



**LUND UNIVERSITY**  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies

What does Daesh want you to know?  
A study of Daesh's propaganda through their online-  
magazine Dabiq.

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Acknowledged from the existing literature regarding Daesh's propaganda, the focus has mostly been on their propaganda on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. However, I argue that a gap regarding Daesh's propaganda is the lack of studies on Daesh's online-magazine Dabiq and this thesis aim to fill this gap. I argue that Daesh's way of arguing and framing their arguments are the key to understanding their propaganda since the frame affects the propaganda and its ability to reach its audience. The purpose of this thesis is thus to *show* the relation between Dabiq's content and its frame and how this frame affects the propaganda, in order understand Daesh's message and goals. Having analysed Dabiq's content, I come to the conclusion that Daesh frames Dabiq in a way that it contains information and discussions regarding their interpretation of Islam which is a very strict, easily portrayed and polarized view of Islam. By using current events and discussions, identifying problems, addressing the audience's needs of fellowship and unity, expressing solutions to the problems affected by how some Western countries treat Muslims, Daesh construct their message and in this way Dabiq's frame affects the propaganda content.

Keywords: Daesh, Dabiq, propaganda, framing, the Enemy, Jihad, Hijrah, discourse and Islam.

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## Wordlist

Al salaf al-salih	It means the pious forefathers and refers to the first three generations of Muslims. <sup>1</sup>
Akhirah	An Islamic term referring to the Afterlife. <sup>2</sup>
Bayah	To give an oath of allegiance to a leader. <sup>3</sup>
Bid'ah	Illegitimate innovations within the faith. <sup>4</sup>
Darul- Islam	The land which is governed by the laws of Islam whose security is maintained by the security of Islam. <sup>5</sup>
Darul- kufr	The land which is governed by the laws of Kufr, whose security is not maintained by the security of Islam. <sup>6</sup>
Dawah	Using the term in Islamic context, it refers to inviting people to Islam and teaching them about the religion. <sup>7</sup>
Dhikr	A form of devotion, where the worshipper in a rhythm repeats the name of God or Quranic verses. <sup>8</sup>
Du'at	Is the act of supplication, having a conversation with God. <sup>9</sup>
Dunya	The Arabic word for this (temporary) world. <sup>10</sup>
Fitna	Internal fight viewed as the main threat to the unity of the Ummah. <sup>11</sup>
Fard 'ayn	An individual duty which relates to tasks that every Muslim is required to perform. <sup>12</sup>
Hadith	Literature containing the Prophet's traditions. <sup>13</sup>
Hijrah	Hijrah literally means "emigration" in Arabic. When used in the Islamic context it refers to the time when the Prophet emigrated from Mecca to Medina. <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lauzière, 2016, 5.

<sup>2</sup> "al-Akhira." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions.

<sup>3</sup> Meijer, 2013, viii.

<sup>4</sup> Cook, 2015, 245.

<sup>5</sup> Meijer, 2013, viii.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>8</sup> "Dhikr." Encyclopedia of Religion.

<sup>9</sup> Stacey, Islamic information portal "What is dua?".

<sup>10</sup> "Dunya." Islamic Terminology.

<sup>11</sup> Meijer, 2013, ix.

<sup>12</sup> "Fard al-Ayn". Oxford Islamic Studies Online.

<sup>13</sup> Meijer, 2013, ix.

<sup>14</sup> Cook, 2015, 5.

Imam	The person who leads prayers in a mosque but it is also a title of various Muslim leaders especially the leaders of Shi'a Islam, succeeding the Prophet. <sup>15</sup>
Jannah	The meaning of Paradise in Arabic. <sup>16</sup>
Jihad	It both means struggle and has different levels, lesser and greater Jihad, referring to self-improvement respective holy war. <sup>17</sup>
Kafir/kuffar	A non-believer(s). <sup>18</sup>
Khilafah	The Caliphate. <sup>19</sup>
Kufr	In an Islamic context it means to deny the truth, specifically regarding Allah and His Messenger which leads to expulsion from Islam. <sup>20</sup>
Mujahid/mujahidin	Fighter in the religious war, doing Jihad. <sup>21</sup>
Murtadd/Murtaddin	Proclaiming a Muslim an apostate from Islam for committing major sins or denying the sources of Islam. <sup>22</sup>
Mushrikin	Someone who worships more than one God and denies Gods Oneness. In Salafism it is also used to other Muslims who do not follow Salafism. <sup>23</sup>
Rafidah	The term is used by the Salafis to refer to Shi'a Muslims as they reject the caliphate of the Prophet's two successors, their acceptance of Ali as the Prophet's successor. <sup>24</sup>
Shaytan	The devil in Arabic. <sup>25</sup>
Shi'a	The followers of Ali, the Prophets cousin and son-in-law and the second largest current in Islam. <sup>26</sup>
Shirk	Putting someone or something at the divine level as Allah and the biggest sin in Islam. <sup>27</sup>
Takfir	Labelling someone as unbeliever and placing the person outside of the Islamic community. <sup>28</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "Imam." English Oxford Living Dictionaries.

<sup>16</sup> "Jannah." About Religion.

<sup>17</sup> Meijer, 2013, ix.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> "What is the Khilafah (Caliphate)?"

<sup>20</sup> Meijer, 2013, ix.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., xiii.

<sup>25</sup> "Shaitan." Encyclopedia Britannica.

<sup>26</sup> Meijer, 2013, xiii.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Tawhid	Refers to the absolute unity of God- monotheism. <sup>29</sup>
Ummah	In Islamic context it means the Muslim community bound together by Islam. <sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Cook, 2015, 246.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> "Ummah." Encyclopedia Britannica.

## 1. Introduction

*"The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify –by Allah's permission- until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq".*<sup>31</sup> This quote is the opening of every issue of Dabiq, the online-magazine of Daesh<sup>32</sup>, a quote of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, an important person for the development of Daesh. In this quote he refers to the final battle that will take place between Muslims and infidels in Dabiq, a city in Syria, where the apocalypse will begin.<sup>33</sup> This strict separation between Muslims and everyone else is a reminder of the final battle which is the foundation of the Salafist ideology, Daesh's worldview and their reason to their actions.<sup>34</sup>

Dabiq is published by Daesh and is published in several official languages including Arabic and English. It aims to spread information about the group, their missions, conquests, intentions, and contains interviews with both males and females who have left their homes to join Daesh. Accordingly, as Dabiq spreads information about the organization and their actions and the justification written by themselves, it is a crucial channel that needs to be examined in order to understand what their propaganda contains and what information they are spreading to their audience. In other words, Dabiq is an excellent asset to understand Daesh, their message, their goal and how they justify their actions. As Daesh has been successful in attracting people to join them<sup>35</sup>, studying their propaganda will make us understand why they have been successful as the focus on their propaganda will reveal how they address their audience to get the desired reaction from them.

There have been studies done regarding Daesh's propaganda in other platforms especially their activities in social media such as Twitter and Facebook. However, Dabiq has not been studied to the same extent and therefore, this thesis aims to fill this gap by studying Dabiq.

Having read Dabiq several times it is clear that the frame of the propaganda in Dabiq affects the propaganda itself and thus this relation needs to be studied in order to understand what the propaganda is as the frame of the propaganda affects the propaganda itself. Therefore, in this thesis, I will argue that the frame of Dabiq- meaning what topics are highlighted and how these are framed- shape the propaganda and affects how the propaganda reaches the audience. I will argue that in order to understand Daesh's propaganda, we have to

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<sup>31</sup> Dabiq, Nr.1: "The Return of Khilafah", June/July 2014, Last visited: 2016-05-30.

<sup>32</sup> In this thesis, Daesh will be used to refer to the terror organization, instead of IS, ISIS or ISIL.

<sup>33</sup> Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor. 2016, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Wood, "What ISIS really wants" The Atlantic, March 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Yan, "Why is ISIS so successful at luring Westerners?" CNN, February 2016.

understand Daesh's propaganda's propagandistic features and in that way understand how it is framed and what message they want to spread to their audience. Therefore, this thesis is driven by its aim to show the relation between the propaganda in Dabiq and its way of being framed to show the importance of this relation.

To make this study possible, I identified themes that exist in the 15 issues of Dabiq and then I categorized these identified themes into three broader themes- concepts- which I argue are concepts that contain themes that express Daesh's propaganda and message best as they are topics that exist through all 15 issues and are referred to the most.<sup>36</sup> These concepts are the Enemy<sup>37</sup>, Jihad and Hijrah. By analysing how Daesh highlights and discusses the Enemy, Jihad and Hijrah and by analysing how these discussions and arguments are framed, one can understand what their message and goal is. According to this, I use key samples that discuss, highlight and address most of the identified themes, in order to have a good representation of Dabiq, its content and themes in this thesis.

## **1.1 Purpose and research question**

As stated before, Daesh's propaganda through Dabiq has not been studied to the same extent as their propaganda in social media. This thesis therefore aims to fill this gap regarding Daesh's propaganda in Dabiq. As I argue that in order to understand Daesh propaganda in Dabiq, one also has to understand the frame of it as the frame affects the propaganda and its ability to reach its audience, the focus will also be on Dabiq's frame. As Daesh's propaganda has been successful in attracting people to join them, I argue it is because of their way of framing their propaganda, their argument and the topics they highlight in order to argue for their cause and justify their actions and message. It is also because Daesh has been successful in their propaganda that it is important to study and investigate what their propaganda is as there is a battle taking place parallel to the military battle; the battle of propaganda. It is important to acknowledge what their propaganda consists of in order to countering it and give an alternative to the audience.

So, the purpose of this thesis is to *show* this relation that I argue exists between Dabiq and the way its content is framed in order to understand what Daesh's message and goal is. As

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<sup>36</sup> These are all stated in the Appendix 1.

<sup>37</sup> This concept will be referred to in English as the author could not identify a suitable concept in Arabic that could contain all of the different factors that Daesh addresses as Enemies.

Daesh follows the Salafi ideology, the central message in their propaganda is their strict interpretation of Islam and justifying it. Although this is a central message of Daesh's propaganda, this is a secondary purpose, as the primary purpose is to understand *how* the propaganda Daesh spreads, is framed in order to reach their audience. In order to fulfil this purpose and understand the relation between the content and its form, I need to answer a couple of questions:

- What is Daesh's propaganda, message and goal?
- How is this propaganda, message and goal framed to support their argument?

As this thesis' primary data is quotes from Dabiq, these questions will enable me to show the relation between Dabiq's propaganda content and its form by applying these questions to the quotes.

## **1.2 Disposition**

This thesis is structured into the following chapters. *Chapter one* is the introducing chapter which presents the topic, its focus, the research problem, significance of the study, the thesis' aim and research question. *Chapter two* gives brief background to Salafism and Daesh. *Chapter three* elaborates on the existing literature regarding propaganda and later on the Islamic extremist propaganda by focusing on al-Qaida's and Daesh's propaganda. *Chapter four* discusses the theoretical framework of this thesis. Two different theories will be applied, the theory of propaganda and the theory of framing. *Chapter five* engages with the methodological approach and discusses the choice of method, Critical Discourse analysis followed by a discussion of the data. Additionally, this section provides a discussion regarding the methodology, ethical judgments, validity and reliability of this thesis and highlights this thesis' limitations. Additionally, this chapter defines and discusses key concepts used in this study. *Chapter six* presents the analysis of Dabiq's propaganda. *Chapter seven* presents a concluding discussion and recommendations for future research. The last chapter, *chapter eight* presents the references that have been used throughout this thesis.

## 2. Background

As the Salafi ideology is the foundation of Daesh and its worldview, I will here give a brief introduction to Salafism so the reader will know the background of Daesh's worldview. Later a brief history of Daesh will be presented.

### 2.1 Salafism

Salafism's mainstream version is derived from Ibn Taymiyya, an Islamic orthodox theologian living in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> The term itself comes from the Arabic word "*al-Salaf*" which means Islam's pious forefathers in an Islamic context. The Salafis are the Muslims who lived during the first three generations of Islam and contain the period of the three first caliphs (632-661 CE).<sup>39</sup> This period is known as the Golden age. Muslims during the Golden age are viewed as those living their life according to the right Islam by only following the teachings of the Prophet and therefore stand as the rightful Muslims. Salafis believe that because they follow the pious forefathers, they are the only true Muslims and the only ones who will enter the paradise.<sup>40</sup> The Golden age is a key factor in the Salafi doctrine because Salafis argue that in order to purify Islam from innovations and wrong interpretations; the *Ummah* has to return to the purity of Islam that existed during the Golden age. This is done, by returning to the Quran and the *Hadiths* which both are basic sources of Islam. As the Quran is viewed as the direct words of God and the *Hadiths* contain information of how the Prophet practiced Islam, these are the only sources that Muslims should live according to, this way is Allah's will.<sup>41</sup>

To understand the essence of Salafism and the actions of its followers is to understand their interpretation of the sources and their approach towards who is a Muslim according to them. In addition, there are six essential factors that characterize the ideology and reveals what is important for their followers. 1, as stated, to follow Islam one has to return to the belief and the practices of Muslims during the Golden age. 2, Salafis have a very specific interpretation of *Tawhid* by condemning the acceptance of intermediaries between the individual and Allah. 3, a Muslim has to fight every indication of *Shirk* and *Kufr*. 4, Salafis argue that the only valid sources of authority are the Quran and the *Hadiths* which do not need to be interpreted. 5, the Salafis also has a clear vision of what actions are reprehensible innovations in Islam and they easily act upon this to declare people as apostates or infidels. Lastly, 6, Salafis argue that their view of Islam, al-Salafs and the sources of Islam have to be

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<sup>38</sup> Lauzière, 2016, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Meijer, 2009, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

applied in all times because nothing is more divine than Allah's words and individual interpretations are therefore not needed. <sup>42</sup>

An important element in the Salafi doctrine is how Salafis interpret the level and way of practicing the faith, referring to the participation of the Ummah in different matters and how active one should be. This topic is one of the reasons why Salafi scholars are divided as they argue and interpret the level of participation differently. The first group is called the Salafi Jihadi which is the smallest group. They argue for a need for violent action against the existing political and instead want the establishment of a Caliphate as during the Golden age. The justification of the usage of violent action to reach their goal is the main difference between this Salafi group and the other two groups. The second group stands for non-violent political activism and are usually referred to as the activists. The third group of Salafis who are called Scholastic Salafism, are totally against all form of political organisation and action. Instead they engage in teaching about Salafism and justifying the ideology. <sup>43</sup>

Since the Salafi Jihadi group only accepts the Islam during the Golden age, they argue that there cannot be different types of Salafism and therefore only one correct version exists, the authentic Salafism gone from generation to generation since the pious ancestors. <sup>44</sup> Taking from this, the Salafi Jihadi group argue that Muslims have become ignorant of the accuracy of their religions and live in a barbaric state. Accordingly, in order to re-achieve salvation and the past glory is the need of re-assertion of absolute monotheism, meaning going back to Islam's initial sources: the Quran and the hadiths. Those who do not follow this doctrine of monotheism are declared as unbelievers (Kuffar), apostates (*Murtaddin*), who can be announced as non-Muslims (*Takfir*) which is a precondition for waging Jihad against them. <sup>45</sup>

Salafism is the foundation of Daesh's justification of their actions. As we will acknowledge in this thesis, this strict interpretation of Islam lays the ground for Daesh's worldview which is seen in Dabiq's content.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>44</sup> Lauzière, 2016, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Meijer, 2009, 5.

## 2.2 Daesh

In the United Nations Security Council February 2003, the Secretary of State of the US of that time, Colin Powell, falsely claimed that there is evidence that Saddam Hussein collaborates with al-Qaida. This was stated as one of the reasons for the US' invasion in Iraq. This invasion led to the demolishing of the Iraqi government which resulted in Saddam Hussein fleeing the country.<sup>46</sup> President Bush's claim and argument was that because of the collaboration between Hussein and al-Qaida, Iraq had become a central front for terrorism in the region. This accusation had become accurate after the American invasion of Iraq and creating a chaos in the country. Soon after the invasion, terrorism within Iraq's borders rose.<sup>47</sup>

The US had assigned Paul Bremer as the leader of this mission and as a reaction to the rising terrorism in the country, Bremer decided to demolish the military, the Baath Party and their positions in different civil services. As a result, more than 100,000 Baathists were removed from the former positions, leaving them unemployed and angry. Not having the former force weakened the ability to fight the foreign fighters that now were increasing in the country. This situation was taken as an opportunity for different terrorist organizations to become active and to reach their goal(s).<sup>48</sup>

One of these terrorist organizations was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's organization, *Monotheism and Jihad*. Zarqawi came to Afghanistan after the country's invasion by the Soviet Union and built a training camp, training soldiers in suicide bombing. After 9/11, he fled Afghanistan to Iraqi Kurdistan and when the US invaded Iraq Zarqawi's group became useful and he became a top leader within al-Qaida.<sup>49</sup> In this chaos in Iraq, an outbreak started which targeted both American troops and the Shi'a Muslims. In this outbreak, Jihadists such as Zarqawi's group and al-Qaida could begin to grow. When Zarqawi pledged loyalty to Osama Bin Laden he renamed his group *al-Qaida in Iraq* and later to *the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham*.<sup>50</sup>

After two years of chaos, Nuri al-Maliki, a Shi'a Muslim was installed as the Prime Minister of Iraq in 2006. Before his official instalment, Maliki had promised diversity in the military and the police force but once he got installed these promises did not occur. Sunnis

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<sup>46</sup> Günes and Mellbourn, 2016, 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Stern and Berger, 2016, 19.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 15, 17.

<sup>50</sup> Zarqawi will not have a role in this thesis but needed to be included in the background section as he was a key person in the emergence of Daesh and its development in the region.

were left fearful of their government and feeling betrayed by Maliki. As a result some of them turned to Daesh.<sup>51</sup> Daesh's existence and significance in the region became known for the West when they conquered Mosul; the second largest city in Iraq.

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<sup>51</sup> Stern and Berger, 2016, 44.

### **3. Literature review**

As this thesis will investigate Daesh's propaganda, I will in this section give an overview of the existing literature related to propaganda. In order to place my topic in its field, I will later focus on the Islamic extremist propaganda, by discussing al- Qaida and Daesh's propaganda.

#### **3.1 Studies on propaganda**

There are different studies done regarding propaganda and how it is used. Much of the literature focuses on propaganda as a form of communication and enables the researcher to study its messages, goals and the broader meaning of the propaganda by asking questions regarding the social and cultural context.<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Payne has focused on how propaganda is used in the war on terror from both sides. He states that propaganda is used to explain to a certain group of people, a specific audience, that some values are the correct ones. Payne argues that because propaganda is used to persuade the audience it can be seen as a battle of hearts and minds, like a psychological warfare.<sup>53</sup>

The different propaganda content, the information, has been used to persuade the audience to accept the propagandist's ideology and actions. Further, Payne states that propaganda has a negative tone and people usually think that propaganda content consist of lies and manipulation. This is wrong and he states that the most successful propaganda has been the one based on the truth and derived from real events.<sup>54</sup> This, because lies are more likely to be exposed, which leads to loss of reliability for the message and therefore propagandists' do not engage with lies but instead use the real events to make their own point by selecting what information to present.<sup>55</sup>

In the literature, it is stated that propaganda has mostly been used to damage the image of the opponent and is simplistic and persuasive to be able to make sense to the audience. Baines and O'Shaughnessy address this further and state that the purpose with any propaganda is to persuade the target audience by using the existing facts. However, the role of the propagandist is to interpret these facts and present it in a way that it is understandable for the audience.<sup>56</sup> They further argue that for the propagandist, the audience is an important component as it is the intended audience that make the propagandist frame the propaganda in

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<sup>52</sup> Jowett and O'Donnel, 1999, 28.

<sup>53</sup> Payne, 2009, 110.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>56</sup> Baines and O'Shaughnessy, 2014, 3-4.

a specific way. Related to this, propaganda is, usually unknowingly, used by the audience to make sense of the events of the world.<sup>57</sup> For instance, Keen states that in the American invasion of Iraq, the standpoint was that the troops were successful in their mission. Some facts were used to highlight the success of the mission. This made people support the troops even if they did not support the war itself.<sup>58</sup> Paul Baines and Nicholas O'Shaughnessy elaborate further on this and argue that propaganda is used in connection to nationalism. In any cause, both the pro-side and the anti-side, have a nationalistic approach when arguing for their cause by arguing that they know what the best is for the people and for the nation.<sup>59</sup>

Propaganda does not necessarily have to be used to promote wars or a direct cause. Baines and O'Shaughnessy highlight what is known as the less visible propaganda within democratic states and states that propaganda is also used in creating an education system in a democracy as an example. Education takes place in a context, that of a nation-state so that the interest of that state is reflected in the curriculum, and thus students learn how to understand and interpret the world according to the nation and its culture.<sup>60</sup> So, propaganda is used in any way to persuade the audience to think in a specific way about a specific issue, whether it is a war, an event or the educational system.

### **3.2 Al-Qaida's propaganda**

As I will study Daesh's propaganda, I will here highlight the existing literature regarding Daesh's propaganda. As Javier Jorda expresses that Daesh's propaganda derives from al-Qaida's propaganda, I will begin by discussing al-Qaida's propaganda. However, I am aware that other terror organizations such as Al-Shabab and Boko Haram, have Islamic extremist propaganda. Below, I will state four central themes within the al-Qaida's propaganda, identified in the existing research.

The first central theme in al-Qaida's propaganda is the Salafi desire to return to the Islamic purity and divide the world in "us" and "them" between Muslim's and everyone else. The central vision in Islamist purity is to "liberate the lands of Islam from the falsehood of today's existing world and from the hands of the unbelievers".<sup>61</sup>

The second theme is the idea that the enemies are attacking the Muslims and Islam and that this is used to justify al-Qaida's actions. Payne expresses that Bin Laden used to structure

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Keen, 2006, 90.

<sup>59</sup> Baines and O'Shaughnessy, 2014, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>61</sup> Payne, 2009, 111.

and surround his speeches around the notion that the people of Islam are under the oppression of tyranny and injustice and therefore they are obligated to liberate themselves from the oppression by defending themselves.<sup>62</sup> An essential factor here is Al-Qaida's transnational hate and their global audience. This is an essential matter as they motivate and attract people with a strong sense of frustration. In these narratives, propaganda and religious ideas are intermixed with intolerant of injustice.<sup>63</sup>

The third central theme is the usage of Jihad in al-Qaida's propaganda. Jihad is stated as the mean to protect and defend the Ummah and they argue that using Jihad to defend Islam and the Ummah is justified in Islam.<sup>64</sup> The formation of Jihad then, Payne argues, is an important tool and aspect of this propaganda discourse as it clearly states that Jihad is used against resistance and expresses revenge.<sup>65</sup> Jorda states that this argument's success is its ability to aim feelings of manipulation and humiliation towards the West and Israel by framing it as an obligation.<sup>66</sup>

The fourth central theme is terrorism as a powerful tool of propaganda. In the research field this is called "propaganda by deed".<sup>67</sup> Terrorism, Payne states, spreads the message wide open to a wide audience without framing it in a specific way and gives al-Qaida a sense of credibility. In addition, Jorda states that the terror attacks are justified as "an eye for an eye", justice referring to the innocent Muslims being killed by Western countries. Al-Qaida argues that this approach is valid both in a religious sense and logically as it has support in the Quran.<sup>68</sup> This type of propaganda, then, creates a follower to commit terror actions through radical interpretations of the Quran and the simplification of the reasons as an obligation and as a justified action. Even though the power of words is all about the ideas, facts that are used to argue are essential as well.<sup>69</sup>

Even though, terrorist attacks have been seen as one of the most successful propaganda tools, a new tool has emerged in the recent years: social media, which has been positive for terror organizations. Before the emergence of Internet and then social media, al-Qaida and other terror organizations were dependent on the modern media to spread their message wide

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>63</sup> Jorda, et al. 2005, 34.

<sup>64</sup> Smith and Walsh, 2013, 315.

<sup>65</sup> Payne, 2009, 112.

<sup>66</sup> Jorda, et al 2005, 38.

<sup>67</sup> Payne, 2009, 113.

<sup>68</sup> Jorda, et al. 2005, 37.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 41.

(for instance the news of terror attacks). However, as Internet emerged and became a global asset for everyone, it also included al-Qaida. The online social network has thus become an important tool in this field as it allows the propagandist to communicate easily with its audience and it is used to recruit people. Further, social media is faster and it is difficult for opponents to suppress the messages once it is published.<sup>70</sup> Manuel R. Torres Soriano states that the rise of cyberspace has transformed both the meaning and opportunity for propaganda as anyone can be a propagandist.<sup>71</sup> Paul Baines and Nicholas O'Shaughnessy state therefore that Internet propaganda is the most dangerous one as it does not have any limitations and is unfiltered.<sup>72</sup>

### **3.3 Studies on Daesh's propaganda**

Social media has freed the terror organization, such as al-Qaida and Daesh from depending on mainstream media. Especially Facebook and Twitter have had a big part in spreading terror organizations' propaganda. Therefore, the focus on Daesh's propaganda has mostly been on their activities in social media, especially Twitter, where the focus has been the content of the tweets to grasp the propaganda themes expressed on Twitter.<sup>73</sup> The most common themes and topics that have been expressed by Daesh are religious instructions, quotes from the scripts, religious advice, report from the battle, pictures of dead martyrs and battles, reporting current locations of battles, threatening the West, interpersonal communication and what region they have conquered.<sup>74</sup> However, Twitter is also used to recruit and indoctrinate people and thus building a global community of extremists.

Another internet-based propaganda platform is Daesh's online magazine Dabiq. Mohamed Elaw Bader has done one of the very few studies on Dabiq. Bader argues that Daesh's religious propaganda is written with the power to communicate with people everywhere with the message of comfort, hope and salvation. By creating a feeling of power, people are attracted to the Caliphate not only through fear but also through love because it argues that it spreads freedom, justice, equality and humanity.<sup>75</sup> The second part is according to Bader a key factor and is used by Daesh through a number of channels; internet,

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<sup>70</sup> Payne, 2009,115.

<sup>71</sup> Torres, 2010, 80.

<sup>72</sup> Baines and O'Shaughnessy, 2014, 9.

<sup>73</sup> Magdy, Darwish and Weber, "#FailedRevolutions: Using Twitter to study the antecedents of ISIS support" Peer-Reviewed Journal on the Internet, (2016), Vol. 21, No.2.

<sup>74</sup> Klausen, 2015, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Elewa Badar, 2016, 366.

broadcasting airwaves, traditional, publications and videos.<sup>76</sup> In this context, according to Bader who in this article focuses on Daesh hate propaganda leading to genocide, Dabiq, makes the most important propaganda channel for grasping their *intentions*.<sup>77</sup>

Chris Galloway has also studied Dabiq and he states that Daesh argues that Islam is the religion of victory and salvation. Accordingly, the narrative is framed with Islamic rhetoric, aimed at propagating the terror organization's Salafi-Jihadist views and demonstrating their implementation in the Caliphate as a positive factor.

According to Galloway, Daesh's propaganda builds on earlier messages by al-Qaida but there are some essential differences between them. The most essential difference is the need of a Caliphate where the need is agreed on but it is the timing that differs between these two terror organizations. For al-Qaida, the Ummah has to be prepared for the Caliphate but Daesh argues that the existence of the Caliphate is enough for the Ummah to join it.<sup>78</sup> As a result, building the caliphate now is a central theme in Daesh's propaganda and the propaganda, its message and justification, is connected to their goal.

Galloway argues that we would miss a lot of information regarding Daesh's propaganda if we only would see it as religious propaganda and not focus on other topics that the propaganda touches on. Daesh justifies its actions through mediated theological argumentation as well as powerful images, but it is also more than that, Galloway argues. Their way of justifying might be religious but the persuasion is psychological as any political warfare and propaganda.<sup>79</sup> By stating this- it opens up a need to study how this persuasion is made. Thus, this is what I will do in this thesis: study how Daesh persuades its audience.

### **3.4 Concluding summary**

This literature review has highlighted and discussed some key factors related to propaganda in general. It has also provided central themes regarding al-Qaidas and presented an overview of Daesh's propaganda. As stated in the literature review some propaganda related to Daesh has been studied, particularly, their activities and propaganda on social media such as Twitter and Facebook. However, like Badr and Galloway expressed, Daesh's online magazine Dabiq is a very important propaganda channel that exposes their intentions, ideology and goals. This

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 377.

<sup>78</sup> Galloway, 2016, 4.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 8.

channel has not been the focus of studies to the same extent as their propaganda in the social media, which is the gap that I will focus on in this study.

## **4. Theoretical framework**

Deriving from the literature review, to study Dabiq as propaganda, it needs tools that will highlight the propagandistic features. I will thus, use Jacques Ellul's propaganda theory. As I argue that in order to understand Dabiq's propaganda, the frame has to be studied as well. Therefore, I will complement this theoretical framework by using the theory of framing by Robert Entman to be able to get tools to highlight Dabiq's frame.

### **4.1 Theory of propaganda**

Within the field of propaganda there are different theories and perspectives. In this thesis, I will use Jacques Ellul's theory on propaganda, a French sociologist. I will both use his own writings but also Jowett and O'Donnell's writings on Ellul's theory.

Ellul's definition of propaganda is that propaganda "is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist".<sup>80</sup> This definition focuses on the communication and information flow between the propagandist and his audience. As stated in the literature review, propaganda is used in order to affect the audience and hopefully make the audience react in the way the propagandist desires. Ellul's theory and definition derives from this relation between propaganda and its audience and enables the researcher to study a particular propaganda case, its intended message and desired reaction from the audience.

In its natural sense, propaganda means to promote or disseminate some specific ideas, values or ideologies. But, as stated in the literature review, as propaganda has been used for the advantage of the propagandist it is viewed as a negative and dishonest communication because the propagandist controls the information flow. However, according to Ellul, propaganda is not necessarily a negative thing. He argues that people need propaganda in order to make sense of the world and the mass information that is shared every day. Thus, propaganda enables people to participate in important events and understand the information that is shared daily. Therefore, Ellul also argues that propaganda is not necessarily based on lies, rather propaganda is built on the truth, half-truth or limited truth.<sup>81</sup> The difference between propaganda and other kind of information sharing is that the purpose with the propaganda information is not to inform the audience but it is to promote the propagandist's ideas, values, and ideology in a way that it will change the targeted audience's opinions so that they will share the propagandist's worldview and construct new opinions. Ellul states that this

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>81</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell, 2015, 3.

is done by controlling the information flow through different strategies of communicating with the audience, such as withholding information, spreading information that will influence the audience's perception, using the context to make a point, highlighting some topics that reflect the connection between the propagandist and the audience.<sup>82</sup> In this way, propaganda uses persuasive strategies with the desire to change the targeted audience's opinions. So, using a communication approach to study the propaganda, it enables the researcher to identify how this communication is done, identifying the context which is used to make a point, what the desired intention and message is and also how the propagandist wants the audience to react to the propaganda message.<sup>83</sup>

Applying Ellul's tools to identify Daesh's propaganda in Dabiq enables me to identify Dabiq's propaganda content, message and Daesh's goals. As Ellul focuses on propaganda as a communicative tool between the propagandist and his targeted audience, his theory enables me to study what Daesh wants their audience to know, how Daesh wants the audience to understand their propaganda and message.

As addressed before, the goal of propaganda is to create a certain belief and opinions in the target audience so the audience can in turn react or respond in a specific way which will benefit the propagandist. As the relation between the propagandist and the audience is at focus in Ellul's theory, one can identify the desired reaction of the propagandist. The desired reaction is in its turn connected to the goal of the propagandist and his message as his message is framed in a way to affect the audience.<sup>84</sup>

Further, Ellul highlights that the propagandist in order to be able to construct and point the audience's perception in a specific direction, he uses the language, images and symbols. And because of this, Ellul argues that how the audience understand the different forms of propaganda is both based on their psychological and practical habits. Accordingly, Ellul argues that how propaganda then is understood and interpreted is based on the audience's internal and external patterns. Ellul gives the psychological context as the internal pattern and the social and cultural contexts as the external pattern. Thus, the propagandist place his message within a psychological, social and cultural context that the audience can relate to in order to react the way the propagandist wants to.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p2.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 8.

Ellul states that the best and the most successful propaganda does not operate in a vacuum, rather it uses current events and discussions so that the audience can relate the propaganda to the current world and what happens in the world. In this way the propaganda gives the audience a purpose and a sense of fellowship otherwise, the audience will not understand why this information (propaganda) is important.<sup>86</sup> Ellul states that the propagandist, in order to be able to connect the propaganda to the current events, he engages himself with the needs that he believes the audience has. All propaganda must respond to a need, whether a concrete need or a psychological need. The point is that the propaganda addresses a need in order to be viewed as reliable for the audience because the propagandist also answers this need.<sup>87</sup>

Having the aim to understand Daesh's propaganda through Dabiq, I need to investigate these topics that Ellul highlights. Ellul argues that the connection between the propaganda and the current world is important as it is in this way propaganda makes sense to the audience. So, I will apply these tools to understand what contexts Daesh highlights in Dabiq. I will explore how Daesh use psychological, social and cultural aspects to make their point. I will also identify the needs that Daesh believes the audience has and study how these needs are addressed and what topics are highlighted in relation to them. I will also investigate how these contexts and needs fit into Daesh's goal and intentions. However, to be able to understand how this need is framed, one needs to grasp the tools that give the opportunity to study the frame to understand the propaganda.

As stated before, the goal of the propaganda is to persuade the audience to react the way the propagandist desires. Ellul states that this is the difficult part as people are reluctant to change. In order to make the change easier and possible, propagandists use "anchors" to argue indirectly for the need of this new change. Anchors can be anything that the audience is familiar with, such as faith, different ideological beliefs, values that express what is right, wrong, good and bad etcetera, or attitudes.<sup>88</sup>

This method of using different anchors to justify the propaganda and to implement the need of a change and reaction in the audience will be applied on Dabiq. This will give me the tools to investigate Daesh's propaganda deeper and to understand how some values or ideologies are used as anchors to create a change within the audience. I will investigate what

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ellul, 1973, 36-37.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 34-38.

kind of anchors Daesh uses in Dabiq and in the same time, I will grasp what their propaganda is built on, meaning what kind of values they believe are good, right, bad and wrong. In other words, it enables me to understand what values according to Daesh is expressed as perusable and how they justify their arguments and actions.

In this section, I have highlighted and discussed the characteristics of propaganda and the tools that enable me to study the propagandistic content of Dabiq. By applying this theory of propaganda, I am able to investigate Daesh's propaganda, message, their goal and their desired reaction from the target audience. However, as it is stated in Ellul's theory of propaganda, the propagandist uses different aspects, historical and current events, different contexts, the audience's needs and anchors to frame his propaganda in order to get the desired reaction from the audience. This aspect of propaganda shows the need to investigate the *frame* of Dabiq as the question of *how* the propaganda is framed affects Daesh's propaganda content. Therefore, the next theory will complement the theory of propaganda, by enabling me to grasp how Daesh construct and frame their propaganda in Dabiq.

#### **4.2 Theory of framing**

In order to show the relation between Dabiq's propaganda and its frame, I will use the theory of framing created by Robert Entman. This theory will be used as a complement to Ellul's theory of propaganda.

The concept of framing describes the power that a communication channel's frame has and its influence over the human understands of things.<sup>89</sup> The word framing means that a communicator frames its communication tools, for example a text or a talk, with a process of selection and salience. Entman argues that when something is described or told, it is told by selecting from a wide range of alternatives ways of telling, aspects and topics to include in this particular telling when communicating it. He defines the relation between selection and salience as follows: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."<sup>90</sup> By framing a concept or telling a story we do not only define and discuss it, the framing also reveals underlying functions about the concept that one may or may not be aware of. Entman identifies four functions that are the essence of the frame. 1, a text's frame

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<sup>89</sup> Entman, 1993, 51.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 52.

reveals what problems the communicator believe exists with her cultural measurements. This means that the problem is according to that culture's values. 2, frames also contain information regarding who has created the problem and why. 3, frames also contain moral judgments regarding the problems and their effect on the society, a group and or the culture. 4, lastly, frames also suggest solutions to the problem and what affect the solutions will have in this particular context.<sup>91</sup> However, Entman argues that the problems that the communicator identifies are not created by the communicator or by the text's frame. The problem has to exist in the current context, in the society so the communicator can extract the problem and frame it, although, in the direction he desires. Taking from this, by writing a text or by talking we do not only tell something, rather factors and aspects that our text or our opinions are based on, are revealed in the process. In my case, I will emanate from the mentioned four functions that a frame has and apply these on Dabiq and investigate how these functions exist in Dabiq's. By doing so, I will be able to identify what problems exist in the world according to Daesh. When applying this on Dabiq's content, one has to study what kind of aspects and factors they address as problems and how they justify it. Studying how these problems are framed by investigating whom they believe created the problems, one can grasp their message of what is wrong and what is right. Studying the problems give one also the tools to study what values they want to pursue, how these values are justified and why the problem is framed as a problem. Studying how Daesh frames the problem and what values to pursue, also enables me to investigate what their solution to these identified problems are and how these problems can be avoided which in its turn will reveal what they desire and what their desired reaction from the audience is. I thus argue, that investigating these aspects in Dabiq, it will reveal how Dabiq's frame actually affects the propaganda itself to reach the audience in the best possible way.

Accordingly, the author has identified four locations that is important and affects the communication: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture. The communicator frames the communication by deciding what to say which in its turn is guided by frames that organize their belief system. The text, contains frames which are created and understood by the presence or absence of certain keywords, phrases, stereotypes, sources of information and sentences that formats the information. The receiver being the third location gets affected by the presented information in the text by making on opinion based on the present information.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

The culture is also an important location where it both affects the framing in the text but also affected by the information in the text.<sup>93</sup> So framing in all four locations includes functions such as selecting, highlighting and use the selective information to construct an argument about problems and their cause, their evaluation and solution, by the author (meaning that the author defines what is important to know, defines the issues and the problems and how they can be solved). The discussion regarding these four locations that communication takes place within is important as one can understand what factors shapes Daesh's propaganda and message. By using Entman's theory of framing, I argue that Daesh's way of spreading and framing their intentions, choosing what the information should contain and not contain, affects the audience understanding of the propaganda. As the cultural context affects our values, it also plays a major role in what we believe is important information, what we choose to include and not include, what is of value to highlight and why.

By studying Dabiq's frame, in other words, by studying how things are told, justified, argued and what topics are selected to be included in Dabiq's frame, I will identify what is important for Daesh to spread. I will be able to understand what message Daesh wants to spread, what values are important for them, how some specific parts of information are more noticeable and more important than others in these texts and if some aspects or elements are absent. The receiver, the audience, in its turn acquires the information in the way it is presented and makes judgments according to the information and how it is justified and relevant for them. As propaganda's aim is to get a specific reaction from the audience, the frame is important to study to identify how the frame affects the propaganda itself. So by studying the frame with these tools that Entman provides with, one can understand Daesh's propaganda, their goal and desired reaction from the audience through the frame of Dabiq.

To sum this section, I will apply the theory of framing on Dabiq and discuss the four locations within the texts and also identify the four key aspects this theory argues that texts are framed by: the problems, the causes, the moral judgments (values) and the suggestions as solutions.

There are other theorists that have written about frames and their ability to affect people. Erving Goffman<sup>94</sup> focuses on the social dimension of framing and how it affects our views on reality. He focuses on the everyday life and on organizational structures and how these affect our notion of the reality. He argues that the structures in the society determine which reality becomes "The" reality by framing it in a specific way. This is an important

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>94</sup> Erving Goffman (1974). *Frame Analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*.

aspect of framing as it focuses on the society and its structures and explores how it affects our attitudes and understanding of the world.

Another theorist is Shanto Iyenger.<sup>95</sup> He focuses on how Television news influences on how people attribute political accountability and shape political opinions and attitudes. Among other things, he focuses on how the news distinguishes between societal and individual forces depending on who the news is about. This is also an important aspect to highlight as it shows how the news frame affects our view of each other.

However, as I want to show the relation between Dabiq's propaganda and its frame and how its frame affects the propaganda by looking at what tools they use to support their argument and goal, these other theories of framing although interesting, are not suitable for this aim. My focus is not to reveal the daily-life of Daesh and the societal structures that affects their way of framing their propaganda. Neither is my focus on how a certain way of framing the news (in Television) affects our political views and attitudes. Entman contextualizes the frame with a communication perspective that enables me to investigate what Daesh wants to communicate with its audience: what Daesh want them know. Entman's theory highlights four locations where framing takes place and applying this on Dabiq it enables me to focus on what aspects and factors affects the frame of the content which enables me to reveal what tools the communicator uses to frame its argument so it can reach its audience and make sense to them. Entman's way of discussing the frame enables me to explore what Daesh's desired reaction from the audience is which is the aim of this thesis. Therefore, Entman's theory of framing is what suits the aim of this thesis best.

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<sup>95</sup> Iyengar, (1991), Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues.

## **5. Methodological approach**

This study is a case study focusing on Dabiq as a specific case to study and reveal Daesh's propaganda. I believe that Daesh, by promoting and propagating for a specific goal, view and understanding, constructs a specific reality. Therefore, this study will have a constructivism paradigm, arguing that Daesh, with their propaganda and message, create a certain discourse with their language in Dabiq. Our actions are a result of our worldview and how we interpret our context and reality. With communication, we retell and share our understanding of the reality and thus we construct our own understanding of the world through language. This study is based on this perspective of the world as constructed through Daesh's understandings. In order to go in depth with this particular case, Dabiq's content, I need to investigate its discourse to get to the essence of it. Therefore, the only suitable method for my case study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I will use Norman Fairclough's writings on CDA.

### **5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Norman Fairclough, states "with language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse."<sup>96</sup> This quote highlights four essential factors of CDA: i) everything is constructed by the language, ii) we represent reality (the understanding of the world) through language, iii) we construct the reality through language and iv) reality gets a meaning through the language discourse.

As it can be acknowledged, discourse has a big role in constructing our reality (and interpreting it) as it is with the discourse language that one understands the reality and also creates it. The definition of discourse that will be used in this thesis is "The use of language in speech and writing as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as a social practice implies a dialectic relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution, and social structure that frame it, the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them [...]."<sup>97</sup> Deriving from this definition, the foundation of this method is that our ways of talking and behaving does not come naturally and does start to exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is our understanding of the reality through our social and cultural backgrounds that affects our perceptions of the world and constructs our way of seeing the reality. In its turn,

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<sup>96</sup> Winther Jørgensen and Phillips ,2002, 9.

<sup>97</sup> Bergström, Boréus, 2012, 308.

how we see the world and our reality is expressed in our usage of the language and creates a specific discourse.<sup>98</sup> The key factor in the discourse field is that there is no objective truth as reality is constructed and understood through categories. Our knowledge of the world is not a reflection of one existing reality but it is a product of our ways of categorizing the world and interpreting different events in different ways. In this way, there are different realities which are subjective and by retelling them we construct different discourses, different ways of seeing the world.<sup>99</sup>

As discourse constructs realities, it also has the power to decide what norms and values are the normal and correct ones, as the reality works through these notions, with how we speak and behave. Thus, different discourses and different understandings of the world compete with each other regarding who has more influence over people minds. In this way discourses contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between worldviews and understandings of the reality.<sup>100</sup> Every discourse tries to be the mainstream discourse that the audience believes. Being so, the mainstream understanding has thus the power of determining what knowledge and information and opinions people should have.<sup>101</sup> As discourse is a representation of a specific way of understanding the world, “winning” is also discourse’s interest. Jørgensen and Philips state: “[o]ften opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts and (b) broader social and cultural structures, relations and processes [...] how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power [...] how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony”.<sup>102</sup>

Having the constructivism paradigm, it is important to see how Daesh creates and constructs a specific reality for its audience by having a specific discourse in Dabiq. This is seen in how Daesh tries to determine what is right, normal and accepted by their understanding of the world by writing certain statements, highlighting different topics, historical and cultural events, by applying the theories of propaganda and framing. In other words how the *how* (their propaganda is framed) question is closely related to the *what* (their propaganda and message is) question, will be revealed by studying the discourse (Daesh’s

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<sup>98</sup> Van Dijk, 2005, 353.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 353-354.

<sup>101</sup> Bergström, Boréus, 2012, 328.

<sup>102</sup> Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, 63.

understanding of the reality) in Dabiq.

Additionally, Fairclough argues that communication and discourses shape and are shaped in relation to other discourses. This aspect is important because it addresses how discourses affect each other.<sup>103</sup> Therefore text or communication in general can never be understood or studied alone, rather they have to be put in relation to a broad context, other texts, other communicative events in order to understand its full meaning.<sup>104</sup> Applying this on Dabiq's case, I will investigate how other discourses are present in Dabiq, how they are addressed and in what way they have affected Daesh's discourse and their understanding of the reality.

Discourse itself involves around three dimensions: the linguistic features of the text, the relation between the producer and the audience of the text and the wider social world present in the text. So applying CDA on Dabiq, I will study the linguistic features meaning what words and sentences are used to describe and discuss topics and events, what topics are stressed to make a point, what issues are essential in the texts and the structure of the text is. Having the tools to focus on how the text is structured and what the text contains of (words, metaphors and sentences), I will be able to study the relation between Daesh and their audience and exploring how Daesh wants the audience to react. Lastly, by applying CDA on Dabiq, I will also be able investigate what other aspects influence Daesh's reality and their way of arguing and justifying their message and goal, aspects such as cultural and historical events. Also, as discourses determine which values are the correct ones, normal and what values are not, I will study this feature in order to understand what message and goals Daesh has.

Although I argue that there is no other method that is more suitable for this case, I am aware of its limitations. One important limitation is that CDA only provides information regarding one specific chosen text, in this case the texts in Dabiq. Therefore, the researcher is only able to study a topic, a problem or a subject within this particular textual frame and therefore cannot provide absolute answers to a specific problem. However, as this thesis' aim is specifically to study this particular text and to come to a conclusion based on this text, this limitation does not affect the study.

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<sup>103</sup>Bergström, Boréus, 2012., 322.

<sup>104</sup> Winther Jørgensen and Phillips ,2002, 70.

## 5.2 The data

As stated before, this thesis' data is based on Dabiq, the online-magazine published by Daesh's institution Al Hayat Media Center.<sup>105</sup> This magazine is written by Daesh members but it is not stated who the author(s) is, how many they are, their backgrounds and how they approach their material. This magazine being online is easily accessed on the internet and by typing the word Dabiq on google one can easily find the magazine. I have accessed Dabiq through the website called [clarionproject.org](http://clarionproject.org)<sup>106</sup>, where all existing issues of Dabiq are stated with a brief explanation of each issue. The first issue of Dabiq was published in June 2014 and the most recent as of November 2016, is issue number 15 published in August 2016. Dabiq has with some exceptions been published every other month engaging with topics and news that was accurate for that month. The magazine is published in several languages, such as Arabic, English, and French and I have used the English version. The magazine is structured in a very clear way and there are some fixed topics that are discussed and highlighted in every issue but with different content, and then there are some specific topics that are discussed in a specific issue, particularly written to highlight this specific topic. Some of the fixed topics seen in every issue are titled "Among believers there are men" which contains interviews with people who have done Hijrah to the Caliphate or stories about the Caliphate's martyrs, "From our sisters" containing interviews with women who have joined the Caliphate or discussing how women can support the Caliphate, "In the words of the enemy" which addresses what different leaders of countries that Daesh views as enemies have said about the Caliphate and "Islamic state reports" which contains news regarding the Caliphate's new conquests and information about the daily-life and implementing Islam in the Caliphate. There are also specific topics that are highlighted by dedicating an entire issue to them, topics such as "the Rafidah", "the call to Hijrah" and "the failed Crusaders". These topics are discussed throughout all of the issues in different ways but are highlighted further to stress their importance in the propaganda. The title of each issue expresses what the specific content of that issue is.

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<sup>105</sup> "JIHADODOLOGY: A clearinghouse for jihādī primary source material, original analysis, and translation service".

<sup>106</sup> "an independently funded, non-profit organization dedicated to exposing the dangers of Islamist extremism while providing a platform for the voices of moderation and promoting grassroots activism". (Clarion Project 2016).

### 5.2.1 Data collecting and coding

I began the data collecting by downloading and printing all of the existing issues of Dabiq. I read each issue separately and took notes on a separate piece of paper. The notes were themes that expressed all the topics and values that Daesh brought up and discussed. After reading the 15 issues, I had about 25 themes (all stated in the Appendix 1), which included both strong themes (reoccurring in all of the issues) and weak themes (visible in some issues). These themes were identified by looking at data on a semantic level meaning that the themes were identified because of their explicit meanings.<sup>107</sup>

Using CDA as the method to identify the themes, I focused on how the text was written by focusing on repeated words and ideas that could be singled out, what context was highlighted, how they construct their reality with the usage of their language and thus what kind of discourse they created. I also translated some discussions and arguments into themes (in other words, I located what themes these discussions and arguments highlighted) which I found important as they revealed what is important for Daesh to stress. Specific words such as “the Crusaders”, “Hijrah” and “Shirk”, and discussions for example regarding Jihad, ideologies such as nationalism and secularism and fellowship in the Caliphate. Some would argue that a good way of coding your data is to search for some specific words in Dabiq. However, applying this method just to get an insight of what information about Dabiq it would give me, I quickly realised that this approach meant that I have to have a pre-judgments of the issues and made-up my mind of what I want to search for. As I wanted to identify the themes based on the issues and what is expressed in Dabiq, this approach would have made me miss important information as searching for specific words only gives information about these exact words and not information based on the content as a whole.

After collecting all of these themes, I categorized these into bigger themes and subthemes. Highlighting different themes and subthemes with different colour markers, I was able to structure the themes into strong and weak themes and get an overview of the thematic content of all 15 issues of Dabiq. I, then, categorized all of the themes into bigger themes, which I call for concepts. Thus, the concepts that the identified themes were categorized into and represent the content of Dabiq and all subthemes are the Enemy, Jihad and Hijrah. These identified concepts were used because I argue that they express the identified themes best and represents Dabiq’s 15 issues. Therefore, by studying these concepts, I can fulfil this thesis’

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<sup>107</sup> Braun and Clarke, 2016, 13.

aim to understand Daesh's propaganda and their message. All of the identified themes are stated in Appendix 1.

### **5.2.2 Analysis steps**

After identifying the concepts that reflect the important themes in Dabiq, I began to engage with identifying quotes that best could express what these concepts mean to Dabiq and how they discuss them in order to understand what their propaganda and their message is. I read all of the issues again and I highlighted quotes that I in a first stage though I could use. These were over a hundred quotes, but as a lot of these quotes were expressing the same things or similar things as others, I decided to use quotes that in a clear and strong way expressed the meaning of the concepts, Daesh's definition of these concepts and contained several of the identified themes.

After this process, I started to write a brief explanation and a short analysis of these quotes in order to actually see how these quotes can contribute to reveal Daesh's propaganda, message and goal. Accordingly, I narrowed the quotes down to 16 which are the final number used in my analysis. As one can acknowledge, I began with a wide range of quotes in order to see what information these quotes could give me regarding Daesh's interpretation of these concepts and thus their propaganda. However, the majority of these quotes had to be eliminated in order to grasp the essence of their Daesh's propaganda, key aspects and topics that express Daesh's propaganda and what kind of message they want their audience to receive. These identified themes and the concepts are thus key themes to understand Daesh's propaganda in Dabiq and by analysing the quotes Daesh's propaganda and message will be revealed.

## **5.3 Concept definitions**

### **The Enemy**

The concept enemy in Daesh's context is very broad and can be pointed at anyone that does not agree with Daesh, their ideology and their approach. Firstly, the West is a broad term which is used to point to the bigger enemy, but merely Europe, North America and Israel, particularly the US, Great Britain and France are stated as enemies. Secondly, different ideologies and religions that people live by are also considered a part of the enemy as they are against Islam and Allah. Shortly, behaviour that according to Daesh is against Islam or

neglects Allah's Tawhid is viewed as an enemy and it is with this definition, I will study the enemy in Dabiq.

### Jihad

The Arabic word "Jihad" is usually interpreted as holy war in Islam, but literally means struggling or striving for something.<sup>108</sup> According to the Quran and different hadiths, Jihad has different levels and can be used in several ways. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslims as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam (dawa)<sup>109</sup>. Although military Jihad does exist in Islam in order to protect the religion from different enemies, it can be performed by using different means such as legal- , diplomatic- , economic- and political means. Additionally, Jihad is also referred to in a major and a minor form; the peaceful battle for self-control respectively the armed battle.<sup>110</sup> However, as this thesis will investigate Jihad according to Daesh, Jihad first and foremost means to protect Islam with war.

### Hijrah

Hijrah literally means "emigration" in Arabic. However, when it is used in an Islamic context it has a more profound meaning. Firstly, it refers to the time when the Prophet Muhammed emigrated 622 CE from Mecca to Medina in order to escape persecution. This date and this event mark the starting point of Islam.<sup>111</sup> Secondly, the usage of the term Hijrah within Daesh's propaganda refers to Daesh's invitation to Muslims everywhere to immigrate to the land of Islam: the Caliphate. So it is with this definition of Hijrah that I will study Dabiq.

## **5.4 A note on validity and reliability**

For a study to be valid, meaning being trustworthy and its results being credible, the accuracy of the data is important. An important challenge for me was the representation of Dabiq in my data as my study depends completely on the content and themes in Dabiq. In order to represent all 15 issues of Dabiq in this thesis, I had the aim to have at least one quote from each issue in order to have all 15 issues represented in the data so that the result would be representative for the magazine. However, my study does not include quotes from all the issues because I chose to have the strongest quotes that express the identified themes best,

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<sup>108</sup> Cook, 2015, 1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 5.

even if it meant to have more than one quote from one issue. In other words, to study some quotes just to have all issues included would not have been the best approach to understand Daesh's propaganda, it would make my data weak as some other important themes would have been left out. But, as I explained in the previous chapter, the themes were chosen based on all of the issues and the quotes were based on the themes that were expressed in all of the issues. Therefore, I argue that all 15 issues are indirectly represented in the data. These issues together identified the concepts which Daesh finds most important which through them their key messages is expressed. This also means that a lot of the deselected quotes are indirectly included in the data and the analysis. This increases the trustworthiness of my study since it avoids the risk that the conclusions will be based on biased selection and the risk of missing important information that may affect the study.

Another discussion regarding this study's reliability is about the choice of analysing the English version of Dabiq. As mentioned before, Dabiq is published in several languages including Arabic. One might argue that the best choice would be to use the Arabic version as it most likely is the initial published version, and using the English version will affect the understanding of Dabiq as one has to interpret it which might affect the validity of the study. However, as I argue that Dabiq is written in a way to attract a wide audience from all around the world, the English version is not a less of a version and contains the same information as the other versions, if not being the most complete one. Thus, not using the Arabic version is not a problem for my thesis' purpose as their message is not only for Arabic speakers but for everyone.

Another important aspect is the questions that I ask Dabiq. Focusing on the hermeneutic questions of *what* the propaganda is and *how* it is framed, this thesis does only focus on these questions which exclude other important questions that can help revealing other information about Dabiq. Questions such as how Dabiq's content and propaganda has changed over time, who the authors are (if possible to explore), how the audience of Dabiq are addressed and why this is their propaganda. Implementing these questions on Dabiq reveal other important information regarding Daesh and because of this it may be understood as this thesis neglects other parts and thus the study may not be reliable as it leaves out other important aspects. However, this thesis aims to focus on the propaganda itself and to show the importance of its frame affection of the propaganda itself. By approaching the material as explained the aim of this thesis is fulfilled. Therefore, not including other questions and aspects, it does not affect this thesis' reliability.

Lastly, a note on this study's reliability, I believe it is much about the reader being able to follow the study and if one wishes being able to do the steps oneself and come to the same conclusion. I believe that as my study is a clear analysis of the content of Dabiq, with detailed explained steps and an open coding of the themes, motivating my choices; the reader can trace my approach and come to the same understanding as me.

## **5.5 Ethical judgments**

During the process of writing, I came across a few ethical considerations that need to be highlighted. Firstly, by analysing Dabiq and having the aim to understand Daesh's propaganda, this thesis makes this terrorist group's message and actions understandable and accessible for everyone, which may be understood as giving publicity to terrorist propaganda. However, my purpose is academically to understand their propaganda and message. Therefore, I have to approach the material as any other material and ask relevant question to the material to fulfil my purpose. This also includes the notions of subjectivity, objectivity and pre-judgments as we all have pre-judgments especially regarding this intense topic. However, it is extra important to put the pre-judgments aside and try to understand the material on its own terms in order for the material to be researched based on findings and not pre-judgments. This is the responsibility that I as a researcher have towards academia and the study; to not let personal feelings affect the study and not present results I cannot support.

Secondly, engaging with Dabiq which in itself engages with a specific interpretation of Islam, it is important to state that this is only one interpretation of Islam and should not be generalised as the meaning of Islam and represent Muslims rather Islam should be seen a religion with different interpretations as any other religion. Related to this, it is important to acknowledge that when one discusses Islam usually one specific category of people comes to mind, people from the Middle East or Arabs and so on. This topic is important specifically here as Daesh refers to these people in their propaganda as well. However, it is important to remind oneself that "liberal" Muslims' voices are not included here and they cannot counter-argue what Daesh represents.

## **5.6 Role as a researcher**

My attitude as a researcher towards Dabiq and Daesh has been a constant struggle to not let my background as a Shi'a Muslim and feeling violated by Daesh's propaganda and their actions, affect this study. As a researcher, you owe a sense of objectivity towards the research

and your readers so that the study will be based on facts and not personal feelings or opinions. My challenge during the whole thesis process has been to find a balance between the two persons that I am: a Muslim living in the West and the researcher who wants to investigate Daesh's propaganda for scientific reasons. I believe that the way that I have approached the data, explained the different choices and steps of this thesis, I have been able to keep my distance and instead let my researching tools step up and guide me in the thesis process and thus be as objective as possible. However, I do not want to neglect the "other" me, as having a Muslim background enabled me to understand aspects and facts that I could have missed if I would not have the insight that I have as a Muslim.

### **5.7 Clarifications and limitations**

I am aware that propaganda can be pictures, videos, symbols and texts. This is not an exception in Dabiq as Dabiq both contains pictures and text and Daesh also uses videos to share their propaganda.<sup>112</sup> However, I have chosen to focus on Daesh's textual propaganda in Dabiq in order to fulfil this thesis' aim. I argue that it is easier to identify a text's purpose and its desired action from its audience than from pictures or videos. I argue that the relation between the author of a text and its audience is closer and clearer and that the propagandistic tools can be revealed easier by investigating texts rather than other kind of propaganda. Therefore, I chose to focus on the textual propaganda in Dabiq.

This thesis focuses on Daesh's propaganda in Dabiq and in order to understand Daesh's propaganda. A limitation of this thesis that I believe needs to be mentioned is how this thesis does not include Daesh's other propaganda channels such as social media and other media which was discussed in the literature review. In the sense to get a whole picture of Daesh's propaganda it would be necessary to include all of Daesh's propaganda channels. However, as stated in the literature review, Daesh's activities in the social media has been the focus of different studies regarding Daesh's propaganda but Dabiq has not been to the same extent. Therefore, due to the limitations in a masters' thesis I chose to focus on Daesh's propaganda through Dabiq to contribute to this research field. But, this limitation does not affect the study itself.

As Ellul states in the theory of propaganda, propagandas aim is to change the intended audience's opinions to a specific direction and therefore the propaganda is framed in a way to attract the audience, thus the audience is important in how a specific propaganda is framed.

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<sup>112</sup> For example, a propaganda video published on Youtube, with the title: ISIS 'children: soldiers trained to kill and die.

As this thesis solely focuses on Dabiq's content, the issue of who Dabiq's intended audience is, is not discussed as the topic requires further investigation than what this thesis can offer. However, having read Dabiq I can give my suggestion on who I believe is the target audience of Dabiq. As it will be revealed in the analysis, the message of Dabiq is to get as much people to the Caliphate as possible. To do so Daesh express and justify their very strict, easily portrayed and polarized view of Islam by engaging different aspects and backgrounds to affect the reader. So, in my opinion, Daesh wants to reach to anyone that "buys" this propaganda, and does not focus on a specific gender, age, class or background, everyone is welcome to the Caliphate and this is also the essence of their message.

Lastly, this thesis does not discuss the question of gender in Daesh's propaganda and Daesh's view on women and their role in the Caliphate. This is an important topic to discuss and highlight, however due to this Master thesis' limitation this aspect is not highlighted.

## 6. Analysis

In this section, I will have an analytical approach when studying Dabiq's quotes and not an Islamic approach even if much of the content has an Islamic rhetoric. My purpose is to understand what propaganda Dabiq spreads to its audience and how this propaganda is framed in order to reach its audience best. To do so, I will in this section analyse key samples of Dabiq and with every quote I will highlight a specific topic in Daesh's propaganda. To make the ending of a quote's discussion clear, I will put a hyphen in the end of each discussion.

### 6.1 The Enemy

As stated in the theory of framing by Entman, we express what is important to us by framing our message in a specific way, being selective in what information we spread, using specific words, phrases, historical events and other contextual information. In this quote, the importance of the usage of some specific words is highlighted. By using, in this case, some specific words, the propagandists, as stated by Ellul in the theory of propaganda, promotes specific ideas, aspects and neglect other ideas and aspects.

*"The camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy – the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the jews."*<sup>113</sup>

This quote addresses how Daesh sees the world: consisting of two camps. One of the camps is the camp for the good people; the faithful Muslims. However, by using the word *Mujahidin*, Daesh exposes their audience and who they believe are the real Muslims. Mujahidin literally means "those who do Jihad". So in order to be a Muslim in the camp of Islam according to Daesh you have to be a *mujahid*- you have to fight for Islam, but in their way and this is their message. Here, by highlighting the word mujahid, Islam is being presented as the religion that stands for war. Although everyone is in this war either by being with Daesh or against them, here Daesh invites everybody to be on the right side- against the disbelievers. The other camp consists of those being excluded from Islam, described with words such as *disbelievers* and *hypocrites*. The interesting part is that Daesh goes further with describing exactly who the

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<sup>113</sup> Dabiq, Nr.1: "The Return of Khilafah" June/July 2014, 10.

disbeliever and hypocrite is: the Jews, the Crusaders and everyone else who is supporting these states and religions. More explicitly, Daesh addresses America and Russia as the main enemies who are following the Jews.

From this quote, by using the tools of propaganda and framing, one can understand that Daesh believes is important. They promote one specific reality that they construct by using some specific aspects to describe the world, as Ellul states in the theory of propaganda, to be advantageous to the propagandist's ideas. Using the word Mujahid they state exactly who they see as a Muslim. By using the word crusaders, the importance of the historical background is also highlighted as Ellul stated, by arguing with a specific historical event. In this case, one can grasp why Daesh sees this as a battle. As they fully describe the Enemy and their mission, they put more emphasize on creating the Enemy and describing it, rather than describing themselves. Their view on themselves is dependent on the Enemy: whatever the Enemy is, Daesh is not which is shown by their division of the world into two camps. An important aspect here is that the usage of the word "camp" indicates that this is not only a description of world's two modes, or levels, but by putting them in front of each other they state that this is a battle between these two modes; it is a war between these two groups.

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In the theory of propaganda much of the propaganda entails identifying problems that the audience can relate to or at least be familiar with. These problems cannot be created, they exist but the point is that the propagandist, as Ellul states in the theory of propaganda, uses these existing problems to spread its goals, messages and intended desires. In the theory of framing, Entman also addresses this and states that by framing the problem, the writer, in this case, the propagandist, also exposes what according to him is the cause of the problem, how it affects the audience and also what his solution to the problem is. In this quote, Daesh addresses the meaning of Islam and the change of its meaning as a problem.

*"There is a slogan repeated continuously by apologetic "du'āt" when flirting with the West and that is their statement: "Islam is the religion of peace," and they mean pacifism by the word peace. They have repeated this slogan so much to the extent that some of them alleged that Islam calls to permanent peace with kufr and the kāfirīn. How far is their claim from the truth, for Allah has revealed Islam to be the religion of the sword, and the evidence for this is so profuse that only a zindīq (heretic) would argue otherwise".<sup>114</sup>*

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<sup>114</sup> Dabiq, Nr 7, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy", January/February 2015, 20.

The essence of this quote is the argument between West's definition of Islam as the religion of peace and Daesh's argument that Islam is the religion of sword. Daesh argues that the problem in this context is that some Muslims are willing to sacrifice Islam and change its real meaning in order to have West on their side which they see as Muslims "flirting" with the West. The context for Daesh is that the West tries to change the meaning of Islam by only accepting Islam as a religion of peace and with their Western premises and values. For Daesh the word peace is everything Islam is not- pacifism and being naive. The affection of this problem according to Daesh is that if Islam would be the religion of peace (naive and passive), it would mean that Islam is compatible with the West, their values and their way of living, which according to Daesh is not correct. Daesh means that by seeing Islam as a religion of peace, Muslims apologize to the West for the nature of their religion. However, the "real" Islam, being practiced by Daesh, is the religion of sword and only a heretic will argue something else. The context is then, characterized by the notion that the West accepts a non-accurate or true definition of Islam and they only view Islam by their values. This is another related problem that is stated, which also is related to the current world. Here, the political context can be highlighted and the notion that the West has a major role in different matters that both may and may not involve them, viewing everything with their own values and not recognizing that other parts of the world have other values, religions and worldviews.

So, as Islam is the religion of sword, the solution according to Daesh is that Muslims should act with the sword and not *Du'at*. The key point here is that there are Muslims that accept other approaches in order to be in peace with the West and they reject the notion of Islam being the religion of sword. In this context, Daesh fails to take anything else into account to understand why some leaders for instance take diplomacy before war, or try to get Western leaders to support them and not fight with them for the sake of their people. This absent information is what the theory of propaganda also highlights as a way to deceive the audience by withholding information. However, for Daesh nothing else matters as long as the right kind of Islam exists. Thus they construct their reality by arguing in this way.

As stated in the theory of propaganda, propaganda is at its best and affects people the most when it is based on the truth and current events as the audience can easily relate to it and thus act upon it. This quote further discusses the definition of Islam and Muslim and how West argues it should be according to democracy. Daesh, by highlighting that Muslims that do not

fit in the Western definition of Muslim will be persecuted, connects their message and argument to current events which I will discuss below.

*"[...] It's the same rubbish we hear from Obama, Hollande, Netanyahu, [...] How Islam is great, we really like Muslims, but only "Muslims" who conform to our definition of what a "Muslim" should be, who fits neatly into the definition of a working democracy. And whoever does not conform to this new definition of "Muslim" will be persecuted".*<sup>115</sup>

Here, this topic elaborates further on the notion that West, specifically the mentioned leaders, do not have problem with Muslims whose interpretation of Islam is compatible with West and their democracy. Here an important issue is highlighted; West-friendly Islam and Muslims are welcome but other Muslims will be persecuted according to Daesh. This quote highlights West's arrogance and actions in some matters that involve Muslims. Viewing this topic with the current context and events in some countries in the West, such as the US, France and Israel, one can understand that Daesh frames its argument by current events: changed laws to aggravate Muslims' situations, such as headscarf ban in France and other general problems that Muslims face for being Muslims (Israel and Palestine for example). Framing this topic like this by presenting a reality that in some Western countries (here the US, France, Israel is explicitly stated) is accurate, Daesh uses this to justify their actions and arguments. As Jacques Ellul stated, propaganda is at its best and affects people the most when it is based on the truth. Daesh does that very well by grasping the negative things that exist in the West, not mentioning positive aspects in Western countries and thus withholding information. The message that Daesh wants to spread here is that in West, in order to be able to be a Muslim, you have to practice Islam according to the way West wants to and as Daesh argues that Islam cannot be compatible with West as what will be left of their practice will not be the correct Islam. Daesh's point here is that the true meaning of Islam has no place in the West.

In this quote racism and nationalism is primarily discussed. The message is that these are Western notions and are negative. According to Ellul, as a clever propagandist identifies problems to make his point, Daesh does it very well here. Here by arguing the way they do, by highlighting a very important and very accurate problem in many countries in the world, it connects the problem to the accurate world and events but also reveals their solution to the problem, what the intended and desired reaction is and also connects to the social and cultural

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<sup>115</sup> Dabiq, Nr 7, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy", January/February 2015, 78.

context. As Ellul has stated the problems are not created, they do exist but it is framed in a way that Daesh can provide with solutions that will benefit themselves. Here are their most important values revealed in contrast to important values for Western countries.

*”Indeed, racism is a tool of Shaytān, which, like nationalism, is intended to divide and weaken the children of Ādam and prevent them from uniting upon the truth. For just as nationalists would never wage jihād beyond their borders to spread Islam to the corners of the earth and wipe out shirk, likewise racists would not be inclined to disavow any members of their race except for those whom they deem “self-hating,” let alone fight them for the sake of raising high the word of Allah. The Muslim, however, does not accept the Ummah remaining divided in the name of petty concepts, for he recognizes that the only acceptable line of division is that which separates between a Muslim and a kāfir, whereas any other course of division would only be a source of weakness”.*<sup>116</sup>

Racism and nationalism are described firstly as a tool of the devil and secondly, as notions being accurate in the West and being a reason of weakness. Daesh highlights nationalism as a tool that divides the people of the world (the children of Adam) and prevents them from being one with the truth; Islam. The stated problem here is nationalism as it divides the people by race, country, borders and everything that is man created, which is something that exists in the West. This is the identified problem: nationalists do not care about others beyond their borders. This is stated as the biggest difference between Muslims and other religions, people and other ways which people live by. Thus, the solution to nationalism and racism or a way to avoid it is Islam. Muslims desire to help and “wipe out shirk” everywhere, and this is the strength of Islam; everyone accepting Islam being under one banner without any worldly based differences. Daesh then argues that this is exactly what they are doing. For Daesh, only Allah is the important thing and everyone within Allah’s religion are family; the Ummah. The Ummah consists of people all around the world, with different languages and ethnicities sharing the true religion; Islam. Here the Ummah is a way to get a purpose and a fellowship with others who share Islam. Thus the only category to divide people by is by their acceptance of Islam respectively not accepting Islam, which also shows the difference between Muslims and Kuffar, everything else is a sign of weakness. Nationalism is expressed here both as a problem according to Islam and as an Enemy of Islam. The connection of nationalism and racism expresses a Western reality for some Muslims. It would be difficult to deny that Muslims living in the West in fact do experience racism as a consequence of nationalist sentiments. Daesh makes use of these problems and frame their argument that in Islam where

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<sup>116</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 11, ”From the Battle of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions”, August/September 2015, 20.

nationalism does not exist, racism does not exist. Further as nationalism is expressed as a problem the solution is stated with it; the Ummah and the Islam, because Islam does not divide people with worldly means but only by who accepts Islam and not. For Daesh, the Islamic fellowship is beyond nations and borders as their goal is to create a world-state.

Additionally, by highlighting racism and nationalism, Daesh also refers to global injustice and oppression of Muslims around the world. So by stating this problem and giving Islam as the solution (or the Ummah in this case), the anchors are also revealed as the Ummah, fellowship, un-divided family, with the intention to attract people to the Ummah. This quote is also an example of how propaganda can address some needs that the author identifies as the audience's need; fellowship and belonging somewhere. Highlighting the problems with the West and giving the Ummah as the solution, the intended reaction from the audience is to turn to the Ummah.

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Both the theory of propaganda and framing points out a communicator's ability to address different background information to make their point. In the theory of propaganda, Ellul states the propagandist creates a reality and accuracy with their message by connecting to a historical, religious or cultural background. This quote is a good example of how propaganda uses merely a religious historical event to justify a specific message and actions. Additionally, as Entman states, the theory of framing gives the tools to understand what values the communicator wants to follow and what values he wants to avoid, by looking at the frame of the argument and the message. This quote highlights two specific events in Islam's history; when the Prophet Ibrahim destroyed the gods in Ka'bah and when the Prophet Mohammed entered Makkah. In the terms of Ellul, the need of the fellowship that is addressed here also refers to the social context of the problem, which according to the theory of propaganda has an important influence on the propaganda and how it is framed.

*"With the kuffār up in arms over the large-scale destruction at the hands of the Islamic State, the actions of the mujāhidīn had not only emulated Ibrāhīm's ('alayhis-salām) destruction of the idols of his people and Prophet Muhammad's (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) destruction of the idols present around the Ka'bah when he conquered Makkah, but had also served to enrage the kuffār, a deed that in itself is beloved to Allah. [...].The kuffār had unearthed these statues and ruins in recent generations and attempted to portray them as part of a cultural heritage and identity that the Muslims of Iraq should embrace and be proud of. Yet this opposes the*

*guidance of Allah and His Messenger and only serves a nationalist agenda that severely dilutes the walā' that is required of the Muslims towards their Lord".<sup>117</sup>*

Daesh uses this part of the Islamic history which marks Islam's presence in Mekka, to neglect the notion of culture and stating that it does not exist within the traditions of Islam. For Allah, according to Daesh, culture does not have any place as it is connected to nationalism and embracing the nation, borders and pride but has no connection to Islam or Allah. Anything connected to culture such as cultural heritage is forbidden in Islam as it embraces the discrimination of every other nation based on ethnicity. As Daesh argues that every action and intention should be for Allah and Allah only and therefore Islam should be in the centre and not culture as they believe has replaced the function of Islam in the sense of uniting the people. So this quote's message and argument is that culture and cultural heritage is against Islam and is not a value one should live by.

The historical reference to both Prophet Ibrahim and Muhammed destroying what Daesh calls "the idols of these people" is used to strengthen their argument as they argue that is what the Prophet did by destroying the gods. For Daesh, embracing the culture means turning away from Islam and embracing anything that is connected to it such as cultural history is Kufr because they believe that being proud of a culture means putting it in the same level as Islam which is Shirk as Muslims should only be proud of being Muslims and following Allah's religion. They believe that having a culture means that the people's loyalty first and foremost is towards their nation, race and history and not towards the people of Islam, Islam or Allah. Thus, according to them culture should not exist and therefore culture is another enemy of Islam.

In this quote, the religious historical events play a major role in Daesh's way of arguing for culture being against Islam. This historical event did take place, however how Daesh chooses to interpret it is the essential part and an example of how Daesh uses historical, religious events for their own use. So, as Ellul states in the theory of propaganda, the propagandists, here being Daesh, construct a reality by emphasising on specific events and having a specific interpretation.

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<sup>117</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 8, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: Dabiq, "Shari'ah Alone will Rule Africa", March/April 2015, 22.

This quote highlights another problem that Daesh has with the West and their values. This quote is a clear example of what Ellul states, the propagandist wants to control the audience, their way of thinking and how it is shown that the communicator wants to spread information but he is rather controlling the information flow by withholding aspects of the information, in order to persuade the audience to think in a specific direction. This quote highlights the notion of freedom of choose.

*“From amongst the polluted ideologies that have afflicted people the entire world over throughout the course of the tyranny carried out by the forces of kufr, is the notion that the people can choose whether to follow the truth or to embark upon falsehood. This ideology teaches that no one has the right, regardless of whom he may be, to impose any creed or set of morals on anyone else even if that creed or set of morals is the truth revealed by Allah. They went to the extent of attributing this “methodology of free choice” to the religion of Allah ta’ālā, and to the call of the prophets, peace be upon them. The proponents of this ideology have portrayed the prophets of Allah incorrectly[...].”<sup>118</sup>*

Daesh’s argument is that by giving people the freedom of choice and thinking on their own, you state at the same time that Allah does not know the best and thus you put the word of the man higher than Allah’s word. The ideology of the Enemy, according to Daesh, teaches that no one has the right to impose a set of morals on anyone else, even if it is Allah doing so through his Prophets. In this ideology, people use the peaceful means of change meaning that the ideologies and the morals are all presented to the people and they choose which one to follow by thinking for themselves. This notion makes this ideology false because it contradicts Allah. By doing so the Western ideology has portrayed Allah and his Prophets of being incorrect and having no authority over the people, sense the people can choose freely based on their own mind of what is right or wrong, or in this case what is the truth and what is false. The essential part here is that there only exists one truth according to Daesh, and it is their truth as they argue they follow the Prophet’s traditions. Every other way of viewing something is false as only Allah and his Prophets has the authority to guide the people, even with pressure and force and not by a free choice. This is the way Daesh argues and the intended message is to justify to the audience that Allah does not want people to be able to choose, because he himself has given the people the Quran and Prophets that has shown the right way. Letting people choose, as they do in some countries by voting for example for political leaders, means that they know what is best for them and therefore the human being is

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<sup>118</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 2, “The Flood”, June/July 2014, 5.

put in the same level as Allah, which is Shirk, the biggest sin in Islam. Daesh argues that Allah has to be distinguished from the worldly thoughts, views and leaders. Allah has already shown the right path to his people and choosing anything else other than what Allah has chosen is wrong and therefore the need for the people to choose is in this way outplayed. The key point here is that the human should not have the right to think and choose because Allah has already done it.

This quote only entails negative things regarding critical thinking and freedom of choosing. For the audience, there is no choice left than believing the propagandist based on the information presented here. So as Ellul argues that propagandists withhold information and presents negative information about its opponent to persuade the audience to get the desired reaction, here Daesh uses this approach to make their point by arguing that Allah has already shown the way.

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In the theory of propaganda, Ellul states that propaganda is used to describe the opponent negatively and wrong, by stating facts and use them against the opponent. At the same time, the propagandist uses this opportunity to counter the opponent and instead highlight himself as the better part. In this way, the propagandist persuades the audience to think as the propagandist wants by highlighting specific information and withhold other facts. This quote is an example of that as Daesh uses some facts (problems according to them) to state that the true Muslim is a stranger in the West.

*"Strangeness is a condition that the Muslim living in the West cannot escape as long as he remains amongst the crusaders. He is a stranger amongst Christians and liberals. He is a stranger amongst fornicators and sodomites. He is a stranger amongst drunkards and druggies. He is a stranger in his faith and deeds, as his sincerity and submission is towards Allah c alone, whereas the kuffār of the West worship and obey clergy, legislatures, media, and both their animalistic and deviant desires. For them it is strange that one manifests sincere submission to His Lord in word and deed. It is strange that one works for the Ākhirah, giving it priority to the Dunyā. It is strange that one does not pursue his animalistic desires like a beast and even experiment with perverted desires like a devil!"<sup>119</sup>*

Daesh argues that Muslims do not feel at home in the West (primarily because of the previous stated problems). Even if they are born or grown up there they are still strangers. According to

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<sup>119</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 12 "Just Terror", November/December 2015, 29-30.

Daesh, Muslims are strangers with Christians, liberals, fornicators, drunks and druggies which all of these actions are prohibited by Allah. According to Daesh, Muslims do not act like that and do not share these values with the Christians. For Daesh, approving these actions means that these secular leaders have taken Allah's position of being the greatest and knowing the best and replaced Allah's words with values that is the result of worldly minds, allowing things that are prohibited by Allah such as permission of consuming alcohol, drugs, fornication and gambling. For Daesh secularism and Christianity symbolizes these things and have replaced Allah's words as supreme. Therefore, the Muslim is a stranger because she does not have the same faith, do not act like them and only obeys Allah in difference to Christians who have different institutions who they, according to Daesh, obey instead of Allah: clergies, legislatures, media and different worldly desires. The Muslims live in a way that will lead them to a good after-life, but the Christians live out their worldly and animalistic desires and do not think about their after-life. In this quote a number of problems according to Daesh are addressed and the solution that they argue for is Islam because being a rightful Muslim means to avoid all of these sins that exists in the West. Even if these facts or problems do exist in the West, Daesh withholds other facts that the audience need to know to get a whole picture about the West. In this quote, as Elull stated, the opponent here being the West is portrayed as a region with only negative things and problems that the Muslim is unfamiliar with. By framing the facts as problems, Daesh also provides with an alternative to the West. By arguing that a Muslim is a stranger in the West for stated reasons, Daesh states at the same time that in the Islamic State, Muslims will be able to live as they like, as true Muslims without these problems and without feeling as a stranger.

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Entman, in the theory of framing, states that the communicator by highlighting some specific aspects, using specific words and framing the context as a problem, he constructs his own interpretation of the reality and the problem by discussing what consequences this particular problem will have. In this quote, Daesh are discussing the Shi'a Muslims by giving them the word *Rafidah*. Daesh by using the word *Rafidah* shows the hate towards them and justify their usage by highlighting some specific acts and interpreting them based on their view on reality and spread this message to the audience.

*“The Rāfidah are the insurmountable obstacle, the lurking snake, the scorpion of deception and malice, the prowling enemy, the deadly poison. We here wage a war at two levels. The first war is open and exposed with an aggressive enemy and clear kufr. The second war is a difficult and fierce one with a scheming enemy who*

*dresses like a friend, shows approval, and calls to unity, while he conceals evil [...]. The precise observer and wise scrutinizer realizes that Shiism is the immediate danger and real challenge. {They are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded?} [Al-Munāfiqūn: 4]. [...] Shiism contains everything from blatant shirk, to grave worship, to circumambulating tombs, to takfīr of the Sahābah, to cursing the Mothers of the Believers and the best of this Ummah, to claiming distortion of the Qur'ān [...]*".<sup>120</sup>

According to Daesh there exist two kinds of Enemies. The first one is a clear, open and exposed Enemy. This Enemy do not reject that they do these actions that Daesh argue that they do. The first Enemy refers to the people that openly engage in kufr; the kuffar. They are clear because, as stated before, their goals and intentions are well known; they do not want Islam (for example as America wants to impose their values on Muslims and so on). The second Enemy the most dangerous one is with the Enemy that looks like themselves and acts like a friend in the sense that they argue that they pursue Islam but in fact have evil intentions. They state themselves as Muslims, believer of Allah and follower of Islam but this is not the case. According to Daesh, this is the clear description of the Shi'a. The Shi'a is stated as the worst Enemy because according to Daesh everything Shi'a does and contains of are Shirk as according to them Shi'a worship graves, tombs, curses what is important for the Ummah and Sunna and instead worship and follow their Imams.

This quote shows firstly Daesh's problem with Shi'a but also what they believe is Shirk and is against their belief and understanding of Islam. So because of these reasons, Shi'a is viewed as the main Enemy of Islam and Daesh. It is important to highlight the word that Daesh uses to refer to Shi'a as the Rafidah. The word is used by Salafis, who refer to Shi'a Muslims as such because Shi'a Muslims do not recognize Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman as the legitimate successors of Muhammad, and hold Ali to be the rightful first successor.<sup>121</sup> The importance here is that, according to Salafism, when one is stated as Rafidah it means that they are apostates and their death is desired from Allah and therefore it is justified and legit to kill them as they are the enemy of Allah. The context here is clear Salafism, applying the ideology on the contemporary problems of the Middle East, by referring to a group of Muslims as rejecters of Islam, the message is clear.

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<sup>120</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 13, "The Rāfidah – From Ibn Saba' to the Dajjāl", January/February, 2016, 41.

<sup>121</sup> This is explained for the word "Rafidah" in the Wordlist.

### **6.1.1 Summary**

In this part of the analysis, I focused on Daesh's view on their Enemy, who and what they consider as their Enemy, by applying the theory of propaganda and the theory of framing on quotes from Dabiq. For Daesh in order to describe their Enemy and argue why these are the Enemy, the focus was much on expressing the difference between Daesh and the West. In the majority of these quotes, Daesh directly counter certain beliefs that are held in the West to convince their audience about their own validity. By describing the West, what problems exist in the West according to Daesh, Daesh construct a reality for its audience by selecting some specific information and facts to highlight and showing a black and white reality. At the same time they argue for their cause by highlighting how the problems can be avoided. From the analysis, everything that according to Daesh goes against their interpretation of Islam is their Enemy. Those Muslim leaders who agree with Western leaders that Islam is compatible with Western values such as democracy, liberalism, secularism, nationalism and thus believe that Islam is a religion of peace and those who do not believe this are persecuted in the West. This is done by connecting their own message to current events to make their message reliable trustworthy. Other Western values are also highlighted, such as culture and cultural heritage and the freedom of critical thinking and choosing that exist in the West. A part of the argument regarding the argument that culture is prohibited in Islam is framed with a historical event. According to Daesh, these ideologies, ways of living and these values are the Enemy of Islam because, easily put, they are put at the same level as Allah and these values are used as guidelines instead of Allah's word. Among other Enemies, one specific Enemy is stated in Dabiq which are the Shi'a Muslims. These are the number one Enemy as they have hidden agendas engage with Shirk according to Daesh.

### **6.2 Jihad**

Ellul, in the theory of propaganda, states that the propagandist selects what information to spread to its audience and by choosing the information, he also selects its audience as the best propaganda addresses the audiences need in order to persuade the audience to think in a specific direction. In this quote, Daesh discusses their view of Jihad, what it means to them and why they are doing Jihad. By addressing that Jihad is for Allah and Islam, Daesh tries to create a sense of obligation for the audience.

*”Shaykh Abū Mus’ab az-Zarqāwī (rahimahullāh) said, [...] We perform jihād so that Allah’s word becomes supreme and that the religion becomes completely for Allah. {And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allah} [Al-Anfāl: 39]. Everyone who opposes this goal or stands in the path of this goal is an enemy for us and a target for our swords, whatever his name may be and whatever his lineage may be. We have a religion that Allah revealed to be a scale and a judge. Its statement is decisive and its judgment is not amusement. It is the kinship between us and the people, for our scales – by Allah’s grace – are divine, our laws are Qur’ānic, and our judgments are upon the prophetic tradition [...].<sup>122</sup>*

Daesh argues that they do Jihad to make Allah’s word supreme and it is in this way that religion becomes completely for Allah’s sake. So, indirectly, according to Daesh, in order to fulfil the duties of being a Muslim is to do Jihad. However, Jihad has several meanings and in this context it is used in different ways for different reasons. Firstly, Jihad is used to fight *Fitnah* and only then is the religion freely and entirely for Allah. So Jihad is used to abolish the *Fitnah* which in its turn means killing the Kuffar. Everyone who opposes this goal or stands in the way of this Allah given mission is considered Kafir and will be killed. Jihad according to Daesh is thus to destroy the enemy of Allah with the sword. Secondly, Jihad is defined as an obligation towards Allah as a relation of kinship between Allah and his believers. What is meant here is that sword-Jihad is the tool to fulfil the bigger act; to judge who is a Muslim and who is not. The traditions and laws of Islam are thus used as a scale by Daesh to, according to themselves, make this world free of *Fitnah* and Kuffar. So, people are judged by how they live by the laws and traditions of Islam and Jihad is the punishment and the price at the same time; price for those who realise the value of Jihad for Allah (and do jihad) and punishment for those who do not realise this and decide to defy Allah.

By framing Jihad with the sword by arguing that this interpretation of the act is taking from the Quran and the Prophet’s tradition, it is difficult for the audience to oppose that as other meanings of Jihad is absent such as *Dawa* or the major form of peaceful battle for self-control is not presented and the audience gets only this interpretation of Jihad- the minor Jihad.<sup>123</sup> Additionally, by stating that sword- Jihad is used to defend Islam from Kuffar, Kufr and *Fitnah*, this gives the audience the obligation that they have towards Islam and Allah as Jihad is used to make Allah’s words supreme. By arguing that Jihad makes the religion completely for Allah, not engaging in this act can be seen as withdrawing from the religion and one’s duty towards Allah.

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<sup>122</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 8, “From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: Dabiq, “Shari’ah Alone will Rule Africa”, March/April 2015, 3.

<sup>123</sup> This is explained both in the wordlist for the word ”Jihad” and in chapter 5.3.

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Ellul, in the theory of propaganda, states that propagandists use some actions or values as anchors to change the audience opinions and make them react the way the propagandist desires. In this quote, Daesh argues for the value and the importance of doing Jihad and stating it higher than other important actions in Islam. Here Daesh frames the argument, as Entman states in the theory of framing, in a way that it neglects the other values for Jihad.

*"Even if one were to spend all his hours at a masji in prayer, dhikr, and study of the religion, while living amongst Muslims who reside amid kuffār and abandon jihād, then such a person would only be establishing the strongest proof against himself and his sin".* <sup>124</sup>

Daesh addresses the praying, being in a mosque, studying the religion as being in the periphery of the religion. The most important thing for Allah, according to Daesh, is to do Jihad, everything else is secondary. By framing it in this way, they argue that all of these things do not matter and are not enough if the most important thing in Islam is not recognized. This is used as an anchor to change the audience's opinions and make them get bad conscious and think that they are not viewed as Muslims or at least a good Muslim if they do not fulfil their duty as a Muslim. This is done by highlighting that even if you do all of these things which are the pillar of the religion, but not doing Jihad it does not count and you are not viewed as a Muslim. The same is for those who do these things but still live and are surrounded by Kuffar and Kufr; if you do all of those things that for liberal Muslims stands for being a good Muslim but still live with Kuffar and are surrounded by Kufr, your religious actions do not matter.

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As stated before, for the propagandist it is important to be able to control the audience. This means, according to Ellul, that the propagandist in its turn needs to control the information that exists and connect their own message to current world and even current discussions. In this quote, Daesh uses the discussions regarding Jihad to highlight Islamic leaders and scholars who think highly of, according to Daesh, the Eemies of Islam and because of this interpret the meaning of Jihad differently. As Entman states in the theory of framing, the communicator highlights some information to argue for a thing. In this quote, nationalism is

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<sup>124</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 3", The Call to Hijrah", July/August 2014, 32.

highlighted again by connecting the discussion of Jihad to nationalism. Studying this quote's framing of Jihad we can identify their intended message.

*Sadly, this shirkī attitude (both minor and major) entered the hearts and minds of many supposedly “Islamic” leaders, scholars, and callers – in imitation of the Arab nationalists before them – as they began to describe the enemies of Islam with attributes bordering rubūbiyyah (Allah’s lordship). To them, the kuffār had the near absolute knowledge, power, and ownership to plot and execute any grand conspiracy of their desire. It is almost as if they attribute to them the ability to create with the word “be”! Their evil became most apparent in issues related to jihād. If one desired to perform jihād, these leaders would warn that jihād now was a conspiracy to kill off the sincere Muslim youth and thereby leave the Muslims’ lands to the secularists. If one wanted to join a jihād jamā’ah, they would warn that it was the creation of the kuffār so as to aid in achieving kāfir interests [...]”.*<sup>125</sup>

By stating in the beginning of the quote that these are Arab nationalists they state their agenda and what their interests are. These leaders are called nationalists because they argue differently than Daesh regarding the responsibility of a Muslim, especially regarding nationalism and nation. Daesh believes that these leaders who follow secular leaders see them with the same attributes as Allah as these leaders argue differently than what Allah has stated; these are the enemies of Islam acting like they have absolute knowledge, power and ownership to do whatever they desire; acting like they have the same attributes as Allah. These Arab nationalists (Kuffar in the quote) are behaving like the Kuffar secularists and trying to attach their values into Islam and Muslim lands. These Kuffar argue that Daesh’s approach of Jihad is wrong and instead makes the Muslim turn away from Islam as they argue that Jihad in Islam is not about killing. Daesh argues that this approach is taken because these Arab nationalists want to have secularists on their side. These Arab nationalists argue that the Jihad operations (terror attacks) are only done to hurt the Muslims (liberal Muslims) and separate them from other people, making them the enemy. These Arab nationalists mean that this is not the case, Muslims are not the Enemy, Daesh is.

Understanding this quote in our contemporary context, this is one of the important ones that occur in our contemporary world between “liberal” Muslims and “Jihadi” Muslims. Here the battle is between how to interpret what the interest is and stating which one is the correct one. So, Daesh, in order to state that their interpretation of Jihad is the correct one, they frame their argument in a way that expresses that these Arab nationalists do not want the best for the

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<sup>125</sup> Dabiq Nr. 9, “They Plot and Allah plots”, May/June 2015, 15.

Ummah but instead priorities nationalism, diplomacy and other, according to Daesh, Western issues.

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Entman, in the theory of framing highlights an aspect of the communicators that is very clear in this next quote, namely that the communicator always provides with a solution to an identified problem. The problem, being the Muslims being under oppression, is not the focus, rather it is the solution and how Daesh justifies it that is the important part. This quote also addresses a need, but it is not the need of the audience rather the need of the Ummah, to be protected by individual means.

*”The scholars mentioned numerous cases that make jihād against the kuffār fard ‘ayn, including the invasion of the Muslims’ lands, the imprisonment of Muslims, the imminent threat of attack against the Muslims, and the faceoff of the opposing armies. The Khalīfah (hafīdhahullāh) has made a call for a general mobilization, further emphasizing this obligation – as one of the cases making jihād fard ‘ayn is the Imām commanding all the Muslims with jihād – so how can one ignore this clear-cut obligation now and be satisfied with submission to his lower self? [...]”.*<sup>126</sup>

In this quote individualism in Islam is highlighted. Here, regarding Jihad Daesh argues that as much as this is a matter for the entire Ummah, Jihad is also an individual (*Fard ‘ayn*) fight. Different cases such as invasion of Muslims’ lands, the imprisonment of Muslims, the threat of attacking Muslims and opposing armies addresses the solution that in order to fight these problems, Jihad also becomes an individual act, as it needs to be done quickly (no time for mobilization). Applying this way of arguing in our contemporary context, this is what we have seen in the world in the past years- individuals acting on their own.

This way of framing and arguing for Jihad and its need is to justify all of Daesh’s action, attacks and so on. As they state, the foundation of individual Jihad is Islam and Muslims being under threat and attack. Framing and highlighting this matter by arguing like this, their kind of Jihad is an act of self-defence; defending their lives, lands and their Ummah. The highlighted problem is Muslims being attacked and the solution being argued is Jihad by defending the Ummah. This argument is something that every human being can be able to understand and relate to. The argument itself that they act as self-defence is something that reaches to and affects everybody. The need of individual Jihad and the obligation

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<sup>126</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 10, “In the Law of Allah or the Laws of Men”, June/July 2015, 16.

becomes clear by framing the need as self-defence. Thus, the reader of Dabiq gets a sense of guilt and might act accordingly.

### **6.2.1 Summary**

In this part, I have analysed the concept Jihad according to Daesh by applying the theory of propaganda and the theory of framing on quotes from Dabiq. For Daesh in order to justify their usage of Jihad they use a lot of anchors in order to make the Muslim feel guilty for not doing Jihad as Daesh argues. These anchors are also used to justify their interpretation of Jihad. Their focus on Jihad is that it is the duty of all Muslims towards their religion and their Ummah. For Daesh, the key of the religion is Jihad meaning that both men and women fulfil their duty as a Muslim and their duty towards Islam and Allah by doing Jihad. If you do not do Jihad, it does not matter how much you pray, spend time in mosques or study about Islam because you have not accepted the foundational act as a Muslim. This is argued by stating that Jihad is only done to spread Allah's words and make the words supreme with the sword. Everyone else who argues against this way of interpreting Jihad (for instance by arguing that Jihad is to spread Islam or is an inner fight), is against Islam, Allah and the Ummah, regardless if it is Westerners or Arabs who are friends with the West (called Arab nationalists). Daesh also argues that Jihad is also an individual act. Because of the oppression and tyranny that Muslims all over the world face, there is no time to mobilize and therefore everyone should act in the way they can. So, Daesh withholds other interpretations of Jihad that may affect the audience's opinions regarding Jihad and Daesh in order to spread their message and get the desired reaction from the audience. Daesh also frames most of its arguments regarding Jihad by using anchors to make the audience feel guilty towards Islam and Allah, feeling they do not fulfill their duties as a Muslim.

### **6.3 Hijrah**

One aspect of successful propaganda, which Ellul highlights, is that it addresses some needs of the audience to attract them and to make them believe the propagandist. In this quote, the need of a Caliphate is expressed. Related to this, Entman states the anchors that are used by the communicator to make the audience act in a way that the propagandist desires. In this quote the meaning of Hijrah is discussed that both can be traced back to a historical event but also engaging the audience by addressing current events in other parts of the world, addressed as anchors.

*"It is a state where the Arab and non-Arab, the white man and black man, the easterner and westerner are all brothers [...]. Allah brought their hearts together, and thus, they became brothers by His grace, loving each other for the sake of Allah, standing in a single trench, defending and guarding each other, and sacrificing themselves for one another. [...] All praise and thanks are due to Allah. Therefore, rush O Muslims to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians and Iraq is not for the Iraqis. The Earth is Allah's. [...]"*<sup>127</sup>

Here, Daesh elaborates on the previous statement that in Islam everybody is brothers and sisters in faith- nothing else is important and nothing else divides the people. This is stated, in contrary to what exists in the West: dividing people based on worldly measurements such as ethnicity and citizenship. Here the reason why Muslims from all around the world should make Hijrah and abandon the countries that divide people by their ethnicity and instead come to the state that unites everybody by sharing only one thing; Allah. Thus, Hijrah does not only mean to leave one's home and enter another country. By highlighting the love for Allah, and arguing that everyone is one because of this love, Daesh argues that Hijrah really means to sacrifice oneself for his religion and to protect his people: this is the key in doing Hijrah. It is important to know why Daesh frames their argument in this way by using their state as an anchor, a reason to leave the West. Taking the history of Hijrah into account, when the prophet made Hijrah from Mecca to Medina he left and created an Islamic community in Medina.<sup>128</sup> Having this in mind, Daesh argues that the audience now can do the same thing as the Prophet and make Hijrah now that an Islamic state exists as Syria and Iraq is not only for Syrians and Iraqis but they are for all Muslims. An essential point here is that by shaping the argument by downplaying Western countries, they argue that there is a need of a Caliphate which could unite the Ummah because nowhere else is everyone brothers through their religion, nowhere can people feel at home even if they are not born there. Framing the need of Hijrah in this way it shows that the character of the Islamic state is what the Muslims need: a caliphate to unite the Ummah based on religion. Thus they justify their state, the condition it is in and their way of interpreting Islam by addressing the character of the caliphate and its need, comparing to the conditions in West.

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As Ellul stated in the theory of propaganda, the propagandist always needs to be able to control the audience and the information flow for his own advantage. By promoting one

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<sup>127</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 8, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: Dabiq, "Shari'ah Alone will Rule Africa", March/April 2015, 4.

<sup>128</sup> This is explained both in the wordlist for the word "Hijrah" and in chapter 5.3.

aspect of a topic, the propagandist argues for his cause and persuades the audience to think in a specific direction. In order to do so, Entman argues that the communicator frames his information by highlighting specific topics and connects them to construct his argument. In this quote, the further meaning of Hijrah is discussed connected to the notion of sins.

[...] *“The crux of hijrah is to abandon sin and its people, including hajr (abandonment/ avoidance) of the callers to bid’ah, the sinful, and those who intermingle with them or aid them. Similarly, one who abandons jihād – the deed without which he can achieve no maslahah – should be punished by hajr, since he did not assist the Muslims in righteousness and piety. And so, the zunāh (fornicators/ adulterers), lūtiyyah (sodomites), abandoners of jihād, ahlul-bida’ (people of religious innovations), alcoholics, are all harmful for the religion of Islam, and intermingling with them is also harmful. They do not assist in righteousness nor piety. Whoever does not abandon them has thus left an obligation and fallen into a prohibition” [Majmū’ al-Fatāwā]”*<sup>129</sup>

Daesh argues that by doing Hijrah the Muslims do not only leave their homes, rather they leave for a better place, as by moving from the West they move away from the sins. This quote focuses on how Hijrah and sins are related and by living in a place where sins exist such as adulterers, sodomites, abandoners of religious innovations, alcoholics and so on, Muslims also take part in these sins as they witness these actions and do not react to it. Here the passivity of some Muslims is highlighted and according to Daesh, by making Hijrah you make an active choice to leave the sins and at the same time by choosing to stay you make an active choice to support the sins and these conditions. Therefore, Daesh argues that being passive in doing Hijrah is the same thing as abandoning Jihad – the act of assisting Muslims in righteousness. Now that an Islamic state exists Muslims can be rightfully Muslims and live without witnessing sins. However, if people still are left in their states in the West, it means that they are supporting these sins and thus are sinners themselves because there are no other reasons to stay in the West when there is a state ruled by Islam. The point is that according to Daesh, Hijrah is about making an active choice to become a rightful Muslim.

Arguing like this, connecting the decision to do Hijrah with the ability to leave sins, the propagandist’s (Daesh) desired reaction is for the audience to leave their homes and make Hijrah to the caliphate. Addressing the sins, this is an anchor as it touches upon the person’s guilt and hopefully makes them to leave for the caliphate.

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<sup>129</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 3”, The Call to Hijrah”, July/August 2014, 32.

As stated before, propaganda is more affective when it addresses current events, discussions to make a point, as Ellul states in the theory of propaganda. Connecting to this, Entman, in the theory of framing, states that the reality of the communicator is identified when one studies the topics is highlighted within the information, to describe for instance a specific problem. In this quote engages with the reason that most of the people believe is the reason why people from the West join Daesh.

*“The opponents often repeat that those who perform hijrah to the Islamic State belong to a marginalized class in their former lands, living in difficult conditions between unemployment, poverty, family problems, and psychological disorders. But I saw something contrary! I saw sisters who divorced the Duniya and came to their Lord, striving. I saw sisters who abstained from a life of luxury and abundant wealth. I saw sisters who abandoned a beautiful home and luxurious car, and ran for the cause of their Lord, as if they were saying, {“My Lord, build for me near You a house in Jannah”} [...].<sup>130</sup>*

A very common view on the people who support Daesh and leave for Syria and Iraq is that they have some sort of a problem in their life and therefore choose to leave to hold a better situation and make up for their bad situation. Problems that usually are highlighted are unemployment, poverty, psychological problems and other problems within and outside the family. In this quote, Daesh argues that these are not the reasons; rather it is the love of Allah that is the reason for Muslims doing Hijrah. Daesh argues that there were women who had wealth but chose to leave these things in order to gain the important thing; the paradise in the afterlife. So framing the argument by highlighting wealth, Daesh states that Muslims did not leave because of their problems in their lives in the West, but they left in order to leave *Dunya* and surrender to Allah and the life He wants for Muslims. So, despite having a good situation and life in West these women wanted something more. Additionally, by highlighting that the West sees economical problems as the reason why people join Daesh, they also argue that for West it is only the worldly things and way of thinking that are important and that the people strive to obtain the worldly success, pleasure and comfort. Meanwhile if one wants to strive after the spiritual, Godly and “right” success, pleasure and comfort they have to leave this land and make Hijrah to Islam, only then are they truly happy. Another important message is that Daesh argues that only in the Islamic state Muslim women can be free and fulfil their obligation as a Muslim. So by focusing on the issues of why people leave to find a reason, one misses the real point. As stated before, Daesh uses real and current events and arguments

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<sup>130</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 8, “From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: Dabiq, “Shari’ah Alone will Rule Africa”, March/April 2015, 34.

regarding the view of why people leave for the caliphate, to argue for their cause. This is completely accurate as people genuinely believe that people leave because of suffering in their lives in the West and do not see other reasons.

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The relevance to the current events is one of the important characteristics of propaganda to make the message stronger and reliable. In this last quote, Daesh addresses the problem of people leaving their home countries for the West. They use this topic to argue for their cause by highlighting different problems they believe leaving the land of Islam will bring. And, once again Daesh's solutions to these problems and what is important to them can be grasped by studying how they argue one can avoid these problems. In this quote, the specific word of "Darul" is used to address the problem.

*"Dārul-Islām for dārul-kufr is a dangerous major sin, as it is a passage towards kufr and a gate towards one's children and grandchildren abandoning Islam for Christianity, atheism, or liberalism. If one's children and grandchildren don't fall into kufr, they are under the constant threat of fornication, sodomy, drugs, and alcohol. If they don't fall into sin, they will forget the language of the Qur'ān – Arabic[...]."*<sup>131</sup>

Here, Daesh refers specifically to Muslims leaving their homes for Europe and America. According to Daesh, leaving *Darul-Islam* is a sin, no matter what the reason is. They argue that when you leave Darul-Islam you do not just leave your land, you leave Islam and chose Kufr instead as you get to *Darul-Kufr*, the land that contains sins: Christianity, atheism, liberalism, fornication, sodomy, drugs and alcohol. Thus by leaving Islam's land, you also leave your security. This is the identified problem, that when people leave the land of Islam for any reason they also leave Islam and turn to sins. So to avoid turning to sins and forgetting Islam one should not leave Darul-Islam.

An important part of a message, according to Entman in the theory of framing, is using specific words to make a point. The important of focusing on the words is its connection to its deeper meaning and background. Here, Daesh uses the terms "Darul Islam" and "Darul Kufri". These terms do not only mean "lands of Islam" respectively "lands of sins" but they also reveal what the leaders' responsibility are and how the land secures its people.<sup>132</sup> In the land of Islam the people's security is maintained by the authority and protection of Muslims inside and outside by Islamic laws. Accordingly, the land of sins is governed by the law of sins

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<sup>131</sup> Dabiq, Nr. 11, "From the Battle of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions", August/September 2015, 22.

<sup>132</sup> This is explained in the wordlist for the words "Darul Kufri" and "Darul Islam".

(Kufr), whose security is not maintained by the security of Islam even if the majority of its inhabitants are Muslims. The important part here is how Daesh argues regarding the security of Muslims outside of the Islamic lands and their responsibility towards them. Here Daesh justify their actions and the fact that their responsibility as an Islamic state also includes the people living outside of their land.

This quote's point is that where you live matters for which religion you have and leaving the "dDrul-Islam" means also leaving Islam. Daesh does not consider that other factors may be important in a decision of leaving one's home- for them is the survival of Islam that it the most important thing and this can only be done if the same view if passed on to children and the future generations.

### **6.3.1 Summary**

In this part, I have focused on the concept of Hijrah according to Daesh by applying the theory of propaganda and the theory of framing on quotes from Dabiq that highlighted this. For Daesh, Hijrah is much connected to their perception of sins. They argue, through Dabiq, that in order to be a good Muslim and not do sins, one has to leave their home in the West and do Hijrah to the land of Islam- the Caliphate. This is their main argument regarding Hijrah and this is done by highlighting different aspects of their argument. They argue that the land of Islam is for everybody, where everyone is united by Islam and now that an Islamic state exists everyone has to make Hijrah to this state. If one does not leave, it is an active choice to support the West. Another important aspect of their argument's frame is how Daesh uses the mainstream reason of why people believe that some people leave for the Caliphate, to make its own point. Daesh argues that some women despite their wealth left their luxury life for a life in the Caliphate because of the love of Allah and not because of being marginalized and having economic problems. This usage of the mainstream opinion that many Westerners argue is the reason why people leave, shows how Daesh uses current events and information to make their own point, as Ellul, in the theory of propaganda states that propagandists do. Another propagandist tool is using words that have a deeper meaning. Here Daesh, uses the term "Darul" the land of Islam and respectively the Kufr to show that it is not only your actions that matters, but also the land you are living and what it stands for. This aspect was highlighted to condemn the other Hijrah- from the land of Islam to the land of Kufr to argue that by leaving the land of Islam one also leaves Islam. As stated, this is also used as an anchor, in Ellul's term.

## 7. Concluding discussion

The aim of this thesis was to identify Daesh's propaganda and the message in this propaganda that they want to spread through their online-magazine Dabiq. In order to do so, I identified three concepts which I argue, highlight Daesh's propaganda message best as I argue these concepts together express what Daesh's propaganda contains. I analysed how Daesh discuss the Enemy, Jihad and Hijrah, with the theory of propaganda and the theory of framing. These theories enabled me to identify the propagandistic aspects of Dabiq, and highlight how these propagandistic features are framed in order to be able to reach their message to their audience.

Focusing on Daesh's discussion regarding their Enemy, Jihad and Hijrah, there is a clear connection between what their propaganda is and how it is framed to reach their audience, which cannot be explained and understood without focusing on the how their propaganda, message and argument is framed. Thus, by analysing the frame of Dabiq, the message becomes very clear that the intended desire with the propaganda in Dabiq is to attract more people to join Daesh. By joining, it both means the physical act of leaving one's home and join Daesh and their actions within their state. But, it also means to join their cause of erasing the Enemies of the Caliphate, easily said, by killing Kuffar. This message is clear within Daesh's discussion of these concepts and the way they frame the concepts, words they use to discuss, connecting to different historical and current events, what information and facts they use and highlight to embrace and to argue for their usage of these concepts.

In Dabiq, Daesh brings up and highlights specific topics and specific aspects to make their point. They argue that there is a battle between two forces in the world: between the Muslims and everyone else, and there is no space between and therefore you are either with Daesh or you are not and if so you are with Daesh's Enemies. The Enemies are portrayed as the Enemies because they pursue values that are incompatible with Islam, values such as nationalism, racism, democracy and freedom of choice. Additionally, they are also the Enemy because they want to affect Islam and Muslims by changing the meaning of Islam to the religion of peace (pacifism) and only then are Muslims welcome in the West. Highlighting only one side of the argument by withholding information that may affect the audience opinions is a way Daesh make their audience react in the desired way. By posing that these are the problems in the West and they pursue values that are incompatible to Allah and Islam, they create an opportunity to argue that they have the solution, a way to avoid these problems which it is to turn to the Caliphate. This can be done because of the problems they address and

their ability to counter this and state that in the Caliphate no one is divided based on their ethnicity or citizenship (addressing the problem of nationalism) or the laws of the man is not what governs the people but it is the law of Allah (addressing democracy) and thus the only thing that matters in the Caliphate is Allah. Daesh also states that culture and cultural heritage is against Islam and the interesting part is that Daesh refers to a specific historical and religious event. By highlighting the time when the Prophet entered Ka'ba he destroyed all of that time's gods and this particular event is used to argue that culture is against Islam. By referring back to historical events or in other cases to Quranic verses, Daesh make their argument trustworthy and their judgment reliable for their audience as by interpreting these events in this way they find grounded support for their argument. However, these things are done by withholding information and other interpretations of the events or the history.

Although, withholding information, addressing problems and referring to different historical and religious events are not the only propagandist features Daesh uses in Dabiq. By stating that Jihad is a Muslim's most important obligation towards his religion and Allah, Daesh uses, what in propagandistic terms is called, anchors such as guilt to reach their desired reaction from the audience. By arguing that as long as one does not do Jihad it does not matter how much one prays, spends time in mosques or learns about Islam, because Jihad in Allah's name is the most important duty and obligation in Islam (erasing Allah's enemies) and everything else is secondary. This way of arguing, puts guilt into the Muslims by using different anchors to create a change within the Muslim. By highlighting Jihad as a duty to kill Kuffar to cleanse the world from Shirk, reflects what the most important value is for Daesh, which according to Entman in the theory of framing is an important factor to investigate when one wants to highlight the frame of a communication (what values are explicitly expressed).

Another important propagandistic tool used by propagandists to reach to their audience is addressing the audience's needs in order to make them believe the propaganda. Daesh addresses the audience's need of feeling belonged, having a sense of fellowship and feeling united with a group very well especially within the concept of Hijrah. By addressing problems that exist in the West, by discussing the difficulties that Muslims have in some Western countries and identifying the feeling of strangeness in the West, Daesh argues that people should do Hijrah to the Caliphate. Now that there is an Islamic state there is no reason for Muslims to stay in the West and be a part of Western sins. Daesh addresses accurate events and discussions to make its point. As the reason of why people do Hijrah, economic marginalisation is stated as the most accurate one in Western context. However, Daesh counter-argues this by stating that there are women that had wealth and a luxury life but left

that in order to be in the Caliphate because of the love for Allah. Another important aspect addressed in the theory of framing that is visible in Dabiq is the usage of some specific words to make their point stronger. Words such as Crusaders, referring to a specific historical period and “Darul’ meaning the land of, which is used to refer to the land of Islam respectively the land of Kufr. This word is used to justify their responsibility to secure the safety of Muslims in the Western countries as the term Darul also includes Muslims outside the land of Muslims.

In this thesis, I argued that in order to understand Daesh’s propaganda in Dabiq, we have to understand how Dabiq is framed. Thus, the purpose of this thesis was to show this relation between Dabiq and its content in order to understand what Daesh’s message and goal is. To fulfil this purpose, I posed two questions that I needed to answer: what Daesh’s propaganda, message and goal is and how these are framed, by focusing on the content. Having analysed Dabiq’s content, I come to the conclusion that Daesh frames Dabiq in a way that it contains information and discussions regarding their interpretation of Islam which is a very strict, easily portrayed and polarized view of Islam which can be understood through their understanding of the Enemy, Jihad and Hijrah. By using current events and discussions, identified problems, addressing the audience’s needs of fellowship and unity, expressing solutions to the problems affected by how some Western countries treat Muslims, Daesh construct their message. From the content and the frame of Dabiq one can understand that their message is that one cannot be a Muslim anywhere else besides in the Caliphate, especially in the West. Therefore, Daesh’s goal and their desired reaction from the audience is for them to turn to the Caliphate as there is not possible to be a rightful Muslim anywhere else.

## **7.1 Further research**

This research focused on the propaganda of Daesh, what message the propaganda desires to spread to its audience with a connection to the current context. Based on the conclusion, the audience is an important factor to study because frame of the propaganda is based on how to persuade the audience best. This research opens up to the possibility and the need of focusing on the audience and how they understand and receive the propaganda. Is the desired reaction comprehensible for the audience and is the message understood as intended? A further research regarding the relation between Daesh’s propaganda and its audience may help us understand why people decide to join Daesh.

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## Appendix 1: Dabiq's themes

All of the identified themes in Dabiq are stated issue-wise in the table below. Some themes are therefore mentioned several times as they were discussed in several of the issues. The new mentioned themes are in italics.

Number of Issue	Title of the Issue	Date of publish	Themes→	Broader themes (concepts)
1	"The Return of Khilafah".	June/July 2014.	<i>Battle between two camps.</i>	The Enemy.
1			<i>Jihad versus nationalism.</i>	Jihad and the Enemy.
1			<i>Call of Hijrah vs nationalism.</i>	Hijrah and the Enemy.
2	"The Flood".	June/July 2014.	Hijrah.	Hijrah.
2			<i>People's will versus Allah's will.</i>	The Enemy.
2			<i>Back to real Islam (Salaf)</i>	The Enemy.
2			<i>Takfirism.</i>	Jihad and the Enemy.
2			<i>Crusaders and Kuffar.</i>	The Enemy.
3	The Call to Hijrah".	July/August 2014	<i>The US as the enemy.</i>	The Enemy.
3			Hijrah- leaving the West and ideologies.	Hijrah.
3			Hijrah- the path to Jihad.	Hijrah.
3			<i>Muslims being slaves for the West.</i>	The Enemy.
4	"The Failed Crusade".	September/October 2014	<i>Jihad- to defend oneself against the West.</i>	Jihad.
4			<i>Leave Dunya.</i>	Hijrah.
4			Crusaders.	The Enemy.
4			<i>Western countries are materialistic.</i>	The Enemy.
4			<i>Shia.</i>	The Enemy.
4			Islam versus apostates and Crusaders.	The Enemy.
5	'Remaining and Expanding".	October/November 2014.	The obligation of Jihad.	Jihad.
5			Kafir.	The Enemy.
5			<i>Martyrs</i>	Jihad.
5			Do Jihad everywhere.	Jihad.
6	Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony From Within	December 2014/January 2015.	Hijrah- leaving sins.	Hijrah.

6			Jihad.	Jihad.
7	”From Hypocrisy to Apostasy”,	January/February 2015	Jihad/martyrs.	Jihad.
7			<i>Who should be killed.</i>	The Enemy.
7			<i>Islam the religions of sword vs pacifism.</i>	Jihad and the Enemy.
7			<i>Two camps: no grayzone.</i>	The Enemy.
7			Jihad.	Jihad.
7			<i>Western values (freedom of speech, democracy etcetera).</i>	The Enemy.
8	”Shari’ah Alone will Rule Africa”.	March/April 2015.	Unifying Muslims by Jihad.	Jihad.
8			Western values being against Jihad.	The Enemy.
8			Islam versus nationalism.	The enemy.
8			Make Allah’s word supreme.	The Enemy.
8			<i>Children’s role.</i>	Jihad.
8			<i>Culture versus Islam.</i>	The Enemy.
8			Women’s obligation and role.	Jihad.
8			Who is Kafir.	The Enemy.
9	”They Plot and Allah plots”.	May/June 2015.	Shirk.	The Enemy.
9			Sykes-Picot borders of nationalism.	The Enemy.
9			<i>Connection between Hijrah and Jihad.</i>	Hijrah and Jihad.
9			Jihad- an obligation for all Muslims.	Jihad.
10	”In the Law of Allah or the Laws of Men”.	June/July 2015.	The laws of men.	The Enemy.
10			Jihad.	Jihad.
10			Islam versus nationalism and borders.	The Enemy and Hijrah.
10			Women’s role.	Jihad.
10			Make Allah’s word supreme.	The Enemy.
11	”From the Battle of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions”.	August/September 2015.	Shiism.	The Enemy.

11			Peaceful Islam versus Daesh's Islam.	The Enemy.
11			<i>Fellowship versus discrimination.</i>	Hijrah and the Enemy.
11			Hijrah.	Hijrah.
11			Jihad for women.	Jihad.
11			Iran and Shiism.	The Enemy.
12	"Just Terror".	November/December 2015.	Muhajirun.	Hijrah.
12			<i>The need of the Caliphate.</i>	Hijrah.
12			<i>Muslims' strangeness in West.</i>	Hijrah.
13	The Rāfiḍah – From Ibn Saba' to the Dajjāl".	January/February, 2016.	Iran.	The Enemy.
13			Murtaddin.	The Enemy and Jihad.
13			Jihad for Allah.	Jihad.
13			<i>Takfirism towards the Rafidah Shia.</i>	The Enemy and Jihad.
14	The Murtadd Brotherhood".	April/May 2016.	No grayzone.	
14			Murtadd Muslims in West.	The Enemy.
14			No excuse for not doing Hijrah.	Hijrah.
14			Western values not compatible with Islam.	The Enemy.
15	Breaking the Cross".	July/August 2016.	<i>The final battle.</i>	Jihad and Hijrah.
15			Western values.	The Enemy.
15			The western women.	Jihad.
15			Fellowship.	Hijrah, Jihad and the Enemy.