions and preconceived experiences.[63] Figures of speech constitute another rhetorical tool, and they refer to a 'creative arrangement of words in phrases or sentences that catch the audience's attention and focus it on your key ideas'.[64] The definition of rhetoric, in fact, must 'acknowledge the ways that figures and tropes persuade, not simply by providing pretty or ornate language, but by bringing to bear associations that make words convincing - argumentatively, emotionally and aesthetically'.[65]

The analysis of the speeches made by ISIS will provide several instances of the use of Aristotle three persuasive aspects: **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**, and the use of different rhetorical tropes as a means of persuading their followers, and changing the views of their audiences. To demonstrate the power of rhetoric in such extremist discourse, it is important first to acknowledge the role of rhetoric in the Arabic language, which is the focus of the next section.

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[61] Ibid, P.31
[62] Ibid, P.8
[63] Jowett, G. S. (2012) *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 5th edn. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi: SAGE. P.275
[64] Keith, W. M. and Lundberg, C. O. (2008), P.62
[65] Ibid, p.70

2.3 Arabic rhetoric

Arabic and Western rhetoric have shared elements created by a special old relationship: 'the history of Western rhetoric traces back to Europe from the city of Granada in the Spanish region of al-Andalus or Andalusia, ruled by the Muslims from 711 to 1492 CE. […] in a palace called the Alhambra, Western rhetoric was born out of Aristotle'.[66]

Muslim scholars translated and studied the Aristotelian manuscripts after they were found: 'the most prominent of the scholars was a 12th century scholar by the name of Ibn Rushd, or his more commonly used name - Averroes. Averroes translated and commented on virtually every work by Aristotle as they existed in the Arab world'.[67] Averroes' vision regarding rhetoric is consistent with Aristotle's: 'agreeing with Aristotle, Averroes saw rhetoric as a persuasive tool in discourse and viewed logical reasoning supported by facts as important components of rhetoric'.[68] Averroes called for knowledge to be attained through logical arguments rather than restricting it to rely only on religious ones. Averroes has been criticised and rejected by many Arab scholars on the grounds that this is inconsistent with Islāmic religious teachings: 'Arabic rhetoric reasoning is based on utilising verses from the *Qur'ān* and Islāmic beliefs, and there is great emphasis on emotional appeal through the use of poetic language, which is based on the *Qur'ān*'.[69] Arabic rhetoric is linked to religion. Muslims consequently disregarded Aristotle's rhetoric due to its separation from religious beliefs. European society, however, paid attention to Averroes' translations and commentaries on Aristotle's works; they were translated from Arabic back into Latin to be integrated into Western European societies.[70]

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[66] Van De Wege, M. (2013), p.23
[67] Borrowman, S. (2008) The Islamisation of rhetoric: Ibn Rushd and the reintroduction of Aristotle into medieval Europe. *Rhetoric Review*, 27(4). p.353.Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07350190802339242
[68] Clark, C.L. (2007) Aristotle and Averroes: The influences of Aristotle's Arabic commentator upon Western European and Arabic rhetoric. *Review of Communication,* 7(4), p. 371. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15358590701596955?scroll=top&needAccess=true&journalCode=rroc20
[69] Van De Wege, M. (2013), p.28
[70] Borrowman, S. (2008), p. 357

'Arabic rhetorical discourse is deeply connected to the poetic prose of the *Qur'ān*',[71] while conversely, 'Western rhetoric is not tied to the language of any religious book. It is viewed as a set of strategies for relaying information'.[72] The result is that a number of differences between Arabic and Western rhetoric exists: Western rhetoric is characterised by a direct and explicit main idea. The topic is developed through examples and illustrations, no new ideas are presented in the conclusion, it uses transitional phrases to connect paragraphs, and, moreover, employs minimum keyword frequency. Arab rhetoric, on the other hand, is characterised by an indirect main idea that can be extracted from the context of the topic. The topic is developed by reframing the main idea and uses adjectives, adverbs, and nouns to explain the paragraph.[73] The repetition of words or ideas is a significant feature of Arabic rhetoric which indicates the importance of these words or ideas.[74]

Studies on Arabic rhetoric show that 'rhetoric is concerned with the order system (*al-nazm*), whereas the elegance of discourse (*jamal/husn al-kalam*) is concerned with the impact of a speech act upon the addressee's behaviour. Therefore, rhetoric is concerned with the semantics of stylistics because one of its major objectives is the clarification of the features of effective discourse'.[75] Arabic rhetorical studies cover 'three independent yet interrelated disciplines: *ilm al-maani* (word order - semantic syntax), *ilm al-bayan* (figures of speech) and *ilm al-badi* (embellishments).[76] The study of Arabic rhetoric involves a comprehensive investigation of these three disciplines. *Ilm al-maani* (word order - semantic syntax) is 'concerned with language and context such as the pragmatic effects of such word orders in Arabic. Thus, word order is related to the deliberate and skilful manipulation of language by the text producer'.[77] Word order is therefore concerned with the semantic understanding and harmony among words, because different word orders will generate different interpretations by

[71] Clark, C.L. (2007)
[72] Ibid, p. 371
[73] Van De Wege, M. (2013), p.46
[74] Ibid, p.46
[75] Abdul-Raof, H. (2006) *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis.* Abingdon: Routledge. P.16
[76] Ibid, p.15
[77] Ibid, p.100

the targeted addressee. *Ilm al-bayan* (figures of speech) is the discipline through which 'we are able to appreciate how a given meaning is channelled to the addressee by simile, metaphor or metonymy modes of discourse. *Ilm al-bayan* rhetorically is the discipline through which we can shape up the aesthetic form of the proposition and vary the style in order to expose the required signification'.[78] *Ilm al-badi* (embellishments) refers to 'the discipline by which we appreciate the linguistic features that give discourse decorative elegance and acceptability provided it does not violate contextual or linguistic criteria'.[79]

The Arab speaker's awareness of the necessity of compatibility between the text and the overall context in which that text is formed makes him (or her) more concerned with the addressee's needs, interests, and fears. It is important, in that case, to pay attention to 'the rhetorical classification of the addressees to the deniers, the sceptics and the open-minded',[80] which can be considered a significant matter on which to build a persuasive message.

Arabic rhetorical analysis can be performed on several levels: the word level that takes into account the morphological qualities and semantics of words and their meanings; the sentence level which pays attention to grammatical rules and rhetorical methods; and the text-level that is concerned about the structure of the text as a whole, not merely in terms.[81]

Speakers attempt to persuade their audiences by emphasising their merit and credibility, presenting arguments in support of the topic, and attempting to engage the audience emotionally.[82] Quoting from the *Qur'ān* is a method employed by Arab rhetoricians in general. It can be considered a powerful persuasive method that derives its authority from the *Qur'ān* itself as it is the most sacred book for Muslims, and has acquired this sanctity because 'it is regarded as the divinely preserved

[78] Ibid, p.197
[79] Ibid, p.239
[80] ibid. P.273-274
[81] ibid. P.272
[82] Al-Khatib, M. A. (2003) The pragmatics of letter writing. *World Englishes*, 20(2), p. 208. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-971X.00208

speech of God (*Allah*) and the final revelation to humanity. Muslims believe that the text was miraculously dictated through the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) over a period of some twenty-two years in ancient tribal Arabia'.[83] Abu Rass argued that 'quotations from the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīths* of the Prophet are among the methods used by Arab writers to support their arguments together with quotes from Muslim leaders and scholars'.[84] She also suggests that 'Muslims usually accept principles covered in the *Qur'ān* as the divine truth and reject others that differ from the *Qur'ānic* principles and teachings, which embrace all aspects of life'.[85]

The analysis of the speeches made by ISIS will show how al-Adnani used all these qualities of Arabic rhetoric in his attempts to persuade his audiences and how he exploited Aristotle three persuasive aspects: **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**, within his persuasive strategies.

2.4 Mainstream religious rhetoric (*khataba*)

It is crucial to highlight the significance of rhetoric in Islāmist discourse; in fact, previous studies (such as those reviewed below), demonstrate how preaching and speech (*khutba* or sermon) have been key practices established since early Islām; for example, speeches delivered as part of Friday prayer. Rhetoric has therefore occupied a central position in Islāmist discourse as a means of attracting new followers, and strengthening the faith of existing ones. Friday sermons or preaching were not the only medium to reach out to Muslims everywhere; as the researcher shows below, other forms of media such as audio cassettes and television have been utilised for this purpose. The initiation of the cassette phenomenon for instance, afforded a mode of circulating sermons and the mass production of tapes, created a new sort of relationship between the *khaṭīb* (preacher or deliverer of the sermon) and the recipients. This situation made it possible for the preachers (*khutaba*) to be 'media stars'.

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[83] Halverson, J. R., Furlow, R. B. and Corman, S. R. (2012) *How the Islamist Extremist Quote the Qur'ān*. Arizona State University: Center for Strategic Communication. P.3
[84] Abu Rass, R. (1994) *The effect of Arabic Culture on Arab Students' Writing*. Unpublished Seminar Paper. University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.
[85] ibid. P.207

One key study to cite here is that of Hirschkind (2006) who explores the contribution of the production and circulation of cassette sermons among preachers in Egypt. The Islāmic revival movement paid attention to the aspects of the moral and political landscape of Middle Eastern societies. The study also explores the rhetorical techniques exploited by this aural mass media, and the capacity of these cassettes, not only through the cognitive act, but also in relation to their effect on human emotions.

Hirschkind discusses the effect of specific aspects of the mass media on challenging preachers to produce an authoritative Islāmic discourse which acknowledges the popular media. He states that the impact of visualisation relating to the practice of Qutb's[86] sermons showed his interest in what he calls the 'artistic portrayal' or representation that distinguishes the verses of the *Qur'ān* which gives harmony to the entire experience. Qutb considered the contributions of the *Qur'ānic* rhythm to appeal to emotions. The author argues that the style of visualisation described by Qutb represents a cinematic image.

Kishk (1933-1996)[87], another Islāmist preacher, was able to appeal to his audience by means of a style known as 'word as camera'. His sermons depended on image and sound according to Qutb's formulation of *taswir* (to picture). With the help of his vocal dynamics, he was able to run his voice softly over the word then gradually increase the tempo according to a specific situation. He exploited the use of rhythm and repetition as well as the vocal aspects of the *Qur'ānic* vocabulary. Kishk's sermons formed a combination of the phonic language such as those in al-Shernubi's[88] sermon, as well as the visual characteristics of film and theatre. While Hassan[89] repeatedly draws on poetry to

[86] Sayyid Qutb is an Egyptian preacher most commonly known in Western academia for his polemical militant tract 'Milestones'. Qutb's impact on contemporary *da'wa* preaching, however, is not only due to his polemical writings but also, equally, to his work on aesthetics, in particular his discussion of the aesthetic image found in the *Qur'ān*.
[87] Shaykh Abd alHamid Kishk has been as important both in shaping contemporary sermon styles and in defining the cassette sermon as a medium of contestation in Egypt.
[88] Abd al-Majid al-Shernubi was trained at al-Azhar but preached at various mosques in Cairo during the 1930s and 1940s.
[89] Muhammad Hassan is a leading figure in one of the largest da'wa organisations, Ahl al-Sunna, which administers thousands of non-governmental mosques in Egypt and provides a variety of welfare and preacher-training services.

intensify the emotional textures of his sermons, his preaching is recognised by the beauty of his recitation style which is closer to 'singing'.[90]

The recording tapes were central to Hirschkind's study, and he considered the vocal dynamics of the preachers as a basic tool of analysis, in addition to the employment of the text analysis to show the style of visualisation. The present study, however, will focus only on analysing the written text to find the rhetorical strategies used by ISIS to try to influence their audiences.

A different study is the one conducted by Madanat which explores the relationship between the Friday sermon (*khutba*) and the public opinion of worshippers in Jordan by investigating the extent to which the state's agenda-setting process in the media applies to the mosque agenda-setting, or how the preachers and government compete with each other to control public opinion. The study also investigates whether the preacher circumvents State regulations to influence the worshippers' perception of reality or to meet his audience's expectations by considering their own agenda. The study examines the effect of religious speech and the media in forming public opinion. While the preacher functions as a social actor, the State uses regulations to challenge political players in shaping the political, social and religious sphere in Jordan. Thus, to uncover the apparent and hidden actors that work together on regulating the Friday sermon, the researcher applied observations, interviews methods and conducted thematic content analysis on several sermons. The analysis shows that the preacher delivers his speeches without clashing with the State regulations, but at the same time, the content meets the expectations of the audience. The study concluded that the framing process is effective as much as it meets with the audiences' ideology, religious beliefs, prior personal experiences besides the political tendencies of the audience. Thus, the roll of the agenda-setting,

[90] Hirschkind, C. (2006) *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counter publics.* Columbia University Press.

framing and priming processes still requires more attention to understand how they participate in shaping religious and political attitudes and public opinion in an Islāmic context.[91]

Høigilt studied rhetoric in his book *Islāmist Rhetoric/ Language and culture in contemporary Egypt*, which provides focused reading of selected rhetoric of three Islāmist figures in Egypt. To achieve the aim of his study, Høigilt investigates how these figures communicate with their audiences, and how they use language to participate in achieving Islāmic reform as a task they undertook. This book is an examination of the way in which these Islāmists appealed to **ethos**, **pathos** and **logos** to carve out roles to position themselves in the Islāmic field through textual strategies.

Høigilt concludes that, just as in other cultures, Arab discourse is affected by the cultural milieu to which the writer belongs. He also found that contemporary Islām in Egypt can effortlessly use different expressions to convey ideological messages. These expressions have become accepted in general – implicitly - without being explicitly investigated or even questioned. These Islāmic figures do not need to discuss premises or build arguments for people to understand their messages; liberals and secularists, on the other hand, must build these arguments in an attempt to persuade their audiences.

Høigilt was interested in establishing how the three discourses shaped the 'Other' concept. He found that the discourses of al-Qaradawi and Imara have similar themes: both deal with liberal and secular as 'Other', while Khalid avoids the 'Other' concept, and deals instead with the relationship the audiences have with themselves and other individuals. [92]

Høigilt's book focuses on persuasion, ideology, and rhetoric, within three types of Islāmic discourse; specifically the religious establishment, new Islāmic preachers' discourse and moderate discourse, and how these discourses appeal to the Egyptian community, while this thesis aims to study whether

[91] Madanat, P. O. (2015) *The Role of Friday Sermon in Shaping the Opinion of the Worshippers in Jordan (with focus on the changing legal and political context, and coverage in the press and new media)*. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Catalonia. Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.
[92] Høigilt, J. (2011) *Islamist Rhetoric/ Language and culture in contemporary Egypt*. 1st edn. Routledge.

the influence of extremist discourse may be facilitated by its closeness to some elements of mainstream public discourse in the region.

Alsaawi conducted a key study to examine the rhetoric conveyed by *imams*, and how they employed language in their preaching. The focus is on how *imams* employ more than one language during Friday sermons, code-switching between Arabic and English. To explore the importance of code-switching to express the effect of religion on peoples' lives, Alsaawi employed qualitative research by means of interviews and observations involving *imams* and audiences in selected mosques in the U.K. The written transcripts from these interviews and observations formed the bulk of the data for analysis.

The interpretivist paradigm is the philosophical stance adopted for Alsaawi's study to inform his research methodology and to provide a context for the analysis process. This interpretive framework was applied to draw meaning from the respondents' perspectives, and to understand how language was used in Friday's religious sermons (*Khuṭbah*). Studying the phenomenon that results from the use of more than one language in Friday sermons aimed to explore the functions of language use from the perspectives of both the *imams* and the addressees. These functions were discussed by analysing selected extracts from the written transcripts of the sermons and interviews. Alsaawi concluded that this way of presenting the sermons emphasises the historical authenticity of the Arabic language, reflecting its authority over Muslims all over the world, whilst code-switching between Arabic and English helps the audience become familiar with the Arabic language, and arouses the feelings of the public and *imams* alike, due to the presence of many ritual terms that carry religious or historical connotations. He also assumed that they adapt to the recipients' language preferences, and the need to focus on the accuracy of the meaning of the words.[93]

[93] Alsaawi, A. A. (2017) *Imams' Language Use in Mosque Sermons*. London: Newcastle University.

Alsaawi's study intersects with the present study in using the interpretivist paradigm as the philosophical stance. Adopting this paradigm as a framework helps in drawing meaning from the audiences' perspectives by way of conducting audience analysis; in addition, while conducting the rhetorical analysis, this paradigm also helps to understand the way in which al-Adnani used language to try to persuade recipients to adopt ISIS's point of view.

The present study takes into consideration all the previous studies specially Høigilt's examination of the way in which Islāmists appeal to **ethos**, **pathos,** and **logos** through textual strategies, and the conclusion of Madanat's study regarding the method adopted to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermons by analysing the audiences' responses. This study thus probes the youth about their religious beliefs, reflecting mainstream norms, and then compares and contrasts these norms with those demonstrated in ISIS' rhetoric.

2.5 Extremist rhetoric

This extremists' interpretation of many concepts was accepted by a number of individuals who organised themselves into groups, claiming their aim was to confront Western policies and non-democratic regimes. The study of Zehr begins with inquiries that seek to understand how these individuals and groups are motivated, and their actions are legitimised, by way of religious and moral commitments. Zehr argues that, in addition to the use of military force, the Long War must take note of the theological alternatives that are presented by a variety of figures within the Muslim community.[94]

Ashraf studied the relation between ideology and political myth in his doctoral thesis, *Al Qaeda's Ideology Through Political Myth and Rhetoric*. He postulates that the primary components of ideology are several political myths created in historical, theological, and political contexts. Rhetorical analysis is carried out to identify aspects of al-Qāʿidah's ideology, particularly in the

[94] Zehr, N. A. (2011) *Responding to the Call: Just War and Jihād in the War Against Al-Qaeda.* Ph.D. Thesis. The Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences.

construction of political myth. It also reveals how it shapes its ideology within a novel framework to identify the roots, causes, beliefs, and trajectories of political thought.[95] Ashraf's study is relevant to this study, but the present thesis will examine the aspects of ISIS ideology, particularly in the construction of religious myths.

Ingram discusses other aspects of the extremist narrative by examining the narratives of *Inspire*[96] and *Dabiq*[97]. The core extremist narrative is based on one fundamental pillar: We against Others or the In-Group against the Out-Groups. The In-Group is imbued with positive values and is responsible for introducing solutions for society's problems by keeping together its traditions. This group will protect society, confront its enemies, and restore its glory; consequently, this In-Group needs and deserves the support of society. The Out-Groups, conversely, are imbued with negative values, and are responsible for generating crises and the breaking down of traditions of society; therefore, society must be against these Out-Groups. The number of Western Muslims travelling overseas as foreign fighters, or implicated in domestic terrorism-related activities, is low, but still, this small number of fighters reflects the success of extremist propaganda efforts, and the failure of Western governments to effectively counter it.[98]

Aarten, Mulder, and Pemberton discuss victimisation and de-radicalisation. Pemberton, Mulder, and Aarten have shown how the life story of radicals and former radicals can be interpreted as a matter of identity rather than merely of attitude. These experts argue that hate and anger are powerful emotions that often drive individuals into radicalised behaviour. The culture of certain societies can either be strong and supportive in helping someone to escape extremism, or it may be a factor of attraction to extremism. They also argue that the narrative of extremists is intimately connected to victimisation, which is the experience of suffering intentional harm. This kind of narrative can play

[95] Ashraf, M.A. (2012) *Al Qaeda's Ideology Through Political Myth and Rhetoric.* Ph.D. Thesis. University of St. Andrews. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10023/3222
[96] An English language online magazine published by al-Qaeda.
[97] An online magazine used by ISIS.
[98] Ingram, H. J. (2017) *An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War.* Australia: Routledge.

a turning point in the stories that radicals construct about their own lives, and thus play a role in their pathway to radicalisation by using traumas, ideology, attitudes, or opinions. Extremists find the term 'victim' to be disempowering and passive, so they refuse to use victimisation as a means of describing their experiences. The radical ideology can instead provide the means to transform a victimisation event from a possible sign of weakness or defeat into a rallying cry for action and demonstration of strength.[99]

One assumption of the present study suggests that ISIS presents its members as champions who can deliver the community from evil; another assumption indicates that ISIS adopts the idea of 'We against Others'. This suggests that any of its absolute supporters are considered to be the In-group, while the 'Others' are considered as Out-groups. This category of studies will, therefore, help to clarify how ISIS adopts and practices these visions.

2.6 Arab youth and extremist ideology

The Arab Spring uprisings that spread across much of the Arab world in the early 2010s shed lights on Arab youth grievances. Post-2011, several Arab states have come to realise the power of their youth in political and religious mobilisation. Here, states tend to 'securitise' the youth communities in the same way they securitise extremist discourse. For instance, one can also that the Jordanian state 'securitises' extremism. Securitisation here is defined as an extreme means of politicisation of a certain issue, often political, which is frequently presented in public policies as an existential threat.[100] It can refer to threats that may arise from both military and non-military issues, and requires a securitising actor whose discourse enforces and consolidates the framing of such threats as existential to the state or community. The securitisation process then entails a socially-constructed

[99] Aarten, P., Mulder, E., and Pemberton, A. (2017) The narrative of victimisation and de-radicalisation: An expert view. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1311111
Pemberton, Antony. and Aarten, Pauline G. M. (2018) *Narrative in the Study of Victimological Processes in Terrorism and Political Violence: An Initial Exploration.* Taylor & Francis© Antony.
[100] Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publisher, p. 23

threat using language, but this threat does not necessarily exist in reality. The threat may be exaggerated to mobilise public opinion around a certain issue or to justify a certain policy. The Copenhagen securitisation theory[101] draws on discourse, particularly the speech act, to demonstrate the role of language in securitising any issue by exaggerating its risks. This means that language plays an instrumental role in the securitisation process. The sender of the discourse (securitising actor) however, does not solely control the process, as it is subject to his (or her) success in persuasion of the security threat through the discourse. A securitisation process, in this sense, is an inter-subjective act involving both the audience (such as youth) and the securitising actor, in what Balzacq[102] defines as the ideal type of securitisation. This ideal type also includes social mechanisms such as rhetoric, as well as deontic powers, or rights and obligations.

The past decade has witnessed an increasing interest in conducting studies regarding Arab youth. The Arab Youth Survey, for instance, shows the impact of unemployment on Arab youth, who are more concerned about economic issues than political conflicts. The survey shows that young Arabs express concerns regarding the inadequate role their governments play in addressing the economic situation. The survey also shows that religion plays a big role in the region, and its influence is on the rise, although many Arab youth think that religion is losing its influence and holding the region back; they believe that the religious institutions need to be reformed. The youth are also concerned about security issues, and reject extremism and corruption. The majority of young Arabs are unhappy with the quality of education, and many of them want to pursue higher education in the West. The findings of this survey confirm the steady increase in the number of problems facing Arab youth, while highlighting the role that religious discourse occupies in the region. The need to reform and

[101] ibid.
[102] Balzacq, Thierry (2015) The 'Essence' of securitization: Theory, ideal type, and a sociological science of security. *International Relations,* Vol. 29(1): 103-113

develop religious institutions is a major concern, in addition to analysing misleading directives of what is acceptable in Islām and what is not.[103]

Another survey covering twenty-two Arab countries, examined the impact of social, political, and economic factors on the rise in extremism indicators among Arab youth in general. Based on this survey, an average of 46.6 per cent of participants were rated as extremists. The survey indicates that the Arab region has the highest percentage of young people in the world, most of whom are educated and in good health. They can therefore contribute effectively to the development of their countries in various fields. The youth, in fact, pose a security threat to their countries as a result of poverty, unemployment, and lack of democracy and freedom, and these factors push them to join terrorist groups such as ISIS. The number of unemployed young people is close to 75 million in the Arab region according to the International Labor Organization. The part of the survey conducted in Jordan showed that the average percentage of the prevalence of radical beliefs was 64.4 per cent among university students in Jordan, which is a rather alarming figure. It also showed that religious attitudes have a significant impact on the development of radical behaviour and actions.[104]

Another study by Massella, based on interviews with a sample of Iraqi youth, explored their perceptions of life before, during, and after ISIS occupation. The study shows that the quality of life before ISIS occupation was good; during that time, the youth, including young women, had access to good education, and freedom of movement on a daily basis. During ISIS's occupation, the youth were afraid to leave their houses, and they suffered from the changing educational curricula to accommodate ISIS doctrine which led to their dropping out of school, especially girls. Men experienced much movement restrictions due to fear of being used as human shields, while females suffered from uncertainty about their future. The youth showed how much they had endured health

[103] ASDA'A BCW (2019) A CALL FOR REFORM. *The findings of the 11th annual ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey*. Publisher (ASDA'A BCW). Available at: ASDA'A BCW Arab Youth Survey website: arabyouthsurvey.com

[104] Diab M. Al-Badayneh, Rami A. Al-Assasfeh, Nisreen A. Al-Bhri. (2016) Social Causes of Arab Youth Radicalizing. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, Vol. 6, No. 12, 743-756. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312197008_Social_Causes_of_Arab_Youth_Radicalization

problems and unstable financial conditions after ISIS's occupation ended, but they slowly resumed their education and freedom of movement. The main concern now is to regain stability and to end sectarianism.[105]

A few studies on Jordan revealed the tensions and challenges experienced by Jordanian youth. Milton for instance, sheds light on the tensions between the Jordanian government and Jordanian youth due to the growing marginalisation practiced by the government towards youth politically, socially, and economically. Jordanian youth, she argues, also face religious and gender challenges that not only increase their exclusion, but also limit their participation in most fields. The study indicates that continuing to marginalise young people will pose a threat to Jordan's security and stability, and will contribute to creating extremism among frustrated Jordanian youth. To achieve political inclusion, the study recommends strengthening the culture of civil society through developing educational curricula, conducting political awareness campaigns, and increasing opportunities for young people to run for municipal and parliamentary elections. Regarding the economic conditions, it recommends the necessity of providing job opportunities, and developing vocational training to prepare young people for the labour market, in co-operation with the government, civil society institutions, NGO, and the private sector, in addition to the government's partners such as the United States and the European Union. Societal forces, including tribes and religious leaders, must embrace the youth to avoid youth violence and radicalisation.[106]

The OECD Development Centre also conducted a study on Jordanian youth which sheds light on the challenges and obstacles facing Jordanian youth. Unemployment, for example, is a serious issue facing Jordanian youth, especially females. It is worth noting that most of the employed youth have jobs that do not match their qualifications. Jordanian youth are aware of the importance of political

[105] Massella, A. (2017) *We Have Forgotten What Happiness is: Youth Perspectives of Displacement and Return in Qayyarah Subdistrict, Mosul.* European Union Humanitarian Aid. OXFAM
[106] Milton-Edwards, B. (2018) *Marginalized youth: Toward an inclusive Jordan*. Brookings Institute. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/11540/8351

participation, but they have little trust in parliament and parties, and they have limited civic engagements. The absence of a comprehensive framework that facilitates the interaction of governmental institutions, especially the Ministry of Youth, with non-governmental institutions and organisations interested in youth affairs, makes it difficult to address issues that affect youth. Co-ordination and good strategies are therefore recommended to provide youth with attractive and relevant alternatives.[107]

The aim of Al-Rwashdeh's study was to identify the relationship between the radical ideology and selected variables such as gender, place of residence, education, family income, and parents' educational level. It was conducted on a sample of 304 male and female students from two Jordanian universities. The study shows the existence of radical opinions toward the West and to people of other religions. The students' ideological and intellectual extremism were attributed to social factors, followed by religious, political, academic, and economic issues. Al-Rwashdeh argues that there were minor differences that are attributed to gender, but no differences were noted in other variables. Al-Rwashdeh's study recommended the need to resolve the radical ideology by considering the social factors, as the most prominent catalyst for the formation of ideological extremism; however, it did not attach importance to the role of extremist religious discourse in shaping extremist social thought. The study did not focus on the importance of creating a counter-narrative, nor did it make discussion a possible solution to political and economic problems, including unemployment, which underpin the youth's frustration.[108]

Another study was organised by USAID targeting Jordanian and Syrian youth, reaching out to over 800 young Arabs aged between 10-24 (female and male) through focus groups. The findings centre around three main themes: persistence in education; transition to the workforce; and a voice and

[107] OECD Development Centre (2018) *Youth Well-being Policy Review of Jordan,* EU-OECD Youth Inclusion Project, Paris. Accessible at: http://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Youth_well_

[108] Al-Rwashdeh, A. Z. (2015) Radical Ideology from the Perspective of Jordanian Youth: A sociological Study on Aspects and Factors. *The Arab Journal for Security Studies and Training,* 31(63).

participation. The outcomes revealed the parents and students' frustrations due to the little value of education because of overcrowded classes, old buildings, and poor competence of teachers, among other factors. This resulted in an overall low academic performance. The youth believed that personal connections are more important than educational credentials in securing employment. They lack participation opportunities in addressing collective problems despite their knowledge of many social and political issues. The majority of parents encourage their children to join *Qur'ānic* centres because they believe these centres provide safe spaces for youth to fill their free time, especially in light of the government's lack of interest in exploiting the capabilities and potentials of young people. The USAID project suggested a general approach that would include parents, teachers, and community members to provide the youth with better alternatives; however, it did not pay attention to the theological factor in feeding youth with immoderate ideologies that may result from attending unregulated religious centres.[109]

Finally, it is important to mention that youth, as a sociological category, is difficult to define, since its characteristics and definition may vary across different cultural and political contexts. One key attribute of the youth category is their unique position as drivers of social change.[110] The youth category is socially constructed and determined by the specificity of its political and social circumstances which play a role in determining when someone is no longer a child but a full adult.[111] Defining youth in the Arab region solely by biological age may be problematic, as Arab youth may experience a delay in reaching material independence; conversely, a portion of Arab youth, particularly in the poorest Arab countries, may enter the labour market sooner than documented in

[109] Claudia, L., Dima, T., Reem, E., Shadia, N., Jenine, J., and Mohammad, B. (2015) Jordan National Youth Assessment. *USAID/Jordan Monitoring & Evaluation Support Project (MESP)*. Available at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KBZD.pdf

[110] Murphy, Emma (2018) 'The in-securitisation of youth in the South and East Mediterranean.', *The international spectator,* 53 (2). pp. 21-37.

[111] Calder, Mark, Robert MacDonald, Drew Mikhael, Emma C. Murphy & Jo Phoenix (2017, p 5) Marginalization, Young People in the South and East Mediterranean, and Policy. An Analysis of Young People's Experiences of Marginalization across Six SEM Countries, and Guidelines for Policy-makers. Working Paper No. 35 - May 2017, Power2Youth project, Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).

other neighbouring countries in order to support their families. For this study, youth are defined as those between 18 and 24 years of age.

2.7 Summary

This chapter introduced the concept of rhetoric and its definitions in general, and the characteristics and tools of rhetoric in the Arabic language in particular. It also reviewed a number of studies that dealt with mainstream religious rhetoric (khataba) and extremist rhetoric in the region. A number of studies that dealt with the problems and needs of Arab youth were also reviewed.

The present study highlights the specific rhetorical strategies applied in the propaganda employed by ISIS and the tropes and the aspects of persuasion repeated in the group's speeches. To go further than the studies cited above, an evaluation will be made of the ideological rhetoric employed by ISIS, by considering the extent to which extremist rhetoric may or may not appeal to the youth in Jordan, not necessarily to prompt them to join radicalised groups, but to transform the youth's views of the world and the West. Thus, one objective of this study is to discover the youth's view of basic religious ideas such as martyrdom and the Islāmic state, while exploring whether such view converges or diverges from extremist rhetoric like that of ISIS.

Studies on Arab rhetoric show a focus on the interpretivist paradigm which is applied in the present thesis to explore a sample of Jordanian youth's perception of extremist rhetoric and its underpinning ideology.

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework for the present thesis, and an investigation into the ideology and rhetoric, used by ISIS and its spokespersons and leaders.

Chapter Three

Theoretical framework: ideology and rhetoric

3.1 Introduction

The present study centres on extremist discourse which is regarded as a threat to national security in many Arab countries including Jordan. Discourse here is broadly understood as the meanings and interpretations of any form of communication such as visuals, news, pamphlets, political communications, and so on.[112] Discourse analysis typically takes a holistic approach in integrating the interpretation of the text with the interpretation of its users because it is based on meanings. Discourse is used mainly to refer to ISIS's speeches and key texts in this study. Here, it is important to note that some governments have acknowledged the significance of narrative in interpreting radicalised discourse; for example, the U.K. Prevent strategy links the narrative of radical groups to the theme of grievance, drawing on, and combining, religious and emotional content to manipulate the audiences.[113] The focus of states has been on the emotional content of extremist discourse; conducting a rhetorical analysis is, therefore, appropriate to extract the rhetorical tropes and persuasion aspects reflecting ISIS' extremist views before exploring whether such radical views, e.g. with regards to the concept of martyrdom, are shared with Arab youth. Sociologically, terrorist and extremist groups can be analysed as social movements by drawing on social movement theory, or actor-network theory.[114] The choice to focus on rhetoric tools instead, is important as an attempt to fill the knowledge gap, although these tools are still linked to social relations in mainstream society (see Discussion chapter).

This chapter provides a theoretical exploration of the link between ideology and rhetoric. It also addresses the use of rhetoric to strengthen certain types of claims in order to persuade audiences to

[112] Lahlali, El Mustapha (2011) Contemporary Arab Broadcast Media. *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press,* p. 120
[113] Archetti, Cristina (2013), p. 7
[114] Archetti, Cristina (2013), p. 4

adopt certain visions. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to unpick the main concepts of ideology and rhetoric, and explore how they are interlinked. The chapter concludes with a framework to analysing ISIS rhetoric and ideology.

3.2 Ideology and Rhetoric

The number of definitions of ideology reflects the breadth of the subject and the wide range of the concept's understanding. The French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy introduced the term 'ideology' more than 200 years ago. This was circulated in his book, and published during the French Enlightenment; the term subsequently evolved in different ways. Allam states that De Tracy defined the concept of ideology as the 'science of ideas'. The term evolved in a way that not only referred to the science of ideas, but also to different attitudes regarding man and society, whether political, economic, or otherwise. It is also used to refer to religious thought that was aimed at totalitarianism and the absence of reason, which was rejected by the philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries.[115]

Foss introduced the concept of ideology as a 'system of ideas or a pattern of beliefs that determines a group's interpretations of some aspect(s) of the world'.[116] The expansion and breadth of the interpretations according to the group's values and objectives contribute to the creation of different ideological groups; as each group believes that it monopolises the ultimate truth, all groups will reach a certain point beyond where no group can criticise other groups without also being criticised itself.

Ideologies commonly represent mental models adopted by individuals, groups, institutions, organisations, or even communities, who have expressed them in different contexts. Language is used to describe the ideologies in terms of objectives, norms, beliefs, and values.

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[115] Abd Alrahim, A. (2015) The concept of Ideology. *Mominoun Without Borders for studies and research*. Available at: https://www.mominoun.com/articles/%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%81%D9%87%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A7-2755 Date: May 12 2015

[116] Foss, S. K. (2018) *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*. 5th edn. Waveland Press, Inc.P.237.

Individuals normally adopt different ideologies. To express specific ones, group members need to identify and represent themselves as being members of groups in order to be able to act as group members. They bring to bear shared, general knowledge about society, and interaction in the competent execution of their actions in addition to the understanding of the actions of others.[117] Groups build their ideologies by relying on specific cultural values and social norms that they carefully choose to help them achieve their goals and interests; typically, each ideology highlights the positives of the group while masking its negatives. Van Dijk explained that 'The overall strategy of all ideology appears to be positive self-presentation and negative other presentations. This also implies various moves to mitigate, hide, or deny Our negative acts or properties, and Their good ones'.[118]

Ideology refers to beliefs and values that are shared by a certain group, community or class, be it religious, political or economic. In this study, I define ideology as a set of religious norms and values that are accepted and disseminated in Jordan and which can be assumed to reflect the so-called mainstream religious discourse understood as the discourse proliferated by non-banned clerics, and through non-banned forums such as mosques, mainstream media and educational institutions. Examples of such clerics are e.g. Friday preachers in mosques, TV clerics like al-Qaradawi, or the so-called new preachers in Egypt such as Amr Khaled.

This study focuses on the ideology of the Islamic State that shows a polarising structure between 'US' and 'THEM'.

Extremist rhetoric is inherently political in the sense that it aims to propagate contesting views, and persuade audiences of changing their perceptions and eventually adopt a different ideology. In so doing, a group like ISIS seeks to harness the power of rhetoric in order to shape a new form of

[117] Fiske, S.T. and Taylor, S.E. (1991) *Social Cognition*. McGraw-Hill Education; International Ed edition.
[118] Van Dijk, T. A. (1995) Ideological Discourse Analysis. *New Courant Journal*, p.157. Available at: https://dare.uva.nl/search?identifier=e28f3092-4024-4b7a-b88f-cdf072f8be40

agency, influence public opinion and establish a community of supporters.[119] As such, there is indeed convergence between ideology and rhetoric in that rhetoric gives shape to, contest and even re-fashion ideological system. Seen through this lens, rhetoric can be defined as a form of discourse that can help persuade and even recruit supporters. It provides a unique method to zoom in on discourse-in-action to explore how speakers use referents to certain events, texts and tropes to persuade audiences.

Analysing ISIS's rhetoric then provides an analysis of the social practice behind their extremist ideology, while exploring the youth's religious views offers an insight into the impact of mainstream religious ideology.

ISIS, as a Salafi-jihadist movement, presents a political as well as a religious ideology that internalises certain beliefs which forms a map through which adherents of this ideology perceive of themselves and others. To combat their ideology, and develop a viable counter-terrorism narrative, ISIS' religious as well as political ideology must be weakened. This view departs from previous studies[120] that see extremist ideology as based on political rather than religious ideology. The fieldwork in the present study demonstrates the presence of both political as well as religious values in both ISIS' rhetoric and in the views of selected Arab university students. The empirical evidence in this study also indicates the need to highlight that ordinary Muslims who are perceived as non-extremist may harbour certain intolerant views that divides the world between 'Us and Them'. Muslims tend to be the primary victims of extremist ideology[121] and so it is important to scrutinise religious norms and values, as perceived not only by extremist groups like ISIS but also by ordinary Muslims.

[119] Martin, James (2014) *Politics and Rhetoric. A critical introduction*. London: Routledge
[120] Moghadam, Assaf (2008) The Salafi-Jihad as a Religious Ideology, CTC Sentinel, February 2008. Vol 1. Issue 3, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol1Iss3-Art5.pdf
[121] Ibid.

3.3 *Jihād* as an ideology

Ideology can be defined as a set of conscious and unconscious ideas that make up one's beliefs, goals, expectations, and motivations.[122] Rhetoric is the art of persuasion which aims to study the capacities of writers or speakers needed to inform, persuade, or motivate particular audiences in specific situations.[123] Berlin discusses the relationship between ideology and rhetoric as follows:

> Instead of rhetoric acting as the transcendental record or arbiter of competing for ideological claims, rhetoric is regarded as always being ideological. Rhetoric can never be innocent: [it] can never be a disinterested arbiter of the ideological claims of others because it is already serving ideological claims.[124]

This relationship will be explored in the present study to figure out the way in which ISIS ideology is reflected in its rhetoric. ISIS, as a group or an organisation, shares an ideology among its members. This ideology is viewed in its rhetoric to strengthen the organisation's claims and arguments. It conveys its own opinions or beliefs to its audiences with the aim of persuading them to adopt a certain vision or to execute certain operations.

This study assumes that ISIS's ideology represents a way of thinking based on a zero-sum game, depending on the fall of the Other as a prerequisite for Muslims' renaissance. Al-Jabri discusses this idea in several books, and addresses it in the writing about 'Contemporary Arab Discourse'. He argues that these extreme groups take the past as their reference, and seek to establish the Arab Renaissance by restoring early Arab-Islāmic civilisation to address the issues of the present, without taking into account all the changes that have taken place since then.[125]

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[122] Mossotte, P. (2017) *Ethics in Social Networking and Business 1: Theory, Practice and Current Recommendations*. London: Wiley-ISTE. P. 20

[123] Corbett, E. P. J. (1990) *Classical rhetoric for the modern student.* New York: Oxford University Press. p. 1.; Young, R. E., Becker, A. L., and Pike, K. L. (1970) *Rhetoric: discovery and change*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World. p. 1

[124] Berlin, J. (1988) Rhetoric and Ideology in the writing Class. *College English*, 50, No. 5, p.477

[125] Al-Jabri, Mohammed Abed (1982) *Contemporary Arab discourse*. Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab Unity Studies.

The early Arab-Islāmic civilisation is presented by ISIS as the state of a caliphate, the place of justice, or a utopia, by articulating its ideology through its rhetoric. The analysis of ISIS rhetoric will rely on ideological and utopian concepts in addition to some others. Ricoeur shows that ideology is always one of the phenomena of social existence that cannot be overcome, while utopia is the fantasy of an alternative society and its embodiment in nowhere. He shows that the association between ideology and utopia offers a model of social welfare that contributes to shaping the social reality itself.[126]

Virk agrees with Ricoeur in that the ambition of any society is associated with its ideology which is derived from various factors. Virk focuses on several political and social elements that contributed to the formation of extremist ideology in Arab and Muslim countries. This led the societies of these countries to seek an alternative reality through which they could find justice and peace. Virk's study has examined the Western-led policies in many countries in the Islāmic world such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya, among others, and analysed radical Islāmist ideology and its appeal in Muslim societies. Virk has also explored how the poor governance of authoritarian and non-democratic regimes created social grievances in the Islāmic world, which, in turn, have helped fuel extremist ideology and terrorism. Academics have offered a diversified menu of causes, factors, and possible drivers of Islāmist terrorism, ranging from political repression, identity crisis, feelings of humiliation, poverty, corruption, nepotism, cronyism, marginalisation, illiteracy, and unemployment which breed desperateness and hopelessness. Extremists declare their interpretation of the concepts of *Jihād*, *Takfir*, and Martyrdom as the only true interpretations of the Prophet Mohammed and his Companions' actions and statements, without deviation. The literal and selective interpretations of the *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth* are taken out of context, and are the basis of the ideological understanding of Islām promoted by extremists.[127]

[126] Ricoeur, P. (1986). *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*.
[127] Virk, N. H. (2017) *The Persistence of Islamist Terrorism Since 1979*. Master Thesis. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California.

The serious political and social issues that plague Muslim societies contribute to the formation of extremist ideologies; these issues, therefore, need solutions that help to stabilise and develop these societies.

3.4 *Jihād* as rhetoric

The speeches of ISIS are a means of communication among many others to influence its audiences' ways of thinking. ISIS spokesman shapes information through these speeches, emphasising positive aspects and toning down negative ones. This study is interested not only in analysing the speeches, but also in evaluating the potential impact of such speeches on audiences by examining the persuasion process which is the focus of this study.

Persuasion is the ultimate goal for all the speakers to achieve. Aristotle defined it as 'the faculty of discovering the persuasive means available in a given case'.[128] Persuasion here is defined 'as a communicative process to influence others. A persuasive message has a point of view or desired behaviour for the recipient to adopt in a voluntary fashion'.[129]

Hovland, Janis and Kelley developed the Yale Model of Persuasion in 1953, according to which 'the process of any persuasion attempt will follow six stages: exposure, attention, comprehension, acceptance, retention and translation'.[130] McGuire also developed a model of persuasion highlighting the following processes: attention, comprehension, yielding, retention and action.[131]

The persuasion model was further developed by Zimbardo and Leippe adding exposure and changed action to the 'translation of attitude to behaviour'.[132]

[128] Burke, K. (1974), P.49
[129] ibid. P. 32
[130] Matusitz, J. (2013) *Terrorism & Communication: A Critical Introduction*. SAGE. P.81
[131] Jowett, G. S. (2012), P.180
[132] ibid. P.181

According to Jowett[133], a persuasion process is a successful one if it creates a reaction after the recipient relates it to his [her] own beliefs and values; since the persuaders attempt to evoke a specific form of response from the person or persons being persuaded, they must consider the latter's needs as their own needs, because it is the audience's response to persuasion that promises to satisfy their own concerns, wants, aspirations, or requirements. A persuader must use the existing anchors of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviour to create or influence the formation of new ones.

There are many factors that are difficult to change, and which tend to persist over time. Political affiliations, religious beliefs, and cultural legacies are among these constant factors that resist changes through persuasion processes. The persuaders are generally aware of the difficulties that they will face in attempting to change the behaviour of their audiences. They seek information regarding their audiences' needs and requirements to build a strong argument leading to a successful persuasion process. Jowett argued that the anchors of the group can be discovered by a persuader who is well prepared, and has an insight into the group members' beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviour. A successful persuasion process creates change by accepting the speaker's message. This change is consistent with the vision and goal of the speaker, but the recipients do not feel that this change is caused by an influential external force; rather they think that they are doing it voluntarily and on their own.[134]

Seeing as rhetoric is the primary resource used in the persuasion process, rhetorical analysis will discover the available forms of proof and means of persuasion (**ethos, pathos** and **logos**) produced by the persuaders within their texts.[135]

One goal of the Jihadist rhetoric is to establish a myth based on the assumption of spiritual motives behind human actions. 'Myth provides the ideological content for a sacred form of behaviour'[136] and

[133] ibid.
[134] Jowett, G. S. (2012), P.32-41
[135] ibid. P.41
[136] Honko, L. (1972) *The problem of defining myth*. Indiana University: Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion. p.18

myth can cover a wide range of fields. Honko stating that: 'myth can encompass everything from a simple-minded, fictitious, even mendacious impression to an absolutely true and sacred account, the very reality of which far outweighs anything that ordinary everyday life can offer'[137]

The myth can reflect the development of human lives: 'The human sciences dealt with it by looking for latent symbols that helped to understand the human being and his behaviour, his spiritual and psychological life and the mechanisms of his thinking, emotions and motives'.[138] The definition of mythology is taken from the Greek *mythos* that tells the story of the people, explains sacred tales and myths, and, moreover, deals with different concepts such as life and death, as well as the afterlife and the gods.[139]

There have been various schools that aimed to present comprehensive theories in the interpretation of the myth through literature, history, art, and so on. Modern theories of myth 'may be distinguished by four sub-groups, namely, historical, psychological, sociological and structural perspectives'.[140] These theories 'overlap and complement each other to some extent'.[141]

The psychological interpretations of myth are based on fear as a source of belief and worship, while the sociological theories of myth suggest that it can be interpreted as choosing different elements that satisfy individual tendencies and social requirements to form a certain perception of the world.[142]

Myth can be partly shared by members of the same country, region, race, religion, and culture. It thus has a close relationship with the societies that are formed within them, as it reflects the culture, civilisation, and beliefs of those societies; consequently, it cannot be considered a collection of

[137] ibid. p.7
[138] Al-Sawah, F. (1996) *Mind First Adventure. A Study in Myth - Syria and Mesopotamia.* 11th edn. Damascus: Aladdin Dar for publishing.
[139] Mark, J. J. (2018) Mythology. In : *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Available at: https://www.ancient.eu/mythology/
[140] Cohen, P.S. (1969) Theories of Myth. *JSTOR*, 4, pp.337-353. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2798111?seq=1
[141] Honko, L. (1972), p.13
[142] Ibid, p.13

random stories that are not interconnected, but rather, it expresses topics that embody a certain social and cultural form.

Myths can also be represented as symbols: ‘it is an insight into what lies behind them that is important’.[143] The single myth has certain characteristics that express it, although certain traditions can be expressed with specific meanings that are widely accepted and spread worldwide. It will have its own character, in this case, and its own laws that will reflect the values and beliefs on which that myth is based.

Myth and religion share many concepts. They can be considered forms of the communication processes by which information is transmitted from the speaker to the recipients; mythical events affect a religious person according to his or her experience; as a result, he or she may identify himself or herself with a mythical figure. Honko highlights the relationship between myth and religion as ‘myth expresses and confirms society's religious values and norms; it provides patterns of behaviour to be imitated, testifies to the efficacy of ritual with its practical ends and establishes the sanctity of cult’.[144]

Myths have been associated with offerings throughout history. According to al-Qamani, these have taken many forms, including vegan, animal, human, royal, divine, maternal, self-sacrifice or redemption. He argues that the optional self-sacrifice for the safety of the whole community has turned into the pinnacle of acts so transcendent and sacred that sacrifice lifts all sins from the person who sacrifices (in all religions) until his holiness reaches the limit of the angelic and his work, in this case, is termed martyrdom.[145]

Martyrdom is an attractive idea - for those who want to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of their societies - and so is a utopia - for those who dream of a place of goodness and justice. Utopians

[143] Ibid, p.9
[144] Ibid, p.15
[145] Al-Qamani, S. (1999) *A legend and heritage*. Cairo: Egyptian Centre for Civilisation Research.

always think in unrealistic ways, as do the groups of political Islām thinkers and followers which affected their way of life. Younes argues that the political Islāmic vision is based on the myth of divine promise, which is represented in the inevitability of following the agenda of their righteous predecessors to establish and restore their empire.[146]

The relationship between ideology and myth is based on acknowledging that ideologies are based on solid truths for the groups who believe in them. Myths live in the social arena just as ideologies do, in which they draw their characteristics and taboos that are considered an absolute truth for those who believe in them.

To sum up, ideology is a system of ideas or a pattern of beliefs that determines a group's interpretations of some aspect(s) of the world. The myth can also be described as a selection of different elements that may create an individual and traditional way of viewing the world. To perpetuate their specific ideologies, groups exploit and modify their own mythical conceptions, not only in developing and introducing persuasive arguments, but also articulating their beliefs and objectives through rhetoric. These arguments are always presented by charismatic personalities to mobilise individuals by typically placing present-day situations in a meaningful perspective regarding the practices of the past. The study turns to the role of rhetoric in the next section as a key tool in communicating and disseminating ideologies and garnering support.

3.5 A framework for analysing ISIS's ideology

This thesis draws on the concept of ideology and its relationship with myth and religion, to analyse ISIS's ideological rhetoric which aims to persuade people of the organisation's messages. The analysis will discover the values deployed through detailed reading of ISIS's speeches. This will help

[146] Younes, S. (2017) The founding myths of "political Islam" ... ... the worship of the past, accusing the society of infidelity, and the search for the lost empire: The lost empire. *Alfaisal,* 31 December. Available at: https://www.alfaisalmag.com/?p=7141

ascertain the way in which ISIS interprets and redefines Islāmic beliefs in order to persuade its adherents to adopt certain points of view.

This study demonstrates how the rhetorical analysis of ISIS's speeches draws on a specific set of rhetorical tools to persuade the audience. These tools include grammatical aspects such as using the 'We' pronoun throughout speeches; by doing so, the ISIS spokesman identifies with his audience. He used already existing anchors to form new ones and deliver them to the audience to evoke a special response from them. This study also attempts to show how ISIS spokesman use the aspects of **ethos**, **pathos,** and **logos.** These aspects are instrumental in his efforts to mislead and manipulate his audience. He used rhetorical tools such as similes, metaphors, and certain terms to help accentuate the process of exclusion or inclusion or in forming an ingroup or outgroup. ISIS appealed to its addressees' fears, hopes, needs, and circumstances, while offering the audience a dream or myth pertaining to the Caliphate or a utopian city, as a solution for all their problems. The analysis of ISIS's rhetoric will focus on the ideological factor that affects society's convictions and individual reactions. The meaning and effectiveness of Islāmic ideological discourse should consequently be judged by considering the reactions of those who are exposed to the ideological religious messages.

The analysis framework works on two levels: exploring the themes and ideologies presented in ISIS speeches; and the youth's perception of the same values such as exclusion, martyrdom, and an ideal state.

The media play their ideological roles through discourse; therefore, the role of discourse in supporting and reproducing ideology cannot be ignored. The link between ideology and discourse can be described as ideology being a function of discourse,[147] since it is only through language use that communication of ideologies can be explicitly formulated. Ideology shapes facts and ideas through language; therefore, the relationship between them will be explored within this thesis.

[147] Hall, S. (1980) Cultural studies: two paradigms. *Media, Culture & Society*, 2(1): 57-72. Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/016344378000200106

Relying on the fact that 'language is a system of signs that express ideas', Scannell explains that language then is a vehicle of ideology, and, as language constructs our understanding of the world, there is no escape from this ideology.[148]

The ideological discourse is aiming primarily at convincing an "in-group" about the rationale of certain actions especially in times of crisis where a certain group can seem itself as a saviour to its people heralding new solutions.[149] In so doing, the in-group rhetoric is often accompanied by the act of attributing blame on an out-group whose actions tend to undermine the interests of the in-group. Ideological rhetoric here then serves the function of shaping and consolidating an in-group identity, setting boundaries with an out-group, and offering solutions to counteract the acts of the out-group. ISIS, as a representative of Salafi-Jihad, disseminate such an ideology through its speeches and other forms of communicative events aiming primarily at reinforcing a certain world view among its adherents. It is expected then that those who may support ISIS, e.g. those detained in the UK on charges of supporting ISIS or the so-called foreign fighters who left their countries of residence to join ISIS, will adopt ISIS' rhetoric in perceiving themselves as part of an in-group fighting an out-group. However, those ordinary, peaceful Muslims who have not expressed such support are usually regarded as those who dismiss or reject extremist ideas such as 'Us and Them' rhetoric. **This study tests this perception by conducing focus groups analysis with selected university students (Jordanian, Palestinian and Syrian) in Jordan to assess some answers about the religious ideologies and norms of this group of youth juxtaposing these norms with those propagated by ISIS.**

New media plays an important role at present in propagating different ideologies on a large scale, reaching an unlimited number of people across borders. Terrorist organisations controlled several Internet channels, and actively exploited them to present their ideologies. One method to polarise the

[148] Scannell, P. (2007), p.219
[149] Moghadam, 2008

public was the extremist discourses that were presented under a religious cover. The intention was to have the greatest possible impact on the public, given the prior knowledge of the power of religious discourse on the masses. States and those who controlled the means of communication exploited these discourses to reproduce and transmit their ideological elements and threads. Marxist scholars expressed the effect of dominators of the materials of production on the receivers as: 'the class which has the means of material production at its disposal also has control over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it'.[150] Stuart Hall paid special attention to the way in which prevailing ideas reached individuals' minds, and how these ideas are effective. His solution was the encoding/decoding model. This model allows three different reading positions: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional. It seeks to bring a certain type of ideological message, since the media are already ideological and thereby establish a preferred reading of the topic. The encoding/decoding model expounds on the premise that 'it is in the nature of all linguistic systems which employ codes, that more than one reading can potentially be produced […]. It follows that different audiences […] can make more than one reading of what has been encoded'.[151]

The rhetorical analysis that follows aims to demonstrate how the ISIS spokesman 'encoded' the organisation's messages. To supplement this analysis, however, it is necessary to also explore how the audience may decode certain concepts, as the audience is a central element in the study of rhetoric. This is why focus groups were conducted to assess the youth's interpretation of such concepts as martyrdom and Islāmic state; the focus groups were conducted with a sample of university students to represent the different nationalities who live in Jordan (Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian). Combining audience analysis with textual and rhetorical analysis helps provide an all-round

[150] Scannell, P. (2007) *Media and Communication*. London: SAGE. p.5
[151] ibid. p.11

evaluation of extremist rhetoric, and further details are provided in the following methodology chapter.

3.6 Summary

Terrorism studies still need to incorporate a viable theory of the causal processes triggering violence.[152] There are many studies which have offered minute details about terrorists, but there is still a gap in understanding why radicalised rhetoric appeals to some audiences. If some Muslims sympathise with the extremist rhetoric, then why do others not? If extremist groups like ISIS draw on an erroneous understanding of Islām, then why have Arab states' efforts to rectify such understanding not eradicated such groups?

This study seeks to propose some answers to those questions, demonstrating that extremist rhetoric must be tackled by debates with youth and other recipients of radicalised discourse. This can be done by continuous dialogue and debating religious or Islāmic beliefs. This study thus integrates two levels of analysis: rhetorical and interpretation, to arrive at broad themes regarding ISIS's persuasion tactics. This level of analysis, ontologically speaking, also explores the opinions regarding the reality as created in extremist discourse. The study then explores the youth's interpretation of such views, such as martyrdom, based on a series of focus groups with a sample of university students in Jordan to demonstrate how knowledge (of Islām and Islāmic concepts such as belief, *jihād,* and the Caliphate) interacts with existing social and moral values.

[152] ibid. p. 12

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the chosen research methodology and the selected research methods. The ontological and epistemological foundations of the project are explained in this introduction, before the primary data and methods of analysis are presented.

This study, in terms of research philosophy, is based on the constructivist and interpretivist paradigms[153] in that it aims to understand how certain speakers (in this case extremists) use their speeches to appeal to and to persuade listeners, not necessarily to follow the extremists' path, but at least to persuade their listeners to change their worldviews. The constructivist paradigm draws on picking the meaning and rhetorical tropes in the selected extremists' speeches, whereas the interpretivist paradigm will be the basis of the audience analysis to draw meaning from respondents' points of view, and how they extrapolate meaning from those extremist discourses.[154] The underlying assumption is that both producers (extremists) and receivers of texts (Muslim audiences), share certain beliefs, although they may differ in their understanding of Islāmic practices in everyday life, or in the meanings attributed to certain eras in Islām such as that of the Caliphates.[155]

This project is an ontological exploration of the opinions regarding the reality as created in the extremists' discourse, and in the receivers' interpretation of it. The project, as such, is based on constructing different interpretations of this reality (as unfolded in the primary data and in the audiences' interpretations). This leads to the specific epistemological stance adopted here, which is

[153] Flowers, P. (2009) 'Research philosophies – importance and relevance', *European Journal of Information Systems*, 3(2), pp. 112−126
[154] Crotty, M. (1998) *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA, New Delhi, London, Singapore: Sage.
[155] Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2003) *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA, New Delhi, London, Singapore: Sage.

based on demonstrating how knowledge (of Islām and Islāmic concepts such as the Caliphate interacts with social and moral values, as will be shown in the final analysis chapters.[156]

The primary sources are presented in the following sections, and then expanded on the chosen methods of analysis, focusing on two specific methods: rhetorical and audience.

The majority of the reviewed studies pertaining to extremist movements have drawn on theories from political science such as those on social movements. Ideology is used loosely to identify concepts such as *jihād*, martyrdom, and the Caliphate. There is an obvious gap in these studies, namely, their lack of coverage of ideological and rhetorical aspects that concern the way in which Islāmic State's speeches affect the behaviour of individuals. To fill this gap, and to understand ISIS's narrative, a detailed reading of its rhetoric is required. This will help to reveal the way in which ISIS has interpreted these concepts, and also to identify aspects of the group's main ideology and political myth which polarise youth. The speeches made by the ISIS spokesman, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, have been chosen from all of ISIS's publications as an example of the specific features or characteristics they have. This will enable a detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes or ideological and rhetorical aspects which the research intends to study.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the methodological framework for this study, and to discuss the main methods of analysis. It will subsequently be followed by an explanation of the rationale for the use of the focus groups method. This part of the audience analysis (focus groups) is meant to reflect the way audiences perceive the extremists' values and themes extracted from the rhetorical analysis, and to explore the possible interpretations of such messages amongst Arab youth.

4.2 Primary sources for rhetorical analysis

The data consists of 25 speeches, all of which were delivered by al-Adnani, the media spokesman of ISIS from 2011 to 2016; each speech consists of an introduction, verses from the *Qur'ān*, quotes by

[156] Creswell, J.W. (2003) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA, New Delhi, London, Singapore: Sage.

the Prophet, poetry, and plain text. To make the data appropriate for the rhetorical analysis approach, the speeches will be clustered according to themes such as the 'inner' and 'outer' groups, *jihād,* martyrdom, and the Caliphate. The speeches made by Islāmic State's spokesman that were published online in 2011-2016 will be analysed to achieve an in-depth understanding of these themes regarding ISIS. There are several of these speeches which can be found in both Arabic and English; however, this study will focus on the Arabic speeches only. Selected extracts will be translated into English and integrated into the final analysis to demonstrate the arguments.

The data required for this study (the speeches) have been harvested directly through the ISIS website of *Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment, *Al-Fajr* Media Centre for distribution, which were reached through the advice of the *Shorufat* Centre for Globalisation & Terrorism Studies.[157]

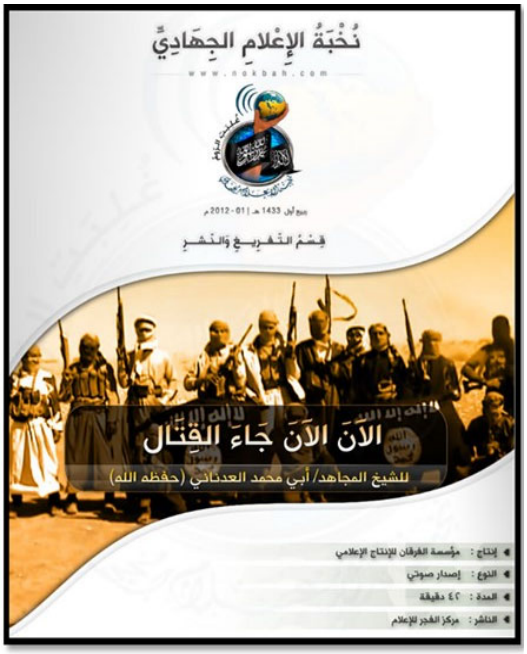


Image 4.1

The *Al-Furqan* institution produced all of al-Baghdadi's and al-Adnani's speeches, while the *al-Fajr* Media Centre published them all.

Image 4.1 shows an announcement[158] by ISIS which distributed a 42-minute audio speech by Abu Mohammed al-Adnani entitled 'Now! Now! the Fighting Comes', produced by *Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment. *Al-Fajr* distributed it on the Internet on January 2012 with the title, 'Top

[157] Shorufat Centre for Globalisation & Terrorism Studies is the only research centre in Jordan and the Middle East to specialise in the large-scale reciprocal effect of the process of globalisation, global terrorism and Islamic extremism along with their repercussions on both nascent and international communities. The centre also provides holistic analytical and operational studies which are distinguished by a high level of objectivity and significant academic value. These studies consider up-to-date events in a rapidly changing world, where states, institutions and individuals must work in concert to face transnational dangers and challenges. http://www.shorufatcenter.com/about/

[158] Al-Furqan Media Production Foundation. (2012) *Cover of a speech by Al-Adnani titled: Now now the fight has come*. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/nokbah/6775579709 [Taken on January 28, 2012]

Jihādist Media' with the logo of the *Al-Furqan* Media Institute. All materials are in Arabic.

Al-Furqan Media Institute produces videos and audio speeches. The institute's agents convert these speeches into ones printed in Arabic the majority of these printed speeches were translated into several languages, the most important one being English. Al-Amri explained that 'Most of ISIS's publications are distributed in Arabic. Occasionally, some of the publications are also distributed in other languages (English, French, Russian, etc.)', [159] while Kimmage shows that ISIS uses the *Furqan* Establishment to spread news of its activities and makes them available to users.[160]

Table 4.1, in appendix 2, shows the titles of all the speeches delivered by al-Adnani and provides information on the number of words, names of the producing establishment and the website, in addition to the date of publication of each speech.

Speeches are generally considered a remarkably effective source of data for discovering the power of rhetoric; this research therefore depends on analysing speeches. The rhetoric in the Islāmic era played a prominent role in defending the Islāmic call and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Speeches are still considered important tools; according to Hirschkind, they are a required component of Friday's communal prayer, and the sermon has continued to occupy a well-defined location conceptually and ritually within Islāmic practice. The sermon has its authoritative basis in the example set by the Prophet Muhammad's words, as with the other acts of worship prescribed within Islām, and what is collectively referred to by Muslims as the *Sunna*. The doctrinal requirements for the performance of sermons (*khutab*; sing. *khutba*) have remained relatively stable since the practice was instituted early

[159] Al-Amri, M. (2019) US Blacklists ISIS Media Wings. *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 23 March. P.2. Available at: https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/1646631/us-blacklists-isis-media-wings
[160] Kimmage, D. (2008) *The al-Qaeda media nexus: The Virtual Network Behind the Global Message*. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (RFE/RL, Inc). P.16

in Islām's history. [161] The *khutbah* is practised also before the *Eid*[162] prayer, *Hajj,*[163] and so on. There were many forms of rhetoric in the Islāmic era, and they varied according to the different religious events and purposes for which they were said.

4.3 Who is Abu Muhammad al-Adnani?



Image 4.2

According to the U.S. Department of State (2014),[164] Syrian national Taha Sobhi Fahla—known by his alias Abu Muhammad al-Adnani—was born in Banash (or 'Binnish'), Syria, in 1977. Al-Adnani (shown in image 4.2)[165] was the spokesman of ISIS, and the group's emir (leader) in Syria. Al-Adnani publicly proclaimed an Islāmic Caliphate on ISIS's behalf in June 2014, and named Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as its so-called 'caliph' (leader of the Caliphate).

Al-Adnani was believed to control nearly all of ISIS's operations in Syria. He was tasked with leading ISIS's *Emni* unit, which, according to Western intelligence documents, was behind nearly all the major attacks undertaken by ISIS such as those that occurred in Paris and Brussels. According to a former ISIS member, Harry Sarfo, al-Adnani was the head of ISIS's so-called 'special forces.' Sarfo told the *New York Times* in early August 2016, 'Everything goes back to Adnani.' Al-Adnani

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[161] Hirschkind, C. (2006) *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counter publics*. Columbia University Press. P.143

[162] Eīd al-Fiṭr or the "Festival of Breaking the Fast", is a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting (ṣawm), while Eīd al-Aḍḥā is the Festival of ending the journey of Hajj to Mecca.

[163] The Hajj, sometimes spelt Haj, is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims are expected to make at least once in their lifetime. The word Hajj is an Arabic word, meaning 'to intend a journey'. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam – the others are shahadah (declaration of faith); salat (daily prayer); zakat (giving of alms) and sawm (fasting in Ramadan). Available at: https://www.islamichelp.org.uk/what-we-do/seasonal/qurbani/what-is-hajj/#q1

[164] U.S. Department of State: DIPLOMACY IN ACTION. (2014) *Terrorist Designation of Abu Mohammed al-Adnani*. Available at: https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/230676.htm [Press Releases: 18 August 2014]

[165] Al-Ghad TV. (2016) *Al-Binali and Abu Luqman are the most prominent candidates to succeed Al-Adnani in "ISIS"*. Available at: https://www.alghad.tv/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/501-4.jpg [4 September 2016]

was known for his fiery rhetorical skills and for urging ISIS sympathisers in the West to carry out lone-wolf attacks. He was arrested by the international coalition forces in Iraq in May 2005 and spent six years in prison.[166]

ISIS's *Amaq* news agency reported that al-Adnani had been 'martyred' near Aleppo on 30 August 2016, while overseeing the operations to repel the military campaigns. The Pentagon confirmed that on 12 September 2016, a 'U.S. precision airstrike' had targeted and killed al-Adnani on 30 August 2016. [167]

Analysts suggested that before his own death, al-Adnani would lead ISIS in the case of al-Baghdadi's death. He was designated a terrorist by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Treasury Department, the United Nations, and the United Kingdom.[168]

4.4 Research Methods

This research is based on a combination of rhetorical analysis and audience analysis (focus groups). A thematic analysis approach was conducted to sort the large data sets (the speeches) into main themes, as that helped to extract the most insightful, rich and trustworthy research findings which would help to figure out the main aims of ISIS speeches.

Thematic analysis has been introduced as 'a qualitative descriptive method that provides the core skills for researchers to conduct many other forms of qualitative analysis'.[169] It has also been described as 'a method of analysing qualitative data that is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics,

[166] Counter Extremist Project (2020) *Abu Muhammad al-Adnani*. Available at: https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/abu-muhammad-al-adnani
[167] Martinez, L. (2016) ISIS Claims Top Spokesman Killed in Syria. *ABC NEWS*. Available at: https://abcnews.go.com/International/isis-claims-top-spokesman-killed-airstrike/story?id=41749973 [Broadcast on 30 August 2016]
[168] Counter Extremist Project (2020)
[169] Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H. and Bondas, T. (2013) Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nurs Health Sci,* 15(3), p400. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23480423/

ideas, and patterns, of meaning that come up repeatedly […]. There are various approaches to conducting thematic analysis, but the form that has been adopted in this study follows a six-step process: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report'.[170] According to Nowell et al. (2017), 'The six-phased method is actually an iterative and reflective process that develops over time and involves a constant moving back and forward between phases'.[171]

Thematic analysis assists with interpreting the data, and helps to sort large data sets into themes. The inductive approach was adopted for the thematic analysis which allows the data to determine the main theme; moreover, the 'inductive processes involve using evidence as the genesis of a conclusion'.[172] The six-step process shown below was considered the most appropriate method for this research.

Step 1: Familiarisation

A thorough reading was repeatedly conducted by completing an overview of all the collected data (the sermons) to become familiar with them. This process was followed by a detailed study of each sermon separately, to identify the main ideas in each one. These main ideas helped to document ideas concerning potential codes or themes.

Step 2: Coding

The sermons were scrutinised again, and the texts highlighted in different colours; each text highlighted in blue, for example, shared a set of related ideas (also highlighted in blue) which were given labels or codes. This highlighting system was applied to the text of every sermon, and new codes were added as the text was further examined. The related texts were placed into groups

[170] Caulfield, J. (2019) How to do thematic analysis. *Scribbr*. Available at: https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/ [Revised on August 14, 2020]
[171] Lorelli S. N., Jill M. N., Deborah E. W. and Nancy J. M. (2017) Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 16(1), p.4. Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1609406917733847
[172] Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2003), P.14

identified by a code. These codes helped to gain a condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that frequently appeared throughout the data.

Step 3: Searching for themes

Themes were identified through patterns emerging from the codes that were obtained in the previous step. The related codes were then gathered up and combined in groups to create three main themes as shown in the following table (4.2).

Themes	Codes
The good 'Us' camp versus the evil 'Them' camp	– Defining 'Us' – Defining 'Them' – Excluding the Shi'ites – *Allah* is responsible for classifying people as disbelievers
Jihād as an inevitable issue	– Motivating *jihād* – Justifications for *jihad* – *Allah* is responsible for killings
The indicators of the utopian city in the legendary Caliphate	– Establishing the Caliphate and implementing Sharīʿa – The supremacy of Caliphate above all other ruling systems – The dominance of Sharīʿa over man-made laws – Allegiance as an alternative to elections – The mythological state derives its power from God – ISIS leaders as absolute sanctification and perfection – The Caliphate sees fighters as ideal soldiers or the selected few – The Caliphate sees society as an ideal society – Approaching the ideology of ISIS as a divine law or Sharīʿa

Table 4.2

Step 4: Reviewing themes

The data set was visited many times, and the resulting themes were compared with the data to make sure that these themes were an accurate representation of the aims of these speeches. During this

process, the themes were separated and combined, and some were discarded. Changes were made many times to obtain the most useful and accurate themes.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

The final list reflected a set of themes which were defined, and a succinct and easily understandable name was created for each theme to formulate exactly what each one meant.

Step 6: Producing the report

The thematic analyses of these data (ISIS's speeches) were discussed with the supervisor. The main ideas were extracted from all the speeches, codified, and then grouped into major themes.

A further discussion followed on the possible options for compiling and arranging these themes and topics in the best way; after several attempts, the relevant codes were grouped into themes under appropriate labels to express each in the most appropriate way. The generated codes which formed the themes of this study were agreed, and the research questions were revisited to assure that this thematic analysis helped in sorting, organising, and describing the themes found within a data set.

King argues that 'if researchers simply report the codes and themes that appeared in the transcripts, the results will only offer a flat descriptive account with very little depth, doing little justice to the richness of the data'.[173] According to King's argument, this thematic analysis was a foundational method for the rhetorical analysis which has been applied throughout this study. Boyatzis contends that 'because thematic analysis is a process used by many qualitative methods, it is not a separate method, rather something to be used to assist researchers in analysis'.[174]

Reliance was placed on the results of the thematic analysis to conduct a rhetorical analysis of ISIS sermons. Following the analysis of the complete data, sample citations were chosen from each theme

[173] King, N. (2004) Using templates in the thematic analysis of text. In: Brooks, J., Mccluskey, S., Turley, E. and N. King, eds. *The Utility of Template Analysis in Qualitative Psychology Research*. London: Sage, pp. 207-211
[174] Boyatzis, R. (1998) *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

in the analysis chapter. The aim of conducting the rhetorical analysis was to articulate what each theme meant, as well as the assumptions and implications that underpin each of them.

4.5 Rhetoric as ideology

The rhetorical analysis 'considers all elements of the rhetorical situation; the audience, purpose, medium and context within which a communication was generated and delivered in order to make an argument about that communication'.[175] Arabic rhetoric scholars share this definition in that it is "conducted at three different levels of analysis: word level, sentence level and text level'.[176] According to Høigilt, it should be noted that rhetorical analysis was chosen over discourse analysis, 'since the latter has come to be used for such a sprawling and heterogeneous array of approaches to language'[177] and because this study intends to analyse the rhetorical appeal of ISIS's ideology. Considering the centrality of the rhetoric in the present study, insights from the rhetorical analysis of the speeches will be used to show their relationship with ISIS's ideology. Ideology here is understood as a concept that is being 'constructed by a biased selection of basic social values and organised by group self-schemata in which categories, such as identity, task, goal, norms, position and resources play an important role'.[178] According to van Dijk, 'Ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication',[179] therefore, to understand the ideological meanings of any group's discourse, attention needs to be paid to the characteristics of the discourse which expresses that group's beliefs, orientations, and characteristics.

[175] Howe Center for Writing Excellence (2020) Rhetorical Analysis. *Miami University*. Available at: https://miamioh.edu/hcwe/handouts/rhetorical-analyses/index.html
[176] Abdul-Raof, H. (2006), p.272
[177] Høigilt, J. (2011), p.17
[178] Van Dijk, T. A. (1995) *Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis. Language and peace.* 1st edn. London: Routledge. P.32
[179] ibid. P.17

Drawing on rhetorical analysis, the study has explored the 'general pattern of ideological control of discourse, viz., a positive self-presentation of the ingroup and a negative other-presentation of the outgroup'.[180]

Conducting the thematic analysis repeatedly, helped to gain a greater understanding of the subject. Themes resulting from this analysis revealed aspects of **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**. One can make use of these three aspects in public speech to appeal to audiences: **ethos** reflects the characters of the speakers, and how they establish their authority; **pathos** appeals to the emotions of the receivers; and **logos** presents the logical arguments. These three aspects can overlap, as will be demonstrated later in the analysis. An elaboration of these aspects shows how the rhetorical tropes in each of them overlap across the themes to accentuate the desired meaning behind ISIS's communication.

A brief discussion follows of each rhetorical aspect linking it to one or more of the above themes.

The first theme entitled '*The camp of good (we) versus the camp of evil (them*)', shows that al-Adnani relied substantially on **ethos** to persuade his audience about his claims. The analysis shows that al-Adnani, as a spokesman for ISIS, delivered his speeches after the name of his organisation, and because of that, he did not use the 'first person' pronoun (I) at all; he used the first person plural pronoun (We) instead. He therefore united himself with ISIS while talking on their behalf; at the same time, he invites the audience to become part of 'Us'. The **ethos** aspect regarding ISIS as a group introduces itself as a group of believers aiming to rescue Islām and Muslims, taking into consideration that the group members share many features such dress code, the use of standard modern Arabic (SMA) or *Fuṣḥā,* historical names and titles which they borrowed from the Caliphate era, and the terms they use, which all represent the early era of Islām. As a writer and speaker for ISIS, al-Adnani uses rhetorical methods and tools in a professional manner. This process indicates several things: his mastery of the Arabic language; his extensive knowledge of historical events; his

[180] ibid. P.26

significant knowledge of the Islāmic religion; and his profound awareness of Arab and Islāmic culture as an individual member belonging to it; all these characteristics of ISIS members, including al-Adnani, also contribute to both ISIS's and al-Adnani's **ethos**.

The second theme entitled '*Jihād as an inevitable issue*', shows al-Adnani relied considerably on **pathos** to convince his audience regarding his claims. The analysis of this theme shows how al-Adnani employed rhetorical tools and strategies to appeal to his audience by creating or reinforcing certain emotions such as enticement, intimidation, frustration, a sense of responsibility, shame, and so on. The study also clarifies the method of using verses from the *Qur'ān* and extracts from the *Hadīth*. These citations can be considered a way of exploiting **pathos** in the process of persuading the audience, because 'the most persuasive rhetorical methods used in Arabic speech are quoting verses from the *Qur'ān* or texts of the Prophet or citing poetry. Using one verse of the *Qur'ān* is more persuasive than any definitive books or evidence. Quoting poetry is also considered an important [persuadive] method in Arab rhetoric'.[181]

The third aspect of **logos** is clearly shown through the theme entitled '*The manifestations of the utopian city in the legendary Caliphate*'. The analysis determines how al-Adnani used rhetorical tools and strategies to show the reasonability of his claims; how he supported these claims; and how he organised the codes of the theme together to establish ISIS's authenticity and authority, while moving in space and time by invoking Arab-Islāmic folktales and myths.

A brief discussion follows of specific rhetorical tropes used as examples of ISIS's communicative strategies, while focusing on their way of creating metaphorical borders between Muslims and non-Muslims, including the different Islāmic sects.

[181] Raja Allah al Silmi, A. (2017) Rhetoric of argumenta discourse in artistic prose. Rhetoric in the Umayyad era as a model. *Al'athar Magazine*, 29 December, pp.91-104

4.6 Rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion

Van Dijk asserts, 'the ideologies of speakers or writers may be "uncovered" by close reading, understanding or systematic analysis, if language users explicitly or unwittingly "express" their ideologies through language and communication'.[182] To reveal the way in which al-Adnani applies the inclusion and exclusion method within his speeches, it is necessary to comprehend how his textual strategies contribute to positioning ISIS within the 'good' people's group (in-group), and to positioning others within the group of 'bad' people (or out-groups); each group wants to be seen and evaluated in a 'good' way: 'the ideological discourse of groups will typically focus on the (good) goals of their activities'.[183] Groups accordingly represent the relationship 'between themselves and the Others essentially in terms of us versus them, in which we are associated with positive properties and they are associated with bad properties',[184] each terrorist group seeks to present itself as an ideal group in the pursuit of benevolent goals. These groups consequently work to express and reproduce their ideologies by means of rhetoric as a method of communication through which they seek to convince the recipients of their ideas, beliefs, and (decent) goals.

The analysis of an ideological rhetoric that is structured by group schema categories deals with questions concerning identity, membership, and the activities of the group. The analysis also examines discourses that generally function as modes of self-defence, legitimation or explanation, or that have other self-serving functions, norms, and value descriptions.

Terms and concepts are also central to the inclusion and exclusion method. Terms that represent 'Us' create feelings of intimacy which evoke mutual sympathy between the speaker and the receivers, while the terms that represent 'Them' or the out-groups, create negative feelings. Terms that represent 'Us' and 'Them' pronouns through ISIS's speeches are described in Table 4.3 below.

[182] Van Dijk, T. A. (1995), p. 135
[183] ibid. p. 148
[184] Van Dijk, T. A. (1995), P.18

Terms that represent 'Us' and 'Them' in ISIS's speeches			
Us/in-group Terms	**Frequency**	**Them/out-group Terms**	**Frequency**
Believers	109	Infidels	76
The few selected	6	The traitors	18
Mujahideen	319	Hypocrites	22
Immigrants	38	Tyrants	63
Supporters	28	The Rejectionists	189
Soldiers of the Islāmic State	46	The Crusaders	49
Sunni	173	Shi'ites	22
Caliphs	34	Apostates	84

Table 4.3: terms represented in ISIS speeches

The analysis also reveals the importance of the use of pronouns. Pronouns are 'a central variable for analysing the ways in which the writers create roles for and relationships between themselves and the readers'. [185] The analysis illustrates how al-Adnani employs the pronouns in his speeches.

4.7 Other important rhetorical tools

To learn what goals al-Adnani seeks to achieve by using Rhetorical Questions repeatedly throughout his speeches, this study shows the method of using these sorts of questions. These questions 'have the effect of directly challenging the reader by asking, 'Are you with me or against me?'[186] It is a different type of question, however, whose answer is self-evident. A rhetorical question is 'a mode of semantic embellishment in which the communicator asks a question to which he or she is not expecting an answer'.[187] A rhetorical question may have an obvious answer, but the questioner asks it to emphasis the point he or she is trying to make. This device is also employed to promote a

[185] Høigilt, J. (2011), P.19
[186] ibid. P.122
[187] Abdul-Raof, H. (2006), p.256

particular concept that is not expected to be answered, or where the answer may be clear or presented immediately by the questioner.[188] The analysis will shed light on the role of rhetorical questions in achieving al-Adnani's goals.

Hyperbole is another rhetorical tool on which al-Adnani depends. The aim is to 'describe the state of someone or something in an exaggerated manner that exceeds the customary'.[189] This study also shows a specific interest in **Metaphors** which are 'regarded as the peak of figurative skills in spoken or written discourse'.[190] A further important tool used by al-Adnani is the **Simile** which aims to 'clarify an opinion or a feeling, to bring two significations close to each other, and to compare a given entity with another in praise, dispraise, ornamentation or repugnance'.[191] Another significant approach for terrorists is to establish **identification** with audiences by giving them information within a familiar context of meaning, not only to justify violence, but also to attract and engage certain audiences. All these tools and approaches have been powerfully used within al-Adnani's speeches.

The ultimate goal of these speeches is to appeal to the audience. The rhetorical analysis is therefore supplemented with focus group's analysis to discover the youth's motivations, needs, beliefs, emotions, and problems, and how they understand and interpret speakers' messages. Extremist rhetoric should be examined as an attempt at persuasive communication.

4.8 Focus groups and sampling

A rhetorical analysis is an examination of how a text persuades people to consider its point of view; it focuses on how it can 'frame an issue, establish its stakes, make a particular claim, support it, and persuade the audience to accept the claim. It is not an analysis of what a text says but of what

[188]Black, E. (1992) *Rhetorical questions: Studies of public discourse*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 1
[189] Abdul-Raof, H. (2006), P.252
[190] Abdul-Raof, H. (2006), P.218
[191] ibid. P.198

strategies it uses to communicate effectively'.[192] The analysis begins with what the text says, but it also seeks to show how the text persuades recipients of its position.

According to Høigilt, 'persuasion refers to the techniques that are employed to convince readers of the imaginative truth and emotional significance of a text'.[193] Consequently this study considers to what extent al-Adnani mastered employing the rhetorical tools to present his position in a persuasive way. His speeches targeted a wide range of audiences of different ages. This study is interested in evaluating the congruence between concepts propagated in ISIS's discourse and the mainstream discourse taking university students as a case study of audience in Jordan.

Matusitz defines the audience as 'a group of people who participate in an event, either passively […] or actively […]. Whether it is passive or active, the audience is the interpretive community, reacting or responding to a message'.[194] This definition can be applied to the university students to examine whether they participate passively or actively in responding to certain extremist ideas that they may exposed to as direct audience to several mainstream discourses which converge to a certain degree with the discourse of ISIS.

Depending on the fact that the speaker addresses the audience with the aim of influencing their actions and (or) beliefs, the rhetorical analysis is considered as a form of close reading which 'employs the principles of rhetoric to examine the interactions between a text, an author and an audience', [195] to explain how the text may have a certain effect on the audience, speakers need to provide arguments and reasons to motivate the audience to adopt a certain point of view or take a certain action.[196] This rhetorical analysis is therefore supplemented with the focus group analysis.

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[192] Willihnganz, J. G. (2008) The Rhetorical Analysis. *Stanford University*. Available at: https://web.stanford.edu/~jonahw/PWR1/RhetoricalAnalysis.html [Coursework October 10]
[193] Høigilt, J. (2011), P.12
[194] Matusitz, J. (2013), P.77
[195] Nordquist, R. (2019) Rhetorical Analysis Definition and Examples. *ThoughtCo*. Available at: https://www.thoughtco.com/rhetorical-analysis-1691916 [Updated July 15, 2019]
[196] Keith, W. M. and Lundberg, C. O. (2008), P.36

Sampling method: This study depends on purposive sampling which is suitable for this qualitative study that focuses on understanding students' interpretations of some religious concepts. The purposive sampling technique is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.[197] It is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources.[198]

Focus groups' participants included a purposive sample of Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian students from universities and youth institutions. The students had been chosen deliberately because they met the criteria of age, gender, nationality, and they are all Muslims who are willing to participate, and they have the ability to communicate opinions in the relevant research.

The focus on university students is justified by the sensitivity of the subject of this research, and so it was preferable to conduct the discussion with educated groups, not to mention the importance of the youth category in the Arab countries in general and Jordan. This was shown in several studies reviewed in chapter two which indicated that the Arab region has the highest percentage of youth in the world and emphasized the steady increase in the number of challenges and obstacles they face such as unemployment, poor social, political and educational conditions, poverty and lack of democracy, in addition to the growing influence of religious discourse in the region and the need to reform and develop religious institutions. The surveys conducted in Jordan demonstrate alarming average percentage of the prevalence of radical beliefs among university students[199], they also show that religious attitudes have a significant impact on the development of radical behaviour and actions. The enthusiasm, sensitivity and fragility of youth may contribute to increasing their sense of frustration in light of the continued inability of governments to find solutions to

[197] Bernard, H. R. (2002). Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
[198] Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
[199] Diab M. Al-Badayneh, Rami A. Al-Assasfeh, Nisreen A. Al-Bhri. (2016) Social Causes of Arab Youth Radicalizing. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, Vol. 6, No. 12, 743-756. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312197008_Social_Causes_of_Arab_Youth_Radicalization

their problems. Therefore, they may pose a security threat to their countries instead of contributing effectively to the development process and these factors may contribute to creating extremism among them.

As such, it is imperative to understand the congruence, if any, between extremist narratives and youth's religious attitudes and beliefs in order to limit its expanding and support the developing of an appropriate counter narrative.

A focus group method was used to reach deeper insights into the minds of university students, to explore their attitudes and understandings of certain religious concepts and what motivate them to embrace specific beliefs, feelings, meanings, interpretations of some religious concepts and tendencies. The focus group analysis aims to fill the gap in current research which tends to focus on policymakers and (or) terrorists' communication strategies, while overlooking the public attitude to terrorist communication.[200] To run successful focus groups, the following steps were taken:

Planning and preparing for conducting focus groups: My supervisor and I agreed that we should conduct four focus groups, each one consisting of 4-8 participants aiming to get in-depth answers about the sensitive and controversial theme of the study.

The themes of the focus group dialogue were extracted from the outputs of the rhetorical analysis. Questions were planned regarding these themes, such as 'Us' and 'Them', *jihād* and martyrdom, and the Caliphate State. Clear, open-ended questions were developed to encourage exploration and discovering how the students felt about certain issues. Each focus group was planned to last for around two hours.

The choice of conducting the interviews on campus was to avoid meetings in private places (such as homes) or unfamiliar spaces (such as clubs) where participants may not feel at ease. Campuses, at least in Jordan, provide a natural space for discussion including political debates.

[200] I have also found some inspiration in a previous British research project which explored public attitudes to terrorism (http://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/7045/mrdoc/pdf/7045uguide.pdf

It was not possible to personally form these groups because of the limitations of Covid-19. The help of the deans of four colleges, and the director of a government youth institution, were sought to form these groups, considering the safety procedures that must be followed due to the pandemic.

To obtain the approval of the heads of departments, a meeting was arranged with each of them in person, to explain the importance of conducting face-to-face interviews with the students. Following the initial approval from the deans, the official emails[201] were sent to provide the necessary information regarding this thesis, and to explain in detail the intended methods that would be used to conduct these interviews. A full description of the project was provided, including- a predetermined length of time required, the main topic, and clear terms in relation to confidentiality. A pledge was made to implement the safety procedures that must be followed due to Covid-19.

Finding the right participants: Deans in the selected universities identified and recruited participants based on my briefing to identify youth representing different Arab nationalities in Jordan. It is worth noting that all students are Muslims and are interested in participating in the study.

Running the focus group: Discussions were conducted face-to-face with four selected focus groups (aged 18 - 24) residing in Jordan, including Syrian, Palestinian, and Jordanian nationals; each group consisted of six to eight students; in total, discissions were conducted with 24 students: 11 males and 13 females. The university respondents represented eight Jordanians, 12 Palestinians, and four Syrians.

The necessary measures were taken to ensure safe environment considering covid-19. The meetings were held in large, well-ventilated halls. Initially, I welcomed the students, then I introduced myself and presented my project. After that, each student was provided with the information sheet and the consent form to sign[202], before making their voluntary decision whether to take part in the project. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the interview, leave out any questions that made them feel uncomfortable, as well as their right to withdraw from the project - one month after the data collection -

[201] *See Appendix 4 for more details about the focus groups*
[202] *See Appendix 4 for more details about the focus groups*

without giving a reason. Anonymity of contributors was strongly emphasised. Next, I established a series of ground rules for the discussion. Trying to make them feel comfortable, I started an ice-breaking discussion then I asked them to introduce themselves. Interviews were audio-recorded, after gaining the consent of the students to ensure obtaining the required data.

When I felt that they are comfortable I started the discussion. I did not let the discussion stop as I kept asking new questions or follow up questions, and I made sure that every person had a chance to be heard. My main role was to enable students to share their views and feelings about the raised issues. I closed the discussions by thanking all the students for their kindness to accept the participation in this study.

Analysis of focus groups: All focus groups (in Arabic) were personally transcribed. Conducting the focus groups and transcribing the recorded personally helped me to become thoroughly familiar with the data and to spend time to evaluate the whole process in addition to rereading the transcription many times before starting the coding and developing categories stage.

To sort the large volume of data, the entire discussions were reviewed, notes were taken, and then the data were revisited many times to extract and highlight similar answers (codes). The emerging themes were colour-coded and linked the to the themes emerging from the rhetorical analysis. All the students' answers have been listed in tables.[203] Reliance which lay heavily on the carefully prepared questions before conducting the meetings, helped to organise the data more easily within a fair representation of each theme – 'Us' (Believers) versus 'Them' (Disbelievers), *jihād*, and the Caliphate. The results of this process are shown in Table 4.4 below.

[203] *See Appendix 5 for the focus groups guide.*

Themes	Questions
'Us' (Believers) versus 'Them' (Disbelievers)	– For you, who is the believer? – Who is the infidel? – How can you distinguish between them? – If you consider that the belief of others is wrong, would you like to instruct them? If yes, why? – Can you distinguish between the believing group and the disbelieving one? How?
Jihād	– What is the definition of *jihād* from your point of view? – What is the martyrdom/suicide operation? – Do you carry out what you call a martyrdom operation? Justify your answer whether it is yes or no.
The Caliphate and Sharīʿa	– What is your perception of the ideal state? – Is the Caliphate considered a model for this state? – Do you care about the application of Sharīʿa?

Table 4.4: interview questionnaire

During the analysis of data, special attention was paid to the students' definitions, trends, and acceptance of concepts like *jihād* or martyrdom. Three views were distinguished: immoderate, moderate, and in-between. The related answers were collated into separate groups, and each group given a code to describe its content. The same technique was applied to the analysis of other themes such as the student's perception of the Caliphate. Attention was also paid to the answers to questions relating to Friday sermons, because these answers would contribute to corroborating the argument regarding the impact of mainstream rhetoric (such as religious sermons) on the students.

Analysis: this linked back to research questions, and a thematic analysis was used for the data collected from the focus groups, following the same themes explored in the analysis of ISIS's speeches, as this would provide an in-depth understanding of students' acceptance, awareness, and interpretation of the religious messages to which they are exposed from multiple sources. Reading through all the extracts relating to the codes allowed an exploration of whether they shared similar understanding of key concepts such as *jihād* and martyrdom. Themes, codes, and extracts were revisited many times to make sure that all relevant data fit neatly into the selected themes. The selected excerpts had been translated into English and incorporated into the final analysis to substantiate the arguments.

The focus group analysis is presented in chapters eight and nine.

4.9 Ethical considerations

The project touches on sensitive issues such as Islām and terrorism, but it does not seek to elicit material from people working with these themes such as security officers, and only draws on the material which has been voluntarily published and distributed in the public domain.

The aim was to elicit answers regarding the participants' views concerning subjects such as in-group, out-groups, *jihād*, martyrdom, the Caliphate State, and Sharīʿa. The discussion was therefore broad, and not about specific speeches or figures within ISIS.

The key ethical concern here was anonymity, and, although participants were ensured of it to allow participants the space to talk freely about their views without feeling restricted in any way. The participants were all presented anonymously, and this anonymity was preserved throughout the project. Consent was not treated as a one-off event where participants just sign a piece of paper, but interactions were observed within each group, to check that the informants were comfortable with their discussions. Close observation of the flow of discussion was constantly made within each group so that no single member of the group dominated the discussion or imposed his or her own views on others.

4.10 Summary

The methodology selected for this project has been explained. The primary data have been identified, and elaboration of the chosen methods of rhetorical analysis and focus groups were made. This research focuses on an interpretive paradigm in that it is based on exploring how language is encoded (by extremists) and decoded (by selected audiences).

The chapter elaborated on the tools that the rhetorical analysis emphasis on like the aspects of **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**, inclusion/exclusion method, terms, pronouns, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, and the identification process.

A focus group and sampling method have also been added to clarify how the focus groups were conducted, how the sampling process took place, and why the university student category was chosen for this study.

The process of extracting themes from the chosen speeches, and the plan to expand on the rhetorical analysis of each theme have been demonstrated. The thematic analysis explained in this chapter, highlighted three main themes: The good 'Us' camp versus the evil 'Them' camp; *jihād* as an inevitable issue; and the manifestations of the utopian city in the legendary Caliphate.

The following three chapters (Five, Six and Seven) demonstrate the rhetorical analysis of each one of these three themes. This process shows how the overall narrative draws on ISIS's ideology as communicated through its spokesman's sermons.

Chapter Five

The good 'Us' camp versus the evil 'Them' camp

5.1. Introduction

Al-Adnani exploits the three persuasive aspects; **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos** to provide his rhetorical strategies. Although these aspects act as three sides of a coherent triangle that cannot be separated during the analysis process, one aspect can be more prominent than others or used extensively by al-Adnani as this and the subsequent two chapters will demonstrate. For instance, the analysis in this chapter demonstrates the aspect of **ethos** and how it has been used by al-Adnani to bestow certain traits on ISIS and himself, whereas he uses on the aspect of **pathos** to alienate supporters from their societies and to glorify his own followers. The analysis in this chapter also reveals several tools of persuasion such as the inclusion/exclusion rhetoric, and it presents examples demonstrating the use of certain nouns (terms); pronouns; metaphors; similes; hyperbole; rhetorical questions; and repetition.

This chapter reveals al-Adnani's strategies in reconfiguring the concepts of right (good) and wrong (evil). It also shows how these strategies contribute to positioning ISIS within the group of 'good' people, the 'in-group', whilst positioning others within the group of 'bad' people, the 'out-group'.

5.2 Manifestations of ethos in defining 'Us'

ISIS introduces itself as a group of believers aiming to rescue Islām and Muslims. Al-Adnani evidently make use of the **ethos** aspect to emphasise certain qualities to ISIS members. He uses certain terms with connotations that create positive feelings, sympathy, and acceptance towards ISIS members. The analysis of this code shows how he exploits such terms to establish authority and authenticity to ISIS. The following chart (5.1) shows Terms that represent 'Us' in ISIS speeches.

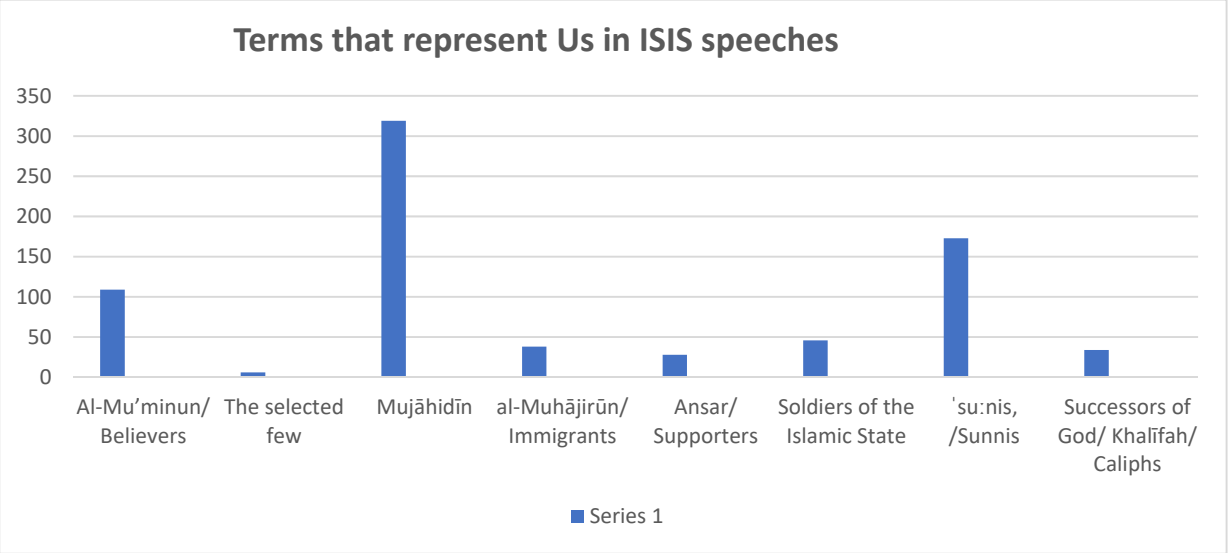


Figure 5.1: Terms representing 'Us' in ISIS speeches – see also Appendix 3.

The text below, for instance, demonstrates how al-Adnani depends on **ethos** by using the terms *Mujāhidīn* and the selected few to include ISIS members in the ingroup, while he uses the term Tyrants to exclude ISIS enemies, and place them in the out-group.

> The *Mujāhidīn* are victorious by using the sword, argument and proof. […]. Here are the selected few the armies and countries of the world fight against, but who can withstand them. […]. The tyrants were unable to eliminate […] them.[204]

The term *Mujāhidīn* is one of the most important terms that al-Adnani uses to describe ISIS fighters; furthermore, it has the highest frequency - 319 times. This term assists him in presenting his fighters as heroes, saviours, and true believers in God. He legitimises their actions in doing so, and gives them an aura of respect, authenticity and authority. Calling fighters *Mujāhidīn* gives ISIS the opportunity to hide all its operations behind the veil of *jihād* rather than classifying most of these operations as murder. Al-Adnani cites the *Qur'ān* implicitly by using the term *'The selected few'*. He thus attaches a mythical image to these *Mujāhidīn*, as they are the few soldiers who fight the

[204]Sermon No.25

armies of the world, on behalf of all (Sunni) Muslims; as for the ability to gain victory and be steadfast, it is a promise from God who preached victory to the believers against the *Tyrants* who represent the out-group.

Al-Adnani emphasises the terms that refer to the companions of the Prophet, thereby giving ISIS members authenticity and authority. The label '*al-Muhājirūn'* was given to all fighters who joined the ranks of ISIS from around the world, while '*Ansār'* was given to everyone who supported the ISIS project. The use of the terms *al-Muhājirūn*[205] *(Immigrants)* and *Ansār*[206] *(Supporters)* provides further examples of how al-Adnani counts on the aspect of **ethos** to define the identity of the 'in-group'. The following sentence illustrates the way in which al-Adnani uses these terms to portray ISIS fighters and their Supporters: 'Go with *al-Muhājirūn*, O *Ansār***,** because they keep everywhere they fight safe'.[207]

These two terms have religious and historical connotations in the minds of Muslims. Al-Adnani attempts to further emphasise ISIS's authenticity and authority by using them, as well as conflating the authority of terms or labels with religious connotations from *Qur'ānic* citations with his authority as ISIS spokesman. He moves between the past (the early Islāmic era) and the present, in that he looks backwards to find solutions to contemporary problems, thereby ruling out the use of modern logic and secular solutions as an option.

A different term used to establish the identity of the in-group is *'Soldiers of the Islāmic State',* which was used 46 times in the 25 speeches to describe ISIS fighters.

> As for you, the soldiers of the Islāmic State in Iraq and the Levant ... go ahead with firmness and certainty, for you, by God, are following the revealed truth.[208]

[205] Al Muhajirun or the companions of the Prophet who migrated with him from Mecca to Medina to support Islam at the beginning of the call to Islam.
[206]Alansar or the people of Medina, received the Prophet's companions and supported and shared everything they owned with them.
[207]Sermon No.12
[208]Sermon No.13

Identifying ISIS fighters as *Soldiers of the Islāmic State* suggests that they are not extremists but soldiers, heroes, and saviours who sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the dream or the myth of a Caliphate in which justice, mercy, reassurance, and safety will be achieved as a result; they are established as a replacement for (and on par with) national armies. The term also grants these fighters legitimacy, and portrays them as champions who deserve the people's support.

Sunnis is another significant term with a remarkably high frequency - 173 times - which al-Adnani employs to emphasise the idea of the in-group versus the out-group.

> The war of the *Sunnis* with the *Rāfiḍah* is a sacred, religious and ideological war. A war of faith against unbelief, a war of polytheism against monotheism, which is unavoidable and inescapable.[209]

The inclusion/exclusion method which is fully evident in the above text reveals the aspect of **ethos**. Al-Adnani presents the war on the *Rāfiḍah (*Shi'ites) as a religious war between two completely opposite camps: one of which represents absolute faith and monotheism; the other represents absolute disbelief and polytheism. He consequently calls for war against the Shi'ites, and declares it an absolute necessity that must not be abandoned.

The analysis also reveals how al-Adnani depicts ISIS members as *Successors of God* on Earth; this term occurs on 34 occasions in the 25 speeches. To reinforce this concept, he quotes a verse from the *Qur'ān* explaining that God promised to grant land to believers who perform righteous deeds and to make them His *Successors*.

> *Allah* has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will make them successors on earth, as He made those before them successors [*Light* - an-Nur:55].[210]

Al-Adnani claims that the only righteous believers are ISIS members, so they deserve to be God's successors on Earth. He excludes all other groups on the grounds that they are non-believers. This

[209]Sermon No.3
[210]Sermon No.1

citation from the *Qur'ān* gives al-Adnani the chance to bestow an aura of authenticity (**ethos**) on his words as if they were a manifestation of God's words which targets minds (**logos**) and emotions (**pathos**) at the same time.

This idea of succession appears frequently in al-Adnani's speeches. He relies on **logos** by presenting reasons to justify the use of oppression to force people to carry out certain commands, on the pretext that they are the commands of God that the Sharīʿa includes. He maintains that if people follow God's rules, they will be happy and content in this world and the hereafter. He also claims that forcing people to implement these commands is not only the essence of the succession, and the reason why God sent messengers and holy books, but also the main reason for *jihād*.

> That is the truth of the succession [Caliphate], for the sake of which God created us. It is not merely the rule, subjugation, and conquest, but rather […] the exploitation of all that. And its [Caliphate] use: to force everyone to act as required by Sharīʿa to achieve their eschatological and worldly interests, which can only be achieved by implementing the command of God and by establishing his religion and adherence to Sharīʿa. The succession within this fact [implementing Sharīʿa] is the goal for which God sent His messengers, revealed His books and commanded us to carry swords for *jihād*.[211]

Al-Adnani highlights the same idea in different ways throughout the same sermon. He quotes a citation from the *Qur'ān*, for instance: 'When your Lord said to the angels, "I am placing a successor on earth"'.[212]

The next example confirms how al-Adnani portrays ISIS as being the only group of believers that defends the religion of God and the nation of Islām, so it is deserving of God's promise of victory and strength. He highlights the role of God in achieving the succession, as He promised the believers victory, sovereignty, pride, and succession.

[211]Sermon No. 19
[212]Sermon No. 19

> Know that *we* are fighting for a religion that God has promised to support, and a nation to which God has granted glory, elevation and sovereignty, and also that He promised the nation succession and empowerment.[213]

5.3 Manifestations of ethos in defining 'Them'

Al-Adnani benefits from the aspect of **ethos** to emphasise certain qualities to ISIS members by demeaning their enemies and portraying them as a group of infidels seeking to harm Islām and Muslims. Therefore, he uses terms that create negative feelings, disputes, and rejection with regard to anyone who does not support ISIS. The following chart shows terms that represent 'Them' in ISIS speeches.

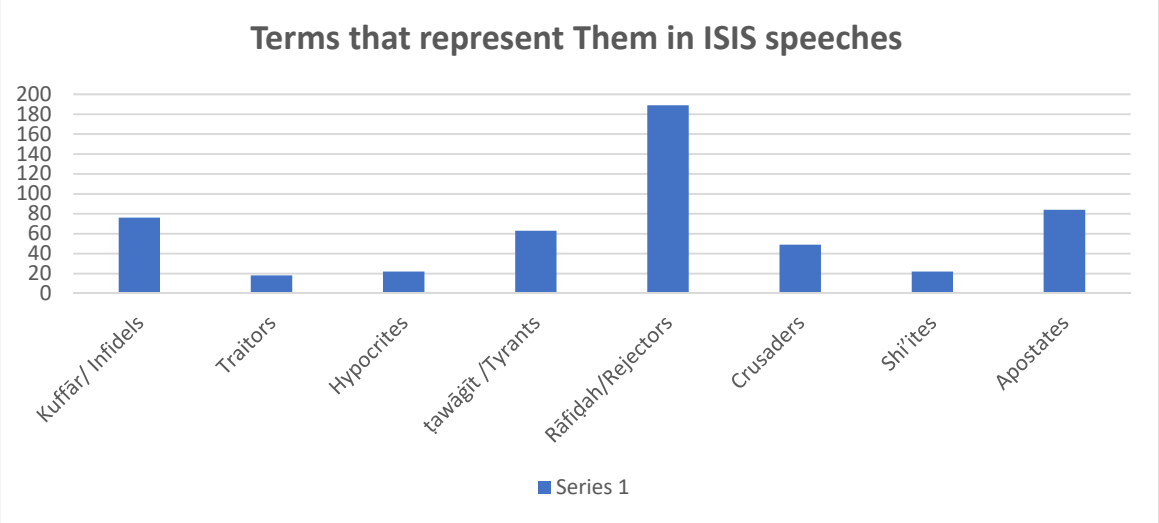


Figure 5.2: Terms representing 'Them' in ISIS speeches – see also Appendix 3.

Al-Adnani claims that all other groups ('Them') are infidels. He therefore excludes all those who do not support or belong to ISIS, and those who do not consider ISIS as the only group that represents the ultimate truth. People outside this group are therefore described as 'others, them, the out-group'. The following examples demonstrate how al-Adnani depends on the aspect of **ethos** to glorify the

[213]Sermon No. 19

members of ISIS by demeaning their enemies. He uses the terms *Infidels, Traitors, Hypocrites, Tyrants, Rāfiḍah, Crusaders, Shi'ites* and *Apostates* to cement his inclusion/exclusion method.

Al-Adnani aims to legitimise killing and portraying it as a war between right and wrong, claiming that all others are infidels (non-believers).

> Come to fight the *infidels* and *atheists* of your tribe to prove that our war is a doctrine war, a war of faith against infidelity, not a war of nationalism nor patriotism.[214]

Al-Adnani introduces reasons (**logos**) for war in the above example, he invites people to fight their fellow countrymen and families. To justify and legitimise this fight, he claims that it is a war of faith that takes place between two parties, one of which represents faith and absolute truth, while the other represents infidelity, atheism, and absolute falsehood.

Al-Adnani also accuses official or state clerics of infidelity, and dismisses their *fatāwā* which challenge those issued by ISIS.

> The *fatāwā* the bad scholars, preachers and sheikhs of the dinar and the dollar vomit up are false; the association of magicians, *hypocrites* and great *traitors* are invalid. Their masters will not help them […], God willing, […] they will fail.[215]

Al-Adnani classifies these clerics as *hypocrites* and *traitors* to the rulers of Arab countries. He also says that their *fatāwā* do not follow Sharīʿa; therefore, they must be excluded, and their *fatāwā* must be rejected.

Included in the infidel groups that ISIS fought are the rulers and armies of several Arab countries.

> The armies of *tyrants* from the rulers of Muslim lands are generally the armies of apostasy and non-belief. Nowadays, it can be said that these are *infidels, apostates* and deviants. They must be fought, particularly the Egyptian army, as stated in the religion of God [Islām] and the legal evidence from

[214]Sermon No. 22
[215]Sermon No. 25

> the *Qur'ān*, [the Prophet's] *Sunnah*, and the words of the distinguished and respected scholars [any scholar who agree with ISIS's vision].[216]

Using the term *tyrants* frequently, 63 times, to describe Arab rulers, allows al-Adnani to exclude these rulers and categorise them as 'Others' (Them), those who are the *infidels* and who must be fought because they do not follow Sharīʿa. Therefore, he describes the Arab armies that submit to these rulers as *apostate* armies. This description shows how al-Adnani uses the aspects of **ethos**; he does not only categorise these armies as 'Others' ('Them') but also lends legitimacy to the fight against them and bestow authority and authenticity to ISIS members.

Al-Adnani variously refers to the Shi'ites as '*Rāfiḍah'*,[217] the Magicians,[218] the *Safavids*,[219] in order to accuse them of polytheism. It thus becomes easier for al-Adnani to place more groups in the category of 'Others' or 'Them' in order to justify killing them.

> Your leaders equate you with the *Rāfiḍah* who deify and worship Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family). We, the sons of the State of Islām, pledge to God and the nation that the Iranian *Safavid Rāfiḍah* will only pass over our dead bodies.[220]

This example shows that al-Adnani categorically refuses to equate Sunnis with Shi'ites, as he claims that the Sunnis are representative of the truth and monotheism, while the Shi'ites represent falsehood and polytheism. He uses these terms frequently; for example, the term '*Rāfiḍah'* 189 times in the 25 speeches, which is the second-most commonly used term which has emerged from the analysis.

The analysis also shows how the use of pronouns contributes to the inclusion/exclusion method.

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[216]Sermon No.11
[217] Rafidah do not recognise the first three caliphs – Abu Bakr, Omar, and Uthman – as the legitimate successors of Muhammad. They believe that Ali had to be the first successor. They are loyal to the infidels, Jews, Christians, polytheists, and atheists. Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi al-Din Ahmad: *Curriculum of the Sunnah,* p. 20
[218] The Magicians are the worshippers of the fire and its servants: *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* (2006) Al-Risala Foundation. 23/12
[219] The Shi'ites Safavid State allied itself with the Portuguese and the Mongols against the Sunni Ottoman Empire, which led to a bloody struggle between the Safavids and the Ottomans that lasted almost three centuries. Available at: http://iswy.co/e5g5d
[220]Sermon No. 1

5.3.1 Pronouns: We/Our, You/Your, They/Their

One of al-Adnani's most pressing concerns is to portray ISIS as the sole example of a State of truth and justice. To achieve this, he relies on the aspect of **ethos** to compare ISIS to the Islāmic State from the era of the Prophet, and as a group that applies Sharīʿa as the law of the State. Al-Adnani also relies on the aspect of **pathos** to gain empathy with his audience by sharing their contemporary concerns and aspirations. The following example is a call to fight the Shi'ites. Al-Adnani argues that everyone must fight them in obedience to *Allah*.

> As for US, the sons of the Islāmic State, WE pledge to God and then to the nation that the Iranian *Safavid Rāfiḍah* will only pass over OUR dead bodies and OUR mutilated bodies. So, what do YOU say to YOUR Lord tomorrow? Oh God, did I tell everyone? Oh God, bear witness.[221]

These sentences include a number of pronouns (WE, OUR, US, YOU, YOUR), which illustrates how al-Adnani applies the method of inclusion/exclusion in support of his claim that the in-group represents the sons of the Islāmic State who worship the true God as opposed to the out-group, including the Shi'ites, whom he calls the *Rāfiḍah*, the *Safavids*, and the Iranians. According to al-Adnani, the out-group also includes those who do not support killing the Shi'ites, whom he also considers infidels who have their own god.

Al-Adnani presents reasons (**logos**) to justify and legitimise killing in the following example, not for material gain, as he claims, but rather to restore the Caliphate and re-establish Sharīʿa:

> As for US, WE have never fought for the sake of the land, but WE are fighting to restore the Caliphate and establish the law of *Allah*.[222]

The use of pronouns in this sentence shows also how al-Adnani depends on **ethos** to establish the authenticity and authority of ISIS as a means of restoring an Islāmic State ruled by Sharīʿa.

[221] ibid.
[222] Sermon No. 2

Al-Adnani depends on the **ethos** aspect to establish the authenticity and authority of ISIS members by deploying other rhetorical tools to accentuate the inclusion/exclusion aspect, and to create positive feelings, sympathy, and acceptance in relation to ISIS members as opposed to negative feelings and rejection for others. These tools include the use of metaphor, and simile, as shown in the following examples:

> And as for you, O soldiers of the Islāmic State in Iraq and the Levant, [...] O lions among men, O mountains above the mountains, go with firmness and certainty, for you, by God, are following the revealed truth.[223]

Al-Adnani uses eloquent analogies in the text above that equate the two sides of the simile in the Arabic language. By naming them lions and mountains, al-Adnani attributes ISIS members with qualities that indicate extreme strength.

He uses more than one rhetorical tool in the text below to attribute positive qualities to ISIS members:

> To the knights of the State in Diyala, the land of heroism, those who gripped the coals, who tasted the sweetness of victory […] - you have been, and still are, the material of the State and one of its strongholds. [You are] a spear in the chest of the *Rāfiḍah,* and one of reasons for killing them, and you have dazed the armies of America and impeded them.[224]

He employs metaphor for instance, in the phrase 'gripped the coals' so as to demonstrate ISIS's members' great ability to withstand adversity and difficulties. Also, he depends on a metaphor in which he likens victory to sweet things that a person can taste. An analogy (simile) is used to compare ISIS members to a spear; in the phrase 'a spear in the chest of the *Rāfiḍah'*, he also uses a metaphor to express how ISIS caused the Shi'ites harm and pain.

The following example reveals how al-Adnani aims to create negative feelings, disputes, and rejection regarding anyone who does not support ISIS:

[223]Sermon No. 13
[224]Sermon No. 5

> The matter in Egypt has come down to a clear conflict between faith and disbelief. The battle is not the battle of the Brotherhood, but rather the battle of the *Mujāhidīn* - the battle of the nation.

Al-Adnani maligns the Muslim Brotherhood as nothing more than an irreligious party only claiming Islāmic principles or codes of belief.

> The Muslim Brotherhood is nothing but a secular party with an Islāmic cloak. Basically, they are the most evil and vicious secular party who worship chairs and parliaments.[225]

Al-Adnani excludes the Muslim Brotherhood. He claims that the Muslim Brotherhood is hiding behind an Islāmic cloak, that it is, in fact, a secular party and, moreover, that its members are more sinister than the secularists because they blindly obey their rulers. He uses a metaphor to express this when he equates chairs and parliaments with something that is worshipped.

He aims to exclude the preachers in the following text:

> You who are fighting the Islāmic State, stand with God, pause and think about this one, and see to whom these preachers adhere? Those witches who were made by tyrants to have trumpets that ring with what they do and don't know. They falsify facts, obscure and distort them, and change the law of God to support tyrants and to appease them.[226]

Al-Adnani calls on the enemies of ISIS to support it, on one hand. He benefits from the **ethos** aspect to support his position, he expresses his idea by using the two formulae of the command: stand up, stand with God. He depicts the alignment with ISIS in this way by his appeal to stand with God himself, rather than being submissive. The intention is to make ISIS a representative of the divine self in order to suggest that ISIS stands for absolute and indisputable truth. On the other hand, al-Adnani maintains that any *fatāwā* calling for fighting ISIS is invalid, because it is issued by the preachers who support tyrants and who therefore do not stand with God.

[225]Sermon No. 11
[226]Sermon No. 4

A simile, 'an eloquent analogy', is used in the previous text, whereby scholars are first likened to witches. They are also compared with badly-sounding trumpets to indicate that they do not follow Sharīʿa when they issue their *fatāwā*, but rather distort or suppress the facts to satisfy the rulers.

The following text explains how al-Adnani excludes the Shi'ites and calls for their elimination.

> The *Rāfiḍah* are a disease that harms this nation, and there is no chance of cure from this disease without the sword[227].

He uses a simile**,** once again, as a means of excluding the Shi'ites by equating them with a disease that must be eliminated. Al-Adnani explicitly divides the world into just two categories: the group with whom God is pleased and loves, and avoids Hell, and the rest of the world that represents falsehood, and whose fate is therefore Hell and God's wrath. To prove that ISIS is the group that survived Hell, al-Adnani cites a verse from the *Qur'ān* that explains how God does not abandon his believing servants and, in this way, he suggests to his audience that ISIS represents the believers. Al-Adnani implies that any criticism of his ideas appears to be directed at the words of God. This is shown in the following text.

> ISIS welcomes those who agree with it, and do not pay any attention to those who don't, even if they call themselves the nation, and even if ISIS is left alone in one camp and the world is in another, and *Allah* endorses it, and *Allah* supports it. 'That is because *Allah* is the Master of those who believe, while the disbelievers have no master'[228]. [229]

Al-Adnani also relies on metaphor in the above text to divide the world literally into two camps: truth which represents ISIS; and falsehood which represents the rest of the world. He uses metaphor to compare ISIS to something that can be placed inside one camp while the rest of the world needs to be placed in another.

[227]Sermon No. 2
[228] *The Holy Qur'ān: English Translation* (2012) Translated by Talal Itani. (Muhammad), verse 11
[229]Sermon No. 16

5.4 Manifestations of pathos in excluding the Shi'ites

Al-Adnani uses different terms to refer to the Shi'ites, both explicitly and implicitly, all of which are intended to arouse negative feelings towards them, and to exclude them and place them in the group of 'Others'. All the following terms are used frequently by al-Adnani to label the Shi'ites: *Rāfiḍah*, *Magians*, *Safavid*, Infidels, Traitors, Hypocrites, Apostates, and Iranians. The following analysis will confirm that the Shi'ites are the most-targeted group of those representing 'Them' in al-Adnani's speeches: they are the most frequently used terms employed by him to cast them as outsiders, and to urge confrontation with them, on the grounds that they are the most dangerous enemies of the Sunnis.

Al-Adnani takes advantage of the historical disputes between Sunnis and Shi'ites, and seeks to exacerbate the situation by portraying the Shi'ites as the most dangerous enemy of the Sunnis. He uses a large number of iterations that occupy a significant part of most of his sermons.

Al-Adnani presents the Shi'ites as a fierce enemy of the Sunnis that must be crushed and eliminated to protect Islām, lives, money, and honour. He also presents them as an absolute evil that has no connection to Islām, so he sees them as infidels to be fought against and eliminated.

The term '*Rāfiḍah'* for instance, is used as a synonym for the term 'Shi'ites'. It has connotations that denote the Shi'ites' rejection of the Companions of the Prophet in addition to their rejection of everything related to them. This idea can be clearly seen in the following text in which al-Adnani is keen to divide Muslims into two groups in order to exclude the Shi'ites as not being compatible with Islām or the Sunnis. He speaks clearly and directly about the differences between Sunnis and Shi'ites, rejects and attacks any opinion contrary to this idea, and seeks to support his idea by relying on the aspect of **pathos** to provoke the feelings of Muslims who love the Prophet and his Companions, accusing the Shi'ites of rejecting all the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet because they were narrated by his Companions.

> Your parties' leaders still repeat: 'There is no difference between Sunnis and Shi'ites'. Your leaders do not differentiate between you and them, they refuse the *Ḥadïth* of the Prophet - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace-. The *Rāfiḍah* disbelieve all *Ḥadïth* on the pretext that they were narrated by his Companions. They also replace them with fabricated narratives, gossip, and horrors falsely attributed to our master Jaafar bin Muhammad – may God have mercy on him– while he is innocent of them, so is there no difference between you and them?[230]

Al-Adnani claims that the Shi'ites accuse the Companions of having interests that are limited to food, drink, sex, and political power. He also claims that the Shi'ites accuse the Prophet's Companions, Abū Bakr and ʿOmar of being fornicators, while 'Ali is silent about such falsehood.

> Your leaders do not differentiate between you and the Rāfiḍah who say that Abū Bakr and ʿOmar – may *Allah* be pleased with them – the ministers of the Messenger of *Allah* - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace - are usurpers, and Ali – may *Allah* be pleased with him – is silent about this falsehood, so are you similar to them?[231]

Al-Adnani's choice of these specific disgraceful charges is intentional because they have negative connotations, particularly in Arab and Muslim culture, and especially as adultery is considered one of the major sins in Islām, in addition to being one of the taboos that are unacceptable in Arab social norms: it significantly links honour to abstaining from sex outside marriage. The transgression of social norms regarding fornication is considered a sufficient reason for killing those guilty of it, as such acts are classified as honour crimes. They become socially acceptable criminal acts to a certain group of people because they consider such crimes as a means to wash away the shame resulting from the transgressions.

Benefitting from his prior knowledge of the characteristics of the society that he addresses, al-Adnani makes a concerted effort to incite feelings of anger among his audience by highlighting certain religious and socially unacceptable behaviour that will be strongly denounced when directed at

[230]Sermon No. 1
[231]ibid.

individuals such as the Companions, who inspire many Muslims with feelings of love, respect, and even admiration. They are considered to be exemplars of high morality, faith, courage, and heroism. The text below is an illustration of al-Adnani's incitement.

> Your leaders do not differentiate between you and the *Rāfiḍah* who say that ʿOmar Al-Farooq – may *Allah* be pleased with him – who humiliated Khosrau and broke the nose of his pride, had anal sex with Khosrau - God forbid! , and that 'Ali– may *Allah* be pleased with him – committed adultery with ʿOmar's sister in his house […] [according to] *mut'ah* [pleasure marriage] - that's why ʿOmar forbade it. Are you similar to them? Is there no difference between you and them?[232]

The **pathos** aspect is evident in the previous text. Al-Adnani uses several rhetorical tools in this text as a means of influencing his audience, especially as his clear intention is to evoke people's emotions and feelings. He uses terms with specific connotations by means of a comparison, a metaphor, and a rhetorical question.

Al-Adnani uses a metaphor in the phrase, 'broke the nose of his pride' to describe the superiority of ʿOmar ibn al-Khattab over Khosrau, and to show that he humiliated him and overcame him. The metaphor is another rhetorical attempt through which al-Adnani seeks to glorify ʿOmar ibn al-Khattab in the minds of his audience, and then to present from the lips of the Shi'ites, a hideous description of a disgraceful and shameful accusation against ʿOmar that he practises sodomy. This contrast between the greatness of ʿOmar and the unacceptable accusation against him aims to create condemnation, rejection, and anger in the minds of al-Adnani's audience concerning a great man such as ʿOmar, one of the closest Companions of the Prophet. The text refers to accusations of adultery with 'Ali's sister in addition to the accusation of ʿOmar's homosexual act,[233] and he ends

[232]Sermon No. 1

[233]Ali ibn Abi Talib was a cousin and son-in-law of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, who ruled as the fourth caliph from 656 until his assassination in 661. He is one of the central figures in Shi'ites Islam and is regarded as the rightful immediate successor to Muhammad as an Imam by Shi'ites Muslims. *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc*. Archived from the original on 18 October 2007. Retrieved 12 October 2007

the paragraph by using two rhetorical questions to emphasise the difference between Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Al-Adnani resorts once again to the same method when he presents a new text through which he champions the greatness of the Prophet's maternal uncle [Sa'd], who overcame the Romans and the Persians, as a rebuff to the Shi'ites' accusation against him and against all the maternal uncles of the Prophet of being sons of fornication. He refers, in the same context, to another accusation by the Shi'ites against Amr ibn al-As,[234] one of the respected Companions, who is described by al-Adnani as an opponent of the Romans and the conqueror of Egypt, while the Shi'ites describe him as another son of fornication.

> The *Rāfiḍah* say that Sa'd, the maternal uncle of the Prophet - may *Allah*'s prayers and peace be upon him - the exterminator of Khosrau's soldiers, the conqueror of the Magian, is a son of fornication. [The Rāfiḍah say] that the sons of Zahra, Prophet's grandchildren - may God bless him and grant him peace - are all sons of fornication. And Amr ibn al-As – may God be pleased with him –who astounded the Romans and conquered Egypt was also a son of fornication, so are you like them?[235]

Another sensitive matter that cannot be overestimated in the Arab and Islāmic social norms is that of speaking badly about women in general, and women related to the Prophet in particular, which is also directly linked to honour. Al-Adnani is already aware of this sensitivity, but he seeks to exploit the **pathos** aspect in order to evoke a reaction from his audience against the Shi'ites as can be seen in the following text.

> Your leaders do not differentiate between you and the *Rāfiḍah*, as they suspect the wives of the Prophet - may *Allah'*s prayers and peace be upon him – accusing them of disbelief, immorality, and

[234]Amr ibn al-As, a companion and a Muslim military leader, one of the four leaders in the Islamic conquest of the Levant, and the leader of the Islamic conquest of Egypt, and the first Muslim ruler over Egypt after its conquest. The *Hadīth* Transmitters Encyclopaedia. *Hadīth Transmitters. Hawramani.com*
[235]Sermon No. 1

> shame, so are you like them? Are you not ashamed of your Prophet - may *Allah*'s prayers and peace be upon him - to say that there is no difference between you and the *Rāfiḍah*?[236]

Another way in which al-Adnani seeks to exclude the Shi'ites is to separate them from the Arab nation and to highlight their affiliation with Iran instead, as is apparent in the following text.

> The *Rāfiḍah* do not feel they belong to the great Arab nation that chosen by *Allah* to carry his religion and deliver his message […]. They behave and feel as an Iranian community linked to Qom. They do not fast, […], perform *Eid* or *Hajj* except with Iran, and they follow the Iranian timing and they do not follow yours, so are you like that, O *Ahl al-Sunnah*? Is there no difference between you and the *Rāfiḍah*, as your leaders claim?[237]

Al-Adnani skilfully manipulates the way in which he excludes the Shi'ites. He claims that they are the ones who do not feel that they belong to the Arab nation which is responsible for protecting and spreading Islām, and that they are the ones who align themselves with Iran and follow its customs in performing their religious rituals.

Al-Adnani resorts to using several rhetorical questions in most of these cited texts, which he presents in different formulae, albeit all bearing the same implicit answer: there is an inevitable difference between Sunnis and Shi'ites. Al-Adnani makes use of repetition to highlight and reinforce the notion of excluding the Shi'ites, as evidenced in the following rhetorical questions in various sermons: 'So is there no difference between you and them? Are you like that? Are you not ashamed of your Prophet - may *Allah*'s prayers and peace be upon him - to say there is no difference between you and the *Rāfiḍah*? Are you like them? Are you like them, O *Ahl-as-Sunnah*? Is there no difference between you and the *Rāfiḍah* as your leaders claim?' All these questions stress the same answer; yes, there are huge differences between Sunnis and Shi'ites.

[236]ibid.
[237]ibid.

Al-Adnani evokes more emotions (**pathos**) to fight the Shi'ites. He stresses over and over again that ISIS defends good against evil and the disbelieve, as shown below.

> The Islāmic State, since its inception, has conflicted with falsehood, fighting the imams of infidelity, and cutting off the heads of evil. Muslims still face enemies who do not stop killing and abusing Muslims […] mercilessly. The war remains a battle between the group of truth and the groups who have gone astray; among the misguided of the lost and the most hostile […] are the hateful *Rāfiḍah*; […] allied with the enemies of Muslims. They have been weaving the ropes of their plots against the Islāmic State since its inception, […] as the Iranian rejectors' tide reaches its peak, and is gradually creeping in to control the entire region. A *Safavid* army has gathered the militia of Iran and Iraq, robbed the homes of the Sunnis day and night, killed and kidnapped men, plundered and stole belongings and money, violated the honour and sanctity [of women], under the pretext of searching and arresting according to arrest warrants. If they did not find the owner of the house, they took his women [as a negotiating tactic to convince] him to surrender himself.[238]

Al-Adnani talks about the struggle with the enemies of Islām who represent falsehood, disbelief, delusion, and evil, and who do not stop killing and torturing Muslims without mercy. He then puts the Shi'ites at the top of the hierarchy of these Islāmic nation's enemies who have fought ISIS since beginning. This approach gives him a chance to present ISIS as an entity that represents all Muslims, whom the Shi'ites have abused, robbed, killed their men, and raped their women. Al-Adnani stresses the connections between Islām and ISIS in this way, (real) Muslims and ISIS members. He uses metaphor to liken the plots to woven fabric, while he describes the Iranian tide to a creeping entity to show the Shi'ites' alliances with the enemies of the Islāmic nation, trying to achieve their ambition to control the entire Arab region. The text shows how al-Adnani's relies on **pathos** to instil fear into his audience through his description of the Iranian *Safavid* enemy who will rape women, and plunder and kidnap men.

[238]Sermon No. 3

Al-Adnani continues to warn the Sunnis against Iranian Shi'ites who aspire to take over their countries and who threaten their religion and belief. He seeks to provoke the feelings of the Sunnis, and to hold them responsible for defending both their homelands and their religion, as is evident in the following text.

> Iraq, Iraq, O people of the *Sunnah*, stop the black crawl coming, cut off the head of the rejectors' snake whose tail is beside you. Next is war with the *Rāfiḍah*, like it or not. The war of the Sunnis with the *Rāfiḍah* is not a sectarian war, as is said by squawking crows. The sect is part of a whole, but the *Rāfiḍah* have no connection to Islām. This war is a holy war of faith against unbelief, a war of monotheism against polytheism.[239]

Al-Adnani describes the 'tide' of the Shi'ites as something black and creeping. He then uses a metaphor to liken the Shi'ites to a snake that must have its head cut off. He continues by describing the war between Sunnis and Shi'ites as a holy war rather than a sectarian war; likening those who claim otherwise to crows that squawk. He justifies this analogy by maintaining that the Shi'ites are not a part, or a sect, of Islām, they are not related to Islām, and, since he describes them as the nation's fiercest enemies, he makes the war against them a sacred, religious war of belief, in which faith stands against disbelief, and monotheism against polytheism. It must therefore be waged in obedience to *Allah*.

Al-Adnani seeks to maximise the role of ISIS in the following text, and portray it as the force that protects the blood, honour, and money of the Sunnis from the danger posed by these rejectionist *Safavids*. Failure to support ISIS will therefore lead to the Shi'ites' seizing Iraq, the Levant, and even the Arabian Peninsula.

> We say to the sons and soldiers of the Islāmic State of Iraq – may *Allah* bless it –know that today you are a closed door in the face of the new *Safavids*… And, behind you, are the blood, honour, and money of the Sunnis in Iraq, the Levant and even the Arabian Peninsula. So, do not break this door as long

[239]ibid.

> as your veins are flowing with blood, because […] none of these will remain after that. So, it's either you or them. The *Rāfiḍah* are a disease of this nation and there is nothing but the sword as a cure.[240]

To support his claim, al-Adnani employs a metaphor to describe individuals and soldiers belonging to ISIS as a closed door that protects the Sunnis in the face of the Shi'ites. He uses the eloquent metaphor to liken the Shi'ites to a disease that threatens the nation, and for which there is no medicine but the edge of the sword.

Accusing the Shi'ites of infidelity has been clearly and explicitly repeated in several speeches among the total number of sermons under analysis (25 speeches). Al-Adnani presents the same rhetorical arguments through these speeches for excluding the Shi'ites, and removing them from the group of 'Us' and placing them within the group of 'Them'. The great prevalence of this idea can be considered as evidence of al-Adnani's continuous attempts to portray the Shi'ites as the most prominent enemy of Islām and Muslims, which is said to justify the call to eliminate them.

The depiction of the Shi'ites as the most dangerous enemy of the Sunnis occurs in many of the remaining sermons, but any further analysis would only result in repetition of the same argument.

5.4.1 *Allah* is responsible for classifying people as disbelievers

The analysis of this theme has already shown how al-Adnani divides the world into two groups: the group of faith that is represented only by ISIS; and the group of non-belief that includes everyone else. The analysis of this code will reveal how al-Adnani relied on **ethos** to support this division: holding *Allah* and the Messenger responsible for accusing people of infidelity, given that what ISIS does is nothing but the worship of *Allah* and obedience to the Prophet. Al-Adnani uses two methods in the following text: setting out options for his audience, and quotes ibn Nawfal.

> Whoever lives safely in a place ruled by tyrants, is claiming to be on the way and the method of the Prophet - may *Allah*'s prayers and peace be upon him -. Either he is a lost person who does not follow

[240]Sermon No. 2

> the path of the Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him -, or he is a liar as he claims to have faith. Waraqah ibn Nawfal said to the Prophet - may God's prayers and peace be upon him, - 'Whoever presents a message similar to yours, people confront him with hostility'.[241]

Al-Adnani begins the text by restricting the conditions of belief with the aim of focusing the audience's attention on specific options. He does not give them the opportunity to search for other alternatives outside this limitation. He illustrates the characteristics of believers that ISIS accepts in this example. He questions the faith of others from the beginning of the text by using the verb 'claim' to justify the determinants of ISIS's vision: these others are either lost from the Sunnah of the Prophet and do not follow his approach, or they are liars in claiming they have faith. Al-Adnani assumes the authority to decide whether a person is a believer or not. His approach is different from that of Islāmic law because Islām does not regard any monotheist – be they Muslim, Christian or Jew – as an unbeliever, since they believe in one God (*Allah)*; Islām considers that evaluating faith is a divine matter and is not something that humans can perform.

Al-Adnani presents non-hostility and co-existence with ISIS's enemies as sufficient reason for accusing people of infidelity. To confirm this, he quotes ibn Nawfal to achieve two purposes: implicit, suggesting that ISIS is following the correct approach of the Prophet. The evidence for this is the great number of enemies that ISIS faces; as for the direct purpose, he maintains that any co-existence with enemies is sufficient reason to know that others do not follow the path of the Prophet. The evidence for this is that they are not in a state of hostility with ISIS enemies. The citation of ibn Nawfal reinforces this idea and makes it difficult to be challenged: that would be considered as questioning the dialogue that took place between the Prophet and Waraqah ibn Nawfal[242] rather than considering it as doubting the ideology of ISIS.

[241]Sermon No. 10

[242]Christian cousin of Muhammad's first wife, Khadijah. According to tradition, assured Muhammad that his call to prophecy and message were genuinely from God. Acknowledged that Muhammad's recitation of revelation was identical to the revelation given to Moses. Prophesied that Muhammad, like other prophets before him, would be

To emphasise that *Allah*'s law (Sharīʿa) is the source of ISIS legislation, al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect. He depends on several rhetorical questions, supported by metaphors and similes to equate the rivalry with *Allah* with the rivalry with ISIS; the failure to follow the instructions of the *Qur'ān* with the failure to follow ISIS's instructions; and the failure to adopt the Prophet's approach with the failure to adopt ISIS's approach, as shown in the following text:

> Would you stand between the hands of *Allah* while your opponents are the *Ansār* and the *Muhājirīn*? Would you ask for the mercy of your Lord if you sprinkle the blood of the Mujāhidīn, the monotheists? Where are you going, infatuated? What is your stance towards the book of your Lord? What is your stance towards the *Sunnah* of your Prophet? Or have your eyes turned to suspicions and your ears are blocked by desires?[243]

Al-Adnani appeals to **pathos** to address those who refrain from joining ISIS, nurturing feelings of guilt in them by claiming that their lack of support for ISIS is as ugly as drinking the blood of the *Mujāhidīn*, the monotheists who perform *Allah*'s duties. He adds: this lack of support is a neglect of the teachings of *Allah*, His Messenger, and His Book.

Al-Adnani also relies on **pathos** to evoke the emotions of his audience by referring to the shame they will feel when they meet their Lord, before resorting to instilling in them a deep fear of *Allah*'s punishment for their imperfection when the Doomsday reckoning begins. This is an attempt to invoke fears of the torment of Hell and the wrath of *Allah*. He appeals to strengthen his argument by citing the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*, and to challenge those who try to dispute or refute his allegations. He relies on this argument on the pretext that his statements are consistent with the words of *Allah* and the Messenger, therefore no one has the right to question them.

> *Allah* Almighty said: 'Whoever kills a believer deliberately, the penalty for him is Hell, where he will remain forever. And Allah will be angry with him, and will curse him, and will prepare for him a

rejected, fought against, and lied about. *Oxford Reference.* Available at: https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803120859967

[243]Sermon No. 13

> terrible punishment'.[244] The Messenger of *Allah* - may *Allah*'s prayers and peace be upon him - said: 'Insulting the believer is a sign of disobedience to God, and fighting him is a sign of infidelity'.[245]

To assert his claim that ISIS is the only group that represents truth and faith, al-Adnani uses the verse and the *Ḥadïth* as evidence to illustrate the torment that *Allah* will inflict on the enemies of ISIS. According to this verse, He will cast them into Hell, become angry with them, curse them, and torment them severely. Al-Adnani cites the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadïth* to reinforce his claim because this kind of citation is considered to be above scepticism as it appeals to **ethos, logos**, and **pathos** by conflating ISIS words with God's and the Messenger's' words, use these words as solid arguments, and evoking several kinds of emotions. Citing the *Qur'ān* is a rhetorical method that succeeds in convincing an audience more than any other method, because it uses the words of *Allah* which targets minds and emotions at the same time; as for the *Ḥadïth*, insulting ISIS 'the true believers' is committing adultery, and fighting them is disbelief. This suggests that *Allah* and the Prophet are the ones who determined that the infidel groups are the ones that do not support ISIS.

Al-Adnani addresses his speech on behalf of ISIS to all those who do not belong to them, adopting a position of superiority that places ISIS members on a similar level to that of *Allah*, as shown in the text below.

> We invite you to the Book of *Allah* and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet - may *Allah*'s prayers and peace be upon him - so repent sincerely, return to your religion, and turn your back on your temptation. Whoever among you, or someone who repents, came to us before we were able to kill him, we will accept his repentance, protect his blood, even if he had killed a thousand, thousand Muslims – […] no blood money or exchange. We, by *Allah*, rejoice at the repentance of one of you more than […] cutting off your heads, so why are you our enemies, and why do you make yourselves into shields and bastions for the *Rāfiḍah* and the Crusaders? [246]

[244] *The Holy Qur'ān: English Translation* (2012) Translated by Talal Itani. (an-Nisa'), verse 93
[245] Narrated Ibn Mas'ud.
[246] Sermon No. 1

ISIS offers other groups to return to implementing the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, and it calls this return a 'pure repentance'. The term 'return to religion' implies that these other groups are not embracing the true religion, as the 'call to repentance' implies that these groups are sinful and guilty. The creed that ISIS invites people to embrace, however, is its doctrine, and the sin that it invites them to repent is their failure to accept its belief. The evidence for this is al-Adnani's description of the forgiveness that ISIS will grant to those who offer it their repentance: if ISIS accepts this repentance, it will not shed their blood, nor cut off their heads, nor impose a demand for blood money on them.

Accepting or not accepting repentance is a divine right granted by ISIS to itself; determining the severity and the form of the punishment is another divine right granted by ISIS to itself. This divine right self-attribute adopts the role of *Allah*, and links His satisfaction or anger to the acceptance or rejection of ISIS's doctrine, named from the beginning as 'The Book of *Allah* and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet'. Al-Adnani tries to conflate the violence practised by ISIS with divine punishment, and the amnesty it grants to others with the divine acceptance of repentants. He assigns the responsibility to *Allah* in this way to determine who is entitled to punishment or repentance, so that ISIS's monopoly on the exercise of this divine right can appear as if it is merely worship and obedience to *Allah*.

Al-Adnani continues to direct the supreme discourse for non-ISIS members, as he relies on several rhetorical questions aimed at conflating the role of *Allah* with the role of ISIS regarding the issues of punishment and acceptance of repentants, as shown in the following text:

> Why do we fight you if you repent […]? None of you is safe to go out of your homes or to travel […]. You do not sleep in your homes out of fear […], when will you be safe? Do you think that we will leave? [...] No, we will remain, -*Allah* willing - until the Hour of Resurrection, and the last one of us will fight the Antichrist, so hurry up - we still hope for your repentance. We do not kill you except for

> those who have not repented. Where are you fleeing to? From whom do you seek refuge? By *Allah*! You have no refuge or deliverer but *Allah* and the State of Islām.[247]

Al-Adnani once again, declares that repentance is something that should be offered to ISIS, and, again, he appeals to **pathos** to warn of the consequences if not. If these consequences are examined, then it will be found that they revolve around the intimidation and death threats carried out by ISIS, who justifies them as obedience to *Allah*'s orders. Al-Adnani ends the speech with a rhetorical question in which he declares that the only way to achieve salvation and deliverance from slaughter is to turn to *Allah*, and then to ISIS. Al-Adnani confers on ISIS a status equivalent to that of *Allah* by offering this solution: avoiding slaughter will be achieved only by seeking refuge with *Allah*, and then with ISIS; at the same time, the implication is that *Allah* bears an equal responsibility with ISIS for slaughtering those deemed to be infidels.

Al-Adnani draws on the words of leading figures such as ibn Taymiyyah, who supported the supremacy and authority of *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadïth,* exactly as he does when he quotes out of content from the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadïth*. Ibn Taymiyyah encouraged a literal interpretation of the *Qur'ān*, linked Islām to politics and state formation, and sharply distinguished between Muslims and non-Muslims. The later thinkers such as Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Hassan al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutb, who have had a major influence on contemporary radicalism, were inspired by ibn Taymiyyah. There were also many Islāmic groups in the twentieth century who used his authority to declare *jihād* against the ruling governments.[248] Al-Adnani, who was completely aware of the influence of ibn Taymiyyah, seeks to conflate his own messages with ibn Taymiyyah's views to appeal to **ethos** in order to bestow an aura of authenticity around ISIS's ideology. Speaking on behalf of ISIS, al-Adnani accuses anyone who abandons the application of any Sharīʿa ruling of infidelity. He also claims that this judgement is based on the true religion which is verified by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah,* and the

[247]ibid.
[248]The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. Available at: https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095955675

sayings of eminent scholars. The suggestion is that ISIS is not responsible for accusing anyone of infidelity, but what it does is merely the worship of *Allah* and carrying out His commands.

> Sheikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah - may *Allah* have mercy on him - said in his famous *fatāwā* on the Tatars: Every sect that refrains from adhering to one of the apparent and frequent laws of Islām […] must be fought, until they abide by the Islāmic law, even if they nonetheless pronounce the two *Shahada* and abide by some of Sharīʿa laws.[249]

This claim is repeated during the sermons in various ways, with the aim of convincing the audience that this version of accusing others of infidelity is taken from the divine Sharīʿa, and that it is not merely a tool used by ISIS to justify killing and violence towards anyone, even a Muslim who bides by many Islāmic laws. Due to the difficulty of enforcing all acts of worship, it becomes easy to exclude anyone from the group of believers. The following text shows how ISIS interprets Sharīʿa in a certain way to justify all its illegal acts by claiming to apply the correct religion, and following the law of *Allah*.

> The saying, which is supported by the religion of *Allah*, attested to by the legal evidence from the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah,* and […] distinguished and respected scholars, is: 'When worship is for someone other than God, then fighting is a duty'. So, if a sect has refrained from performing some of the obligations such as prayers, fasting, and *Hajj*, or from prohibiting 'blood money', alcohol, adultery, gambling, marriage to incestuous women, or […] performing *jihād* or imposing *Jizya*[250], then no one is excused if he doesn't consider this sect adherents as non-believers. So, the sects that refuse to perform the duties or deny that they are obligatory are disbelievers and must be fought. This is not disputed among the scholars.[251]

Al-Adnani only implies that *Allah* is the one who says that these people are infidels in the previous examples; however, in the text below, he explicitly holds *Allah* responsible.

[249]Sermon No. 11
[250]Tax paid by non-Muslims to their Muslim leaders.
[251]ibid.

> As for your saying: The state considers that whoever says there is no God but *Allah* is a disbeliever, it sanctions the blood of the infallible' you have lied. The state considers the infidel is only the one whom God and the Messenger consider a disbeliever.[252]

Al-Adnani responds to the accusation directed against ISIS of a lack of compassion, even towards many Muslims, by declaring that this accusation is a fabrication and a lie against ISIS. He defends ISIS by saying that *Allah* and His Messenger said that these people are infidels, and therefore ISIS must act in obedience to *Allah* and His Messenger; explicitly attributing this act to *Allah* and the Prophet is a way of shedding responsibility, and making it impossible for the act to be challenged because *Allah* and His Messenger are the ones who have been held responsible.

5.5 Summary

To sum up, al-Adnani creates a mythical image of ISIS fighters and surrounds it with an aura of sanctity by using several methods; significantly, he relies on the aspect of **ethos** to convince his audience of the authenticity and legitimacy of this image. He also relies on **pathos** to provoke emotions to present ISIS as a group that embodies the ultimate truth while the rest of the world representing evil, sometimes he relies on **logos** to present arguments that support his goals. Al-Adnani uses terminology with connotations that support this image, giving his warriors the title of 'the *Mujāhidīn'*, in order to portray ISIS fighters as defenders of Islām and Muslims. This gives him an opportunity to justify operations such as killing, intimidation, and looting, by including these operations within various frameworks as legitimate operations.

The legendary image of ISIS fighters is a significant feature of many speeches; for example, the image of the brave soldiers being likened to lions, as well as the image of those who possess great resilience to overcome adversity and difficulties. They display a great deal of strength and solidarity, as they are the few who face and challenge the armies of the world, exhaust them, and weaken them.

[252]Sermon No. 4

Al-Adnani also claims that ISIS fighters have a monopoly of the attribute of faith, which makes *Allah* support them over their enemies, and entrusts them with the task of establishing the Caliphate; they are worthy of this mission because they are men who divorce themselves from the world and abandon all its blessings and gains in order to fight only for the testimony that would grant them the pleasure and paradise of *Allah*. Al-Adnani also alludes to the concepts of *al-Muhājirīn* and *al-Ansār* in an attempt to portray his fighters as being closer to the Companions of the Prophet by attributing his fighters with characteristics similar to those of the Companions whose sanctity inspires the love and respect of a significant proportion of Muslims. The repetition of such terms intends to bestow an aura of authority and authenticity on ISIS and on al-Adnani himself. This aura, moreover, is further strengthened by his use of the written variety of classical Arabic[253] or *Fuṣha*[254], which is often referred to as the code of the *Qur'ān* and is frequently considered part of the clerics' symbolic capital.

Al-Adnani's citations from the *Qur'ān* not only help to add authority to his words, but also help to conflate the source of the words (God's words) with his own, thereby extending the authority of the *Qur'ān* to his own words and speeches. An additional aim of the inclusion of such *Qur'ānic* verses is to cement the knowledge as being that which is derived from Islāmic teachings and not from secular sources, and to give credence to those who master this knowledge, namely ISIS members, through their memorisation of the *Qur'ān*. Al-Adnani's speeches tend to move in time and space between the era of early Islām to modern times, which further contributes to emphasising that the

[253] Classical Arabic is a linguistic system that consists of a set of expressions, meanings and structures that are subject to the provisions of morphology and grammar. It is termed a model language, a common language, a written language and an ideal language. The Arabic language has gained a special importance among its speakers and among those who embrace Islam, because it is a medium that expresses the religious heritage and its legislations based on the *Qur'ān* and the Sunnah as basic sources. This feature made the Arabic language stable and prevented it from disappearing. In addition to the *Qur'ān* and Sunnah, the use of al-Fusha is evident in Arabic poetry, proverbs, as well as the writing and drafting of legislation. It is the official language within the institutions of authority, international education, and scientific and literary forums.
As for colloquial Arabic, it is the vocabulary that the public uses as a means of daily communication. It is not subject to grammar restrictions and linguistic provision. *Language Skills Lecture No. 2.* More information is available at: https://uomustansiriyah.edu.iq/media/lectures/8/8_2020_07_02!02_08_15_PM.pdf

[254]Odeh, S. (2017). *Between colloquial and formal ... Does duplication pose a threat to language?* Available at: https://www.aljazeera.net/midan/intellect/sociology/2017/7/23/

only knowledge available to Muslims is that found in Islāmic heritage, rather than in secular ideologies.

Al-Adnani seeks to persuade people to consider them as a source of pride by attributing such qualities to ISIS fighters, even a crown to be placed on Muslims' heads. Al-Adnani feels it is necessary to go further by describing them as the heirs of the prophets, even granting them divine characteristics such as the authority to forgive wrong-doers, to accept their repentance, and to spare, or destroy their lives at any time. Al-Adnani seeks to equate ISIS with *Allah* in this way.

Chapter Six

Jihād as an inevitable issue

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the rhetoric adopted by ISIS to promote the concept of *jihād* understood as unprovoked violence. In so doing, ISIS rhetoric draws heavily on the aspect of **pathos** through various tropes such as direct, and out of context, citations from the *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth*. It also relies on the repetition of certain terminology as will be illustrated with many examples throughout the chapter. These terms aim to provoke various feelings and hence trigger the audience to decide or at least endorse a certain action. The chapter provides ample examples of the manifestation of the appeal to **pathos** as evidenced in ISIS' speeches. For instance, ISIS' rhetoric expanding on invoking feelings such as humiliation, fear, pride, and dignity. However, it is important to highlight that the other rhetorical aspects of **logos** and **ethos** are also present in the following examples and that the three aspects (**pathos**, **ethos**, and **logos**) can hardly be separated in rigorous rhetorical analysis. What this chapter demonstrates, is that ISIS draws on the aspect of **pathos** but tends to supplement it with tropes that appeal to justifications (**logos**) through references to history and past events with the overall aim of convincing the audience of its message about *jihād* and its inevitability. It also appeals to **ethos** to convince audiences that ISIS merely applies God's laws, and not invent a new perspective. The following sections provide numerous examples of the aspect of **pathos**, and how it is connected to **logos** and **ethos**.

The above rhetorical aspects aim to enforce a certain view of the world upon which ISIS's ideology is based, namely dividing the world into two sides: 'Us' the believers and 'Them' the infidels (or non-believers). It called for compelling these infidels to embrace its own concept of Sharīʿa, even by force, if necessary. *Jihād* was one of the most important means of power that the organisation decided to adopt to attain control. ISIS considered *jihād* as an individual duty which every Muslim must perform wherever he or she is - whether in a battlefield or not. The suicide operations that targeted

the ‘Other’ have gained legitimacy. ISIS, which emerged from *al-Qāʿidah*, agreed with *al-Qāʿidah*’s ideology in many details, but contradicted it in interpreting the concept of *jihād* because it legitimated the targeting of Muslims who did (do) not believe in its ideology. ISIS considered these Muslims to be apostates, therefore, fighting them was more important than fighting non-Muslims; *al-Qāʿidah*, on the other hand, prohibited the targeting of any Muslim who testified that there is no God except *Allah*, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of *Allah*. The analysis of this theme will clarify ISIS's own interpretation of the concept of *jihād*.

Al-Adnani relied on the aspect of **pathos** by provoking different types of emotions in his sermons to gain the sympathy and support of his audience in seeking to achieve the goals to which he aspired. He focused on certain texts, on one hand, which would provoke the feelings of contentment that would be achieved through rewards: the promises of blessings in this world and the hereafter for those who participated in *jihād*; while on the other, he focused on provoking feelings of fear of divine punishment in this world and the hereafter for those who neglected or abandoned *jihād*. The analysis of the following codes will shed light on the linguistic strategies that al-Adnani used, not only to provoke the feelings of his audience, but also to exploit them to serve his goals.

6.2 Manifestations of pathos in Motivating *Jihād*

Al-Adnani's reliance on the **pathos** aspect can be seen through his persistent attempts to provoke the feelings of his audience by motivating and urging them to adopt ISIS’s point of view. He uses certain terms, or repetition of particular commands in his efforts to achieve this in a manner that is overwhelming in some texts. Al-Adnani’s main tools in provoking his audience feelings are quoting texts from the *Qur’ān* and *Hadīth* which urged his audience to fight ‘the enemy’ under the pretext of *jihād.*

> O Knights, the state is on the verge of a new war - *Allah* willing - and a severe, fierce war will be launched, and you will race to participate in it; so, raise the banner with righteousness and sincerity.

> Light the spark, and stoke the fire in raid after raid; advance as the lion advances, and face your enemy seriously, and never be weak. God implores you to help, and make your bravery its fuel.[255]

Al-Adnani relied on the myth of knighthood in the above text. He consequently named ISIS fighters as the 'knights', which bears historical connotations that help him to create a perception of brave, victorious warriors. He also used the term 'state' to help him create a perception of a legitimate entity that represents a recognised state, as it prepares to go to war against its enemies. Al-Adnani extracts an idea from the cavalry values and moral system. He uses this to suggest to ISIS fighters that their courage will motivate them to take the initiative to fight this war; he also encourages them to be the first to go to war through their own free will and choice.

Al-Adnani uses the imperative form to motivate ISIS fighters, and therefore, orders them to raise the banner of their state; in addition, he incites their feelings (**pathos**) of courage to ignite successive wars and raids. He uses the metaphor in which he likens war to fire that needs a spark to burst into flames. He also motivates the fighters to confront their enemies by ordering them to storm the battlefields with courage, and uses the eloquent analogy that equates them with lions. He continues by reminding them that *Allah* will support them if they do this. Al-Adnani also seeks to achieve more than one goal: he strengthens the fighters' feelings of confidence in victory, and bestows legitimacy and sanctity (**ethos**) on war. He thus proposes that participation in war against ISIS's enemies is a form of worship that *Allah* loves, and blesses those who engage in it. *Allah* will reward them with victory in this world, or martyrdom that leads to paradise in the eternal afterlife.

One of the important motivational terms that al-Adnani relied on is 'martyrdom'. Using this term helps al-Adnani to benefit from the three aspects of persuasion (**pathos**, **logos**, and **ethos**) at once, because it carries religious connotations related to the status of a person who is killed for his or her

[255] Sermon No. 5

(religious) beliefs. A great reward, he says, awaits the martyr in the hereafter. Wishing for martyrdom expresses the courage of people who choose to face death. It is considered an opportunity that a person seeks, according to al-Adnani, especially since death is a destiny that every person will meet anyway, so why should this death not be in the form of great martyrdom?

> Walk to death on foot, for each of you will face death, and there is no death - by *Allah* - better than martyrdom. Take advantage of it because - by *Allah* - you will not find the chance to perform it whenever you want. [256]

Al-Adnani implicitly uses several well-known prophetic *Hadīth* together in the following texts to serve his goals. He takes advantage of the prior knowledge of most of these *Hadīth* by his audience. He continually refers to them, but avoids using these texts explicitly to inform his audience that those who fight the war with ISIS will receive all the rewards of *jihād* or martyrdom mentioned in the *Hadīth* to which he refers.

> So, go on, O servants of *Allah*, in your *jihād*, for he who eats food and sleeps during *jihād* is better than the fasting person who is praying all night without *jihād.* Whoever protects the Islāmic state for the sake of *Allah,* will not see Hell - you know that Paradise exists under the shade of swords. War for a day is better than this world and everything in it. The sword erases sins [...] - go ahead. Whoever gathers dust on his feet for the sake of *Allah*, He will not allow him to go to Hell. Whoever spends a dinar, it will multiply to seven hundred thousand dinars.[257]

Al-Adnani exploited the aspect of **pathos**, not only to motivate people to fight, but also to prompt feelings of pride in performing the duty of *jihād* which would also draw people closer to God.
The following text shows how al-Adnani prompt to project feelings of pride and dignity.

> My brothers *Mujahideen* [those engaged in *jihād*], wherever you are; above every land and under every sky, we do not console you for the killing of our sheikh, the brave imam, the scholar, the worker,

[256] Sermon No. 5
[257] Sermon No. 5

> the *Mujahid* [one who is engaged in *jihād*], the regenerator - Abu Abdullah Osama bin Laden - may *Allah* have mercy on him – because consolation is offered for death, but we congratulate him for his good ending and martyrdom for which he always wished and sought to achieve. We think that he has obtained it, so that he is truly the pride of our nation, the imam of his time, and the best of those who walked on earth, in his time.[258]

Al-Adnani begins by granting himself and his comrades the title of *Mujahideen*, so the dead among them would be martyrs; since martyrdom is an honour for which all the *Mujahideen* strive, obtaining this honour deserves to be congratulated and not consoled. Al-Adnani did not therefore offer condolences to his comrades for the killing of Osama bin Laden, because he considered his death as an honour that deserved pride. This reverence does not remain confined to the personality of bin Laden, but includes everyone who is killed in the wars of ISIS, given that these are martyrs, and will receive their reward which *God* has prepared for them.

The following text presents another example illustrating how al-Adnani relies on the **pathos** aspect to provoke his audience's feelings of pride.

> It is time for you, Oh *Sunnis* of Iraq, to know the path to honour and sovereignty, the path to goodness, security, and happiness. It is time for you to know that there are no rights without *jihād*; there is no justice without *jihād*; there is no honour without *jihād*; there is no security without *jihād*; there is no life without *jihād*.[259]

He urges the people of the *Sunnah* to show their loyalty towards the *Mujahideen* and to support them. He appeals to the **pathos** aspect to present the sacrifices they have made to support the 'true religion' [Islām] and to help people to get back their pride.

> O people of the *Sunnah*, […] rally around the *Mujahideen*. Look and ponder, imagine, and think. The *Mujahideen* have never fought for elevated positions, or for the detritus [insignificant sections of

[258] Sermon No. 1
[259] Sermon No. 15

> humanity] in a mortal world. The *Mujahideen* sacrificed everything to support the religion of *Allah* and the oppressed. They suffered only killing, captivity, abuse, and injury from this world. They did not bequeath to their families and relatives anything but imprisonment, displacement, and deprivation. Despite all these tragedies and wounds, they exude dignity and pride. If one of you is devoted to *Allah*, and contemplates the state of the Muslim nation today, he will find that it is devoid of positions of pride and dignity, except in the actions of the *Mujahideen* among their ranks and under their banner: a fact that whoever denies it outwardly will not be able to deny it in his own heart.[260]

Al-Adnani presented *jihād* as the only way out of being rid of the current chaos and conflicts that the Iraqis were suffering. He confirmed the effectiveness of this solution by repeatedly presenting it as an exclusive way to solve each problem separately. He accordingly gave himself the right to ask the people to support those he called *Mujahideen* in order to give them the status of defenders of Islām and Muslims. To provoke the feelings of pride among his audience, al-Adnani relied on the metaphor which likened ISIS fighters to a (magnificent) vessel that exudes pride and dignity, while all others yield to feelings of humiliation and shame. The limitation of the qualities of honour and dignity to those who are called *Mujahideen* paves the way for the hypothesis of the inevitable necessity of *jihād* as the only way to recover rights, and the imperative need to support those who do not seek worldly gains or fleeting high positions.

Al-Adnani still relies on the **pathos** aspect to provoke feelings to reinforce the premise of the inevitability of *jihād* as the only path to glory, dignity, and pride. Al-Adnani implicitly referred to the *Qur'ānic* verse, 'You are the best community that ever emerged for humanity: you advocate what is moral, and forbid what is immoral, and believe in *Allah'*.[261] To present the state of ISIS as a means that would restore the nation's glory, and rid itself of the humiliation in which it was drowning, al-Adnani tells the people that *Allah* would help ISIS to achieve this inevitable goal.

[260] Ibid.
[261] *The Holy Qur'ān: Ali 'Imran,* verse 110

> O *ʾummah* of Muhammad - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace - you are still the best of a nation; […] let your sovereignty return to you […]. Yesterday's Lord of this nation is still its Lord today. He [God] who helped it yesterday, will support it today.

He attempts to convince his audience that it is time for the people ['*ummah*] to wake up and restore their dignity due to the presence of ISIS, which God will help in accomplishing this gaol as He helped the believers before in their wars against their enemies.

> It is time! It is time for generations that sank into the seas of humiliation, and sucked dishonourable milk, were ruled by the most despicable people because of its long sleep in the darkness of negligence; It is time for it to rise; for the *ʾummah* of Muhammad - may Allah bless him and grant him peace - to leave its sleep, remove its shame and dust of humiliation and sin clinging to it. The time of wailing has passed, and - *Allah* willing - the hope of glory has dawned again; the sun of *jihād* shines; the signs of goodness brighten; the horizon of victory appears. […] The banner of the Islāmic State – monotheism - fluttering […] from Aleppo to Diyala. The walls of tyrants were destroyed under the banner of ISIS. Their flags held back, their borders smashed, their soldiers either killed or captured. […]. The *Sunnis* are honourable masters, the heretics dishonoured and betrayed.[262]

Al-Adnani depicted the state of humiliation and indignity that the nation was experiencing by using successive metaphors. He used the declarative metaphor to compare the humiliation that the Arab nation experienced with the seas in which generations have sunk. He added a second declarative metaphor to resemble humiliation as the milk on which generations have survived. This is followed by another declarative metaphor in which he compared negligence to darkness, and described inaction with *jihād* as 'deep sleep'. He then resorted to setting the alternative solution that was well paved for it, to make it the only way to salvation by joining ISIS, which is, once again, the inevitability of *jihād*. He then compared shame to the garment that the nation must remove, and humiliation to the dust that it must shake off, because the time after ISIS will not be like the time before it. Al-Adnani continued to use several declarative metaphors to compare dawn with the glory

[262] Sermon No. 19

that had emerged again, and *jihād* with the sun that had risen. He compared preaching of goodness with the bright rays of the sun, so that pride and victory would be evident under the banner of ISIS, which would destroy 'the walls' surrounding the tyrants.

The following texts illustrates how al-Adnani raised feelings of fear by highlighting all kinds of worldly torment, and the eternal punishment of the hereafter that would befall on everyone who abandoned *jihād*.

Al-Adnani relied on the **pathos** aspect to provide his audience with information that enhanced their fear of their enemies, especially the Shi'ites, but, at the same time, he also provides them with a set of solutions that would help them to face the dangers that threatened them, especially of the Shi'ite tide, in an attempt to remedy it even before it occurred. Al-Adnani skilfully based his argument on connotations and inherent meanings of terms such as: noble women, rape, sanctities, and 'private body parts' which are related to the honour of the Arab male. He also relied on terms with connotations that suggest a tremendous level of weakness, humiliation, and subservience, which insults and harms the social position of the Arab male such as crying, wailing, begging, and helplessness; in addition, he also uses terms such as 'plunder', 'abuse', 'arrest', and 'capture', which are repeated in multiple contexts and often linked to a threat to the honour and masculinity of the Arab male.

To show to what extent al-Adnani relied on the **pathos** aspect by using such terms to provoke his audience's feelings of fear, an examination is required of the extensive use of these terms within a text that does not exceed a few lines.

> Are our noble women arrested and raped in *Safavid* [Iranian] prisons, while our response is crying and wailing like women? Do the Rejectionists violate the sanctities of our homes, day and night, while we beg and plead like children? Do the rejectionists see our private body parts, and take our children

> away while our response is condemnation, denunciation, and accusation? Are our belongings plundered, and our homes usurped while we beg as supplicants?[263]

Al-Adnani reconfigured the same ideas by using other synonyms for the terms in which he sought to deepen their connotations in the minds of his audience. He reintroduced ideas in the following text, for example, relating to house demolitions, money stripping, and bloodshed. He used the declarative metaphor to compare blood with the (brownish) water flowing from the gutters and filling the roads, to indicate the brutality of the Shi'ites who would practice this amount of killing against the *Sunnis* if they [*Sunnis*] did not carry weapons.

> If you do not take up arms and fight the Rejectionists, then there will be no homes, money, or honour left for you, and your blood will run in the streets and from the gutters - so weapons, weapons, weapons, weapons […] Know, O people of the *Sunnah*, that what afflicts our nation from all this humiliation, indecency, and dishonour is only as a result of us abandoning *jihād*.[264]

Al-Adnani relies again on the **pathos** aspect to cement his claim, he returned to placing his audience in the category of those who would suffer as a result of leaving *jihād*. He depicted all forms of violence and brutality that the Shi'ites would commit against the *Sunnis* within the framework of divine anger that the *Sunnis* deserve for their abandonment of *jihād*. He also portrayed this punishment as *Allah*'s justice, because He does not oppress his servants: they are the ones who wronged themselves when they abandoned *jihād*; they are able to lift this injustice by repenting for their sins and taking up arms. The intimidation in this text transcends the limits of human action, and is related to the divine act as a warning against sin.

> Know that if *Allah* punishes you in this world by means of the Rejectionists, it is because He is just, and that this punishment is due to your abandonment of weapons and *jihād*. If *Allah* saves you, it is

[263] Sermon No. 7
[264] Sermon No. 8

> because of His mercy. If you return to your religion, take up weapons, and strive hard, then it is better and safer for you, because killing your enemies will prevent them from killing you.[265]

ISIS presented many justifications for the killings which it called *jihād,* to give it legitimacy and acceptance, and to present it as a sacred form of worship through which a Muslim draws closer to *Allah*. The question is what are these justifications?

6.3 Manifestations of logos in Justifications for *Jihād*

The analysis of the following texts shows how al-Adnani relied on the **logos** aspect to present solid reasons to justify killing. He used some rhetorical tools to undermine the image of the Arab armies in order to present ISIS fighters as a suitable alternative.

> Today, our dear nation lives in slavery and humiliation, and the evidence for that is what was known as the Arab Spring revolutions, which came about by demanding freedom and dignity. The armies of tyrants have humiliated Muslims, and made them worship unjust state and polytheistic laws; except for this bitter truth, people would not have gone out to defy the bullets of tyranny and oppression with bare chests, bent on lifting injustice and breaking the chains of humiliation [...]. The armies of tyrannical rulers of the Muslim lands are generally armies of apostasy and disbelief. These are armies of non-believers who have abandoned their religious beliefs, and departed from the religion of Islām. It is necessary [therefore] to fight them - especially the Egyptian army. This is the only correct saying according to the religion of *Allah* - attested to by […] the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*, and […] respected scholars.[266]

Al-Adnani offered solutions from the past, specifically the early period of Islām, to the problems of the present, by moving in time and space. He considered it is the only way out of the current reality

[265] ibid.
[266] Sermon No. 11

from which the Arab countries were suffering. Al-Adnani relied on the reality of the Arab Spring revolutions (in the above text) to create an unfamiliar perception of Arab armies in the minds of his audience. He presents these armies as those of oppressive rulers and not those of homelands. He considered these armies were used to humiliate Muslims, and to make them slaves of polytheistic regimes; this confirms, in his view, that the performance of the armies in the task of humiliation and enslavement had already been carried out. He likens it metaphorically to something that can swallow its bitterness. Presenting Arab armies in this way creates an image of armies in the minds of his audience to quite similar images of the rulers against whom the Arab masses revolted. Al-Adnani urges the audience to resist these armies which fired the bullets of injustice that the masses defied 'with their bare chests' to break the chains of humiliation. Al-Adnani forms the image he wants within this framework for Arab armies to help him, not only to create questions about the reality of these armies, but also the feasibility of their existence. He is trying to make the idea of the national army lose most of its weight, in order that his audience becomes more willing to accept the idea of searching for an alternative to these armies - and even fighting them - an idea that al-Adnani will advocate at a later stage. Al-Adnani aims to present ISIS fighters as armies eager to implement Sharīʿa law, or more precisely, 'armies of believers'. He thus makes war against Arab armies a sacred duty as a form of *jihād* that Muslims perform under the leadership of a 'believing' party such as ISIS. He confirms that this idea enjoys evidence from the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah*, and religious scholars to make it more immune to any criticism; but, in fact, he does not present any alleged evidence to support this claim.

Al-Adnani relies on the **logos** aspect to tell his audience that the only reason which led the Arab countries to this state of humiliation is their abandonment of *jihād;* he therefore puts before them one option only to overcome this reality: reject man-made laws and replace them with what he calls '*Allah*'s law'. He explicitly states that the only way to enforce *Allah'*s law is through *jihād* for the sake of *Allah*:

> The reason for our humiliation is relying on this world and forsaking *jihād*. If we want to lift oppression and gain dignity, we must reject man-made laws of polytheists and arbitrate the law of *Allah*. There is no way to do that except by *jihād* for the sake of *Allah*.[267]

Al-Adnani cites the *Hadīth* as a powerful rhetorical tool. The *Hadīth* indicate that abstaining from *jihād* has one consequence: the humiliation that *Allah* inflicts upon those who neglect *jihād*. Quotes of this nature make it difficult to object to the idea presented by the speech, because such an objection could be interpreted as an objection to the *Hadīth* of the Messenger and narrated by Abu Bakr[268], regardless of the occasion for which this *Hadīth* was mentioned, or its reasons and original intentions.

> Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq - may *Allah* Almighty be pleased with him - said: 'I heard the Messenger - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace - say: "If people abandon *jihād* for the sake of *Allah*, […] He humiliates them, and if a people abandon enjoining good and forbidding evil, then *Allah* will punish them all".[269]

Al-Adnani also used repetition to provide reasons (**logos**) for killing. He stresses that the only way to be rid of the humiliation and shame is to fight and 'pour out blood'. The use of the term 'pour out blood' is deliberate: its intention is to justify one of ISIS's terrifying methods, and present it as a legitimate action aimed at extracting the right to liberation, lifting injustice, and breaking through restrictions. The fight was expressed with 'swords screeching' (as a metaphor for the clash of swords in battles), to evoke the early period of Islām - the historical period during which Muslims' power and influence extended over a significant area - thus reminding his audience that such glory would not have been achieved without resorting to swords and fighting.

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[267] ibid.
[268] A senior companion of the Prophet, and his father-in-law. He became the first Rashidun Caliph, after Muhammad's death. Saritoprak, Zeki. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. *Oxford Bibliographies*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved 12 December 2018
[269] Sermon No. 11

> Attaining dignity, freedom from oppression, and breaking the chains of humiliation can only be achieved by swords, shedding blood, and sacrificing lives - it will never be achieved by peaceful calls or parliamentary elections.[270]

Another reason (**logos**) that al-Adnani relied on in calling for *jihād* was that he considered it a decree that *Allah* had written for the true believers only. Based on this justification, whoever does not participate in *jihād* is considered to be a non-believer or infidel by ISIS. Al-Adnani's concept of *jihād* aims to illustrate that it is the fight on which ISIS has elaborated, and ordered to be carried out against all groups which it has classified as 'non-believers' or 'infidels'. Al-Adnani uses the method of citing the verses of the *Qur'ān* as a powerful rhetorical argument, and he relies on it as a tool to measure the level of the faith of others. He relies on several rhetorical questions to disbelief for those who refrain from fighting or who leave *jihād*; while he places those who do not call for resorting to *jihād,* or who are 'sinning against' ISIS fighters, in a position worse than the disbelief itself.

> Fighting is the fate of those who believe, and *Allah* Almighty did not prove the faith of those who sought permission from the Prophet - may *Allah's* prayers and peace be upon him - to abstain from fighting. *Allah* said: 'Those who believe in *Allah* and the Last Day do not ask you for exemption from striving with their possessions and their lives. *Allah* is fully aware of the righteous. Only those who do not believe in *Allah* and the Last Day ask you for exemption. Their hearts are full of doubts, so they waver in their doubts'.[271] God did not prove the faith of those who failed to commit to a single battle, seeking permission from the Prophet - peace and blessings of *Allah* be upon him - so how about a person who sits without permission? Or how about those who left the entire *jihād*? Or how about someone who discouraged the entire nation from *jihād*, and even sinned against the *mujahideen*, and condemned them for their *jihād* - God forbid?[272]

[270] ibid.
[271] *The Holy Qur'ān: at-Tawbah,* verses 44 and 45
[272] Sermon No. 1

Apostasy (Muslims who had abandoned Islām) was also one of the most important reasons (**logos**) for al-Adnani to call for *jihād*. He used the term 'apostasy' several times, and in several sermons, to describe persons or groups as apostates, depending on various justifications. Al-Adnani gave apostasy a new dimension this time. The apostate in the following text is the one who neglects, avoids, or abandons *jihād*.

> Indeed, *Allah* - Blessed and Exalted - preserves His religion and His servants, so if a people forsake *jihād*, He will replace them with others, and He loves them while they love Him. The Almighty said: 'O you who believe! Whoever of you goes back on his religion—Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him - kind towards the believers, stern with the disbelievers. They strive in the way of Allah, and do not fear the blame of the critic. That is the grace of Allah; He bestows it upon whomever He wills. Allah is Embracing and Knowing'.[273 & 274]

Declaring someone an apostate permits the shedding of his or her blood according to al-Adnani. He was not satisfied with intimidating his audience from this punishment, but he also told them that *Allah* will completely abandon these apostates by replacing them with faithful people who reciprocate His love. They express this love for their Lord by obeying Him and fighting His enemies as a way of preserving the religion. This annihilation and replacement are tasks that *Allah* will undertake, and this meaning increases the legitimacy of the call to kill the apostates or, more precisely, the ones who leave *jihād*. This is what al-Adnani confirms through citing the *Qur'ān* - the rhetorical method that he usually uses to reinforce his argument. This rhetorical approach is the way in which he chooses to interpret the text to serve his goals, such as killing any Muslim who does not fight with ISIS. Al-Adnani bases this concept on the grounds that those who decide not to fight with ISIS are the apostates to whom the *Qur'ānic* verse refers.

[273] The Holy *Qur'ān: al-Ma'idah,* verse 54
[274] Sermon No. 1

Al-Adnani did not spare any effort to call for war in every possible way. The analysis of the next texts shows how he exploited customs and traditions which are still acceptable in most Arab societies, to introduce *jihād* as a means of retaliation.

Al-Adnani relied on portraying the Shi'ites as the brutal and barbaric enemy through many of the texts included in his sermons. He relied on the **logos** aspect to present reasons and arguments to make his audience more willing to accept the idea of confronting this 'enemy' by any means. Al-Adnani counted on the right to self-defence to justify the brutal practices of ISIS. He shows them as methods that ISIS had been forced to adopt, in response to the practices of the Shi'ites who were executing the *Sunnis*. This violence is therefore within the framework of reaction or revenge, and the restoration of rights. Al-Adnani took advantage of this framing to make it easy for him to use terms that carried connotations of brutality and barbarism such as cutting off limbs, burning skins, and beheadings. He thus links violence and brutality with the Shi'ites only - ISIS's actions were merely a reaction and revenge equal and similar to the original acts perpetrated by the 'enemy'.

> While the rejectionists executed some of you, they opened the gates of Hell on themselves. We will dismember them with explosive belts and booby traps, burn them with cannisters, cover their breath with silencers, exterminate them, and execute many more of them for each of you executed, and if we said that we will kill a thousand for each of you, then a thousand would be few. We have promised to avenge those executed among you; to pursue and prosecute those who butchered you, including judges and investigators […]. We have fulfilled our intentions - praise be to *Allah*. As for your butchers, we are slaughtering them, as well as judges, investigators, and guards - in one day we slaughtered thirty-five.[275]

Al-Adnani identifies with the feelings of those audiences who reject the American hegemony over the region (Iraq and the Levant), in order to exploit these feelings, and provide more reasons (**logos**) to justify *jihād* as an imperative to change reality. He claims that this is the only way to establish a

[275] Sermon No. 3

just ‘Caliphate’ through which all the problems of the nation will be solved. This so-called Caliphate is being presented as a utopia of good and peace, although peace does not prevent it from being built on bodies and spilt blood, as the following text explains.

> Oh, people of the *Sunnah* in Iraq and the Levant - America and its crusader alliances, and the Jews behind them, with the tedium of non-belief - all will never be satisfied with the establishment of an Islāmic state, because they know that this state will empower Islām and its people, and humiliate polytheism and its people. With *jihād* the Caliphate will be restored so that Islām and Muslims reign over the world again. The non-believers will never allow it to happen as long as they are able to fight us’.

He attempts to present the Islāmic State or the Caliphate as an essential project that will benefit all Muslims so, they all are called to participate in establishing this state.

> Muslims must know that the establishment of the Islāmic state will not be achieved except on skulls, body parts, and the pure blood of our enemies. Oh, people of the *Sunnah*, you have to take up arms even though you hate to do it, but this is the grace of *Allah*. ‘Fighting is ordained for you, even though you dislike it. But it may be that you dislike something while it is good for you, and it may be that you like something while it is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know’. [276&277]

Terms such as ‘skulls’, ‘body parts’, and ‘blood’ appear to be used intentionally to intimidate the enemies of ISIS. This has been proven (in more than one way, and on several occasions) through ISIS’s bloody brutality and extreme cruelty towards those who violate its ideology. Al-Adnani also resorts to the method of quoting from the *Qur’ān*, and interpreting it in favour of ISIS, as he urges the *Sunnis* to fight on the grounds that it is *Allah*’s will.

[276] *The Holy Qur’ān: al-Baqarah,* verse 216

[277] Sermon No. 13

It can be said that al-Adnani's call to fight generally relied on the **pathos** aspect by provoking many emotions such as pride, revenge, and fear, and he used them as justifications and reasons (**logos**) for ISIS's atrocities. The most dangerous justification al-Adnani relied on, however, was to consider the killing that ISIS carries out as a form of sacred worship to draw closer to *Allah*; not only that, but it is an act in which *Allah* himself participates and even blesses. This justification will be evident from the analysis of the texts that are discussed in the following code.

6.4 Manifestations of ethos in holding *Allah* responsible for the killings

The general context for the rhetoric that ISIS adopted to call for *jihād* clearly depends on quoting verses from the *Qur'ān* which directly expresses the will of God. The sermons also relied on quoting from the *Hadīth* of the Prophet, which also represents the will of God, but indirectly, as they express the words of the Prophet inspired by God. Quoting from the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth* helps al-Adnani to benefit from the three aspects of persuasion **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos** because his words will be supported by the words of God and the Prophet, and that evokes the feelings of the audience and sustains his reasons and arguments. However, the analysis of this code shows the dominance of the **ethos** aspect which he relies on to add authority and authenticity to his claims. Holding God responsible for killing not only makes this act sacred and legitimate, but it also makes ISIS merely a tool that God uses to kill His enemies. This perception frees the fighters from the feelings of guilt, and gives them a sense of satisfaction of themselves, because they perform an ordinance commanded by God, so they draw closer to Him and worship Him. This idea also generates a set of questions about failure to perform the sacred duty of *jihād*, and the punishment that it entails in this world and the hereafter.

The following text shows al-Adnani's reliance on **ethos** through direct and explicit attempt to hold God responsible for killing, and to limit the role of ISIS as a tool used by God to kill. ISIS only

detonated the car, for instance, but God was the one who killed dozens, spreading terror, and defeating the people of the village.

> We announce the end of the stage of 'demolishing the walls', and the beginning of a new stage which we have called 'Extermination of soldiers'. Thankfully, it started with hitting Nusayri [an Alawite] village with a car bomb in Hama. *Allah* killed dozens of them, filling their hearts with terror, and defeating them so they evacuated the village and ran away.[278]

The following text shows God's role in supporting ISIS, as He is the one who gives them victory. This perception helped al-Adnani to rely on **ethos** to show the booby-traps of explosive belts and cars, and killing and intimidating ISIS's enemies, all of which are legitimate and acceptable acts, as they are supported and blessed by God.

> O the lions of the Islāmic State in Iraq and the Levant: patience, patience, and steadfastness, steadfastness […]. The ranks of the Rejectionists have faltered, terror filled their hearts, and soon, *Allah* will grant you victory over them – *Allah* willing. So, hit them with explosive belts and booby-traps and canisters. Kill them with muffled guns and snipers, and panic and terrorise them with incursions.[279]

The following introduction illustrates two examples of the methods that al-Adnani relied on in many sermons to hold God responsible for killing: the first is by replacing the phrase 'in the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate' with the phrase 'in the name of God, the Strong, the Robust'; and the second by replacing the phrase 'God sent his Prophet as a mercy to the world' with the phrase 'God sent his Prophet with the sword as a mercy to the world'.

> Praise be to *Allah*, the Strong and the Robust, and may blessings and peace be upon he [the Prophet] who was sent with the sword as a mercy to the world.[280]

[278] Sermon No. 10
[279] ibid.
[280] Sermon Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 23

Contrary to the method adopted by most (if not all Muslims) which usually begins any sermon with the phrase: 'in the name of *Allah*, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate', al-Adnani uses the phrase: in the name of *Allah*, the Strong, the Robust', taking advantage of the connotations it bears that spread fear instead of tranquillity and mercy that usually accompanies the word '*Allah'*. He continued with the phrase 'blessings and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad, who was sent 'with the sword' as a mercy for humanity'. This is also contrary to the familiar phrase that is used by Muslims in general, which states that Muhammad was sent to show God's mercy (the spirit of Islām) to the world: it does not include 'with the sword'. These phrases that al-Adnani adopted and repeated in many sermons can be considered as rhetorical tools to justify killing those who violate ISIS's concept of Sharīʿa (Islāmic law), and to present this killing as the mercy (or core essence of Islām) for which God sent Muhammad to uphold.[281] The following text shows al-Adnani's reliance once again on **ethos** to hold God responsible for the fight.

> We praise *Allah* Almighty who blessed our nation with the grace of *jihād*. […] He opened the door wide for us […] especially in Iraq and the Levant.[282]

Al-Adnani begins his talk with the metaphor through which he compares *jihād* to something that has a door that can be opened wide; however, he explicitly states that God is the one who opened this door, and He is the one who made it easy for fighters to join *jihād* everywhere, especially in Iraq and the Levant, and that God granted this fight only to his faithful servants in the form of a great blessing.

Al-Adnani continues holding God responsible for killing in the following text, and tells the fighters that they are God's soldiers who are fighting for Him against all the soldiers of the devils.

> Be certain of *Allah*'s victory, for you are *Allah*'s soldiers who are fighting for His sake, and the rejectionists are Satan's soldiers who are fighting for the tyrants. So, fight the devil's guardians, […]

[281] He cites a prophetic *Hadīth* through this expression, and refers to it implicitly, although it is not a *Hadīth* 'that was written by Bukhari or a Muslim in this wording, so the *Hadīth* transmission is weak, not strong, and it is not suitable to be inferred separately in such a serious case', according to Dr. Shawky Allam, Mufti of the Egyptian Republic. http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/1942708.aspx [accessed 26/05/2018]
[282] Sermon No. 13

> for their plot is weak. May *Allah* grant you victory over them, and - *Allah* willing - you will break their power, and - *Allah* willing - you will eradicate them, and *Allah* will fill their hearts with horror, and He will defeat them, and He will give you their weapons and equipment as spoils [of war]. Watch all their movements; enter their areas from every door; slaughter them as you slaughter ewes; and kill them as you kill flies. If America and Iran support them […], then your Lord […] is the best lord and protector.[283]

Involving God to this extent bestow **ethos** and gives the fighting a sacred element, for God is the one who will vanquish the enemies, break them, root out their existence, fill their hearts with terror, and defeat them; not only that, but He will also give the money and weapons of 'Satan's' soldiers to His faithful soldiers. Holding God responsible for killing gives way for al-Adnani to call for more brutality, such as slaughtering enemies like sheep, and crushing them like flies. These two eloquent analogies were used to reduce the impact of a violent act such as beheadings, and depicting it as an act equal in value to killing ewes, or even crushing flies.

Al-Adnani reproduced his hypothesis that holds God fully responsible for killing through various rhetorical methods. To further clarify this idea, it was necessary to quote the following text, after which al-Adnani cited many verses from the *Qur'ān* in an unfamiliar way.

> Our *Qur'ān* obliges us to fight the whole world without exception, and we would only apply the law of our Lord. If we were given the choice, we would have chosen otherwise. If what we follow or fight over were an opinion, we would have retreated; […] if it were a constitution, we would have justified it; if it were a fortune, we would have bargained with it. But it is the *Qur'ān*, and the guidance of our Prophet - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace. […] Our motivation to do so is what our Lord has told us. [284]

[283] Sermon No. 15
[284] Sermon No. 25

Al-Adnani followed the previous text by a large number of fragmented verses which dealt with killing. He selected all these *Qur'ānic* verses [sometimes parts of verses] out of context to underpin his argument which holds God responsible for killing.

> 'Fighting is ordained for you' [285], 'Mobilize, light or heavy' [286], 'Respond to *Allah* and to the Messenger when He calls you to what will revive you'[287], 'And why would you not fight in the cause of *Allah*'[288], 'Unless you mobilize, He will punish you most painfully'[289], 'Never turn your backs on them'[290], 'And fight the polytheists collectively'[291], 'Do you fear them? It is *Allah* you should fear, if you are believers'[292], 'Fight them. *Allah* will punish them at your hands'[293], 'Fight those who do not believe in *Allah*, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid what *Allah* and His Messenger have forbidden, nor abide by the religion of truth—from among those who received the Scripture—until they pay the due tax, willingly or unwillingly'[294], 'When you encounter those who disbelieve, strike at their necks'[295], 'Fight them until there is no more persecution, and religion becomes exclusively for *Allah*'.[296]

The citation of this large number of verses illustrates the effort made by al-Adnani to persuade the audience to adopt the assumption of God's complete responsibility for killing. Al-Adnani tells the audience, directly and frankly, that ISIS is fighting all the sects of the world to establish the law of God, as shown in the *Qur'ān*, and that it has no fleeting worldly ambitions or goals. Al-Adnani's assertion of this idea places the responsibility for killing completely on God, as the *Qur'ān* is the word of God, and all its rulings have been set by Him. Al-Adnani therefore suggests that everything that ISIS does is merely carrying out God's commands. The text explicitly shows that ISIS has no

[285] *The Holy Qur'ān: al-Baqarah, verse 216*
[286] ibid, *at-Tawbah, v*erse *41*
[287] ibid, *al-Anfal, v*erse *24*
[288] ibid, *an-Nisa', verse 75*
[289] ibid, *at-Tawbah, v*erse *39*
[290] ibid, *al-Anfal, v*erse *15*
[291] ibid, *at-Tawbah, v*erse *36*
[292] Ibid, *at-Tawbah, v*erse *13*
[293] ibid, *v*erse *14*
[294] ibid, *verse 29*
[295] ibid, *Muhammad, verse 4*
[296] ibid, *al-Anfal, v*erse *39*

choice in this fight, and it cannot retreat from it, modify its essence, or even compromise, because the whole matter of fighting is solely in the hands of God and His Messenger.

6.5 Summary

Al-Adnani relied heavily on the aspect of **pathos** to support his argument on the necessity of *jihād*. This was shown in his attempts to provoke many types of feelings such as shame, humiliation, fear, intimidation, pride, revenge among others. He relied also on the **logos** aspect to give reasons to justify and motivate killing. He benefited from the **ethos** aspect to gain authority and to legitimate ISIS's brutal actions. To get the best effect of these three aspects of persuasion, he quoted a large number of the *Qur'ānic* verses, usually out of context, that all talk about killing to the extent that he holed Allah responsible for the killings and death. The sermons also depended on terminology clearly reliant on issues which are considered taboo for most Arabs. The selected terms were based on provoking emotions towards matters relating to honour, religious belief, slavery, humiliation, rape of honourable women, bloodshed, and other terms which covered in the analysis.

ISIS presented itself as the responsible party for implementing this form of *jihād* in compliance with *Alla*h's commandments and implementation of His law (Sharīʿa). Al-Adnani suggested to the audience of his sermons that ISIS could be considered as an alternative to the Arab armies, and that it would be able to perform the military tasks such as protecting the people, defending them, and restoring their rights and dignity within the framework of a Caliphate.

All the ideas presented by al-Adnani serve in one way or another the project of establishing the Caliphate which he portrays as a solution that serves the present and future of the Arab nation. This idea will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven

The indicators of the utopian city in the legendary Caliphate

7.1 Introduction

The analysis of this chapter shows how al-Adnani draws heavily on the aspects of **logos** and **ethos** to present his arguments in support of the Caliphate project. The aspect of **logos** emerges clearly in his attempts to present convincing reasons and logical arguments to invite his audience to accept the Caliphate as the best alternative above all other ruling systems, Sharia as an alternative to man-made law, and allegiance as an alternative to elections. The **ethos** aspect is prominent in the rhetorical attempts to support the authority of ISIS as a state or a Caliphate that derived its greatness from the absolute care and support of God, the authenticity of this state's leaders who have qualities of the ideal caliphs that give them a sacred status as representatives of God as His shadow on earth. The **pathos** aspect appears less in this chapter, however, it can be seen in the rhetorical attempts to evoke the sentiments of the public, whether in making arguments in support of establishing the Caliphate, or even in confirming the authenticity of ISIS leaders and fighters.

The analysis shows how al-Adnani provides reasons to legitimate the Caliphate. To emphasise this idea, he moves in space and time or from past to present: from the early Islāmic period to the Arab Spring, and a longing for social justice. He consequently employed folktales and myths regarding the heroism of the early Islāmic era to provide solutions for the current problems confronting Arab and Muslim-majority countries. He claims that these solutions will help them to rid themselves of their feelings of humiliation, shame, loss of honour, or victimhood.

Al-Adnani used certain terms with connotations that created positive feelings, sympathy for, and acceptance of, the Caliphate. He simultaneously used other terms within contexts that generated negative feelings, dispute, and rejection of any other regime. These terms are shown in figures 7.1 and 7.2 below.

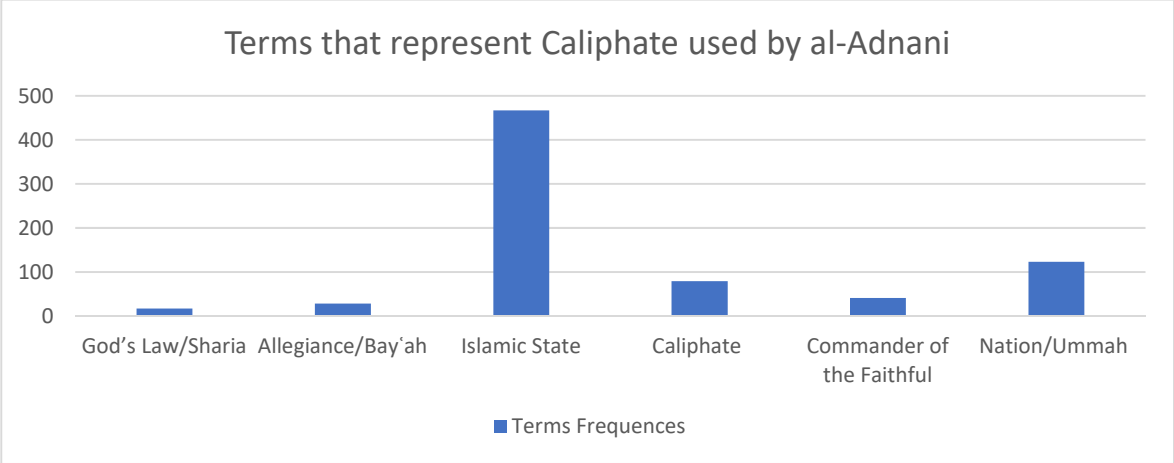


Figure 7.1: terms representing the Caliphate (see also **Table** 7.1 in Appendix 3)

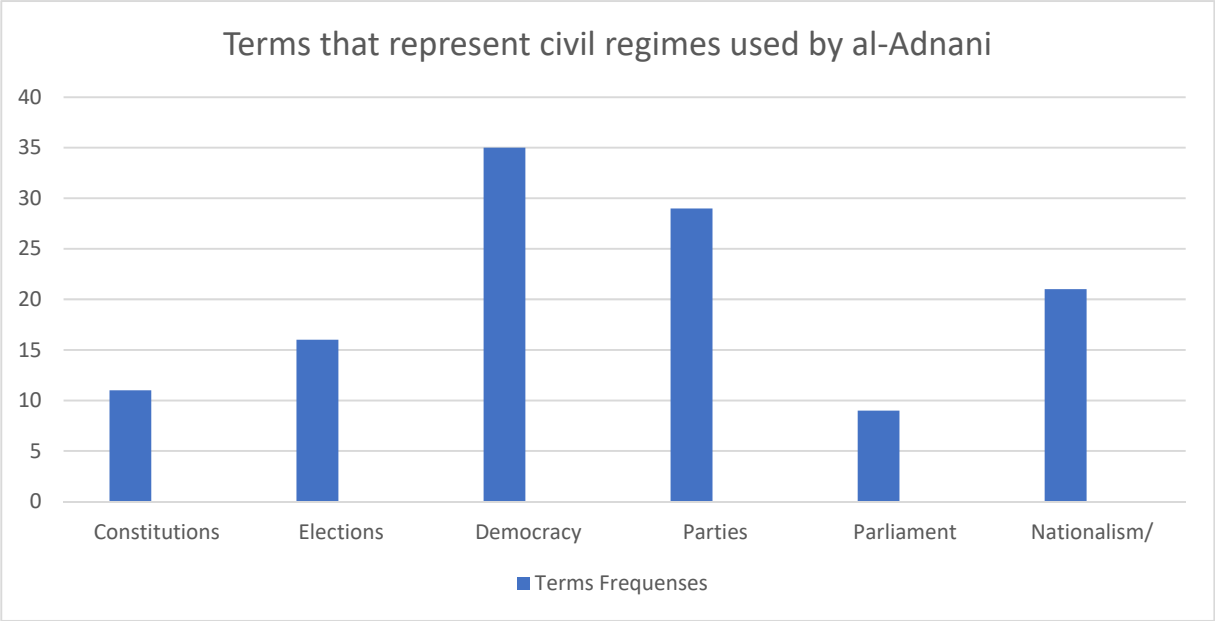


Figure 7.2: terms representing other regimes (see **Table** 7.2 in appendix 3)

The regular use of pronouns also emerged from the analysis; for instance, 'we, us, they, you' to reveal the ideological orientations of ISIS. Rhetorical tools such metaphors, similes, hyperbole, repetition and rhetorical questions are central to the analysis, to help in clarifying al-Adnani's strategies in showing the authority and authenticity of the Caliphate as an ideal State, and to equate the ideology

of ISIS with Sharīʿa. The following section provide ample examples of the manifestation of the appeal to **logos** as evidenced in ISIS' speeches.

7.2 Manifestations of logos in establishing the Caliphate and implementing Sharīʿa

ISIS presented its political project as that of the entire Islāmic nation, based on perfect divine law. This perfection made it free from the impurities and shortcomings of the rest of other systems and constitutions. To gain the necessary support for the success of this political project, al-Adnani relies on the **logos** aspect to provide his audience by good reasons to portraying the tremendous attributes that their Caliphate will enjoy. He seeks to present the Caliphate as an ideal state. The next code sheds light on the most important features of this Caliphate or the 'legendary state', as presented in the speeches.

7.2.1 The supremacy of Caliphate above all other ruling systems

The Caliphate is presented as the only legal system within the framework of the ideology of ISIS because it is based on the divine law of Sharīʿa. This makes it sacred and fundamental above all the systems established by humans. Al-Adnani introduces many reasons **(logos**) to present the Islāmic state as an ideal solution to the problems from which Arab countries generally suffer such as humiliation, shame, lack of justice, loss of rights, poverty, unemployment, and many other complexities that stand as obstacles to the future of the people. Al-Adnani exploits the extreme despair afflicting the people of the region who are aware of the corruption and injustice of the ruling classes, to present the Islāmic state as an urgent and necessary requirement, imposed by the circumstances represented by the right to defend lives, money, family, and honour.

The following text explains how al-Adnani tries to consolidate the idea that the establishment of an Islāmic state is the only solution to all these problems.

> O our people of the Sunnis, the Islāmic state has only existed to defend you, preserve your rights, and stand up to your enemies. The Islāmic state is your only sincere hope after *Allah* Almighty to get out

> of the dark tunnel into which your leaders and your representatives have led you through their alliance with the Shi'ites.[297]

To impel people to accept this system, ISIS works on disparaging the attractive ideas within other systems by linking them to disbelief and Satan, and thus considers their followers as infidels; in addition, ISIS excludes the possibility of achieving any progress through applying other systems than that of a Caliphate. Al-Adnani relies on the **logos** aspect to present reasons that support this vision. He argues that, because they are human systems, they are subjected to the goals of the individuals who call for them to be adopted. Democracy, for example, is an infidel's and polytheist's notion, according to the following text.

> Sheikh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi - may *Allah* have mercy on him - said regarding the approach to democracy and its people: 'We have declared a sworn war against this pernicious approach. We have shown the judgment of the devotees of this false belief and the losing method. Whoever seeks to implement this approach with aid and assistance is considered a non-believer, and a supporter of those who believe in it. Therefore, he will be judged as those who call and demonstrate for it. Election candidates are pretenders of deity […], and those who elected them have taken them as lords and gods other than *Allah*. […] According to the religion of *Allah*, they are disbelievers - they must leave Islām.[298]

Al-Zarqawi described democracy as a 'wicked' approach. The candidates for the elections are pretenders to deism: anyone who elects them recognises their lordship and divinity. He claims that the position of Shari'a and the religion of God is to disbelieve, and banishes all these people from Islām by implicitly signifying that anyone can be killed without a trial.

Al-Adnani provides another reason to reject democracy by equating it to religion through an eloquent analogy; by doing so, he seeks to alienate people from democracy on the grounds that he who believes

[297] Sermon No. 3
[298] Sermon No.17

in it is like someone who embraces a new religion other than Islām. This analogy provokes the feelings of Muslims who believe that their religion is the last one of the divine religions, and is the true religion that God revealed to all people; therefore, if people believe in democracy, then they will be considered as infidels, as can be deduced from the following text.

> The alleged political process that you accepted, kept silent about, and entered into, is nothing but a false American peg; a malevolent Zionist conspiracy; a filthy Magian rejectionist hoax; a peg on which the Crusaders hang their false, imagined victories of suppressing *jihād*, spreading the religion of democracy.[299]

To disbelieve in the nation-state as well, al-Adnani relies on the **logos** aspect to present reasons that support his argument. He describes the nation-state as non-Islāmic because it depends on Arab Gulf money; it was established through intelligence; used to make peace with the Jews; and is ruled by tyrants from the West. He also described the governments of these states as non-Islāmic to say that they are pretending to be religious, but are not. He claims that, as the nation-state is subjected to tyrants from the West and the East, it is not administered according to Islāmic law. Its objectives will consequently not serve Islām, and will instead be used against it by targeting the project, as shown in the following text.

> The project of a local, national state is called Islāmic, supported by funds and *fātāwa* [non-binding legal opinions by Muslim scholars] from the scholars of the Salul family[300] and the Gulf governments. Its project is engineered by its intelligence, and there is no harm in its government being long-bearded and short-dressed - a government that pays for peace to Jews and protects borders [...]. This project is apparently Islāmic but, in fact, it is a nation-state which submits to tyrants in the West, and follows them in the East. Its aim is to divert the path of *jihād* and strike it at its core.[301]

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[299] Sermon No.1

[300] Abdullah bin Abi Salool was a chief of the Arab tribe Banu Khazraj, and one of the leading men in Medina. He seemingly became a Muslim upon the arrival of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, but remained treacherous to Islam until his death. Al-Adnani refers to the Saudi family as the 'Salool' family, to indicate the hostility of Saudi rulers to Islam. *William Montgomery Watt, "`Abd Allah b. Ubayy", Encyclopaedia of Islam, the second in 1954–2005.*

[301] Sermon No.10

ISIS is not standing against a specific system of government; it is standing against any system that may be followed to form a government and to choose a ruler. It is, moreover, against any constitution or law that does not belong to its interpretation of Sharīʿa or its ideology which is presented as a 'divine' Sharīʿa:

> We ask you to reject all constitutions and man-made laws, not to recognise their advocates, followers, and representatives (*al-bara'*). And we ask you to adopt the *Muhammadiyah* divine law and declare loyalty to its advocates, followers and representatives (*al-wala'*). Adopt the Islāmic State's project to restore your lost Caliphate, sanctities and wealth, and to take back your glory, honour, and sovereignty. All this will not return to you until you return to your religion and restore your Caliphate.[302]

ISIS used the word *al-wala'* (loyalty) to promote support, love, honour, respect, and being with the beloved, both outwardly and inwardly, and *al-bara'* (disavowal) as the dimension, salvation, and enmity, after an excuse and warning[303]. These two terms have religious connotations due to their presence in *Qur'ānic* verses. Al-Adnani here relies on the **ethos** and **pathos** aspects; intentionally he employed them to help him link loyalty to the ideology of ISIS with that of loyalty to Islām, and the loyalty to its leaders with the loyalty to God and the Prophet. ISIS's leaders and ideology will thus gain strength, legitimacy, and sanctity. Al-Adnani also considered the rejection of all human regimes, and standing against their theorists is equal to the rejection of the disbelief and confronting its advocates. ISIS has made pursuing its ideology the only way to build an Islāmic State, and restore the Caliphate and the goodness, sanctity, dignity, and sovereignty that the nation had lost. The reasons for the decline and defeat of the nation of Islām were caused only by the fall of the Caliphate. The text equates religion with the Caliphate, which gives this system the full sanctity of religion. Al-Adnani spoke on behalf of ISIS through the pronoun we to represent the only group that adopts

[302] Sermon No.1
[303] Bin Ali, Mohamed. (2012) *The Islamic Doctrine of Al-Wala'wal Bara'(Loyalty and Disavowal) in Modern Salafism.*

Sharīʿa in its correct form. He likewise provokes the feelings of the audience, and motivates them to support his organisation by using the pronoun you to indicate that if they support ISIS, they will regain their Caliphate, sanctity, good things, pride, dignity, and sovereignty.

Al-Adnani relies on **pathos** to intimidate people from the consequences of not establishing or defeating the Caliphate for Islām and Muslims in the following text.

> We have warned you before, and we still warn you that the war is a *Safavid* crusade; a war against Islām; a war against monotheism; a war against the Sunni; and if the Islāmic state were broken – *Allah* forbid - there is no further Mecca for you, O *Ahl-as-Sunnah*, nor Medina, and the rejectionists will exhume the graves of the Companions of your Messenger - may *Allah*' prayers and peace be upon him - on top of which are the graves of the Rashidun caliphs - may *Allah* be pleased with them - and you will live as slaves and servants for the rejectionists.[304]

Al-Adnani equates the war against ISIS with the war against Islām, monotheism, and the Sunnis. He depicts the defeat of ISIS with the catastrophe from which the Sunnis will suffer because the Shi'ites will violate the sanctity of Mecca, Medina, and even the graves of the Companions of the Prophet. They will make the Sunnis into slaves and servants. The solution that al-Adnani is trying to present to protect the Sunnis, is to establish a Caliphate that will protect them from the evils of the Shi'ites.

Al-Adnani's rhetoric approached the ideology of ISIS with divine law. Al-Adnani, in fact, claims that the Caliphate literally applies this perfect divine law that expresses God's perfection. This idea will be further clarified in the next code.

[304] Sermon No. 22

7.2.2 The dominance of Sharīʿa over man-made laws

Al-Adnani declared that ISIS is the only group that applies divine law, and therefore, it must have the support of the people. He aims to make a differentiation between the just divine law and the man-made laws through this claim. Based on this comparison, he called for confronting man-made laws and preventing their application.

Al-Adnani cites a text by Osama bin Laden that doubts any constitution that does not adhere to all details found in Islāmic law, and therefore the details must be found in ISIS law. His pretext was that abandoning the application of any of the provisions of Shari'a is an admission of its imperfection, and therefore becomes an admission of God's imperfection. This idea is shown in the subsequent text.

> Sheikh Imam Al-*Mujaddid* Osama bin Laden - may *Allah* have mercy on him - said [...]: 'If people adhere to all the rulings of Islām - except for the prohibition of usury, for example, which allows usurious banks - then the constitution of their State will be considered as an 'infidel', because this behaviour includes people's belief that Sharīʿa is not perfect; therefore, *Allah*, its creator, is not perfect'.[305]

To support this idea, al-Adnani presented it under the name of Osama bin Laden, who has been described as a Sheikh, Imām, and '*Al-Mujaddid*'[306]. These terms carry religious connotations that give positive impressions concerning the personality of Osama bin Laden as a distinguished religious figure, a leader seeking renewal, and worthy of the trust of Muslims. The form that the Imām accordingly presents to the legitimacy of the constitution, (or its illegitimacy) is the correct one. This interpretation of Sharīʿa gives ISIS an unlimited ability to accuse any constitution of disbelieve due

[305] Sermon No.17
[306] Al-Mu'atadid (Mujaddid) was one of the greatest of the Abbāssid caliphs, known for his ruthless skill in dealing with competing dynasties, sects, and factions. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Mutadid-Abbasid-caliph-died-902) [accessed 14/10/2021]

to the extreme difficulty related to implementing all Sharīʿa rulings, not to mention implementing all the details of ISIS law.

Al-Adnani quoted a text from a sermon entitled 'The Apostates in Kuwait', which accused Kuwait of being an 'infidel state', as well as all those who supported its constitution; those who did not support the Islāmisation of the State were deemed apostates. This quotation is shown in the following text.

> O apostate, if you are against the Islāmisation of the State and the system of this country's government, then I am against the entire system of government in this country and the constitution that you cling to under my shoes. Rather - by *Allah* - I avoid stepping on it with my shoe so that it will not become defiled, and I will throw it in the garbage. Be aware that the Kuwaiti constitution is unfaithful, unfaithful, unfaithful. Whoever rules this constitution is an infidel. By *Allah* - I will not give up this word! By *Allah* I will not give up this word! Whoever rules by this constitution is an infidel.[307]

Several rhetorical tools were used in the above text. Terms with religious or political connotations such as constitution, regime, disbelief, the Islāmisation of the regime, apostates, and infidel. Repetition was often used to emphasise that the constitution is an 'unfaithful' one, and therefore the ruler, the State, and the citizens are all 'unfaithful' or infidels. The metaphor was also used when al-Adnani compared the constitution to impurity. He used the word 'apostate' with the pronoun 'you' to describe everyone who accepted the constitution, and the word 'unfaithful' to describe the constitution; this confirms that everyone who supports the constitution also supports disbelief.

Al-Adnani also refuses to choose the leaders through elections because this does not follow the correct Islāmic law. The following code shows the correct way to choose the leaders according to ISIS.

[307] Sermon No.17

7.2.3 Allegiance as an alternative to elections

Al-Adnani also criticises the election process, as explained in the two following texts. He refers to **logos** or logical argument to show the reason of the failure of the process to choose strong leaders who can take over the affairs of the people. He presents the pledge of allegiance as the only correct way to choose the leaders because it applies Islāmic law.

> We call on the clans of the authentic and proud Sunnis to pledge allegiance to the Islāmic state, and to support the *Mujahideen* and adopt them for the sake of *Allah*. If you do that, then - by *Allah* – you will possess the world, and land will be subjugated to you. 'O you who believe! Be supporters of *Allah*, as Jesus, son of Mary, said to his disciples, 'Who are my supporters towards *Allah*?' The disciples said, 'We are *Allah*'s supporters'. So, a group of the Children of Israel believed, while another group disbelieved. We supported those who believed against their foe, so they became dominant.'[308] So what harms you, O *Ahl al-Sunnah* clans, to embrace *jihād* and the *mujahideen*, to reject the traitorous politicians, and to be supporters of *Allah*?[309]

Al-Adnani used the term 'pledge of allegiance' in the above text as an Islāmic alternative to the term 'election', calling on the Sunni tribes to pledge allegiance to ISIS, and to support the fighters. If they did, He swears by God that these clans will possess the world and rule the land. Al-Adnani quotes a verse from the *Qur'ān* to prove that the victory of ISIS is a victory for God, and brings the supporters of ISIS closer, as Christ's apostles did. In doing so, he appeals to the ethos aspect to bestow authority ana authenticity to ISIS.

Al-Adnani returns to using the term 'allegiance' for a new purpose this time, which is to choose the caliph, as the following text shows.

> We warn the Muslims by declaring the Caliphate has become a duty for all Muslims to pledge allegiance to it and support Caliph Ibrahim - may God preserve him - and nullify the legitimacy of all

[308] *The Holy Qur'ān: as-Saff*, verse 14
[309] Sermon No.13

> Emirates, groups, states, and organisations to which his authority is extended and his army is connected. [...] It is not permissible for anyone who believes in *Allah* to spend that night without accepting him as an imām, whether this caliph is a righteous or immoral man.[310]

People with decision-making powers are unanimous in choosing a specific person, claiming that he has met all the characteristics of the caliph that Sharīʿa enjoins, and therefore people must obey him absolutely; everyone is forbidden to deny him being an imām of Muslims, whether he is a believer or an infidel; even if he seized power with a sword, and used the soldiers to subdue the Muslims. Swearing allegiance to this caliph means that he possesses absolute authority over all areas controlled by ISIS, and his authority nullifies any other authority by rendering it illegitimate.

'Parties' is also a term that has connotations that may be attractive to some. To alienate people from it, al-Adnani used an eloquent analogy to describe them as walls that form obstacles to the *Mujahideen*.

> The parties you place your hopes on, and the blocks that you are chasing after, are really nothing but a wall built to confront the *Mujahideen*.[311]

The following text explains how al-Adnani addresses reasons (**logos**) against the voting process, and how he calls for it to be replaced with fighting:

> The Islāmic State knew that truth can only be recovered by force, so it chose ammunition boxes, not ballot boxes; confronting injustice and change can only be achieved by the sword; consequently, it [ISIS] insisted on negotiating in trenches, not in hotels. It thus starts battles in the same way as one starts a fire.[312]

Al-Adnani used the metaphor to describe the State as a person who attempts to recover his or her rights. He also used the eloquent analogy of 'simile', thus likening the raids to the fire being lit.

[310] Sermon No. 19
[311] ibid.
[312] Sermon No.6

Terms such as ‘sword’ and ‘raids’ have historical connotations. Al-Adnani aimed to bring images of Islāmic battles to the minds of his audience to remind them of their (past) glories and power. Al-Adnani employed these rhetorical tools to indicate that it was the State or the Caliphate that chose the ammunition and the sword. It is consequently responsible for war and confronting democracy. He presents the Caliphate as the only legitimate form that should represent the ‘*ummah*, so the choice of the Caliphate is also legitimate compared to the illegitimate procedures of democracy.

The analysis of the next code shows how al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect to support the authority of ISIS as a state or a Caliphate, and the authenticity of this state’s leaders as God’s shadow on earth.

7.3 Manifestations of ethos in Supporting the Authority of the Caliphate and the Authenticity of Leaders, Fighters, and Society

The analysis of the texts of this code sheds light on the strategies that al-Adnani followed to persuade his audience to adopt and support ISIS's vision of the Caliphate, which relied on the myth of a utopian city protected by divine providence.

ISIS declared that its constitution was derived solely from divine law, and that the mechanism for selecting the ruler follows that law. It depicted its society with an ideal, compassionate and believing one, therefore, the declaration of this claimed ‘perfect Caliphate’ became based on divine foundations.

7.3.1 The mythological state derives its power from God

Al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect to establish authority for the Caliphate. He tries to present it as the only form of a just state with which God is pleased through the following text, by preferring it over the rest of the regimes in which ISIS has no belief, as shown several times before in this analysis. ISIS claims that it represents the entire Islāmic nation that is united by a creed that is neither based on colour, race, or language, nor does it recognise geographical borders or nationalities. Its

message and state must extend over all the earth because the power of Muslims, and their pride and sovereignty have, for many centuries, depended on their unity based on religion, not homeland, lineage, or language.

> Here [the Islāmic State] monotheism has been achieved. Here, loyalty and disavowal are incarnate. Here is *jihād* for the sake of *Allah*. There is no polytheism here: no idols, no nationalism or patriotism, no polytheistic democracy, and no blasphemous secularism. There is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab, between black and white. Here is the brotherhood of the American, Arab, African, European, Eastern, and Western peoples - enjoining good and forbidding evil, according to *Allah*'s law. Here the whole religion is for *Allah* - thanks be to *Allah*. Here is the obedience to monotheism. Here is the abode of Islām. Here is the land of the Caliphate.[313]

Al-Adnani once again uses Islāmic terminology to present an ideal picture of living in the Caliphate, where all people are equal, regardless of their nationalities, colour, or language, and where good prevails over evil.

Al-Adnani grants this utopian city a depiction that combines justice, ideal rulers, an ideal society, fighters seeking to spread true religion, tranquillity and goodness in all parts of the world. The more prominent features highlight the authenticity of this utopian city can be extrapolated from the following text.

> The rules of *Allah* will be established by the edge of the sword, while the holes have already been closed: crosses have been broken, graves have been demolished; and prisons have been destroyed. People throughout the country are enjoying their livelihoods and travels, feeling safe about themselves and their money. *Walā* (Governors) and judges were appointed, *al-fay*, *al-jizya*, *al-kharaj,* and *zakat* were collected. Courts were established to resolve disputes and address grievances; evils were removed; lessons and seminars were held in the mosques, and - thanks be to *Allah* - the entire religion belonged to *Allah*; only one thing remained - the *'ummah's* duty. The '*ummah* is sinning by not doing it […]. The nation has not sensed pride since it lost it; a dream that lives in the mind of every believing

[313] Sermon No. 22

> Muslim; a hope for which the heart of every *Mujahid* flutters - the Caliphate! The Caliphate! the lost duty of the age.

Al-Adnani quotes from the *Qur'ān*: '*Allah* said: 'When your Lord said to the angels, I am placing a successor on earth,'[314] he also quotes what Imam al-Qurtubi said in his interpretation: 'This verse originates in the monument of an imam and a caliph to be heard and obeyed; to unite Muslims, and to implement the provisions of the caliph'.[315]

The previous text highlights al-Adnani's attempts to benefit from **ethos**. It begins with ISIS claiming that it is establishing its state on the foundations of the perfect and sacred law of God. The practices of ISIS members appear as sacred acts of worship within this frame to draw close to God. They can, therefore, distance themselves from appearing as a group which seeks to achieve its goals, but it confirms that everything they do is for the benefit of Islām and Muslims.

Al-Adnani recalled the early historical period of the Islāmic state by evoking the stereotype of a Caliphate to redefine terms such as security, justice, and economic prosperity. The above text clarifies that he uses Islāmic economic terms such as *al-jizya* (form of tax paid by non-Muslims to their Muslim leaders according to Islāmic law)[316]; *al-fay* (spoils the Muslims take from the non-Muslim warriors without fighting)[317]; and *al-kharaj* (a type of individual Islāmic tax on agricultural land and its produce developed under Islāmic law)[318]; and Islāmic political terms such as *wali* [319], *mujahid*, Caliphate and caliph. He also uses Islāmic terms that represent daily life details such as lessons sessions (lectures),[320] and terms that express an Islāmic vision of citizenship and belonging such as *'ummah.* Al-Adnani used these terms to describe the form of life within the framework of

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[314] *The Holy Qur'ān: al-Baqarah*, verse 30
[315] Sermon No. 19
[316] Abdel-Haleem, M. (2010) *Understanding the Qur'ān: Themes and Style.* I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd. pp. 70, 79
[317] https://islamweb.net/ar/library/index.php?page=bookcontents&idfrom [accessed 9/11/2021]
[318] Cooper, Richard S. The Assessment and Collection of Kharaj Tax in Medieval Egypt, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 96, No. 3. (Jul. – Sep., 1976), pp. 365–382
[319] The Muslim ruler who fulfils certain conditions such as Islam, reason, masculinity, justice, knowledge, puberty, freedom, and physical aptitude, to belong to the Qurayshi tribe, to rule by Allah's command, and to avoid prohibitions. https://www.almarakby.com/web/play-275.html [accessed 9/11/2021]
[320] The lectures concerned preaching and counselling that are usually given by Muslim clerics.

the Caliphate, in which people would live in safety, and be ruled by believers who apply the just law of God. These rulers find solutions to the people's problems through fair judges, and enjoy economic well-being through a just distribution of money, funds, *kharaj,* and *zakāt*, in addition to receiving useful knowledge through religious scholars.

ISIS exploits its prevailing perception of the ideal period of the early Islāmic caliphate to assert that the restoration of the glories of the nation will only be achieved by restoring that period. ISIS also emphasises applying these reasons to the present, as it is the most successful model known to the Islāmic nation. Al-Adnani relies on the **pathos** aspect to hold the responsibility of restoring the caliphate for society by relying on provoking the feelings of pride, and the desire to obey God. He used repetition to assert that restoring the caliphate is the only way to achieve all this well-being. He also cited a verse from the *Qur'ān* to strengthen this claim. A closer examination of the meaning of this verse reveals that it is a dialogue between God and the angels that took place before the creation of man. God tells the angels that He will create human beings to inhabit the earth, generation after generation. Al-Adnani took the verse out of its historical context and imposed on his audience a specific interpretation that serves the goals of ISIS. The origin of this verse, according to al-Adnani, is the call to install a successor to implement God's rules.

ISIS grants itself the right to monopolise divine support, which helps to amplify its power because it is supported by God. The following text shows the divine role in the victory of ISIS, and the defeat of the rejectionists, the Crusaders, and the apostates. God also has a role, according to al-Adnani, in terrorising them, and facilitating the seizing of their weapons. Al-Adnani lists this idea in different ways in the same text, by repeatedly confirming that ISIS does not win with the help of money or equipment, but only by the grace of God. This rhetorical attempt shows how al-Adnani relies on the aspect of **ethos** to claim that God supports ISIS.

> Wasn't the Islāmic state fighting more than two million Crusaders with their armies and allies at the same time as the rejectionists with their militia and parties, and the apostates with the *Sahawat*

> ['awakening' movements] and the factions [...] so that all of those were unable to eliminate it [The Islāmic State] and it still remains? Is there any entity in the world that stands in the way of the rejectionists, deters and abuses them, as much as the Islāmic State does?[321]
>
> The state does not win because of numbers or equipment, or because of weapons or money, but the State triumphs by the grace of *Allah* alone.[322]

The 'tremendous' power ISIS has is derived from the support and care of God, and it is one of the most important mythical images that occupied a significant part of its narrative. It was presented in multiple forms and remarkable repetition. ISIS tried to create this image by focusing on the idea of confronting America, despite the large military force it has. ISIS claims that it has a monopoly on faith for itself, therefore, it also has a monopoly on the help of God and his angels, especially since He promised that the truth would triumph, even if it is represented by a small group of people; no earthly force can overcome divine power. This support from God enabled the *Mujahideen* to uncover the myth of the invincible American army. This army lost its prestige, and it was no longer feared, not even by the youth. Al-Adnani injects Israel into the text to win sympathy from his audience which is angry about the occupation of Palestine; he therefore presents ISIS's alleged victories over America as a means of scoring victory over Israel – which, according to al-Adnani, has been long overdue by Arabs and Muslims, as shown below.

> *Allah* Almighty has supported the *Mujahideen* against America in many places, and He shamed it [America] and healed the faithful hearts […]. America went mad about the blows, so it gathered its most saddened - thundering and frothing, and leading the fiercest, most malicious crusade in history, to eradicate the roots of the *Mujahideen,* and extinguish the flame of *jihād* […]. It came to establish a state for Israel from the Euphrates to the Nile […], and the whole world, except for a small group of

[321] Sermon No. 10
[322] Sermon No. 18

> believers, joined it […], but the mask of the indomitable America has fallen […], and history has recorded a new defeat for the Americans, and their army is no longer feared, even by the young men.[323]

Al-Adnani does not lose sight of the importance of talking about Jerusalem, because this topic aims to evoke feelings in his audience that ISIS unites with the Arab nation's pain for the loss of Jerusalem. ISIS not only wants to regain Jerusalem, but also Andalusia, the glory lost by Muslims; al-Adnani vows that ISIS will pay them both back. He not only provoked the feelings of the audience to restore the glories of the past and to correct the mistakes of the present, but he implicitly referred to a prophetic *Hadīth* that talked about 'conquering Rome' in the future, before Doomsday. He reminds the audience at the same time, that the realisation of Muslim dreams depends on the support of God - monopolised by ISIS - and true believers, as is common throughout the sermons.

> And we do not forget to renew the covenant with the nation: we do not have the pleasure of living until we liberate Muslim prisoners everywhere, we restore Jerusalem, claim back Andalusia, and conquer Rome - *Allah* willing - [...] in fulfilment of the sincere promise of the Prophet - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace.[324]

Al-Adnani links God's will with restoring glory to the Islāmic nation by standing with the Caliphate and rejecting all other regimes. He swears by God that this is the only way through which He will subjugate all nations to the believers, as He promised them. Al-Adnani used several rhetorical methods to reinforce his idea, such as an oath to God and repetition. He also used 'We' to suggest to the audience that ISIS is taking on the task of fighting for them, while he used 'You' in an attempt to attribute victory and gains to them.

> So come, O Muslims! Rally around your caliphs; return to what you were, forever. The kings of the earth, the knights of war, come, so that you may live as dignified, honoured, and worthy masters. Know that we are fighting for a religion that *Allah* promised to support, and a nation endowed by *Allah* with glory, supremacy, sovereignty, succession, and empowerment. Muslims come to your

[323] Sermon No. 2
[324] Sermon No. 10

> glory, to your victory for the sake of *Allah* - if you disbelieve in democracy, secularism, nationalism, and other garbage and ideas of the West - and return to your religion and your faith, then - by *Allah* - and by *Allah* you will possess the earth, and East and West will submit to you. This is *Allah'*s promise to you. This is *Allah*'s promise to you. This is *Allah*'s promise to you.[325]

Al-Adnani also relies on the **ethos** aspect to support the authenticity of this state's leaders who have qualities of the ideal caliphs that give them a sacred status as representatives of God as His shadow on earth. The next section provides examples to further illustrate this idea.

7.3.2 ISIS leaders as absolute sanctification and perfection

Al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect to give ISIS leaders additional advantages over other members of the organisation. This was in order to present them as leaders who are capable of giving people their utopian city in this worldly life, and to lead them to win paradise in the afterlife. The sermons focused on using terms with historical Islāmic meanings such as Commander of the Faithful to name these leaders; in addition, the leaders named themselves after the Prophet's Companions in an explicit reference to them. They gave themselves names such as 'Abu Bakr' and 'Omar', (whom most Muslims perceive as the best men in Islāmic history). The aim of this imitation was to equate ISIS's leaders with the Prophet's Companions and successors. To underpin these concepts, some ISIS leaders resorted also to linking their lineage directly to the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad to present themselves as his descendants, and therefore, the rightful leaders to govern a 'utopian' Caliphate.

An assessment of the characteristics that al-Adnani attributed to the leaders, for example, is illustrated in the following text.

[325] Sermon No. 19

> Do you know who Abu Bakr is? If you are asking about him, then he is Hosseini Qureshi from the lineage of the pure Prophet, a working and worshipping scholar, and a *Mujahid*. I saw in [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi] the belief, endurance, audacity, and ambition of Abu Musab [al-Zarqawi], with the mercy, justice, rationality, and humility of Abu Omar [al-Shishani], and the intelligence, cunning, persistence, and patience of Abu Hamza [al-Muhajir]. It is necessary to approach *Allah* by washing Abu Bakr's feet and kissing them; calling him the Commander of the Faithful [*Amir al-Mu'minin*[326]]; and sacrificing our money, lives, and children for him. *Allah* is witness to what I said.[327]

To bestow authenticity to ISIS, al-Adnani was keen to attribute other qualities to its leaders such as mercy, justice, and humility, in addition to the image of purity and sanctity that were created for them through titles, names, and lineage. Al-Adnani was also keen to give the leaders other attributes that would qualify them to lead the '*ummah* such as intelligence, patience, love of work, courage, ambition, and experience that would surpass even the qualities of the Companions themselves. His intention was to make ISIS leaders reach the state of absolute divinity or perfection which would help him to ask people to sacrifice their lives and money, as well as washing and kissing the feet of these leaders as a means of worshipping God.

It would be difficult to find all such qualities in one person, and impossible for a person to reach absolute perfection. Al-Adnani, however, extends his notion of leadership to the reverence of the leaders to such a degree that these qualities would distinguish all leaders, without exception, because the will of God is deeply involved in harnessing them to serve the Caliphate. He claimed that the will of God will continue to intervene and assign such distinguished leaders to ensure the survival of the Caliphate. If a caliph is killed, then God will replace him with a better caliph, who is more perfect and more proficient in his work. These leaders take upon themselves the task of preparing and

[326] Amir al-Mu'minin is an Arabic title that is usually translated 'Commander of the Faithful'. It is sometimes translated as 'Prince of the Believers', since the word 'amir' is also used as a princely title in states ruled by royal families or monarchies. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Volume I: A–B. Leiden: E. J. Brill. p. 445
[327] Sermon No. 1

qualifying more leaders, according to al-Adnani, by creating students who are superior to their teachers, as the following text explains.

> If we lose a leader or a prince, then *Allah* replaces him with someone who has mastered management and continues in the same path, surprising us by his good performance, his greatness, and the intensity of his mastery. He [new leader] is more oppressive over the enemies of *Allah*, and he enrages them more than those before him. We had previously thought that we would not find someone to fill his place![328]

He goes on to explain what would happen if a leader were killed:

> If we lose our Emir, Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, God will reward us with a better leader - *Allah* willing - *Mawlana* Abu Bakr al-Husseini al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, Commander of the Faithful - may *Allah* preserve him and guide him - as well as his deputy, Abu Abdullah al-Husseini al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi - may *Allah* protect him. If we lost our minister, the lion, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, he would be replaced by the men he raised and left behind as fierce jungle lions.[329]

The following text is a declaration of the establishment of the Caliphate, and it shows the qualities of the caliph who had reached the degree of sanctification and perfection.

> The Islāmic State, represented by the people of Power and Decision among the notables, leaders, princes, and the Shura Council decided on the declaration of the establishment of the Islāmic Caliphate, and the installation of a caliph. Muslims should pledge allegiance to the Sheikh *Mujahid*, the working scholar and worshipper, the Imām, the descendant of the family of the Prophet, al-Qurashi al-Hashemi Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. He was chosen as the first to reign. He accepted the pledge of allegiance, and thus became an imām and caliph for Muslims everywhere.[330]

[328] Sermon No. 24
[329] Sermon No. 1
[330] Sermon No. 19

Al-Adnani suggests to the audience that the reasons for which God bestowed upon Muslims the grace of restoring the Caliphate are their solidarity and obedience to their princes; for those who break the orders of the princes, their reward will be smashing their heads with bullets.

> Then know: one of the greatest reasons for this victory that *Allah* the Blessed and Almighty has bestowed upon you is your solidarity and lack of disagreement, your listening and obedience to your princes, and your patience with them; so, remember these reasons, and preserve them; get together and do not differ; obey and do not quarrel. Beware! beware of splitting our unity. Whoever wants to split our unity, we will split his head with bullets, and let his brains fall out - whoever he is.[331]

One of the ways that al-Adnani relied on to support the establishment of the Caliphate is to demean politicians and leaders. He presented them as people unable even to protect themselves from the Shi'ite threat, and that this matter is clear, even to the youth. Adults should therefore realise it, and not be deceived by these politicians, as the following text shows.

> The truth of your politicians has been revealed, and it is no longer hidden, even among the young. Remember their [politicians] inability to fulfil any of your legitimate demands, or to recover or collect any of your stolen rights […]; not one of them is able to protect himself if the *Safavid* circle revolves above him as well as protecting individuals, so how would they protect others? How impossible! How impossible![332]

Al-Adnani continues to narrate the misfortunes of the politicians. He uses a metaphor in the following text, to liken these leaders to animals that can be mounted and driven by the desires of Crusaders and Shi'ites:

> Your elected leaders who claim to represent you are nothing but animals that can be mounted by the crusaders and hateful rejectionists. […]. They are satisfied with humble positions and the alleged gains.[333]

[331] ibid.
[332] Sermon No. 7
[333] Sermon No. 1

Al-Adnani's reliance on the **ethos** aspect helped him to make all ISIS leaders receive divine honour, and bear the noblest and fairest qualities, for they derived their wisdom from the Book of God (the *Qur'ān*), and they obeyed all God's commands. They moved away from all the forbidden things, which made them surrounded by a great aura of sanctity, as they represent God's shadow on earth. Their sanctity is derived from that of the divine self since God assigned these leaders to serve the people. Absolute obedience must be offered to them by all fighters. What are the specifications, therefore, that these fighters must possess to serve establishing the Caliphate?

7.3.3 The Caliphate sees fighters as ideal soldiers or the selected few

Al-Adnani depicts ISIS members as exemplary people who have the blessings of God, so He chose them and made them belong to the only group with which He was pleased, and would grant them the Caliphate. Al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect to present these fighters as role models, and bestows on them certain qualities, for they are the men who will protect the law of God, defend its sanctity, restore rights, and spread joy and reassurance among people. Their enemy, in return, must bear bad qualities, for they are tyrants and oppressors, and they must be defeated in order for good and truth to prevail and triumph.

> Congratulations to you, O lions of the state, for this great victory and the clear conquest [...]. Congratulations to you, men of faith and guardians of monotheism, you are the knights of the fights and the heroes of the battles. Congratulations to you; like you who preserved the sanctity and restored the rights - may *Allah* bless you. History has recorded your victories. The present has proven […] your sincerity. […] The tyrants of the whole world are frightened.[334]

Al-Adnani did not separate the terms 'believers' and 'ISIS fighters', but rather presented them as two sides of the same coin. This idea can be extrapolated from the following text:

[334] Sermon No. 10

> But *Allah* insists that His light be fulfilled [Islām will be the religion of the whole humanity], so *jihād* will continue until the Hour [Doomsday] begins […]. The Messenger of *Allah* - may *Allah'*s prayers and peace be upon him - said: 'A small group of my *'ummah* [community of followers] is still fighting on the command of *Allah*. Whoever disobeys them [the small group] will not stop them. They will continue to practice *jihād* until Doomsday'.[335]

Al-Adnani resorted once again to citing the *Hadīth* of the Prophet as a rhetorical method through which texts could be interpreted to serve his goals. He calls for *jihād* as an obligation for believers which must continue to be performed until Doomsday. Those who were entrusted with this task, according to the *Hadīth,* is a small group of believers who will fight to raise the word of *Allah*; by using this *Hadīth*, al-Adnani relied on the **ethos** aspect to limit the attribute of faith and steadfastness to the truth for ISIS fighters who will perform the obligation of *jihād*. This is so that the light of *Allah* will shine over the earth as a sign of the spread of Islām.

Al-Adnani emphasises the unique and distinctive characteristics of ISIS members, and repeats this idea in various ways, as shown in the following text.

> The statesmen demolished the fortifications of Taji and Abu Ghraib prisons; crushed the checkpoints surrounding them; and killed more than one hundred and twenty of the strong 'mega-men' of the two prisons.[336]

To show the strength of these soldiers, their enemies must also be extraordinarily strong, but ISIS surpasses them, despite the strength of their enemies. These enemies have fortifications and prisons, but the heroes can crush them. The use of the verb 'crush' gives the meaning of 'demolish and destroy' powerfully, so that the highest of these forts and prisons would be razed to the ground. The text also contains words such as 'trouncing the enemy' to mean certain and complete death. Al-Adnani described ISIS's enemies as strong 'mega-men' to indicate the enormity of their bodies and

[335] ibid.
[336] ibid.

physical strength - all this in addition to the constant emphasis on the ability of ISIS fighters to prevail over their enemies, despite their strength and the enormous numerical superiority compared to the small number of ISIS fighters.

ISIS's rhetoric suggests that the task of selecting fighters is also a task that God takes care of, for He is the one who chooses his righteous servants and makes it easier for them to join ISIS: 'Come, for we never doubt that whoever among you is good: God will bring him'.[337]

Al-Adnani did not neglect to describe the fighters as above material gains, because they had become ascetics in this world, and had no claim or purpose for them. They strove to win the never-ending bliss of Paradise, and for that, they are ready to endure all hardships, even if they are forced to sit on hot coals or surrounded by fire.

> Our souls have emptied [themselves] of the adornment and falsity of this worldly life, and we have left all its gains and benefits; the embers became our mattress, and the flames became our cover. We have become so familiar with distress, affliction, worry, and calamities, that our troubles have become boats, and our difficulties have become demands.[338]

ISIS attempted to win the support of the largest number of defenders of its so-called 'idealistic' state which vowed to save humanity from injustice, tyranny, and corruption. ISIS's founders and followers used to present themselves as the selected group, and thus claimed that God promised them victory; because He would give victory to His faithful servants, He would make them His successors on earth, just as He made those who preceded them successors from among the believers, as shown below.

> Our state will remain because it was built from the remains of the martyrs, and was watered by their blood. It remains because the support of *Allah* in this *jihād* was more evident than the sun in the midst of the sky […]. It remains because we are certain that *Allah* will not break the hearts of the oppressed monotheists, and will not gloat over the oppressive people against us. It remains because *Allah*

[337] ibid.
[338] Sermon No. 1

> Almighty made a promise in His holy Book, and said: '*Allah* has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will make them successors on earth, as He made those before them successors, and He will establish for them their religion—which He has approved for them—and He will substitute security in place of their fear'.[339; 340]

Al-Adnani's sermons highlighted the great specifications of the Caliphate leaders and fighters. What are the specifications, therefore, that the society of this Caliphate must possess to form a new, solid link to be added to the chain that forms this alleged utopian city?

7.3.4 The Caliphate sees society as an ideal society

To emphasise the uniqueness of the Caliphate society, al-Adnani also relies on the **ethos** aspect. For instance, he uses terms such as *Muhajirun* and *Ansār*:

> Today you see the lions of the Islāmic state from the *Muhajirun* [immigrants] and *Ansār* [supporters], and you see their potency and strength.[341]

> The immigrants will keep coming to the Islāmic State, even if they are bound in chains. There will be no suspicion between them and the state. They will not be prevented by a tyrant or misguided by anyone.[342]

These two terms have considerable religious and historical connotations in the minds of Muslims. The *Muhajirun* (immigrants) were the first converts to Islām and the Islāmic Prophet Muhammad's advisors and relatives who emigrated with him from Mecca to Medina. The *Ansār* (supporters) were the local inhabitants of Medina who, in Islāmic tradition, took the Islāmic Prophet Muhammad and his followers (the *Muhajirun*) into their homes when they emigrated from Mecca.[343] Al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect when he borrowed the great position of emigrants and supporters in the hearts of

[339] Ibid, *an-Nur*, verse 55
[340] Sermon No. 1
[341] Sermon No. 15
[342] Sermon No. 16
[343] definitions.net/definition/Muhajirun.

Muslims to add it to the members of his organisation; the title of immigrants was consequently given to all fighters who joined the ranks of ISIS from all countries around the world. His reasoning was that they had migrated from their countries, and had come to help the Islāmic state. The title of *Ansār* was given to everyone who stood by ISIS and supported its project. The use of these two terms suggests that ISIS community is similar to community that formed at the Prophet's time, and this is another attempt by al-Adnani to surround them with an aura of sanctity.

ISIS claims that it is the best of the nations described in the *Qur'ān* as it enjoins good and forbids evil. It is also the group of believers who do righteous deeds, and to whom God has promised success over the earth. It is also the only monotheistic group, and it is the category that God promised to honour and is sublime. Al-Adnani reinforces all these claims by quoting four verses of the *Qur'ān* to suggest to his audience that ISIS society members are idealists and believers, and deserve to be supported by God and respected by people.

> And *Allah* - may He be blessed and exalted - has honoured and preferred the nation of Muhammad - may *Allah* bless him and grant him peace - and made it the best among the nations. *Allah* Almighty said: 'You are the best community that ever emerged for humanity: you advocate what is moral, and forbid what is immoral', and believe in *Allah'*.[344] *Allah* has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that 'He will make them successors on earth, as He made those before them successors'.[345] 'They worship Me, never associating anything with Me'[346]; but power belongs to *Allah* and His Messenger, and the believers'.[347]

By quoting these verses, al-Adnani aimed to reinforce the notion that the Caliphate community is the best nation, it is characterised by goodness and faith, and therefore deserves support from God.

[344] *The Holy Qur'ān: Ali 'Imran*, verse 110
[345] ibid. *an-Nur*, verse 55
[346] ibid.
[347] Ibid, *al-Munafiqun*, verse 8

7.4 Manifestations of ethos in approaching the ideology of ISIS as a divine law or Sharīʿa

It is worth noting that al-Adnani equated the ideology of ISIS with Islāmic law (Sharīʿa), and relied on it to exclude anyone who did not support this ideology by killing him or her in the name of God.

> We will disbelieve all who do not follow the law of *Allah*, and proceed - *Allah* willing - and we will continue with blowing up, exploding, damaging, and destroying.[348]

He said that forcing people towards monotheism in relation to this context is the implementation of the most important goal of God's law. This view aims to justify ISIS's use of force as a legitimate means of implementing Sharīʿa.

> The Islāmic State which existed in the past or the one which exists now aims to coerce people into monotheism and to follow the law of *Allah*.[349]

Al-Adnani has repeatedly defended ISIS by forcing people to conform to its practices in different ways. The text below explains how he relies on the **ethos** aspect to connect ISIS's approach and God's law (Sharīʿa), and to define ISIS members as defenders of Sharīʿa. He also demonstrates how ISIS will fight and even kill, to force people to apply every detail associated with ISIS's concept of Sharīʿa.

> This is our approach, and this is our creed. We will not change, […] we will not accept a system or a state that does not rule by the law of *Allah*. If the religion is ninety-nine per cent for *Allah*, we will not be satisfied, […] or persuaded: we will start the fighting. We will fight the armies of the whole world until the religion is 100 per cent for *Allah.* Let the nations of the earth gather against us as a whole. 'In *Allah* I have put my trust; so, come to a decision, you and your partners, and do not let the

[348] Sermon No. 24
[349] Sermon No.3

> matter perplex you; then carry out your decision on me, and do not hold back'.[350] 'My Master is *Allah*, He who sent down the Book, and He takes care of the righteous'.[351, 352]

Al-Adnani resorted to hyperbole, as shown in the above text, by way of using numbers and percentages to justify killing. He rendered a mythical image of ISIS fighters when he exaggerated the depiction of ISIS as a great power, capable of igniting the fires of wars. He challenged the armies of the world if people leave out the application of even a small percentage of the divine law. Al-Adnani immediately quoted Verse (*āyāh*) 71 from *Sūrat Yunus*, after that, in order to reinforce the ideas that he proposed. If the meaning of the verse is more closely examined, however, it does not fulfil the conditions and details of Sharīʿa that al-Adnani laid down. The verse, in fact, calls only for unity and trust in God. The use of the verse in this context suggests the text which came before is correct, and that its implementation meets God's commands. Al-Adnani was not satisfied with using only this verse, but directly reinforced it with Verse 196 of *Sūrat Al-A'raf* to confirm that God will support the righteous, who, in this case, are ISIS members. Examining the text further, it reveals that al-Adnani also used pronouns (we, our, us) to speak of ISIS as a valuable group of God's soldiers.

The next example illustrates various aspects of the ideology of ISIS which was introduced as the correct interpretation of the divine law.

> We triumphed on the day we declared *albara'a* and *alwala'a*[353], demolished idols, committed to monotheism in every mosque, stoned the adulterer, killed the wizard, cut off the hand of the thief, flogged alcohol drinkers, and restored to Muslim women their chastity with a veil. We won the day, we broke the ballot boxes, set up a Caliph with ammunition boxes and beheadings, and we prayed, and we gave the obligatory charity [*zakāt*], and we enjoined good and forbade evil.[354]

[350] The Holy *Qur'ān*: *Yunus*, verse 71
[351] Ibid. *Al-A'raf*, verse 196
[352] Sermon No.3
[353] *Al-bara'a* wa *al-wara'a*: for the sake of God; declare opposition or take up arms against the enemy for the sake of God
[354] Sermon No.22

Al-Adnani, once again, relies on **ethos** to justify the use of exaggerated violence against those who disobey the ideology of ISIS. He claims in the above text that Sharīʿa validates the atrocities committed by ISIS, such as stoning adulterers, flogging drinkers of alcohol, and killing sorcerers; all these punishments are not even mentioned in the *Qur'ān*. Al-Adnani also claims that the use of ammunition, killing and beheading are means validated by Sharīʿa for appointing a caliph. He presents several acts of worship in the same paragraph, such as prayer, *zakāt*, and enjoining good and forbidding evil. His intention is to confuse the public so that the brutality of ISIS appears to be equal to the normal worship that Muslims perform on a daily basis. The use of the 'we' pronoun aims to introduce ISIS as the only group which is committed to divine law.

This insistence on applying every detail of Sharīʿa made it easier for ISIS to claim that other people were infidels. It thus became easy to find justification for spilling their blood and seizing their money. Al-Adnani quotes *Qur'ān*, Ibn Battal, and the Prophet for further support of this notion as shown in this context:

> *Allah* – may He be glorified and exalted – said: 'But if they repent and perform the prayers, and give the obligatory charity, then they are your brethren in faith'[355]. Ibn Battal said: 'The […] evidence from this verse established that he who abandons the obligatory duties, or one of them, is not released. He is not a brother in faith; his blood and money are not protected'. Our Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him - attests to that in his saying: 'If they do this, their blood and money will be protected'.[356]

Al-Adnani starts this text by quoting Verse 11 from *Surat At-Tawbah*. This verse indicates that everyone who believes in the oneness of God and performs obligatory duties, is considered a Muslim; therefore, his blood and money are safe.[357] The Prophet's *Ḥadïth* carries the same meaning of the verse. It calls for prayer, *zakāt*, fasting, *Hajj*, and so on. It also explains that if the person performs what God has enjoined him, then he is truly a Muslim; therefore, his blood and money must be

[355] *The Holy Qur'ān: At-Tawbah,* verse 11
[356] Sermon No.4
[357] *Tafsir al-Tabari* (2019) Edited by Abdelhai Doukali. Kindle Edition. Surat *At-Tawba*, verse 11

protected. The verse and the *Hadīth* did not mention anything about punishing those who do not apply these religious forms of worship. Al-Adnani used the verse and the Prophet's saying in a specific context, however, to justify killing anyone, under the pretext that he or she had neglected to perform a certain obligation, even though it may have been a simple one such as not fasting for one day during Ramaḍān.

The following example explicitly reveals how al-Adnani relies on the **ethos** aspect to equate Sharīʿa and the ideology of ISIS by limiting the place where the correct interpretation of Sharīʿa is applied; that is, only to territories which are controlled by ISIS.

> Remember, you are the one who has been misled - before you start to fight the Islāmic State - there is no place on earth in which the law of *Allah* is applied, and ruling over it is all for *Allah***,** except in the lands of the Islāmic State.[358]

ISIS detailed Islāmic law in the following text according to its own ideology which did not exclude even Muslims themselves from killing, but considered that the blood of a Muslim who does not adhere to its notion of Sharīʿa is the blood of a dog, and therefore, there is no objection to spilling or wasting it.

> I swear to *Allah* – saying 'no god but *Allah'* will not benefit you unless you fulfil what it takes from monotheism: disbelieves in tyranny; invokes the law of *Allah*, rejects man-made constitutions; accepts guardianship and love for Muslims, and shows enmity and hatred for the unbelievers. Otherwise, your blood is nothing but the blood of a dog, whether you are an Arab or a foreigner.[359]

The above text shows how al-Adnani used the terms Sharīʿa and man-made constitutions to divide people into believers and infidels, despite his prior knowledge that many Arab countries apply man-made constitutions, and that people are subjected to these constitutions by virtue of laws. This generalisation makes anyone a permissible target for killing if he or she does not apply the form of

[358] Sermon No.23
[359] Sermon No.4

Sharīʿa which is approved by ISIS. Al-Adnani used a simile to equate violators of ISIS's law with dogs, not only to diminish their status, but also to clarify that it is easy to kill them.

7.5 Summary

To sum up, al-Adnani makes use of three distinct means of persuasion: **ethos** to add authority to the Caliphate as the only legitimate representatives of the Islāmic nation and authenticity to figures such as Osama bin Laden, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and ISIS's fighters and society; **pathos** to appeal to the emotions of his audience by stimulating feelings of pride, arrogance, and dignity that can be obtained through loyalty to the Caliphate; provoking feelings of fear, humiliation, and shame which might befall them if the Caliphate did not emerge; and **logos** by way of presenting reasons to convince his audience to adopt the Caliphate system of governance, abandon all other systems, and favour ISIS's own interpretation of Sharīʿa as an alternative to any other constitution.

Al-Adnani used *terms* with religious connotations to replace terms with well-known political connotations to assist him in presenting persuasive arguments regarding the Caliphate, Sharīʿa and allegiance. These terms are from classical Arabic, and are used significantly in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, which helps to consider them as supporting elements in the persuasion process.

The *pronouns 'you'* and *'yours'*, have been used to convince the audience that the benefits of establishing a Caliphate would return to *'them'*, and to show them that the presence of ISIS would be to serve them, and to achieve *their* interests.

A variety of rhetorical tropes such as *similes, metaphors, and repetition* have been used to downplay all human regimes and constitutions in favour of a Caliphate which is based on the Sharīʿa that ISIS recognises and introduces as the only correct interpretation of divine law.

Al-Adnani quoted verses from the *Qur'ān* without considering the context in which they were mentioned, or even the harmony of the meanings of the verses with the goals he aimed to achieve.

He sought, instead, to place these quotes within a specific context in which he merges the ideas and beliefs of ISIS with the rulings of divine law, in an attempt to give these ideas and beliefs legitimacy and acceptance.

The rhetorical analysis explored in the last three chapters considers the extent al-Adnani mastered employing the rhetorical tools to frame his position, establish and support his claims, and to communicate effectively to persuade the audience to accept these claims. This study evaluates whether the influence of ISIS discourse may be facilitated by its closeness to some elements of mainstream public discourse in Jordan. In other words, it aims to understand the basis of potential impact of such extremist discourse amongst university students in Jordan. The rhetorical analysis is therefore supplemented with audience analysis to evaluate the university students' interpretations of extremist's messages.

Chapter Eight

Students' perceptions of faith and disbelief

8.1 Introduction

The audience study was conducted in a manner consistent with the rhetorical analysis of al-Adnani's speeches which was built on three main themes: 'Us' versus 'Them', *jihād*, and Caliphate. The questions that formed this analysis, therefore, also depended on these three themes. The focus groups analysis is presented over two chapters; each one is a discussion on the students' answers relating to each theme in an attempt to discover the extent of compatibility (if any) between the ideology of ISIS and university students' beliefs and ideas. In other words, to understand the basis of potential impact of ISIS discourse which may be facilitated by its closeness to some elements of mainstream public discourse in the region. Reference is made to the table of themes and key questions presented in the Methodology chapter.[360] The focus of this chapter is on the university students' debate and perceptions of the concepts of faith and disbelief in order to juxtapose these perceptions with the rhetoric of extremist ideologies. The analysis will shed light on the students' tendencies in general and will elaborate on the manifestations of the three aspects of persuasion - **ethos**, **pathos**, and l**ogos**, which the students try to count on to help them justify some immoderate tendencies. For example, we will see the manifestations of **ethos** to bestow authenticity on some trends by quoting the *Qur'ān*, *Hadīth*, or defence of a specific act by claiming that one of the Companions did such an act, or even attributing that act to God Himself, which are all approaches used by extremists to support a specific argument. We will also see some manifestations of **logos** in the justifications provided by some students to legitimise an immoderate trend that they adopt and defend.

[360] Table 4.4. appendix 5

8.2 The good 'Us' camp versus the evil 'Them' camp

The discussion of the concepts of faith and disbelief required a large proportion of the time devoted to dialogue with each group. The two concepts were approached from different angles with which many students may have been unfamiliar; some of the students felt that it was difficult to define these concepts, while others provided immediate judgments based on certain religious or even social templates.

The largest percentage of students (25%) defined faith from a perspective that is not limited to Islām, and may include any belief; others (17%) that it is a person's ability to treat people kindly; several students (12.5%) introduced it from an Islāmic vision, while some (12.5%) saw faith as not being harmful to others. Students who believed that it is limited to people who embrace Islām is the same (12.5%), while a few students (4.2%) linked faith to people's behaviour; the minority gave priority to repentance for sins.[361]

When students were asked how they distinguished a believer from an unbeliever, some students answered that they were unable to do so, for many reasons. Their answers can be summarised as follows:

A large percentage of students (33.33%) agreed that faith is a special relationship between God and a person; consequently, they were unable to judge. The same percentage (33.33%) did not show interest in distinguishing a believer from an unbeliever. A percentage (29%) assumed that rituals and behaviour are not a measure of faith, while others (25%) believed that God is the only one who has the right to judge. A few (17%) said that they were incompetent to evaluate anyone, while some (8.3%) declared that Islām forbids blaspheming others.

[361] *Appendix 5*

The other students thought they could distinguish a believer from an unbeliever, depending on a set of factors such as manners and behaviour (62.5%), and for sense of obligation to perform religious rites (17%).[362]

The idea of distinguishing between the believing and unbelieving groups presented the students with a new challenge. This prompted them to review some rulings that were attached to entire groups such as labelling some as 'decent' and others as 'deceitful' according to different references and the students' perceptions of the believing group.

The majority of students (37.5%) concluded that they were unable to identify a believing or unbelieving category, they had no prescriptions for the believing group, while others (29%) stated that the *Sunna* is the 'right' or chosen group. There were some (12.5%) who said that it is the group that adhered to a particular belief. A few (4.2%) stated that it is the group which believed in destiny. Muslim Brotherhood was chosen as the selected group (4.2%). The same percentage (4.2%) stated that it is the group which correctly applies Islām; some (4.2%) also thought that good people and scholars are the group of believers. [363]

The students' perceptions of the unbelieving or 'infidel' group were varied. A percentage (37.5%) had no prescriptions for this group, while a lower percentage (21%) stated that it was the Shi'ites. The results showed that some (16.7%) considered it was the atheists; others (8.3%) stated that it was the Christians and Jews; the same percentage (8.3%) declared that it was the non-Muslims. A few (4.2%) thought that it was the deviant group, or the group which did not adhere to its faith.[364]

Disbelief was defined by some students as openly committing a sin, with the aim of provoking others and hurting their feelings. A few considered this type of blasphemy should be met with an appropriate reaction. This conception of disbelief prompted me to ask about the definition and limits of

[362] *Appendix 5.*
[363] *Appendix 5, table 8.6*
[364] *Appendix 5, table 8.7*

disobedience, as seen by the students. The students, however, considered that some behaviour fell within the frame of self-harm, because this disobedience would cause the 'sinner' to be punished by God.

The students' justifications for instructing the so called 'sinner' was varied. A percentage (12.5%) said that they wanted to advise and guide the sinner, while some (8.3%) stated that they wanted to explain to him (or her) what he was doing was wrong. A small percentage (8.3%) justified this action as they wanted to force the sinner not to commit blasphemy or a mistake (in their view). A few (4.2%) stated that they wanted to stand up for themselves and their beliefs, and to guide the sinner, according to customs and tradition; others felt it was their duty to instruct the sinner.[365]

There were some students who viewed faith from a wide perspective, while others narrowed it down to the extent that they considered any non-Muslim person to be an infidel. These views will be discussed according to three different orientations: immoderate, hesitant or contradictory, and moderate.

The participated university students are not necessarily exposed to the rhetoric of ISIS, but nearly all of them are exposed to the mainstream discourses. The analysis of this chapter highlights the potential impact of extremist ideologies on many university students.

8.2.1 Immoderate orientation perceptions

The students presented several conceptions of the definition of faith and disbelief, some correspond to the vision of ISIS, and some at least approximate it. Mousa's vision, for instance, meets with ISIS's perspective of monopolising faith just to Muslims.

> Since childhood, people think that any person who does not embrace Islām is an infidel […] then they know that monotheists are not infidels, but their beliefs are wrong, as they [Christians] believe in more

[365] *Appendix 5, table 8.5*

> than one god. They have reached disbelief because they made man a god […]. The European Christian who insults the Prophet, or draws him in magazines, is also an infidel because his beliefs affect my belief, and he fights me, so of course I will make a reaction.[366]

Mousa's answer shows a tendency to consider non-Muslims as infidels. He relies on the **logos** aspect to justify his position by referring to the way children are brought up; however, because he knows that Islām recognises the followers of other religions and their prophets and 'Heavenly' books, he provided contradictory answers. He said that when a person grows up, he (she) realises that the followers of the Heavenly religions are not infidels; on the other hand, he denied this when he said that they have doctrinal errors, and they believe in more than one god. He thus acknowledges that they have reached the 'stage of infidelity', as he put it. He then returned to different perspective by giving an example of a Christian infidel, referring to the French cartoonist who drew a caricature of the Prophet Muhammad, and considered such behaviour as an attack on his belief that required a response. In doing so, he relies on the **pathos** aspect to provoke rage feelings against this cartoonist on the basis of insulting the Prophet's image.

Mousa has other perspective about the disbelief which may affects any one even a Muslim, and this perspective is also converge with the perspective of ISIS; he considered that public disobedience is a form of disbelief, and is an assault on others, even if it does not constitute a physical assault: he thought that it constituted a moral assault: 'Obviously, committing disobedience, and that you are provoking me, and pushing me into a corner'.[367] Mousa believed that the one who publicly commits a sin aims to provoke others, which may push them to react against him. He, as same as any member of ISIS, burdened himself with the task of evaluating others, trying to reform them, and calling them to adopt what he deemed right. The reaction he talked about was based on what he considered to be

[366] *Mousa, S, M*
[367] *Mousa, S, M*

his right to defend himself and his faith in the way he deemed appropriate and equivalent to the provocative act 'committed by the sinner', as he put it.

> If I see a person committing a sin openly, I want to advise him [her] and try to correct him [her]; but, if his [her] disbelief harms me and attacks me, my reaction will surely be to stop him by force. If others tell me not to defend my faith, they will detract from my right, little by little.

I asked Mousa: What kind of force will you use to stop him? He answered:

> The reaction will be equivalent to the action, meaning that if the painter drew an offensive drawing, then I will not actually slaughter him, because I have many modern methods that I will follow to respond; but, if he wants to reach my home, such as the occupier, for example, I will cut off his head, definitely and actually.[368]

Mousa's position on correcting the other's orientation, even if by force, and that he reinforces his argument with reasons (**logos**) and justifications, is identical to the ideology of ISIS.

Muna also expressed an immoderate position about the concept of faith. Her vision is based on the **ethos** aspect, and it is consistent with the vision of ISIS, which divides the world into two groups: one of which will go to Hell, and the other will enjoy Paradise.

> I believe that no Christian or infidel will enter Heaven [...]. Paradise is for Muslims [...] no disbeliever will enter Paradise. [...] I mean, will the Jews eventually win Heaven? They have created many misfortunes and committed many crimes.[369]

To make sure of the extent to which Muna is aware of the dimensions of this idea, I asked her to re-affirm her answer. I said: 'So, Muna, you divided the world into two parts: not all people will win Paradise, but Muslims will, but not all Muslims'. She confirmed that she was fully aware of what she had said, and that she expressed what she thought: Muna: 'Sure, I think so'.[370]

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[368] *Mousa, S, M*
[369] *Muna, J, F*
[370] *Muna, J, F*

Muna also showed immoderation against the Shi'ites, despite her tacit admission that her ideas about them were based on the opinions of others on social media.

> It is my opinion and the opinion of the people I am in contact with, about Sunnis and Shi'ites - most of them reject Shi'ites and prefer Sunnis.[371]

Siba also adopted an immoderate position against the Shi'ites, and considered that the Sunnis represent the believers, while the Shi'ites represent the unbelievers. She relies on **ethos** to justify this position as being derived from the *Qur'ān* and the Sunnah (The two sources of Sharīʿa or Islāmic law). This proves her lack of knowledge relating to the Shi'ites, because neither the *Qur'ān* nor the *Hadīth* have mentioned them; in addition to that, this sect existed after the death of the Prophet, and during the era of the first Caliphate. Siba attributed her position directly to God in more than one way; the first was when she stated that the *Qur'ān* had definitively declared the Shi'ites to be infidels, and considered them to represent falsehood; the second was when she said explicitly that these words were not her words but rather those of *Allah* and His standards to which we must adhere. This approach of presenting arguments attributed to God in order to persuade others to adopt a certain point of view is completely identical to the persuasive strategies used by ISIS. Siba said:

> This matter has been decided upon in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* […]. The Shi'ite matter is definitive, and it is truth versus falsehood. Islām originally considers Shi'ites to be outsiders [...]. I am not the one who is talking, this is *Allah* Almighty.[372]

Siba went further, and quoted what she believed to be a verse from the *Qur'ān* relating to the Shi'ites; the verse she meant merely forbids divisions among the ranks of Muslims. The verse uses the term 'shia' (groups), which is verbally similar to the word 'Shi'ites'. Siba misunderstood the term. I asked her about the validity of the existence of such a verse in the *Qur'ān*, and she said, 'Yes, it does exist'. She quoted these words: 'Do not divide and do not become sects'. It is a false quote for the verse:

[371] *Muna, J, F*
[372] *Siba, P, F*

‘Of those who divided their religion and became sects; each faction pleased with what they have’. [373]

Siba persisted with her position regarding the Shi’ites, even after her colleagues explained to her that the Shi’ites did not exist at the time of the Prophet; that did not prevent her from claiming that there are texts that support her version; she resorted to considering that everything related to the infidelity of the Shi’ites is found in the stories that are told. ‘Uh, but everything they have is an innovation, and it is found through the stories that have come to us, and are present so far’.[374]

Siba did not tell the group anything about the stories she had heard. Her position shows a confusion between religion and the inheritance that she takes for granted. She did not accept discussion; when her colleagues mentioned that the Shi’ites are Muslims too, she rejected the idea, and said that they were the ones who created their religion, and therefore, she considered them to have no religion: ‘I am saying that whoever innovates his [her] religion has no religion - and they [Shi’ites] invented their religion’.[375]

Siba also emphasised that the Sunni of Saudi Arabia represent the truth, while Shi’ites of Iran represent falsehood. She used the same criterion that she had chosen since the beginning of the dialogue: truth and falsehood; faith and infidelity: ‘Yes, yes, Saudi Arabia is right, and Iran is wrong’.[376]

Siba’s position is congruence with ISIS position against the Shi’ites. She followed ISIS technique to strengthen her position; she tried to support her argument with reasons (**logos**) and justifications, and she resorted to **ethos** to bestow authenticity to her claim when she tried to quote a verse from the *Qur’ān* or cite books of heritage.

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[373] *The Holy Qur’ān: ar-Rum, verse* 32
[374] *Siba, P, F*
[375] *Siba, P, F*
[376] *Siba, P, F*

Ahmad supported Siba's opinion of the Shi'ites.

> I agree that Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country, and that there are deviants in Iran [...]. Saudi Arabia has deviant people, but not as much as those in Iran. Saudi Arabia has the *Qiblah*[377], and it applies Sharīʿa […] it is my duty to follow it. As for Iran, I do not follow its religion.[378]

Ahmad resorted to **pathos** to support his point of view by frightening others, he believed that Shi'ites practised murder and terrorism against Sunnis, and therefore he considers them to be infidels: 'According to what we see, they [Shi'ites] have acts such as murder, and they are terrorising Muslims'.[379]

Rafif tried to justify the infidelity of the Shi'ites in several ways. She also resorted to **ethos,** she said that they do not apply the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*, and that their behaviour reflects their lack of faith. She gives an example that is outside the idea of dialogue: Shi'ites in general use drugs and *hashish* (or marijuana), and therefore, any Sunni who uses drugs and *hashish* is behaving like Shi'ites is consequently not entitled to be affiliated with the Sunnis in the first place.

> When we talk about *Sunnah*, we know that the *Qur'ān* and all the legislation that was revealed from *Allah* are complete […]; but there are also Sunnis who use drugs and *hashish* – […] on what basis does he call himself a Sunni while he behaves like the Shi'ite?[380]

Rafif also adopted an immoderate position against Christians, and justified it by saying:

> When we were young, we were not accustomed to Christians, because the majority were Muslims. We had a negative image about them, and we started to think of them as enemies; and because they differed from us, we thought that we must avoid them.[381]

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[377] The point toward which Muslims turn to pray, especially the Kaʿba, or House of God, at Mecca. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/qibla
[378] *Ahmad, S, M*
[379] *Ahmad, S, M*
[380] *Rafif, P, F*
[381] *Rafif, P, F*

Rafif introduced reasons **(logos)** to justify her position against the Shi'ites and Christians. She also tried to use **ethos** by mentioning the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah.* This position is very similar to the position of ISIS.

Mais also took a similar stance against the Shi'ites, she resorted to **ethos** to bestow authenticity to her claim that they do not follow the *Qur'ān*, which the Sunnis follow: 'The Shi'ites have violated the Book that we follow'.[382] Mais judged the Shi'ites through her own experience, as she did not like how they prayed.

> I saw two things that drove me away from them. They pray in a strange way, so, I said to myself, what is this? Is this considered a religion? The second thing is their feast during which they harm themselves in a serious way that makes you feel disgust.[383]

The progress of the dialogue showed that Mais knew little about Shi'ites, and she also did not know that ISIS and al-Qāʿidah are Sunnis. She expressed this ignorance: 'For the first time I know that al-Qāʿidah and ISIS are Sunnis. This is new information [...] - maybe they call themselves Sunnis'.[384] This lack of information was noticeable, which made her colleagues ask her questions.

> Ameer: 'They are 12 groups. Do you know enough about them to judge them?'
>
> Mais: 'I judged them from my current knowledge because my current information is sufficient for me to judge them'.
>
> Rajaa: 'But you only saw two people'.
>
> Mais: 'No, I see in general'.
>
> Rajaa: 'No. You watch TV - does this represent all of them?'
>
> Mais: 'Yes, all of them [...]. I still stick to my judgment on the Shi'ites'.

[382] *Mais, P, F*
[383] *Mais, P, F*
[384] *Mais, P, F*

These six cases (Mousa, Muna, Siba, Ahmad, Rafif, Mais) reflect an immoderate view that divides the world into two parts: 'we', the believers who are firm in the truth and deserve Heaven, and 'they', the infidels who deserve Hell. What is noticeable is that the students who expressed this immoderate stand were not aware that they were adopting ideas like those adopted by extremist 'terrorist' organisations. Mais, for example, answered at the beginning of the discussion that she did not have the right to blaspheme anyone nor judge others. She also knew that Islām does not tolerate the issue of accusing others of infidelity.

> I am not the one who declares a person a disbeliever or says that he is a believer. I am 21 years old. I am not in my full capacity […]. We Muslims know that *Allah* will judge us if we accuse others of infidelity -, it is not permissible for us to accuse a Muslim of unbelief.[385]

She later allowed herself to declare an entire sect as infidels, without showing interest in reviewing this opinion, or searching for information about it - especially after it became clear to her that she suffered from 'information-poverty' relating to Islāmic sects. Mais said: 'I still stick to my judgment on the Shi'ites'.[386] She did not even know when and how the Shi'ite sect was formed: 'They have been around for a long time; we can say since the days of the Messenger'.[387] It also appeared that she was not familiar with the doctrines of her Sunni sect, which she fiercely defended. She did not seem to know to what doctrine she belonged, or even what the original doctrines were, as is evident from the answer she gave to Ameer. Ameer asked her about the number of doctrines in the Sunni sect. 'Currently, we are following one doctrine [...] that we are Muslims',[388] Mais said.

Mais's position indicates the possibility of her being influenced by the extremists' ideologies to the extents that she excluded a huge number of Muslims without even knowing why she is doing that.

[385] *Mais, P, F*
[386] *Mais, P, F*
[387] *Mais, P, F*
[388] *Mais, P, F*

The following dialogue between Saqr and Fadi shows to what extent Saqr identified the ideology of ISIS, while Fadi did not realise that most of his ideas were consistent with it.

> Fadi: 'The idea of Salafism is not wrong'.
>
> Saqr: 'I just want to ask Fadi: What is the difference between you and ISIS? What are your sources when you talk? I see that we have people criticising the actions of ISIS, but, on *Facebook*, when they see a *fatwā* [ruling] by Ibn Taymiyyah, they put a 'like' and rejoice, and wish to go back to that time. When ISIS burned Moaz, and cut off the heads of others etc. […] All their *fatāwā* were announced as taken from Sunni religious books. When they read the *fatw*ā to you, you reject it as soon as you hear it, and you ask yourself how to cut off a head!'
>
> Fadi: 'Does this mean that you do not believe in these *fatāwā*'?
>
> Saqr: 'I see that 90 per cent of the words written in books are heritage, not religion. All are interpretations and explanations that I am not concerned with, because it is human axioms that I do not cut off the head of the violator. I see it as axioms [sayings], and this vision has nothing to do with whether a person is a believer or a non-believer'.
>
> Fadi: 'Beheading was carried out in the days of the Companions. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab used to cut off heads, my brother, I tell you, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab did that'.
>
> Saqr: 'I want to repeat my question: are you different from ISIS?'[389]

Fadi adopted a position equivalent to the most extreme positions of ISIS. He relied on **logos** to defend and justify the beheading as an act committed by Omar Ibn Al-Khattab. He used **ethos** to bestow the aura and sanctity of this Companion's personality to support his point of view. He showed a position at the beginning of the discussion that is not in favour of the Salafi trends.

[389] *Saqr, J, M; Fadi, P, M*

> The Salafis want to establish an Islāmic state. They consider that they implement it to the fullest - but they do the opposite - they do things that are impossible to do at the present time, such as beheading. I mean, the people who join them are ignorant people. [390]

Fadi's subsequent, pro-Salafist stance which justified beheading, shows a contradiction that gives people the right to question whether this young man realises that he is one of the supporters and defenders of the brutality of ISIS - which he rejected with disgust regarding the burning of Moaz. This suggests that there is a contradiction and conflict in Fadi's position: one of them was moderate, while the other was consistent with the Salafi thought in which he seemed to believe in one way or another.

Noor also resorted to **ethos** to exclude the Shi'ites, she said:

> Our beliefs are clear, and from the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. This is a thing that must not bear any argument or any kind of doubt […]; as for Iran, what it has done in Iraq and Syria is evidence that the Sunni have the right to alienate the Shi'ites.[391]

Noor acknowledged that she did not know enough about them. She stated:

> We are all Sunnis in Jordan. You can't ask the Jordanian about this issue because we have no idea, but you saw what happened in Iraq and Syria, for that anyone can judge.[392]

It is striking that most of the students declared Shi'ites to be infidels, even though Shi'ites are a considerably small sect in Jordan: around 95 per cent of the country's population is Sunni Muslim. The small number of Shi'ites consists mainly of refugees from Iraq and Lebanon.[393] This necessarily means that there are no direct disputes between Jordanians and Shi'ites. This anti-Shi'ite position has no convincing justification, especially as the students are aware that they do not have enough

[390] *Fadi, P, M*
[391] *Noor, P, F*
[392] *Noor, P, F*
[393] Encyclopaedia of the Orient (2021) *Religion in Jordan*. Available at: https://i-cias.com/jordan-religion/

information to make them sure of this opinion against an entire sect which shares the same religion as they do.

Muhannad considered the task of guiding others and correcting their behaviour as his duty. He felt he had to protect them from the consequences of their mistakes, because he loves them, and wants them to benefit from his guidance.

> I feel that it is my duty to advise him because I love him and wish him well [...]. I will try to do it in the right way, of course, not by shouting or embarrassing him in front of others.[394]

Muhannad considered that he corrected others according to crucial criteria: clear and unambiguous religious principles, and not according to his point of view. Here, he also returns to the postulates and ready-made templates which are deemed fixed standards that should not be compromised. He said: 'No, I don't talk about points of view, I talk about pivotal things'.[395] What is striking is that Muhannad hesitated several times when he was asked what if the tables were turned, and how he would accept others guiding him and correcting his behaviour. 'So, if the relationship between us was good, if the method was good, and if the situation was good, I don't feel that there is any objection [...]. If these three conditions are met, why not?[396]

There were some students who believed that a person's appearance and clothing were tools to help distinguish the believer from the unbeliever. This mater is connected to **ethos** aspect, and it implies that clothes or appearance bestow authority and authenticity on a person or deprives him [her] of it, depending on certain criteria that inevitably relate to a religious appearance. This standard is consistent with ISIS standards in dividing people into believers and non-believers and in presenting themselves as models for true believers by sticking to clothing that mimics a particular Islāmic period. This issue was the focus of a more detailed discussion with the students. The topic of women's *hijab* had a particular importance because of the different impressions it gives about females. Few

[394] *Muhannad, S, M*
[395] *Muhannad, S, M*
[396] *Muhannad, S, M*

students' views immoderate orientations regarding the mater of women's appearance. Siba for example, had a strict opinion about a woman's *hijab*. She relied on **ethos** to support her stand.

> For a man, appearance is considered *sunnah* [Prophet's practice]; as for a girl, the veil is an obligation, and I will not discuss this matter […]. Yes, yes, she must be an example to me. If she is religious from within, it will reflect in her appearance.[397]

Fadi gave the female appearance great importance, as he saw her appearance would affect his conviction in the content she provided, because he would not trust a girl who talked about a religious topic if she were not veiled. He also relied on **ethos** to bestow an authority to his point of view.

> A woman who is not veiled, wearing makeup, and perfume [...] - all these things are forbidden in Islām, and mentioned by the Book [*Qur'ān*] and the *Sunnah* [Prophet's sayings], and no two disagree about it. When she talks about religion I flee automatically […]. It is not right to talk about faith while she wears perfume, I mean, this is adultery.[398]

Noor and Rafif likewise maintained that they would not be satisfied with any talk about a religious topic unless it is spoken by a veiled girl. 'Of course, it wouldn't be convincing',[399] Noor said. Rafif, on the other hand relied on **logos** to justify her position.

> She is not a convincing person because she talks about religion as she is not committed to the least things that convince others […]. I mean, for example, the *hijab*. I am veiled and committed to influence others.[400]

Siba, Fadi, Noor and Rafif are examples of a large percentage of students who show potential impact of the extremist discourse that present the Islāmic dress as a means of aiding authority and authenticity on certain Muslim groups.

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[397] *Siba, P, F*
[398] *Fadi, P, M*
[399] *Noor, P, F*
[400] *Rafif, P, F*

8.2.2 Hesitant or contradictory orientations

The majority of students provided several answers to the same question. These answers are contradictory to the extent that they cancel each other out. The students' hesitation between adopting immoderate positions and then retracting them, confirms that the opportunity to influence them is existing. Therefore, establishing a substantial counter-narrative and opening the way for more such discussions will increase the probability of appealing to these hesitant students toward a rational counter-narrative, and this could immunise them and failure the opportunity for the extremist narrative to influence them if they are exposed to it by any party, even if it represents a mainstream discourse. Ahmad, for example, acknowledged that he was not able to judge anybody, but he granted himself the right, and even the ability, to judge others through the first impression he had about them. He said: 'I cannot judge any person, but I can tell that what they hide in themselves will appear in their faces. I mean, when you see someone, you can judge him [her]'.[401] Ahmad used this jargon which constitutes one of the social templates or patterns to which some people occasionally resort to form their impressions of others. Using the phrase in this context means that a person's features are sufficient indicators to distinguish between a believer and an unbeliever.

Rafif initially considered that a person's clothes were indicators of faith or infidelity, then she realised that she needed other indicators such as talking to him (or her) to get to know his way of thinking: 'through his clothes […] and his way of thinking by talking to him'.[402] Mazen's answer also shows a contradiction, and presents two viewpoints that cancel each other out. He considered the performance of religious rites were not an indication of a person's faith: 'I do not consider the performance of rituals as a measure of faith. There are many who perform rituals, but they are not good people'.[403] He contradicted himself later, however, and said that a believer is a person who is committed to performing religious rites.

[401] *Ahmad, S, M*
[402] *Rafif, P, F*
[403] *Mazen, P, M*

> All religions exhort peace, and unanimously agree on worship and rituals; so, a believer is a person who is committed to his religion and knows his duties towards our Lord.[404]

Mazen concluded at the end of the dialogue that he should not assess anyone's faith at all: 'We must stay away from judgment because it is a problem, especially the initial impression'.[405]

The dialogue with Muna revealed further reflections on her initial concept of faith. She originally decided that there is no need for God to evaluate the actions of non-Muslims, because they will not win Paradise under any circumstances. She returned to presenting a different opinion that showed her retraction, or at least her doubts about the correctness of her previous answers: 'I do not know – no - it is the Day of Judgment for all'.[406]

Muna was hesitant and continued to re-evaluate her answers; at first, she could not make up her mind about whether a Christian who defended his or her homeland should be considered a martyr. She said, 'I don't know'. She began evaluating the matter with a new perspective that took into account that the Christian, just like the Muslim, will be rewarded for good behaviour and punished for bad.

> What will happen is, that on the Day of Resurrection, his [her] good deeds will be greater than his [her] bad deeds, so he [she] may win Paradise, I expect'.[407]

It is striking that Muna completely abandoned her opinion at the end of the dialogue, when she reached a new concept of faith which allowed others to win Paradise, and excluded a percentage of Muslims from 'winning' it, based on the criterion of 'doing good'.

> Religion is morals, meaning that I, as a Muslim, may act badly with people; in return, there may be a Christian who does more good things. I mean, he [she] may win Heaven while I don't.[408]

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[404] *Mazen, P, M*
[405] *Mazen, P, M*
[406] *Muna, J, F*
[407] *Muna, J, F*
[408] *Muna, J, F*

Hani, who linked faith to repentance from sins, seemed lost, and gave contradictory answers, especially after the topic was discussed from many angles.

> Not every person is fit to determine who is the believer and who is the unbeliever. I did not see a person's heart. He may do wrong, but he intends to repent [...]. I feel that I am contradicting myself.[409]

Conversations with the students showed that some of them embraced ideas and beliefs that harmonise with ISIS's ideology without realising it. The mere mention of the name of this organisation made most of them feel angry and disgusted: it reminded them of the incident of burning the Jordanian pilot Moaz, in a hideous, Hollywood way, as witnessed by the whole world. Saja said that this was the most gruesome image of terrorism, and that she could not forget the brutality of ISIS against Jordanian pilot Moaz: ' Moaz, especially because I knew him in person'.[410] Ahmad also considered ISIS had carried out many heinous, terrorist acts, but the most shocking one was the burning of Moaz: 'All of their crimes affected us in general, but the burning was very brutal'.[411]

The perception of students regarding belief and disbelief varied so much that their answers to the same question attracted different and contradictory answers. This gives the listener the impression that the student is thinking out loud, re-evaluating the matter, or re-thinking the answers given during the development of the dialogues. The diversity of questions and answers provided them with new visions. Belief and disbelief are controversial or taboo concepts that many prefer not to discuss. This is in order to avoid society's resistance and rejection, or accusations of transgressing religion or heritage. These postulates determined by religious or social references, or both, made some students imagine that disbelief is a departure from the behaviour of society, customs, and traditions.

[409] *Hani, J, M*
[410] *Saja, J, F*
[411] *Ahmad, S, M*

8.2.3 Moderate orientation perceptions

A Few students demonstrated awareness of ISIS's ideology. Saqr, for example, recognised it through immoderate discussions that took place between interlocutors. Saqr saw a congruence between the ideas of some of his colleagues and those of ISIS, so he asked Fadi, for example, these rhetorical questions: 'What is the difference between you and ISIS? [...]. I want to repeat my question, are you different from ISIS?' By asking these questions, Saqr implies that Fadi's thoughts identify with those of ISIS. He confirmed that people condemn the actions of ISIS, but, at the same time, they admire Ibn Taymiyya's ideas, and wish to return to his time.

Saqr's answers showed a political awareness compared to his colleagues' answers; Dima's answers on the other hand, showed her organised way of thinking, and her keenness to understand the meaning of every term she used to help her to clearly express her ideas: 'We must define the concept for each term. I define the term before anything else'.[412] This method helped Dima to rethink what some took for granted, and made her reconsider people's evaluation because she felt that she is old enough now and she could form her own convictions.

> The society formed the idea that everyone must be a Muslim to be a believer, but when I grew up, I discovered that this idea is not necessarily the right one. Faith does not mean that others must believe in my faith; rather, it means that they believe in their own faith.[413]

Dima followed this line of thinking to determine her position on many of her answers. She refused to judge the Shi'ites, for example, and justified this logically by saying that what she knows about them are only certain perceptions that were passed on through mosques or the surroundings in which people grew up.

[412] *Dima, J, F*
[413] *Dima, J, F*

> We actually do not know them […]. The imāms of the mosques pray against the Shi'ites, and against the Christians, as well […]. I completely reject that. It is not permissible to assume that all Shi'ites want to harm me, and will seize a weapon - accordingly, I pray against them in advance.[414]

Tahani also showed awareness of how to judge others, for example, by moving away from dividing others into categories.

> I do not like to deal with people based on faith and disbelief. Faith is a relationship between a person and his Lord. I care about the person's morals, his [her] behaviour and the way he [she] deals with others.[415]

She also said that she does not deal with religious texts as postulates hypotheses, especially the *Ḥadïth*, but rather she subjects them to research and logic. She pointed to the problem of people sanctifying texts without verifying their authenticity, just because someone presented them within a religious wrapping, as if they were attributed to the Messenger, or even to any other Islāmic figure.

> But I must know who narrated it, and if it is a *Ḥadïth* or not. Uh, this is our problem as Muslims; when we hear the word of *Ḥadïth* or a Messenger, we begin to apply the saying immediately, without making sure of the degree of its authenticity.[416]

Tahani expressed a desire to know more about controversial matters more than once, to form her own judgment on them based on logic, without being influenced by the inherited or prevailing opinions.

> I have a lot of passion to know more about Shi'ites. Many people say that Shi'ites are infidels […] well, they believe in our Lord, pray the five daily prayers, fast, give *Zakāt*[417], and perform *Hajj*[418], too. The differences are limited to eligibility to the state […]: they say it is for Ali, not for Abu Bakr.[419]

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[414] *Dima, J, F*
[415] *Tahani, P, F*
[416] *Tahani, P, F*
[417] Zakāt is a tax, comprising percentages of personal income of every kind, levied as almsgiving for the relief of the poor: the third of the Pillars of Islam. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/zakat
[418] *Hajj* is the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every adult Muslim is supposed to make at least once in his or her lifetime: the fifth of the Pillars of Islam. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hajj
[419] *Tahani, P, F*

Basil described faith as a matter that is not related to Islām only, but also relates to all monotheistic religions, as Islām itself stipulates. The evidence that faith for all the Messengers, and in all the Heavenly Books are two basic pillars of Islām.

> The pillars of faith are belief in *Allah*, His Books, Messengers, the Last Day, and destiny. Our Lord did not say that you must believe in Islām only, because true faith means that we believe in Moses, Jesus, and Abraham as well.[420]

Basil considered that infidelity is embodied in the deviant and harmful behaviour towards others.

> The Prophet's uncle ‘Abu Talib, did not convert to Islām, but he did not harm others, so I consider him to be at the pinnacle of faith, while there are rulers of countries who shed blood, murderers, and very deviant, so they are extremely far from faith.[421]

There were some respondents who believed that faith is a feeling that many people may embrace regardless of their religious affiliations. This made them think that it might be a person’s ability to care for and about others.

> Faith is the amount of good that you can do – so, as long as you do good, you are a believer - infidelity is what deviates from the rule that you are a good person, regardless of the religion you believe in.[422]

A number of students expressed the connection of belief with one's morals and one’s relationship with others in multiple ways: ‘I can judge him by the way he treats me and others’;[423] while some associated faith with not harming others: ‘Faith is an inner peace, and it is stopping the harming of others’.[424]

There were some respondents who considered faith as an internal feeling that one keeps to oneself and determines one’s relationship with *Allah*. Safaa said: ‘Faith lies in the person’s relationship with

[420] *Basil, J, M*
[421] *Basil, J, M*
[422] *Malik, P, M*
[423] *Muna, J, F*
[424] *Hani, J, M*

his [her] Lord'.[425] Safaa considered that the infidel is 'the one who does not recognise the existence of *Allah*',[426] while Malik believed that people have different styles of belief, so the infidel in general is the one who departs from the creed in which he believes, whatever it is.

> If I am a Christian and then I become a Muslim, then I have disbelieved; or if I am a Muslim and then I believed in Christianity, then I have disbelieved [...]. Accordingly, disbelief is to depart from your belief.[427]

Mazen said: 'Faith is the acknowledgment of the existence of the Lord of the Worlds, His Books, His Messengers, and His Angels'.[428] This may be a notion that a person espouses safeguarding himself (herself) and others, and dedicating his or her life to defending what is 'rightful'. 'It is to defend an idea that someone believes in'.[429]

A lack of interest in this issue was shown by some, and questioned the usefulness of distinguishing a believer from an unbeliever. Rajaa said: 'Why do I want to know? I do not care about this issue because it is his relationship with his Lord'.[430] Ahmad also questioned the usefulness of such a classification.

> If I categorised him [her] as an infidel, what would the effect of the matter be on me? What does it matter to me whether he is a believer or an unbeliever?[431]

Ahmad's position prompted others to confirm what he said, and also to question the usefulness of this approach: 'How can this really affect us?'[432]

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[425] *Safaa, P, F*
[426] *Safaa, P, F*
[427] *Malik, P, M*
[428] *Mazen, P, M*
[429] *Siba, P, F*
[430] *Rajaa, P, F*
[431] *Ahmad, S, M*
[432] *Noor, P, F*

There were some students who took a moderate position on the Shi'ites, considering that they are similar to other groups that necessarily consist of good and bad people: 'Shi'ites are sects like Sunnis, so surely they will not all be the same'.[433]

Malik believed that searching for a name for the believing group is an extreme thing that no one has the right to do in the first place: 'I think that searching for a name for the believing group is the basis of extremism. Who am I to decide who the believing group is?[434] This position was adopted by some students from the beginning of the dialogue, while others reached it later: 'We cannot judge - we do not have the ability to name a believing group'.[435]

Some students' views moderate orientations about the topic of women's *hijab.* Ameer dealt with the issue of the veil from another angle that is no less sensitive than the religious one. He focused on the customs and traditions that have become intertwined with religious teachings, to the extent that it has become difficult to untangle them, thus contributing to restricting women and controlling them.

> The *hijab* has now become a social issue, not a religious one, because society bears a good impression of the veiled girl, and a bad impression of the non-veiled one [...]. The most oppressed party by the electronic society was the woman. I posted – why do we all attack women? […] why do we not criticise young males? I received a lot of attacks including 'you are an infidel'.[436]

Saqr also believed that society oppresses women in the name of religion, but it easily overlooks the mistakes of men to the point that it makes one feel that adherence to the rituals of religion is 'imposed only on women', as he put it.

[433] *Yasir, J, M*
[434] *Malik, P, M*
[435] *Mazen, P, M*
[436] *Ameer, P, M*

> In these societies, the easiest thing is to pass judgment on women, while a man is without flaws. Whatever his mistakes are, the society's reaction does not go beyond praying for him to be guided by *Allah*. Women are not only persecuted religiously, but socially and morally as well.[437]

A person's appearance does not give people the right to judge him or her, according to some students. People should get to know him or her better through his or her ideas. Mazen said 'I don't care about looks; I care about content'.[438] Ahmad said: 'The issue of the veil does not make much difference to me, because Islāmic law did not focus on it much. I care about people's thoughts […]. Their appearance is their personal right'.[439] Yasir also did not pay much importance to appearance at the expense of ideas.

> I am interested in ideas, and, as for dress, we are used to everything. It is possible that a non-veiled girl has more religious knowledge than a veiled one. I know of many young men who do not have a beard, and despite that, they know more than 100 people who have beards.[440]

Rima talked about the *niqāb*[441], the dress, and the beard as things that may cause nervousness or anxiety in others; it may also sometimes cause them to fear people who wear or have them. Rima expressed this idea: 'We have become alienated from those who have a beard, and frankly, sometimes we are also afraid of women who put on a *niqāb* '[442]. Huda also expressed her discomfort with these appearances, although she is veiled: 'I'm veiled, but when I attend lectures given by bearded men - to be honest, I feel alienated by them'.[443] It is noticeable that Noor retracted her opinion about the necessity of the veil as a means of persuasion. She said: 'Even if a girl is not veiled, she can talk about religious matters, and she may understand things that I do not understand'.[444]

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[437] *Saqr, J, M*
[438] *Mazen, P, M*
[439] *Ahmad, S, M*
[440] *Yasir, J, M*
[441] *Niqab is a type of veil worn by some Muslim women that is made of lightweight opaque fabric and leaves only the eyes uncovered.* https://www.dictionary.com/browse/niqab
[442] *Rima, J, F*
[443] *Huda, S, F*
[444] *Noor, P, F*

Based on all the above, it can be said that the youth are exposed to the influence of the discourses of multiple parties, each of which has its own goals that it seeks to achieve. If the youth is not to become prey to those with agenda, work must be done to educate them, especially regarding religious aspects.

8.3 Summary

Several students stated that they could distinguish between the believer and the unbeliever, while others stated that it was very difficult to know. The students' perceptions of the believer and the unbeliever took three directions: immoderate, moderate, or ambivalent between these two tendencies. These perceptions depended on religious references, while others related to behaviour, appearance, or even customs and traditions. Students who adopted immoderate views use the **logos** aspect to justify their positions and the **ethos** aspect to reinforce the authenticity of an argument. We cannot say that these students are cognisant to use these rhetorical tools because they are not preachers in the first place, but they used them despite that, and this indicates that they may be affected by the persuasion methods used by extremists, and that they, in turn, unconsciously follow these methods.

The majority of the students chose the Sunna as the selected or chosen group; a few changed their way of judging others, while the answers of some developed in line with the evolution of the discussion. The majority of the students chose the Shi'ites as the unbelieving group. This perception ranked first before all other perceptions such as atheists, Christians, Jews, Non-Muslims, deviant people, and any group that did not adhere to its own faith. This anti-Shi'ite position is consistent with the position of ISIS, and it has no convincing justification, because Shi'ites form an unnoticeable sect in Jordan.

There were some students who realised that they had come up with completely new conceptions of faith and disbelief that had nothing to do with their initial ones; they seemed unable to believe that they had given a definitive judgment on people according to their clothes, appearance, or even their behaviour at the beginning of the session. Students sometimes provided moderate answers which had an impact on changing the points of view of their colleagues, especially those who took several

contradictory directions that cancelled others out. This shows their confusion and inability to adopt a specific clear direction. The indication here is a need to open the door for further discussions on these topics which are taboo for many. The dialogues with the students revealed that some would like to instruct others, to help them to enter Heaven or Paradise, and felt that it was their duty to do so.

Chapter Nine

Students' perceptions of *Jihād* and the Caliphate

This chapter continues the previous discussion by shedding light on the way the students understand the concepts of *jihād*, martyrdom, suicide operations, Caliphate, and Sharīʿa to reveal the compatibility (if any) between the students' beliefs and extremist ideologies.

The analysis sheds light on the extent of frustration, disappointment, and hopelessness apparent in the students' answers. These sentiments are well understood by extremists, and they exploit them to influence their audience. The analysis shows the similarities between some of the students' immoderate views and the ideology of ISIS, as it shows how students who adopt immoderate orientations resort to justify them by using the same persuasive tools used by extremists, which generally rely on the aspects of **ethos** through the citation from *Qur'ān* or *Hadīth***,** looking for solutions from the early Islāmic era, attributing certain manners to the Prophet or his companions; **pathos** through intimidation from the punishment of God or evoking feeling to obtain God's pleasure and paradise; and **logos** by looking for reasons to justify certain beliefs.

The students' perceptions for *jihād*, its motives, reward, and the parties it targets, martyrdom, and suicide operations will be discussed in the following section, and the results will be presented according to several questions.

9.1 The definitions of *jihād* from the students' point of view

The students presented four perceptions of *jihād*; the most prominent one was the resistance to Israeli colonialism, as some of the students (42%) believed that any operation could not be considered as *jihād* unless it aimed at liberating Palestine, while the defence of the homeland (Jordan) ranked second place (16.66%). The same percentage considered that defending any country or group

subjected to oppression and aggression is an important form of *jihād,* while two students were unable to provide any definition. The motive of resistance, only for the sake of resistance and not for the sake of winning entrance to Heaven, came next, while one student considered *jihād* as defending the holy sites and sacred beliefs.[445]

9.1.1 Supporting the concept of *jihād*

The analysis of this subtitle illustrates the differences between the students' visions of *jihād* and the vision of ISIS. While ISIS calls for the killing of anyone who does not agree with its ideology, the students consider that *jihād* is only resisting the occupation and defending Jordan.

Ten students out of 24 defined *jihād* as the liberation of Palestine, and they expressed their idea in several ways; Mazen said: '*Jihād* for me is only in Palestine'.[446] Hani also saw *jihād* in the same way: 'For me, in the entire Arab world, there is no *jihād* except in Palestine.'[447] Huda took the same stand: 'Basically, there is no *jihād* except in Palestine'.[448] Fadi believed that the conflicts that are taking place now in the Arab world, are fights between Muslim parties which kill each other. He considered the liberation of Palestine is the only thing that can be called *jihād*.

> The *jihād* that I can carry out is against the Israelis, like those who are now defending Al-Aqsa Mosque […]. This is the only *jihād* that I guarantee is the true one, because in the end, they are all now killing each other - Muslims against Muslims.[449]

Muhannad also defined *jihād* as an act directed against Israel - despite what is happening in Syria - because he considered it as his clear historical enemy, while he could not distinguish his enemy in Syria.

[445] *Appendix 5, table 9.1*
[446] *Mazen, P, M*
[447] *Hani, J, M*
[448] *Huda, S, F*
[449] *Fadi, P, M*

> Palestine - although Syria is my homeland - I will not strive except in Palestine, because the enemy is historically and practically clear - it entered a land that was not its own, and raped, killed, and massacred Palestinians.[450]

Dima also said that her *jihād* will only be against the enemy she knows well: 'It is possible for me to wage *jihād* in Palestine against an enemy I know, and that is Israel'.[451] Tahani talked about her own experience as a Palestinian who had lost her land and her home.

> *Jihād* is against those who attacked me, my land and my country. I will sacrifice myself to defend this country […] because Israelis took our homes and lands - my idea remains within this template.[452]

This result can be explained depending on the centrality of the Palestinian issue for Palestinian and Jordanian students, especially if the special relationship that binds Jordan with Palestine is taken into account. This relationship is represented by the shared history of the two countries: the semi-common geography, the ties of kinship and the lineage that unites the two peoples, in addition to the fact that a large proportion of Jordanian citizens trace their origins to Palestinian roots. It can be said, therefore, that these conditions combined, contribute to considering *jihād* as a form of legitimate resistance against the occupation. It can also be said that the Syrian students reached the same definition for the same reasons.

The defence of Jordan ranked second among the students' priorities. It was also a common goal for students of different nationalities, especially since Palestinian and Syrian students were born and lived in Jordan; they considered it deserved to be striven for as it was now their homeland.[453] Sumiya for example saw *jihād* in this way:

[450] *Muhannad, S, M*
[451] *Dima, J, F*
[452] *Tahani, P, F*
[453] *Siba, P, F*

> I am originally Palestinian, but I have lived all my life in Jordan. I love Palestine, but if I want to strive - I will strive for Jordan [...]. *Jihād* for me is defending myself, my country, Jordan, and my property.[454]

Ahmad considered Jordan to be his homeland, although he is Syrian, he would defend and strive for Jordan.

> For me, *jihād* is defending my homeland. I was born here. I feel that Jordan is my country, and I will sacrifice my soul for it […]. In Syria, no one knows where to go. I mean, I got confused.[455]

Rima said: 'For me, *jihād* is the defence of the homeland [...] - for Jordan, definitely I will strive'.[456]

There are other forms of *jihād*, according to some students. These other forms are represented in defending the weak wherever they are, and whether they are countries being attacked or groups deprived of their human rights. The students expressed these forms of *jihād* in different ways: 'It is defending an idea in which a person believes' Siba said. 'The biggest *jihād* at the present time is reform against corruption in Jordan, because I want to serve the interests of my people'.[457] Muna saw *jihād* as 'raising the word of truth in Jordan, in Palestine, wherever it is [...]. Truth means lifting oppression from any people'.[458]

The motive for the resistance, according to Saqr, is his right that was legislated by earthly and heavenly laws to recover what was taken from him by force. Saqr had his own point of view which was not related to the deferred reward for the afterlife; he did not discuss any idea during the dialogue period regarding the unseen, or relying on the idea of reward and punishment. He rather presented political analyses and opinions most of the time, based on logic: 'For me, in Palestine, of course, it

[454] *Sumiya, P, F*
[455] *Ahmad, S, M*
[456] *Rima, J, F*
[457] *Siba, P, F*
[458] *Muna, J, F*

is resistance, and if I get the chance […] of course; any kind that causes harm to the enemy, of course'.[459]

The defence of holy sites motivated one of the students to carry out *jihād* in Palestine. He considered Palestine as the cradle of religions, including the most important Islāmic and Christian holy places such as the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He considered such a sacrifice as a guaranteed way to enter Heaven: 'Al-Aqsa in Islām has symbolism and a high position, as well as the churches. Of course, I will strive [...]; as for *jihād*, it is enough that you guarantee earning Paradise one hundred per cent'.[460] Rima and Muna both supported Yasir's vision of *jihād* as a sure way to enter Heaven, while Sumiya considered that she would love to win entrance to Heaven; but, removing injustice from her relatives and her country, is the most important reason that could push her to think of this step: 'Of course I want to enter Heaven, but the biggest reason is to lift the injustice and defend the people and the country'.[461]

It is noteworthy that two Palestinian girls could not be specific about *jihād*; one of them attributed this to her lack of interest in politics: 'I don't care about politics - I don't know'.[462] The other one explained that she did not know either: 'I don't know, because I don't have a clear answer'. [463]

To answer the question about the possibility of carrying out so-called 'martyrdom' operations, some students were not able to adopt a specific answer that expressed their convictions: they expressed both the possibility and its opposite at the same time; all the groups distinguished between martyrdom and suicide operations. They defined martyrdom as any operation directed only against the Israeli army, and considered it as a type of *jihād* aimed at liberating homelands and winning entrance to Heaven. Mazen said: 'For me, the operations depend on the nature of the enemy; any operation

[459] *Saqr, J, M*
[460] *Yasir, J, M*
[461] *Sumiya, P, F*
[462] *Rajaa, P, F*
[463] *Mais, P, F*

against Israel is a martyrdom operation'.[464] They defined the suicide operation as any one targeting civilians anywhere, and considered it unacceptable, even if it was directed against Israeli civilians: 'These are not martyrs; they are suicide bombers.'[465] Rafif continued: 'It is not permissible to kill children and civilians'.[466] A percentage (29%) stated that they will carry out martyrdom operations for the liberation of Palestine, while others (20.8%) said they wanted to win Heaven.[467]

The liberation of Palestine can be considered the main motive under which other motives and justifications fall. The idea of *jihād* for the liberation of Palestine is related to the idea of winning Paradise because Muslims believe that they will win one of the two good deeds: victory or martyrdom, according to the *Qur'ānic* verse: 'Say, are you expecting for us anything other than one of the two excellences?'[468] Muslims accordingly consider that attaining martyrdom through *jihād* is a guaranteed way of attaining eternal Paradise. Malik, of Palestinian origin, seemed so angry at the occupation that if he decided to blow himself up, he would only be satisfied with a very big goal: eliminating as many of his enemies as possible: 'For me, I might blow myself up to kill twenty or thirty people, but I want to make it epic to kill the biggest possible number of them'.[469] Mousa, who insisted that self-sacrifice at the present time is futile, also said that he might resort to self-immolation as a last option against the occupation: 'When there is an occupation of our lands, there is nothing to prevent a martyrdom operation as the last choice that I can resort to.'[470] Mazen said that he would not take this option unless it was directed against Israel: 'Yes, I will carry out an operation against Israel for sure, but I will not carry it out against others.'[471] The students consider that their families in the West Bank are subjected to injustice under Israeli colonialism because of arrests, illegal settlements, and so on. They consequently consider helping these oppressed people to be rid of

[464] *Mazen, P, M*
[465] *Tahani, P, F*
[466] *Rafif, P, F*
[467] *Appendix 7. Table No.9.2*
[468] *The Holy Qur'ān: at-Tawbah, verse* 52
[469] *Malik, P, M*
[470] *Mousa, S, M*
[471] *Mazen, P, M*

injustice also falls under the goal of liberating Palestine: some girls showed their willingness to carry out such operations to contribute to removing this injustice. Sumiya, for example, spoke about her own experience, which concerns her relatives in the West Bank. She describes her feelings that burn with heartache and anger for the youth of her family who are subjected to persecution and detention (which may last for twenty years) only because they are 'defending their land', as she put it.

> Yes, even if against one Israeli I will blow myself up [...] what do you expect from a girl whose family members are all detainees and prisoners? Two weeks ago, eight of my family's youth were arrested. When I knew that, my blood boiled, especially since one of them had been imprisoned for twenty years, was released for a week, and they came back and took him again […]. All of this is because they defended their land.[472]

Tahani is also a Palestinian girl who has her own considerations regarding the Israeli army.

> I can face the Israeli wherever he is, and I can offer my soul to confront any soldier, but if there are more soldiers, it is better [...]. Yes, I strive to end injustice and win Heaven.[473]

Dima finds no difference between war against Israel through an official army, and carrying out a martyrdom operation if the goal is clear and specific, which is the Israeli army.

> I will carry out a martyrdom operation against an Israeli military target, whether I am with an army or as an individual, only against a military goal, even if the civilian target costs them more losses, I will not choose it.[474]

9.1.2 Opposing the concept of *jihād*

There were several students, on the other hand, who confirmed that they had no desire or even intention to carry out such operations against anyone. They expressed this stand in many ways as shown next:

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[472] *Sumiya, P, F*
[473] *Tahani, P, F*
[474] *Dima, J, F*

Several students (33.33%) who considered that the impact of such operations would be disastrous, and would not provide a fundamental solution to the problem of occupation; others (8.3%) believed that they would not have to take such a decision because they had many other means to express their rejection of the occupation. One student justified his unwillingness to carry out martyrdom operations because he was not convinced by any *fatāwa* (rulings) or justifications that would permit them; another student also justified her answer by not wanting to override the state's options and policies related to this matter.[475]

Syrian students stated that they would not carry out martyrdom operations because they were convinced that it was an absurd method, and would not achieve significant results on the ground. This view, which was presented similarly by two students from two different groups, may reflect the special experience of the Syrians in their motherland, which they described as 'foggy'. Muhannad said: 'I know the result, and I know that they have more than us in equipment, and I am going to strive arbitrarily. No, I will not go'.[476] Mousa offered similar justification: 'I personally will not carry out a martyrdom operation because I consider that its effect is absurd, and it will not upset the balance.' [477]

Huda was adamant that she would not take such a step 'I will not commit suicide'.[478] Siba also did not believe in the feasibility of these operations, especially at the present time, as she considered them to be illogical operations, regardless of the group they were targeting.

> An apothecary cannot fix what eternity has corrupted - an entire nation will not be saved by one individual, and I am against suicide operations, even if they are inside an Israeli camp. I do not accept it rationally or logically or in any way.[479]

[475] *Appendix 5.*
[476] *Muhannad, S, M*
[477] *Mousa, S, M*
[478] *Huda, S, F*
[479] *Siba, P, F*

Rafif adopted the same position, and considered that its implementation would be counter-productive: it would increase hostility between the conflicting parties. She said:

> 'I will not commit it [...]. These are individual operations that do not make a difference - they only spread terror and increase hostility, and have no effect'.[480]

Rajaa did not think at all about carrying out such operations, even in Palestine: 'No, I will not strive even in Palestine'.[481] Saja said that she did not think of this issue in the first place: 'It does not even cross my mind'.[482] Noor agreed and also said she 'did not think about this issue'.[483] Dima considered self-sacrifice to be a very difficult thing to do and which she would be incapable of doing: 'Frankly, the idea of losing my life is a little difficult, and I can't imagine it'.[484]

Fadi believed that the current times had enabled people to think of a large number of options other than fighting.

> This is a suicide operation and a loss of a life, and you have a hundred other ways that prevent you from committing suicide. […] I am not ready to do it, even against Israel.[485]

Ameer, who seemed to believe in numerous *fatāwa* during the dialogue in general, and had presented many immoderate views on various topics, changed his mind. He declared that he no longer believed in *fatāwa* related to *jihād*, and he found it difficult to think about *jihād* in this way. Ameer said:

> I do not believe in any scholar or Mufti [...] Okay, *jihād* is an obligation, but nowadays I cannot strive [...]. No, frankly, I will not strive.[486]

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[480] *Rafif, P, F*
[481] *Rajaa, P, F*
[482] *Saja, J, F*
[483] *Noor, P, F*
[484] *Dima, J, F*
[485] *Fadi, P, M*
[486] *Ameer, P, M*

Noor considered such a decision could only be taken within a military frame decided by the state: 'I respect the country which I live in, Jordan is my homeland - I am against individual action'.[487]

9.2 Caliphate and the ideal state

This section identifies the students' perceptions of the concepts of the Caliphate as the basis of the ideal state, to reveal the compatibility (if any) between the students' beliefs and extremist ideologies.

The discussion with the students revealed that most of them suffered from frustration; lack of justice and unequal opportunities were the most prominent issues, and a common concern for all. Twenty-five per cent believed that justice existed in the past, specifically during the era of the Messenger and the Rashidun Caliphate, while others (33.33%) believed that justice was missing even then - this perception was the highest among all other perceptions; on the other hand, some students (20.8%) believed that the Caliphate of Omar ibn al-Khattab was the only ideal and just period during the Rashidun Caliphate.[488]

9.2.1 Supporting the Caliphate

There were students who considered the Rashidun Caliphate provided a true and unique model for an ideal state. This vision is consistent with the vision of ISIS. It is based on the mythological perceptions of the Rashidun Caliphs as persons who were closest to perfection. Hani said: 'If I wanted a state in which there is justice, I would return to the Rashidun Caliphate because I consider Caliphs the most just of creation'.[489] Saja also expressed the same opinion: 'I say the Caliphates of Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali are the best'.[490] Ameer believed that Sharīʿa is an ideal law, established by God who created 'man', and knows his or her needs completely; but the application of Sharīʿa was correct only during the Rashidun Caliphate, which made it an ideal period. He also sees that those who claim that they apply Sharīʿa, such as ISIS and Saudi Arabia, are applying it wrongly, so they

[487] *Noor, P, F*
[488] *Appendix 5, table 9.4*
[489] *Hani, J, M*
[490] *Saja, J, F*

have not achieved any success that indicates that their countries are ideal. Ameer relied on the **ethos** aspect by considering that the Caliphate is a perfect system because it follows the divine law.

> The Caliphate [...] I mean, let us be frank […] there is a difference between human law and divine law. Who created us? Our Lord, and He knows our needs. Sharīʿa is not applied in the right way; ISIS did not implement it, nor did Saudi Arabia.[491]

Few students supported the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab due to their aspirations for justice. They believed that he represents the perfect leader. Malik's answer revealed intense anger at the situation under which the youth currently suffer, and despairs over any change for the better. Malik is only looking for justice, devoid of any religious frames. He believes that this justice was found only within the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab.

> I do not like the whole planet. I read a lot - humanity will not know a better example than our master Muhammad, but I would like to live in the period of our master Omar, without a Heavenly message and without a prophet […]. I want to live in the period of Omar as a ruler and politician and not as a caliph.[492]

What is striking about Malik's answer is that he considered that humanity did not know a better model of governance than the Prophet's one according to the books and references he reviewed; despite that, he does not care about this religious model, as he is only looking for justice presented by Omar the politician, not the caliph. Malik's colleague is also impressed by the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, and he also clings to the idea of justice that he seeks in the past, even though he wants to advance towards the future; 'I have not lived in the past, I want the future, but as my colleague says, I only admire the period of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab'.[493]

Dima paid special importance to Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's awareness in dealing with the religious text, which he did not implement literally, but rather made it consistent and in line with reality - not in a

[491] *Ameer, P, M*
[492] *Malik, P, M*
[493] *Hani, J, M*

state of conflict with it - so he applied God's commands, but in a flexible way that kept pace with events, as Dima said.

> The Caliphate of our master Omar was the best because he did not adhere to the wording of the text. He set principles that we still adhere to [...]. I consider that he is the only one who understands the idea of our Lord's rule of the earth, which is that our lives should not be frozen because of certain texts or interpretations.[494]

Dima's answer contradicts with the vision of ISIS which insists on adhere to the wording of the text. This shows her understanding of the need not to stop at the literal meaning of the text, especially since this matter made the current reality restricted to the past. Siba, who seemed affected by Dima's answer, also considered that the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab was a model for the ideal state, and she said that the Messenger was very interested in Omar's opinion. Siba relied on the **ethos** aspect to support her point of view by attributing saying to the revelation, the Prophet, and certain books.

> The revelation was sent down to the Messenger, and he supported Omar in many situations, as mentioned in the book 'Reclaiming Omar', because *Allah* was telling the Messenger that the stances or approaches that our master Omar took were the best.[495]

Omar's personality was attractive to students, as the justice he was famous for applying contributed to forming an image of him that is characterised by perfection, and even reverence for many. Noor said: 'He is a comprehensive man, political and religious, and possesses the qualities of courage, chivalry, and generosity, and they complement each other'.[496] Siba added: 'There is no room for comparison at all, and this is due to the methods of governance that highlights Omar's personality'.[497] Mazen said that if he were the head of a state, he would benefit from Omar's method of just rule: 'Oh my God, how much will I do! Regarding the political approach, I can adopt Omar's approach and

[494] *Dima, J, F*
[495] *Siba, P, F*
[496] *Noor, P, F*
[497] *Siba, P, F*

develop it'.[498] Basil also considered Omar as a role model in governance: 'If I were the president, I would make a mixture of the civil state and Islāmic law on the model of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab'.[499]

9.2.2 Opposing the Caliphate

The majority of students did not believe the Rashidun Caliphate was an ideal state. Basil, for example, said: 'I do not consider the Rashidun Caliphate as a model because of the apostasy wars, and I do not wish to return to this model'.[500] Noor thought the Caliphate was successful, although she did not consider it as an ideal state, as it could not meet people's current requirements: 'Of course, the Rashidun Caliphate was a successful one, but we cannot say that we want a Caliphate now because the era has changed'.[501] Yasir supported this idea, and saw the futility of implementing the Caliphate in modern times: 'It is impossible to apply the Caliphate system to us'.[502]

The Caliphate was not an option for Mousa either, as it would not be achievable.

> Any Muslim can say the Caliphate is better, and I wish it would return; but if we held a referendum in any Islāmic country on establishing a Caliphate and applying Sharīʿa law, it is impossible to achieve. The best solution is to preserve the country's Islāmic identity in a moderate manner [...]. The Syrian people are tired of conflict and will not want a Sunni or a Shi'ite regime.[503]

Mais was one of the students who considered Jordan to be an ideal country as it fulfilled their ambitions.

> Yes, Jordan meets my ambitions. I mean, thank *Allah* that I live in this country. Why would I object? Corruption is not mentioned here, and security is overwhelming [...]. There is better security than China, and better than the countries that Saqr talked about.[504]

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[498] *Mazen, P, M*
[499] *Basil, J, M*
[500] *Basil, J, M*
[501] *Noor, P, F*
[502] *Yasir, J, M*
[503] *Mousa, S, M*
[504] *Mais, P, F*

Mais's position is based on her sentiments, and she attacks many of the facts that her colleagues mentioned. Mais's answers, however, showed a contradiction. She said that Jordan fulfils her ambitions, and that the problem of corruption does not deserve attention; but, at the same time, she complains about unequal opportunities, and the problems of poverty and unemployment from which the youth are increasingly suffering. She knows that she will join the groups of the unemployed after completing her university studies: 'Yes, unemployment and poverty. […] I am not interested in working here because I know that I will not get a job'.[505] Yasir used another lens through which he saw that Jordan is the ideal country - he would not choose an alternative. He believes this because many chose it as a place of refuge when their countries were ravaged by wars and devastation: 'Jordan is an ideal country, all the sister countries have sought refuge in Jordan. I have never even thought about emigration'.[506] Tahani knows that no country is completely exemplary, and that Jordan is no exception; despite that, Jordan will remain her only option: 'I do not see a completely model country, there must be a specific defect, but I can study abroad then come back to Jordan, but I will not emigrate'.[507] Rima also preferred to stay in Jordan with her family and friends, over the job opportunities provided by Turkey: 'Turkey and Jordan - but Jordan is better; in Turkey, there is no family or friends, but there are opportunities'.[508]

The positive side regarding Jordan was met with criticism by some students. They think that Jordan is not an ideal state because it is not serious about solving the problems. This prompted them to search for other places which might help them to improve their economic conditions and achieve their ambitions. They spoke of their love for Jordan with heartache and disappointment, and each one justified his or her reasons for looking for a better place. Mazen said:

[505] *Mais, P, F*
[506] *Yasir, J, M*
[507] *Tahani, P, F*
[508] *Rima, J, F*

> I wish to live in Qatar [...]. I sing and act, and I have a lot of talents, but I do not find any opportunity to invest in them […]. I have the right to look for a better place to achieve a better economic situation and to find a way to invest in my talents.[509]

Hani also believed that Qatar could be a more suitable place to achieve his ambitions.

> I love Jordan, and I do not replace it with any other country, but I aspire for Jordan to reach the level of Qatar or Oman, as well as to follow the political approach they both follow.[510]

Muna was also among those who saw Qatar as a model country. Muna was looking for her rights as a citizen, and felt that Jordan did not provide her with the most basic ones: 'Qatar - I wish Jordan were like it, there are rights for citizens'.[511] Malik expressed the pain he felt towards Jordan, as he believed that its people were able to place it at the forefront of countries only if its decision-makers had the political will to do so.

> I hope that decision-makers realise to what extent the Jordanian people can present if they were given the opportunity. By *Allah*, when I was in the Emirates I cried […] I want Jordan to become like the Emirates.[512]

It is worth noting that a large percentage of students are thinking of emigrating to any place in search of realising their ambitions and dreams. This percentage shows a lack of interest in a particular political system or a specific religion. Their biggest concern was not to have to face the fate of many unemployed, well-educated youths. Huda said:

> I will belong to any country that gives me safety and full human rights [...]. The main problem in Jordan is that the citizen does not feel that he or she is a human being or has the most basic rights. Our only concern is to secure the basic requirements of life such as food and drink.[513]

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[509] *Mazen, P, M*
[510] *Hani, J, M*
[511] *Muna, J, F*
[512] *Malik, P, M*
[513] *Huda, S, F*

Muhannad also did not demand much: he was looking for his just state in the absurd Al-Waq-Waq[514] islands.

> I don't prefer a country, but I have conditions in mind. If I find them even in the Al-Waq-Waq islands, I would like to go there. These conditions are to do my duties and take my rights and to be left alone.[515]

Ameer's position was similar to that of Huda and Muhannad.

> I want to leave the country, and I don't have a problem where to go […] but I want to be able to live my normal life; economic security, social safety, family safety - economic security is especially important.[516]

Fadi had, in fact, lived in another country for a while. This gave him the opportunity to know about other laws, and a different way of life that made him want to leave his homeland to obtain such privileges.

> The country that respects me and gives me freedom of opinion and economic security that makes me obtain a safe life and stability, like the country I am in now - Qatar. I pray freely and express my opinion freely.[517]

Hani also values Qatar because of the care it gives to his colleagues at the university who are supported and sponsored by the Qatari embassy.

> My Qatari friends who study at our university - the Qatari embassy takes care of their fees and gives them salaries, personal expenses, and medical treatments [...]. Qatar gives the divorced woman a salary, women and children have rights and well-being programmes.[518]

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[514] A name, possibly onomatopoeic, of uncertain origin, found in medieval Islamic geographical, zoological, and imaginative literature. One of the most mystifying place names in the geographical literature, it refers variously to an island or group of islands, inhabited by a darks-kinned population who speak a distinct language; a people or race; and a tree producing human fruit. There is also the cuckoo bird, onomatopoeically known as Wāḳwāḳ. https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wakwak-COM_1334

[515] *Muhannad, S, M*

[516] *Ameer, P, M*

[517] *Fadi, P, M*

[518] *Hani, J, M*

Sumiya was also waiting for the nearest opportunity to leave the Jordan that she loves because she knows that she will not obtain the opportunities that suit her.

> Of course, I will travel when I get the first opportunity […] It is possible for me to travel to Dubai because it has many economic opportunities. Turkey also gives us opportunities.[519]

Saqr was fully convinced that China would be the model country, and that the best system that currently exists is the communist system.

> My model country is China. I see the best system that exists today is the communist system […]. China, a while ago, announced that they had eliminated poverty. If I go to China, I feel that I will get my chance.[520]

Saqr searched for his ideal country, far from poverty, but also far from his beloved homeland; however, many students considered that Jordan lacked justice. Yasir said: 'If I wanted to choose something to add to Jordan, I would choose justice like the one that was in the time of Omar'.[521] Muna also said: 'We may lack justice'.[522] The rest of the students agreed; 'Yes, we lack justice.'

The students' perceptions of the ideal state sometimes came close to the Caliphate, and sometimes moved away from it. Justice was the main pillar around which these perceptions revolved. The second question directed at the students, therefore, aimed to identify the role of Sharīʿa in achieving justice in the supposed ideal state.

9.3 The application of Sharīʿa

Justice may be found, according to several students, if divine law or Sharīʿa were applied, because they believed that *Allah* (who created man) knows people's needs better, so His law will be more just than human law.

[519] *Sumiya, P, F*
[520] *Saqr, J, M*
[521] *Yasir, J, M*
[522] *Muna, J, F*

Those who were looking to apply divine law made up the highest percentage (37.5%), while others (16.66%) did not show much interest in applying Sharīʿa; some students (20.8%) suggested a partial application of Sharīʿa along with man-made laws; several students (29%) concluded that the application of Sharīʿa at the present time is impractical; others (20.8%) had a different view: they believed that Sharīʿa is applied incorrectly, therefore, the flaw does not lie within it: it lies in the way it is applied.[523]

The students' perceptions took two directions: Supporting the application of Sharīʿa, and opposing the application of Sharīʿa. The analysis will show how the supporters of the application of Sharīʿa resorted to use the same rhetorical tools that used by the extremists.

9.3.1 Supporting the application of Sharīʿa

Some students supported a comprehensive application of Sharīʿa. This vision is consistent with the vision of ISIS. Huda for example, relied on the **ethos** aspect to support this tendency under the pretence that it is a divine law, and on the **logos** aspect to present reasons to justify her point of view. She believed that this would help her achieve her aspirations, because Sharīʿa laws would uphold justice.

> I think that if Jordan implements Sharīʿa, it can fulfil my ambitions, because the application of Sharīʿa constitutes a deterrent because it is full and comprehensive of divine laws, while man-made laws serve the interests of certain parties. Corruption has emerged and the law has been exceeded.[524]

Ameer also relied on the **ethos** aspect to support the application of Sharīʿa under the pretence that it is a divine law, and on the **logos** aspect to justify his view. He believed that the application of Sharīʿa would constitute a deterrent against moral transgressions, and would prevent religiously and socially unacceptable matters such as adultery. Ameer asked his colleagues a rhetorical question to explain that the punishment for adultery is very just. He added that it exists for the purpose of preventing a

[523] *Appendix 7. Table No.9.5*
[524] *Huda, S, F*

sin, with evidence that it is not applied unless many difficult conditions are met, to prove that it has occurred.

> Why do you always talk about the adulterer? [...] I want to apply the entire divine law to the letter, because in the end, our Lord knows us, and He is the one who created us.[525]

On the other hand, Fadi relied on the **pathos** aspect to accentuate that the implementation of such penalties would constitute a strong deterrent that would eventually lead to the cessation of crime: 'By *Allah*, if this thing is a hundred per cent applied, and the hand of the thief is cut off, by *Allah*, there will be no crime'.[526] Siba believed that a person is the one who wrongs himself (or herself) when he commits a mistake; thus, he exposes himself to punishment, and therefore, the problem lies in committing the mistake, and not in the punishment. She relied on the **ethos** aspect to support her claim by citing a verse from the *Qur'ān* and on the **logos** aspect to present more reasons to justify her view.

> The Almighty said: 'We did not wrong them, but they used to wrong their own selves'[527] […] All the children of Adam are sinners, so I prefer the application of the divine law, because I see the laws of *Allah* are the best.[528]

Noor relied on the **ethos** aspect by looking for the solution in the past days, specifically in the Prophet's era. She believed that the application of Sharīʿa would lead to the development of Jordan. She reached this opinion through a comparison with the state established by the Prophet. She supported Saudi Arabia in applying Sharīʿa, even though she did not support its political positions such as its war against Yemen.

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[525] *Ameer, P, M*
[526] *Fadi, P, M*
[527] *The Holy Qur'ān: an-Nahl, verse 118*
[528] *Siba, P, F*

> Jordan will develop if it implements Sharīʿa which was successful in the days of the Prophet [...]. I can agree with the state religiously, but I do not agree with it politically. I mean, I do not agree with Saudi Arabia in the war against Yemen.[529]

Rafif relied on the **pathos** aspect to accentuate that the implementation of Sharīʿa would constitute a strong deterrent that would eventually lead to eliminate the roots of crimes. She wished that Sharīʿa law would be implemented in Jordan. She considered the Saudi model as a successful example of an Islāmic state that applies Sharīʿa to reduce crime.

> The criminal must know that if a hand is cut off, then his hand will be cut off. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and the appearance is darker [...]. Saudi Arabia is an example of the Islāmic state because it is committed to implementing Sharīʿa and this limits crime.[530]

Tahani admitted that she could not tolerate violence, but this did not prevent her from demanding the implementation of Sharīʿa in all its details, because she considers that God created retribution for a wisdom that He knows; therefore, she would be satisfied with its application, even if she found it difficult to accept. In doing so, she relied on the **ethos** aspect by attributing the responsibility of punishment to God.

> I want to apply all Islāmic Sharīʿa. When our Lord instituted retribution, He was certainly a God of wisdom, but I find it difficult to bear. I can accept an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but to cut off the thief's hand … mm?[531]

Mousa preferred the application of Sharīʿa, although he acknowledged that it is not appropriate in the present time. 'I prefer it, but frankly, it is impractical. Islām is for every time and place, but the circumstances now are different as there are many rifts.[532]

[529] *Noor, P, F*
[530] *Rafif, P, F*
[531] *Tahani, P, F*
[532] *Mousa, S, M*

Fadi did not support the application of Sharīʿa in present times, and preferred man-made laws because he considered what was appropriate at the beginning of Islām is not necessarily appropriate now. Ameer objected to the opinion of Fadi: he believed that the application of Sharīʿa is valid for every time and place. Ameer's view is consistent with the view of ISIS.

> Fadi: 'I support the application of man-made laws. It is not reasonable in this time to talk about beheadings […]. This is something wrong now. It was appropriate at a certain time'.[533]
>
> Ameer: 'How do you say that applying it now is something wrong, Fadi? […]. It is appropriate for every time and every place'.[534]

The debate became intense between Ameer and Saqr regarding the application of Sharīʿa; at a certain stage, Ameer realised that he believed in what ISIS believes:

> Ameer: 'Where is the problem if someone stole and the punishment was cutting off his hand? I want to apply the divine law to the letter, because, in the end, our Lord knows best about us'.[535]
>
> Saqr: 'ISIS applies all these laws and considers them valid for every time and place, so why then do you disagree with ISIS?'
>
> Ameer: 'Why do I disagree with ISIS? Because it does not apply Sharīʿa - since when does religion command us to kill? 'Whoever kills a person unjustly is as if he killed all people'. So, am I similar to ISIS? How? I mean, is the Prophet's state not perfect? It was an ideal state'.[536]

Ameer relied on the **ethos** aspect, he selectively quoted from the *Qur'ān* to defend and justify his immoderate viewpoint, intending to cite the following verse: 'that whoever kills a person— unless it is for murder or corruption on earth—it is as if he killed the whole of mankind; and whoever saves

[533] *Fadi, P, M*
[534] *Ameer, P, M*
[535] *Ameer, P, M*
[536] *Ameer, P, M*

it, it is as if he saved the whole of mankind'. [537] Not only that, but he also claims that what he is talking about is identical to what was applied during the era of the Prophet himself.

Ameer did not realise to what extent there is a congruence between what he demands to implement and what ISIS is already implementing. He knew that he could not be a supporter of ISIS in any way, and therefore, how can his ideas agree with ISIS's ideas and beliefs? Ameer justified his hard-line stance on the application of Sharīʿa by saying that he supported and defended the ideal state of the Prophet, but he never believed that he was also supporting the beliefs of ISIS.

Hani was angry with Saudi practices and policies, and he did not see that what it applies is Sharīʿa. He expressed his anger in an immoderate way which is consistent with ISIS view toward Arab rulers.

> I will let Basil answer this question. He told you that the Saudi family should be killed. They are the ones who spread corruption in the land - they must be killed - this is what I have.[538]

Fadi also showed similar anger towards Saudi Arabia's selective application of Sharīʿa, which he considered unfair, and was aimed at achieving certain interests. Fadi's vision is congruence with the vision of ISIS in supporting the application of Sharīʿa to the letter, but he does not support Saudi Arabia's approach.

> Of course, I have a problem. Saudi Arabia applies something and leaves a million things behind. If Saudi Arabia follows everything, right, I do not mind applying retribution.[539]

Some students support a partial application of Sharīʿa because they believed that it is important to preserve the Islāmic character of the state, even at the present time. They believed that this could be achieved through the application of some of Sharīʿa's provisions along with man-made laws.

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[537] *The Holy Qur'ān: al-Ma'idah, verse* 32
[538] *Hani, J, M*
[539] *Fadi, P, M*

Dima preferred the application of man-made laws, but, at the same time, she preferred that these laws considered Islāmic law:

> I support the observance of Islāmic Sharīʿa, but not its application [...]. I hope that the law respects the principles of Sharīʿa without these principles being far from the society in which we live now.[540]

Malik believed that Jordan partially implemented Sharīʿa: 'I consider that Jordan is not far from implementing Sharīʿa, as it applies it to some extent'.[541] Ameer also believed that Jordan does apply Sharīʿa to some extent, and seemed satisfied with the matter: 'In this era, I prefer to combine man-made laws and Sharīʿa, like the Jordanian system'.[542]

9.3.3 Opposing the application of Sharīʿa

Basil set his answer straight and clearly: 'I am looking to the future. I want a solution that fits the future'.[543] Fadi said: 'At this time, like the West, I advocate for man-made laws [...] - the law must be man-made'.[544] Mousa also presented a moderate direction, he said:

> Never, I do not care about the application of Sharīʿa [...] I prefer a civil law if it preserves the country's religious and historical identity; even in Palestine, I have no objection to live side-by-side with Jews under a system that guarantees the rights of all.[545]

Saqr and Muhannad had similar points of view. Saqr considered everything related to these details was nothing but interpretations and clarifications by people, and he did not consider himself obligated to accept them.

[540] *Dima, J, F*
[541] *Malik, P, M*
[542] *Ameer, P, M*
[543] *Basil, J, M*
[544] *Fadi, P, M*
[545] *Mousa, S, M*

> I want man-made laws because all of these [laws] are interpretations and explanations of the whims of ancient people, and they are not Sharīʿa. I have a problem, especially with the books and the Sharīʿa that we have received.[546]

Muhannad also questioned these legislations that were passed down through generations until they reached the present one: 'I prefer man-made laws, because, to some extent, I do not believe in what was reported'.[547]

There were many students who were not interested in the application of Sharīʿa, and they justified this with several reasons. Mazen, for example, was not particularly interested in whether the state implemented Sharīʿa or not, if it met its citizens' needs. Mazen said: 'No, I don't care, because religion is a personal matter that concerns me as an individual. I want to achieve my ambition'.[548] Hani was disinterested in the application of Sharīʿa, as he cared more about achieving justice, and considered this to be faith in itself, even if it were through man-made laws.

> I do not care whether Sharīʿa is applied or not. What Qatar, Oman, and the Emirates do is a belief *per se* [...]. I mean, the prince releases prisoners before *Ramadān* to spend it with their families - this is the pinnacle of humanity - while a young girl cries in Jordan because her father is imprisoned for a cheque or a bill of exchange.[549]

Dissatisfaction with the way Sharīʿa is applied in Saudi Arabia was expressed by several students: they considered it incorrect, and that it did not represent Islāmic law.

> Saudi Arabia invented another religion - this is not Sharīʿa - this is strictness. They treat people like sheep living in a barn. The woman must be hidden and covered. Saudi Arabia does not only cut off the hand, but it cuts off heads, cuts off livelihoods, and funds a hundred occupations and a hundred military bases.[550]

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[546] *Saqr, J, M*
[547] *Muhannad, S, M*
[548] *Mazen, P, M*
[549] *Hani, J, M*
[550] *Malik, P, M*

Dima also presented a similar position regarding the Saudi application of Sharīʿa.

> I do not see Saudi Arabia as an example for applying Sharīʿa; on the contrary, I see some of its behaviour is already harmful to the reputation of Islām, and offends those who adhere to Islām, because they contradict with Islāmic principles in which I am a firm believer. It claims to apply Islāmic law, but it does not.[551]

Yasir was also not persuaded by the Saudi approach: 'I am not convinced that laws are implemented a hundred per cent in any Arab country, even Saudi Arabia, even Jordan; and Saudi Arabia with Muhammed bin Salman has become worse'.[552] Tahani also saw that what Saudi Arabia is doing is merely exploiting Sharīʿa to achieve political goals as it activates and disrupts provisions in Sharīʿa in a way that serves its interests.

> Saudi Arabia does not apply Sharīʿa, so their issue with the Houthis is not a Shi'ite issue, it is purely political. The same applies to the obligation of *jihād* in Syria...I mean, there is no *fatwā* necessitating *jihād* in Palestine. So, it doesn't really apply Sharīʿa law.[553]

There are several studies about Arab youth which show that many of them suffer from difficult economic conditions created by the corrupt, totalitarian regimes that rule the Arab countries, and monopolise their resources; some studies declare that economic issues are the most dominant concerns for young Arabs. The living standards of people are deteriorating day-by-day, and the number of unemployed youths is increasing - even many of those who have high-level educational degrees. The youth are also concerned about the quality of education, security issues, and political conflicts that the region is currently experiencing. Studies have shed light on the role of religion which many Arab youths believe that it is losing its influence and holding the region back. They think that the religious institutions need to be reformed.[554] The youth criticised these situations, and

[551] *Dima, J, F*
[552] *Yasir, J, M*
[553] *Tahani, P, F*
[554] ASDA'A BCW (2019)

Milton-Edwards, B. (2018) *Marginalized youth: Toward an inclusive Jordan.* © Brookings.
http://hdl.handle.net/11540/8351

suggested alternatives and solutions that they would have offered, if they had the opportunity to rule. Noor said:

> If I were the head of state, I would carry out reform and instil hope among the youth, because they are a group that could be exploited by anyone abroad. There is corruption, and it takes a lot to reform the internal situation.[555]

Tahani had her own hopes for improving the young people's lives.

> The most important things are equality and justice among all. I will care a lot about youth, especially females, because we are a patriarchal society. About extremism, the clergy must be paid attention to, and awareness lessons must be spread.[556]

Sumiya also believed that the state needs to reconsider the laws and make them more just. She said: 'If I were the head of state, I would change the laws completely, I mean completely, by emphasising justice and equality. Equality has a million lines under it'.[557] Mazen said that if he were the head of state, he would provide the youth with all the opportunities they needed, and a true democracy that guaranteed their rights to express themselves.

> The state claims that it is democratic, and it has freedom. Notice how many drug cases involving the youth during a month. Officials only talk on the screens, but they do nothing for the youth [...]. Why does the state arrest me if I express my opinion?[558]

Several students felt that this discussion gave them an opportunity to rethink certain things they took for granted. Sumiya showed her happiness with this dialogue, which allowed her to express her thoughts without fearing that her faith would be judged, and without fear of suppressing her beliefs. Sumiya said: 'I feel very relieved having this conversation, as I expressed my feelings, and talked about topics I've always wanted to talk about'.[559] Noor also said: 'I am incredibly happy with this

[555] *Noor, P, F*
[556] *Tahani, P, F*
[557] *Sumiya, P, F*
[558] *Mazen, P, M*
[559] *Sumiya, P, F*

dialogue, which made me think about many things in a new way that I did not know before'.[560] Basil and Mousa seemed motivated to engage in more dialogue, which prompted them to continue for some time after the departure of the other students.

9.4 Summary

To summarise, the students presented many definitions for *jihād*: the most prominent one being confronting the Israeli army. They all presented only one definition for martyrdom, however: self-sacrifice to liberate Palestine. They considered that any operation carried out to achieve this goal was martyrdom, while all other operations were suicide. This discrimination was agreed by students of both sexes and by the different nationalities. There were some students who declared that they might carry out a martyrdom operation under certain circumstances, while others admitted that they would not; however, most of them changed their minds when it came to Palestine.

While being unable to generalise the findings of these focus groups on the whole Jordanian population, it emerged in this limited sample that Palestinians and then Jordanians were more inclined to support martyrdom. It was also remarkable that the percentage of females who adopted this option was higher than the percentage of males.

The students who adopted immoderate ideas like dividing the world into two groups, 'us' and 'the other', and resorting to blaspheming others, did not show any inclination to execute any radical acts; none of them showed some sympathy for ISIS during the discussion; the majority rather expressed their disgust and anger at the group, and considered its acts to be terrorist and heinous. It can therefore be assumed that the students who presented immoderate ideas did not realise that their ideas intersected with the ideology and creed of ISIS: they believed that they were defending their religion and beliefs.

[560] *Noor, P, F*

Justice is the most prominent factor that shaped students' perceptions of the ideal state, whether these perceptions came from the past or the present. Students who do not consider the Caliphate as an ideal state constituted the highest percentage, while the option of Caliphate as an ideal state ranked in third place in favour of the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab. Al-Khattab's Caliphate formed a certain vision of the utopia in which absolute justice, good governance, and an ideal ruler were assumed.

The highest percentage of young people were in favour of the application of Sharīʿa, as well as the search for lost justice, because they believed that divine law would inevitably be more just than man-made laws which the powerful employ to serve their own interests. Sharīʿa was assumed to be impractical on its own by some students; they preferred to combine Sharīʿa and man-made laws in a way that would suit the current times; others considered that the negative idea that was associated with the implementation of Sharīʿa is due to the wrong and misguided application of it, and not to Sharīʿa itself.

The students realised, at a certain stage of the discussion, that Sharīʿa requires the application of retribution; some of them considered that the retribution is a just and deterrent law that should be applied; others considered that it is not suitable for implementation at the present time, and it is better to replace it with man-made laws.

The students' choices show their lack of knowledge about the concepts of the Caliphate and Sharīʿa. The evidence shows that the highest percentage of students considered the Caliphate to be an imperfect model for the state, but, at the same time, the percentage who voted for the implementation of Sharīʿa was also the highest in that category. This illustrates a clear contradiction, because the application of all details of Sharīʿa is one of the most important conditions for the establishment of the Caliphate. These contradictions indicate that students lack enough knowledge about their own religion, so they may adopt immoderate ideology without realising it.

The students' answers showed that they also lacked sufficient political awareness about democracy, even though a few introduced solutions within the frame of the civil state.

Unemployment, uncertainty of the future, and the difficulty of achieving ambitions, caused a lack of confidence in the state's ability to solve these problems. This affected the youth's sense of belonging, and promoted their desire to migrate to any place which would grant them their rights and meet their aspirations.

The analysis showed how the students who adopted immoderate orientations resorted to persuasion approaches similar to those used by the extremists. Although they were not preachers, but they relied on the three aspects of persuasion **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos** to support and justify their claims. For example, they have searched for solutions to their contemporary problems by going back to the early Islāmic era, they created mythical images of some historical figures, they also used tactics of intimidation and temptation, and some of them even attributed actions and sayings to God and the Messenger.

Chapter Ten

Discussion

The last seven years will perhaps be remembered as a time of redrawing the political map of the Arab world. The uprising in Tunisia, which gained momentum on the eve of 2011, sparked the upheavals in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. The number of Arab migrants from only nine Arab states (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Libya, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Palestine) was close to six million by 2012.[561] The political upheaval gave rise to the so-called renewal of religious discourse mentioned in the Introduction, but a clear definition or parameters of such a discourse are yet to be provided. What many Arab states, including Jordan, agree on is that extremist discourse must be tackled, and a new counter-narrative should be offered for it to succeed, particularly to the youth who represent the majority of populations.

The above analysis provided several key pointers to guide the debate surrounding counter-narratives while directly contributing to the existing literature about extremism. These pointers centre around the use of extremist rhetoric as a moral discourse and the youth's perception of such discourse. Mainstream institutions should realise the acute need for creating a safe participatory and communicative space, particularly for the youth as well as other age groups, to debate, as explained in this chapter. It begins with reflections on the analysis of ISIS rhetoric and linking it to previous studies, and a reflection on the analysis of the focus groups and what emerges regarding the need for a new space for dialogue and listening.

10.1 Extremist rhetoric as a moral discourse

The above rhetorical analysis demonstrates how ISIS uses terminology with connotations to bestow an aura of authenticity on ISIS members as true believers of God. The most frequent terms that

[561] Fargues, Philippe (2017) Mass Migration and Uprisings in Arab Countries: An Analytical Framework, International Development Policy, https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.2275

represented ‘Us’ in ISIS speeches are: *Mujāhidīn*; the selected few; believers; immigrants; supporters; soldiers of the Islāmic State, and successors of God, while al-Adnani uses specific terminology to confer repulsive traits on everyone who is not affiliated with ISIS. The most frequent terms that represented ‘Them’ in ISIS speeches are: infidels; traitors; hypocrites; tyrants; rejectionists; crusaders; Shi’ites; and apostates. The legendary image of ISIS fighters is a significant feature of many speeches; for example, the image of the brave soldiers being likened to lions, as well as the image of those who possess great resilience to overcome adversity and difficulties. These ‘lions’ display a great deal of strength and solidarity, according to al-Adnani, as they are the few who face and challenge the armies of the world, exhaust them, and weaken them. Al-Adnani also alludes to the concepts of al-*Muhajirun* (immigrants) and *al-Ansār* (supporters) in an attempt to portray his fighters as being closer to the Companions of the Prophet by attributing his fighters with characteristics similar to those of the Companions whose sanctity inspires the love and respect of a significant proportion of Muslims. He seeks to persuade people to consider ISIS members as a source of pride, even a crown to be placed on Muslims’ heads; yet al-Adnani feels it is necessary to go further by describing them as the heirs of the prophets, even granting them divine characteristics such as the authority to forgive wrongdoers, to accept their repentance, and to spare, or end their lives at any time; by attributing such qualities to ISIS fighters; al-Adnani seeks to equate ISIS with God.

Al-Adnani also claims that ISIS fighters have a monopoly of the attribute of faith, which makes God support them over their enemies, and entrusts them with the task of establishing the Caliphate. They are worthy of this mission because they are men who divorce themselves from the world and abandon all its blessings and gains in order to fight only for the testimony that would grant them the pleasure and Paradise of *Allah*, as he claims. Al-Adnani uses the term *Mujāhidīn* in order to portray ISIS fighters as defenders of Islām and Muslims. This gives him a great opportunity to justify operations such as killing, intimidation, and looting, by including these operations within various frameworks as legitimate operations. The most significant frame al-Adnani depends on to justify ISIS’s brutal

and criminal actions is presenting these actions as *jihād* for the sake of God, and to protect Islām and Muslims.

ISIS creates a mythical image of ISIS fighters and surrounds it with an aura of sanctity by using several methods including rhetorical tools. It relies on the repetition of certain notions to convince audiences of the authenticity and legitimacy of this image. ISIS applies the inclusion or exclusion method through; terminology such as pronouns, metaphors, similes, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, and repetition, to include ISIS members in the 'in-group' and to create positive feelings, sympathy, and acceptance towards them.

ISIS's sermons relied significantly on many rhetorical tools that were skilfully used to try to change the convictions of the audience. Al-Adnani did not neglect to benefit from heritage, customs, and traditions to support his claims, therefore, he introduced *jihād* as a source of pride and dignity, and as a means of revenge. He also warned his audience of the consequences of abandoning *jihād* by intimidating them with God's punishment in this life and the afterlife.

Al-Adnani also sought to legitimise killing and brutality as the means of controlling others and gaining political achievements. The most significant justification for murders that al-Adnani relied on is to consider the killing that ISIS carries out as a form of sacred worship to draw closer to God. Not only that, but it is an act in which God Himself participates and even blesses. He cements this claim by the heavy citations from the *Qur'ān* to make it difficult for anyone to criticise his ideas because this person will be accused of criticising the words of God Himself.

Al-Adnani's speeches emphasised the supremacy of Shar'ia to (Western) political ideologies, and presented ISIS leaders as absolute sanctification and perfection, and the Caliphate society as an ideal one. The citations of *Qurānic* verses and the *Hadīth* were employed to emphasise that the Caliphate derives its power from God who supports His true believers.

The ideas presented by al-Adnani all serve, in one way or another, the project to establish the Caliphate, which he portrayed, in one way or another, as a solution that serves the present and future of the Arab nation. Al-Adnani argued that *jihād* is the only way to establish the Islāmic Caliphate - the utopian state where people enjoy justice, freedom, and happiness.

10.2 Links to previous literature

There have been several studies which have established the role of media in spreading extremist ideologies and establishing the extremists' 'struggle for the moral high ground and the hearts and minds of global audience'.[562] Terrorists' texts usually reveal three communicative strategies: to legitimise the actors' violence; to propagate the actors' movement by appealing to sympathetic audiences, and to intimidate the opponents.[563] One ultimate goal of extremists' rhetoric is 'to elevate the status of *jihād* in Muslim consciousness, and make it equal to the five pillars of Islām (profession of faith, prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and pilgrimage)'[564], thus making *jihād* become a collective duty for all Muslims. The above analysis reinforced those findings in previous studies, providing ample examples of how ISIS sought to legitimise its brutal actions while appealing to Arab audiences.

Extremist groups usually harbour political interests and motivations, as established in the Literature Review chapter. The political motivation is usually aimed at changing the political and social order in home countries, although many *jihādist* movements claim to direct their attacks on global or American targets; however, the action of such movements is often underpinned by 'a powerful drive to capture the state at home'.[565] There are other scholars[566] who argue that the appeal of extremist groups is not necessarily driven by a religious or political cause through regressive fundamentalism,

[562] Archetti, 2013, p. 1
[563] Corman, Steven R. & Jill S. Schiefelbein (2006) Communication and Media Strategy in the Jihādi War of Ideas. Consortium for Strategic Communication, Report #0601, Arizona State University, April 20, 2006
[564] Gerges, Fawaz A. (2005) *The Far Enemy. Why Jihād Went Global*. Cambridge University Press, p. 3
[565] Gerges, 2005, p. 283
[566] Richards, Barry (2018, p. 38) A Most Brutal and Implacable Superego: Understanding the Pseudo-political Violence of the Islamic State. In Steffen Krüger, Karl Figlio & Barry Richards (eds.) *Fomenting Political Violence. Fantasy, Language, Media, Action*. Palgrave, pp. 37-56

understood as 'an unconscious phantasy of submission to a terrifying and perverse superego, represented in consciousness as a theocratic absolutism'. There is no pattern of socio-economic or family background that unites all recruits in the case of ISIS, whether they originate from the MENA region or Western countries.[567] Scholars identify humiliation in addition to grievance as a factor in the rise of terrorism. When individuals feel humiliation, they can identify with a group that has been exposed to humiliation or oppression.[568] This triggers a strong sense of victimhood underpinning acts of violence to avenge those perceived as victims. One can argue that ISIS's exclusion of Western democracies is a 'projection of disowned parts of the self' to rationalise their conflict with others.[569]

One key finding in the above analysis is perhaps the way Jordanian youth represented the *Sunnah* adherents as *the* selected group, and the Shi'ites as the infidels. This anti-Shi'ite position has no convincing justification since Shi'ites form an exceedingly small sect in Jordan. There are also no justifications for an anti-Christian position, especially as Jordan had not previously experienced any conflicts between Muslims and Christians. The argument here is that this anti-Shi'ite sentiment is deeply rooted in Jordan and many other Arab societies due to the prevalence of orthodox *Salafism* in Jordan. Studies on Jordanian *Salafism*[570] show that *Salafists* have contributed to the rising anti-Shi'ite discourse in Jordan, and that *Salafists* tend to refer to the Shi'ite groups as either *Rafida* or *Rawafid*, meaning rejectors of the Caliphs revered by the *Salafists*.[571]

The official Islāmic discourse in Jordan, as adopted by state institutions, also reflects anti-Shi'ite views. The reason for this, according to Wagemakers,[572] is the influence of the Iranian revolution in 1979, and the fear of the increasing Iranian influence in Jordan. This resulted in the emergence of an official Islāmic discourse in Jordan where religious institutions have worked to counter militant (and

[567] Richards, 2018
[568] Richards, Barry (2007) *Emotional Governance: Politics, Media and Terror*. Palgrave, p. 154
[569] Richards, 2018, p. 40
[570] Wagemakers, Joas (2021) Making sense of sectarianism without sects: Quietist Salafi anti-Shia discourse in Jordan, Mediterranean Politics, 26:4, 518-523
[571] Wagemakers, 2021, p. 520
[572] Wagemakers, 2021, p. 518

revolutionary) discourses. The state set up the international centre Amman Message (ammanmessage.com) in 2004, concerning this issue to counter the radicalised discourse which tends to exclude certain Shi'ite sects such as the *Alawites*. The state has also been critical of the increasing Shi'ite political influence in the region that stretches beyond Iran's borders.[573]

The *Salafist* groups in Jordan are estimated not to exceed tens of thousands of supporters, most of whom are Palestinian-Jordanian. It is also estimated that most *Salafists* in Jordan belong to the 'purist' *Salafist* category in that they focus more on religious teachings than on political activism.[574] Jordan has also witnessed the rise of *Jihādi-Salafist* groups who seek to impose radical political and social changes by using violence as the means of achieving their plan; in this respect, *Jihādist-Salafist* groups seek to impose their understanding of Sharīʿa law as the basis of an ideal state.

10.3 Audience's perceptions of extremism

The key aim of any communication is to understand the audience and undoubtedly ISIS, like many other radicalised groups, knows this concept. Radicalised groups generally tend to divide their audience between insiders and outsiders.[575] The outsiders, who are the focus of this project, can be further divided into the good versus the bad people. The good people are the supporters or potential backers, who are usually targeted with religious messages, and the bad ones are the fallen groups, whether Muslims or the so-called 'infidels'.[576]

Corman & Schiefelbein,[577] for instance, recommend correcting the *Jihādists'* religious messages by identifying the contradictions or religious controversy in their messages; however, as is argued in this study, such efforts have usually been done in a top-down way, entrusting institutions and (or) clerics in managing these efforts. What the above analysis shows is that a bottom-up approach could

[573] Wagemakers, 2021, p. 519
[574] Wagemakers, 2021, p. 519
[575] Corman & Schiefelbein, 2006, p 10
[576] Corman & Schiefelbein, 2006, p 10
[577] Corman & Schiefelbein, 2006, p. 19

be far more productive by continuously debating and challenging beliefs, especially among the youth. The word 'continuously' is used because the tenets of extremist discourse have taken decades to be established in Arab (and Western) societies. The idea of *jihād, for instance,* which emerged in the 1980s in the call to join the Afghanis' war against the former Soviet Union, and which was legitimised by Western governments. It is therefore not possible to challenge such ideas and beliefs in one or a few debates, such as those conducted via the above focus groups. There is a need, instead, to nurture the notion of genuine debate of religious ideas.

Terrorism studies as well the efforts of governments tend to approach the problem as an individual one: an individual receives a radicalised message and believes it; as a result, he or she joins an extremist group or engages in violence even without direct instructions from any extremist group. This idea is predicated, however, on seeing extremism as 'a form of virus' which can infect individuals and spread out of control.[578] This idea also overlooks the role of identity and social networks which underpins individuals' understanding of the world, religion, and their problems. Thus, radicalisation as previous studies show, 'is both an individual and collective process of identity construction that involves a social rupture in the relationship of the individual with his or her fellow citizens. The radicalised young people reject others on a cultural and political basis. They oppose their values and even develop antagonism towards their own families and local communities. They equally reject other cultural groups both locally and in the rest of society'.[579]

Jordan's mainstream discourse about extremism presents it as a national security issue and with the youth as an easy target for extremist groups. This is part of a securitisation process with the Jordanian state as the securitising actor highlighting Jordan's unity and security as a referent object or an object that is under threat and needs protection. The audience (or functional actors) must accept the threat implied in the securitisation discourse, however, for the securitisation process/discourse to succeed.

[578] Archetti, 2013, p. 92
[579] Archetti, 2013, p. 106

There are some studies which attribute the role of functional actors to the audience of the securitisation discourse, on the grounds that the audience can veto or endorse a certain securitisation act. The category of a functional actor has been vaguely defined, however, and thoroughly critiqued. Floyd[580] rejects the tendency to subsume the functional actors within the category of the audience because audiences, as the addressee of the securitisation discourse, may object or endorse the discourse on behalf of himself, but functional actors endorse or object to it on behalf of others. Here, one can mention Muslim clerics as potential functional actors who may reject or endorse certain threats as existential. This is particularly applicable to the anti-Shi'ite discourse in the context of this thesis, articulated by ISIS and other groups, including *Salafist* groups in Jordan, as an existential threat; in addition, foreign powers such as the U.S.A. and the U.K. may endorse or veto certain securitisation discourses in Jordan. They may also be categorised as functional actors in this respect. Their role will be limited in this project which focuses more on local and national actors.

This means that the state's securitisation discourse cannot be analysed separately from the specific social, religious, and political context in Jordan, and which shapes individuals' perceptions of security, drawing on their subjective views of those events.[581] This thesis, therefore, sought to provide an in-depth analysis of such beliefs through engagements with a sample of Jordanian youth. The youth's views of Shi'ites, for instance, demonstrates the impact of the routinisation of *Salafists'* narratives, and the internalisation of a culture of conflict. The state needs to engage the youth in a genuine debate, and cultivate the culture of debating as well as listening.

[580] Floyd, Rita (2020): Securitisation and the function of functional actors, Critical Studies on Security, DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2020.1827590

[581] Daniel Bar-Tal and Dan Jacobson (1998) A Psychological Perspective on Security, APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY: AN INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, 1998,47 (1). 59-71

10.4 Youth debate as a cornerstone of a new counter-narrative

A U.N. survey among Arab youth demonstrated their concern with radicalisation in Jordan, seeing it as a growing problem, particularly in Jordanian universities.[582] The majority of participants also believed that radicalisation could take place without necessarily turning to violence. The U.N. survey[583] also shows a gap in trust between the Jordanian participants and the security sector; this means there is an urgent need to develop more meaningful communicative action with the youth in Jordan in order to raise awareness about security issues and embrace the youth's feedback on such issues. The survey (p. 2) more importantly, also shows that Jordanian parents are usually reluctant to discuss radicalisation with their children, and they prefer that their children do not discuss it outside the home, either. This view contributes to diminishing the development of a genuine communicative space where youth can debate and discuss radicalisation and its impact on their specific circumstances.

The Jordanian youth who participated in the focus groups in this study engaged in a real debate in which they began with a set of assumptions and stereotypes, only to challenge one another later; some of them ended up expressing contrasting and more tolerant views by the end of the discussion. This is because they found themselves in a situation where they could challenge their past assumptions and justify the rationale behind them. Counter-terrorism narratives tend to favour dialogue over debate where dialogue aims to highlight unity (with Westerners, for instance) while debate can be seen as a confrontational conversation that only highlights differences. It is such intense discussions that can lead to raising awareness and challenging views. It is also this balance "between dialogue and debate"[584] that can eventually lead to reducing extremist ideas and ideologies among the youth. Studies of civic dialogue initiatives in Western culture have pointed at the 'scepticism of

[582] UN (2016) Women and Violent Radicalization in Jordan. Amman: UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women, March 2016, Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development – RASED & Search for Common Ground, p. 7
[583] UN, 2016, p. 24
[584] Cramer Walsh, Katherine (2007) *Talking about Race. Community Dialogues and the Politics of Difference*. University of Chicago Press, p. 250

the capacity of ordinary citizens'[585] to engage in a based on challenging differences, and this attitude is even more present in the Jordanian context (and indeed many Arab societies) where ordinary citizens are seen as less ready to embrace democratic values (see the Arab barometer survey results) indicating scepticism of Arab citizens' ability to embrace democracy.[586] One example is the 'We Are All Jordan Youth Commission' mentioned in the Introduction. One initiative under the auspices of this Commission was an awareness and education programme to promote the culture of dialogue among youth by linking them to experts in various institutions to discuss national challenges, and to explore the youth's proposed solutions. The initiative seemed to embrace a top-down approach, however, where the youth were there to listen to experts' presentations about the need for tolerance rather than exploring differences among youth, with less intervention from those 'experts'. One of the performance indicators highlighted by the Commission to measure the success of this initiative was to measure the number of sessions across the country, the number of participants in each session, and the content of the recommendations emerging from the sessions. It was unclear, on the other hand, how the culture of debate could be measured qualitatively, and how challenging previously held assumptions was achieved in practice. One of the National Youth Strategy's initiatives was similarly conducted to promote tolerance, and dialogue was a project entrusted with the ministry of Islāmic Affairs, and the ministries of Culture, Youth, Political Development, and Education, in addition to Jordanian universities. The main performance indicator was to measure the number of participants, but it was unclear how it measured the actual results of dialogue among the youth, especially that officials and experts in the above ministries were leading those debates, that is, they were often top-down discussions.[587]

[585] Cramer Walsh, 2007, p 234
[586] See e.g. https://www.arabbarometer.org/media-news/do-arabs-want-democracy/
[587] Ministry of Youth, 2019, p. 64

10.5 Creating a safe communicative space

Arab youth have been the centre of an emerging body of research that has highlighted the binary construction of Arab youth; this entails the securitisation of youth as a driver of revolutionary acts, and hence a potential risk and threat to the stability of Arab states, and the de-securitisation of youth as a driver of development and modernisation since the independence of Arab states in the middle of the 20th century.[588]

Arab youth, moreover, are at the centre of political attention, not only in the Arab region but also in the West which has become increasingly concerned with the risks posed by Islāmic violent extremism and information migration. This is because both risks draw on youth groups which contributed to the securitisation of these cohorts.[589] One characteristic of Arab youth is that they generally lack opportunities to fully participate in the political processes in their countries, which make them 'a generation in waiting'.[590] The youth are also concerned with the economic situation, including poverty and unemployment, far more than enhancing democracy.[591] The Jordanian Ministry of Youth acknowledged a host of political and economic reasons that underpin religious intolerance such as the high rates of unemployment and feelings of frustration, and questioning one's religious identity.[592]

The increasing growth of youth populations in Arab societies has resulted in the so-called 'youth bulge', reflecting the gap between the developmental projects and the stagnant labour market across the region failing to absorb this growing number of youths; thus, since the 1990s, Arab youth has been framed as a problem.[593] The youth category in the Arab region, and particularly post-2011,has been derived from the perception of youth in mobilising political protests and therefore 'Youth'

[588] Murphy, Emma (2018)
[589] Calder et al. 2017, p. 11
[590] Calder et al. 2017, p. 7
[591] UNDP, 2016, p. 24
[592] Ministry of Youth, 2019, p.6
[593] Murphy, 2018

appears as a euphemism, or a shielded category, for public action'.[594] The 2011 uprisings have highlighted the role of youth as action initiator and a catalyst for change. The events also reflected the youth's political awareness of the challenges surrounding the region, and the limitations imposed on them by national policies, and tough economic terms imposed by international actors. The political protests of 2011 onwards have, nonetheless, also revealed the lack of organised political movement which could absorb Arab youth to sustain the success of their political action.[595] The consequences of the 2011 uprisings have proved that securitising the youth as a risk group neither addresses the root causes of the protests nor guarantee that such uprisings would not be repeated in the future.[596]

When it comes to creating a counter-narrative that offsets extremist discourse, Western, particularly American, counter-terrorism narratives are usually based on highlighting unity or common grounds between Westerners and non-Westerners while avoiding narratives that highlight differences. To diversify the narratives, and facilitate a genuine debate, there is a need for 'intergroup dialogue programmes' defined as 'opportunities to examine why, under what conditions, and how people are using face-to-face conversations to listen to, scrutinize, and make sense of racial difference'.[597]

Research has shown that ordinary citizens involved in civic dialogue initiatives may choose to highlight differences rather than unity with other groups.[598] If dialogue is based on exploring others' views as a step towards mutual understanding, then it should be based on the debate in a safe environment where participants feel free to exchange, explore, and challenge other views. Seen from this perspective, the ultimate goal of dialogue is not only to focus on unity but also on the difference

[594] Catusse, Myriam & Blandine Destremau (2017) (Arab) Youth, a versatile government category? The Middle East in London, Volume 13(3), April – May 2017, p. 7
[595] UNDP, 2016, p. 7
[596] UNDP, 2016, p. 7
[597] Cramer Walsh, Katherine (2007) *Talking about Race. Community Dialogues and the Politics of Difference*. University of Chicago Press, p. x
[598] Cramer Walsh, 2007, p. 33

from others. This is a departure from seeing civic dialogue as a means to avoid conflict, and instead, adopt a "difference-focused" view that sees conflict 'as a means to avoid domination'.[599]

The above analysis chapters demonstrated the need for developing a truly participatory communicative space for dialogue among and between the youth and other actors, be it state, international organisations or civil society.[600] This communicative space entails a collaborative approach that is based on genuine dialogue to understand the complexity of youth's lives as well as the complexity of the specific socio-political problems in the Arab region, including Jordan. A participatory communicative space that engages the youth will mean a move away from the policies of tackling the symptoms of radicalisation to focusing on the underlying reasons behind it.[601] The U.N. framework for youth and peace-building cannot reach its full potential without a clear participatory action performed in every Arab state, including Jordan.

Participatory communicative space is founded on 'valuing one's voice' understood as an expression of views[602], and the ability to transform the voice into action. This necessitates the practice of listening which is defined as a collective action in society to acknowledge, value, and link individuals' narrative within the specific societal context and relations. Post-2011 and the proliferation of social media in the Arab region, there has been a plethora of commentaries and scholarly literature about the discursive power acquired by Arab audiences, particularly the youth, and facilitated by the new media argues, a society can suffer from an unequal distribution of narratives, however, as Couldry[603] argues, due to an existing hierarchy of voices where some voices are more valued than others. A cleric's narrative, for instance, may be more valued than an ordinary practising Muslim's; an official narrative about terrorism may be more valued than the views of ordinary citizens. Narratives can also draw their value from the social and symbolic capital attributed

[599] Cramer Walsh, 2007, p. 249
[600] France, Alan (2007) Understanding youth in late modernity. Open University Press, p. 164
[601] Sukarieh & Tannock, 2018
[602] Couldry, Nick (2010). *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*. Sage.
[603] ibid.

to each voice: for instance, state officials may command more authority than less advantaged citizens; a state cleric may command more respect; consequently, his voice is more heard than an auto-didactic preacher.

Jordan, as well as many Muslim-majority societies in the region, acutely needs to examine this hierarchy of voices and question the narrative provided by each group. This includes examining mainstream clerics who have created a hegemonic discourse about political Islām,[604] including the exclusion of other groups such as the Shi'ites; this exclusion provides a suitable breeding ground for extremism. The state and other actors will grapple with this call of renewing religious discourse until this is done for generations to come.

[604] See e.g. Mellor, 2017, p. 215 for a discussion of the rise of political Islam discourse in Egypt

Chapter Eleven

Conclusions and Recommendations

This qualitative study deconstructs ISIS's narrative in order to identify some of its main rhetorical tactics, before assessing whether the influence of such ideology and rhetoric may be facilitated by its closeness to some elements of mainstream public discourse in the region.

To uncover these rhetorical strategies and tactics, this study depends on the rhetorical analysis taking as a case study all speeches written and delivered by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, from his position as ISIS media spokesman in 2011 until he died in 2016 to demonstrate how ISIS appropriates the past, interprets the present, and visualises the future for Arab Muslims. The study is also an analysis of how young Arabs interpret extremist messages to demonstrate the convergence or divergence of extremist rhetoric through a sample of university students in focus groups.

11.1 Rhetorical analysis outcomes

The above rhetorical analysis clarified how the ideas intertwine and intersect to serve in establishing the Islāmic State or the Caliphate, while dividing the world into 'us' and 'them'. This division grants a certain group the right to set standards for good and evil, and allows it to have guardianship over the rest of the groups. This guardianship may be through a state governed by certain laws, and in the case of ISIS, these laws are heavenly laws that derive their stability and sanctity from God Himself. *Jihād* was also presented as the only approach that would lead to the establishment of a just state. ISIS expiated all those who tried to implement any modern ideas to help Arab peoples be rid of injustice and tyranny. ISIS therefore justified the killing in the name of *jihād* as the only way to establish its alleged state, and present it to the people as the only solution to all the problems of the Arab world.

The overall findings can be summarised as follows:

The analysis of al-Adnani's speeches revealed that he made use of three distinct means of persuasion: **ethos**, which reflects how the speakers establish their authority; **pathos**, which appeals to the emotions of the audience; and **logos**, which presents logical arguments. To achieve his rhetorical goals, he relied on classical Arabic, which is often referred to as the code of the *Qur'ān*, and is frequently considered part of the clerics' symbolic capital.[605] He also depended on a variety of rhetorical tropes such as simile, and metaphor, in addition to citing from the *Qur'ān* (usually out of context) and drawing on terms from the early era of Islām such as Companions, *Mujāhidīn*, Caliphate, Sharīʿa, among others. Al-Adnani's citations from the *Qur'ān* not only helped to add authority to his words, but also helped to conflate the source of the words (God's words) with his own, thereby extending the authority of the *Qur'ān* to his own words and speeches. An additional aim of the inclusion of such *Qur'ānic* verses was to cement the knowledge as being that which is derived from Islāmic teachings and not from secular sources. This tactic was used to give credence to those who master this knowledge, namely ISIS members, through their memorisation of the *Qur'ān*.

Dualism (absolute evaluations of good versus bad) is one of the most important bases on which ISIS ideology relies.[606] Scholars point to several factors that fuel ISIS's fundamentalist ideology in addition to dualism such as 'authority (of a sacred book or leader), selectivity (choosing certain beliefs or practices over others), and millennialism (confidence in eschatology as God's will). One facet out of all factors, however, is thought to be vital: 'reactivity', which takes the form of a hostility toward secular modernity.[607]

ISIS's ideology is fundamentally a Sunni identity oriented towards an anti-Shi'ite campaign. Its rhetoric is therefore anchored on identity politics derived from religion. The Shi'ites are the main

[605]Odeh, S. (2017) *Between colloquial and formal ... Does duplication pose a threat to language?* Available at: https://www.aljazeera.net/midan/intellect/sociology/2017/7/23/
[606] Gerges, F. A. (2017) *ISIS: A HISTORY*. Princeton University Press. P. 284
[607] ibid. P. 25

enemy of ISIS, but they are not the only ones because the circle of its enemies includes everyone who differs - even slightly - from its beliefs and principles. This circle expands to include all those who do not convert to Islām, all non-Sunni Islāmic sects, and all Sunni groups whose creed does not completely match ISIS's vision of Islām. This expansion has created a growing chasm between ISIS and the whole world because of its total rejection of theological diversity and pluralism.

ISIS has been frozen in time and space; it relies on opposite dualities in managing the affairs of life, as well. It puts the laws of God against the laws of man, for example, as a belief to establish the Caliphate. To do that, it borrows heavily but selectively from the Islāmic law based on the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, and imposes the past on the present to reach the utopia it promises to establish. ISIS consequently presents the Caliphate, not merely as a political entity, but also as a collective religious obligation: a means to salvation within its ideological framework that affirms its 'Sunni Islāmic' identity and redefinition of true Islām.[608] ISIS used the Caliphate as an effective weapon against its opposition by claiming to be the guardians of the faith and the defenders of '*Ummah*.

ISIS exploits the Arab identity crisis, and the Arabs' frustration that resulted from decades of dictatorship, failed governance, poverty, unemployment, in addition to the ongoing foreign intervention and the Palestinian issue. ISIS offers an alternative model that promises a divine justice, deliverance and salvation, and brings honour and victory, because it is following in the footsteps of the Prophet Mohammed and his righteous Companions.[609] The organisation has nurtured an appealing mythological narrative that offers youth a higher reason to fight for it, and people the promise of a better life under the Caliphate state. The allure of the Caliphate has taken hold of the imagination of some Sunni Islāmists who see that it imbues them with a greater purpose in life: to be

[608] Gerges, F. A. (2017), p. 28
[609] ibid. pp. 289-291

part of a historical mission to restore Islāmic unity, and help bring about redemption and salvation, and a worthy cause for which to practise *jihād*.[610]

11.2 Focus groups analysis outcomes

There is a congruence between the vision of some students and the vision of ISIS in terms of the audience's interpretations of the extremist ideology regarding the 'Other'. The majority of the students believed that the *Sunnah* adherents are the selected group, while the Shi'ites are the infidels, ahead of other groups such as Christians, Jews, and so on. This anti-Shi'ite position has no convincing justification since Shi'ites form an exceedingly small sect in Jordan. There are also no justifications for an anti-Christian position, especially as Jordan had not previously experienced conflicts between Muslims and Christians. These anti-Shi'ite and anti-Christian positions show a congruence between the vision of some students and the vision of ISIS regarding the 'Other'.

The students' view of *jihād* and martyrdom is different from that of ISIS, whether in the definition, objectives, or goals. ISIS defines *jihād* as any operation directed at anyone who does not embrace its vision of Islām and for any military or civilian goal. It considers its soldiers who carry out suicide operations as martyrs, and they will win Heaven. The students, on the other hand, defined *jihād* as the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, the defence of Jordan, or the achievement of justice for the oppressed, provided that this fight is directed against Israeli military objectives. They thus consider that the operations carried out with the aim of liberating Palestine are martyrdoms that lead to Paradise, while the operations carried out by terrorist organisations against indiscriminate targets are suicide operations, and the perpetrators deserve Hell.

ISIS advocates offensive *jihād* as opposed to defensive *jihād* as an individual obligation for all Muslims at all times. The ultimate goal it seeks to achieve through *jihād* is to enforce divine law, and thus to establish the Caliphate. ISIS fighters consider *jihād* and suicide bombings to be attractive

[610] ibid. pp. 226-229

means as they are a quick and sure way to win Heaven. The students, on the other hand, see that *jihād* is a defensive duty that the armies should carry out and not individuals. They justify it as a legitimate way to resist occupation, recover their land and property, and defend their families and relatives. Students did not show a desire or impulse for *jihād* or for carrying out martyrdom operations, but considered that resorting to any of these should be the last option if all other attempts to solve the Palestinian issue failed.

It is also worth noting that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict 'has provided ideological nourishment to non-state actors, including Salafi - *Jihādists*. Time and again, Salafi - *Jihādists* refer to Palestine as the final stage or culmination of their *jihād*, promising to come to the aid of the Palestinians after they topple renegade Arab rulers at home'.[611]

The majority of the students believed that justice is the most prominent element that constitutes a utopia, regardless of whether it is within the form of the Caliphate or any secular state. This vision does not agree with ISIS's vision that considers the Caliphate as the only form of utopia.

The concept of a Caliphate did not represent a utopia for all students, although some believed that the Rashidun Caliphate provided a model for such a state; others considered that the Caliphate of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab was the only ideal and just period, and their perceptions of Al-Khattab were legendary and closer to perfection. The image of an ideal state and a perfect president is consistent with the mythical image that ISIS gives to its state, and to its most perfect caliphs and leaders.

Regarding the application of Sharīʿa, some students believed that what was applicable in the past may not be valid now. They preferred to apply man-made laws, while others preferred to combine both in a way that would suit current circumstances. A few of them believed that Sharīʿa should be applied to the letter because it is suitable for every time and place. The latter vision is consistent with

[611] Gerges, F. A. (2017), P.261

ISIS's vision which considers Sharīʿa as the only source of legislation that is suitable for every time and place, and its application as one of the most important rules on which the Caliphate is based.

Some students adopted immoderate directions that reflected certain elements of the fundamentalist ideology of ISIS. They resorted to rhetorical strategies similar to those of ISIS to support their claims. For instance, they relied on the **ethos** aspect through their desire for the literal application of Sharīʿa, the selectivity in quoting Qur'ānic texts or the Prophet's *Ḥadith*, and through attributing certain actions to certain historical figures, the Prophet, or even God Himself. Some students relied on the **pathos** aspect; they resorted to the tactics of enticement and intimidation to convince their colleagues of immoderate views. Some students also resorted to using the **logos** aspect to provide reasons and arguments to justify some immoderate ideas.

The vision, in addition, of some students regarding the implementation of retribution, converges with the vision of ISIS. The majority of students did not accept the idea of retribution in present times and preferred the application of man-made laws instead.

It is noteworthy that the students' view converges with that of ISIS regarding the corruption of the ruling regimes and their failure to provide the most basic citizens' rights. ISIS considers these rulers to be infidels who should be killed. Some students agree with ISIS' stance regarding the Saudi rulers, while most of them prefer to change the corrupt regimes by legitimate political means.

The above discussion shows that some youth tend to harbour immoderate ideology consistent with the terrorists' beliefs and goals and conflate such an ideology with the core tenets of Islām. Such an ideology proliferates in mainstream discourse as well, for instance, in mosques and networking sites.

11.3 Contribution

This study makes a two-fold contribution to existing literature. Theoretically, it departs from previous studies that draw on the theory of rational actor, seeing violence as the sum of rational calculation while disregarding emotionality. Emotionality is instrumental in appealing to Arabic-speaking

audiences by using a range of rhetorical tools deeply rooted in the Arabic language and which mainstream clerics and preachers also use. The analysis, moreover, is an example of relational analysis[612] or one that acknowledges the intricate and complex network that connect extremist ideas and ideologies with existing, mainstream ideas such as the anti- Shi'ites sentiment.

Methodologically, the contribution of this study lies in its focus on how the audience, Jordanian youth, actually interpret extremist discourse and the roots of *takfiri* - ex-communication ideology. I chose to focus on the indirect audience of this discourse or those who are neither victims of extremism nor involved directly in acts of violence. This choice was deliberate as there is a paucity of studies that are based on audience analysis; although several previous studies such as those examined in the literature review chapter, indicate the vulnerability of young audiences to extremist discourse.

Ontologically then, the rhetorical analysis explored the main themes of ISIS's propaganda, and epistemologically, the audience analysis explored the youth's interpretation of the tenets of this ideology.

11.4 Limitations

There are some limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. First**,** the sample data size of al-Adnani's speeches was too big. This was excellent for identifying significant relationships from the data, although the analysis was time-consuming, especially that many of the speeches needed to be converted from audio to text format, and the final selected ones were translated from Arabic to English. This process produced considerable repetition and redundancy for similar ideas that needed substantial exploration to reach the thematic analysis outcomes. It may be useful to choose the most important speeches for further research in this area which relate to the same topic or are repeated on the same occasion for similar purposes, after extensive examination and appropriate selection.

[612] Archetti, 2013, p. 3

Second**,** the audience study was supposed to include Iraqi students, but, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, most of them went to stay with their families outside Jordan. The institutions that I chose for conducting the focus groups, undertook the responsibility of contacting the youth to guarantee they would commit to certain safety regulations. The necessity for committing to the institutions' arrangements contributed to limiting the reach to Iraqi students whose families reside in Jordan. The meeting of the Iraqi students was supposed to provide more information on the issue of Shi'ites, especially since many of them are supposed to be Shi'ites, and most of them or their families have directly witnessed the presence of ISIS in Iraq during the period allotted for this study.

Third, the audience analysis was based on the view of selected educated youth (university students) in urban centres, and thus one cannot generalise the findings across the whole Jordanian society. Future research could aim to replicate the focus groups among other socio-economic groups.

Future research could also explore the views of youth who received rehabilitation from the Community Peace Centre, directed by the 'Public Security' section. The Community Peace Centre provide counter-extremism programmes, in addition to offering rehabilitation for those who have already shown immoderate behaviour. Conducting either interviews or focus groups with youth who receive care from this centre could provide different points of view.

Appendix 1 - Research Ethics form

Proposer: Sabah A.M Harahsheh Research Institute: RIMAP

Proposal short title: READING ON-LINE RADICALISM: THE RHETORIC OF ISIS

Answering the following question by ringing/deleting **yes** or **no** as appropriate:

1. Does the study involve vulnerable participants or those unable to give informed consent (e.g., children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?

a. No

2. Will the study require the permission of a gatekeeper for access to participants (e.g., schools, self-help groups, residential homes)?

a. No

3. Will it be necessary for participants to be involved without consent (e.g., covert observation in non-public places)?

a. **No**

4. Will the study involve sensitive topics (e.g., sexual activity, substance abuse)?

a. **Yes**

5. Will blood or tissue samples be taken from participants?

a. **No**

6. Will the research involve intrusive interventions (e.g., drugs, hypnosis, physical exercise)?

a. No

7. Will financial or other inducements be offered to participants (except reasonable expenses)?

a. **No**

8. Will the research investigate any aspect of illegal activity?

a. **Yes (rhetorical/discursive aspect)**

9. Will participants be stressed beyond what is normal for them?

a. **N/A**

10. Will the study involve participants from the NHS (e.g., patients) or participants who fall under the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005?

a. **No**

1. Integrity -

The research will be carried out in a rigorous and professional manner and due credit has been attributed to all parties involved. The research follows the guidelines stated by the BSA

https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

2. Plagiarism

Proper acknowledgment has been given to the authorship of data and ideas.

3. Conflicts of Interest -

All financial and professional conflicts of interest have been properly identified and declared.

N/A

4. Data Handling –

The research draws upon effective record keeping, proper storage of data in line with confidentiality, statute, and University policy.

The research follows the ethical guidelines outlined by the BSA:

https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

As such, adequate measures will be followed to store the collected data in a secure manner, i.e. in a password-protected file. In addition, I will deposit transcriptions and field notes in the University of Bedfordshire's Data Repository in accordance with the new regulations. I will preserve the participants' anonymity by removing identifiers of participants' identities and using pseudonyms. In the PP documents, the final thesis, and subsequent publications, data will be scrutinised prior to access to such documents so as to avoid potential identification of research participants.

The data will be shared with my Director of Studies (DS) who masters Arabic, and she will be able to verify the data. However, the data will be scrutinised to ensure pseudonyms have been used, where required, prior to sharing the data with the DS. Also, participants will be informed of the way data might be shared with DS.
Raw data (audio files and notes), as well as the transcripts (in Arabic), may be kept on the university server if such technical support is available at the University of Bedfordshire.

Ethical Procedures

Proper consideration has been given to all ethical issues and appropriate approval sought and received from all relevant stakeholders. In addition, the research should conform to professional codes of conduct where appropriate. Attached to this form is the required documentation in compliance with the ethics guidelines: consent form, focus group guide, an information sheet for participants.

6. Management and supervision of staff and student for whom the researcher(s) is/are responsible

N/A

7. Health and Safety- Proper training on health and safety issues has been received and completed by all involved parties. Health and safety issues have been identified and appropriate assessment and action have been undertaken.

Proposer declaration

I understand that I cannot collect any data until the application referred to in this form has been approved by all relevant parties. I agree to carry out the research in the manner specified. If I make any changes to the approved method, I will seek further ethical approval for any changes.

Signature of Proposer: Sabah Harahsheh Date: 18 October 2019

Consideration by Research Institute Ethics Committee

Comments of Research Institute Ethics Committee:

Our primary concern is safeguarding the participants and the researcher, especially if there are live discussion in situ, although it is underlined that all work is anomalised and password protected, have any other measures been considered to safeguard participants i.e., where interviews will be conducted?

Has proper consideration for aspects of criminal activity been considered before this project continues (you answered yes to question 8) apart from https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf ?" as this does not directly consider illegal activity.

23/12/19 This has now been approved

The RiMAP Research Institute Ethics Committee have considered this proposal and are satisfied that the ethical issues have been satisfactorily addressed

Director of Research Institute: Alexis Weedon Date:

23/12/19

Appendix 2 - Primary sources: speeches of ISIS

	Title of the speech in Arabic	Title of the speech in English/ website	Number of words	Name of the producing Establishment and the web site	Date of publication
1.	إن دولة الإسلام باقية	The State of Islām Will Remain Safe	4817	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment http://ammaralabede.yoo7.com/t2767-topic	(August 2, 2011)
2.	الآن الآن جاء القتال	Now the Fighting Comes	3686	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://archive.org/details/N5bh88	(January 25, 2012)
3.	العراق العراق يا أهل السنة	Iraq, Iraq Oh Ahl al-Sunnah	2917	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/iisn	(February 24, 2012)
4.	إنما أعظكم بواحدة	I Exhort You to One Thing Only	1801	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://archive.org/details/enma.a3ezakom	(May 21, 2012)
5.	واهاً لريح الجنة	Longing to the spirit of Paradise	1989	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/emwaha	(June 2012)
6.	الاقتحامات أفجع	The Incursions Are Deadlier	2182	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://archive.org/details/Aleqt7mat	(November 1, 2012)
7.	سبع حقائق	The Seven Facts	1486	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://archive.org/details/7hqae3q	(January 30, 2013)
8.	فاقتلوهم إنهم مشركون	So, Fight them, Verily They are Polytheists	2320	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/2uzr	(June 15, 2013)
9.	فذرهم وما يفترون	Ignore them and their False Allegations	2398	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/abkhatab5/8ukrbuwsu7re	(June 19, 2013)
10.	لن يضرّوكم الاّ أذىً	They Will Not Harm You Except For Some Annoyance	4259	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/39k2	(July 30, 2013)
11.	السلمية دين من؟	"Peaceful is Whose Religion?"	3284	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment http://alfetn.net/vb3/showthread.php?t=78133	(August 30, 2013)
12.	لك الله ايتها الدولة المظلومة	May God Be with You, Oh the Oppressed State	2159	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/enos	(September 30, 2013)
13.	الرائد لا يكذب أهله	The Scout Doesn't Lie to His People	3697	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/e103	(January 7, 2014)
14.	ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَةَ اللهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ	Then We Pray for God's Curse to Be on the Liars	2159	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/enos	(March 7, 2014)
15.	وليمكنن لهم دينهم الذي ارتضى لهم	God will make the religion, that He	1611	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://archive.org/details/al_adnani2	(April 3, 2014)

		accepted from them, stronger.			
16.	ما كان هذا منهجنا ولن يكون	This is Not Our Manhaj, Nor Will it Ever Be	1589	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/makan	(April 17, 2014)
17.	عُذراً أميرَ القاعدة	Sorry, Emir of Al-Qaeda	3093	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://justpaste.it/mofaragh	(May 11, 2014)
18.	مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللهِ	What Comes to You of Good is from Allah	1343	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://archive.org/details/ma_asabak	(June 12, 2014)
19.	هذا وعد الله	This is the Promise of Allah; He Will Surely Establish for them their religion which He has Preferred for them	3127	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/user-571555677/qvefvpujexuz	(June 29, 2014)
20.	إن ربك لبلمرصاد	That God is monitoring the oppressors' actions.	3497	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/jaraah-alfahad/al-furqan-islamic-state	(September 2014)
21.	قل موتوا بغيظكم	Say Die in Your Rage	737	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment http://www.sunnti.com/vb/showthread.php?t=24897	(January 26, 2015)
22.	فيقتلون ويقتلون	So, they Kill and are Killed	2647	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/8utskhql6fez/sets/qanj8bxlbgtu	(March 12, 2015)
23.	يا قومنا أجيبوا داعي الله	O Our People Respond to the Caller of Allah	3176	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/deen-khan-4/glyfyka234jm	(June 23, 2015)
24.	قل للذين كفروا ستغلبون	Say to Those Who Disbelieve You Will Be Overcome	3827	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/8utskhql6fez/dcahh1ulpkvs	(October 15, 2015)
25.	ويحيى من حيَّ عن بينة	And Those Who Lived in Faith Would Live Upon Evidence	3113	*Al-Furqan* Media Production Establishment https://soundcloud.com/user-478500741/mhit7vzt7blo	(May 21, 2016)

Table 4.1

Appendix 3 - The rhetorical analysis tables

Terms that represent Us in ISIS's speeches	
We/ingroup Terms	**frequency**
Believers	109
The few selected	6
Mujahideen	319
Immigrants	38
Supporters	28
Soldiers of the Islāmic State	46
Sunnis	173
Caliphs	34

Table 5.1

Terms that represent Them in ISIS's speeches	
Them/outgroups Terms	**frequency**
Infidels	76
The traitors	18
Hypocrites	22
Tyrants	63
The Rejectionists	189
The Crusaders	49
Shi'ites	22
Apostates	84

Table 5.2

Terms that represent Caliphate in ISIS's speeches	
Caliphate terms	**frequency**
God's Law/Sharia	17
Allegiance/Bayʿah	28
Islāmic State	467
Caliphate	79
Commander of the Faithful	41
Nation/ʾ*Ummah*	123

Table 7.1

Terms that represent other regimes in ISIS's speeches	
Other regimes English terms	**frequency**
Constitutions	11
Elections	16
Democracy	35
Parties	29
Parliament	9
Nationalism/	21

Table 7.2

Appendix 4 - The focus groups guide

Letter to the universities where I recruited participants of the focus groups

The Email that was sent to deans of media colleges in four Jordanian universities and heads of two youth institutions to help with selecting participants for the focus groups:

Dear Mrs., Mr.

After my Greetings to you, I kindly ask you to assist me in forming a group of six to eight male and female students who hold Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian nationalities and belonging to the age group between 19-30 years and who are willing to participate in the interviews that I attend to conduct to collect data for an audience study which is part of my PhD thesis and here are some of its details:

The research is entitled as READING ON-LINE RADICALISM: THE RHETORIC OF ISIS. It aims to uncover the rhetorical strategies that are used by extremist groups to persuade youth to execute or support extreme actions. The research also aims to show how young Arabs interpret the extremist groups' messages. Therefore, I will hold a discussion session that focus on religious extremism, note that I will provide the participants with the attached forms to explain details related to the participation process. These forms can be summarized as follows:

Participants will receive a consent form in addition to a participant information sheet that includes a complete description of the project before making their voluntary choice to accept or reject participation or even withdraw from the project within one month after data collection if they wish to do so without giving any explanations, bearing in mind that they can also skip any questions they do not feel comfortable answering. Participants will also be informed that this research is self-funded as a part of my PhD thesis, therefore, it does not represent the goals of any funding organization.

The interviews will be audio-recorded then the data will be converted into written texts (in Arabic). This registration will be done only by the researcher and the data will be stored in a password-protected computer within a password-protected document.

The confidentiality of the data that will be obtained from the participants is very important and will be carefully handled. I will anonymize the participants, who will be over the age of 18, and those under the age of 18 will not be interviewed.

The proposed research project will comply with the ethical standards required by the University of Bedfordshire and established by the Research Ethics Policy Committee as well as guidelines provided by the British Sociological Association (BSA).

Moreover, in consultation with my supervisor, I decided to delete any personal information about the participants to ensure their complete anonymity.

Accept my respect.

Researcher Sabah A.M Harahsheh

Participant Information Sheet

A. About this research

Title of Research: **READING ON-LINE RADICALISM. THE RHETORIC OF ISIS.**

This research aims to uncover the rhetorical strategies that are used by extremist groups to persuade youth to execute or support extreme actions.

B. Your participation in the Research Project

Why you have been asked?

You have been asked as a citizen/resident in Jordan.

What happens if you want to change your mind?

If you decide to join the study, you can change your mind and stop within one month of the interview. I will completely respect your decision. There are absolutely no penalties for stopping.

What would happen if you joined the study?

If you agree to join the study, you will be interviewed for one and a half hours where you will be asked some questions about your views of specific religious concepts and rhetoric.

Are there any risks?

I do not think there are any significant risks due to the study. If you did feel that there was any stress involved, you can stop at any time.

What happens to the interview results?

I will collect the data to use as a basis for my analysis. I intend to use quotes from the interviews after translating them into English. You will not be identified in the research, and you will be anonymised to protect your identity.

Are there any benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits to you for taking part. However, I hope that my research will be of interest to academic research, media institutions, and media students in the UK and the Middle East.

How I protect your privacy

All the information I get from you is strictly confidential. I will not use any identifiers and will keep your identity anonymous.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS SHEET TO KEEP, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM

Contact Details:

Name: Sabah A.M Harahsheh

Email: sabah_alslam@yahoo.com

CONSENT FORM

Title of the project: READING ON-LINE RADICALISM. THE RHETORIC OF ISIS.

The guidelines	Yes	No
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the study, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw within one month, without giving a reason.		
I agree to take part in the study.		
I agree with the interview being audio recorded.		
I agree with the use of anonymised quotes in publications.		

Name of Participant (optional):

Date:

Signature:

Name of Researcher: Sabah A.M Harahsheh

Date:

Signature:

The questions that guided the focus groups:

Themes	**Main questions**
The Believers versus The Unbelievers (We / They)	– For you, who is the believer? – Who is the infidel? – How can you distinguish between them? – If you consider that the belief of others is wrong, would you like to instruct them? If yes, why? – Can you distinguish between the believing group and the unbelieving one? How?
(Jihād)	– What is the definition of Jihād from your point of view? – What is the martyrdom/suicide operation? – Do you carry out what you call a martyrdom operation? Justify your answer whether it is yes or no.
The Caliphate and Sharia.	– What is your perception of the ideal state? – Is the Caliphate considered a model for this state? – Do you care about the application of Sharia?
Media	– How do you see terrorists as mediators? – What is the impact of the use of Fusha (classical) and the *Qur'ān* in the discourse? – What is the importance of forming a counter narrative? – What images do you recall from extremist media? – Why do youth join these group? How to stop them?
History as reflected in	– Radical discourse anchored in the past, explain how? – Is this discourse relevant at present time?

extremist propaganda	– How to draw on Islāmic history/ Heritage to direct our future?
Security	– Are Radical groups a threat to your security? – Are they an existential threat? – How to be secure? – If you were a head of state, what would you do? – What is your perception of justice and how can it be applied in the Middle East?

Appendix 5 - Tables related to the focus group analysis

Some students may express more than one answer to the same question, while others may not answer some questions at all. This note applies to all tables of this study. Therefore, the percentages may increase, decrease, or equal to 100%.

The students' perceptions of the believer.

Who is the believer?	Males/ 11	Females/ 13	Jordanian /8	Palestinian/ 12	Syrian /4	%
Who believes in a certain belief	2	4	3	3	0	25
Who does good to others	1	3	1	3	0	17
Who believes in God, his books, and messengers	2	1	2	1	0	12.5
Who does not harm others	2	1	1	1	1	12.5
Who embraces Islām	0	3	2	1	0	12.5
Who repents of a sin he committed	1	0	1	0	0	4.2

Table 8.1 shows students' perceptions of the believer and the percentage of each one according to the variables of gender and nationality.

The students' perceptions about the infidel.

Who is the infidel?	Males /11	Females /13	Jordania n/8	Palestinia n/12	Syria n/4	Percentage
Who deviates from the behavior of society, customs, and traditions	2	2	2	1	1	17%
Killers and villains	2	1	1	1	1	12.5%
Who does not believe in God, his books, and messengers	1	1	0	2	0	8.3%
Who commits sin without repentance	2	0	2	0	0	8.3%
The followers of other monotheistic religions	1	1	1	0	1	8.3%
Who departs from a belief he believes in	1	0	0	1	0	4.2%

Table 8.2 shows students' perceptions about the infidel and the percentage of each of them according to the variables of gender and nationality.

Distinguish a believer from an unbeliever.

Why can't you distinguish between them?	Males/11	Females/13	Jordanian/8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	Percentage
Faith is a special relationship between a servant and his Lord	3	5	4	3	1	33.33%
I do not care to distinguish between them	1	7	2	5	1	33.33%
Rituals and behavior are not a measure of faith	3	4	1	6	0	29%
I do not have the right to judge, it is up to God	3	3	1	4	1	25%
I am incompetent to evaluate anyone	3	1	1	2	1	17%
Islām forbids blasphemy of others	0	2	0	2	0	8.3%

Table 8.3 shows the reasons produced by some students to justify why they are unable to distinguish a believer from an unbeliever.

Distinguish a believer from an unbeliever.

How can you distinguish between them?	Males / 11	Females / 13	Jordanian / 8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	Percentage
His manners and behaviour	6	9	6	7	1	62.5%
His looks and clothes	2	2	0	2	2	17%
Obligation to perform religious rites	2	2	3	1	0	17%

Table 8.4 shows the reasons produced by some students to justify why they can distinguish a believer from an unbeliever.

The justifications for instructing others.

Why would you like to instruct others?	Males/ 11	Females/ 13	Jordanian/8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	%
I want to advise and guide him	3	0	1	0	2	12.5%
I want to explain to him what he did wrong	2	0	1	1	0	8.3%
To force him not to commit a mistake	2	0	1	0	1	8.3%
I stand up for myself and my faith	1	0	0	0	1	4.2%
I feel it is my duty because I love him and wish him well	1	0	0	0	1	4.2%
I want to guide him to customs and traditions	1	0	1	0	0	4.2%

Table 8.5 shows the reasons given by the students as justifications for instructing others.

The perceptions of the believing group.

Who is the believing group?	Males/ 11	Females/ 13	Jordanian/ 8	Palestinian /12	Syrian/ 4	%
I do not know	4	5	4	4	1	37.5%
Sunna	3	4	2	4	1	29%
A group that believes in a particular belief	2	1	2	1	0	12.5%
The group that believes in destiny	0	1	0	1	0	4.2%
Muslim Brotherhood	0	1	0	0	1	4.2%
The group that applies Islām correctly	1	0	0	1	0	4.2%
Good people and scholars	1	0	0	1	0	4.2%
The majority group	0	1	0	0	1	4.2%

Table 8.6 shows all the students' perceptions of the believing group and the percentage of each of them according to the variables of gender and nationality.

The perceptions of the infidel group.

Who is the infidel group?	Males/ 11	Females/ 13	Jordanian/ 8	Palestinian /12	Syrian/ 4	%
I do not know	4	5	4	4	1	37.5 %
Shi'ites	1	4	0	4	1	21%
Atheists	2	2	1	2	1	16.7 %
Christians and Jews	1	1	1	0	1	8.3 %
Non-Muslims	2	0	1	1	0	8.3 %
The deviant people	1	0	0	1	0	4.2 %
A group that does not adhere to its faith	1	0	1	0	0	4.2 %

Table 8.7 shows all the students' perceptions of the infidel group and the percentage of each of them according to the gender and nationality variables.

The definitions of Jihād.

The definitions of Jihād	Males/11	Females/13	Jordanian/ 8	Palestinian/ 12	Syrian/4	%
Liberation of Palestine	6	4	2	5	3	42%
Defending Jordan	1	3	2	1	1	16.66 %
Achieving justice	1	4	2	1	0	16.66 %
I do not know	0	2	0	2	0	8.3%
Legitimate resistance	1	0	1	0	0	4%
Defending the sacred	1	0	1	0	0	4%

Table 9.1 shows all the students' perceptions or definitions of Jihād.

The reasons to carry out a martyrdom operation.

Why do you carry out a martyrdom operation?	Males/11	Females/13	Jordanian/8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	%
For the liberation of Palestine	4	3	2	4	1	29%
To win Heaven	1	4	3	2	0	20.8%

Table 9.2 shows the percentages of the students who gave reasons to carry out a martyrdom operation.

The reasons to not carry out a martyrdom operation.

Why don't you carry out a martyrdom operation?	Males/11	Females/13	Jordanian/8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	%
It never even crosses my mind	2	6	1	4	3	33.33%
I will look for other approaches	2	0	0	1	1	8.3%
I do not believe in any Fatwā	1	0	0	1	0	4%
I respect the laws of my country	0	1	0	1	0	4%

Table 9.3 shows the percentages of the students who can't carry out a martyrdom operation.

The perceptions of the ideal state

What is the ideal state?	Males/11	Females/13	Jordanian/8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	Percentage
Caliphate is not an ideal state	3	5	5	2	1	33.33%
The country where justice is provided	4	3	0	5	2	29%
The Caliphate is an ideal state	2	4	2	4	0	25%
The Caliphate of Omar ibn al-Khattab	3	2	2	2	1	20.8%
Jordan	3	4	4	3	0	29%

Table 9.4 below shows all the students' perceptions of the ideal state and the percentage of each of them according to the gender and nationality variables.

The application of Sharia

Do you care about the application of Sharia?	Males/11	Females/13	Jordanian/8	Palestinian/12	Syrian/4	%
Yes	4	5	0	6	3	37.5%
Sharia is impractical	6	1	3	2	2	29%
I prefer a partial application of Sharia	4	1	1	2	2	20.8%
Sharia is applied incorrectly	3	2	2	3	0	20.8%
No	4	0	1	3	0	16.66 %

Table 9.5 shows all the students' choices about the application of Sharia and the percentage of each of them according to the variables of gender and nationality.

Appendix 6 - Focus groups Information

The following table shows the percentages of the study sample consisting of 24 female and male students, according to the gender and nationality variables.

Group name	Categories	Frequency	Males%	Females %	Jordanians%	Palestinians %	Syrians %
G1	Male	5	20.8				
	Female	2		8.3			
	Jordanian	2			8.3		
	Palestinian	3				12.5	
	Syrian	2					8.3
G2	Male	4	16.66				
	Female	2		8.3			
	Jordanian	1			4.2		
	Palestinian	4				16.66	
	Syrian	1					4.2
G3	Male	2	8.3				
	Female	5		20.8			
	Jordanian	2			8.3		
	Palestinian	3				12.5	
	Syrian	2					8.3
G4	Male	1	4.2				
	Female	4		16.66			
	Jordanian	3			12.5		
	Palestinian	2				8.3	
	Syrian	-					0
Total 24			49.96	54.04	33.3	49.96	20.8

References Table Codes

G1	G2	G3	G4
Safaa, P, F.	Saqr, J, M.	Siba, P, F.	Tahani, P, F.
Huda, S, F.	Ameer, P, M.	Rana, P, F.	Sumiya, P, F.
Mazen, P.	Fadi, P, M.	Rafif, P, F.	Rima, J, F.
Hani, J, M.	Rajaa, P, F.	Dima, J, F.	Yasir, J, M.
Majid, P, M.	Mais, P, F.	Ahmad, S, M.	Muna, J, F, G4.
Mousa, S, M.	Muhannad, S, M.	Saja, J, F.	
Basil, J, M.			

* Nationalities coded as: Jordanian (J), Palestinian (P), Syrian (S).

* Gander Coded as: Male (M), Female (F).

* Real students' names have been replaced with names in the table.

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