Al-Wala wa-l-Bara and the Western Foreign Fighters of the Islamic State

by

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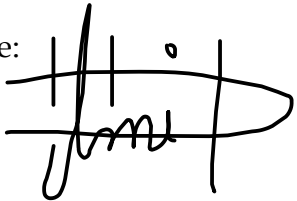
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ABSTRACT

Addressing the question of the Islamic State's foreign fighters not only necessitates a thorough understanding of their state of mind or psychology, but also the firm ideological beliefs in their hearts and minds. There are many studies that focus on the earthly pursuits of the Islamic State's Western fighters but they tend to fall short because they do not adequately address the religious aspects. As it appears, Salafi-jihadism and Wahhabism are the central philosophies of the Islamic State's religious roots. Heavily relying on qualitative data, this study aims to unveil whether *hijrah* to the Caliphate or rallying to its cause at home correlates with the Islamic State's emphasis on the distinctly Salafi and particularly Wahhabi doctrine called *al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* This study first explains the historical and theological contexts of the doctrine. Second, it examines the extent to which the doctrine was preached by the Islamic State to sway Muslims to support its cause. Third, it examines the statements of some Western foreign fighters of the Caliphate to trace the significance of the doctrine. Finally, through interviews with imams & muftis, it introduces the understanding of the doctrine among Muslims living in Western society. The study reveals that the doctrine was directly introduced or quoted to Muslims living in the Western societies in thirteen of fifteen issues of *Dabiq*, and in eight of the twelve available issues of *Rumiyah*. The examined statements of the Western fighters, who fought in the Caliphate, tried to travel to the Caliphate, or raised arms at home, clearly indicated the influence of the doctrine and its importance to their decision-making process and its significance to their everyday life in the West. According to all the imams & muftis interviewed, *hijrah* to the Islamic State, and terrorist attacks in the West were highly driven by the teachings of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. All the interviewed participants argued that the doctrine is considered a threat, if misinterpreted or misunderstood by an individual.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In memory of my father who was taken away from us

"we stopped looking for monsters under our beds when we realized that they were inside us."

–Charles Darwin

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the question posed by this thesis, explains the purpose of this study, provides a statement of the problem, and then briefly describes the method applied in this study to explain the phenomenon in question. Furthermore, the chapter will clarify how the terms Western foreign fighters, terrorism, the Islamic State, Salafism, and Wahhabism are defined in this study. These terms are controversial, and policymakers and academics use different language. Finally, the chapter will acknowledge that there are certain limitations that are beyond the control of the researcher, and these shortcomings place some restrictions on the methodology and conclusions.

Writing about terrorism is like working on a jigsaw puzzle where every piece is important and there is always one missing piece that is a key to the next part of the puzzle. Violent extremism, which comes out of a fraction of more or less 1.6 billion Muslims around the world, is no exception. While it is important to acknowledge the missing puzzle pieces, it is just as significant to put together the available pieces in the hope that a more precise image may develop[1], as I am seeking to do with this research.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to understand why individuals from Western societies engaged in *hijrah* to the self-declared Caliphate or rallied to the Islamic State's cause at home. There are many studies that focus on the earthly pursuits of the Islamic State's Western fighters but they tend to fall short because they do not adequately address the religious aspects. Tackling the question of the Islamic State's foreign fighters not only necessitates a thorough understanding of their state of mind or psychology, but also a firm understanding of ideological beliefs in their hearts and minds. However, to understand the *hijrah* trend of Western foreign fighters and their participation in *jihad* at home, it is vital to realize the dynamics and complexities of Salafi-jihadism and Wahhabism as it appears to be the central philosophy of the Islamic State's religious roots. The Caliphate advocates strict adherence to Islam through the lens of the distinctly Salafi and particularly Wahhabi doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* The doctrine is the central component of Salafism and Wahhabism.

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[1] This analogy was used by Beverly Male in the preface of his book *Revolutionary Afghanistan* that was written in 1982, but in the context of politics and Afghanistan.

This thesis aims to identify whether engaging in *hijrah* or rallying to the Islamic State's cause at home correlates with the Islamic State's emphasis on the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. The topic of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* in the context of Western foreign fighters is important to explore and necessary for discussion because, for the first time after the establishment of the Saudi state, the doctrine has constantly resonated in the propaganda materials of a jihadist group. The doctrine in itself is only important because it is a component part of a larger discussion about the jihadi narrative, and it has wider political and religious goals. The Islamic State grants itself religious superiority over other terrorist organizations because it believes in bigger religious and political outcomes (Gambhir, 2014).

The traditional Jihadist groups, such as Al-Qaeda or Hezbollah, are the form of modern jihadi movements that abstain from the larger religious priority of Islam i.e., a Caliphate. Despite this, they do frequently cite the return of a Caliphate that is steeped in Prophet Mohammad's teachings, and would follow the Quran, and once again would righteously establish Islam's cohesive and expansive polity in the world. However, they believe that this will not happen until the Ummah is united—referring to the Sunni divides. They show their deep grievances against the democratic regimes, the West and the Western sympathizers who are engaged in the "suppression" of Muslims (Burke, 2003). They constantly engage in *jihad fard ayn* [jihad as an individual responsibility] and *jihad fard kafiya* [offensive jihad], as a collective obligation of Ummah against the United States and the West. However, the Islamic State is far different from other jihadist groups and its former affiliate, Al-Qaeda. The jihadists within their groups and rankings do not necessarily agree on everything regarding the practice of Islam, *din* [religion] and *iman* [faith]. According to the Islamic State, these differences are due to the understanding of "…some aspects of creed connected to *wala* and *bara* and what is thereby necessitated in matter of *takfir* and *irja*…"(Dabiq Issue Six, 2014, p. 40). To deal with the present state of Ummah, the Islamic State's focus is not only on *takfir* [excommunication], but also on the creeds of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* such as *irja*.[2] Unlike the Islamic State, al-Qaeda's goal is limited to jihad and unity of Ummah through the message of jihad. They have resisted the obligations of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. That is why the establishment of a caliphate was the priority of al-Baghdadi, but only the endgame of Al-Qaeda.

Thus, tackling the question of why Western foreign fighters are making *hijrah* to the Caliphate requires developing a deep understanding of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara,* its schools of thought, and its significance in Islam and for a *mu'min*'s [believer]

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[2] Irja is explained in section three Part-I of Chapter 2

din [religion] and *iman* [faith]. While many commentators have observed a possible connection between the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and the success of the Islamic State in attracting foreign fighters, to date, only one study by Shiraz Maher (2016) *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea*, has specifically examined the connection between the Islamic State and this doctrine. Maher's analysis, however, only undertakes a textual and historical analysis of the doctrine, in one chapter of his book. No study to date has specifically made connections and explained in-depth how the Islamic State used the distinctly Salafi, and particularly Wahhabi doctrine of al-Wala wa-l-Bara, to enforce or obligate jihad and hijrah.

This study first explains the theological background of the doctrine, and then its historical contexts. Qualitative research is then used to explain the doctrine's understanding by the Islamic State and by the Muslims living in the Western societies. Three different sources of qualitative data are gathered for this part of this study to reveal the doctrine's relevance and significance: 1) Content analysis of the two official propaganda magazines of the Islamic State; 2) Thematic analysis of the published interviews and statements of Western foreign fighters; 3) Interviews with imams and muftis of the mosques, Muslim community centers, or Islamic academies in Canada. In part-I of the thesis, all fifteen issues of the Islamic State's propaganda magazine *Dabiq*, and the available twelve of the thirteen issues of *Rumiya* were analyzed. Part-II of the thesis is a thematic issues analysis of the published interviews and statements of Western foreign fighters to trace the concepts of *wala* and *bara*. Part-III of the thesis include in-depth one-on-one interviews with imams and muftis in Canada. If the findings of this study reveal that the doctrine inspired individuals in the West to travel to the Caliphate or to take part in *jihad* at home, the research would make a significant contribution to the current debates over the relevance of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. Then the data produced by this research should help develop a counter-narrative to the doctrine.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Even though the fight against Jihadist groups such as *Taliban, Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (ISIL's former name in 1999), Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda, Hamas,* and *Palestine Islamic Jihad,* continued in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the number of "Western" foreign fighters was so low that most of us do not even remember who detainee #001 in the American invasion of Afghanistan was. The Jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan was the first modern conflict in which a very high number of foreign fighters took part, but mostly from Muslim countries. The ulamas [plural of scholars having knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology] denounced the Soviet invasion and coined it as an invasion of the territory of Islam and proclaimed a defensive Jihad that obligated every

individual Muslim to participate (Kepel & Roberts, 2014). There was an estimated 20,000 foreign fighters with a strikingly high majority from the Arabian Peninsula—59 percent from Saudi Arabia, 14 percent from Yemen, and 6 percent originating from Kuwait (Reed, Zuijdewijn, & Bakker, 2015). There is no data available to suggest exactly how many jihadists from Pakistan crossed the border into Afghanistan to participat in jihad. But, without any doubt, the numbers are much higher than the total number of the foreign fighters who participated in this war from rest of the world. However, there were not many foreign fighters from Western societies, even though the call for Jihad against "*kuffar*"[3] Soviets, was made officially by the ulamas and Islamic institutions such as the Muslim World League, and radical groups like Muslim Brotherhood and other Salafi and Wahhabi institutions. The only known fighter from a Western society then was John Phillip Walker Lindh AKA Sulayman al-Faris (he prefers Abu Sulayman al-Irlandi). He was detainee #001. Born and raised in Washington D.C. to a Catholic family, John completed his school at age 16 in California, passing the California High School Proficiency Exam. After conversion to Islam in 1997, he travelled to Yemen at age 17 where he learned Arabic for the next 10 months. In 2000, after a brief return home to California, he travelled back to Yemen and from there to Pakistan and then Afghanistan, to fight alongside the Taliban regime (Luce, Gramer, & Winter, 2017).

However, this picture of Western foreign fighters took a dramatic turn when the Saddam regime in Iraq collapsed in 2003, and the Syrian conflict broke out later in 2011. To date, an estimated 8,000 plus individuals from the Western societies have travelled to the Islamic State's so-called Caliphate to fight alongside the notorious jihadist group (United Nations, n.d., BBC, 2019). Not only that, but many of them became effective iconic recruiters for the group. A case in point is John Douglas Maguire, who was a typical white kid from Canada—one of the most liberal democracies in the world. So, what has changed since the "anti-Soviet" Jihad in Afghanistan? Why the sudden hike in the number of Western jihadists? How did the Islamic State manage to recruit individuals who were neither mercenaries or had any direct stake in the war, and did not belong to an Islamic society? First, however, certain basic terms and information need to be clarified.

The Numbers

Since the rise of the Islamic State, an enormous pattern of *hijrah* from around the world to the Caliphate has been observed. The Turkish authorities in 2017 had recorded 53,781 people on no-entry lists. These individuals belonged to 146 different countries and had crossed the Turkish borders into Syria. An estimated 4,957 were directly deported in

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[3] Plural of Kafir. Kafir means disbeliever, infidel, non-Muslim, anyone who does not believe in Islam

June 16, 2017 to 99 countries of origin after their failed attempt to cross into the conflict zone (Turkey Ministry of Interior 2017, 07). The last report released in October 2017 by *The Soufan Center*[4] estimated that 5,718 people were fighting for the Islamic State from the Western European countries, with France at the top of the list with 1,910 Jihadists. A total of 8,717 people had joined the Caliphate from the former Soviet Union region, with the majority population (3,417) from the Russian federation. Although the United States and Canada had taken high security measures, 439 people had still managed to make the trip. From the Maghreb (Western North Africa), 5,319, and from the Middle East (Jordan, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia), 7,054 people, and approximately 845 people from the Balkans, and another 1,568 from the South and South-East Asia had traveled to the Islamic State (Barrett 2017, TSC).

Western Foreign Fighters

Whether it was a failed or a successful *hijrah* [migration] to the so-called Caliphate, it was one of the most effective forms of jihadist mobilization in modern conflicts. Diverse studies on the topic have shown that the purpose of mobilization of the Western jihadists in Syria and Iraq was anything but for the reasons that the locals were fighting. Malet (2013) in his book *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civic Conflicts* argued that, "Foreign fighters do not mobilize for the same reasons that the civil conflict literature assigns to local rebels" (p. 2). However, there was a strong bond between these strangers from the West and the locals that attracted them to each other and allowed them to fight side by side. That strong bond or common factor was a transnational identity and a brotherhood, which is defined in terms of the notion of Ummah. By the locals, these fighters were seen as the angels sent by Allah to protect them. The Syrians referred to Western fighters as the "true believers" and respected them as jihadists (Speckhard & Yayla 2016, p.332). Nevertheless, these jihadists had no sympathy or respect for the culture, or any interest in the issues that started the conflict in the region; rather, they were there for the mission of an Islamic State, revival of *tawhid* [monotheism], and transformation of the "jahiliyya"[5] [ignorance] society and cleansing of *din* [religion]. The Islamic State and its foreign fighters are in fact capitalizing on the political and economic grievances and the toxic sectarian divide in order to lure the disenchanted Sunnis in the region to support a promising Islamic narrative of a utopian society, a society in which they would have a complete political totality, livelihood and security (Tuttle, 2015).

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[4] TSC assists governments and multinational organizations with strategic security intelligence services
[5] The pre-Islamic age that Muslims identify as a period of ignorance. Jahiliyya is explained in detail in section 2 of chapter 2

Islamic State (IS)

The acronym IS stands for the "Islamic State", and this group has previously been known by many names. Between October 2006 and April 2013, the group was known as the Islamic State of Iraq or ISI. From April 2013 to June 2014, the group became famous and was known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham or ISIS. Then in 2016, after the Paris attacks, most of the European leaders, specifically the French president, named the group Daesh. Though the Islamic State group objected the name Daesh and the use of the name by others irritated the group. Daesh doesn't mean anything in Arabic, it is just an acronym derived from the initial letters of the group's earlier name *"al-Dawla al-Islamiyya fil Iraq wa al-Sham"* (ISIS) (Irshaid, 2015). The Obama administration referred to the group as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, between 2015 and 2016. However, ever since the third quarter of 2014, the group is mainly referred to as *al-Dawla al-Islamiyya* [Islamic State]. In this study, I will use IS (acronym for the Islamic State) to emphasize that the group has existed since 2006 and that their goal is to establish an Islamic state.

Salafism

Salafi is a label as well as a self-designated term. Salafis (plural of Salafi) like to distinguish themselves from the rest of the Muslim community, believing that only they (Salafis) are following the right path to Islam. A Salafi is someone who, like the Wahhabis, aims to restore the customs and practices of the people of Medina—the direct descendants of *as-sahaba* [companions of the Prophet]. They do this on the presumption that the direct descedants of *as-sahaba* followed and practiced Islam as it was intended by the Prophet of Islam. Salafis claim that, "what matters are realities and states, and not mere verbal gestures and constructs". This Salafi premise claims a distinction between them and the rest, who also claim to be true Muslims. A true Muslim is someone who faithfully follows the Quran and Sunnah of the prophet. In general, Salafis believe in a literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith, and they believe that the purest form of Islam was the one practiced by the Prophet and his companions, and the two generations that followed them.

The core theological concepts of Salafism trace their roots to the medieval Hanbali scholars such as Taqi ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328). However, later in the eighteenth-century, new strands of influential Salafi thinkers emerged with the rise of Wahhabi movement. The only thing that differentiates these new ingroups within Salafism is that some of them put a heavy emphasis on the writings of the eighteenth-

century influential theologian and revivalist Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792). These new Salafi groups cast aside almost all the other Muslim sects, at times including their institutions that once rose from the same "…iconoclastic strain as the Hanbali reformer…" Ibn Taymiyyah (Brown, 2007, p. 312). Today, these groups still draw their ideological beliefs from the books of Salaf and Wahhab, but are more inclined to the teachings and writings of the modern day Salaf scholars such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who constantly call for and promote jihad. This group of Salafi followers is known as Salafi-jihadist.

Wahhabism

A Wahhabi is someone who follows the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1791). The term Wahhabi originates from Ibn al-Wahhab's name and denotes those who subscribe to his teachings. Thus, Wahhabism would mean 'the way of Muhammad Ibn al-Wahhab'. However, the followers of Wahhabi ideology oppose the term Wahhabism or Wahhabiyyah being applied to them. Like the Salafi, this movement also originated with the mission to restore *tawhid* [monotheism] and impose the knowledge of Islam as preserved in its principles in the legal, moral and private spheres (Kepel, 2002). The teachings of Ibn al-Wahhab were neither an invention in Islam nor an introduction of a new doctrine or belief within the faith. To steer clear of this impression, the founder himself avoided the label of "Wahhabism" and instead considered the movement as *ahl al-sunnah wal jamaah* [the people of Prophetic tradition and community] or *ahl al-tawhid* or *al-muwahhidun* [the people of monotheism]. In fact, the movement reflects the teachings of the Prophet and his companions. Wahhabism is a Salafi like movement that also constitutes the return of *al-salaf al salih* [the pious ancestors of Islam]. Today the followers prefer to be called Muslims or Salafiyyun (the Salafis) (Ali, 2016).

Terrorism

Coining the right word to describe the terrorist activities carried out by an individual with religious or ideological motivations is a challenging task, and the debate over time has become more controversial. The word "terrorism" has been used in many different ways, referring to many diverse but often overlapping acts, and this has caused terminological confusion. For example, the U.S. Department of State defines terrorism as, "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (USDS, n.d.). In comparison, the Federal Bureau of Investigation defines it differently: the "use of serious violence against persons or property, or the threat to use such violence, to intimidate or coerce a government, the public, or any section of the

public in order to promote political, social or ideological objectives" (FBI, n.d.). Although both these institutions are from the same country, they have different understandings of the phenomenon (terrorism). These definitions overlap, with variations only in perpetrated violence or threats of violence. These variations in the definition of terrorism are enough to create confusion (English, 2010). Even the academic community differs in defining this word. Igor Primoratz, a Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University, in the 1990s, defined terrorism as, a "deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating them, or other people, into a course of action they otherwise would not take" (Primortaz, 2013, p. 11). In 1991, Sinnott-Armstrong (1991), in the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, argued that three things must be modified in Igor's definition of terrorism. 1) harm or threat against "persons other than those intimidated", 2) include aims "which do not concern action", and 3) distinguish "terrorists who know they are terrorists from those who do not" (Sinnott-Armstrong, 1991, p. 115). Hence, terrorism cannot be explained or defined sufficiently unless what is being discussed or explained is absolute (English, 2010).

The post 9/11 rise of terrorism around the world, in particular in the West, has been instigated by individuals linked to Islam. This is not to say that Muslims are prone to terrorism. In fact, the majority of Muslims openly reject terrorist groups such as the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda, and reject their form of Islam. Take, for example, the speeches of the King of Jordan Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein. With reference to his war on the Islamic State, he repeatedly said to the rest of the world that, "this is our fight" implying that it is Islam's fight with the so-called Islamic State group, not the religion. The king of Jordan is not distancing himself from the Islamic State's religious beliefs because, just like the rest of the Muslim world, he does not think of the Islamic State as not being Islamic (Stengel, 2017, para 9). The concept of "moderate Islam" is not something appreciated by the Muslim community. They consider the term offensive to Islam because Islam is superior to other religions. For instance, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, claims that there is no such thing as a "moderate Muslim", stating, "… that term is ugly and offensive…Islam is Islam" (Bulut, 2017, para 1-3). In Islam, determining one's Muslim status is a very sensitive topic, religiously and culturally, due to its theological implications. That is why we have not noticed any prominent Islamic scholar officially debate the Islamic State's status in Islam, i.e., describing the Islamic State as "apostate" or "non-Muslim". In fact, groups like the Islamic State are simply discredited by Muslim scholars and states (that do not sponsor terrorism) based on moderate Quranic verses and Hadith. We have noticed this when 126 Islamic scholars from diverse Sunni sects around the world wrote an open letter to the Islamic State leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, denouncing the "Caliphate". They did not label the group non-Muslim.

Nevertheless, after reading the definitions of terrorism from different institutions (FBI, Department of State, UN) including academia (scholarly definitions of terrorism), it is clear that violence and motivation are common themes among all. This means that any violence that is politically or religiously motivated is terrorism, and those committing the acts are terrorists. Hence, this study defines terrorists as those who express the intention or willingness to use violence to hurt people (combatants and/or non-combatants), or damage property, and to intimidate or coerce governmental or other authorities, for the purpose of promoting ideological and political objectives. This is the definition that this study assigns to the word terrorism. However, keeping in mind the sensitivity of the connection between terrorist groups such as IS and al-Qaeda with Islam, with respect to our Muslim country partners who are fighting these groups, in this paper, I will refer to this relationship as "violent extremism", "jihadists", "Wahhabism", or "Salafi-jihadism". This is important because words have meanings and consequences for both the radical groups and policy makers (Olidor, 2017).

ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS

For Part-III of the method, the assumption is that all the participants during the interviews will respond with complete honesty to the proposed questionnaires about *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. It is also assumed that the participants are truthfully explaining the doctrine during the research as if they would handle questions about the doctrine from any member of the mosque. It is also assumed that the imams in the West, i.e., Canada, will explain their knowledge on the doctrine the same way as if the imams in the Middle East would.

The major limitation of this study was the time and financial challenges involved in the interviews, and many of the potential participants were not willing to talk with me about such a controversial and sensitive topic. This limited the number of participants and hence the amount of data that could be acquired. With more time and money, more detailed and generalizable data could have been produced. The initial target was to interview approximately ten imams from each of four provinces (Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta). Many of them declined to talk, however, as I later learned, on the assumption that I might be actually be from a security agency. Initially recruiting emails were sent to mosques in Toronto. The emails were sent to the email addresses listed for the mosques. There was absolutely no response. Emails were then sent to the same mosques indicating I wished to speak to an imam, but without mentioning the doctrine I wished to discuss. This time a high percentage of the mosques replied with the imam's names, direct email addresses, and phone numbers. When the original email initially sent to the mosques was sent to the imams I received only three responses that were positive. Out of these three contacts, only one imam

agreed to sit for a one-on-one interview. I then followed this same strategy, contacting imams directly, throughout the recruiting period. However, the responses were unbelievably low. Not even one imam from Quebec responded to my request once they were informed about the research topic. In the end only four individuals were recruited. Three of these participants were from Alberta and one from Toronto. In order to keep the identity of the participants safe, no further identifying information is provided.

Nevertheless, the recruited participants in this study were all well-educated and trained as imams and muftis. Most of them have studied Islamic jurisprudence, Quranic interpretations, and Hadith for well over ten years, and from credible Islamic institutions in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Additionally, these four imams/muftis came from the diverse *Madhhab* [ways of thinking or acting in Islam] of Sunni Islam including Hanbali, Shafii, and Hanafi traditions. More specifically, they were followers of Salafism, Ash'ari, and Ahl us-Sunnah. These imams and muftis were specifically recruited to cover the diverse Islamic schools of thought that might reflect how the doctrine is interpreted.

For Part-II of the method, the major limitations in this study design were time and finances, which limited the data sources for this portion to journals, YouTube videos, published articles, and published court documents. However, there were enough sources online in which the participants responded to questions, such as what contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected the decision-making process to do *hijrah* or rally to the IS cause at home, or other open-ended questions relating to this, to help provide an understanding of the common experience of the participants (Western foreign fighters).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains three sections. Section one focuses on presenting the current studies and debates over the issue of why individuals from the Western societies do *hijrah* to the Caliphate or pick up arms at home for the support of the Caliphate. A high percentage of the current debate has focused on the "push factors" that created the situation or provided the environment for these individuals to do *hijrah* or fight at home on behalf of the Islamic State. The push factors in this case are essentially the conditions, circumstances, or distresses under which these individuals are living. These factors are believed to motivate them to become interested in issues such as jihad, *hijrah*, and a Caliphate, and be inclined to do something about it. There is the implication that these are large structural factors that the person may not even be aware of. For example, these individuals may be unemployed, or aimless, or they lack purpose in their lives, etc. These factors tend to push the person, without the person even really understanding why, to being attracted to the idea of *hijrah* to a warzone.

While the push factor is part of the problem in the case of the Islamic State's Western foreign fighters, the pull factor is also widely considered a major contributor, though it is not often acknowledged by scholars or government officials due to political reasons. The pull factors exist largely outside the person's situational condition. When we talk about IS reaching out for people to draw them to the Caliphate, or rally to their cause wherever they are, that is a pull factor. That is why the Islamic State uses different ideological ideas such as Caliphate, *hijrah*, and jihad (which act as pull factors) to attract people's attention. It is like a piece of attractive advertising. The Islamic State planted the ideas (hijrah, caliphate, jihad) through their propaganda platforms into the heads of these vulnerable individuals. If your life is aimless, listen to the "true" message of Islam and travel to the Caliphate and fight for the "hereafter", which could make your life so much more important and meaningful.

However, these pull factors tends to be neglected or handled in a limited and naïve way. In light of this, sections two and three of this chapter will concentrate on the pull factors in relation to the role of ideology. Although ideologies such as jihadism have been widely discussed in the context of pull factors, no study to date has specifically made connections and explained in-depth how the Islamic State used the distinctly Salafi, and particularly Wahhabi doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*, to enforce or obligate jihad and *hijrah*. Section two of this chapter will explain the concept of a Caliphate as the most important obligation in Islam. More importantly, section three will discuss in

detail the theological, historical, social, and political contexts of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*, to explain its importance in Islam, and a believer's obligations.

SECTION ONE—THE PUSH FACTORS

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

The armed conflicts in Syria, which originally began in March 2011 with an anti-government protest in Daraa city (CNN, 2017) and evolved into a deadly civil war, and the decade-long war in Iraq after the collapse of the Saddam Hussein, has massively increased the number of Western foreign fighters in the so-called Caliphate. Since this thesis is only focused on the Islamic State's foreign fighters from the Western societies, we will not get into the debate about foreign fighters from the rest of the world. In June 2014, the world was shocked when Islamic State troops numbering approximately 1,000 stormed and took control of the city of Mosul. This was Iraq's second largest city and was heavily guarded by 30,000 American-trained Iraqi soldiers and police who were armed with the latest American weapons (Weiss and Hassan 2015). Looking back at the formation of the Islamic State and its first advancement, the many factors that allowed its ascent to begin with, still exist. Today, experts and scholars are on the opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to the question of why so many individuals from the Western societies did *hijrah* to the so-called Caliphate or rallied behind the Islamic State's cause at home. On one end of the spectrum are scholars and policymakers whom strongly believe that the motivations come from the ideology, religion, and the culture, whereas the other end of the spectrum argues that the motivating factors are the social and economic grievances of Western Muslims (Taspinar, 2016). Nevertheless, the Caliphate and the conflict in the region attracted an unprecedented number of jihadists from Europe and North America. Their presence in the conflict raised high security risks at home. This is because it was feared they would either return home with radical ideologies and orchestrate attacks or would encourage others in their community to be part of the Caliphate. Policymakers and scholars have struggled to understand fully why these individuals left or fought at home for the Caliphate.

Scholars argue that those from the Western societies who decide to *hijrah* to the Caliphate or travel to fight for other groups in the Middle East are mainly doing so because they are marginalized members of their societies. In presenting the life stories of five Dutch jihadists, for example, Weggemans et al (2014) claim that the jihadists were marginalized members of the society who grew up in "…lower or lower middle class" families with "…middle and low education levels…". They were "…raised in relatively bad neighbourhoods" (Weggemans et al, 2014, p. 107). Others have argued that the Islamic State fighters are not Islamist radicals first, but rather they mostly come from criminal backgrounds, and join the Caliphate for the sake of redemption (Batrawy et al, 2016). Those making these kinds of arguments often point to the thousands of

Islamic State intake applications that were leaked and analyzed by the Associated Press. The analysis revealed that seventy percent of the Western Islamic State recruits had checked a box indicating that their knowledge of Sharia law was "low." Some captured recruits also had purchased "The Koran for Dummies" and "Islam for Dummies." These discoveries were widely reported by journalists and others as indicating that the recruits were not very religious, and their faith could not have been a significant factor in their radicalization (Choi, 2016; Rosenbaum, 2016). Their lack of religious knowledge, it is assumed, made them susceptible to being recruited by the Islamic State. Sharia laws, however, are complex and it could be argued that most Muslims have only a basic understanding of them. That is why there are imams and muftis to help explain them and guide people in the practice of these laws. Most observers, however, used this information to make the simpler conclusion that people must be joining the Islamic State for reasons other than their faith.

Others focused on the idea that these individuals lived under distressed circumstances including criminal backgrounds which motivated them to go to the Caliphate. As early as 1999, the FBI had discovered that "sleeper cells" existed that engaged in the radicalization of Muslim inmates in American prison cells (Dunleavy, 2011). The "crime-terror nexus" is a term that today the European policy makers apply in defining the European Islamic State fighters. According to one report published by GLOBSEC policy institute (n.d.), one-third of the Islamic State recruits from Europe come with a criminal background, including violent robberies, thefts, burglaries, drug dealing, frauds, and terrorism related crimes (Rekawek, et al., n.d.). Take for example the Westminster attacker who orchestrated one of the deadliest terror attacks in London since the 7/7 bombing. He was a recent convert and a father of 3 with a decade long criminal record. He was born as Adrian Elms in Dartford United Kingdom, and grew up with a single parent. He was arrested and convicted of criminal charges at age 18, and was converted to Islam behind bars. He continued with criminal activities until 2003, with several convictions, including assaults, possession of offensive weapons and other public order offenses. However, for the next 14 years, he was one of your "typical" neighbours who kept to himself, played with his kids, washed his car, mowed his lawn, and acted like any other suburban father would. In relation to violent extremism, he was once interviewed by British security personnel and was considered a peripheral figure, in the sense of being a radical Islamist (Lusher, 2017). Nevertheless, on March 22, 2017 he revealed his jihadist identity when he rammed a rental 4x4 truck into innocent pedestrians, killing 5, including a police officer. Before the attack, during a visit to his mother, he told her, "They'll say I'm a terrorist. I'm not.", but she had no idea what he meant. Chilling handwritten notes found on him read "exciting opportunity", "Previous examples, this life, right time. All outcomes are good, so go ahead.", his manifesto entitled "Jihad", and his continued rant (praising IS) to his wife

on the Islamic State, hints that he was a supporter of the Islamic State and he did what the Islamic State had asked supporters like him to do.

In many pieces of propaganda and recruiting materials, the Islamic State has commanded its followers to kill the "disbelievers….in any manner or way however it maybe…", even commanding them to use everyday objects such as kitchen knives or cars. In propaganda videos and print materials, the Islamic State promoted the promise of redemption from past crimes. "Some people with the worst pasts create the best futures," read the Facebook post of one of "Banner of God" Islamic State British fighters (Dearden, 2016). The Paris terrorist attack master mind, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, also served time in prison in 2010 where he met Ibrahim Abdelslam—the other perpetrator, and together with a group of 10 jihadists they killed 130 Parisians in 2015. Even the self-proclaimed caliph spent time in prison. In 2004, the Islamic State's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was then the leader of another small jihadist group called Jaysh Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jamaah (Army of the People of the Sunna and Communal Solidarity). In February 2004, he was detained and imprisoned, not as a jihadist but as a civilian, when he visited a friend who was on the American Wanted List (according to his prison files). His 10 months of imprisonment in Bucca Prison in Iraq played a major role in his future leadership in the Islamic State (Mcants, 2015). Some of his fellow 24,000 prison inmates were Sunni Arabs, who had served as military intelligence personnel in Saddam Hussein's regime. They later became al-Baghdadi's recruits and high-ranking officers in his so-called Islamic State.

NEWFOUND SENSE OF BELONGING

Most of the foreign fighters of the so-called caliphate are those individuals that faced identity challenges in the Western culture and societies. They turned to the Islamic State who offered them a pre-packaged identity, the Ummah. There are many theories and studies that solely focus on the signs of terrorism and ignore the importance of the conditions that produce terrorism. "Islamic terrorism" is a very complex issue that involves people of different cultures and religious beliefs within Islam. According to many scholars, the radicalization of Islamic State recruits is rooted in the feeling of isolation and one's desire to belong (Mitts, 2017, Tucker and One, 2015, BBC, 2015). The youths who are lonely, marginalized and felt unappreciated are the prime targets of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State. These youths are the ones who are in need, and if the community shows no interest in them, then they cherish the attention and the sense of brotherhood and community shown by the Islamic State. The new converts (those who convert to Islam from a different belief system) are more susceptible to getting dragged into the gray areas of the religion. They can easily be lured to the wrong paths with the direction of the wrong guides. In most cases, they are exposed to

the teachings of Salafi/Wahhabi thinkers like Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Taymiyyah, and modern radical thinkers such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. These figures offer them the promise of fundamental purpose "…to establish Allah's religion…" and "…practice Tawheed…", for moral clarity in the world (Ibn Taymiyyah, n.d., p.63).

According to one report from 2017, ever since the establishment of the Islamic State, more than 5,000 people had gone from Western European countries alone (Soufan Group, 2017). Michael Delefortrie, who goes by his Islamic name Younnes, is one of those 5,000 who made the journey but was captured on his return home to Belgium. In a CNN Special Report segment, an interview with Younnes by Clarissa Ward[6] revealed that Younnes's rocky childhood, marred by his parents' divorce, mother's alcoholism, and his own ADHD, led him to search for a new identity (Ward, 2017). He converted to Islam and strictly followed Salafism. Then he turned to hotbeds of radical groups in Belgium and joined Sharia4Belgium. According to Salafi theologian Taqi ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, when a believer feels like a stranger in his community or land and endures challenges in his endeavour to obey Allah, "...Belief in the angels strengthens the believer's patience, endurance and perseverance in Jihad in the way of Allah." It helps him "…reject despair and despondency. He obtains security and a sense of belonging to a blessed company" (Ibn Taymiyyah, n.d., p. 58). Michael's new path was influenced by such teachings. He joined the Islamic State because he believed he was becoming part of something bigger than his everyday life, and that he was being accepted and honoured by a new brotherhood. He believed that the group was committed to imposing shari'ah and that "they were clear in what they're trying to accomplish: to fight for the sake of Allah" (Ward, 2017).

According to one report published by the Soufan Group (2015) titled *Foreign Fighters*, the existence of Hotbeds of recruitment for the extremist groups such as the Islamic State is the result of close-knit groups of youth who often lack a sense of purpose or belonging (The Soufan Group, 2017). The "Belgium Cell" is an example of such Hotbeds in the Brussels district of Molenbeek. It masterminded and carried out the November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks that took 130 lives and injured hundreds in seven coordinated attacks.

Nevertheless, it is quite normal for teenagers to have feelings of loneliness or doubt their relationships with others. Who doesn't? But that does not justify picking up arms and engaging in jihad. Behavioural sciences teach us that logic and feelings both play a role in decision making. Both have components of conscious and non-conscious

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[6] CNN Senior International Correspondent

processing. Therefore, it is as much a logical decision-making process for an individual as it is emotional, to join the Islamic State or any other terrorist group for that matter. It is important to keep in mind that the Islamic State has a persuasive approach in recruiting its target audience, rather than to force them into a decision. The emotions of these isolated individuals, such as Younnes, may originate unconsciously to support the decision to join a terror group, even though they do have the choice to consciously respond to their feelings to make the right decision.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

European countries used to cherish the successful liberal policies of their multiculturalism. States like Denmark had a remarkable history in embracing liberal policies towards immigrants which had produced a civic cultural mosaic (The Economist, 2015). However, the hidden cultural and religious clashes in Europe slowly were unmasked with the rise of terrorism instigated by "radical Islamists". Today, the growing fear of "Islamic Terrorism" caused by the ongoing Global War on Terror has stimulated an overwhelming public concern over the growing numbers of Muslims across the Western societies (McCoy, 2018). The Pew Research Center estimates that by the year 2050, only 10 percent of Europe's population will be Muslim (Hackett, 2017). Today in the 28 European Member States, approximately 25 million Muslims live, which is only 4.9 percent of the overall population (Pew Research Center, 2017). While the number of Muslims in Europe is noticeably small, the fear of the threat level from this minority group has risen specifically after the establishment of the so-called Caliphate. A report released by Chatham House[7] in 2015 suggested that between 2003 and 2013, 50 British-born Muslim citizens engaged in terrorism conspiracies designed to kill British citizens (Herrington, 2015). A more recent estimate released by European Union security officials stated that between 20,000 and 25,000 wannabe and returnee British Islamic State fighters are posing threats to the EU. Among these numbers, 3,000 of them are considered a direct threat and 500 of them are under surveillance according to MI5 (Dearden, 2017). The European states are concerned with these numbers and government officials are forced to wonder who the next Islamic State fighter in their communities will be.

Although Europe is built on a fundamental shared believe of individual freedom and a commitment to freedom of speech, religion and equality (Betts, 2016), the rise of its protectionist politics has largely capitalized on both the imagined and the real threat of Islam in Europe. Laurence (2012) in his book *The Emancipation of Europe's Muslims*

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[7] The Royal Institute of International Affairs

argued that, in Europe the left governments and right governments have renounced "the past excesses of religious toleration toward Islam" and "public opinion has grown increasingly skeptical of Muslims' integration, perhaps the ambiance is not best described as 'emancipatory'." (p. xviii). The continued threat from groups like IS and the fear of another terror attack by a jihadist has made Muslims a scapegoat which has resulted in extreme measures by policymakers. For example, the state control of Islam in Europe is widely the result of terrorist attacks carried out by radicalized Muslims. As a result, this has forced European states, such as France, to impose harsh control and surveillance over Muslim institutions, including mosques. For instance, in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015, the French government gave police the power to conduct raids where radicalization of Muslims are suspected. In addition, it required the imams in France to have certificates acknowledging French values and expressing that they are not radicals (Winkler, 2016). The most controversial policy that targeted the minority Muslims was the ban on head and face covering. The practice of body and head covering in Islam continues to pose a challenge for France's liberal society, which views the practice as oppressive. Take for example the ban on full-body swimsuits that the Muslims wear on the beaches. In 2016, the French Prime Minister Manuel Valls called the suits "the affirmation of political Islam in the public space" and introduced a controversial ban on them (BBC, 2018). Similarly, Denmark announced new laws that targeted minority Muslim kids that came from low-income families. The law required them to spend 25 hours apart from their parents every week in order to learn Danish values and become "Westernized" (Goldschmidt, 2018). This indicates that the fear of "political Islam" has become a shared concern across the political spectrum in Europe.

While the dynamics of jihadists, terrorist or fundamentalists is associated with the strong beliefs in the extreme contents of Islam i.e. jihad, accumulated frustration also plays a major role. McCoy (2018) in his book *Protecting multiculturalism: Muslims, security, and integration in Canada* argued that, it is the Islamophobic atmosphere that has pushed back on the integration and assimilation efforts of the European policies, and instead encouraged the immigrants, specifically Muslims, to retract to their ethnic enclaves. Although withdrawing from the wider European community gives them (Muslims) a sense of belonging, they feel they are under a constant cloud of suspicion (McCoy 2018). Indeed, there are serious gaps in the Islamic practices and European liberal values. But, it is argued that these gaps increase when minority Muslims are targeted with policies such as control of their religion, education, and cultural practices.

The Western policymakers claim that Muslims do not integrate into their societies, instead they live in a "parallel society" and refuse to adapt to the Western liberal values. So, what happens when the Muslim communities in the West struggle to make a choice

between a participatory civic culture that keeps them under constant cloud of suspicion, and segregated lifestyles and closed communities where they feel free and trusted? The argument is that, the deprived social strata of the population are attracted to the fundamentalist beliefs (Kazmi & Pervez, 2011). Government control of Islam in Europe, for the sake of security, is an example of deprived social strata that Kazmi and Pervez (2011) addressed, which makes the environment hostile for Muslims and deprives them of the ability to openly practice their religion. The government control of Islam also builds mistrust between the two communities (Laurence, 2012, Winkler, 2016) and sets the stage for a future Muslim characteristic that will feed "rational Islamophobia", which in Adida et al's (2017) book is defined by three elements—religious norms, gender norms, and mastery of host population's language (Adida et al, 2017). Once these minority groups are segregated at this level, it creates a platform for the emergence of radical beliefs such as Salafi-jihadism or Wahhabism. Groups like these focus their effort to promote religious revivals among these second-generation European Muslims. This eventually ends up challenging the European liberal values, Islam's compatibility with those values, and the safety and security of the Europeans as a whole.

Radicals or far-right Islamist groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, al-Muhajiroun, Sharia4belgium, Sharia4denmark, Muslims for Crusades, and personalities like Anjem Choudary managed to create "safe spaces" within these Muslim communities where they (those who face islamophobia) could practice the religion according to the ideals of the Islamist groups mentioned. They promote an image and behaviour of an "ideal Muslim" and religious practices, including jihad, and make them sound more rational. The rationality is simple. Why should you live in *dar-ul-kufr* [the land of the disbeliever] or *ard ul-adu* [land of the enemy], when a "kaffer" has made it a challenge for you to practice Islam openly? Or is it necessary that you stay in the land of the disbeliever or land of the enemy even though they treat you as a second-class citizen and make your Islamic practices more challenging? When individuals are put in conditions like this, they start questioning their loyalty—whether they are loyal to Islam or their host country. This, according to Wiktorowicz (2005), creates a cognitive opening that "shakes certitude in previously accepted beliefs" (p. 5) and helps make people receptive to the message of groups like the Islamic State. This approach was well observed with the establishment of the so-called Caliphate when the group focused its attention on the Muslims living in the West.

How did the Islamic State take advantage of the "Islamophobic" culture in Europe? The Islamic State's recruiting pool also feeds on the idea that Muslims in the West are treated as second-class citizens, cannot practice Islam openly, and hatred is common against them. The Islamic State portrays "Westerners" as enemies of the Muslim

communities and Islam in the West. Knowing the existence of Islamophobic trends in Europe, for its recruitment, the Islamic State strategically targeted Muslims who lived in the Western societies. The Chief of External Operations and spokesman for the Caliphate, Taha Subhi Falaha, also known as Abu Muhammad al-Adnani al-Shami, orchestrated the Islamic State's attacks abroad. He inspired many "lone-wolves" around Europe and North America, inciting them to kill Westerners and non-believers. In one of his video recordings in September 22, 2014, he tells Islamic State supporters in the West, "If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any of the other disbelievers waging war [against us], including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it maybe, smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him over with your car, or throw him down from a high place, or choke him, or poison him" (Zelin, 2016).

On October 20, 2014 a month following this violent and vitriolic message, the first Islamic State inspired attack in North America took place in Quebec City, Canada, by Martin Couture-Rouleau. He was a recent convert to Islam. He rammed his vehicle into two Canadian Armed Forces officers. According to RCMP, he yearned for martyrdom for several years in posting on his social media. He changed his name to Ahmed-LeConverti, grew a long beard without a mustache, attended the mosque regularly, and tried to travel to the Caliphate. According to RCMP records, he was radicalized and had pleaded allegiance to Islamic State (Robertson, 2015). He was also featured in the Caliphate's official English language propaganda magazine Dabiq for their first successful terror attack in North America.

The Islamic State argued that a *muwahhid* [those who uphold tawhid] should not tolerate mistreatment due to Western racism because there is no tolerance in Islam for those who mistreat Muslims. According to the group, when Muslims use humanistic language, and liberal and democratic thought to explain Islam, it is an attempt to make Muslims coexist with the unbelievers. The Caliphate argued that Muslim who encourage "…the kafir societies they live in to be more accepting of them, rather than meeting the enmity of the mushrikin with hatred and disavowal" are guilty of *shirk* (p.19). Therefore, the "correct way to approach the issue of racism from an Islamic perspective is to reassert the importance and significance of *wala* and *bara*, and to state in clear and unequivocal terms that those who wage war against Islam and the Muslims will not be spared on account of their skin color or ethnicity" (Dabiq Issue Eleven, 2015, p. 19). The actions and rhetoric of violent extremist groups such as the Islamic State has led to blind, visceral responses and increased racism, "Islamophobia", and religious bigotry in the West towards the mainstream Muslims (Wiktorowicz, 2005).

Embracement of the concept of unity is a defining feature of Islamists. The eighteenth century influential Salafi figure like Sulayman ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1785-1818) argued that, "if a person displays *muwafaqah* [compliance/agreement] with the *mushrikun* [polytheists]—out of *khawf* [fear] from them, *mudarah* [friendship/lenience] towards them, or *mudahanah* [compromise/deceit] to repel their evil: then verily, he is a *kaffer* [unbeliever] just like them" (Maher, 2016, p.116). Such emphatic statements are used to push for support and political loyalty and a collective responsibility in wars "waged against Muslims". In sahih al-Bukhari the Prophet reportedly said, "The believers, in their love, mercy, and sympathy, are like one single body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with insomnia and fever." For a long time, scholars have pointed to the importance of the effects of the West's interference in the wholesale transformation of Muslim societies, the military policy attitude towards the Muslim world, and the relation of these two factors in the epidemic rise of violent extremism in Islam. Pape and Feldman (2010) in their book *Cutting the Fuse*, stated that "It is not what we are, but it is what we do, that drives Islamist terrorism" (p. 320). The central debate over Islamic extremism has centered on religious beliefs, and not the impact of the foreign or military policies of the West. They further add that, "the more we have gone there, the more they've wanted to come over here" (Pape & Feldman, 2010, p. 3). Between 2004 and 2009, 92 percent of suicide-terrorist attacks were anti-American, as compared to fewer than 15 percent between 1980 and 2003. Most of these attacks were justified by terrorists as responses to the invasion of Iraq (Pape and Feldman, 2010).

A database of suicide bombers from 1980-2003 compiled by Pape shows that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. He further concluded that a specific common secular strategic goal was found among all the jihadist suicide bombers from 1980 to 2003, a period in which 315 attacks took place. The analysis revealed that the common secular strategic goal of these jihadists was to force modern democracies to withdraw their military forces from the countries that are home to Muslims (Pape, 2006). "…Those who go to fight with groups like Islamic State see their quest as a struggle against oppression from the West, even though the terrorist group clearly oppresses the people it controls" says Dr. Lorne Dawson, a sociology professor at the University of Waterloo, who also co-leads Canada's largest terrorism research network TSAS (Robertson 2015). Take for example Abdulrahman El Bahnasawy, who plotted a terrorist attack in New York City. He is a Canadian citizen born in Kuwait, who partially grew up in Mississauga, Canada. After his sentencing was announced in March 2018 in a US court, documents revealed that El Bahnasawy claimed, "it was appropriate to use similar methods back until and unless they stop"

referring to the American led airstrikes in Iraq and Syria and demanding their withdrawal (Shakeri, 2018).

Typical to rest of radicalization studies, the examined literature in this section also heavily weighted in on the push factors i.e. conditions, distresses, and circumstances that presumably forced these jihadists to support the Caliphate. If read between the lines, these studies don't explicitly state, but "…make an almost inevitable and conspicuous reference to the quest for greater purpose in life…" (Dawson & Amarasingam, 2016, p. 206) while explaining what makes them to support or fight for the groups like the Islamic State. And those "conspicuous references", are the pull factors that is usually underestimated in the radical extremist debate.

SECTION TWO—THE PULL FACTOR

A CALIPHATE

"Hear and obey [your leaders], even if an Ethiopian slave is made your chief and he has a head like a raisin" (Sahi al-Bukhari, n.d.).

To understand the Islamic State and its supporters is to understand their ideology and practices, which trace their roots to the lineage of Salafi/Wahhabi scholars from medieval times to the twentieth century through such figures as Taqi Ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad ibn Abdu al-Wahhab, Sayyid Qutb, and al-Maqdisi. Al-Qaeda's leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, a pivotal Qutbian ideologue, argued that "Sayyid Qutb underscored the importance of *Tawheed* [monotheism] in Islam, and that the battle between it and its enemies is at its core, an ideological difference over the issue of the oneness of God. It is the issue of who has the power: God and his Shari'ah (Islamic law) or man-made, materialistic laws…". He further adds that Qutb's message was, and still is "…to believe in the oneness of God and the supremacy of the divine path…" Qutb's political manifesto represents the understanding and reasoning of Salafi-jihadist movements. His "…message of jihad fanned the fire of Islamic revolution against the enemies of Islam at home and abroad. The chapters of his revolution are renewing one day after another" (Al-Mehri 2006, p. 17). Sayyid Qutab is one of the most influential Salafi ideologues of the twentieth century, who inspired generations of jihadists such as Abdullah Yusuf Azzam (Bin Laden's mentor), Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and thousands of others, to put an end to *jahiliyya* in the world.

The word jahiliyya has many different meanings and usages in Arabic. However, Qutb (1906-1966) in his book *Milestones*, refers to *jahiliyya* as the "terrible condition of a world in the state of spiritual darkness, unenlightened by humankind's submission to God" (Manne, 2016). In his political manifesto *Milestones*, he argued that the "… cause of Islamic jihad should be sought in the very nature of Islam…", because a Muslim is stateless unless there is a part of the world where Shari'ah of Allah is the only law, and where belief in Allah is the only nationality, and where a believer's only other relative is a believer. Such a place is *Dar-ul-Islam* [an Islamic State] that can be called home to the Muslims, whereas the rest of the world is considered *Dar-ul-Harb* [home of hostility] (Qutb, N.D., p 131-133).

The "Caliphate", which has recently become a topic in contemporary Western discussion and geopolitics, is not a new idea. The establishment of the Caliphate in Islam first emerged after the Prophet Mohammad's death in 632 AD. This is when his

close companions, *al-khulafa al-Rashidun* [righteous Caliphs] (Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib) assumed the leadership of the Muslim communities until 661 AD. Exactly what role and authority would a *Khalifah* [Caliph] have, was not clear at the start. Khalifah roughly means, 'one who comes after', in other words a successor. The question raised among early Muslims was whether the successor will be *Khalifah* of the Prophet or Allah. Izutsu (1965) in his book *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology,* mentions that this confusion was made clear in the very start by Abu Bakr when he was addressed as *Khalifah* of Allah to which he replied, " I am the Khalifah of the Messenger of God, and I am quite satisfied with this (title), I am quite satisfied with it, I am quite satisfied!" (Izutsu, 1965, p. 2). His emphasis on Khalifah of the Prophet indicates what he was establishing a role model for the future of Islam. As the close friend and father-in-law to the Prophet, and descended from the Quraysh tribe, Abu Bakr proclaimed succession to the leadership of the Muslim community. He immediately articulated his sequacity and implemented the Caliphate's vision (cohesive and expansive) over the entire Muslim Ummah's affairs regardless of faction, tribe or region (Hassan, 2016). A Caliph's lineage to Prophet Mohammad and his tribe (Quraysh)himself sends a direct message to Ummah of a trustworthy and respectable leading Muslim figure. A figure with assurances to "…follow the book of God and the example of God's messenger in his stewardship…" and who will establish important legal precedents and "...ideals for Islamic leadership and politics…" (Hassan, 2016, p.5). Under *Al-khulafa al-Rashidun*, the Arab armies expanded Islam from Arabia to the furthest shores of the Mediterranean and to the far east of Iran. The thirty-year reign of the *Al-khulafa al-Rashidun* in Sunni Islamic tradition is known as the golden age of Islam, because these four caliphs followed the Quran and were steeped in Mohammad's teachings, and righteously established Islam's cohesive and expansive polity.

In Islamic tradition, Muslims point to several Hadiths [records of traditions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammad] in which the Prophet instructed them to follow *al-khulafa al-Rashidin al-mahdiyyin* [righteous and rightly guided caliphs] who would come after him. According to one Hadith, the Prophet reportedly said "…there will be a mordacious monarchy. It will be among you as long as God intends, and then God will take it away when He so wills. Then there will be a tyrannical monarchy. It will be among you as long as God intends, and then God will take it away when He so wills. Then there will be a caliphate in accordance with the prophetic method" (McCants 2015, p.114). Following the assassination of the second, third, and forth Caliphs, there was turmoil, and struggles of succession and civil war engulfed Muslim communities. Eventually al-Hasan bin Ali (grandson of Mohammad) ceded the right to the Caliphate to Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan in 661, to put an end to the civil wars. This established the Umayyad

Caliphate, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indus River[8], which lasted almost a century (661-750 AD) (Hassan, 2016, p. 3-6). Many revolts and rebellions gained momentum during the Umayyad Caliphate, over such issues as the bureaucratization and Arabization (domination of the Arabic language) of the Ummah. Mu'awiyah neither had any direct lineage to the Prophet or his tribe, nor did his family have a good history with the Prophet. His father Abu Sufyan had persecuted Mohammed and his followers for years. His mother Hind bint Utbah had eaten the liver of Hamza, the Prophet's uncle in the battle of Uhud to avenge her father and brother. Of course, this was before they lost Mecca to the Muslims, and both his parents converted to Islam. However, one major reason behind the revolts was that the Umayyads did not come directly from the noble lineage of the Prophet Mohammad, but belonged to a branch of Quraysh called Abd Shams. These revolts led to the "righteous" candidate for caliph— Abu' l-Abbas, who was the descendent of the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, and established the reign of Abbasid's Caliphate. Abbasid's Caliphate would start in Mesopotamia, and last for five hundred years until the siege of Baghdad in 1258 AD by Mongolians (Hassan, 2016).

After the surrender of Baghdad, the righteous locus of central authority of the Muslim Ummah and all his successors were slaughtered by the Mongolians. This left catastrophic and inconceivable loss and pain in the Muslim communities. This also was the first time since Prophet Mohammad's death that the Muslim Ummah would be left without a "righteous" central authority figure for their safeguard and guidance. The absence of a Caliph and a Caliphate has always been seen as a great threat, endangering both the religious and civil order and the protection of the Muslim Ummah's honour (Hassan, 2016, p. 173-175). As captured in a fifteenth century Egyptian Islamic theologist's writings, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445-1505), the three-and-a-half year gap in the Caliphate after the Mongolian invasion of Baghdad was deemed a catastrophic threat to Islam itself. This is because the institution was deeply embedded in the religion and culture that represented the Ummah's righteousness and glory (Hassan, 2016).

Following the fall of the Abbasids came the Ottomans with much more secular ideologies and religious tolerance. Since the Ottomans did not have any lineage to the Quraysh tribe, they commissioned legal works to proclaim their right to the Caliphate and "…. utilized the titles caliph, Sultan, *Aamir al-Mu' minin* [commander of the faithful], and the preferred juristic term imam in official documents, along with a panoply of other titles legitimizing and glorifying their reign" (Hassan, 2016, p. 9). The

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[8] Located in today's India and Pakistan

Ottomans faced many challenges including modernization in the eighteenth century and the fear of military defeat by the Europeans. This is when eventually, in 1924, after the defeat in WWI, the "Caliph" was abolished by Turkey. On March 3, 1924, a legislative act was passed by the Grand National Assembly of the Turkish Republic that read, "The Caliphate of the house of Osman is abolished and all members of the house are to follow the Caliph—and the late Sultan—into exile. Their property is to revert to the state. Justice and education are to be entirely purged of their religious associations. The policy of disestablishment or laicization is carried to its local limit" (Hassan, 2016. p. 1). The abolishment of the Caliphate came as a pressing issue for Muslims around the world, as it was the second time that they were left without a shepherd to guide them. Mona Hassan (2016) argues that the, "Significance of the caliphate within the Islamic context and the elusive desire for a righteous locus of central authority and leadership is grounded in the Islamic tradition" (p.13).

The institution offered leadership and shepherded Muslims to follow the Quran and the examples of the Prophet in his stewardship. It brought a sense of unity, connectivity, and solidarity that maintained the notion of Ummah for the Muslims. The genesis of a Caliphate is deeply embedded in cultural, political, and intellectual dimensions of Islam and protected by Islamic laws and jurisprudence that strongly advocates for the idea of such an authority. That is why today the Muslims of the modern world still idealize the symbolism of a Calipha and a Caliphate and the glorious memories of the "golden age" of Islam that these righteous central authority figures represented (Hassan, 2016). For some, these were the ideal leaders that they still look up to, and their absence today is seen as an aching challenge in today's religiously politicized world. However, the Ummah has different beliefs when it comes to the Prophet's prophecy of the return of the "righteous" caliphate. Some believe that it has already happened—signalling the 30-year reign of the *Al-khulafa al-Rashidun* after Mohammad's death. Others believe that the return of the "righteous" has yet to come, while others believe that it has come and gone (referring to Ottomans) and now we are awaiting the end of times and living in the Last Days. Either way, a Caliph is in waiting; that is the belief.

There are six credible Hadith books (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Majah, Sunan Abu Dawud, and Sahih al-Nisa'i) in the Sunni sect of Islam. They recollect the traditions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammad. Of these six books, two of them, *al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* are considered the most credible recollections of the Prophet. The coming of the "just" caliph, a reference to the coming of *al-Mahdi,* is cited in almost every one of these books. According to one recollection in Sahih al-Bukhari, the prophet is reported as saying, "Even if the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted and only one day is left (before the day of judgment), Allah will expand that day to such a length of time, as to accommodate the

kingdom of a person from my *Ahlul-Bayt* [members of the household] who will be called by my name. He will fill out the earth with peace and justice as it will have been full of injustice and tyranny (by then)" (Asqalani, n.d., p. 305). After the abolishment of the last caliphate in 1924, the "Damascus Muslims created a caliphate Society to headhunt for a suitable caliph, claiming that unless the job is immediately filled by a suitable candidate, a charlatan will emerge one day to assume the title for himself" says a Syrian historian and the author of *Under the Black Flag*, Sami Moubayed (2015). Then, eighty years later, the Islamic State's leader did exactly what the Muslims of Damascus feared years before.

Jihadist groups (referring to all kinds of violent jihadists, including globalists, irredentists, and revolutionists), such as Al-Qaeda or Hezbollah, frequently speak of the return of a Caliphate that is steeped in the Prophet Mohammad's teachings, and would follow the Quran, and once again would righteously establish Islam's cohesive and expansive polity in the world. They believe that this will not happen until the Ummah is united—referring to Sunni divides. This has been a long standing religious and political dream of jihadi movements. They wish to institute an Islamic world order centered on the belief that the Quran (the holy book of Islam) will be the constitution and Sharia (body of Islamic law) the law of the land. In this way, they hope to secure Islam's dominance and return to the "golden age" of *al-Al-khulafa al-Rashidun*. However, the Islamic State is far different from other jihadist groups and its former affiliate Al-Qaeda. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Al-Qaeda leader, repudiated the Islamic State leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in February 2014 and renounced any ties with the Islamic State (Cragin, 2015). Not necessarily all the jihadists within their groups agree on everything on the practice of Islam. According to the Islamic State, these differences are due to the understanding of "…some aspects of creed connected to *wala* and *bara* and what is thereby necessitated in matter of *takfir* and *irja*" (Dabiq Issue Six, 2014, p. 40). To deal with the present state of Ummah, the Islamic State's focus is not only on *takfir*, but also on the creeds of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* such as *irja*. *Irja* means to postpone or to defer, and the adherents of the *irja* doctrine are called Murji'ah or Murjites. Unlike the Islamic State, al-Qaeda's goal is limited to jihad and unity of Ummah through the message of jihad and they have resisted the obligations of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. That is why the establishment of a caliphate was the priority of al-Baghdadi, but only the endgame of Al-Qaeda.

The rise of jihadist ideologies such as the Islamic State has made "Islamic terrorism" a challenging issue for policymakers. It has become more of a partisan issue among politicians of all stripes. Some use it to rewrite history by exploiting the fear of "Islamic" terrorism for protection of their legacy, while others use it as a platform for their political trench warfare (Kilcullen, 2016).

As described by counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen (2016), the Islamic State was an "enormous slow-motion train wreck…" (p. X) that we did not realize until it hit us. The many chaotic events that engulfed the Middle East in the first several months of 2014 (i.e., the after effects of the "Arab Spring"; overspill of the Syrian civil war; collapse of the Libyan government; Iraq's failed government's further entanglement in civil unrest; civil war in Yemen, and the Middle East policies of the U.S. and the European states) has allowed the Islamic State to interpret the chaotic situation in the Muslim world as the End of Times and encourage the desire for an apocalyptic return of the "Caliphate".

The Islamic State's thinking was that the establishment of a Caliphate is the necessary precursor to transition to an Islamic State. They wanted the prophecy to be fulfilled as soon as possible, since now they had the basic requirements for the establishment of an Islamic State— a substantial powerbase and territorial control, and a central authority figure. For al-Baghdadi's compatriots to establish his legitimacy and the return of the "righteous" caliph, as described by the Prophet, they had to first reinterpret al-Baghdadi's lineage in order to trace it back to *Ahlul-Bayt* [members of the household of the Prophet]. Then, they had to convince the people that the time of the prophecy had arrived. Using the Islamic scriptures, the group's Sharia scholars argued that there will be twelve "just" caliphs from the prophet's lineage, either at the time of *al-Mahdi's* return, or at the appearance of the last caliph, who will pave the way for his arrival— signalling al-Baghdadi (McCants, 2015, p. 116). When al-Baghdadi was planning to announce himself as the Caliph, there were other arguments among his companions, including whether he can claim the leadership without having the allegiance of those conquered, and without the agreement of those Muslims who did not know him. In response, Turki ibn Mubarak al-Bin'ali, who was overseeing the Sharia committee of the Islamic State at the time, argued that "the Islamic scholars have ruled that the people are to obey a Muslim who conquers them", "Islamic law does not require unanimous agreement on an emir" and it is not necessary for every person to know the emir, as long as their leaders do (McCants, 2015, p. 118). To further support his claim, al-Bin'ali points to the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750 AD, when they secretly gained allegiance from their counterparts. As to the question of whether they have enough territory and people to rule, Bin'ali cited that even when the Prophet Mohammad started his state, he did not have a vast territory or population (McCants, 2015).

On July 4, 2014, the Islamic State's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Hussain al-Quraysh[9], entered the 842-year old historic mosque (the Great Mosque or al-Nuri) to

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[9] The last two titles are his claims of having a lineage to the tribe of the Prophet of Islam

give the Friday (holy day of the week for Muslims) sermon, and announce the fulfillment of Allah's promise on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan at the gathering of thousands of worshipers and supporters. How, when, and where he would make the announcement was all pre-planned and calculated, even the selection of his clothing—the traditional black outfit with a black turban, and robe associated with the last caliph of Baghdad. He then stood in front of thousands as the Sunni messiah, and asked them to obey him, because "after long years of jihad, patience, and fighting the enemies of Allah", Allah has finally guided him and strengthened him to achieve the goal of establishing a Caliphate. Al-Baghdadi went on to proclaim that, "I am the *wali* [friend] who presides over you, though I am not the best of you, so if you see that I am right, assist me,". He declared himself the first Caliph since 1924, and confirmed the "good news" with excitement, signalling that the long wait of Muslims was over as he is the righteous central authority figure prophesized to establish the pan-Muslim government. To gain their trust he humbly asked the thousands listening to his sermon, "If you see that I am wrong, advise me and put me on the right track, and obey me as long as I obey God in you" (Strange, 2014, para 5).

As Graeme Wood mentioned in his famous article (2015) *What ISIS Really Wants*, the group is not a group of psychopaths, but a religious group with a carefully considered belief system. The fact is that the Islamic State follows Islam and is not creating a new religion; it is just practicing the violent aspects that exist in Islam, like any other religion. It is important for strategic policymaking and counter terrorism efforts to acknowledge this reality. As a matter of fact, what the group's leader, al-Baghdadi, and his hard-core Islamic jurists preach, derives "… from coherent and even learned interpretations of Islam" (Wood, 2015, para 10). So far, there has not been any Islamic country that has shown its support for the group or its claims, which indicates that Muslim countries around the world reject the group. In fact, they claim that it is Islam's fight to oppose the Islamic State. Take for example the speeches of King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan. With reference to his war on the Islamic State, he repeatedly said to the rest of the world that, "this is our fight" (Stengel, 2017, para 9). However, it is also true that no one officially has come out and said Islam does not have a violent aspect to it, or that jihad is not a religiously sanctioned institution of armed violence. That is why none of the prominent Islamic scholars have officially debated the Islamic State's status in Islam, i.e., describing the group as "apostate" or "non-Muslim". As a matter of fact, groups like the Islamic State are simply discredited by Muslim scholars and states (that do not sponsor terrorism) based on moderate verses of the Quran and hadith. This was well observed when 126 Islamic scholars from diverse Sunni sects, wrote an open letter to the Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi denouncing his "Caliphate". They did not label the group as non-Muslim. The Islamic State has taken great advantage of this position and managed to cherry-pick Islamic scriptures to justify its actions.

Understanding theology matters, and ignorance of it by mainstream Muslim scholars gives the Islamic State the opportunity to have the upper hand, and cherry-pick Islamic contents. When they have a monopoly over content interpretation, then they can shape it as they wish to fit their needs in the ideological fight. The declaration of a Caliphate by the jihadi group in 2014 is a living example, when they claimed that the Prophecy was fulfilled, the Islamic Caliphate was established, and the judgement day had approached. The Islamic State and their supporters are a wave of reformers like many before them, following in the footsteps of their teachers and applying their doctrinal ideologies of the faith. They believe that the purity of Islam is under threat, *tawhid* [monotheism] is fading, the Ummah has lost its way, the obligation of caliph is abandoned, and people have forgotten their purpose on this earth.

SECTION THREE—ROOTS OF THE DOCTRINE

Part—I

HISTORY OF SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN ISLAM AS AN EXPLANATION

In his book *The Symbolic Species* (1997), Terrence Deacon argued that, "Knowing how something originated often is the best clue to how it works" (Deacon, 1997, P. 23). During the first century, Islam encountered many influential philosophical and theological Islamic ideas (*al-Ashʿari, Murjiʾah, Zahirism, Muʿtazili*) on the interpretation of the Quran and the Hadith, which shaped the applications of *fiqh* and *Shariah* for generations to come. *Fiqh* [Islamic jurisprudence] and *Sharia* [laws based on the Quran and Hadith] are the only two bases of the Islamic legal institutions through which Islamic jurists and religious leaders derive Islamic laws. After the Prophet's death, Islam's main challenge was to define the exact status of man in a Muslim society on the basis of the Quran and Hadith (Izutsu, 1978). In other words, how 'law and faith', God and 'knowledge and reasoning' interact in a society, if there is no clear-cut answer in the Quran and no credible Hadith. Another question is to what extent human reason can guide mankind in material and spiritual matters (Izutsu, 1978). Following the passage of the close disciples of the Prophet, for the practice of the faith and control of the Islamic communities, the Quran and the inherited hermeneutic Hadith were the only two lenses that seminal Islamic scholars and jurists like Abu Hanifa, Malik b. Anas, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafii, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Jafar al-Sadiq, and Zayd ibn-Ali relied upon.

By the second century in Islam, these two lenses led to two general trends in interpreting Islam. One interpretation of the Quran and Hadith came out of Medina— the Prophet's adopted home, where "…his legacy thrived as living communal practice…" (Brown, 2007, p. 49). The interpretations of the Quran and Hadith were passed down by the grandson of Abu Bakr (the first caliph and Prophet's uncle), al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr, and the Prophet's most prolific student, Abu Hurayra's son-in-law, Sa'id b. al-Musayyab. Later, these interpretations were collected and put together by the influential Medinan jurist Malik b. Anas and became Sunni Islam's Maliki *fiqh* school of thought. The second interpretation of the Quran and Hadith came out of the multicultural and multilingual Kufa city of Iraq where the ancient doctrines and practices of the pre-Islamic era swamped the young Islamic society that was established by the Prophet's companion Abdallah b. Mas'ud. These blended Quranic and Hadith interpretations, and approaches and methods of legal

reasoning, were passed on by his disciples—from Alqama b. Qays to Ibrahim al-Nakhai, to Hammad b. Abi Sulayman and finally to Abu Hanifa, who eventually formed the Hanafi school of thought (Brown, 2007, p. 48-51). These two lenses shaping the interpretation of the Quran and Hadith formed the bedrock of the applications of *fiqh* and *Shariah* in Islam.

However, later between the eighth and ninth century, many other schools of thought that differed from each other on the broader discussion of *usul al-din* [fundamentals of Islamic doctrine] emerged, and each of these *fiqh* had different strands of Sunni orthodox schools of theology branching out. Their disagreements extended well beyond theology and juridical problems. For example, the Muhaddithin [Traditionists], the Fuqaha [jurists], and the Zahirites were strictly opposed to any theological discussions and considered it as "innovation" in Sharia (Gleave, 2013). Some, like the Kharijites who rose during the *First Fitnah* (civil war that erupted during the Al-khulafa al-Rashidun), believed that even *kufr Asghar*[10] [minor disbelive/shirk/sin] leads to *takfir* [excommunication of other Muslims]. The Murji'ah or Murjites, on the other hand, believed that any Muslim who commits an act of sin (except *shirk*), should not immediately be labeled as *Kafir* [disbeliever]. Disobedience is not *kufr* [unbelief]; it is an act of *jahiliyya* [ignorance]. However, by the standards of the Kharijites, the person will be condemned as *kaffer* [disbeliever] on acts as simple as disobedience (Izutsu, 2006, p.53-54). Murjite theology promoted tolerance, claiming that the unity of Ummah and avoidance of civil war is more important than the declaration of *takfir* [excommunication of other Muslims] in one's own community. Then there was the Ashʿarism or Ashʿari theology that emerged to essentially purify Islam and defend the Quran and Hadith against rational interpretations used in Greek philosophy, methods and ideas. At the same time, it also claimed to defend Islam against extreme orthodox interpretations (Izutsu, 1978). However, gradually, by the end of the ninth century, some major Sunni jurisprudence from amongst the orthodox movements of Islam rose that stood strong by the Quran and Hadith and purged Islam of all the elements deemed non-Islamic. Presently, there are four well-known schools of *fiqh* in Sunni Islam—Shafii, Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali. They are also called Sunni *Madhhab* [way of thinking or acting in Islam]. These *Madh'hibs* [plural of Madhhab], including the Jafari (Shia sect) *Madhhab*, constantly competed with each other for "…intellectual ascendancy

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[10] In Quran Kufr is used to denote covering or concealing of the truth by an individual, and thus, it is an antonym for iman [faith]. There are two main types of kufr in Islam, al-Kufr al-Akbar [major shirk/disbelieve] and al-kufr al-Asghar [minor shirk/disbelieve]. Kufr al-Asghar does not expel a person from the religion of Islam. An example of kufr Asghar can be kufr un-Nimah [disbelieve of blessings of Allah] i.e. not being thankful to Allah for the many blessing/rewards he has given.
Kathir, I. (n.d.). Ibn Kathir. Retrieved April 13, 2019, from https://sunnahonline.com/library/beliefs-and-methodology/87-types-of-kufr-disbelief

and state patronage…" (p. 191), and the conflict became more intense over time (Brown, 2007).

Take for example Hanbalism. Abu Abdullah Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ash-Shaybani was a ninth century Islamic theologian, scholar, and expert on Hadith who founded the Hanbali *Madhhab* of Sunni Islam. He was the most influential formulator of orthodox Islam, and was a traditionalist who influenced the Muslim community to acknowledge that the only correct form of Islam was the one that was practiced at the time of the Prophet and *Al-khulafa al-Rashidun*. He believed that salvation in the afterlife is achieved by mirroring this world to the *al-salaf al salih* [refers to the first three generations of Muslims following the Prophet's death]. The Hanbali *madhhab* (school of thought within fiqh) is the smallest and most strict traditionalist school of jurisprudence. It is the official jurisprudence of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and a majority of followers also exists in the UAE and a larger minority in Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, and Oman. This sect of Sunni Islam strictly derives Sharia from the Quran and the Hadith, including the views of *Sahabah* [the companions of Muhammad], unlike the other three (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii) Sunni sects that sometimes rely on jurist discretion or customs of a community as a sound basis to derive Islamic law when there is no clear answer available in the Islamic scared texts (Ramadan, 2006, p. 14-18).

Ibn Hanbal, like many other Sunni orthodox scholars before him, influenced many individuals by his doctrinal thoughts on the Quran and Hadith. He drew a clear line between *al-kufr wa al-tawhid* [disbelief and monotheism]. Taqi Ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328) was one of those who came under the influence of his predecessors and imitated exactly what they did at the times when the Quran, Hadith, and classical Islamic practices came under the influence of innovationists, imitators, and philosophers. The milieu in which Ibn Taymiyyah grew up (Ottoman Caliphate and introduction of modern Islam), paved the way for him to push for reform in the Hanbali school of thought. He too drew the lines between the black and white of society, describing consequences of choices between *taqlid* [imitators] and *Sunna* [sayings and practices of Muhammed]. *Taqlid* was coined for those Muslims who invited other practices in Islam and its culture. Many revolts and rebellions against the caliphate were partially influenced by Taymiyyah's creed (fatwa against Muslims). He believed that the Islamic society no longer followed the Quran and the examples of God's messenger, and the lifestyle of those during *Al-khulafa al-Rashidun*. He fiercely opposed the rise of Sufism, modern doctrines on Islam, and the imitation of other cultures (Bearman et al, 2008, p. 261, Wiktorowicz, 2005, Esposito, 2003, p.45, Springer et al, 2009). Later, in the eighteenth century, Ibn Taymiyyah's writings encouraged the reformation of the Hanbali school of thought, through a new wave of reformers known as Wahhabi and Salafi movements (Muhammad, 2012, p.15).

Part—II

SALAFI SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The *Tawhid* and *Takfir* doctrinal influences of scholars such as Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Muhammad Ibn Abdu al-Wahhab (1703–1792), Mawlana Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979), Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), and *fuqaha* [scholars of Islamic jurisprudence] before them, have been the bedrock of the twentieth and twenty first century reformers and puritan movements like Wahhabism and Salafism. The understanding of Islamic doctrine under such theological interpretations aid jihadists who seek to purify Islam of *bid'a* [innovation]—the essential threat to its monotheism and strive for reviving Islam's "golden age". They strictly reject the use of lax Hadith or Quranic verses in defining *mu'min*'s [believer] worldviews (Brown, 2007).

The Islamic State is known to be a Salafi-Jihadi movement. However, the group draws its theology and beliefs from the broader Salafi doctrine that traces its roots to different Sunni orthodox *fiqh*. This complexity of the group's ideology is poorly understood by the outside world. Salafism in general does not really follow any one particular Sunni *Madhhab*. Jihadists pick and choose between all four, but mostly they subscribe to Hanbali *fiqh*. At other times, they choose whichever is most accurately aligned with the Quran and Hadith interpretations that could support the practice of Islam mirroring the first three generations of Muslims. In fact, the mission of *Al-salaf al salih* [pious predecessors] is the reason why they have designated themselves as Salafi (Muhammad, 2012). In the face of secular influences on Islam, personal and communal traditionalists have risen from time to time to preserve the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad. One Hadith reportedly quotes the Prophet as saying, "One party from among my Ummah will always stand by the truth unharmed by those who forsake them, until the command of God comes" (Brown, 2007, p. 351). We do not need a weatherman to tell us which way the wind blows. Certainly, groups like Salafi-Jihadists and Wahhabi would like to identify themselves with the prophesied sect. With restricted and rigid precepts, both the groups, generally call on the Muslim Ummah to view the Quran and Hadith with the practices of *al-salaf al salih.* The aim is to restore the customs and practices of the people of Medina, the direct decedents of *as-sahaba* [companion of the Prophet], on the presumption that they followed and practiced Islam based on the literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah. Nevertheless, it is also part of Sunni-Islam's general desire to scrap modern Islam and emulate the practices of the pious predecessors, in particular the Prophet himself and his *al-khulafa al-Rashidin* (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 5). But, because of the methodology and strictness applied in Salafism, it distinguishes them from the rest of the Sunni sects. They cast aside almost

all the other Muslim sects, including the institutions that once rose from the same "…iconoclastic strain as the Hanbali reformer…" Taqi Ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah (Brown, 2007, p. 312).

After the Prophet's death, discussions around *iman* [faith], and how it defined a *mu'min*, marked the starting point of all theological doctrines among all Muslim sects. Whether *a'mal* [action/act] is part of *iman* or not, is fiercely debated among the orthodox Sunni and Shiite sects (Izutsu, 1978). The Hanafi *fiqh* firmly believe that *iman* has two phases, *iqrar bi-l-lisan* [verbal confession] and *tasdiq bi-l-qalb* [heart-felt conviction]. This means that in practicing *iman*, there is no need to work towards it as long as intellectual conviction and oral testimony is performed (Maher, 2016, p.80). By this definition, any Muslim who commits an act of sin (except *shirk*) should not immediately be labeled as *Kafir*. According to Abu Hanifa, disobedience is not *kufr* [unbelief], it is an act of *jahiliyya* [ignorance] (Izutsu, 1978). This argument was also made by Murji'ism, that *a'mal* is irrelevant to *iman*. Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafi school of thought, was the "eponymous epitome"[11] of this movement (Givony, 1977).

In order to defend and preserve *Sunnah* in the modern era, Salafism and Wahhabism strongly reject the very premise on which other Sunni sects (excluding ahlu sunnah) establish *iman* [faith] and *din* [religion]. With such restricted and rigid precepts of Islamic tradition, it is of no surprise that the Salafi and Wahhabi scholars and theologians have embraced the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. They put neither *iman* behind *a'mal*, like the Murji'ites, nor *a'mal* behind *iman*. In Salafism and Wahhabism, *din* [religion], *iman* [faith], and *a'mal* [action], all go hand in hand. They argue that without *a'mal*, faith will be meaningless. On this matter, they strongly adhere to Ibn Hanbal's doctrine. The Hanbali school of thought rejects the idea that without any action, *iman* can be attained. Thus, those who believe that in *iman*, "intention" voids "doing", is downright *kafir*. Ibn Hanbal argued that, "Eemaan [faith] is saying and action according to Ahlu as-Sunnah, this is the practice of the prophet" (Ibn Taymiyyah, n.d., p.169). This means that refuting the action premise of the faith is to refute the Sunnah[12], and by refuting Sunnah, a person automatically crosses into *kufr* (Abdu-Allah, n.d., p. 116). This is because denying the right of Allah and his Messenger negates *iman*. Although *iqrar bi-l-lisan* and *tasdiq bi-l-qalb* are prerequisites, the aspects of *iman* [faith] are

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[11] "…Although not responsible for the actual forging of the Murji'ite attitudes…" (p. i-ii) Givony, J. (1977). *The Murji'a and The Theological School of Abu Hanifa: A Historical and Ideological Study* (Unpublished PhD thesis). University of Edinburgh.

[12] "…and whoever refutes Tawakkul, he has indeed refuted Eemaan [faith]. Tawakkul is the characteristic of the Prophet and earning is his customary action, so whoever follows the characteristic of the prophet should not abandon his action." Sahlu Bnu Abdu Allah, 'Madaarij as-Saalikeen', Vol. 2, p.116

pointless without *a'mal* [action]. As noted by Maher (2016) in his book *Salafi-Jihadism*, the most important texts for adherents of this view are written by Ibn Taymiyyah.

Ibn Taymiyyah, in his theory of *iman* [faith], dissects the word *tasdiq* [assent] to understand its relations with *iman* and its implications on a *mu'min* [believer]. In his book, *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology*, Izutsu (1965) points out that *iman* is not the synonym of *tasdiq* in Ibn Taymiyyah's thinking. The difference between the two is that *tasdiq* relates to whether an individual's testimony is about the seen (visible world) or the 'unseen'. As noted by Izutsu (1965), Taymiyyah looks at the two words, *iman* and *tasdiq*, in reverse to understand their relations to *mu'min* [believer]. He states that the opposite of *tasdiq* is *takdhib*, taken from the word *kadhaba*, which means 'he has told a lie'. Therefore, the meaning of *takdhib* becomes 'giving the lie to something', which is not the opposite of *iman*. In other words, *tasdiq* is contrary to *takdhib*, but *takdhib* is not contrary to *tasdiq* (Izutsu, 1965). *Iman,* on the other hand, is a derivation of the word *amn* [feeling secure/safe, the mind being peacefully at rest]. If anything is added to the 'truth' rather than the truth itself, it can become *kadhib*. In the same way, if anything is added to *tasdiq*, *tasdiq* will become *shakk* [doubt]. Thus, the word *iman* can be used only if the reporter of the report is trustworthy. Taymiyyah explains that, "…when somebody tells us, 'the sun has arisen' or 'the sun has set', we may regard his words as true (*tasdiq*), but we never 'believe in' (iman) his words, because the matter concerns a visible phenomenon." He adds that, since *iman* [faith] is not simply a negation of *takdhib* [giving the lie to something], *tasdiq* [conviction] is not enough to form *iman*. That is because, a person may have *tasdiq*, but if his heart is empty of the necessities (love and fear of God) of *iman*, then he has no *iman*. According to him, this is why *kufr* truly is the antithesis of *iman*, and it is understood falsely by other *fiqh,* such as Murji'ite, because of the false knowledge they have regarding t*asdiq* (Izutsu, 1965, p.166-181).

Ibn Taymiyyah (n.d.), from whom Salafism draws its ideas, defines *iman* [faith] in his book *The Book of Eemaan,* as "the affirmation by the tongue, acceptance by the heart and action by the limbs", arguing that the Quran and Hadith weigh in more on this premise "because action of the limbs is mandatory for the belief of the heart" (p.170). He further argues that, *tawakkul* [trust] is like the base of *iman,* and *a'mal* [action] is the best way of attaining that *iman*. *Tawakkul* is thus to trust in Allah and his book, and his messenger, Mohammad, in one's heart. To support his argument, he even goes out of his way quoting Junayd b. Muhammad, one of the early Sufi saints who said, "tawhid is *qawl al-qalb* [saying of the heart], while *tawakkul* is *amal al-qalb* [doing of the heart]." Thus, he adds, " …there can be no doubt that there is 'saying' as well as 'doing' of the heart…..The 'doing of the heart' includes things like love of God and His Apostle, fear of God, the love of what God and His Apostle love, and the hate of what God and His Apostle hate, devoting all one's actions to God and God alone, a complete reliance of

the heart upon God, and other psychological acts which God and His Apostle have imposed upon us as religious duties and made parts of *iman"* (Izutsu, 1965, p. 173). Therefore, in order to attain *iman* [faith] in Allah, his book and the Prophet, *a'mal* [action] is a necessity. *Din* [religion] and *iman* in Taymiyyah's view solely rely on the acceptance of the heart and actions. In other words, intellectual conviction and moral testimony must be compatible with the reality of *iman*, otherwise the individual is not only a *kaffer* [non-Muslim/infidel] in this world, but also in the hereafter (Taymiyyah, n.d. p. 3-6 & 163-172). This much is clear that *a'mal* is constituted as a pillar of *iman,* and its absence can deprive an individual of *iman*, which will lead to *kufr* [unbelief]. This can further shed some light on the understanding of what constitutes *takfir* [excommunication] in orthodox *fiqh* of Sunni Islam. Understanding of *takfir* is vital because it reveals under what circumstances, and due to which doctrines, groups like the Islamic State slaughter people, even Muslims.

Movements such as Wahhabism and Salafism have offered detailed answers to exactly what constitutes *kufr* [unbelief] and justifies *takfir* [excommunication]. Joas Wagemakers (2012) in his book, *A Quietest Jihadi,* has captured the diverse positions of the Islamic scholars on the debate of *takfir* and categorized them into four different stances (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 64). First is the Murji'ah. Their position on *takfir* is one of the earliest in Islam that appeared during the *First Fitnah*. The *First Fitnah* was the first civil war in Islam that erupted during the reign of *al-khulafa al-Rashidin al-mahdiyyin* [righteous and rightly guided caliphs], following the assassination of the second, third, and the forth Caliph Ali. One of the examples of the civil war is the Battle of the Camel that took place in Mecca. This war was the first civil war within the Prophet's family after Uthman was assassinated. It was so brutal that its memories haunted the Meccans for centuries to come (Sardar 2015). As the civil war continued, it led to Ali's[13] assassination, and this is when al-Hasan bin Ali (Ali's son and grandson of the Prophet) ceded his right to Caliphate to Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan in 661 to put an end to the civil war among Ummah. The word Murji'ah is driven from *irja* which means postponed or to defer, and the adherents of the *irja* doctrine is called Murji'ah or Murjites (Izutsu, 1965). The Murjites were the ones who did not participate in the *First Fitnah,* claiming that God is a better judge of people's sins, and any judgement by men should be subject to postponement. They campaigned for the position that the unity of Ummah and avoidance of civil war is above the declaration of *takfir* in one's own community. Al-Hasan bin Ali in *Kitab al-irja* argued that, "Among our Imams we approve of Abu Bakr and Umar [the first wo *khulafa al-rashida*]; we approve of their being obeyed and are angered at their being disobeyed. We are enemies of their enemies. [But] we suspend

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[13] Ali ibn Abi Talib was the Prophet of Islam Mohammed's son-in law and the forth Caliph

judgement on those of them who first participated in the schism."[14] They raised the importance of *tasdiq bi-l-qalb* [heart-felt conviction] in attaining *iman* [faith], and believed that God alone can judge what is in the hearts. Therefore, no matter whether it is a *kufr* Akbar [major shirk/sin] or Asghar [minor shirk/sin], there is no reason for an ordinary human to condemn the culprit as *kaffer* [non-Muslim/infidel] and invoke *takfir* (Wagemakers, 2012).

In contrast, Khawarij/Kharijites who also rose during the *First Fitnah*, believed that even *kufr Asghar* leads to *takfir*. No matter whether it is a small or major shirk, a *mu'min* becomes *kafir*. They are in fact the origin of the "infidel" problem because this issue is of paramount importance to the very existence of the religion of Islam. Their stance in the debate comes after the death of the third Caliph Uthman, which divided the Muslim community into three parties, of which the Shiites argued that Ali Ibn Abi Talib (The Prophet's son in-law) should be the next Caliph, the Umayyads claimed Mu'awiyah, and the Kharijites who argued for neither Ali nor Mu'awiyah, and there is no need for a Khalifa. The Quran and Sunnah are there to lead the Muslims, unless there was no other option, in which case, the best among the people should be chosen as Caliph (Izutsu, 1965). Kharijites believed that "judgement belongs to God alone, and arbitration is a means for people to make decisions, thus it should not be used as a platform to choose a caliph" (Martin, 2004, p.390).

The debate of all parties was as much political as it was religious, but all essentially argued from a religious point of view. In order to win the argument over their opponents (Shiites and the Umayyads), the Kharijites formulated their question of support on the basis of *Iman* [faith], claiming that, "Is he who follows Ali and supports him an 'infidel' *kafir* or a 'believer' *mu'min*? Is he who follows Mu'awiyah and supports him an 'infidel' *kafir* or a 'believer' *mu'min*?" (Izutsu, 1965, p. 3). With these objections, the Kharijites directed everyone's exclusive attention to one's *kufr* rather than *iman*. This created a sort of distrust in the community—who is the unbeliever among us? Those who form the Muslim community, do they all pass as proper Muslims? In fact, they became a well-known source of insurgency against Caliphates after the assassination of Uthman. *Iman* [faith] and *Kufr* [shirk[15]] are two of the most important terms in the Quran that constituted its very central thought. Therefore, the Kharijites based their doctrine on these two concepts of the Quran. In stressing the importance of differences in understanding of *iman* and *kafir* [infidel/unbeliever], the Hanbali reformer Ibn Taymiyyah stated that, "the dispute on what these two words meant was the first

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[14] I could not find Kitab al-irja in English. However, this quote from Kitab al-irja was used by Maher (2016). Maher, S. (2016). *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea*. New York: Oxford University Press., p. 79
[15] polytheism or associating partners with Allah, worship of false gods/idols

internal discord to occur among the Muslims; because of this problem the Muslim community was divided into sects and factions, who came to differ on the Sacred Book and the Sunnah and began to call one another 'infidel'. And the first to enter the scene were the group, or groups of people known as the Khawarij or Kharijites" (Izutsu, 1965, p. 1). Thus, by the standards of Kharijites, the person will be condemned as *kafir* on acts as simple as disobedience (Izutsu, 2006, p.53-54). Wagemakers (2016), categorizes Khawarij as the fourth standing in the debate of *takfir*.

Salafi *ulama* [scholars] that hold the second and third positions in the debate, invoke *takfir* on other Muslims when they are found guilty of applying *al-qawanin al-wad'iyya* [secular or positive laws] instead of Islamic laws. They base their decisions on the Quran's *Surah* [chapter] *al-Ma'idah* verse 44-47. These verses characterize the rulers that do "…not judge by what Allah has revealed…"[16], and place them in three categories: *al-kafirun* [unbelievers], *al-zalimun* [evildoers], and *al-fasiqun* [the ungodly] and of which, only *al-kafirun* legitimizes *takfir* (Wagemakers, 2016). The Salafi *ulamas* [scholars] who hold the second position in this debate would refrain from legitimizing *takfir* where un-Islamic laws were applied unless *istihlal* [considering a forbidden as permissible], *i'tiqad* [conviction] or *jahd* [negation] is clearly seen in the culprits. They argue that regardless of the replacement of complete Islamic society with *al-qawanin al-wad'iyya*, proof of *kufr* of the ruler is needed to legitimize *takfir*; meaning, as long as the rulers are explicitly and verbally not negating Islamic laws, they are protected against *takfir*. This, however, changes to the belief of Salafi ulama, who hold the third position in the debate. They claim that a full transformation of an Islamic society with *al-qawanin al-wad'iyya* in itself is a proof of *kufr akbar* [major shirk/sin] in the ruler's heart, thus the ruler has become *kafir* (Wagemakers, 2016). Therefore, it is legitimate to justify *takfir* against him. This is the reason why Wahhabism and Salafi-jihadism allow jihad against other Muslims.

The debate over what constitutes *kufr* [unbelief] and justifies *takfir* [excommunication], has become a major strategic approach for contemporary jihadi scholars to acclaim their superiority over others, including some Muslims sect. Scholars like Qutb have dedicated their entire life's work to advance *Da'wah* [call] and to reject the man-made laws in order to establish *Tawhid* [oneness of God]. In Sayyid Qutb's writings (Milestone), *jahiliyya* became of central significance in describing the "ignorance and disregard" of the Muslim leaders towards Allah's precepts. In Qutb's understanding, *jahiliyya* is the terrible condition of the world due to their ignorance in *tawhid*. He argued that the term *jahiliyya* is no longer limited to the Western societies, but today's

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[16] Al-Quran's *Surah* [chapter] *al-Ma'idah* verses 44. https://quran.com/5/44-49

Muslim world is comparable to pre-Islamic Arabia and that they can be rightly designated with the same term. According to him, the rise of new *jahiliyya* in the Muslim world has its deep roots in the West, which is fostered and protected by the sources of the modern states. This happened due to the neglect and decay of Muslim leaders, claims Qutb. His views came during a critical time in Egypt when Islamist views were posing a threat to the modernization of the new society (Maher, 2016).

Sheikh Hassan Ahmed Abdel Rahman Muhammed al-Banna, also known as Hassan al-Banna, founded an Islamicist movement called *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* [Muslim brotherhood] against Egypt in 1928. The mission of the movement, "Allah is our objective; The Prophet is our leader; The Quran is our constitution," was to articulate social dissatisfaction against non-Islamic practices in an Islamic society. Qutb, an *adib* [man of letters] rather than a leader of the movement, was an ideologue of the Brotherhood and dedicated his last fifteen years to its cause. The Egyptian regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who was also a former member of *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, subjected the movement's members to brutal military trials and eventually execution (Maher, 2016) after the failed attempt to assassinate him. Like many other militants of the brotherhood, Qutb was also arrested and imprisoned. Islamic thinkers like Qutb could not comprehend the brutality inflicted on Muslims by their own Muslim brothers.

Through his writings from prison, Qutb made *takfir* a mainstream idea by raising the concerns among Islamists, arguing that the black and white of society is no longer clear; and that they are neither living in *dar-ul-Islam* [an Islamic State] or *dar-ul-Harb* [home of hostility], but a society where *jahiliyya* is not just in theory, but an active movement. He argued that the Ummah has slowly fallen into the patterns of non-Islamic societies and into the hands of forces hostile to Islam. In Qutb's thinking, there is no short-term solution to cleanse the Islamic societies of *al-kafirun* [unbelievers], *al-zalimun* [evildoers], and *al-fasiqun* [the ungodly]. He believed that Islam will stand no chance if the Ummah were to fight the rise of new *jahiliyya* with theory. This is because any theoretical attempt to abolish jahiliyya will be useless against the organized and active "*jahili*" system (Milestone, n.d. p. 57). Signalling the practice of *takfir* and *tawhid*, he adds that, only a long-term ideological agenda coupled with "…training of a dedicated vanguard of believers…", using force if necessary, can establish an Islamic State (Milestone, n.d., p. 11). To date, jihadists justify their claims of jihad against Muslim rulers and the West, on the basis of this understanding of *iman* [faith], *tawhid* [monotheism], and *takfir* [excommunication] doctrines. They claim that this struggle will continue unless the Ummah is in total submission to the Quran and Hadith (Wagemakers, 2016). Qutb made *takfir* a mainstream idea by advocating a total war, not just on the ruling party, but against the entire society. He believed that a total overhaul of the society is required

to ensure that the society is upheld by *tawhid*, which is the same belief shared by the Islamic State today.

AL-WALA WA-L-BARA APPLICATIONS IN ISLAM

A TOOL FOR THE IMAN [FAITH]

According to Islamic theologists such as Taymiyyah (1263-1328), ever since the first prophet (Adam) was on the earth, Islam was the religion. Adam taught the message of Islam and his children followed the religion and believed in the oneness of God, and there was no *shirk* [polytheism]. The ten generations that passed between Adam and Noah, followed Islam as their religion as well. Not just that, all the other prophets following Adam, came with the same message of *tawhid* according to Taymiyyah. Whenever they moved away from the prophetic *shari'ah*, they fell into *shirk* [polytheism]. This is one reason why the jihadist and orthodox Muslim theologians believe that the ethics and traditions of a *kafir* and polytheists are found in *shirk*. According to Taymiyyah, the root cause of *shirk* is the lack of any revealed book from Allah, and these are the people that deviated from the prophetic path (Ansari, 2000, p.201).[17]   No one has any share in Allah's *ilahiyyah* [divinity] and those like the Christians that take their priests as "…lords in derogation of God, and (they take as their lord) Christ the son of Mary…"[18], are guilty of *shirk* (Ansari, 2000). Therefore, if anybody calls upon anyone (dead or alive, even a prophet) or anything or any god other than Allah, is guilty of committing a *shirk*. Prominent Wahhabi scholars such as Hamd b. Ali b. Atiq argued that "…one can only be a true Muslim if one disavows shirk and proclaims one's own tawhid, which is done by openly stating one's enmity of *mushrikin*" (Wagemakers, 2012, p. 152).

Iman [faith] and *Kufr* [unbelief] are two of the most important terms in the Quran that constitute its very central thought. The Hanbali reformer, Ibn Taymiyyah, stated that once it is revealed that there are "…among the people allies [*awliyaa*] of the Merciful, and allies of the devil," we must differentiate between the two groups "just as Allah and His Prophet differentiated between them" (ibn Morgan, n.d., p.4). The pious believers are the allies of Allah, and whoever enters into warfare against His allies are the enemies of Allah (Taymiyyah n.d). This claim of Taymiyyah (n.d.) in his book *The Criterion Between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of the Devil*, is backed by hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari in which Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet reportedly said,

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[17]This is referenced from selected writings of Taymiyyah on Islamic Faith, Life and Society. These collections are compiled and translated by Muhammad Abdul-Haqq Ansari. The book is called *Ibn Taymiyyah Expounds on Islam*
[18] Quran 9:31

"Allah ta'ala says: I have declared war on anyone who is an enemy of any of my allies. There is nothing better with which my slave can come closer to me than fulfilling all that I have made obligatory upon him. Then, my slave will continue to come closer to me by making extra efforts until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. If he asks me, I will give him, if he seeks refuge with me, I will give him refuge…" (ibn Morgan, n.d., p.4).

The above Hadith is quoted from one of the most authentic recollections of the Prophet's six books and this Hadith is the most prominent description of Allah's *wali*. In the Arabic language, *Wali* means ally and it is the singular form of *Wilayaa* which means allies. The word *wali* finds its roots in *wilayaa* [love and closeness] and the antonym of *wilayaa,* on the other hand is, *'adaawa* [hatred and distance]. According to Taymiyyah, this interpretation of *wali,* puts its enemy in enmity with Allah himself, because, *awliyaa* [allies] of Allah are the believers who give their full loyalty to Allah. This means that the believers must love all which Allah loves, hate all that he hates, be pleased with what he is pleased with, be friends with whom he is friends with, despise what he despises, command what he commands, forbid what he forbids, give to whom he allows you to, and "withhold from those whom Allah loves not to receive" (Taymiyyah, n.d, p.4).[19]

Surah *Al-Ma'idah*

"Your ally [wali] is none but Allah and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed—those who establish prayer and give zakah [charity], and they bow [in worship]." Quran 5:55:

Surah *Al-Mumtahanah*

"There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, 'indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you, animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allah alone'" Quran 60:4:

The above two verses from the Quran lay the foundation of the actual image of *iman* [faith]. In modern Salafi theology, they are the definitions of an individual's belief,

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[19] The book has no date; therefore, I have used footnotes here to indicate the additional information about the book. Taymiyyah makes this argument in his book called *The Criterion Between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of the Devil* by Ibn Taymiyyah.

actions, and love towards, Allah, his Prophet, and the Ummah; and an individual's belief, actions, and hate towards the enemy of Allah, his Prophet, and the Ummah. From the above surah comes the fieriest and unnoticed concept known as *Al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* As it was learned earlier in the schools of thought, Salafism and Wahhabism are the strictest rising Sunni sect in Islam that derive Sharia strictly from the literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith. They are the revivalist reformers who acknowledge that the only correct way of life in Islam was the one that was practiced at the time of the Prophet and *Al-khulafa al-Rashidun;* and that salvation in the afterlife is by mirroring today's Islamic society to that of *al-salaf al salih*. To maintain this accuracy in *din* [religion] and *iman* [faith] for the Muslim communities in the modern world, Salafi and Wahhabi scholars and theologians embraced the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* This has allowed them to strictly separate the "right" from "wrong" and "insiders" from "outsiders" in the society and steer away the followers from *bid'a* [innovation], *kufr* [unbelief], and *shirk* [polytheism] (Wagemakers 2012). Hence, the jihadist interpretation of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* is a deviant reading of the doctrine, even within the Salafism and Wahhabism.

LINGUISTIC DIMENSIONS OF AL-WALA WA-L-BARA

The concept is composed of two terms, *Wala* and *Bara.* The Arabic language is quite vast and complex because each word can have more than one meaning. Therefore, to trace a precise meaning for *Wala* and *Bara* is far too challenging for a thesis of this length. However, if we take a closer look at the word *Wala,* it is the past participle of *wa-li-ya* [to protect] and as a noun, *wa-li-ya* would be *wala* or *wilayaa,* and *wilayaa* means protection. So, the one who protects is called a *wali* [protector]. The word *mawla* also derives from *wala,* which means a 'slave who is owned by someone' (Ali, 2016, p.71). Allah has referred to those who worship him as slaves in the Quran. It is important to note that this does not hold the meaning of "slave" as in slavery. In this context, it means to work harder towards *iman* [faith] for Allah, his Prophet, and his book. This is made clear in the earlier Hadith we mentioned from Sahih al-Bukhari in which Muhammad quoted Allah saying, "…Then, my slave will continue to come closer to me by making extra efforts until I love him." So, if the *mu'min* [believer] is the slave, then Allah is the *mawla* [the act of having someone as *wali*]. This means, *mu'min* as *wali* of Allah is the protector of *iman* and *tawhid*. To be a protector of *tawhid* and *iman,* requires a firm belief in all six foundations of *iman*: *Iman* in Allah, his Angels, his Prophets and Messengers, his scripture, the Day of Resurrection, and *iman* in *Al-Qadaa' Wal Qadar* [Divine Preordainment]. Taymiyyah in his book *The Book of Eemaan* argues that the *iman* of any person "…is incomplete without his belief in all of them, in the way and manner indicated in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Whoever denies any of these six truths, places himself outside the boundaries of faith and becomes a Kaafir

(disbeliever)" (Taymiyyah, n.d., p. 9). From an earlier definition of Allah's *wali*, defined by Taymiyyah, we learned that *wilayaa* also means "love and closeness" and *wali* in the Quran signified "obedience". Taymiyyah interprets *wala* as "closeness and the approach (for friendship)". He adds that friendship is the antonym of enmity, thus, enemy and friend are opposites of each other. Therefore, "believers are friends of Allah…and disbelievers are friends of Satan and Taaghut" (Taymiyyah, n.d., p. 212). Therefore, *Wala* can also be interpreted as loyalty, support, and friendship.

The word *Bara*, on the other hand, is associated with *tabarru*, which means severance, to be free of, denunciation, or disavowal. In surah *At-Tawbah* [The repentance] *Bara* is explained as declaration of disassociation with the disbelievers and freeing oneself from *shirk* and of tyranny. "[This is a declaration of] disassociation, from Allah and His Messenger, to those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists" (Quran 9:1). *Bari* [innocent or free] derives from *Bara*, and as noted by Wagemakers (2012) in his book, *A Quietest Jihadi*, *bari* is used in pre-Islamic Arabia among the tribes to expel a tribe that poses a threat to alliances. The tribe would in fact declare itself *bari* [free of] of that expelled tribe (Wagemakers, 2012). The two terms (*Wala* and *Bara*) have been decoded, interpreted, and rationalized differently throughout Islamic history, but the most common interpretations are found as 'loyalty' and 'disavowal' or 'love' and 'hate'. In the Quran the usage of both the terms indicate similar interpretations. For example, in surah *Ali'Imran* [Family of Imran] it says, "Let not believers take disbelievers as allies rather than believers…" (Quran, 3:28). This verse indicates *Wala* [loyalty] to Allah's *wali* only; and in surah *Al-Mumtahanah*, "…We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you, animosity and hatred forever…". This indicates that *Bara* [disavowal] is shown to disbelievers. *Wala* and *Bara* are considered the two prerequisites of *iman* in Salafi theology. The doctrine is a "distinctly Salafi and— particularly—Wahhabi…" notion that in short is defined as love and hate or loyalty and disavowal for the sake of Allah (Wagemakers 2012, Mehar 2016). Maher in his book, *Salafi-Jihadism*, explained the two terms (*wala* and *bara*) as the "occupying opposing ends of a spectrum where, by definition, the closer an individual is drawn to one end, the further they move away from the other" (Maher 2016, p. 113). As noted by Maher (2016), the choice between *wala* and *bara* becomes a zero-sum game for a believer.

A TOOL FOR SOCIAL AND RITUAL PURITY

Like Taymiyyah, his students' writings on *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* also directed Sunni Islam (more specifically, Salafism) to ritual purity, and distancing from disbelievers. Wagemakers (2012) in his book, *A Quietest Jihadi*, noted that Ibn Taymiyyah's student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya dedicated his work extensively to how a Muslim should greet a non-Muslim (Wagemakers 2012). Ahmad al-Wansharisi the official *mufti* [Muslim

scholar of *fiqh*] of Fez (a city in present-day Morocco) dedicated his entire work to the Muslims of Iberian that lived under the rule of Christians following the Reconquista. In one of his *fatwas*[20], the sixteenth century Maliki *fiqh* jurist and scholar argued that, "Muslims could not in good conscience remain in Spain under Christian rule and had an obligation to emigrate on the grounds that they were not able to fulfill their religious obligations properly" (Stewart 2006, p. 299).

It is interesting to note that the Islamic State's recruits from the Western societies spoke almost word for word of these jurists. John Douglas Maguire, who was also known as Yahya, from suburban Ottawa, Canada, in his 2014 propaganda video stated that, "To the Muslims who are still residing in Canada I say to you: How can you remain living among the disbelievers under their unjust man-made laws which are slowly but surely eliminating the rights of the Muslims especially now that the Caliphate is being established?…" To pursue effectively the messages of *hijrah* [migration], the Islamic State expansively narrated the history and its real-life events to Muslim communities that lived under the rule of non-Islamic (European and Northern American) governments. Another contemporary Salafi scholar, Muhammad Saeed al-Qahtani, who was also a critic of the United States-Saudi alliance that began in the early 1990s, presented the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* as the "real image of the actual practice of the faith". He argued that *wala* is applicable to every situation in which a believer is required "to help, to love, to honor, to respect something, and to stand next to likeminded people both outwardly and inwardly." Conversely, *bara* applies to situations where a believer is required "to take heed of a warning, to disassociate oneself from something, avoiding it totally and showing enmity towards it" (al-Qahtani 1993, n.p).

Nevertheless, it was Taymiyyah who not only incorporated the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* in *iqrar bi-l-lisan* [verbal confession] and *tasdiq bi-l-qalb* [heart-felt conviction], but also in *a'mal bil ihsaan* [the highest level of obedience in worship]. Since *iman* [faith] in Taymiyyah's doctrine is the "speech of the heart and tongue", and, "action of the heart, tongue, and limbs" (Naim Ya-Sin, n.d., p. 169-170), he strongly advised the Ummah against *bid'a* [innovation], which are illegitimate ways of practicing Islam; specifically, the imitation of other cultures, celebration of religious festivities, visiting of the tombs,

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[20] Fatwa title: *Asna al-matajir fi bayan ahkam man ghalaba a'la watanihi al-nasara wa-lam yuhajir wa-ma yatarattabu a'layhi min al-'uqubat wa'l-zawajir* ("The Most Noble Commerce, Setting Forth the Legal Rulings regarding One Whose Lands Have been Conquered by the Christians and Who Has Not Emigrated, and the Punishments and Stern Threats That Apply to Him as Consequence")

and decoration of holy places including al-Masjid an-Nabawi [the Prophet's mosque[21]] and al-Masjid al-Haram [the holy mosque in Mecca[22]]. Taymiyyah argued that these are actions, customs, and traditions of disbelievers and imitating disbelievers is *riddah* [apostasy]. Following the actions, traditions, and practices of disbelievers is a sign that the *wali* of Allah is being drawn towards his (Allah's) enemy (disbeliever). This, Taymiyyah argues, is *muwaalaat* [a form of loyalty] towards the disbeliever or polytheists instead of Allah.

In Salafi theology, *muwaalaat* is a measurement used to test who becomes a believer and who does not. This principle comes from Taymiyyah's belief that the degree of one's closeness to Allah is measured by the degree of his *iman* and *taqwa* [fear of Allah] (Taymiyyah, n.d.[23]). Taymiyyah derives *muwaalaat*'s meaning from *wala* which we earlier clarified is the opposite of enmity and hate. In his book (n.d.) *The Book of Eemaan*, Taymiyyah introduced five elements that can divert Allah's *wali* loyalty towards a disbeliever or a polytheist. The first element is when a believer follows the desires of the disbeliever; second, when listening to advice, and obeying their commands; third, when inclining towards them; forth, showing courtesy, flattering, and compromising with them at the expense of Islam; and the fifth is when a believer makes a friendship with a disbeliever. He supported all five elements by verses of the Quran 2:120: 'never will the Jews and Christians be pleased with you', 3:149: 'If you obey those who disbelieve, they will send you back on your heels', 18:28: 'obey not those whose heart we have made heedless of our remembrance', 6:121: 'the devils do inspire their friends', 11:113: '… incline not towards those who do wrong, lest the fire should touch you', 68:9: '', and finally verse 22 from Surah al- Mujadila, which warns '…having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger…' (Taymiyyah n.d. p.212-214). Taymiyyah therefore, draws a distinct line to ensure a believer's *iman* [faith] remains separated from *kufr* [unbelief].

Therefore, any action of *mu'min* [believer] that shows respect or draws oneself closer to a disbeliever; or supports and protects them; or makes decisive and crucial decisions based on the disbeliever's advice; or accepts support from the disbeliever, joins their organizations, fights on their side; or imitates their actions, customs, traditions; or imitates their world affairs and man-made laws and imposes them on Ummah, are

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[21]Masjid an-Nabawi was the main mosque of the Muslim state in medieval Islam. Mohammad not only led prayers there, but also ran his state's policies. It has other significances as well, i.e., inclusion of the Prophet's grave, and that a prayer is valued thousands of times more in this mosque than any other place in the world.
[22]The Great Mosque of Mecca is where Muslims face for prayers
[23] The book has no publication date. I have used more than one book of Taymiyyah which does not have dates. This will make it hard to find in references if names are not indicated. That is why footnotes are used to clarify that. This book of Taymiyyah is called *Ibn Taymiyyah Expounds on Islam* which can be found in the references page.

examples of taking the disbeliever or polytheists as *awliyaa*. Based on this understanding, these actions can establish ample evidence against any individual that he/she has willingly accepted *kufr* [unbelief]. In Taymiyyah's view, such person must abandon these actions and must renew his *iman* [faith] to be saved from apostasy. This is because, Allah does not recognize the apostate's excuse, or excuses him for the excuses he made for taking these actions of apostasy (Taymiyyah, n.d.). Allah has made his promise that, "Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith, but such as open their breasts to disbelief on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment. That is because they loved and preferred the life of this world over that of the Hereafter. And Allah guides not the people who disbelieve" (Quran 16:106-107). It is very clear and defined lines are drawn. So, whenever *wali* of Allah takes the disbeliever as its *awliyaa* instead of Allah, then he/she is drawing himself/herself close to *kafir* and showing love and attachment to them with words, action and intention. This is also in contradiction with one's *shahaadatayn* [that is, he testifies that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger], and contradicting *shahaadatayn* is downright *kufr* according to Taymiyyah (Taymiyyah, n.d.).

While orthodox Islamic theologians for centuries made it their priority to shield Muslims from bid'a [innovation], kufr [unbelief], and shirk [polytheism], the rise of the Ottoman Caliphate posed a clear danger to maintaining that shield. During the Ottomans, Islam was introduced to many new philosophies, cultural practices, and modern schools of thought. The Sultan (caliph) did not limit the empire's laws to shari'ah alone; he introduced *Kanun* [law], allowed non-Muslims to live in the empire, and did not recognize nationality or ethnicity. And by the standards of the puritan movements, the Ottomans blurred the lines between Islamic laws, *bid'a*, *kufr*, and *shirk.* They promoted all four Sunni schools of thought —Shafii, Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali, in practice of jurisprudence. They allowed many different Sufi orders, and Shiite communities in and around Hijaz to flourish. In the nineteenth century, Saudi Arabia, the land of the two holy sites in Islamic tradition, had become a heretical society by the standards of the puritanical movements (Wahhabism/Salafism). The Prophet's mosque in Medina was decorated with treasures, shrines were a common visiting site, prayer tombs, saints, and glorifying of holy places had become the new norm in both Mecca and Medina. The Ottomans themselves predominantly followed the rationalist Hanafi *fiqh*, which was at odds with the strict traditionalist Hanbali school of thought that was followed predominantly by followers like Wahhabis (Commins, 2006, p.77). This research has clarified earlier that a caliphate for the Muslim community was not just a locus of central authority, but it was someone who practically upheld *tawhid* and established important legal precedents and ideals for Islamic leadership and politics,

ensuring transnational ideology and unity known as Ummah. However, the Ottomans in the eighteenth century were not seen in this light.

The Sultan's practices alienated most of the Arab Muslims and resulted in conflicts, violence, and insurgency. Amidst this widespread perception of decline in Muslim beliefs and practices across the empire, a revivalist movement figure, Muhammad Ibn Abdul al-Wahhab, rose to re-establish *tawhid* and unify the Ummah under the banner of *tawhid* (Ali, 2016). The Wahhabis concluded that the Islamic society under the Ottomans no longer followed the Quran and the examples of God's messenger, and the lifestyle of *al-salaf al salih* (Sardar 2015, Maher 2016, Ali 2016). Ibn Abdu al-Wahhab took the discussion back to the basic Hanbali *fiqh* doctrine and claimed that *shahada* [confession of faith] is insufficient for an individual to be considered a *mu'min* [believer] without Islamic practices. They argued that calling upon others than Allah, decorating holy places, visiting shrines, praying at tombs are all acts of *jahiliyya* that threatens *tawhid* and leads to *shirk*, *kufr*, *riddah* [apostasy], and *bid'a*. The movement associated the *jahiliyya* condition of the Arabian Peninsula with the four centuries of Ottoman Caliphate's suzerainty that promoted a pluralistic religious culture. To steer Muslims away from *bid'a* [innovation], *kufr* [unbelief], and *shirk* [polytheism], Muhammad ibn Abdu al-Wahhab not only reintroduced *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* as a ritual purity concept, but also as a political tool.

A TOOL FOR POLITICS AND WAR

The concept of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* was first used as a political tool during the time of the Prophet when the Medinans were at war with the Meccans. This is evidenced in the battle of Uhud. In surah *Al-Mumtahanah*, verse one states, "…do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allah…if you have come out for jihad in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]…" (Quran 60:1). The purpose of the surah was to forbid Muslims to seek help or the support of the non-Muslims in times of conflict (Wagemakers, 2012). Based on this verse of the Quran, the concept of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* becomes as much political as it is religious. Love and hate operate in every aspect of a faithful Salafi or Wahhabi follower—from social to political to military, and in everyday aspects of personal conduct (Al-Qahtani, 1993).

The Saudi-Ottoman rivalry is said to be the principal reason for the development of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* as a political concept in the nineteenth century (Wagemakers 2012, Ali 2016, Maher 2016). Just as Taymiyyah's writings on *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* directed Sunni Islam to ritual purity and enmity towards the disbelievers, the subsequent scholars,

whether Salafi or Wahhabi, used the same ideology as a religious tool for their struggle. Nevertheless, they expanded its socio-political concepts a lot more in the nineteenth century during the Ottoman-Saudi rivalry. Some major Wahhabi scholars included some people in the 'out-group' that in Taymiyyah's doctrine were part of the 'in-group'. For example, *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* was a tool for Taymiyyah's doctrine to separate Muslims (in-group) from non-Muslims (out-group). However, al-Wahhab and the scholars who followed him introduced *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* as an instrument that could also differentiate between the Muslims within the in-group, i.e., apostate-believers—those who say they are believers but fail the *muwaalaat* measurement test of Taymiyyah. In other words, they expanded *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*'s socio-political concepts on the premise of Taymiyyah's argument that, "degree of one's closeness to Allah (wilaya) is according to the degree of his *imaan* and his *taqwa*" (Ansari, 2000, p. 17). This also hints at *munafiq* [hypocrite]—those who are decried in the Quran because they undermine the Muslim community by concealing their disbelief.

To understand how the politicization of the doctrine came into being, knowing the key events that led to the establishment of the Wahhabi kingdom (Saudi Arabia) is of vital importance.

The Wahhabi movement's political mission, that went side by side with his religious motives, was to support the expansion of Saud's Emirate of Diriyah towards Hijaz. At that time, Hijaz was a traditional political and religious power center along the Western coast of the Arabian Peninsula that included the Muslim world's most holy sites, al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina and al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. Wahhab's support towards the Al-Saud family was purely political from the beginning—it was a give and take game. Rebellion against the Ottomans in the Arabian Peninsula, especially in the holy cities such as Mecca, was of great challenge for Al-Saud and the Wahhabis. The Meccans regarded the group as dangerous fanatics. In fact, the Imam of al-Masjid al-Haram released *fatwas* against them and labeled them as "…infidels who came disguised as Muslim…" and compared them to the Qarmatians and the Kharijites of ninth century Islam. The Wahhabis were not welcomed for *haj* [pilgrimage] either, unless they provided a hundred camels annually and paid their pilgrimage cost, as much as the Persian Shiites paid (Sardar, 2015). This was the Meccan's way of politely denying the Wahhabis participating in the pilgrimage.

Muhammad ibn Saud, who built the first Saudi State (Emirate of Diriyah) in 1744-1818, was aware of the disenchantment of the Wahhabi movements with the growing "jahiliyya" society of the peninsula. His Emirate was of the same belief that the Ottomans threatened the authenticity and purity of Islam. After all, both the Saud brothers were once students of Muhammad ibn Abdu al-Wahhab (Sardar, 2015). Al-

Saud's symbolic partnership with Muhammad ibn Abdu al-Wahab in 1747 served both their purposes and marked the birth of the Wahhabi movement. As described by Maher (2016), in his book *Salafi-Jihadism*, "Wahhab was to provide religious conquest against neighboring tribes in uniquely confessional terms. In return, his family—the Al ash-Shaykh—would be allowed to enforce Wahhab's particular brand of religious conservatism within al-Saud's dominion" (Maher, 2016, p. 115). The rivalry of the Wahhabi and Al-Saud against the Ottomans was in fact a major war on the future trajectory of Islam, not just in the Arabian Peninsula, but for the whole Ummah. That is why ibn Abdu al-Wahhab developed *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* as a concept of political mobilization. The idea was to win the loyalty of the tribes that were under the rule of the Ottomans and also appeal to them in "distinct confessional terms" (Maher, 2016, p.117).

After the death of ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 1792, the movement declared *jihad* against all those who were categorized as disbelievers, apostates and *mushrikins* (including the Ottomans and their allies). They argued that jihad against these *mushrikins* was not just permissible, but was an obligatory task, and their "…blood could be legitimately shed, their property was forfeit, and their women and children could be enslaved" (Sardar 2015, p. 218). In 1803, the Wahhabis entered Mecca with Ibn Saud's army. Saud summoned the Meccans, including the scholars. This whole act was an imitation of the conquest of Mecca led by Prophet Mohammad in 630 AD. Mohammed also returned after a decade long exile and took over Mecca with thousands of Muslims without war. To obtain the city's support, Saud told the people that he saw the Prophet Mohammed in a dream and he advised him not to harm the people in Mecca. He would reintroduce the pure teachings of Islam to the people. Besides his announcements of cleansing the faith, he also prohibited the traditional mentioning of the Sultan's name in the Friday sermons. This was a very strategic attack on the legitimacy of the Ottoman Caliphate (Sardar, 2015). Mentioning the name of the Sultan during Friday sermons was one of the many legal works the Ottomans had employed in proclaiming their right to the Caliphate. After the Wahhabi and Saud advancement and capture of the holy cities, the Ottoman Caliphate felt the threat to its legitimacy as the righteous leader of the Muslim *Ummah*. The threat encouraged the Ottomans to retaliate against the Wahhabis and the Saud with force.

These were the times when the Wahhabi scholars employed the powerful preservationist idea of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* to repel any aggression towards the Saud state. Sulayman ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1785-1818) the grandson of al-Wahhab wrote the first important book on *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* called *Al-Dala'il fi Hukm Muwalat ahl al-Ishrak* (The evidences for the ruling regarding alliances with the infidels) (Maher, 2016). His work was a strategically religious attack against those, especially the Hijazi

tribes, who would think of siding with the Ottomans in the conflict. He implied that support of any tribe for the Ottomans, or their backing army, was a betrayal of Islam and loyalty to the disbeliever. In this book he argued that, "If a person displays *muwafaqah* [compliance/agreement] with the mushrikun—out of *khawf* [fear] from them, *mudarah* [friendship/lenience] towards them, or *mudahanah* [compromise/deceit] to repel their evil: then verily, he is a *kafir* just like them." Sulyaman's work raised significant points, preaching *al-wala wa-l-bara* as a collective political obligation and political loyalty and responsibility among the tribes (Maher, 2016).

THE ISLAMIC STATE AND AL-WALA WA-L-BARA

The Islamic State, through the concepts of the doctrine, presented the image and responsibilities of an "ideal Muslim" to the community of Muslims in the West. They warned them how living among disbelievers will weaken a *mu'min*'s [believer] *iman* [faith], and if they can, they should engage in *hijrah*. Their recruitment feeds on the idea that the obligation of a true Muslim living in a Western society is incomplete unless *wala* and *bara* is openly practiced. They strategically made them question their loyalty as to whether they are a *wali* of Allah or the *kafir's*. In the Caliphate's propaganda magazine Dabiq, a fiery speech by the official spokesperson of the Islamic State, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani ash-Shami, focused on the message of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and directly addressed all those Muslims living in the Western societies. He said, "So O muwahhid…O you who believe in wala and bara…will you leave the American, the Frenchman, or any of their allies to walk safely upon the earth while the armies of the crusaders strike the lands of the Muslims not differentiating between a civilian and fighter?...will you leave the disbelievers to sleep safely at home while the Muslim women and children shiver with fear of the roars of the crusaders airplanes…How can you enjoy life and sleep while not aiding your brothers, not casting fear into the hearts of the cross worshippers, and not responding to their strikes with multitudes more? So O muwahhid wherever you may be, hinder those who want to harm your brothers and state as much as you can. The best thing you can do is to strive to your best and kill any disbeliever, whether he be French, American, or from any of their allies" (Dabiq Issue Four, 2014, p. 9). *Muwahhid*, *wala*, and *bara* were the three vital components of his message that he wanted his targeted audience to hear. *Muwahhid*, in Salafi interpretation ("Salafi-dawah", n.d.), means a Muslim who emphasizes the concept of *tawhid*. And through wala and bara, he also promoted the idea of *bayat* [pledge of allegiance] to the caliph and an Islamic State. The goal of the message was to inspire Muslims in the West in their obligation towards *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and Allah's promise, and to terrify the "crusaders" with the capability of *din* [religion] and Allah's promise (protect His *din* and exact punishment against disbelievers). Originally al-Adnani recorded his speech on September 22, 2014, in which he also directed the

Islamic State supporters in the West to, "If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian,…then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it maybe..., Smash his head with a rock,… or run him over with your car… " (Dabiq Issue Four, October 20, 2014. p. 9). Issue four of the propaganda magazine was published on October 11, 2014. On October 20, 2014, the first Islamic State inspired attack in North America took place in Quebec City, Canada, by Martin Couture-Rouleau. He was a recent convert to Islam. He rammed his vehicle into two Canadian Armed Forces officers. However, it is not certain whether he first viewed al-Adnani's video message or if he later read the published article in Dabiq, but either way, the RCMP did conclude that he was a supporter of the Islamic State and acted on his *bayat* to the group.

We have noticed over and over throughout this study that the need for an ideology to ensure control and draw a distinct line against those ideas and individuals deemed outsiders and a threat to Islam, is fulfilled by extremely orthodox Islamic thought. Based on the doctrinal interpretations of *din* [religion], *iman* [faith], *da'wa* [the call to Islam] and *tawhid* [monotheism] by the Salafi/Wahhabi scholars discussed in this research, it is evident that their teachings have been the bedrock of the twentieth and twenty first century reformer and puritan movements' violent extremism. Salafi-jihadist groups like the Islamic State not only seek to purify Islam of *bid'a* [innovation], and *kufr* [unbelief], but also try to revive Islam's "golden age". When the self-proclaimed *amirul-Mu'minin* [leader of the faithful] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the Caliphate, he immediately put forth the worldly mission of his Caliphate by emphasizing the forgotten obligation of the Ummah—*da'wa* and *tawhid*. He argued that, "Allah created us to practice *tawhid*, worship him, and establish his religion." It is interesting to note that even the Islamic State's flag is a symbol of *tawhid* and they refer to their flag as the 'flag of tawhid[24]'.

Al-Baghdadi's statement signals the wider goal of Islamist radicals. The whole world must submit to *tawhid*, and only then can the world be cleansed from "man-made" laws. Only then will the Ummah's threat be defeated. The Islamic State is of the belief that the battle between Islam and its enemies are at Islam's core, which is the ideological difference over the issue of the oneness of Allah and his laws. The Caliphate believes in a total overhaul of society to ensure that society is upheld by *tawhid*. The total repair of society in the jihadist's view is not a theoretical attempt, but rather one by force. Qutb, in his book, *The Milestones,* argued that the concept of Islamic Jihad is misrepresented by Muslims. *Jihad bis-saif* [striving through fighting with the sword]'s purpose is to fight

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[24] In Dabiq, the group constantly refers to its flag as flag of tawhid. Check for example, "Khalifa Declared" Issue one, July 2017.

purely for the sake of Allah under the banner of *iman* for the success of his laws, and the protection of *Dar-ul-Islam* (Qutb, n.d.). Based on such views, the cause of Islamic jihad is found in the very nature of Islamic belief by Salafi/Wahhabi ideology, which demands *tawhid* and adherence to Allah's laws above all. If these two (*tawhid and Sharia*) conditions are not found in the land where Muslims reside, then they are stateless. But, jihadists with the goal of *tawhid* claim that if there is found a part of the world where the society is in total submission to *tawhid*, ruled by *Shari'ah*, and where every individual is a believer, then that is the *Dar-ul-Islam* [Islamic State] and a home to Muslims.

There is an old saying, "with sugar you catch more flies", and the Islamic State put this to the test very well and succeeded. When the Islamic State declared the Caliphate, to populate its utopian society, they focused on one very strategic key concept that became the backbone of their successful recruiting outcomes. For the first time since the establishment of the Saudi Kingdom, the Islamic State re-introduced the forgotten concept of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* to the Muslim communities around the world. In its propaganda magazine *Rumiyah,* the Islamic State defines '*wala'* and '*bara'* as the great foundation of the laws of prophets (Rumiyah Issue Seven, 2017, p. 27). As it is explained in the doctrine's theological history, it is not just a tool for purification of *iman*, but also an accelerant to Muslim world affairs, deciding whom they talk or trade with, whom they befriend, where they can live, and how they should behave. The Caliphate's religious and theological dimensions strictly obligate its followers to adhere to Islam through the lens of this doctrine. The Islamic State elevated *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*'s importance by making it the cornerstone of its Jihadi campaign against the West. They argued that, declaring disavowal and enmity (*bara*) towards *kuffar* [plural of *kafir*] and *Mushrikeen* is not sufficient, unless you fight them by waging jihad until they surrender to Allah (Rumiyah Issue Seven, 2017, p. 27).

When the Caliphate was declared, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi clearly stated to all Muslims around the world that, after the establishment of the Caliphate, there are only two camps on this earth, the camp of Islam and the camp of *Kufr*. They can either be a Muslim by living among the Muslims (referring to the Caliphate) or a *kafir* by living among the *kuffar*. In Issue Three of its propaganda magazine, Dabiq (2014), the Islamic State quotes a Hadith in which the Prophet reportedly gave glad tidings to those strangers who broke away from their tribes to form and defend Islam. The reference to 'strangers' is to all those who leave everything behind for the sake of Allah and his *din* [religion]*,* and become *muhajirun* [migrants] (Dabiq Issue Three, 2014). We learned from the schools of thought in Islam that living in the land of the disbeliever poses a threat to *din* [religion] and *iman* [faith]*.* The believer should exercise disavowal of the disbelievers and openly show enmity towards them, not take them as *wali*, and openly practice the *iman* in accordance with *Shari'ah*. If such conditions are impossible, then

hijrah [migration] becomes obligatory and it is advised to move away from such sinful states by engaging in *hijrah* for the sake of *Allah* (al-Maqdisi, n.d.).

Hijrah is derived from the word *hijr*, which means to abandon or leave. Thus, in Islamic law, *hijrah* would mean to leave or abandon what Allah has forbidden (Dabiq Issue one, 2017, p. 36). As a noun, *hijrah* means exodus and immigration, and as a verb, it means to dissociate, separate, keep away from or renounce ("Dar Al-Ifta Al-Missriyyah", n.d.). In Islamic tradition, the meaning tied to *hijrah* goes back to the two most important events in the history of Islam. The first event was in 615 AD when the small newly converted group of Muslims were being persecuted by the Meccans. The Prophet himself was protected because of his uncle, the leader of the Quraysh clan, Banu Hashim. The Prophet instructed the group of eleven Muslims, which also included some of his companions, to take refuge in Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia). At this time, Abyssinia was under the rule of a just and God-fearing Christian king who provided the refugees protection. This event marked the first *hijrah* for the Muslims (Kamali, 2014). The second event was in 622 AD, when the Meccans plotted the assassination of the Prophet following the exodus of Muslims from Mecca to Yathrib. When the prophet and his companion Abu Bakr learned of the plot, they too fled to Yathrib—the present-day Medina ("IslamiCity", n.d.). This marked the second most important *hijrah* in Islam. The *hijrah* to Medina was designated obligatory by the Prophet for all Muslims, except the weak and the old who could not make the long journey. It is possible to conclude that apart from its religious reasons, this migration also involved political dynamics. The religious dimension was about finding a land where the Muslims could practice *tawhid* without suppression and fear. The migration was also a test of the Muslims and their devotion to Islam i.e. Were they willing to leave everything behind for the sake of *din* and Allah? A political dynamic was involved because the Prophet made this migration obligatory for every Muslim of Mecca, and those refuges outside, to ensure unity of the Muslim community against the Meccans. Therefore, all the Muslims who fled persecution and lived under the Christian king in Ethiopia also made *hijrah* to Medina (Kamali, 2014). Even though these refugees were safe and could practice Islam, they still had to leave because the Prophet had made it obligatory. This *hijrah*, in its basic terms, formed the foundation of the notion of Ummah—the brotherhood among Muslims. This strategy played a major role in the future conquest of Mecca by the Prophet. Therefore, *hijrah* seems to be one of the basic principles of *wala* and *bara*. The contemporary Salafi scholar, Muhammad Saeed al-Qahtani, argued that, "it is a fact that those whose religion is Islam; which is based on directing all kinds of worship to Allah, rejecting and showing hatred to polytheism and disbelievers; will never be left at peace by the antithesis of Islam" (Al-Qahtani, 1993, p.17).

The Islamic State strategically invoked *'wala'* [devotion] and *'bara'* [denunciation] when they claimed that those outside of *Dar-ul-Islam* (land of Islam) are blessed with *hijrah*, which is a pillar inherent to Jihad (Dabiq Issue one, 2017). In August 2014, on the advent of Eid a-Fitr, the Islamic State released a professional video in which the Caliphate congratulated the Ummah and showed them what it is like to celebrate such an auspicious day under a "true" Islamic society. The scenes from this video, as described by Stern and Berger (2015) in *The Atlantic*, shows "Gauzy images of smiling worshippers embracing at a mosque cut to children passing out sweets to break the Ramadan fast…These scenes were interspersed with shots of the muhajireen [imigrants]—British, Finish, Indonesian, Moroccan, Belgian, American, and South African—each repeating a variation on the same message." "I am calling on all the Muslims living in the West, America, Europe, and everywhere else, to come, to make hijra with your families to the land of Khilafah…Here, you go for fighting and afterwards you come back to your families. And if you get killed, then… you'll enter heaven, God willing, and Allah will take care of those you've left behind. So here, the Caliphate will take care of you" (Stern & Berger, 2015). Such promotional videos of the Caliphate attracted a lot of attention from those who were in doubt about the purity of their *iman* [faith] under a non-Islamic society. The Caliphate officially made *hijrah* obligatory for all those who lived under the rule of "man-made" laws. The call for *hijrah* to the Caliphate appears a month after the Caliphate's establishment. In the very first publication of its official propaganda magazine *Dabiq*, the self-declared *Amirul-Mu'minin* said, "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 State is a state for all Muslims… It is a state where the Arab and non-Arab, the white man and black man, the easterner and westerner are all brothers. The land is for the Muslims, all the Muslims. O Muslims everywhere, whoever is capable of performing *hijrah* to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because *hijrah* to the land of Islam is obligatory" (Dabiq Issue one, 2017, p. 11).

In Muslim apocalyptic tradition, it is prophesized that the final battle of the 'final hours', will take place in al-Sham and its vicinity (Dabiq). This will be the al-Malhamath al-Kibra [Great Battle] between the "good" and the "evil". This is also something that drew considerable attention from the youth in the West. The army of the "good", Islamic State argued, is the *muhajirin* [immigrants] who are traveling to the Caliphate to fight the battle of 'the final hour'. The Islamic State quotes the Prophet from Sahih-al-Bukhari in which he reportedly said, "Matters will run their course until you become mobilized armies: an army in Sham, and an army in Yemen, and an army in Iraq. Chose for me [which army to join] if I reach that time. Go to Sham, for it is the best of Allah's land, and He draws His best slaves to it. And if you do not, then go to your Yemen and drink from your wells. For Allah has guaranteed me that He will look after Sham and

its people" (Dabiq Issue Three, 2014, p.11). With this in mind, the caliphate strongly promoted the Islamic obligation of *hijrah* to fulfill the prophesized gathering of the "final battle of the final hour" in the prophesized land. The Islamic State quotes Taymiyyah saying, "Islam in the end of times will be more manifest in Sham. [...] So, the best of the people on the earth in the end of times will be those who keep to the land of Ibrahim's hijrah, which is Sham" (Dabiq Issue Three, 2014, p. 10). Arguments such as this may sound very attractive for an individual is born Muslim but raised in a non-Islamic society, and is in the early stages of reclaiming the faith.

The Islamic State was established on the understanding of Salaf, and free from any theology that threatened a *mu'min*'s [believer] *iman* [faith] and *din* [religion]. In its propaganda magazine the group clearly stated that they reject the idea that people should be given the choice of whether to follow the "truth" or "falsehood". This, according to them, is the ideology of the forces of *kufr* [unbelief] who believe that no one has the right "...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" (Dabiq Issue Two, 2014, p. 5). Based on this extreme understanding, freedom of choice is then seen as a threat to the very existence of Islam. Those Muslims living in the West are in a free society and are surrounded by freedom of choice, whether it is speech, religion, sexuality, or political affiliation. Therefore, the focus of the group's doctrine (*wala* and *bara*) was particularly aimed toward these Muslims. The Islamic State strategically utilized the concept of '*al-Wala wa-l-Bara*' to contest the beliefs of Muslims in the West, whether they should at all live in *dar ul Kufr* [land of the disbeliever] or *ard ul-adu* [land of the enemy]. This campaign strategy required them (Muslims of West) to re-evaluate themselves on the basis of *Tawhid*, re-evaluate their societies on the principles of *hijrah*, and re-evaluate their *manhaj* [personal conduct] as true followers of Islam. The Caliphate believes that when people are given choices between "absolute truth" and "complete falsehood", they fail to distinguish the true nature of *bid'a* [innovation] and *nifaq* [hypocrisy]. Since the Ummah has fallen into the "twisted" methodology of 'choices' of *kufr* [unbelief], simply declaring *shahada* [confession of faith] is not enough. This is another reason why the Caliphate applies terms of *kufr* and *mushrikin* to Muslims.

The Islamic State argues that Muslims today are engaged in *shirk* in every aspect of their lives and their love for legislation has resulted in "...secularism, liberalism, democracy or anything else that contradicts the essence of *tawhid*. Due to this reason, we no longer find the sate of Islamic affairs that existed in the generations of the sahaba, who were taught by the Prophet, nor in the generations of the rightly guided khulafa when there were many noble sahaba as leaders...nor in the generations of those who lived during the jihad against Persia and Rome, the conquest of Sham...and the emergence of Muslim reign and its expansion to Al-Andalus..." (Dabiq Issue Two, 2014, p. 10). The

caliphate's religious and theological dimensions obligated its followers to constitutionally be "incapable of certain types of change, even if that change might ensure its survival" (Wood, 2015). Their end goal is to draw a distinct line in the world where on one side would be the camp of *iman* with no trace of "hypocrisy", and on the other side, the camp of *kufr* with not a trace of *iman* (Dabiq Issue Four, 2014, p. 21). Based on the high numbers of Western foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria, the doctrine seemed very appealing to its supporters in the West.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

In the rest of this study qualitative data is developed to support the thesis of this study. The analysis has three parts: I, II & III. In part-I, all fifteen issues of the Islamic State's propaganda magazine Dabiq, and the available twelve of the thirteen issues of Rumiya were analyzed. These two English language magazines were a decisive component of the Caliphate's propaganda policy that predominantly targeted the Muslim communities residing in the West. In addition to promoting their propagandist achievements, they put an enormous emphasis on awakening the true Islamic identity in *tawhid*, Shariah, *khilafa* [caliphate], and jihad through the lens of *wala* and *bara*. The analyses of the two magazines focused on tracing the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and the extent to which it was emphasized in the Muslim communities in the West or "*dar ul-kufr*".

Part-II of the method conducted a thematic analysis of the published interviews and statements of Western foreign fighters to trace the concepts of *wala* and *bara*. The statements of these jihadists are a combination of their court appearances, investigations, social media posts, and one-on-one interviews conducted by news agencies.

Part-III of the method included in-depth one-on-one interviews conducted by the researcher of this study with four imams as well as muftis in the mosques, Muslim community centers, and Islamic academies in Canada. Thousands of people follow these figures and listen to their teachings and guidance. The word imam is often used to define the one who leads the Muslim prayer in a mosque. However, imams do take a wider role as they are advised by Allah in the Quran to justly lead and guide the Muslim community to the right path on earth and beyond. In Islamic history, although both positions of imam and caliph, were held by the same person, the caliph is the one who passed down the responsibilities of the imam to a separate individual. The imam's role and responsibilities are pre-established in Islam. The community owes obedience to the imam as long as he is on the right path and follows Allah's guidance (Mernissi, 2002, p. 22-25).

Ideally, those who become an imam in Islam must have completed their Islamic studies from accredited institutions such as the Islamic University of Madina in Saudi Arabia, or al-Azhar University of Egypt. They must also be able to understand Arabic and recite the Quran. The study term is a minimum of one year. However, the communities in Canada can choose whomever they wish as their imam of the mosque as long as he is

knowledgeable in Islam and can recite the Quran, and he is well respected in the community. In some cases, I found that during the interviews, some mosques only rely on imams from Saudi Arabia, who guide them over skype for lectures and Friday sermons (without leading the prayer). The prayer can be led by anyone who is a Muslim. There are mosques that do not even have a designated imam. In fact, anyone who wishes, can lead the prayer, including the Friday sermon. A mufti, who is also an imam, not only leads the Muslim community but he is also authorized to weigh in on sharia and release fatwas and write creeds. He is usually more educated in Islamic jurisprudence and has spent well over a decade studying Islam, the Quran, and Hadith.

The four participants in this study are all well-educated and trained as imams and muftis. Most of them studied for well over ten years with respect to Islamic jurisprudence, the Quran and Hadith from credible Islamic institutions in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Additionally, these four imams/muftis come from the diverse *Madhhab* of Sunni Islam, including Hanbali, Shafii, and Hanafi. More specifically, they are followers of Salafism, Ash'ari, and Ahl us-Sunnah. These imams were specifically recruited to cover the diverse Islamic schools of thought that might reflect how the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* is interpreted.

PROCEDURES & DESIGN

In Part-I of the qualitative analysis, all fifteen issues of the Islamic State's propaganda magazine Dabiq, and the available twelve of the thirteen issues of Rumiya were thematically analyzed. The magazines were found online through the Google search engine and acquired from various websites including *Clarion Project*, *Azelin*, and *IEPROJECT*. The discussion of the doctrine was widely spread throughout each publication of the magazine, and in most cases, not directly named *wala* and *bara.* However, considering the time constraints in this study, the results discussed here are the ones that only directly refer to *wala* and *bara* with an emphasis on Muslims in the West. Contents relating to the doctrine were then rephrased or directly quoted in separate paragraphs under each titled magazine for the readers of this research. This can be found in the appendix section. If no information is shown underneath the magazine title or issue number, this means that no trace of the doctrine was found in that magazine.

DATA ANALYSIS

 The data was acquired from twenty-seven magazines. No specific qualitative research approach was applied for this analysis other than a straightforward type of content analysis. The thesis aimed to identify whether the pattern of *hijrah* to the Caliphate or rally to their cause at home correlated with the Islamic State's emphasis on the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. Therefore, the content analysis focused on identifying whether the Islamic State directly referred to the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* or not. If the doctrine was mentioned and applied, then in how many issues of the magazines was it used. The analysis also focused on pinpointing patterns as to whether the Islamic State addressed the doctrine to the Muslim communities living in the West. The analysis also aimed to identify to what degree the doctrine was introduced as an important aspect of a *mu'min*'s [believer] life. Furthermore, the analysis also looked for the patterns of the doctrine that encouraged actions on *hijrah*. These steps allowed the data to be interpreted into common themes to represent the culminating aspect of *hijrah* or rallying to the IS cause at home.

Part-II

METHODOLOGY

This methodology only applies to Part-II. This portion of the thesis applies a phenomenological study approach to describe what all the Western foreign fighters have in common that led them to *hijrah* or *jihad* for the Caliphate. The phenomenological approach provides the understanding of a phenomenon experienced by individuals, and that is why this approach will be applied to this portion of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenon in question is the pattern of *hijrah* and *jihad*, which this study theorizes is due to the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. The research approach requires that the participants of the phenomenological study must have experienced the phenomenon in question. This approach will not only allow the use of a streamlined form of data collection by "…single or multiple interviews with participants", but also data usage from journals, written responses, and accounts of experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 79). This will give this study the liberty to describe Western foreign fighters' decisions (to make hijrah or rally to the IS cause at home), by analyzing the available data such as news reports, written responses and formal statements to search for common themes. The phenomenological approach being an interpretive process, will allow this study to describe and interpret Western foreign fighters' actions (hijrah or rally to the IS cause at home). This kind of data analysis will allow the transformation of significant statements from participants into detailed descriptions that recapitulate the two elements: "what" and "how" the individuals experienced (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

PROCEDURE & DESIGN

In Part-II, news reports, social media posts, and court appearances of Western foreign fighters were traced over the internet for thematic analysis of their statements. Their statements are about such general questions s as what contexts or situations have influenced or affected their decision-making process. Some of the interviews were found over YouTube and were conducted by various news outlets. Others were conducted over skype, phone calls, and social media communication by reporters. Not all the transcripts were used in this study as data sources, but only the portion of the interviews, communications, reports, and social media posts that reflected the questions as to which contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected the decision-making process to do *hijrah* or rally to the IS cause at home.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the thematic analysis of this data, a list of significant statements of these jihadists was developed which describe the factors affecting their decisions. These non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements were listed horizontally, and all of them were treated as having equal value. Following that, these significant statements were grouped into broader units or themes to generate the bases for the interpretation of the data. For example, *wala* and *bara* concepts in their statements, importance in decision-making and personal life. In other words, to produce a textural description of "what" the Western foreign fighters' motives were. These descriptions include verbatim examples. In addition, a draft was created which described "how" they were convinced to make such decisions by reflecting on the settings (i.e. location), and contexts, (i.e., under what circumstances they made the decision). Lastly, both the textural and structural descriptions were incorporated to represent the culminating aspect of *hijrah* or rallying to the IS cause at home. Since there are so many cases of Islamic State Western fighters, due to the time constraint for the completion of this study, only twenty-four diverse cases were selected from the available data sources. In this data, only those cases were selected in which the participants had responded to questions such as what contexts or situations typically influenced or affected the decision-making process to perform *hijrah* or rally to the IS cause at home, or other open-ended questions relating to this which helped generate understanding of the common experience of the participants (Western foreign fighters).

PROCEDURES & DESIGN

Part-III of this study included in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher directly with the participants. The participants for this section consisted of imams, and those who are imam as well as mufti of the mosques, Muslim community centers, or Islamic academies in Canada. The participants were recruited via email. First, the mosques were located via the Google search engine, and then an email was sent to the mosque requesting contact information of the imam or mufti. The interviews took place in locations preferred by the imams/muftis. All participants were males. No remuneration was given to the participants and participation was completely voluntary. After a contact was established directly with the imam or mufti, he was introduced to the study and consent was acquired for a one-on-one audio recorded interview. The interviews were mainly conducted in English, except for one in which parts of the interview was conducted in Urdu. The design of the interview questions and their order mostly remained the same throughout the process. However, follow up questions were added as each interview progressed. After the interviews the audio recordings were transcribed for data interpretation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The participants (imams and muftis) did not experience the phenomenon in question, but as leaders of the Muslim community, they hold the responsibility and knowledge of the contexts (i.e. controversial doctrines in Islam) that led to the phenomenon. The phenomenon in question is the pattern of *hijrah* and *jihad*, which this study theorizes is due to the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*—the context around the phenomenon.

These participants (imams and muftis) were asked semi-structured and open-ended questions, which were designed to gather the kind of data that would lead to the textual and structural description of the phenomenon in question, i.e., why did Western foreign fighters do hijrah or rally to the Islamic State's cause at home. The interview questions also were meant to clarify the doctrine's interpretations by the imams and muftis in the West vs. the Islamic State's. The analysis of the data as well focused on other common themes, such as the doctrine's importance in a *mu'min*'s life who lives among non-Muslims, the level of usage by the community of Muslims, preaching by the imams/muftis, and the doctrine's impact on those who travelled to the caliphate or acted at home as a "lone wolf".

After the analysis of this data, a list of significant participant statements from the interviews were developed to describe the different interpretations of the doctrine.

Later, these significant statements were developed into broader units or themes to generate the basis for the interpretation of the data. A textural description of "what" the participants said about the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* was created afterwards. These descriptions include verbatim examples. In addition, a draft description of "how" the participants understand the doctrine differently was produced.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS
PART-I RESULTS

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DABIQ & RUMIYAH

This content analysis focuses on whether or not the Islamic State directly referred to the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. If the doctrine was applied by the group, then how frequently was it cited? Was it directed towards Muslims in the West? If yes, then to what extent did the group elevate the importance of the doctrine in one's life? Finally, did the doctrine at all focus on the idea of *hijrah* and *bayat* [pledge of allegiance]? To answer these important questions, first, all the available publications of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* were analyzed to sort out the articles in which the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* was introduced. Second, the articles on the doctrine were sorted into two categories: 1— Whether the doctrine's usage was focused on Muslims in the West, and 2— Whether the doctrine's usage focused on Muslims in general. Then, category 1 (Whether the doctrine's usage focused on Muslims in the West), was further analyzed to divide the Caliphate's usage of doctrine into two categories:

1. Was the doctrine elevated for the importance of Islamic identity?
2. Was the doctrine focused on hijrah and *bayat* [pledge of allegiance]?

The findings were very surprising. The doctrine was directly introduced or quoted to Muslims living in the Western societies in thirteen of fifteen publications of Dabiq, and in eight of the twelve available publications of Rumiyah. For example, in the very first publication of its first official propaganda magazine, Dabiq, the Caliphate declared that "…the most important goal would be to revive *tawhid* especially in matters ignored and abandoned by 'Islamic' parties in our times—matters relating to *wala*, *bara*, *hukm* [ruling], and *tashri* [legislation]" (p. 35). The Caliphate argued that Muslims living in the West should not forget their duty of *wala* and *bara*, which obligates them to reject *kufr* and separate themselves from the *kufr*, "…abandon their lands, harbor enmity and hatred towards them, and wage war against them until they submit to the truth" (Dabiq Issue Eleven, 2015, p. 19). They promoted the idea that unity in Islam is not possible without *wala* and *bara*. In this regard, Muslims living among the "disbelievers" and "apostates" must manifest their *bara* as much as possible and, in any way, possible, "…with his pen and tongue, and his sword and spear…" (Rumiya 2016., p.6). They strictly warned Muslims not to listen to those Muslim scholars who have failed to fulfill

the "duty of action" in Islam, i.e., did not declare the *tawhid* in the "faces of the" *tawaghit* [those who worship other than Allah].

The analysis found that *al-Wala wa-l-Bara's* importance was not only elevated for the purpose of *hijrah* or *jihad*, but also for upholding *tawhid*. The Caliphate declared that it does not matter how dedicatedly a Muslim abides by the five pillars of Islam (shahada, prayer, fast, zaka, hajj), they will not find the "real taste" of iman until they "…love for the sake of Allah, hate for the sake of Allah, make allegiance for the sake of Allah, and make enemies for the sake of Allah…" (Dabiq Issue Eleven, 2015, p. 19). This encouraged those who lived in the West and supported the Caliphate's ideology to take action to prove their identity as the true *muwahhid* [those who upheld tawhid].

As the official spokesperson of the Islamic State, Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Adnani ash-Shami, in his fiery speeches, strongly focused on the message of the doctrine *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and directly addressed all Muslims who live in the West. In Dabiq, he addressed Muslims in the West stating, "…O muwahhid…O you who believes in wala and bara… How can you enjoy life and sleep while not aiding your brothers, not casting fear into the hearts of the cross worshippers, and not responding to their strikes with multitudes more?..." (Dabiq Issue Four 2014, p. 9). *Muwahhid*, *wala*, and *bara* were the three vital messages that al-Adnani wanted his target audience—Muslims in the West, to hear. The goal of the message was to inspire Muslims in the West in their obligation towards *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and Allah's promise, and to "terrify the crusaders" with the capability of *din* [religion] and Allah's promise (protect His *din* and punishment for disbelievers).

Originally al-Adnani recorded his speech on September 22, 2014 in which he directed Islamic State supporters in the West, "If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian,…then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it maybe..., Smash his head with a rock,… or run him over with your car… "(Dabiq Issue Four, 2014, p. 9). Issue four of the propaganda magazine was published on October 11, 2014. On October 20, 2014, the first Islamic State inspired attack in North America took place in St. Jean sur Richelieu, Canada, by Martin Couture-Rouleau. He was a recent convert to Islam. He rammed his vehicle into two Canadian Armed Forces officers. However, it is not certain whether he first viewed al-Adnani's video message or if he later read the published article in Dabiq, but either way, RCMP did conclude that he was a supporter of the Islamic State and acted on his *bayat* [pledge of allegiance] to the group. On October 22, 2014, another Islamic State inspired attack took place in Canada, carried out by Michael Zehaf-Bibeau in Ottawa. He opened fire at the National War Memorial and Parliament Hill, killing Captain Nathan Cirillo and injuring two others. Later, in Issue five of the propaganda

magazine Dabiq, the Caliphate claimed these two attackers as their soldiers, as well as Abdul Numan Haider, who stabbed two counterterrorism officers in Melbourne, Australia. They claimed that these attacks were a direct result of their message of *wala* and *bara* (Dabiq Issue Five, 2014, p. 32). This indicate that the doctrine might have inspired these individuals to take action and express their duty of loyalty and disavowal, love and hate, to ensure the purity of their belief and support of the Caliphate.

The analysis also found a common theme in the interpretation of the doctrine by the Caliphate, which was laser-focused on Islamic identity and the responsibility towards faith. The doctrine is designated as the "strongest bond" of Islam and *iman*, because individual testimony (shahada) has been driven out of the doctrine. Hence, they introduced the doctrine of *hisbah* [accountability] and claimed that it is not achievable without *wala* and *bara*. For example, they argued that "Love for the sake of Allah, hate for the sake of Allah, make allegiance for the sake of Allah, and make enemies for the sake of Allah, for the wilayah [loving guardianship] of Allah is not attained…" except by upholding to the doctrine (Dabiq Issue Ten, 2015, p. 38). Referring to *wala* and *bara*, they constantly warned Muslims in the West that they can become a *mushrik* without realizing it if they continue living among the non-believers and do not declare their *bara* towards them, and express their *wala* to Islam. They argued that *al-wala wa-l-bara* is even greater than prayer, zakah, fasting, hajj, and jihad. Therefore, one can only find the taste of iman if he or she adheres to the principles of this doctrine (Dabiq Issue Ten 2015).

The Islamic State elevated the importance of the doctrine to such a high level that it is made obligatory for those who read it to re-evaluate themselves and their loyalty towards Islam. For instance, the Caliphate raised a theological question in the minds of Muslims and asked, "what is included in the meaning of *asl ad-din* [the foundation of the religion] and what is excluded from it". In answering this question, the Caliphate quotes Muhammad Ibn 'Abdil-Wahhab who argued that, "…it is sufficient for a Muslim to know that Allah made it a duty upon him to take the *mushrikin* as enemies and to not take them as *awliya* [friends], and He made it obligatory to love the believers and to take them as *awliya*. He made this an essential of iman [faith], just as He negated the iman of whoever shows love to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers, sons, brothers, or tribesmen. As for *wala* and *bara* being from the meaning of 'la ilaha illallah' (shahada) or from its inferred requirements, then Allah did not burden us with researching this. He only burdened us with knowing that Allah made *wala* and *bara* a duty and obligation and that He obligated acting on the basis of *wala* and *bara*. This, undoubtedly, is what is obligatory and necessary…" (Rumiyah Issue Two, 2016, p.5). The Islamic State described a Muslim's everyday livelihood in the West as the "…constant feeling of subjugation to a *kafir*…". Here they are referring to

the concept of *bara* in which failing to show disavowal of the disbeliever draws the believer closer to them (Dabiq Issue Three, 2014, p. 29).

Another doctrinal pattern found across the magazines was the focus on the principles of *hijrah*. The Islamic State focused much attention on the importance of *hijrah* from the land of the "disbeliever", to the land of Islam, i.e., the Caliphate. They promoted the idea that the Prophet gave glad tidings to those strangers who broke away from their tribes and families to form and defend Islam. The reference to 'strangers' refers to all those who leave everything behind for the sake of Allah and his *din* [religion] and become *muhajirun* [migrants]. According to the Islamic State, the Prophet called these 'strangers' the best slaves of Allah. Those who leave what they love (family, tribe, homeland) for the sake of Allah to establish the *sunan* [tradition] of Islam, are the "…most wondrous of the creation in terms of faith, and the strangest of them all" (Dabiq Issue Three 2014, p.8). The Islamic State advised all those living in *dar ul-Kufr* [land of disbelief] that when Allah's best slaves leave everything and rally behind the Calipha and upon the path of Islam, they have declared their enmity and hatred for the "cross worshippers, the apostates, their crosses, their borders, and their ballot-boxes…" (Dabiq Issue Three 2014, p. 11). The Islamic State's reference to "ballot-boxes" strongly advised the Muslims living in the West against any kind of participation in the man-made laws that negate their *iman*. They argued that those who learn the open-ended concept of tolerance, loyalty to their nation and race, are taught in contradiction to the cornerstone of Islam's fundamentals—*wala* and *bara* (Dabiq Issue Twelve, 2015). This creates a challenge for those living in the West as to whether their participation in a democratic system threatens their *iman* [faith] or not. This was one of the concerns raised by the members of the mosques in Canada. Not just that, even things as simple as saying 'hello' to a non-Muslim was a question raised by some members of the Muslim community in Canada. The Islamic State strongly argued that, *hijrah* "of strangers to Sham was in adherence to the path of Ibrahim who established for them the tradition of declaring enmity and hatred towards the *mushrikin* and their *tawaghit*, and the land of Ibrahim's *hijrah* has been made for us equal to the land of our Prophet" (Dabiq Issue Three, 2014, p.11).

The examination of the use of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* in the magazines of the Islamic State clearly indicates that it is an important part of the Caliphate's preaching. The doctrine appears to have been an effective marketing strategy for the Caliphate and I will argue that the response of the supporters in the West, examined next, suggests it may have been a necessary condition for successful recruitment to the Islamic State. Obviously, it is hard to be sure if this is the case, but the unique success of the Islamic State in attracting foreign fighters points to its importance. It is hard to imagine an

alternative line of argument that the Islamic State could have used that would have been as compelling.

PART-II RESULTS
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF WESTERN FIGHTERS' STATEMENTS

This section looks at the statements of a sampling of twenty-four individuals from Europe and North America (see appendix). The sampling included male and female IS supporters. These individuals either travelled to the Caliphate, or tried to and failed, or fought for the Caliphate at home. Their statements were accessed from news reports, interviews, social media posts, and documents from their court appearances. In this data, only those cases were selected in which the participants had responded to questions such as what contexts or situations had influenced or affected the decision-making process to do *hijrah* or rally to the IS cause at home. The answers to this question were examined for statements regarding why they went. These significant statements were then transcribed and grouped into three themes: 1—*Wala* and *Bara*'s concepts in the statements, 2—*Wala* and *Bara*'s importance to their decision-making process, and 3—*Wala* and *Bara*'s importance in their lives.

The analysis revealed that Western fighters who fought in the Caliphate or tried to travel to the Caliphate or raised arms at home, clearly indicated the influence of the doctrine and its importance in their decision-making process, and its significance in their everyday lives. For example, in response to a question about travelling to Syria to fight, one very prominent British jihadi and an influential recruiter of the caliphate known as Jack lits aka jihadi Jack, explained:

> It's not a hard question to answer. Allah guides whom he wishes, so once you know tawhid…I came here searching for the truth and people of the truth and I don't regret that I came (ITV News, 2019).

Individuals like him, who solely went for the sake of practicing the religion in its purest form or to uphold *tawhid*, were the easiest targets for recruiting by the Islamic State. As shown by the analysis of the history of the doctrine, it is part of an "Islamic identity" that builds a protective shield around a believer to repel all kinds of actions and practices that could endanger the purity of the faith. This aspect of the doctrine emerges spontaneously regardless of the influence of the push factors influencing these individuals. For instance, Samuel Wendt, a German IS returnee, was asked by reporters about why he could not live in Germany and still be a good Muslim? To this question, he replied:

> my opinion at this time was, when practicing Islam at the highest level, if you are here in Germany, there are girls running with free body (revealing clothing) outside and if you see this as a Muslim, it

is not good. So, I wana live in a country where the Islamic rules are the highest. And so, the caliphate, it's the only caliphate in the world. So I wanted to join this (BBC News, 2016).

These jihadists were and are in search of an Islamic society to identify with; a utopian society where they can impose the literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith in theory and practice. The Islamic State represented that utopian Islamic society for these seekers. For example, when the Belgium IS returnee, Michael Delefortrie, was asked why he joined the group, he claimed:

Allah answered my prayers when I joined the caliphate…I regret coming back…I want to live under the caliphate…Finally, there is a place on earth where we can be a Muslim for the full 100 percent…You can hold back and do your prayers and be satisfied, or you can go further and try to practice what you're learning (Ward, 2017).

As explained, in Salafism, religion and belief, including faith and action, all go hand in hand. Without action, which in this case is practicing the doctrine, faith will be meaningless. The actions required for the purity of the faith not only promise achievement in this world, but also in the hereafter. When the Canadian IS veteran Damian Clairmont, aka Mustafa Al-Gharib, was asked why he joined the group, he explained:

The benefit for myself in terms of the worldly life is most certainly back in Canada where I could see my family, indulge in fornication and infidelity legally and limitlessly and stagger around poisoned on intoxicants and then lie to myself and the world about 'Freedom' and how fantastic its…Afterall that is what we were conditioned to believe since our school days, was it not?...I am where I am because I believe in something…Challenging those learned assumptions, questioning them and actually being willing to change yourself is always much harder to do. My doing so caused a search for truth and ended in a conclusion that Islam was the answer. With that came Islam's concept of working for an afterlife that never ends. … An eternity in Paradise cannot be traded for 70 years (if that) of this place (Bell, 2015).

The decision of these individuals to travel or pledge allegiance to the Caliphate is prompted by their understanding of the effects on the faith while living under "man-

made" laws. The democratic laws of the West are widely at odds with the doctrine, if interpreted literally, and these laws prevents individuals from acting on the doctrine. For example, the Canadian veteran of the Caliphate, Abu Huzaifa, before his *hijrah*, fore-cried on social media posts that he is a "Mujahid residing in Dar al-kufr". Even later after his arrest on return, he said that he wanted to continue that (ISIS) brand of Islam and not stay engaged in "apostasy" by engaging in the Western lifestyle. Similar patterns of *wala* and bara were found in other Western fighters. For instance, when John Douglas Maguire, from suburban Ottawa, appeared in a propaganda video for the Caliphate in 2014, he was clearly quoting the doctrine when he said:

> I was one of you, I was a typical Canadian, I grew up on the hockey rink and spent my teenage years on stage playing guitar…you have absolutely no rights to live in a state of safety and security when your country is carrying atrocities…To the Muslims who are still residing in Canada I say to you: How can you remain living among the disbelievers under their unjust man-made laws which are slowly but surely eliminating the rights of the Muslims especially now that the Caliphate is being established? And furthermore: How can you stand to live among them peacefully when their leaders, who represent the masses are waging a crusade against your Muslims brothers and sisters at this very moment (Duffy & Hurley, 2015).

The Islamic State promoted the idea that *wala* and *bara* is applicable to every situation in which a believer is required to follow his faith. Hence, while living in the West, one necessity of the faith is to differentiate between Allah's friends and Allah's enemies. No matter where the mujahid [those who engage in jihad] muwahhidin are, they should have *wala* only for Allah's sake and show "…enmity only for His sake, fight for His cause alone, and openly proclaim the religion of Ibrahim and Muhammad to the world without shame…" (Rumiya 2017, p.4). Yahya Bahrumi, an American citizen earned a high rank within the Caliphate in 2014. He was, in fact, one of the pioneers promoting the revival of a Caliphate. After the establishment of the Khilafa, he radically argued in his writings that:

> Call me extreme, but I would imagine that all of those who willingly choose to live among those with whom Muslims are at war are themselves at war with Muslims—and as such, are not actually Muslims…Get out if you can—not only in support of your brothers and sisters whom your taxes have been killing, but also to protect yourselves from the punishment Allah has ordained for those who betray the nation (Wood, 2017).

In their speeches, both Maguire and Bahrumi held Muslims living in the West accountable for their actions under the principles of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* Their thoughts on *wala* and *bara* resonated with that of the Caliphate, which argued that the reality of Islam under *wala* and *bara*, whether "…linguistically or religiously…" is *al-ikhlas* [the purity] and *istislam* [submission to Allah]. Therefore, it is an obligation of Muslims from Allah as individuals or groups to adhere to *al-ikhlas* and *istislam* to "…rule by His law alone, seek his judgement alone, take to account of anyone who breaks His law, and fight all the people…" that fail to adhere to this idea (Rumiya Issue One, 2016, p. 6). Maintaining the purity of faith is important to upholding tawhid or submission to Allah. Throughout the history of Islam, it has been the main concern to ensure believers are shielded from *bid'a* [innovation], *kufr* [unbelief], and *shirk* [polytheism]. The shield will stand as long as the believer stays strong in matters of ritual purity and enmity towards Allah's enemies. Some of the Western fighters openly admitted that IS group's actions were condemnable, but because of the group's strong religious belief, they ignored this negativity. For example, Shabazz Suleman, a British fighter of the Caliphate, after witnessing the atrocities of the Caliphate, still maintained his belief in the group claiming that otherwise he might become the type of Muslim hypocrite that the group talks about. During an interview when he was asked why he joined the Caliphate, he explained:

> I was sympathetic to ISIS for the cause at that time…when you are with ISIS fighters combined in a room and all they talk about is jihad it is almost like peer pressure. So you feel you are out of line if you disagree with them. The Dutch intelligence gave me a choice…either go back to your country, or you can go with these exchange (exchanging ISIS fighters with the hostages)…the reason why I joined ISIS was because they announced the caliphate. A caliphate is like a magnet it attracts all the foreign fighters because caliphate, it is a big big claim…they played with the religion…in the beginning when I wanted to leave ISIS, I was scared that I would become as they (ISIS) would say a hypocrite to Islam…I am a Muslim, so I wouldn't become a hypocrite. Yet it was very hard to convince yourself (Sky News, 2017).

The doctrine demands a believer to take heed of the warnings that negate the purity of faith. When the Caliphate was declared, this created a responsibility for these individuals to take action in order to protect the purity of his or her faith. The action in this case is to do hijrah or pledge allegiance. In such a situation, *bara* was applied to disassociate themselves from the "disbelievers", and avoid their society completely by showing enmity or doing *hijrah*. That is why these individuals, at times, became too

frustrated because they did not live under an Islamic society. These frustrations grew further when the Caliphate was declared, and they could not get to it. For example, Jaffrey Khan, an American born to a Pakistani parent, was frustrated with his life in the United States. Living the lifestyle of the West was a burden for him and he withdrew from all Western lifestyle and luxuries to keep his faith pure. He told his cousin months before joining the Caliphate that:

> I am not gonna use a bed no more because our prophet Mohammed
> didn't use a bed… we're surrounded by a bunch of sinful people
> and we should move to a Muslim country (Engel & etal, 2016).

Another individual with the same frustration was Munir Abdulkader, an American citizen. He claimed in his court appearances after his arrest that, "I really don't like living here…" and that he felt sick to his stomach for not being in a "genuine land of Islam". Living in the West for these individuals was like being constantly engaged in sin. That is why many of these individuals attempted again and again to enter Syria when their plans kept getting thwarted by the authorities. They were told by the Islamic State, "Do not say to yourself, 'I might get arrested'…" because "…fear is unsure and the obligation of *hijrah* is certain" (Dabiq Issue Three, 2014, p.33). The 29 year old Canadian, Pamir Hakimzadah, made his first attempt at *hijrah* to the Caliphate in 2014. But he was caught and deported back to Canada by the Turkish authorities. When he made a second attempt in 2016, he again failed and was finally arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Based on witness testimonies and Pamir's own social media accounts, he justified his actions by explaining:

> Muslims are being oppressed and the Caliphate is legitimate who
> will end the suffering of Muslims. I'm going away for the Islamic
> cause to please Allah. That's my intention. I'm going to help and
> fight for the sake of Islam (Bell, 2019).

During his trial according to the prosecutors, Pamir argued that:

> all non-Muslims should be killed… and…Canada should be under
> the Islamic laws… and…i will fulfil Allah's wish (Bell, 2019).

These individuals not only felt trapped living in a non-Islamic society, but also felt obligated to take action and to reject any and all "man-made" laws of the society under which they lived. For instance, Rehab Dughmosh from Toronto, Canada, was deported from Turkey in April 2016 while trying to travel to the Islamic State. After several failed attempts to travel to Syria, in the summer of 2017, she planned an attack in Cedar Brae

Mall, Scarborough, using everyday objects (knives, hammer, golf club, etc.) just as advised by al-Adnani to hurt "disbelievers". Her handwritten letter read:

> …to grant me martyrdom for his sake, for the elevation of his religion, and to take revenge from the criminal infidels (McDonald & Miller, 2017).

After her arrest, in one of her court appearances, she argued with the jury during the trial and denounced the court and her attorney. She explained:

> I reject all counsel here. I only believe in Islamic Sharia law. I would like to revoke my Canadian citizenship that I received. I don't want to have any allegiance to you…I would like the word of Allah to be supreme word. And I will go on and I will keep on fighting. And I will fight anyone who will fight against Islamic beliefs (McDonald & Miller, 2017).

The Caliphate's religious and theological dimensions strictly obligate individuals such as Rehab to adhere to Islam through the lens of Salafi/Wahhabi doctrines such as *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. The reason for the Caliphate's teaching is to hold Muslims accountable for their actions related to religion. In the sixth issue of the propaganda magazine, Rumiya, the Caliphate introduced the doctrine of *hisbah* [accountability] and claimed that accountability of a believer towards religion is not achievable without *wala* and *bara* (Rumiyah Issue Six, 2017). These individuals thought they were responsible for holding those who fall into enmity with Allah and his religion accountable for their actions. For example, Farah Mohammed Shirdon, of Somali descent, born in Toronto, is one of those individuals who upheld his "responsibilities" as a "true" believer and took action. He was one of the regulars at the controversial Calgary mosque that later became known as an "ISIS cell". He regularly asked his local imam to expand his knowledge on the Caliphate and its legitimacy, and his obligation towards *hijrah*, *wala* and *bara*. After not receiving the desired answers, he came to the conclusion that he had sufficient knowledge of the faith to take the decision of hijrah on his own. After joining the Caliphate in 2014, he became the Islamic State's most outspoken Canadian jihadist. In one of his propaganda videos, he burns his Canadian passport and explains:

> this is a message to America and all the tawaghit, we are coming, and we will destroy you…with permission from Allah the almighty. I made a pilgrimage to this land for one reason alone, I left comfort for one reason alone, for the glorious Allah. And inshallah, after Sham, after Iraq, after Jazerra, we are going for you Barack

Obama…Takbir! Allah Akbar…we will bring you slaughter (YouTube, 2014).

He was not only an influential recruiter, but also one of the external operations facilitators for the Caliphate. He promoted *hijrah* to "the land of Islam", attacks on the West, and loyalty to the Calipha. On his twitter page, he advised Muslims in the West to fulfill their duties to Allah and the Prophet and "perform hijra, attack in the west, support financially…there are no other options…" In an interview with *Vice News*, he was asked who recruited him, to which he responded:

> no one recruited me, actually no one spoke a single word to me. All I did, I opened the newspaper, I read the Quran, very easy

And on a follow up question as to why he left his comfortable life and went to the Caliphate, he replied:

> …if you are the land of the brave home of the free (referring to America), give us our freedom you know, we want sharia law, leave us alone…

As indicated in the last quotation, these individuals' justifications for why they went to the Caliphate or picked up arms at home were dominantly religious in character. Because the Islamic State promoted the idea of faith through the lens of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*, they claimed tawhid cannot be attained without action, and a believer cannot be a believer without acting on the faith. Therefore, all those individuals who previously thought that their good intentions (acting on the five basic pillars of Islam) could allow them to void actions (acting on wala and bara), all of a sudden felt that they were in the boundaries of *shirk* [Polytheism], *bida* [innovation] and *kufr* [unbelief] if they continued on this path. This is the pull factor that encouraged so many individuals in the West, such as shown in this sampling, to either join the Caliphate or pick up arms against the "enemies of Allah" wherever they are. Although there may be some push factors (i.e. socio-economic, lack of purpose. etc.) that influence the decisions of Western fighters they might not have mattered if there was no Caliphate or Islamic State to draw them to travel. Meaning, if an individual has no job, no wife, and a criminal record, he would still need the encouraging platform of the Islamic State propaganda to aid him in expressing his frustration and anger in this way. This is when extreme ideologies, such as this doctrine, may become too tempting to be ignored. It is seen by such individuals as a path to freedom from the "miseries" of this life and a hope for a glorious future.

Hence, the pull factors, such as the doctrine, were amongst the factors that played an important role in the decision-making process of these fighters. Indeed, the analysis in this section showed that one of the main factors influencing their decisions and triggering their recruitment was the importance of *wala* and *bara* in their lives, and their understanding of the effects on their faith and salvation of living in Western societies. This is because all those who left didn't just leave to go and die there. They also wanted to live in an Islamic society where they could practice the religion at its fullest and prevent any form of contamination to the faith which they would face while living in the West. That is why, in terms of doing *hijrah*, I think the doctrine plays a major role, perhaps a necessary one, in ensuring that faith and unbelief will remain separated forever in the lifecycle of the believer. As argued in the exposition of the doctrine, the separation of faith and kufr will be challenging as long as the believer remains in a "kaffer" society.

PART-III RESULTS
ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH IMAMS & MUFTIS

In the interview phase, each participant was asked nine questions, plus a series of additional follow up questions, providing approximately nineteen answers from each applicant. After creating transcripts of the interviews, all responses to the questions were thoroughly examined and segregated based on six overarching analytical constructs or categories.

1. How did the participants define the doctrine?
2. What did the participants think of the doctrine?
3. What did the participants think about the dangers of the doctrine?
4. How did the participants preach the doctrine?
5. According to the participants, how did their communities understand the doctrine?
6. What did the participants think were the challenges presented by the doctrine?

The categorization of questions and segregation of the purpose of categorization was to segregate each question based on the six overarching categories above, to simplify the questions and provide a more clear-cut understanding of the answers. For example, the last category of questions in the above list (#6), corresponds to the three main questions asked about the doctrine during the interviews: 1) How do we move forward? 2) How can the community or law enforcement help? 3) How can we bridge the gap?

The definition of the doctrine by all the participants (imams and muftis) was the same as the definition provided by Salafi and Wahhabi scholars such as Taymiyyah and al-Wahhab. The doctrine as described by the participants in lay language was defined as: to love or to hate, enmity or friendship, loyalty or disavowal for the sake of Allah. For example, Participant number one was asked how the doctrine is defined, to which he replied:

> Al-wala would refer to like loyalty or love, and they say al-wala is referring to your loyalty to Allah, your love for him. Wal-bara means disassociation, … So disassociate yourself from those that don't believe in Allah, that are considered to be enemies of Allah…this is a doctrine in which all believers are to profess their loyalty to god and for that loyalty to be sincere, they must also profess their hatred for enemies of god, or their detachment from them

When the same question was asked from Participant number three, he explained:

> … Al-wala wa lillah, means the loyalty for Allah. This is the linguistic term. Al-Bara, which is you know rejecting anything beside it…anything without Allah you rejecting it, you only you know al-Wala wa-l-Bara only for Allah. So its loyalty and rejecting.

Although the definition of the doctrine remained the same among all the participants, the importance of the doctrine varied. One of the interview questions was designed to understand how important the doctrine is in general. This question was designed to understand the doctrine's value in a believer's life in the West. Three of the four participants' responses to this question were aligned closely. For instance, when Participant number two was asked about the doctrine, he explained:

> This subject is one of the most important subjects for all Muslims, not only in the West or outside of the Muslim countries, even inside the Muslim countries it is very very important. Al-wala wa-l-Bara is a characteristic for Islamic religion and it was very clear in the last revelation in Quran surah al-Mahida "today the religion is complete, today I am happy with the religion, this is a confirmation from Allah". So in this surah a lot of verse talks about this doctrine, which means to show your identity. If you say you are a Muslim, you have to prove it. And it is very clear in every community. If you are a Canadian, it is common sense you don't have coalition or loyalty to enemies of Canada. If you are British, it is common sense, you are not allowed to spy on your country and allow to make coalition to those who fight against your country. Even inside any community, you are not allowed to have friendship with the criminals. This is in brief, the meaning of Al-wala wa-l-Bara. unfortunately, it is misunderstood.

When the same question was asked of Participant number four, he argued that although it is a fundamental part of Islam, its importance depends on one's understanding and perspective:

> a lot of that depends on the perspective that you are coming from. I think it is a fundamental part of Islam and there is a mainstream understanding and there is an extremist understanding.

The Participant number three also agreed that the doctrine is an important aspect of the Islamic identity, as long as it is not misunderstood. When asked about the doctrine, he explained:

Aqedah tul- al-Wala wa-l-Bara, basically is a doctrine linked to testifying the first statement that you take when you become a Muslim, which is the Shahada "I witness that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah, and I do witness that Muhammed is the messenger". This is (doctrine) the Aqedah withdrawn from the shahadaa or the testimony everyone has to take before they embrace Islam. Based on the testimony of Islam, this is what it came and relied on.

This participant linked the doctrine to the first pillar of Islam: testimony. *Shahada* [confession of faith] is insufficient for an individual to be considered a *mu'min* [believer] without Islamic practices. We have explained this in depth in Chapter 2, Section 3, Parts II & III of this study. According to most of the imams and muftis, the doctrine is considered an important aspect of a *mu'min*'s Islamic identity. However, not every participant directly stated this controversial fact. Some of them revealed their thoughts on this aspect in answers to other questions during the interview. Even though Participant number two belonged to a lesser orthodox Sunni Islam school of thought, his answer above was straightforward. In contrast, when Participant number one was asked the same question, his answer indicated that he was distancing himself from the doctrine even though he was from a somewhat more orthodox Sunni Islamic school of thought. When asked whether he was familiar with the doctrine or not, he replied:

I have heard it in places. Not to the extent that I was intrigued by it or wanted to look up on it…I have studied almost 10 to 12 years Islamic studies intensive, memorize the Quran after which I studied almost 10 years initially…mastering the Arabic language, grammar, morphology, and all other eloquent and related subjects to it. After moving on to the principles of jurisprudence—the two main sources of Islamic law, hadith, the Quran and the commentaries of both. And we also had, I think it was in our fifth year, a seven-year Arabic course…In the sixth year there was a book on Islamic doctrine—Islamic beliefs. We studied this whole book…and the most famous book that most of the Islamic institutions cover in Islamic doctrine—what we call the Islamic beliefs, is the Aqeedat-tu Tahawiya. But in that whole year of studying that book in Islamic believes, never we come across this belief or doctrine of al-Wala wa-l-Bara. I never recall the teacher even introducing it, let alone discussing it what it is all about.

However, when the same participant was asked a follow up question about the understanding of the doctrine, i.e., "was the doctrine not substantiated by some verse from the Quran?", he replied:

> I can understand the doctrine being substantiated by these verses of Quran. But, the question is that, do these verses actually convey what they are trying to establish? That is one of the main areas of theology, of jurisprudence, to determine what exactly does a verse convey. What are the precise rulings, or boundaries a verse is interpreted within.

He correctly explained how groups, like the Islamic State, cherry-pick quotes from the Quran and Hadith to fight ideological wars. However, while explaining the meaning of the doctrine, this participant started explaining the doctrine in more detail according to his Sunni school of thought. He referred to the Islamic books written by theologians he affiliates with, such as Muwlana Ashraf Ali Tanavi. In explaining *bara*, part of the doctrine, the participant clarified that there are three different levels of detaching oneself from all those who disbelieve in Allah:

> …Muwlana Ashraf Ali Tanavi, one of the scholars from the Indian subcontinent, speaks a lot about Islam and politics and how Islam deals with non-Muslim religions. In reference to Muslims living among non-Muslims, he says : detaching oneself from all those who disbelieve in Allah…there are three conditions to make association with the kuffar. 1) Muwalat [obvious affection], 2) Muwdarat [to deal with them nicely], 3) muwasaat [cooperation]…**Muwalat** or hearth-fell affection: is not allowed under no circumstances. This would mean you actually incline towards them and like their believes and you have the wish or desire in your heart to be like them. So that is like a type of wala and walayat—to make them awliya and you want to become like them. **Muwdarat** is only allowed under 3 conditions. 1—dafaay durra [to avoid financial loss], 2—maslahat e dini [hope for repentance], 3—ikram e daayef [respect as a guest], like you actually go out of your way to help them. So that would be to save yourself from any potential harm maybe caused by them or to show that you know, your religion encourages this type of behavior so that they also become encouraged towards the religion. **Muwasaat** the conditions for dealing with kuffar nicely and benefiting them is that, those people that are at war with you, are obviously it doesn't allow you to show

such kindness towards them. It is permissible with those that are not at war with you.

The above understanding of the doctrine by Participant number one is not different than what has been discussed in this study so far. However, the only difference at this point is that when the Islamic State preaches the doctrine, they clearly state that those who live under the non-Islamic societies should express their *wala* and *bara* openly. This is because, according to the group, when the "kuffar" attacks the Caliphate, it becomes an obligation for those Muslims living in the West to defend the Caliphate and Islam by acting on the *wala* and *bara* of the doctrine. Nevertheless, the participants in this study, who represent the mainstream Muslims, argue otherwise. They claim that since none of the Muslims living in the West are being persecuted for their religion, and Islam is not at war, the doctrine cannot be applied in the West. All the participants clearly outlined this fact. For example, when asked whether a Muslim can live in the West without violating the principles of the doctrine, the participant number 4 explained:

> I think that requires some true knowns. To treat all the west as exactly the same will be problematic. I will give a general guideline that if you were to be able to establish the basic tenets of your faith, then yes without a shadow of a doubt, it is permissible to live in the West. However, if you are unable to establish the basic tenets of your faith, then you need to move to a place even if its another part of the West where you are able to establish your faith.

Following up on the same topic, the above participant was asked about Salafi-jihadist scholars (such as Qahtani, who has written books on the doctrine), who constantly claim that expressing Islam openly is required when you live under non-Islamic governments. To this, the participant responded:

> In terms of Qahtani's point that you have to openly express Islam, I believe that to be true. I think Muslims are required to have a religious identity. But what does that identity look like? So, the fact that we have mosques, that are openly there, this is called you know Islamic Information Society … or mosques so and so. So, this shows us that Islam is present and the fact that you know in the month of Ramadan our mosques have open iftar in it, they get to see that and when we collect zakat we go and give the money of zakat out and no one says anything. Now specifically for the salah I think this is perhaps the most profound thing that for me as a Muslim and I am saying this purely in the Canadian context, if I have to pray

somewhere, even if it is at an airport, I will go to the gate I will pray
at the gate and no one says anything to me.

This means that the war claim part of the doctrine, which the Islamic State argued, and the group's interpretation of *bara*, can be debunked easily. However, the main concern that poses a threat at this point is the loyalty (wala) part of the doctrine. The doctrine is designated the "strongest bond" of Islam and *iman* [faith]; and the individual testimony (shahada), which is the first pillar of Islam, has been driven out of the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. It is an important tool for the faith, which strictly separates the "right" from "wrong" and "insiders" from "outsiders". The participants expressed that those who adhere to its literal understanding do find themselves at odds with the democratic society of the West. One of the participants explained that:

> the doctrine itself, it will only effect those that adhere to it. Or who listen to those who promote it. That is a very small group of I would say marginalized Muslims who look towards this type of propaganda or ideology. They themselves not have grounding in the faith, and belief, and it sound pretty convincing to such individuals. This would lead to extremist ideas and we have seen instances of that all the time and many places. So, this is why mainstream scholars would say that this doctrine is very problematic. But it is not something that coincides with the general teachings of the religion.

This means that those marginalized individuals that live at the edge of the society, and those who constantly seek to revive their "true" Islamic identity, are easily drawn to this kind of doctrine. As explained in the history and linguistic definition of the doctrine in Chapter 2, love and loyalty to Allah requires the believer to acknowledge Allah and his religion's friends and enemies. This understanding, and the teachings of the doctrine, differed widely among the participants of this study. The participants reiterated that although the doctrine is important to Islamic identity, it is misunderstood and misinterpreted by groups like the Islamic State. According to the participants' responses, the doctrine has two different meanings. As explained by Participant number four, there is a "mainstream understanding" and an "extreme understanding" of the doctrine.

> (doctrine) it is a fundamental part of Islam and there is a mainstream understanding and there is an extremist understanding.

The mainstream understanding obviously as I mention is a part of our faith, whereas the extremist understanding is something that needs to be fought and rebuked and rejected and you know educate people about its danger.

However, the interview also revealed that even the mainstream understanding of the doctrine differed among the different mainstream scholars. For example, half of the participants in this study strongly believed that the doctrine is part of the core Islamic belief system, while the other half argued the opposite. For example, while answering the question of whether he was familiar with the doctrine or not, Participant number one explained that:

when Islamic beliefs were codified, this (al-Wala wa-l-Bara) was not part of the discussion. This is why I am saying that, when we studied the traditional Islamic sources, we never came across this discussion. And so this is something relatively new.

In contrast, Participant number two claimed that the doctrine is in fact part of Islamic identity.

Al-wala wa-l-Bara is a characteristic for Islamic religion and it was very clear in the last revelation in Quran surah al-Mahida.

Ironically, both of these participants were from the same Sunni school of thought. The dispute over whether the doctrine is part of the core Islamic belief system or not was more like the Voldemort-effect. Some of the participants, like the folks at Hogwarts in J. K. Rowling's novel, Harry Potter, dared "not utter the unmentionable" the reality of the doctrine, and expressed that it must not be taught or associated with Islam at all. For instance, Participant number three, while answering the question of whether members of the mosque inquire about the doctrine or not, argued that:

The best thing is don't even teach him, don't even come close. Like it is not an essential. You have other direct approach all over the Quran talk about love in allah and love in everything, but for this matter, this is no, this is why when I wrote the curriculum for the Islamic studies academy here for junior, junior high in high school, I never mention any of that. Because you don't wana mention something that confuses people.

Thousands of people follow these participants and listen to their teaching and guidance. It is understandable that the mainstream scholars are trying to keep the doctrine out of reach of the seekers. But, what good will that do when the information is vastly present on the Web, presented by unaccredited scholars who lean more towards the extremist views. By not addressing the doctrine's reality, unknowingly, the imams are pushing the seekers towards the Salafi-jihadist scholars who are looking forward to recruiting them. This is a major concern among those imams who do understand the doctrine's importance for a believer, and also want the seekers to not fall for the pseudo imams and scholars on the internet. One of the important questions in this regard was asked of the participants during the interviews. Participant number four explained that:

> jihad, al-Wala wa-l-Bara, and Takfir...these three things that if imams don't have the freedom to talk about these things and educate their communities, their communities will go to other places to look for understandings of these matters. Because, groups like ISIS, they constantly use these terms and you know doctrines if you want to call it that, to attract people, and therefore, if people aren't given the mainstream understanding what that is, it can be used to radicalize into the youths.

Therefore, even some of the participants argued that religious literacy prevents the radicalization of Muslim youths. Hence, they should be allowed to talk about controversial topics such as this doctrine with their mosque members on a regular basis. This helps them to debunk Salafi-Jihadist scholars such as al-Qahtani's claims regarding the understanding of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. Participant number four argued that:

> I have a lot of concerns about the doctrine…there is this book… called al-Wala wa-l-Bara by Sayed al-Qahtani. It has been translated into English now as well…it's a very problematic book. Like it portrays that if you are a disbeliever, you are automatically an enemy of Islam, which if you look at the evidences they provide in the structure of the book, you'd think it makes sense. But even if you just look at very simple you know Islamic doctrines like love your neighbor and caring for your neighbor and being a contributing member of society, you know, you can't reconcile the two.

If more imams, like this participant, accept that Islam indeed does contain controversial topics such as this doctrine, jihad, and takfir, and that they should be addressed and educated from the mainstream point of view, it will help counter the extreme understanding of groups like IS. As revealed during the interviews in this study, the

doctrine is not alien to the community. They are aware of it and it does pose a challenge to their thinking and way of life around "non-believers". For example, all the participants faced questions as simple as whether saying hello to a non-believer would negate their faith, and questions as strong as whether they should move to the Caliphate or not. One of the participants, regarding concern about the doctrine in the community explained:

> I have a neighbor from one of the middle eastern countries, he come to me and ask me that "brother, can we say good morning to our neighbor?" at first, I thought why would he even ask that question. Is that something a person would doubt to whether you are allowed or not? But then it occurred to me that it is possible that because he didn't grow up in a place where he had such (non-Muslim) neighbors. Thus, he is thinking that by saying good morning, he is adhering to their ways or their greetings or negating his iman or something like that…

Another participant was asked the same question: whether people from the community inquire about the doctrine. The participant explained:

> of course, not only one, but a lot of people come and ask about the doctrine… They are in every mosque. Every mosque you have these fanatics, you can find out who is he by the way how he look like and how he look at you, and how his bear is and how his cloths are, and how his way of life…They live in their own environment. They have no friendship with anyone.

As noted from the case above, that question (saying hello) itself shows that people might be in this type of dilemma all the time. This "dilemma" can become a bigger challenge for those who adhere to the extreme understanding of the doctrine, which may result in violent actions, as was the case for several community members known to these participants. These individuals attended the participant's mosque regularly, and often asked the participants questions about *hijrah* to the newly declared Caliphate. One participant explained that:

> I have understood that if people don't understand this doctrine properly, it can definitely lead to social isolation. It can lead to lack of integration into a community and society, and it can eventually use to justify violence like we did see in ISIS.

Therefore, the imams must accept the fact that the doctrine has only one definition, which could be understood in two different ways. Any vulnerable individual who educates himself about the doctrine might become a danger to himself and those around him. The extreme understanding of the doctrine is quite literalistic and refers to verses in the Quran and Hadith to support the claims of violence against those who are not just in conflict with Islam on theological grounds, but also at "war" with Islam, i.e., war in Iraq. The participants argued that the doctrine is considered a threat if misinterpreted or misunderstood by an individual. For example, participant number one explained that:

> if you adhere to this, it means that you have no problem with attacking a disbeliever, you have no problem with doing wrong to them or being unjust to them or manipulating or exploiting them or any type of wrong you can think of, would all falls under i.e. they are the enemies of God, they are disbelievers and therefore, it gives you pretty much permission to do anything with them and noting is off limits. I mean this is a pretty scary doctrine, if this was something that was accepted by mainstream, I don't think Muslims will be living in this (Canada) country.

As explained in my discussion of the history of doctrine and its usage by Salafi-jihadism groups like the Islamic State, the doctrine represented the image and responsibilities of what an "ideal Muslim" should look like and act upon. It was represented as a tool to revive the true image of Islam in the "believer" who lives among the "disbelievers". Furthermore, as this study revealed earlier in Part-II, the individuals who traveled to the Caliphate or raised arms against their governments in the West, were influenced by the teachings of this doctrine. When the participants were asked during the interviews about the connection of IS motivated attacks in the West, and the doctrine, they claimed that without any doubt, the doctrine was a significant factor in those actions. For example, Participant number four was asked if he believed the doctrine contributed to violence in the West. He explained:

> yeah yeah, one hundred percent. Like if you look at the Toronto-18 case, a lot of the Toronto-18 case was that you are harming my brothers and sisters overseas, so we are gonna harm you over here. And a lot of this had to do with identifying who our brothers are and who our enemies are, so therefore, you wage violence against your enemies. So, I think that is explicitly true for that case.

When the same question was asked of Participant number three, he argued the same:

the wrong interpretation of the doctrine. It is definitely it hurt unfortunately a lot of people innocent people. So, yes. It did actually harm the Muslims for its wrong interpretation. And I will say for us and imams, and advice all my imams and my fellow imams I told them do not give something to the people they might have it in two different interpretation of two different ways.

Participant number one also said the same thing, he explained:

for the minority that might be adhering to it, yes for sure. This would lead to extremist ideas and we have seen instances of that all the time and many places.

The concern that could be raised here is that the doctrine has one definition but different understandings. How can this "different understanding" challenge of the doctrine be addressed? As revealed in this study, the mainstream scholars tend to disassociate themselves from controversial topics associated with Islam. Their disassociation signals the two shortcomings that have been part of a wider discussion on the rise of violent extremism in Islam. The number one shortcoming is the fear of the mainstream imams as to whether they can be outspoken about controversial topics such as *al-wala wa-l-Bara*, *jihad*, *khilafa* (caliphate). For example, when participants were asked whether they teach the doctrine or not, some distanced themselves from the doctrine while others protested that they want to teach it to prevent the seekers from going to pseudo imams. However, at the same time, they are also worried that they might be flagged by law enforcement or fired by the mosque board if they address issues such as jihad, *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*, Caliphate, and *hijrah*. For example, Participant number four explained how being unable to talk about the doctrine led some individuals to seek information on the doctrine and jihad elsewhere, i.e., the internet:

They are going to interrogate me, they are going to put me on a list, and I am going to get into trouble and therefore, the informants will start coming to the mosque, and it will become a problem for the mosque and the mosque will eventually fire me…when I speak to other imams, I find that they have the exact same fear. That they are unable to speak about these issues because they are afraid of how their boards will react, and how the government agencies will—put them under surveillance, put them on the list and things like that.

This is a huge drawback, when the mainstream imams such as in the cases above are prevented from doing their job. As discussed earlier, the individuals who adhere to the

doctrine and want to learn more about it will eventually end up on the internet and fall for jihadi scholars. However, if the individual's questions regarding controversial topics are resolved and answered by accredited imams in his or her community, then they could be saved from becoming radicalized. Many of those who left from the West did not become radicalized in their mosques, but educated themselves on the internet about these controversial topics. The second shortcoming is the denial of *Ahl al-ilm* [people of knowledge] in Islam regarding the reality of controversial topics such as jihad, *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*, Caliphate, and *hijrah*. The reality is that these topics are imbedded in the religion, and that ignoring them will not help the situation. From the above analysis, six concluding points can be drawn:

1) The definition of the doctrine among all the participants was the same, but the understanding of the doctrine differed.
2) The communities that these participants led are aware of the doctrine and these people do inquire about the doctrine.
3) The participants revealed that the doctrine was a factor in the decision making of the Canadian IS supporters.
4) Most of the participants agreed that the doctrine is an important aspect in a believer's life.
5) All the participants agreed that the doctrine poses a serious threat if adhered to literally.
6) If the imams do not have the liberty to address controversial topics in Islam, such as this doctrine, the seekers will end up on the internet in the hands of jihadist scholars and may become radicalized.

Nevertheless, the data in this section only relied upon the answers of four participants. Although these participants were from the major Sunni Islam schools of thought (Hanbali, Hanafi, Shaffii), no generalizations can be made, based on this small sample, to all the imams in Canada, let alone the West. That is why, any conclusions drawn in study are limited.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The Islamic State perfectly understood medieval Islam and spoke its theological language, and was able to put it into action in the modern world. As shown in this study, the doctrine not only encourages Western fighters to make *hijrah* or *jihad*, but also emphasizes *tawhid* [monotheism], *al-ikhlas* [the purity], *istislam* [submission to Allah], *asl ad-din* [the foundation of the religion], *manhaj* [method], *hisbah* [accountability] and *takfir* [excommunication]. When scholars and policymakers argue that the Islamic State's Western fighters are not Islamist radicals first (Batrawy et al, 2016), they underestimate the reality of the situation and this decreases the chances of countering the phenomena. This eventually leads to the failure of counterterrorism measures. It must be clearly understood that the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* is the "real image of the actual practice of the faith", which means that anyone can adhere to it if they wish. As this study revealed, the danger is that "…it gives you pretty much permission to do anything with them (disbelievers) and nothing is off limits". Those who practice the doctrine and adhere to its literal interpretation do pose a threat to themselves and the society they live in.

Scholars and security experts invest most of their focus on the understanding that these folks travel to the Caliphate or fight at home because they are lonely, marginalized, unappreciated, and in other cases, entangled with political and economic grievances. There is truth to this view because the literal understanding of the doctrine can specifically have a dangerous influence on such folks who already live on the margins of society. These individuals rely on the genuine but isolated history of Islam and literal interpretations of the Quranic verses and Hadith. But as all researchers agree, not all Muslims in the West live at the edge of the society. Many are doctors, engineers, and scientists, and the Islamic State was able to recruit many doctors, engineers, and other professionals (Moncrieff, 2017, CTVNews, 2015, Breslow, 2014). A high percentage of those who undertook *hijrah* to Syria were university students. So, the common factor for all who supported the Islamic State was a commitment to the ideology of Islamism. Push factors probably played a variable role for everyone, but a bigger role is being played by the ideology. As this study reveals, the Islamic State drew its power from these complex individuals and it was adept at exploiting them.

The Caliphate not only presented *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* as a tool to revive Islam in those who live under non-Islamic societies, but they also presented the doctrine to sympathize with them. For example, *wala* and *bara* was introduced in some of the propaganda magazines as a defense mechanism against racism in the Western societies.

The Islamic State argued that a *muwahhid* should not tolerate mistreatment due to Western racism because there is no tolerance in Islam for those who mistreat Muslims. When Muslims use humanistic undertones, and liberal and democratic thought, to explain Islam, it is an attempt to make Muslims coexist with the unbelievers. The Caliphate argued that Muslims who encourage "…the kafir societies they live in to be more accepting of them, rather than meeting the enmity of the mushrikin with hatred and disavowal…" are guilty of *shirk* [Polytheism] (p.19). Therefore, the "correct way to approach the issue of racism from an Islamic perspective…", the caliphate claims is to restate the importance and significance of *wala* and *bara* (Dabiq Issue Eleven, 2015, p. 19).

As this study indicated, the high number of Western foreign fighters in the so-called Caliphate is a direct response to the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* The doctrine is an essential part of the actual practice of Islam. This study also found that the doctrine is not an isolated idea and that it is known by commoners. Hence, it can also be said that a*l-Wala wa-l-Bara* resonates with the primary message of some Muslim communities who reject the role of "man-made" Western laws. A principal example of this can be the constant call for the establishment of Sharia. Those who adhere to a literal interpretation of the doctrine, and live among non-Muslims, face many religious pressures. For example, some of those who were convicted of terrorist plots on behalf of the Islamic State in Canada, fired their government-provided attorneys as a symbol of loyalty to Islam. For instance, Esseghaier and Dughnosh, both declined participation in the Canadian trial system and insisted on representing themselves, claiming they do not recognize any law other than Sharia. Individuals like these do not become radicalized overnight and instigate terrorist activity. They subscribe to a socio-political ideology of Islam and pursue pathways that involve Islamism or Islamic political activism (Herrington, 2015). However, as Thomas Jefferson said in his famous remarks in matters of religion and "the maxim of civil government", "Divided we stand, united we fall".

CONCLUSION

The question becomes, what would have happened if the Islamic State had continued preaching all the other extreme views but not the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*? Would the Western foreign fighters still have been drawn to the Islamic State in such high numbers? It is hard to say. Hypothetically, however, the Western foreign fighters' understanding of *hijrah* [migration], *jihad*, and *bayat* [pledge of allegiance] would have been more challenging without the doctrine. If the doctrine was excluded from the group's ideological tool kit, then the question of *bayat* and *hijrah* would have been less important and this would have reduced the impact of the message of *Jihad bis-saif* [striving through fighting with the sword]. Because, if the doctrine is not there, then *bayat* and *hijrah* would not be viewed as obligatory because the doctrine's teachings (wala) about a believer's responsibility to his/her belief, actions, and love towards, Allah, his Prophet, and the Ummah would be missing or no longer central to the faith. Also, *jihad bis-saif*, which demands *tawhid* and adherence to Allah's laws above all, would lose much of its meaning in the West, because, the doctrine's teachings (bara) about an individual's belief, actions, and hate towards the enemy of Allah, his Prophet, and the Ummah will be missing. Therefore, while the push factors may have played some role, there is enough evidence to suggest that the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* played a very strong, maybe even a necessary role in influencing the Western foreign fighters to either *hijrah* to the Caliphate or rally to the group's cause at home.

The doctrine is considered a part of Islamic identity that casts a protective shield around each person to repel *shirk* [Polytheism], *bida* [innovation] and *kufr* [unbelief]. It presented the perfect tool for the Islamic State to strictly separate the "right" from "wrong", and "insiders" from "outsiders", to populate its utopian society and orchestrate attacks on its enemies in the West.

Because the doctrine produced such a productive outcome for the Islamic State, in the future, other violent extremist groups will attempt to apply it. Therefore, the theological understandings of such doctrines matter because ignorance by the mainstream scholars gave the Islamic State the opportunity to gain the upper hand, which allowed them to cherry-pick the Islamic contents (history, Quran, Hadith). When groups like the Islamic State have the monopoly over content interpretations, then they can shape them to fit their needs in their ideological war. Without a shadow of a doubt, this poses a challenge for counterterrorism policymakers. On the other hand, the misuse of the Quranic verses and Hadith paradoxically "violates the strict Salafist requirement of respect for the sacred texts in their most literal form" (Frissen et al, 2018). Therefore, there should be a strategic approach by the imams on controversial topics such as the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* on how it should be addressed and taught in the mosques so that the seekers of such ideologies do not end up in the hands of jihadist scholars online. At the same

time, Islamic scholars should not disassociate themselves from such parts of the religion; otherwise, this creates an opportunity for the violent extremists to capitalize on their claims of being true believers and leaders of the faith.

As discovered during the interviews with the participants in this study, the mainstream scholars tend to disassociate themselves from controversial topics such as this doctrine. Their disassociation signals two shortcomings that have been part of a wider discussion on the rise of violent extremism in Islam. First, the fear of the imams as to whether or not they should be outspoken about controversial topics such as *al-wala wa-l-Bara*, *jihad*, *khilafa* [caliphate]. They fear that if they teach such topics or discuss them, they might get attention from the authorities. Second, the denial of *Ahl al-ilm* [people of knowledge] in Islam about the reality of controversial topics associated with Islam.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

First recommendation: After the fall of the so-called Caliphate, Western countries like Canada have been preparing for the arrival of IS "veterans". Without a shadow of a doubt, their return poses a security threat (Jenkins 2014; Cragin 2017). In seeking to deal with such threats, governments like Canada have added a deradicalization aspect to their existing programs for countering and preventing violent extremism (e.g., Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence in Montreal). However, these programs are staffed primarily by psychologists, social workers, and trauma and security experts. They do work in partnership with and seek some participation from the communities affected by radicalization. This poses some problems for the deradicalization and reintegration of these returnee jihadists into the society, and may not be sustainable. While the trauma experts may be able to tackle and suppress the violent memories of the returnees, only qualified imams may be able to address the clash of different understandings of Islam that facilitated the turn to violent extremism in the first place.

These individuals left for Syria and Iraq because of their belief that they had not been given the complete or full truth about Islam and that they have been living as a *jahil* [disregard for divine precepts] in the *jahiliyya* society. The Islamic State drove this message home to these individuals from the very start. They were told that the understanding of their religion that they had learned while growing up in the West was from false preachers, "deviant imams" who gave precedence to "…scholarly opinions over the words of Allah and the words of His Messenger…" (Dabiq *From Hypocrisy to Apostasy*, 2015). The reconciliation of the two different understandings of the religion is a necessary condition for the successful and sustainable deradicalization of these individuals. Countering violent extremism programs in Canada, then, should work to change the image of these "deviant imams," turning them into the trusted imams who can help to reform the returnees' limited and skewed understanding of the faith. Addressing the religious ideology of the jihadists is challenging, but as I think the understanding of concepts such as *tawhid*, *wala* and *bara* is so central to the process of becoming a jihadist, it needs to play a role in convincing them that they are mistaken and should stop being jihadists.

Second recommendation: This study revealed that the roles of the imams in preventing radicalization has been neglected, polices in place have prevented them from counseling wannabe jihadists and preventing their radicalization. As indicated by the participants (imams and muftis) in this study, the imams cannot talk about controversial topics in Islam, such as the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*, jihad, *takfir*, without fear of suffering severe consequences. This is a shared concern among all the imams (as revealed by one participant of this study). If the board of the mosque finds out that the imam has engaged in conversations about such controversial topics, then it might dismiss them. Such conversations can also result in the imam and mosque being flagged by the security services, and that opens a whole new challenge for the mosque and the imam. The imams argue that if they fail to talk about these important topics, the seekers will end up in the hands of pseudo imams or jihadist scholars online. Once

this happens these individuals stop listening to their local imams, seeing them as what the Caliphate described as "deviant imams". The recommendation is that policies should be introduced to address the lack of trust, sensitivity, and consensus among imams, government agencies, and the Muslim communities. All the imams should be on the same page when preaching of about such complex topics as the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*. The imams should be trusted with this responsibility, given their knowledge of Islam. Government agencies could show more cooperation and trust in their dealings with the imams, using discretion when they visit with them, rather just dropping by unexpectedly and meeting the imams at the mosques. This is very important as it protects imams from being labeled as "deviant imams" and that is a vital component to ensuring the returnee or wannabe jihadi can trust the imams and learn more fully about their religion.

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APPENDIX

<u>CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FIFTEEN ISSUES OF DABIQ</u>

Issue 1, The Return of the Khilafah, July 5, 2014

In this issue of the propaganda magazine, the caliphate put forth its goals in which it clearly declared that "…the most important goal would be to revive tawhid especially in matters ignored and abandoned by "Islamic" parties in our times—matters relating to *wala*, *bara*, *hukm* [ruling], and *tashri* [legislation]." (p. 35). The self-proclaimed caliph declared that it is beginning of a new era of "might and dignity" for the Muslims where they can walk everywhere "…as a master, having honor, being revered…anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off…" (p.9).

Issue 2, The Flood, July 27, 2014

In the second issue of the propaganda magazine Dabiq, the Islamic State addressed the Muslims concerning their obligation as a "true" Muslim now that a Caliphate has been established. The first priority they argued, is to make *hijrah* from *dar ul-kufr* to *dar ul-Islam*. This should be done by any means possible because, "you can be a major contributor towards the liberation of Mecca, Madinah and al-Quds…" (Dabiq Issue Two 2014). The second priority for the Ummah is that, "if you cannot perform hijrah for whatever extraordinary reason, then try in your location to organize *bayat* [pledges of allegiance] to the Khalifah Ibrahim. Publicize them as much as possible. Gather people in the masajid [mosque], Islamic centers, and Islamic organizations…" and make public announcements of your *bayat* (Dabiq Issue Two 2014). This statement of the Islamic State is promoting *Bara* in which a believer must openly reject the disbeliever and announce disavowal to them, their laws, and their belief. The pledge of allegiance to the caliphate refers to *Wala*. As argued by Taymiyyah, a believer should not take a disbeliever as *awliyaa*. The Islamic State encouraged the Muslims that they should publicize their *bayat* because, 1) it is "a manifestation of the Muslim's loyalty" to each other, 2) "it is a way to fill the hearts of the *kuffar* with painful agony." Otherwise, if a Muslim died without a *bayat*, he will die as a *jahil* (Dabiq Issue Two 2014).

Issue 3, A Call to Hijrah, September 10, 2014

The Islamic State argued that, *hijrah* "of strangers to Sham was in adherence to the path of Ibrahim who established for them the tradition of declaring enmity and hatred towards the *mushrikin* and their *tawaghit*, and the land of Ibrahim's *hijrah* has been made

for us equal to the land of our Prophet" (Dabiq Issue Three 2014, p.11). In this issue, the Islamic State quotes a Hadith in which the Prophet reportedly gave glad tidings to those strangers who broke away from their tribes to form and defend Islam. The reference of 'strangers' is to all those who leave everything behind for the sake of Allah and his din and becomes *muhajir* [migrant]. The Islamic State argued that when first Islam was introduced, it was strange to the Meccans, and anyone who converted to Islam, became a stranger to their family and their tribe. Quoting al-Baghawi, Islamic State argues that in today's *jahiliyya* society where Islam is extremely alien to people, the believer (referring to 'stranger') is like the believer from the time of the Prophet. The Islamic States argues that, Allah has described these strangers according to Abu Musab az-Zarqawi, by number of characteristics including one of which is nuzza (plural of nazi) [stranger who breaks off from his family] of the people. The Prophet described these nuzza as with Islamic honorific terms such as azza wa jall [Mighty and the Majestic; or: Glorified and Sublime be He]. The Prophet has called the 'strangers' as the best slaves of Allah. Those who leave what they love (family, tribe, homeland) for the sake of Allah and to establish the *sunan* [tradition] of Islam, are the "…most wondrous of the creation in terms of faith, and the strangest of them all." (Dabiq Issue Three 2014, p.8). Islamic State argued that when Allah's best slaves leave everything behind and rally behind the Calipha and upon the path of Islam, they have declared their enmity and hatred for the "cross worshippers, the apostates, their crosses, their borders, and their ballot-boxes…". Islamic State quotes Abu Musab az-Zarqawi who argued that anyone who collaborates with the "crusaders and their apostates" will be threated as them. There are only two camps, truth and its followers or the camp of falsehood and its followers. In other words, choose a side because, if you are not with us, then you are against us. The Islamic State in issue three of their propaganda magazine Dabiq argued that the Muslims should not rest and constantly feel that their *iman* is secure. Even the Sahabah did not feel safe from the fear of hypocrisy (Dabiq Issue Three 2014). The group implied a Muslim's everyday livelihood in the west as the "…constant feeling of subjugation to a kafir…". Here they are referring to the concept of Bara in which failing to show disavowal to the disbeliever, draws the believer closer to them. The argued by verse of Quran that says, "O you who have believed! Why do you say what you do not do? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do" (Quran 2:3:). They directly addressed the Muslims living in the West that, "Do not say to yourself, 'I might get arrested'…" because "…fear is unsure and the obligation of hijrah is certain."

Issue 4, The Failed Crusade, October 11, 2014

In an excerpt in the Caliphate's propaganda magazine Dabiq, the official spokesperson of the Islamic State, Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Adnani ash-Shami's speech was published. In his fiery speech, he strongly focused on the message of the doctrine *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and directly addressed all those Muslims living in the Western societies. He argued that, "So O muwahhid…O you who believes in wala and bara…will you leave the American, the Frenchman, or any of their allies to walk safely upon the earth while the armies of the crusaders strike the lands of the Muslims not differentiating between a civilian and fighter?...will you leave the disbelievers to sleep safely at home while the Muslim women and children shiver with fear of the roars of the crusaders airplanes…How can you enjoy life and sleep while not aiding your brothers, not casting fear into the hearts of the cross worshippers, and not responding to their strikes with multitudes more? So O muwahhid wherever you may be, hinder those who want to harm your brothers and state as much as you can. The best thing you can do is to strive to your best and kill any disbeliever, whether he be French, American, or from any of their allies." (Dabiq Issue Four 2014, p. 9). *Muwahhid*, *wala*, and *bara* were the three vital messages that al-Adnani's wanted his targeted audiences to hear. *Muwahhid* in Salafi interpretation[25] means a Muslim who emphasizes on the concept of tawhid. Goal of the message was to inspire Muslims in the West in their obligation towards *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and Allah's promise, and to "terrify the crusaders" with the capability of *din* and Allah's promise (protect His *din* and punishment of disbelievers). Originally al-Adnani recorded his speech in September 22, 2014 in which directed Islamic State supporters in the West that, "If you can kill a disbelieving American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian,…then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it maybe..., Smash his head with a rock,… or run him over with your car,…[26]". The issue four of the propaganda magazine was published on October 11, 2014. Nevertheless, on October 20, 2014, the first Islamic State inspired attack in North America took place in Quebec City Canada by Martin Couture-Rouleau. He was a recent convert to Islam. He rammed his vehicle on two Canadian Armed Forces officers. However, it is not certain whether he first viewed al-Adnani's video message or if he later read the published article in Dabiq, but either way, RCMP did conclude that he was a supporter of the Islamic State and acted on his *bayat* [pledge of allegiance] to the group. On October 22, 2014, another Islamic State inspired attack took

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[25] Salafi-dawah.com
[26] Dabiq Issue Four, October 20, 2014. p. 9

place in Canada carried out by Michael Zehaf-Bibeau in Ottawa. He opened fire at the National War Memorial and the Parliament Hill in which Captain Nathan Cirillo was killed and two others were injured. Later in issue five of its propaganda magazine Dabiq, the caliphate claimed them as their soldiers including Abdul Numan Haider who stabbed two counterterrorism officers in Melbourne Australia. They claimed that these attacks were a direct result of their message of wala and bara (Dabiq Issue Five 2014, p. 32).

Issue 5, Remaining and expanding, November 21, 2014

Wala and *bara* were not only applied by the group to call for hijrah or violence in the West, but they increasingly directed it to their audiences in the Arabian Peninsula. The self-proclaimed caliph Baghdadi said, "So O sons of al-Haramayn…O people of tawhid…O people of wala and bara…the serpent's head and the stronghold of the disease are beside you. Thus, draw your swords and break their sheaths…" (Dabiq Issue Five 2014, p. 26).   Here al-Haramayn refers to the people of the holy lands in Saudi Arabia. Appealing to people of wala and bara is in reference to revival of the doctrine by al-Wahhab that rose from the Peninsula. In the caliphate's propaganda magazine Dabiq, it claimed that "… due to their commitment to wala and bara when Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Adnani made a call to target crusaders everywhere, the mujahidin of Algeria were the quickest to answer this call, and immediately presented a French prisoner for execution…" (Dabiq Issue Five 2014, p. 32).

Issue 7, From Hypocrisy to Apostasy, February 12, 2015

The caliphate argued that the truth regarding wala, bara, and tawhid is not what is preached by the "deviant imams, and the callers to the gates of Hellfire!...they gave precedence to these "scholarly" opinions over the words of Allah and the words of His Messenger…"

Issue 8, Shariah Alone Will Rule Africa, March 30, 2015

The self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State in its propaganda magazine argued that, nationalism and patriotism idea is in contradiction to the religion of Islam. This is because people should be preferred not according to their blood, but according to their quality of being religious. On the other hand, both nationalism and patriotism contradict with the creed of *wala* and *bara*. *Wala* and *bara* according to Islamic group is the fundamental of the religion because it uproots it. A Muslim should only direct their *wala* to Allah (Dabiq Issue Eight 2015).

Issue 9, They Plot and Allah Plots, May 21, 2015

The Islamic States argued that the apostasy and *shirk* among the Ummah is spread due to their *wala* towards "apostates" and the "crusaders". The Islamic State argued that the

strongest weapon of Muslims are the tawhid and their *bara* from the "mushrikin". *Hijrah* is the path to abandoning misdeeds and sins, argued the caliphate.

Issue 10, The law of Allah or the Laws of men, July 13, 2015

The Islamic State appealed to the Muslims living in the west by referring to them as the *muwahhidin* [Muslim who emphasizes on the concept of *tawhid*] and people of *wala* and *bara*, and asked them what are they going to do for the attacks of the "crusaders" on their caliphate? They further argued that, those who take action on behalf of the caliphate, do not care how they will be portrayed by the media because they are driven by the pleasure of Allah, not disbelievers (Dabiq Issue Ten, 2015).

In its propaganda magazine Dabiq, the Islamic State quotes Ibn Abbas saying, "Love for the sake of Allah, hate for the sake of Allah, make allegiance for the sake of Allah, and make enemies for the sake of Allah, for the wilayah [loving guardianship] of Allah is not attained except by this. One will not find the taste of iman even if his prayer and fasting is great until he is like this. The brotherhood of people today has become for the sake of worldly matters and this is something that will not avail its people at all on the Day of Resurrection." The Islamic State believes that a Muslim can become a *mushrik* without him releasing it if he continued living among them and did not declare his bara towards them and expressed his wala to Islam. They declared it the "strongest bond of Islam" based on the Hadith. The Prophet reportedly was asked what is the strongest bond of Islam in which he replied to love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Allah. They argued that *al-wala wa-l-bara* is even greater than prayer, zakah, fasting, hajj, and jihad. Therefore, one can only find the taste of iman if he or she adhere to the principles of this doctrine (Dabiq Issue Ten 2015).

Issue 11, From the Battle of Al-ahzab, September 9, 2015

Racism against the minority Muslims in the "land of kufr" is an example that Muslims cannot coexist among *kufr*. In their propaganda magazine Dabiq (2015), they argued that the Muslims living in the West should not forget their duty of wala and bara that obligates them to reject kufr, separate themselves from the kufr, "…abandon their lands, harbor enmity and hatred towards them, and wage war against them until they submit to the truth." (p. 19). They caliphate presented wala and bara as a defense mechanism against racism in the Western societies and argued that a *muwahhid* should not tolerate because tolerance against "disbeliever" is not in Islam. When the Muslims use humanistic undertones, liberal and democratic thoughts to explain Islam, it is an attempt to make Muslims coexist with the unbelievers. The Caliphate argued that by doing so, those Muslim scholars are guilty of shirk, because they encourage "…the kafir societies they live in to be more accepting of them, rather than meeting the enmity of the mushrikin with hatred and disavowal." (p.19). Therefore, the "correct way to approach the issue of racism form an Islamic perspective is to reassert the importance

and significance of wala and bara, and to state in clear and unequivocal terms that those who wage war against Islam and the Muslims will not be spared on account of their skin color or ethnicity." (Dabiq Issue Eleven 2015, p. 19).

It doesn't matter how dedicatedly a Muslim abides by the five pillars of Islam (shahada, prayer, fast, zaka, hajj), they will not find the "real taste" of iman until they "…love for the sake of Allah, hate for the sake of Allah, make allegiance for the sake of Allah, and make enemies for the sake of Allah…" (p. 19). They labeled the doctrine as the answer to any coalition against Islamic State.

Issue 12, Just terror, November 18, 2015

In this propaganda magazine they are arguing that those who learn the open-ended concept of tolerance, loyalty to their nation and race are taught in contradiction to the cornerstone of Islam's fundamentals—wala and bara. They quote Quran that says, "Your ally is none but Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed…"

Issue 13, The Rafidah from Ibn Saba to the Dajjal, January 9, 2015

Issue 14, The Murtadd brotherhood, April 13, 2016

"…one must take his eyes off those who sit back from waging jihad for the cause of Allah, which means for the establishment of Allah's rule on earth, and look to those who fulfill the words of Allah…", so "one must either take the journey to dar ul-Islam, joining the ranks of the mujahidin therein, or wage jihad by himself with the resource available to him (knives, guns, explosives, etc) to kill the crusaders and other disbelievers and apostates…" (p. 17). The caliphate argues that abiding by "man-made laws" than sharia is in contradiction to the fundamentals of wala and bara. This is enough to constitute takfir against them as they decided to show their wala towards mushrikin. They argue that Ibn abdu al-Wahhab argued that, "know that the evidences for making takfir of the seemingly upright muslims who commits shirk or sides with the mushrikin against the muwahhidin, even if he does not commit shirk, are too numerous to mention, as found in the speech of Allah, the speech of His Messenger, and the speech of all people of knowledge" They give Tawfique Chowedhury (Australian Islamic preacher) and Yasir Qadhi (American Islamic preacher) as an example of such Muslim and call them "a new sample of the new Salafi crusader".

Issue 15, Break the Cross, July 31, 2016

Issue 1, Rumiyah [Rome], September 2016

In the issue one of Rumiya the caliphate mainly argued that the reality of Islam, whether "…linguistically or religiously…" is *al-ikhlas* [the purity] and *istislam* [submission to Allah]. Therefore, it is an obligation from Allah on Muslims as individuals or groups to adhere by *al-ikhlas* and *istislam* to "…rule by His law alone, seek his judgement alone, take to account anyone who breaks His law, and fight all the people…" that fail to adhere. They further argued that the unity in Islam is not possible without *wala* and *bara*. In this regard, Muslims living among the "disbelievers and apostates" must manifest their *bara* from them as much as possible and in any way possible, "…with his pen and tongue, and his sword and spear…" (Rumiya 2016., p.6). They strictly warned the Muslims not to listen to those Muslim scholars who have failed to fulfill the "duty of action" in Islam i.e. did not declare the *tawhid* in the "faces of the" *tawaghit* [those who worship other than Allah].

Issue 2, October 2016

The caliphate's propaganda magazine raises a theological question regarding the concepts of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara* and addresses "what is included in the meaning of *asl ad-din* [the foundation of the religion] and what is excluded from it". In answering this question, they caliphate quotes Shaykh Sulayman Ibn 'Abdillah Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abdil-Wahhab who replied that, "The answer is to say that Allah knows best. But it is sufficient for a Muslim to know that Allah made it a duty upon him to take the mushrikin as enemies and to not take them as awliya, and He made it obligatory to love the believers and to take them as awliya. He made this an essential of iman, just as He negated the iman of whoever shows love to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers, sons, brothers, or tribesmen. As for wala and bara being from the meaning of 'la ilaha illallah' or from its inferred requirements, then Allah did not burden us with researching this. He only burdened us with knowing that Allah made wala and bara a duty and obligation and that He obligated acting on the basis of wala and bara. This, undoubtedly, is what is obligatory and necessary. Thereafter, whoever knows whether wala and bara are from the meaning of 'la ilaha illallah' or from its inferred requirements, then knowing such is fine and an added benefit. But whoever does not know such, is not burdened to know. This is especially so if the argument or dispute over the matter leads to evil, conflict, and discord among the believers – those who upheld the obligations of iman, waged jihad for Allah's sake, took the *mushrikin* as enemies, and took the Muslims as *awliya*. Therefore, remaining silent on such matters that lead to division is definitely obligatory. This is what is apparent to

me. Nevertheless, the two sides are similar in meaning. And Allah knows best" (Rumiya 2016, p.5).

Issue 3, November 2016

Issue 4, December 2016

This fourth issue of the Islamic State's propaganda magazine focuses on hijrah under the principles of *wala* towards Allah and the "believers" and *bara* from Allah's "enemies" through the verse of Quran (9:14-16) "fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands. He will disgrace them, give you victory over them, satisfy the breasts of a believing people, and remove the fury in the believers' hearts. And Allah turns in forgiveness to whom He wills; Allah turns in forgiveness to whom He wills; Allah is knowing and wise. Do you think that you will be left alone while Allah has not yet made evident those among you who strive [for His cause] and do not take other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers as patrons? And Allah is acquainted with what you do." The caliphate argued that hijrah to *dar ul-Islam* will not cease until *tawbah* [repentance] ceases and "…hijrah will not cease as long as the enemy—the *kuffar* and the *murtaddin*—are fought, whether that means the fight is in Iraq or Sham, or … somewhere else." (Rumiya 2016).

Issue 5, January 2017

In this publication, the caliphate designates *wala* and *bara* as the "tightest bond of iman" and whosoever breaks this bond, is in partnership with *jahiliyya*. Under the principles of *wala* and *bara*, the group encourages women to marry Muslims and bear children to outnumber the "disbelievers". They give women the tile of "a place for sowing seeds" to strengthen the Ummah.

The caliphate argues that as a Muslim, they can only rely on Allah. The group uses verse from Quran that states, "The examples of those who take allies other than Allah is like that of the spider who takes a home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew" (Quran 29:41). They strongly advice the Muslims that if they want to preserve the banner of tawhid (referring to Islamic State's flag), the Muslims should not have *wala* towards "cross-worshipers" and the "*murtaddin*". They further argued that no matter wherever the mujahid [those who engage in jihad] *muwahhidin* are, should have *wala* only for Allah's sake and show "…enmity only for His sake, fight for His cause alone, and openly proclaim the religion of Ibrahim and Muhammad to the world without shame…" (Rumiya 2017, p.4).

Issue 6, February 2017

In the sixth issue of the propaganda magazine Rumiya, the caliphate introduces the doctrine of *hisbah* [accountability] and claims that it is not achievable without *wala* and *bara*.

The Islamic State argues that a*l-Wala wa-l-Bara* are the two principles of Islam driven from an individual's testimony of shahada.

The group addresses Muslim women directly not to harbor love and affection for the enemies of Allah and that "…Islam is to surrender to Allah through tawhid, to submit to Him through obedience, and to disavow shirk and its people." They group encourages women to take action through *wala* and *bara* principles against those who discourages them for showing affection towards the Islamic State or prevents them from living in *dar ul-Islam*. Therefore, "…a Muslim is not called a Muslim until he disavows kufr and its people, even if they are his closest relatives."

Issue 7 March 2017

Issue 8, April 2017

Issue 9, May 2017

The caliphate argues that Allah has honored Muslims with Islam and they should only seek honor to this religion. They add that, the Ummah was mended in the past by the principles of wala and bara and by those who upheld to tawhid. These three were their defining characters the salaf. It defined their matters of life, manners, enemies, hardship, and wali. Therefore, for Muslims to upheld to this honor, they must uphold by wala, bara, and tawhid (Rumiyah 2017).

Issue 10, June 2017

In the tenth issue of the propaganda magazine Rumiyah, the caliphate introduces *irjaf* [untrue news] under the principles of bara to its jihadist men and women. They argue that jihadists should keep distance from those who spread rumors to weaken their hearts. Instead they should trust in Allah and maintain loyalty and love to him to succeed in jihad. They further add that, women should be a supporter of her husband and should not demoralize him in his cause of wala, bara, tawhid, and jihad (Rumiyah 2017, p. 18).

Issue 11, June 2017

Issue 12, June 2017

Issue 13

This publication was not found on the internet.

ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENTS OF THE WESTERN FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Name: John Douglas Maguire
Age: 24
Nationality: Canada
Citizenship: Canada
Year of joining Islamic State: 2013

John Douglas Maguire from suburban Ottawa Canada, who was also know by his Arabic name Yahya, in his 2014 propaganda video stated that, "I was one of you, I was a typical Canadian, I grew up on the hockey rink and spent my teenage years on stage playing guitar…you have absolutely no rights to live in a state of safety and security when your country is carrying atrocities…To the Muslims who are still residing in Canada I say to you: How can you remain living among the disbelievers under their unjust man-made laws which are slowly but surely eliminating the rights of the Muslims especially now that the Caliphate is being established? And furthermore: How can you stand to live among them peacefully when their leaders, who represent the masses are waging a crusade against your Muslims brothers and sisters at this very moment?" (Duffy & Hurley 2015).

Name: Samuel Wendt
Age: 20
Nationality: Gernmany
Citizenship: Germany
Year of joining Islamic State: September 2014

Newly convert to Islam left for the caliphate. To a question what made him go to the Caliphate he replied, "it was that there is of course an Islamic caliphate where you can live as a Muslim, but I think the main factor was that there is war and some factor must help the families, those with no houses, no food, and yeah that was my main factor." "…of course IS is a terror group, but it is also a Islamic State…" When the reporter asked that why couldn't he live in Germany and still be a good Muslim, he replied, " my openion at this time was, when practicing Islam at the highest level. If you are here in Germany, there are girls running with free body (revealing clothing) outside and if you see this as a Muslim, it is not good. So I wana live in a country where the Islamic rules are the highest and so the caliphate it's the only caliphate in the world so I wanted to join this[27]."

Name: Shabazz Suleman
Age: n/a
Nationality: n/a
Citizenship: UK
Year of joining the Islamic State: n/a

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[27] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fen7TTooi4o

Shabazz a British IS returnee to a question why he ended up in the Caliphate replied that, " I was sympathetic to ISIS for the cause at that time…when you are with ISIS fighters combined in a room and all they talk about is jihad it is almost like peer pressure. So you feel you are out of line if you disagree with them. The Dutch intelligence gave me a choice…either go back to your country, or you can go with these exchange (exchanging ISIS fighters with the hostages)…the reason why I joined ISIS was because they announced the caliphate. A caliphate is like a magnet it attracts all the foreign fighters because caliphate, it is a big big claim…they played with the religion…in the beginning when I wanted to leave ISIS, I was scared that I would become as they (ISIS) would say a hypocrite to Islam…I am a Muslim, so I wouldn't become a hypocrite. Yet it was very hard to convince yourself[28]…"

Name: John Georgelas aka Yahya Abu Hassan
Age: 29
Nationality: American
Citizenship: US
Year of joining the Islamic State: August 2013

Yahya whose nom de guerre is Yahya Bahrumi converted to Islam in 2001. In the ranks of ISIS in 2014, he was one of the pioneers of the idea of the revival of a caliphate. He argued that delaying would mean "disregarding a fundamental obligation of Islam". In his propaganda writings after the establishment of the caliphate he argued that, "Call me extreme, but I would imagine that all of those who willingly choose to live among those with whom Muslims are at war are themselves at war with Muslims—and as such, are not actually Muslims…Get out if you can—not only in support of your brothers and sisters whom your taxes have been killing, but also to protect yourselves from the punishment Allah has ordained for those who betray the nation." (Wood 2017).

Name: Jack lits
Age: n/a
Nationality: UK
Citizenship: UK
Year of joining the Islamic State: n/a

Jack lits aka jihadi jack first went to Jordan to learn Arabic and then entered Iraq to join the Caliphate. In an interview with ITV news he was asked what he thought about the IS attacks on Paris and London to which he replied, "…I don't want to start a new life on false. To be honest at the time I thought it was a good thing, not that people that had noting to do with it got killed…but genuinely at the time we had this idea that when you're living in Raqqa you're getting bombed every five minutes by coalition jets and you see literal I've seen children burnt alive and it's probably gonna upset when you

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[28] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0EeZi7zf-Q

annoy some people but the truth is truth you know…at the time you have this idea of why shouldn't this happen to them29…" In a separate interview by News4 when asked why he went to Syria, his response was "it's not a hard question to answer. Allah guides whom he wishes, so once you know tawhid…I came here searching for the truth and people of the truth and I don't regret that I came30."

Interview with Abu Umar al-Biljiki
Abuz-Zubayr and Abu Khalid were the members of Verviers cell. This Islamic State cell was dismantled in early 2015 in the Belgian town of Verviers by the Belgian police. Abu Umar had returned to Belgium to orchestrate the terrorist attack which was luckily thwarted by the police and got killed his two jihadi buddies. Abu Umar however, managed to slip away from the security forces and made his way back to the caliphate. On his arrival, he was interviewed by the propaganda magazine Dabiq in which he reiterated his cause of jihad, to affirm tawhid and remind Muslims of their loyalty to *dar ul-Islam* and the importance of their action on *bara* (Dabiq Issue Seven 2015).

Abuz-Zubayr and Abu Khalid's view on *wala* and *bara* are crystal clear from their testimony which reads: "…how do you live with these criminals, the enemies of Allah and His Messenger, while they wage war against Islam and the Muslims...where is your jealousy for your religion? You will be judged by Allah for your action…Allah says…If you obey those who disbelieve, they will send you back on your heels…" (p. 75).

Name: Abu Huzaifa
Age: n/a
Nationality: Pakistan
Citizenship: Canada
Year of joining Caliphate: 2014

Abu Huzaifa who also goes by the name of Abu Huzaifa al-Kanadi completed his education in a madrassa [religious institution] in Pakistan. While in the caliphate, he describes in New York Times Podcast *Abu Huzaifa al-Kanadi* (2018), killing "apostates" was justified and how he killed so many during his time as a "muhajir". In one of his social media posts—facebook before his hijrah, he described himself as the "Mujahid residing in Dar al-kufr". He stated that, "when I joined ISIS the basis was religious…" and he wants to continue that (ISIS) brand of Islam and not stay engaged in "apostasy" by engaging in the Western lifestyle (Makuch 2019). While in the caliphate, he describes in New York Times Podcast *Abu Huzaifa al-Kanadi* (2018), killing "apostates" was justified and how he killed so many during his time as a "muhajir" (Makuch 2019???).

Name: Rehab Dughmosh
Age: 34
Nationality: n/a

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29 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gvbfpcsgj8M
30 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad5UJ4fQl9g

Citizenship: Canada
Intent to join Caliphate: April 2016

Rehab Dughmosh from Toronto was deported from Turkey while trying to travel to the Islamic State in April 2016. In Summer 2017, she planned an attack in Cedarbrae Mall Scarborough with everyday objects (knives, hammer, golf club, etc) just as advised by al-Adnani to hurt "disbelievers". Her handwritten letter read "…to grant me martyrdom for his sake, for the elevation of his religion, and to take revenge from the criminal infidels." (Patton & MacDonald 2019). She argued with the jury during her trial that, "I reject all counsel here. I only believe in Islamic Sharia law. I would like to revoke my Canadian citizenship that I received. I don't want to have any allegiance to you…I would like the word of Allah to be supreme word. And I will go on and I will keep on fighting. And I will fight anyone who will fight against Islamic believes." (McDonald & Miller 2017).

Name: Farah Mohammed Shirdon
Age: n/a
Nationality: Somalia
Citizenship: Canada
Year of joining the caliphate: 2014

A Somali decent, Farah was born in Toronto. He was also known as Abu Usamah and became Islamic State's most outspoken Canadian jihadist. While burning his Canadian passport in a propaganda video, he warns that, "this is a message to America and all the tawaghit, we are coming, and we will destroy you…with permission from Allah the almighty. I made a pilgrimage to this land for one reason alone, I left comfort for one reason alone, for the glorious Allah. And inshallah, after Sham, after Iraq, after Jazerra, we are going for you Barack Obama…Takbir! Allah Akbar…we will bring you slaughter." He was also an influential recruiter and external operations facilitator for the caliphate. He promoted hijrah to "the land of Islam", attacks on the West, and loyalty to the Calipha. On his tweeter page he advised Muslims in the west to fulfill their duties to Allah and the Prophet and "perform hijra, attack in the west, support financially…there are no other options…" In an interview with Vice News, he was asked who recruited him and he responded, "no one recruited me, actually no one spoke a single word to me. All I did, I opened the newspaper, I read the Quran, very easy…" and on a follow up question of why he left his comfortable life and went to the caliphate, he replied, "…if you are the land of the brave home of the free (referring to America), give us our freedom you know, we want sharia law, leave us alone…." (Youtube 2014).

Name: Muhammed Ali
Age: 23
Nationality: Pakistan
Citizenship: Canada
Year of joining Caliphate: 2014

Also known as Abu Turaab al-Kanadi, originally from Pakistan but grew up in Mississauga Ontario. He joined the group in 2014. Muhammed was an inspiring and defiant IS member who became one of caliphate's social media propagandist. In one of his social media posts he wrote, "Can't wait for the day ISIS beheads the first American Soldier…" (Bell 2018). In response to attacks on the Islamic State, Ali wrote on his social media page, "You'll never kill the desire, nor the love the believers have for jihad and fighting to raise the word of Allah the highest,". According to his exchange with the *National Post*, his "goal was not only to impose his militant strain of religion on Iraqis and Syrians", but over everyone else in the world. On his social media account after Mr. Foley's brutal killing, he wrote "Seeing these so called Muslims's [sic] send condolences to James Foley's family is disgusting. No dignity whatsoever," (Bell 2015).

Name: Pamir Hakimzadah
Age: 29
Nationality: n/a
Citizenship: Canada
Year of attepts to join the Caliphate: October 2014, 2016

Born in Toronto, Pamir attempted to hijrah to the caliphate but was caught and deported by Turkish authorities in 2014 and arrested on second try in 2016 by RCMP. On his social media accounts, he praised the Islamic State and argued that Muslims are being oppressed and the Caliphate is legitimate who will end the suffering of Muslims. According to prosecutors, Pamir argued that, "all non-Muslims should be killed" and "Canada should be under the Islamic laws" and that "he will fulfil Allah's wish". According to one witness, Pamir stated that, "I'm going away for the Islamic cause to please Allah. That's my intention. I'm going to help and fight for the sake of Islam." (Bell 2019).

Name: Munir Abdulkader
Age: 22
Nationality: Eritrea
Citizenship: US

According to court documents, Abdulkader told government informant in 2015 that, "I really don't like living here…" and that he felt sick to his stomach for not being in a "genuine land of Islam". In one of his social media posts he wrote, "I love my parents, i don't want to pay them with money after college, rather through the intercession of (martyr) on that day." After his attempts to travel to the caliphate became impossible, he planned on raising arms at home and planned an attack on police station and behead a government employee in support of allegiance to the Islamic State (BieryGolik 2016).

Name: Salman Ashrafi
Age: n/a
Nationality: Pakistan
Citizenship: Canada
Joined ISIS: 2013

Salman Ashrafi from Calgary (Calgary ISIS cell) before leaving for the caliphate stated to his friends that he could no longer live in an un-Islamic society (Bell 2015). Eight days after his arrival in Iraq, he was sent on a suicide attack mission in which he drove a bomb-laden vehicle into an Iraqi military based that took 46 lives (Baksh 2014).

Name: Ahmad Waseem
Age: 26
Nationality: n/a
Citizenship: Canada
Attempt to join Caliphate:
Year of joining: 2014

Ahmad Waseem from Windsor Ontario went to Syria sometimes in 2013 and participated in the civil war. He returned after he was injured and left again. In 2014 while in Syria, he wrote on one of his facebook posts, that "even tho you don't like to hear it…we kill and beg to be killed to get closer to allah" (CTV 2014), and "I enjoy seeing dead Americans", he wrote on another of his social media account (Bell 2015).

Name: Jaffrey Khan
Age: n/a
Nationality: Pakistan
Citizenship: US
Year of joining Caliphate: July 2014

According to a cousin, Khan became devout Muslim after high school and grew beard. He started searching about conflicts in the Muslim world and built hatred for the US. His cousin Ahmed added that "he became really religious" and grew beard and withdrew from western lifestyle and luxury. "I am not gonna use a bed no more because our prophet Mohammed, didn't use a bed." He started hating his life in American, he told his cousin, and that "we're surrounded by a bunch of sinful people and we should move to a Muslim country," (Engel & etal 2016).

Name: ABDI Nur
Age: 20
Nationality: Somalia
Citizenship: US
Year of joining Caliphate: November 2014

In Islamic State's documents he had listed himself as Abd Al Fatah Nour. His nom de guerre was Abu Sleiman Al Somali. Court documents show that before his departure to the caliphate, he had become extremely religious and asked his family to "pray more and wear more traditional Muslim clothing" (Engel & etal 2016)

Name: Douglas McArthur McCain
Age: n/a
Nationality: American
Citizenship: US
Year of joining Caliphate: March 2014

McCain converted to Islam in 2004. He was also known as Abu Jihad the American and after five months in the caliphate, he was killed in a battle and the last social media post of his account read, "It's Islam over everything." (Engel & etal 2016).

Name: Damian Clairmont
Age: 22
Nationality: Canadian
Citizenship: Canada
Year of joining Caliphate: 2012

Also known as Mustafa Al-Gharib in one of his social media posts stated that, "The benefit for myself in terms of the worldly life is most certainly back in Canada where I could see my family, indulge in fornication and infidelity legally and limitlessly and stagger around poisoned on intoxicants and then lie to myself and the world about 'Freedom' and how fantastic its…Afterall that is what we were conditioned to believe since our school days, was it not?". "I am where I am because I believe in something." "Challenging those learned assumptions, questioning them and actually being willing to change yourself is always much harder to do. My doing so caused a search for truth and ended in a conclusion that Islam was the answer. With that came Islam's concept of working for an afterlife that never ends. … An eternity in Paradise cannot be traded for 70 years (if that) of this place." (Bell 2015).

Name: Michael Delefortrie
Age: 28
Nationality: Belgium
Citizenship: Belgium
Year of joining the Islamic State: 2013

Machel who goes by his Islamic name Younnes, converted to Islam at age 16 and claims that "I'm not Belgian. I am Muslim…" Allah answered my prayers when I joined the caliphate he says, and that "… regret coming back…I want to live under the caliphate…Finally, there is a place on earth where we can be a Muslim for the full 100 percent." During the interview with CNN he adds that, "You can hold back and do your prayers and be satisfied, or you can go further and try to practice what you're learning," (Ward 2017).

Name: Zulfi Hoxha aka Abu Hamza al-Amriki
Age: 25
Nationality: Albania
Citizenship: US
Year of joining the Islamic State: April 2015

Now a senior Islamic State commander, Hoxha warned attacks on America in a video launched in 2017. He said, "We will surely guide them to our way…so show results and place your trust in Allah and he will pave the way for you". "Indeed America today is the one carrying the banner of the cross and waging wars against the Muslims…o muwahhid in America, does it not pain you to see your brothers with their honors being violated?...liberate yourself from hellfire by killing a kafir for Allah…Allah's Messenger said a kafir and his killer will not be joined together in hellfire… so show results and place your trust in Allah and he will pave the way for you" (Youtube 2017).

Name: Munir Mohammed
Age: 36
Nationality: Eritrea
Citizenship: Sudan
Pledge of allegiance to Islamic State: n/a

Munir who worked in a factory that produced ready-meals, plotted a Boston Marathon style pressure cooker bomb attack in UK with the help of pharmacist Rowaida in support of allegiance to Islamic State. Munir was also researching how to source poison ricin as IS had also encouraged poison attacks, besides knives and everyday objects. The prosecutor's office found that, in August 2016 Munir sent a message to Abubakr Kurdi an IS organizer that, "you just give the order, compliance and obedience to our Emir [leader]" to which kurdi replied, "I hope God will put you on the right path, we will be in contact with God's will to organize something new." (Casciani 2018).

Name: Rowaida El-Hassan
Age: 33
Nationality: Sudan
Citizenship: UK
Pledge of allegiance to Islamic State: n/a

According to the Crown Prosecution Services, Rowaida and Munir were attracted to each other through their allegiance for the Islamic State and their intolerance towards those who opposed their believes. Rowaida provided advices to Munir on the chemicals to use for the homemade bomb (BBC 2018).

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview questions are semi-structured and open-ended and will merely be a guide for a natural discussion to occur about the doctrinal interpretations of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara.* The questions and the order of the questions might change as the thesis research and the interviews progress. The Ethics Research Committee will be updated with a new interview guide, if the changes are substantial.

Proposed questions:

- Are you familiar with the doctrine of *al-Wala wa-l-Bara*?
- What can you tell me about this doctrine?
- How important is this doctrine?

If the Imam is largely supportive of the doctrine, the following open-ended questions may be asked.

- Has the doctrine been part of your teachings or guidance to the community or the muqtadis (those praying in the mosque)?
- How often do you encounter talking about the doctrine?
- How significant a role does the doctrine play in defining who am I or who you are?
- Can I live in West without violating the principles of the doctrine? Why and why not?

If the Imam is largely unsupportive of the doctrine, the following open-ended questions will be asked.

- Do you find yourself having discussions about this doctrine with any muqtadi(s) (plural)? How often?
- Do you have any concerns about the doctrine? What and why?
- Can I live in West without violating the principles of the doctrine? Why and why not?
- Do you think this doctrine has contributed to violent extremism in the Muslim community?

Other questions that applied to all cases.

- How do we move forward?
- What are the challenges you face as an imam in regard to this doctrine?
- The doctrine is substantiated by the verses of Quran, so how do we move forward?

GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC TERMS

Ahadeeth (Hadith): report on the sayings and actions of the Prophet

Ahl al-Sunnah or Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jammah: those who follow the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet according to the understanding of the Companions of the Prophet.

Amir: leader, commander

Amir ul Mu'mineen: leader of the believers, the Caliph

Ansar/As sahaba: one of the Companions of the Prophet from the inhabitants of

Awliyaa: Allies or friends of Allah Madinah, who received and hosted the Muslim immigrants from Makkah.

Aqeedah: belief

Bid'a: innovation in religion, any act or practice not found in the Qur'an or in the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Da'wah: preaching, inviting, propagating, calling

Dar al-Harb: land of war, i.e. enemy territory, any territory that is not ruled by the Shari'ah of Allah, any authority that is at war with the Islamic state or the Muslim Ummah

Dar al-Islam: land of Islam, any territory that is ruled by the Shari'ah

Din: religion

Fard: compulsory, obligatory duty

Fard al-Ayn: greatest degree of obligation, compulsory on every Muslim, such as five daily prayers, Hajj, fasting in Ramadhan etc.

Fard Kifayah: initially compulsory, but voluntary upon fulfillment of specific conditions, i.e. funeral prayer (Janazah)

Fatwa: legal ruling

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence

Fitnah: trial, tribulation, temptation, mischief, strife

Hajj: the pilgrimage to Allah's House, the fifth pillar of Islam

Haram: forbidden according to the Shari'ah

Hijrah: emigration in the cause of Allah Almighty

Iman: belief, faith and action linked to this

Jama'ah: group, gathering, community

Jahiliyya (Jahilli): pre-Islamic ignorance, disregard for divine precepts

Kafir/kafr: disbeliever, infidel, non-Muslim, anyone who does not believe in Islam

Khalifah: successor, representative of the Prophet, head of the Islamic state

Kuffar: plural of Kafir

Mujahideen: those who perform and wage Jihad

Mushrikeen/Mushrikin: polytheists, pagans, idolaters, people who practice Shirk Jihad.

The land of Ribaat: is a land that is under threat of attack by the enemies of Islam. The one who is stationed in Ribaat is called a Murabit.

Takdhib: giving the lie to something

Tasdiq: conviction

Saheeh: correct, certified: highest ranking of authenticity in Hadith classification

as-Sahwah: Islamic awakening, revival

Sahabah: companions of the Prophet

Salaf: pious predecessors, pious people of the first three generations of Islam

Sharia: Islamic law

Shaytan: Satan

Shaykh: elder, scholar

Shirk: associating partners with Allah, worship of false gods/idols

Sunnah: legal ways, practices, orders, acts of worship and statements of the Prophet that are a model followed by Muslims

Taghout: false deities, people who arrogate for themselves godhead and lordship, leaders calling to establish non-Islamic orders etc.

Takfir: excommunication

Taqwa: fear or consciousness of Allah, piety, devoutness, religiousness

Tafseer: commentary, explanation, exegesis, interpretation of the Qur'an

Tawheed/Tawhid: monotheism, belief in the unity of Allah Almighty

Ulama: scholars, plural of Alim

Ummah: the entire community of Muslims

Wali: Friend of Allah

Zakah: compulsory tax of 2.5% per annum paid by Muslims

Zuhd: detachment—exchange luxury for pious life

(The above Glossary is added from the special edition of *THE MILESTONES*, additional terms were added to the glossary as I came across new ones)