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**Deconstructing Radicalisation Strategies:
A Tripartite Discourse Analysis of *ISIS* Ideology in *Dabiq*
and *Rumiyah* Online Magazines (2014-2017)**

*Thesis submitted to the Department of English in candidacy for the degree
of Doctorate in Language Studies*

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis, entitled “Deconstructing Radicalisation Strategies: A Tripartite Discourse Analysis of ISIS Ideology in Dabiq and Rumiya Online Magazines (2014-2017)”, is the result of my own independent and original research. This work has never been submitted for a degree or diploma at any university or academic institution. I also confirm that this thesis is original and not written by anyone else. All sources used have been duly acknowledged and properly cited.

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Dedications

This work is affectionately dedicated:

To the blessed souls of my mother and father. Though they are no longer with me in this world, their love, wisdom, and values continue to guide my every step. Their immense sacrifices made this path possible, and their memory remains an eternal source of quiet strength. May they rest in everlasting peace.

To my beloved wife, to whom I owe more than words can express. Her unwavering patience, quiet resilience, and constant faith in my vision sustained me through the most demanding phases of this project. Her love has been both my refuge and my light.

To my sons, who serve as my ultimate inspiration and for whom I strive to build a legacy of knowledge, excellence, and wealth.

Abstract

This doctoral thesis investigates the strategic communicative apparatus of the Islamic State (ISIS) within its flagship periodicals, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, between 2014 and 2017. Addressing a critical scholarly lacuna, the research develops and operationalises an original Tripartite Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) framework, synthesising Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach, van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model, and Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach. Through a systematic longitudinal analysis of thirty purposively sampled multimodal fragments, the study reveals a sophisticated "grammar of radicalisation" anchored in lexical engineering, cognitive polarisation through the “Ideological Square”, and multimodal mythologisation. The analysis identifies a strategic metamorphosis in the group’s discourse, tracking the transition from the utopian state-building rhetoric of *Dabiq* to the insurgent urgency of *Rumiyah* in response to territorial decline. Beyond academic deconstruction, the findings are translated into an operational bridge for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE), offering prescriptive recommendations for educational reform through Critical Discourse Literacy (CDL) and institutional policy. Ultimately, the research demonstrates that ISIS discourse is a strategically constructed system of semiotic deception. It positions CDS as a vital instrument for exposing and disarming extremist narratives, fostering the semiotic resilience necessary for global security and the restoration of human dignity in the digital age.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **9/11:** September 11, 2001 Attacks
- **AI:** Artificial Intelligence
- **AIS:** Islamic Salvation Army (*Armée Islamique du Salut*)
- **AQ:** Al-Qaeda
- **AQI:** Al-Qaeda in Iraq
- **AQIM:** Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
- **CAQDAS:** Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
- **CDA:** Critical Discourse Analysis
- **CDS:** Critical Discourse Studies
- **CMC:** Computer-Mediated Communication
- **CT:** Counter-Terrorism
- **CVE:** Countering Violent Extremism
- **DHA:** Discourse–Historical Approach
- **DRA:** Dialectical–Relational Approach
- **DRS:** Department of Intelligence and Security (*Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité*)
- **EU:** European Union
- **FIS:** Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*)
- **GIA:** Armed Islamic Group (*Groupe Islamique Armé*)
- **GSPC:** Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*)
- **GWOT:** Global War on Terror
- **ICT:** Information and Communication Technology

- **IS:** Islamic State
- **ISIL:** Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
- **ISIS:** Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
- **JT:** Just Terror (Referring to the *Rumiyah* tactics section)
- **NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation
- **NLP:** Natural Language Processing
- **P/CVE:** Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
- **PDF:** Portable Document Format
- **RQ:** Research Question
- **SCM:** Socio-Cognitive Model
- **SIT:** Social Identity Theory
- **UK:** United Kingdom
- **UN:** United Nations
- **US / USA:** United States of America
- **WOT:** War on Terror

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the chaotic landscape of twenty-first-century geopolitics, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) emerged not merely as a territorial insurgency but as a uniquely disruptive force, transforming the mechanics of global terrorism through the calculated use of digital media. Between 2014 and 2017, the group succeeded in attracting an estimated 40,000 foreign recruits from over a hundred countries—a feat largely attributed to its multilingual propaganda machinery (Berger, 2018; Zelin, 2016). Central to this unprecedented mobilisation were two English-language magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, which strategically employed multimodal discourse—including textual narratives, symbolic imagery, and eschatological themes—to construct an emotionally resonant, ideologically persuasive worldview (Winter, 2015; Ingram, 2017). Unlike its predecessors, ISIS leveraged the affective vulnerabilities of alienated youth—especially those navigating postcolonial identity tensions or socio-political disenfranchisement—recasting acts of violence as sacred imperatives through a rhetoric deeply embedded in religious and cultural semiotics (Atran, 2016; Borum, 2011).

Within this complex landscape, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as an essential framework for examining the intersection between language, power, and ideology. However, existing research on ISIS’s English-language discourse remains piecemeal. While Fairclough’s framework has been applied to jihadist sermons and van Dijk’s model utilised for social media communications, few studies have synthesised these approaches to analyse the group’s flagship magazines. This study addresses that gap by adopting a tripartite CDA approach, integrating Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA) (1995), van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) (2008), and Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA) (2001). This triangulation allows for a rigorous examination of how textual structures reproduce power, how cognitive models internalise ideology, and how historical intertextuality frames current violence.

The urgency of this inquiry is not merely academic; it is deeply situated within a specific historical and cultural consciousness. As a researcher writing from Algeria—a nation that endured the “Black Decade” of the 1990s—this study is informed by the lived reality of how extremist discourse can fracture a society. The Algerian experience, where armed Islamist insurgency claimed tens of thousands of lives, serves as a grim historical precedent for the consequences of

unchecked radical ideologies. This positionality provides a critical vantage point: it underscores the necessity of moving beyond Western-centric security narratives to understand the visceral, identity-based appeal of groups like ISIS in the North African and broader Muslim context. Furthermore, the need for “ideological literacy” has never been more pressing. In an era of digital saturation, vulnerable youth are increasingly exposed to sophisticated narratives that exploit their grievances and identity crises. Understanding the mechanics of this manipulation—how language is used to dehumanise the “Other” and sanctify the “Self”—is a prerequisite for developing effective, context-sensitive counter-narratives.

The problem this study addresses is both urgent and under-theorised. While the military decline of ISIS has reduced its physical territoriality, its digital and ideological presence persists. The lexicon, frames, and multimodal assemblages found in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* continue to be recycled by various extremist cells and sympathisers worldwide. Moreover, counter-radicalisation strategies remain overwhelmingly security-focused, with insufficient attention paid to the ideological substance of radical discourse. A significant portion of the existing literature also fails to account for the longitudinal dynamics of ISIS’s discourse. *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* were not identical in tone, style, or messaging. As ISIS’s geopolitical situation deteriorated, its discourse adapted—both thematically and rhetorically. This evolution is particularly visible in how the magazines shifted from triumphalist narratives and utopian promises to martyrdom glorification and calls for decentralised, lone-wolf attacks. This study offers a longitudinal, comparative analysis that captures these rhetorical transformations, thereby illuminating how discourse responds to—and attempts to mitigate—external pressures, including territorial loss and international counter-terrorism efforts.

To deconstruct this complex discursive architecture, this study was guided by the primary research question:

Q: How did ISIS employ linguistic and multimodal strategies in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* to construct ideology and narratives aimed at radicalising English-speaking audiences between 2014 and 2017?

Within the framework of this main inquiry, a series of secondary questions were derived to unpack the specific mechanisms at play:

Q1: What discursive, cognitive, and visual techniques are used to represent the Self (the in-group) and the Other (the out-group)?

Q2: How are legitimacy, authority, and religious identity constructed through the recontextualisation of historical and theological narratives?

Q3: How did ISIS's discourse evolve strategically from the state-building rhetoric of *Dabiq* (2014–2016) to the insurgent urgency of *Rumiyah* (2016–2017)?

Q4: How can the findings of a tripartite CDS analysis inform the design of effective counter-radicalisation strategies?

Consistent with these questions, the thesis outlines specific research aims and objectives. It seeks to deconstruct the linguistic, discursive, and visual mechanisms through which ISIS constructs and legitimises its ideological worldview in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. To achieve this, it aims to operationalise a tripartite CDS framework—integrating Fairclough's DRA, van Dijk's SCM, and Wodak's DHA—to provide a multidimensional analysis of jihadist propaganda. Furthermore, the study aims to trace the strategic evolution of ISIS's discourse from the state-building rhetoric of *Dabiq* to the insurgent urgency of *Rumiyah* in response to geopolitical pressures. Additionally, it seeks to identify the socio-cognitive patterns and multimodal configurations that contribute to audience persuasion and identity polarisation. Ultimately, the objective is to formulate context-sensitive, academically grounded, and policy-relevant recommendations for deradicalisation and ideological resilience.

This study adopts a qualitative, constructivist research paradigm grounded in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). The corpus comprises the complete set of English-language magazines released by ISIS: fifteen issues of *Dabiq* and thirteen issues of *Rumiyah*. From this dataset, a purposive sample of thirty discourse fragments was selected for micro-analysis based on their thematic density, multimodal complexity, and relevance to the group's evolving strategic narrative. The analytical framework builds upon a novel triangulation of three complementary

models: Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA) is employed to analyse the textual dimensions, examining how grammar, modality, and vocabulary enact social power; van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) is utilised to explore the cognitive interface, revealing how the text constructs mental models and activates “Us vs. Them” schemas; and finally, Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA) provides the tools to investigate the recontextualisation of historical narratives, tracing how ancient Islamic battles are weaponised for contemporary political ends. Ethical guidelines were scrupulously followed, with content excerpts anonymised and violent images excluded, aligning with established protocols for responsible extremism research (Ferrara, 2022).

The significance of this research is twofold, contributing to both academic scholarship and practical policy formulation. Theoretically, this thesis advances the field of Critical Discourse Studies by demonstrating the utility of a triangulated framework in analysing extremist propaganda. It bridges the gap between linguistic analysis and security studies, offering a robust model for understanding how multimodal texts function as instruments of cognitive radicalisation. Furthermore, the longitudinal comparison of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* provides new insights into the adaptability of extremist discourse, challenging static interpretations of jihadist media strategies. Practically, in the realm of counter-terrorism, this study offers evidence-based tools for practitioners. By identifying the specific linguistic triggers and cognitive frames used by ISIS, the findings inform the design of more precise counter-narratives. The recommendations provided are tailored to support educators, religious leaders, and policymakers—particularly in North Africa and the West—in building community resilience. By decoding the “grammar” of radicalisation, this research empowers stakeholders to disrupt the ideological transmission of extremism before it manifests in violence.

This thesis is organised into five subsequent chapters, structured to guide the reader from theoretical foundations to practical application. Chapter One establishes the theoretical scaffolding, critically surveying the evolution of CDS, social theories of power (Foucault, Bourdieu, Gramsci), and academic literature on radicalisation and terrorism. Chapter Two details the research design, justifying the tripartite CDS framework and outlining the procedures for corpus selection and data analysis. Chapter Three presents the empirical analysis of *Dabiq* magazine, dissecting how the group constructed a utopian narrative of state-building and

legitimacy. Chapter Four examines the discursive shift in *Rumiyah* magazine following ISIS's military decline, analysing how rhetoric evolved into a narrative of insurgency and decentralised violence. Finally, Chapter Five synthesises the findings into actionable strategies, proposing recommendations for educational reform, digital policy, and community engagement, before the General Conclusion summarises the key findings and suggests directions for future research.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

The present chapter reviews the theoretical, conceptual, and analytical foundations that underpin Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) as the overarching framework guiding this thesis. As the study seeks to investigate the persuasive, ideological, and radicalising functions of ISIS's online propaganda discourse with specific attention to *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines, a critical review of literature is vital to anchor the inquiry within the evolving landscape of discourse-analytical research and its intersections with media, politics, and extremism.

Building upon the general background and rationale presented in the first chapter, this literature review systematically synthesises the evolution of discourse studies from its structuralist and functionalist roots into a distinctly critical, problem-oriented, and interdisciplinary paradigm. It traces the historical development from Critical Linguistics to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), culminating in the more expansive and methodologically diverse field of CDS. Central to this transformation are foundational contributions from various domains of social theory—Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Gramscian hegemony, Althusserian ideology, Foucault's discourse-power-knowledge nexus, Bourdieu's symbolic power, and Halliday's systemic functional linguistics—all of which are crucial for understanding how discourse shapes, reinforces, and resists domination.

The chapter further unpacks the core principles of CDS, including its emphasis on critique, context sensitivity, interdisciplinarity, and its commitment to social justice and emancipation. Attention is also given to the intellectual and methodological consolidation of CDS through the contributions of its major theorists—Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak—whose models form the tripartite analytical lens through which ISIS's discourse will be examined. Their respective frameworks—the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA), the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA), and the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)—are not only complementary in their treatment of text, cognition, and context, but also provide the necessary analytical granularity to dissect the multimodal, ideologically dense, and historically situated nature of jihadist propaganda.

While the primary focus is on these three models, the review also engages with larger theoretical and methodological issues surrounding the analysis of power, ideology, identity, radicalisation, and media discourse. This chapter lays the conceptual groundwork for the analytical chapters to follow by critically synthesising existing scholarship, identifying gaps, and situating the current study within the broader terrain of CDS and terrorism studies.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: it begins with the conceptualisation of discourse and its distinction from text, followed by a historical mapping of discourse analysis, leading to the emergence of CDS. It then explicates the foundational social theories relevant to CDS before detailing its core principles and major analytical approaches. The chapter closes by addressing critiques of CDS and reaffirming the study's rationale in adopting a tripartite analytical model for investigating ISIS discourse.

1.2. Theoretical Foundations

1.2.1. The Concept of 'Text' in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is an interdisciplinary framework that critically examines the dialectical relationships between language, power, and ideology. Text is a central concept in this field, which transcends the written form of language to encompass spoken, visual, and multimodal forms of communication. Texts are not neutral entities, but are contested arenas of social practice that reflect and shape societal norms, power relations, and ideologies (Roscoe, 2019; Irawan and Adnan, 2018).

1.2.2. Defining 'Text' in CDS

In critical discourse studies, a text is defined as an actual use of language altered for communicative purposes, differentiating it from abstract linguistic units such as sentences. Widdowson (2007) states that, while we may recognise a piece of language as a text, grasping its meaning necessitates its surrounding context.

1.2.3. Contextual Interpretation and Social Practice

Texts are considered as active entities in constructing and maintaining social realities. They occur within specific social contexts, loaded with the interests and ideologies of their producers and influencing the identities of both dominant and dominated groups (Sarani, 2024; Amosu & Alagbe, 2018). The relationship between text and context is pivotal and vital; we establish meaning by relating a text to its immediate environment and broader cultural norms. This process clarifies what a text signifies and reveals its intended function, such as prohibition or warning. Widdowson (2007) posits that comprehending a text frequently requires acknowledging shared knowledge, which guides its interpretation.

1.2.4. The Evolving Nature of Text

The concept of "text" has evolved from traditional linguistic analyses to contemporary approaches that embrace multimodality, recognising the important role of visual, auditory, and gestural elements in meaning-building processes (Ahmedova, 2024; Hart & Kapp, 2014). From this perspective, texts are multimodal phenomena, where different semiotic sources interact to construct meaning and exert influence, challenging the common notion that language is the sole means of communication (Khabarov, 2022; Fernandez, 2024). In his discussion of the concept of text, Widdowson (2007) argues that texts can perform multiple functions, combining utilitarian purposes with expressive and persuasive elements.

1.2.5. Text and Discourse: A Dynamic Relationship

Understanding 'text' also involves exploring its relationship with discourse. Discourse encompasses broader systems of meaning, while text represents tangible manifestations of these systems (Ahmadova, 2024; KhosraviNik, 2010). Texts mediate between producers and interpreters, and while they serve to convey specific messages, the intended meaning may not always align with the interpretation. Widdowson (2007) highlights that the convergence of intention and interpretation can vary significantly, particularly in complex texts like newspaper articles.

1.2.6. The Role of the Analyst

The analyst plays a crucial role in CDS. Analysts are more than mere observers; they interact dynamically with texts, recognising their positions and biases (Wodak, 2024; Threadgold, 2003). Reflection is essential feature to ensure the validity of analyses and a commitment to social justice, as the core goal of CDS is to challenge and transform entrenched power structures (Sarani, 2024; Amosu and Alagbe, 2018).

1.2.7. Conceptualising Discourse

In addition to these approaches, Michel Foucault's contribution to discourse theory is indispensable. Foucault conceptualised discourse as a system of statements that systematically form the objects they speak about (Foucault, 1972, as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 19). From this standpoint, discourse is a powerful mechanism through which knowledge and power are intertwined, defining what can be said, by whom, and under what conditions. This conceptualisation profoundly influenced the later development of Critical Discourse Studies, embedding within it a concern for the ways discourse disciplines thought and constrains action.

Moreover, discourse is intrinsically historical and intertextual. According to Wodak (2001), discourses are dynamic entities that draw upon previous discourses and are continuously transformed across time and social contexts. Through *intertextuality*, texts are linked to other texts, creating webs of meaning that transcend any individual instance of communication (Fairclough, 1992, p. 102).

Adding further complexity, the multimodal nature of contemporary communication necessitates an expanded understanding of discourse. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that meaning today is made not only through language but through a combination of modes — such as images, layout, typography, and sound — all interacting within communicative acts. Consequently, discourse analysis must account for how linguistic and visual modes co-construct meaning within broader semiotic landscapes.

Importantly, the concept of critique occupies a central role within the study of discourse. Following the tradition of the Frankfurt School (Habermas, 1984, as cited in Flowerdew &

Richardson, 2018, p. 5), Critical Discourse Studies adopts a normative stance, seeking not only to describe discourses but to uncover how they sustain inequality, exclusion, and domination. Flowerdew and Richardson (2018) delineate three dimensions of critique: *immanent critique* (analysing internal contradictions within discourse), *socio-diagnostic critique* (tracing discourse back to social processes and ideologies), and *prognostic critique* (proposing alternatives to oppressive discourses) (pp. 5–6).

Richardson (2007) reinforces this critical orientation, contending that discourses, particularly those disseminated by powerful institutions like the media, play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, legitimising authority, and marginalising dissent (p. 45). Through strategies of framing, selective lexical choices, and rhetorical devices, dominant groups can naturalise their perspectives as common sense, thereby entrenching existing power relations.

In more recent scholarship, a pluralistic understanding of discourse has been advocated. As Wodak and Meyer (2016) argue, discourse is inherently multidisciplinary, requiring analytical tools from sociology, anthropology, political science, linguistics, and cognitive science to capture its multifaceted nature (p. 7). This reflects the broader turn from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) towards Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), acknowledging the diversity of approaches necessary to grapple with increasingly complex globalised communication environments (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018).

Finally, critical scholars stress the need for reflexivity. Analysts must be aware of their own situatedness within discursive fields and the partiality that inevitably shapes interpretation. As Wodak (2001) observes, the act of discourse analysis is itself a social and political act, necessitating a commitment to transparency, critical engagement, and ethical responsibility.

In conclusion, conceptualising discourse as a form of social practice — deeply historical, multimodal, cognitive, ideological, and power-laden — lays the foundation for critical inquiry. It is this robust, multidimensional understanding of discourse that underpins the analytical framework of the present study, enabling a systematic interrogation of how extremist ideologies are constructed, naturalised, and disseminated through language and other semiotic resources.

1.2.8. Distinguishing Between Text and Discourse

Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), maintaining a clear analytical distinction between text and discourse is fundamental. Although the two concepts are closely related, conflating them risks obscuring the multiple levels at which meaning is produced, circulated, and contested (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

A text can be defined as any instance of communication that is materially realised — spoken, written, visual, or multimodal (Fairclough, 1992). Texts are observable entities: a newspaper article, a political speech, a social media post, or a film scene. As Richardson (2007) explains, texts represent “*linguistic traces*” of communicative events (p. 25), providing concrete data for analysis. Importantly, texts do not exist in a vacuum; they are crafted within specific contexts of production, distribution, and reception, each of which shapes their form and meaning.

Discourse, on the other hand, pertains to the broader semiotic and social processes that both generate and materialise texts. According to Flowerdew and Richardson (2018), discourse can be seen as “*semiotic practices, including language use, that constitute and are constituted by social life*” (p. 5). Thus, while texts are individual products, discourse encompasses the complex social practices, ideologies, and power relations that underpin and give significance to texts.

Fairclough’s (1992) influential three-dimensional model elucidates this relationship by situating text as one analytical level among others: alongside discursive practices (processes of production and interpretation) and social practices (the wider societal structures and relations in which discourse operates). This multi-layered approach highlights that a full understanding of any communicative event demands moving beyond the surface structure of the text to engage critically with the discursive and social dimensions it embodies.

Further refining this distinction, Halliday’s (1978) notion of language as a social semiotic is instructive. Halliday, as cited in Wodak and Meyer (2016, p. 9), proposes that language must be understood as a resource for making meaning within specific social contexts, thus blurring the boundary between linguistic form and social function. From this perspective, texts are the material vehicles through which discourses—as systems of social meaning—manifest and circulate.

Moreover, the concept of intertextuality adds an important layer of complexity. As Fairclough (1992) contends, texts rarely stand alone; rather, they are constructed through the selective appropriation, echoing, and reworking of other texts and discourses.

In digital media, for instance, a tweet may incorporate text, emojis, images, hyperlinks, and hashtags, all of which contribute to its overall discursive force. Thus, while a text may be analysed for its internal features, discourse analysis must consider the multimodal orchestration of meaning across broader semiotic resources.

The socio-cognitive dimension, elaborated by van Dijk (2008), also complicates the distinction. Discourse is not only embedded in social structures but also mediates cognitive models — shared understandings, ideologies, and group representations — that readers and listeners use to interpret texts. Through discourse, texts become sites where ideologies are reproduced or contested, shaping perceptions of reality (van Dijk, 2008, p. 119).

Additionally, Foucault's (1972) conception of discourse as a regulatory system that controls what can be thought and said within a given historical moment (as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 19) underlines the constitutive power of discourse over texts. Foucault's notion of *discursive formations* suggests that texts are not neutral conveyors of meaning but are always already implicated within networks of power, knowledge, and social control.

From a methodological perspective, Flowerdew and Richardson (2018) warn against analysing texts in isolation from their discursive and social contexts. They assert that “*texts are realised in concrete, situated interactions that reflect broader ideological struggles*” (p. 6). Consequently, CDS insists on a problem-oriented approach: texts are entry points into the investigation of how social inequalities, hegemonies, and resistances are constructed, maintained, and challenged through discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

In sum, although texts provide the tangible artefacts of communication, they must be situated within the broader frameworks of discourse that give them meaning. Discourse analysis thus requires moving beyond textual description to critically engage with the socio-cognitive, multimodal, historical, and ideological dimensions that shape and are shaped by texts. This nuanced understanding of the text-discourse relationship is crucial for the rigorous deconstruction

of extremist propaganda in the present study, where language and imagery are strategically deployed to radicalise and mobilise audiences.

1.2.9. Discourse Analysis and the Emergence of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The development of Discourse Analysis (DA) marked a significant shift in linguistic inquiry, moving beyond isolated sentences and grammatical structures toward the study of language as social action. Early discourse studies, notably influenced by the work of Halliday (1978), conceived language as a social semiotic, a resource for constructing meaning within particular social contexts (as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 9). Discourse, in this sense, was not merely a vehicle for transmitting information but a means through which individuals enacted social relationships and structured experience.

One of the principal innovations of CDA was its insistence that discourse is both socially shaped and socially shaping. Fairclough (1992) conceptualised this phenomenon through his three-dimensional framework:

- Text: the linguistic features and structures of discourse,
- Discursive practice: the processes of production, distribution, and consumption,
- Social practice: broader socio-cultural structures and power relations that contextualise discursive events.

This multi-layered model allowed analysts to trace how micro-level linguistic choices are both influenced by and contribute to macro-level societal arrangements.

Central to CDA is the interrogation of ideology. Van Dijk (1998) *characterises ideologies as "socially shared representations that organise socially relevant knowledge" (p. 8), which discourse often reproduces and normalises*. For instance, by examining lexical choices, argumentation patterns, or the strategic use of pronouns, CDA reveals how discourse constructs in-group and out-group dynamics, legitimises domination, and obscures inequalities (van Dijk, 2008).

The influence of Foucault (1972) is also pivotal. His conceptualisation of discourse as a system that produces regimes of truth and exercises disciplinary power (as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 19) underpins much of the CDA's attention to how language constrains what can be thought, said, and done in particular historical epochs. Building upon Foucault's insights, CDA scholars maintain that discourses are sites of struggle where competing interpretations of reality are negotiated and contested (Wodak, 2001).

Additionally, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) brought a crucial historical and intertextual sensitivity to CDA. DHA emphasises that discourses cannot be understood without reference to their socio-political and historical conditions of emergence. As Wodak and Reisigl (2001) argue, analysing how discursive strategies evolve across time provides insight into how political ideologies adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining underlying structures of dominance.

1.2.10. CDS methodological openness

Drawing on Halliday's systemic functional grammar, CL conceptualised language through its ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions, laying the foundation for analysing how texts naturalise dominant worldviews (Halliday, 1978; as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 9).

Despite its foundational insights, CL faced criticism for its lack of theoretical depth concerning discourse and social practice, and for overly deterministic interpretations of language's ideological effects (Fairclough, 1992). These limitations catalysed the emergence of CDA, particularly through the work of Fairclough, who introduced a dialectical-relational model linking text, discursive practice, and social practice. His framework reoriented analysis toward the dynamic interplay between linguistic choices and macro-social structures, influenced by Gramscian and Althusserian theories of hegemony and ideology (Fairclough, 1992, 1995).

1.2.11. The Concept and Role of Critique in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

The "critical" dimension in CDS further draws from early Critical Linguistics, notably Fowler et al. (1979) and Kress and Hodge (1979), who demonstrated how language can mystify social realities and obscure agency through linguistic structures such as passive constructions

(Chilton, 2008). Discourse, in this framework, is understood as a form of social practice: simultaneously shaped by and shaping social structures, reinforcing or contesting power relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 7).

However, CDS does not claim an external or neutral position. Inspired by Bourdieu's notion of *violence symbolique* and the embeddedness of intellectuals within social hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1984, 1989), CDS recognises that researchers themselves are positioned within the fields they analyse. Thus, reflexivity—the explicit acknowledgement of one's own ideological stance and social location—is not optional but essential (van Leeuwen, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

According to Andrew Sayer (2009), we can conceptualise critique in CDS at multiple levels. Minimalist critique involves challenging distorted or dominant representations, while explanatory critique seeks to reveal why such falsehoods persist, thereby aiming to support subjugated knowledge and dismantle hegemonic structures. Critique, thus, is inseparable from a normative commitment to exposing illusions and fostering emancipation (Sayer, 2009, p. 783).

The critical orientation of CDS is further elaborated within the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). Reisigl (2018) highlights that critique in DHA is guided by three major theoretical currents: first-generation Critical Theory (Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin), which critiques ideologies and power abuses; Foucault's notion of critique as "the art of not being governed in this way" (Foucault, 1990, p. 12); and Habermas's discourse ethics, which provides normative criteria based on truth, truthfulness, normative rightness, and comprehensibility. These validity claims serve as evaluative benchmarks for discursive practices, particularly in political and institutional contexts (Reisigl, 2018).

Operationally, DHA distinguishes three forms of critique (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, pp. 32–35):

- Text or discourse immanent critique examines contradictions, inconsistencies, and rhetorical manipulations within texts, drawing on norms from argumentation theory (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; van Eemeren, Garssen, & Meuffels, 2009).
- A socio-diagnostic critique contextualises discursive practices within broader social realities, exposing ideological manipulation, discrimination, and systemic inequalities.

- Prospective critique proposes interventions aimed at reducing communicative dysfunctions and enhancing deliberative democratic practices.

Moreover, critique within CDS is viewed not merely as academic revelation but as an act of self-reflection and social transformation. Critical scholars must engage in continuous self-reflexivity, recognising their own political alignments and the emancipatory goals underpinning their work (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Riggins, as cited in Tooley, 1999). In this sense, critical discourse analysts aim not only to describe existing social injustices but to challenge and ultimately transform them (van Dijk, 1993, 2008).

Thus, critique in CDS operates on three interrelated dimensions:

- As revelation, uncovering the hidden mechanisms of domination and ideological reproduction;
- As self-reflexivity, interrogating the researcher's own role within social structures;
- As social transformation, contributing to the disruption of dominance and the realisation of more equitable social orders.

In sum, CDS does not conceive of critique as an optional or peripheral element but as a constitutive feature of scholarly inquiry. It demands from researchers both analytical rigour and ethical commitment—to reveal hidden structures of domination, question the naturalisation of inequality, and envision possibilities for social change.

1.3. Core Principles of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), originally known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is defined not by adherence to a singular theory or methodology but rather by a distinct set of shared epistemological and normative principles (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). As a problem-oriented scholarly program, CDS draws on interdisciplinary theories—social, psychological, historical, and cognitive—to rigorously explore how discourse constructs and perpetuates social inequalities, maintains dominant power structures, and mediates ideological reproduction and resistance (van Dijk, 2015, p. 467; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 4).

1.3.1. Social Problem Orientation

A central principle of CDS is its explicit focus on pressing societal issues, such as racism, sexism, radicalisation, and systemic inequalities (van Dijk, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). It deliberately positions itself beyond mere academic analysis, aspiring instead toward transformative social action through critical linguistic inquiry (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 271; van Dijk, 2015, p. 467). This commitment underlines CDS as a socially engaged and practical discipline that actively contributes to addressing real-world social problems (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, p. 7).

1.3.2. Discourse and Power Relations

Power relations are understood as inherently discursive. CDS theorists argue that discourse both reflects and constructs social structures, identities, and relationships (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Consequently, discourse analysis examines how language legitimises certain forms of knowledge and power while marginalising others, thus perpetuating ideological dominance (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2008, p. 11; and Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 5).

1.3.3. Ideological Function of Discourse

CDS highlights the ideological nature of discourse by demonstrating how language naturalises particular worldviews. Van Dijk (1998, 2008) particularly emphasises that ideologies are socially shared cognitive frameworks that shape collective perceptions and sustain group interests through linguistic mechanisms such as presuppositions, implications, and metaphors. Hence, discourse is not neutral but serves to establish and reinforce ideological hegemony (van Dijk, 2008, p. 11; Richardson, 2007, p. 45).

1.3.4. Historical Embeddedness and Intertextuality

Discourse is historically contingent and must be analysed within its sociohistorical contexts (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), advanced by Wodak (2001), exemplifies these principles by tracing the evolution and recontextualisation of discursive strategies across historical periods. Intertextual analysis thus

reveals continuity and change in how ideologies and power relations are articulated over time (Wodak & Reisigl, 2016, p. 28).

1.3.5. Mediated Relationship between Text and Society

CDS posits a mediated link between texts and social structures, stressing socio-cognitive processes in meaning-making. Texts do not simply mirror social reality but represent it through socially shared interpretative frameworks such as mental models, ideologies, and attitudes (van Dijk, 2008, pp. 10–11). CDS therefore adopts an interpretative and explanatory approach to reveal not just how discourses function, but why they sustain or challenge power dynamics (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, p. 5; van Dijk, 2015, p. 467).

1.3.6. Discourse as Social Action

CDS conceptualises discourse explicitly as social action—language and semiotic practices perform tangible social functions by influencing behaviours, structuring institutions, and enacting social identities (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2015). Thus, analysing discourse involves assessing its pragmatic implications within particular sociopolitical contexts and highlighting its real-world efficacy in perpetuating or contesting social arrangements (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, p. 7; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, pp. 6–7).

1.3.7. Interdisciplinarity and Methodological Pluralism

Methodological eclecticism distinguishes CDS, incorporating diverse disciplinary insights from linguistics, sociology, psychology, media studies, cognitive sciences, and history (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, pp. 8–9; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 31). This theoretical openness and methodological flexibility enable CDS to critically analyse complex social phenomena, including media bias, extremist propaganda, discriminatory discourse, and digital communication with appropriate analytical frameworks (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 4).

1.3.8. Reflexivity and Ethical Responsibility

Reflexivity is a defining ethical commitment within CDS, demanding scholars remain consistently mindful of their own analytical positions, biases, and the political implications of their research (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 32). This reflexive stance promotes transparency, enhances credibility, and underscores methodological rigour by foregrounding the inherently political nature of critical inquiry (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, p. 7; Wodak, 2001).

These fundamental principles characterise CDS as a critical, interdisciplinary research program dedicated not only to comprehending the intricate interconnections between language, ideology, and power but also to actively confronting and transforming social inequalities. These principles provide essential theoretical coherence, analytical clarity, and methodological rigour necessary for robust academic inquiry, particularly underpinning the socio-cognitive investigation of extremist ideological discourse undertaken in this study.

1.4. Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics: A Foundational Framework for Critical Discourse Studies

Unlike formalist linguistic paradigms, SFL is premised on the belief that language functions simultaneously in three broad meta-functions: the ideational (representing experience), the interpersonal (enacting social roles and relations), and the textual (organising messages coherently) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 29–31). Every clause, thus, realises these functions concurrently, making it possible for discourse analysts to unpack how language enacts both meaning and power in specific social contexts.

This orientation has had enduring implications for CDS, particularly through its influence on Critical Linguistics and early CDA. Halliday’s view that “the study of discourse cannot be separated from the study of the grammar that lies behind it” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 658) is central to understanding Fairclough’s emphasis on textually grounded social critique. Fairclough (1989) developed many of his tools for analysing grammar, modality, transitivity, and cohesion directly from SFL principles—adapting them to diagnose how texts reproduce ideological assumptions.

Indeed, one of SFL's earliest and most impactful contributions to discourse analysis was *Cohesion in English* (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), which revealed how coherence in texts is achieved not merely through syntax but through lexical and referential ties—a concept later expanded in studies of discourse semantics and thematic structure (Martin, 1992). These insights laid the groundwork for understanding how textual practices operate ideologically even at the level of cohesive devices and information structure.

Another critical development derived from SFL is the *Appraisal Framework*, elaborated by Martin and White (2005), which has become instrumental in CDS for analysing evaluative language and stance-taking. Through appraisal, analysts can trace how speakers align, disalign, or negotiate power relations through interpersonal meaning—a dimension often obscured in more structuralist approaches.

1.5. Critical Discourse Studies and Social Theory: Intellectual Foundations

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is not merely an offshoot of linguistics but a deeply interdisciplinary venture shaped by broader intellectual currents across the humanities and social sciences. Its analytical strength stems from developments in discourse analysis and systemic-functional linguistics, yet its critical thrust lies in its engagement with questions of power, ideology, and resistance. What distinguishes CDS from conventional approaches to language is this explicit orientation towards social critique—a stance rooted in diverse traditions of twentieth-century thought. As Wodak and Meyer (2016) note, CDS has drawn on a constellation of influences, ranging from Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of ideology to Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony, Foucault's investigations of discourse and knowledge-power, and Bourdieu's concept of symbolic domination. Each of these traditions contributes a different lens through which discourse is linked to social control, identity, and struggle.

Rather than treating language as a neutral vehicle for communication, CDS positions it as a central mechanism through which social realities are constructed, naturalised, and contested. This orientation requires a dual attentiveness: to the linguistic textures of texts and to the social histories and power structures in which

those texts circulate. Fairclough's (1995) model, for instance, foregrounds the dialectical relationship between language and society, while van Dijk (2008) emphasises the role of cognition and mental models in the reproduction of ideologies. At the same time, the reflexive ethos of the Frankfurt School offers ethical scaffolding for what CDS aims to achieve, particularly through its emphasis on critique as a means of social emancipation.

Understanding CDS, therefore, involves more than learning its methodological tools; it requires grasping the interplay of theoretical genealogies that underpin its critical vision. Linguistics offers the apparatus for dissecting texts, but it is the social theories—of domination, exclusion, and resistance—that give such analysis its transformative edge. It is this convergence that makes CDS not only a field of inquiry but also a form of intellectual engagement deeply attuned to the political stakes of discourse.

1.5.1. Frankfurt School (Critical Theory) and Its Influence on Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) finds one of its most profound theoretical foundations in the tradition of Critical Theory, as developed by the Frankfurt School. First-generation Frankfurt School thinkers—particularly Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin—sought to develop a social theory not merely to explain society but to critique and ultimately transform it (Horkheimer, 1937/2002; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 5). This emancipatory impulse is a defining characteristic that CDS inherits from its critical predecessors.

Horkheimer's seminal essay *Traditional and Critical Theory* (1937/2002) argued that genuine social science must aim at human emancipation, uncovering the ideological forces that sustain domination under the guise of neutrality. Instead of adopting a value-free stance, critical research should expose the hidden power asymmetries entrenched within social, political, and cultural systems (Forchtner, 2018, p. 29). Consequently, CDS is committed not just to linguistic analysis but to unveiling how discourse reinforces or challenges social inequalities.

Empirical research was central to the early Frankfurt School. Studies such as *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950) and *Prophets of Deceit* (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949) exemplify interdisciplinary, theoretically informed empirical projects that resonate with CDS's aims today (Forchtner, 2018, p. 30). These works combined sociology, psychology, and linguistics to interrogate the linguistic construction of authoritarian ideologies—an endeavour mirrored in contemporary CDS research on extremism, racism, and populism.

Moreover, critical theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer (1944/1972) in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* highlighted how culture and mass communication contribute to the reproduction of hegemonic ideologies, a concern that continues to animate discourse-analytical inquiries into media discourse, propaganda, and the manufacturing of consent (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Forchtner, 2018).

The second generation of the Frankfurt School, most notably Jürgen Habermas, further shaped the critical orientation of CDS.

1.5.2. Marxism and Neo-Marxism: Foundations for Ideology Critique in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories have significantly influenced CDS's treatment of ideology, power, and class structures. Rooted in the works of Karl Marx and later theorists, CDS draws on the understanding that language and ideology play pivotal roles in maintaining social inequalities (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1998). Neo-Marxist revisions, particularly from Western Marxism, underscore the importance of cultural and discursive practices in reproducing capitalist social relations.

Neo-Marxist extensions, particularly those associated with Western Marxism, deepened the understanding of ideology and hegemony. Antonio Gramsci's (1971/1992) concept of hegemony is particularly influential: hegemony is not merely maintained through coercion but through consent, achieved by normalising certain ideologies as 'common sense'. Discourse plays a central role in this process by embedding hegemonic ideas into everyday communication (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 8). In CDS, Gramsci's insights help explain how media

discourses, political rhetoric, and institutional language practices shape public consciousness and marginalise oppositional perspectives.

Louis Althusser (1971) further contributed to the understanding of ideology's operation through his theory of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), such as schools, media, and religious institutions. Althusser viewed these ISAs as critical sites where individuals are "interpellated" into subject positions that reproduce the existing power structures. For CDS, this perspective underscores the need to analyse how discursive practices within institutions construct identities, social roles, and relations of domination (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, p. 7).

Moreover, as Forchtner (2018) notes, neo-Marxist thinkers highlighted the subtler mechanisms of ideological domination, moving beyond economic determinism towards an appreciation of the symbolic, cultural, and communicative dimensions of power. Critical Theory's critique of the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944/1972) exemplifies this shift by analysing how mass media and popular culture disseminate ideologies that sustain capitalist structures under the guise of entertainment—a theme heavily examined in contemporary CDS studies on media and popular discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 9).

CDS thus inherits from Marxism and neo-Marxism a focus on ideology as a material, discursive, and socially reproductive force. As Fairclough (1995) asserts, discourse is not only shaped by social structures but also shapes them, thereby functioning as a key site for the (re)production of social inequality. Similarly, van Dijk's (2008) socio-cognitive approach integrates these insights by demonstrating how shared mental models and group ideologies are continuously reproduced and challenged through discourse.

However, as Forchtner (2018) rightly observes, CDS scholars also critically engage with Marxist legacies, acknowledging both their strengths and limitations. While the Marxist tradition provides powerful tools for analysing domination and ideology, CDS extends these insights by incorporating socio-cognitive, multimodal, and historical approaches that better account for contemporary complexities such as digital communication, transnational discourses, and hybrid identities (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018).

1.5.3. Althusser's Concept of Ideology: Theoretical Anchoring for Critical Discourse Studies

At the core of Althusser's intervention is the proposition that ideology "represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence", and that it "has a material existence" (Althusser, 2001, pp. 109–115). This conception decisively shifts the focus from ideology as abstract doctrine to a more grounded, practice-oriented phenomenon. For CDS scholars, this materialist definition is crucial in that it anchors ideology within everyday linguistic and institutional practices, aligning with the broader commitment to analysing discourse as both shaped by and shaping social reality (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

Althusser's framework is built around a structuralist understanding of society, in which Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)—such as schools, media, religious institutions, and the family—operate alongside Repressive State Apparatuses (e.g., police, judiciary, army) to secure the reproduction of capitalist relations. While the repressive apparatus enforces power "by repression," ISAs function "by ideology", meaning they instil dominant worldviews through normalised discourses and rituals (Althusser, 2001, pp. 96–97). The educational system, as a paradigmatic ISA, has received particular attention in CDS for its role in shaping compliant subjects through curricular content and classroom interaction (Forchtner, 2018, p. 30; Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018, p. 7).

A pivotal and highly influential concept introduced by Althusser is interpellation—the process by which individuals are "hailed" into subject positions within a given ideological framework. Interpellation explains how subjects are not autonomous agents but are instead constituted through discourse in ways that ensure their "happy submission" to social norms and hierarchies (Althusser, 2001, pp. 115–124). This notion is particularly resonant for CDS, which examines how discursive structures—whether in media, political rhetoric, or institutional language—construct identities and constrain agency in ways that appear naturalised or consensual (Fowler et al., 1979, p. 217n; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

Unlike earlier conceptions of ideology as a distortion of truth, Althusser's theory insists that ideology is inescapable and constitutive, operating not in the realm of falsehood but within the

very fabric of social existence. While this ontological totality has drawn criticism for downplaying human agency, it has nonetheless provided CDS with a potent analytic for exploring how discourses normalise inequalities. As Fairclough (1992) observes, Althusser's ideas allow for a sophisticated account of how discourse functions not merely as representation but as a means of reproducing, contesting, or transforming existing social relations, particularly when interwoven with the symbolic power of institutions.

Althusser's emphasis on the materiality of ideology, embedded in rituals, texts, and institutional behaviours, dovetails with CDS's concern with linguistic materiality. That is, how language use within texts both reflects and reinforces broader power structures. In this respect, CDS adopts Althusser's insight that ideology is not a purely cognitive phenomenon but one enacted in embodied practices and institutional discourses—a view central to the socio-cognitive model (van Dijk, 2008) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

Nevertheless, CDS does not adopt Althusser's model uncritically. Critics have highlighted the deterministic undertones in his account, where the subject seems overly subordinated to ideological formation. Yet, as noted by Forchtner (2018), subsequent developments in CDS—including Fairclough's incorporation of Bhaskar's critical realism and Giddens's structuration theory—mitigate this limitation by positing subjects as reflexive agents capable of resistance and change (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 160–161; Wodak, 1996, p. 11).

Ultimately, Althusser's theory offers CDS a foundational vocabulary for theorising the ideological embeddedness of discourse.

1.5.4. Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony and Its Relevance to Critical Discourse Studies

At the core of Gramsci's theory lies a fundamental distinction between domination (the exercise of coercive power) and hegemony (the achievement of ideological consent). As Fairclough (1995) highlights, this distinction is pivotal to understanding how discourse functions not merely to reflect but to constitute and sustain power relations (p. 94). Hegemony is achieved when ruling groups succeed in projecting their interests as universal, embedding them within the

commonsensical worldviews of subordinated classes. In this way, consent is manufactured through a strategic orchestration of discourse across institutions—schools, churches, and the media—which serve as what Althusser (1971) famously termed Ideological State Apparatuses.

Gramsci's reconceptualisation of ideology is of particular relevance to CDS. While classical Marxism conceived of ideology primarily in terms of false consciousness, Gramsci advanced a more dynamic and culturally embedded view. He conceptualised ideology as a terrain of struggle, where competing worldviews vie for dominance. This understanding of ideology as "lived experience" (Gramsci, 1971/1992, p. 323) informs the analytical practices of CDS scholars, who examine how hegemonic discourses obscure inequality by making certain social arrangements appear natural or inevitable. As van Dijk (2008) argues, discourse plays a crucial role in the production and reproduction of ideologies through mental models that shape how individuals perceive social reality (pp. 115–116).

Equally significant is Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual—a figure who emerges from and articulates the experiences of a particular class. In CDS, this concept has inspired the researcher's ethical commitment to reflexivity, engagement, and transformation. Wodak (2001) insists that discourse analysts must act not merely as observers but as socially responsible scholars, positioned within and accountable to the social fields they analyse. The very act of discourse analysis, under a Gramscian lens, becomes a form of intellectual intervention aimed at disrupting hegemonic narratives and amplifying subaltern perspectives.

The concept of common sense (*senso comune*) is also instrumental in understanding the ideological operations of discourse. Gramsci contended that dominant ideologies are most effective when embedded in the taken-for-granted assumptions of everyday life. These assumptions, often mediated through banal linguistic choices—metaphors, presuppositions, deixis—are the microstructures through which hegemony is enacted and reinforced. Fairclough (2001) incorporates this insight into his theory of naturalisation, wherein the meanings privileged by dominant social actors become so habitual that they are no longer perceived as ideological (p. 93).

The relevance of Gramsci to CDS extends beyond his analytical vocabulary to his method of inquiry. His philosophy of praxis, grounded in historical materialism and cultural critique, resonates with the problem-oriented and interdisciplinary ethos of CDS. As Flowerdew and Richardson (2018) point out, CDS's capacity to connect textual analysis to broader socio-political structures owes much to Gramscian thinking, which insists that ideas and discourses must be analysed in relation to the historical blocs in which they are embedded (p. 9).

Gramsci's theory also anticipates the contemporary turn to multimodal and digital discourses.

1.5.5. Michel Foucault's Concept of Discourse and Power/Knowledge

1.5.5.1. Reconfiguring Ideology in Critical Discourse Studies

Moving beyond the deterministic, class-based ideologies of orthodox Marxism, Foucault reconceptualised power not as something held or possessed but as a dispersed, productive force that is embedded in and reproduced through discursive practices. His genealogical method—uncovering the historical conditions that make certain discourses possible—remains central to how CDS understands the interpenetration of language, knowledge, and social control (Foucault, 1975; 1980; 1982; 1990; see also Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 6).

Foucault's early archaeological work (e.g., *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1972) decouples discourse from an assumed a priori foundation, urging analysts to identify the rules that govern the formation, circulation, and institutionalisation of knowledge. Later, in his genealogical phase, he positions discourse as the nexus through which power and knowledge are co-constituted, coining the term “power/knowledge” to reflect this inseparability (Foucault, 1980). Unlike ideology, which implies a distortion of reality, discourse in the Foucauldian sense does not conceal the truth but constitutes regimes of truth—normative frameworks that define what can be said, by whom, and under what conditions (Foucault, 1984; see also Hall, 1992).

Within CDS, this reconfiguration of discourse theory has enabled scholars to move from exposing ideological misrepresentations to examining how discourse *constructs* social realities. Fairclough (1992, 2003), for instance, draws on Foucault's insight that discourse is constitutive of

identities, social relations, and knowledge formations, thus foregrounding the ‘order of discourse’—the structured configurations of genres, styles, and discourses that delimit meaning in any given social field. Similarly, van Leeuwen (2008) develops a Foucauldian-inspired model that views discourse as a vehicle for legitimation, embedding constructions of social reality within everyday language use. Foucault's notion of power as capillary—diffuse throughout institutions and social practices—challenges the centralised model of domination.

1.5.6. Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Symbolic Power and Its Contribution to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus—including the interrelated concepts of *field*, *habitus*, *capital*, and *symbolic power*—has proved invaluable in equipping discourse analysts with tools to examine how discourse operates as a vehicle of both social reproduction and transformation. Unlike reductionist models that confine ideology to explicit beliefs or propositional content, Bourdieu (1991) views symbolic domination as a subtle, embodied, and often unconscious process, operating through everyday practices and legitimised classificatory schemes embedded in social fields.

At the heart of Bourdieu's approach is the concept of *symbolic power*, which he defines as the capacity to impose meanings and impose them as legitimate by concealing their arbitrariness (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170). This power is not wielded through coercion but enacted via recognition—through shared *habitus* and the misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) of social hierarchies as natural or self-evident (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 479–480). As Wodak et al. (1999) illustrate in their analysis of national identity, Bourdieu's notion of the *national habitus* enables researchers to interrogate how particular linguistic practices embody and reproduce deeply entrenched collective dispositions, often taken for granted by both speakers and analysts.

Crucially, Bourdieu's theory overcomes the binary between structure and agency by proposing the concept of *habitus*: a system of durable, transposable dispositions shaped by one's position in a field (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 52–65). In CDS, this allows for a nuanced understanding of how social actors unconsciously internalise the norms and doxa of their respective fields—media, politics, academia—and reproduce them discursively without conscious intent. The

habitus, when aligned with the logic of a field, facilitates the reproduction of symbolic power, while misalignment may lead to discursive resistance or subversion.

The concept of *field* further elaborates how discourses are situated within relatively autonomous arenas of social practice governed by specific logics and forms of capital. Each field—be it political, educational, journalistic, or academic—possesses its own rules of recognition and valuation, structuring what counts as legitimate discourse (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 97–98). Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999, pp. 99–118) engage with this framework critically, acknowledging the utility of field theory while cautioning against Bourdieu’s occasional tendency to understate the generative force of language and interaction. Nonetheless, the structural embedding of discursive practices within field-specific dynamics enhances the explanatory power of CDS by grounding linguistic phenomena in broader institutional and historical configurations.

Symbolic violence—another core Bourdieusian concept—describes the imposition of systems of meaning that reproduce domination while appearing natural and legitimate. It captures the “soft” forms of coercion embedded in language use, educational norms, and media framing that perpetuate existing hierarchies without overt force (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 167–168). CDS scholars such as Forchtner and Schneickert (2016) have sought to integrate symbolic violence into discourse-historical frameworks, enriching their critique of linguistic practices that mask or legitimise inequality.

Blommaert (2015) also highlights the relevance of Bourdieu’s *linguistic market*, where linguistic capital is unequally distributed, and some varieties of language carry more legitimacy and authority than others depending on the market in which they are used. This concept resonates with van Dijk’s (2008) attention to access and control over discourse, linking symbolic capital to discourse production and circulation. For instance, dominant social actors can define the terms of debate or frame issues in ways that benefit their own ideological positions—actions that reflect their control over the linguistic market.

Another critical contribution of Bourdieu to CDS lies in his reconceptualisation of ideology. Rather than viewing it as a set of explicit doctrines, Bourdieu conceptualises ideology as inscribed in the very schemas of perception and classification, which structure how people see and interpret

the world (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 159–160). This corresponds closely to Fairclough’s (2001) notion of “naturalisation,” where ideologically loaded meanings are sedimented in language and rendered invisible as ideology. In this regard, the strength of CDS lies in its ability to render visible the invisible—what Bourdieu calls “making the unthinkable thinkable” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 243).

Furthermore, recent CDS work inspired by Bourdieu has attempted to navigate the theoretical tensions between his sociological determinism and more dialogic or post-structuralist approaches. Forchtner and Schneickert (2016) propose a synthesis between Bourdieusian field theory and Habermasian communicative action, seeking to retain both structural awareness and the normative potentials of discourse ethics. Such interdisciplinary engagement not only enriches CDS methodologically but also aligns with its foundational commitment to reflexivity, critical engagement, and social transformation.

In sum, Bourdieu’s theorisation of symbolic power, habitus, field, and symbolic violence offers a rigorous sociological scaffolding for understanding how discourse operates within and across social spaces.

1.5.7. Other Social Theories Relevant to Critical Discourse Studies

While the foundational scaffolding of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) has been firmly established through the contributions of Marx, Gramsci, Althusser, Foucault, Bourdieu, and thinkers from the Frankfurt School, the field’s conceptual breadth has been substantially extended through theoretical borrowings from adjacent domains in social and political thought. These incorporations are not supplementary in a marginal sense; rather, they deepen the field’s analytic sensitivity to how discourse not only communicates but actively constructs social reality. Theoretical insights from dialogism, discourse ethics, and performativity have furnished CDS with robust interpretive frameworks that illuminate the operations of language in the shaping of identity, authority, and contestation across sociopolitical contexts.

Among the most influential of these contributions is Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism, which reorients our understanding of discourse as intrinsically relational, multivoiced, and saturated with social heterogeneity. For Bakhtin (1981), language is never neutral; it is always

positioned within a web of past utterances and ideological positions. His notion of heteroglossia—the coexistence and interaction of multiple speech genres and worldviews within a single discursive space—has proved particularly salient to CDS scholars. Fairclough’s theorisation of intertextuality (1992, 1995), for instance, draws directly from Bakhtinian thought, conceptualising texts as sites of struggle where ideologies intersect and compete. Wodak and Meyer (2016) similarly highlight how this dialogic approach allows analysts to trace the sedimentation and transformation of discursive meanings across time and context.

Jürgen Habermas’s discourse ethics further reinforces the normative dimension of CDS, particularly in approaches such as the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). Habermas (1984, 1987) proposed that rational communication in the public sphere should adhere to ideal conditions of mutual understanding, transparency, and validity claims—truth, sincerity, normative rightness, and comprehensibility. Reisigl (2018) illustrates how DHA operationalises these validity claims as criteria to evaluate manipulative or exclusionary discursive strategies. By integrating Habermas’s procedural ethics, CDS affirms its commitment to deliberative democracy and public accountability, viewing discourse as both a medium of social reproduction and a potential space for emancipatory critique (Fairclough, 2003; Forchtner, 2018).

A complementary line of influence derives from the work of Jürgen Habermas, whose theory of communicative action and discourse ethics has provided CDS with a normative orientation. Habermas (1984, 1987) argues that genuine communication presupposes conditions of mutual intelligibility, sincerity, and the rational contestation of claims. These ideals—what he terms ‘validity claims’—are not only philosophical aspirations but also analytical tools. Within the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), Reisigl (2018) demonstrates how these claims can serve as evaluative criteria to scrutinise discourses that obfuscate truth, marginalise interlocutors, or distort public deliberation. Habermasian principles thus bolster CDS’s normative commitment to democratic dialogue, accountability, and the exposure of manipulative or hegemonic discourse.

Equally transformative is the intervention of Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, which reconfigures our understanding of identity as something not given but enacted through discourse. Drawing from poststructuralist feminist theory, Butler (1990, 1997) contends that identities emerge through repeated, regulated acts that conform to social norms. Language, in this account, does not simply reflect reality; it enacts and sustains it. This insight has had profound implications for CDS, particularly in analyses of

gender, race, and subject formation. Researchers such as Lazar (2005) and Flowerdew and Richardson (2018) have applied Butlerian performativity to explore how discursive iterations of power naturalise inequality while also leaving open the possibility for resistance and rearticulation.

Taken together, these contributions from Bakhtin, Habermas, and Butler reflect the open and interdisciplinary spirit of CDS. Their respective emphases—on the dialogic nature of meaning, the ethical demands of public discourse, and the performative constitution of identity—equip CDS with a richer vocabulary for analysing the complex ways in which discourse structures social life. These theoretical extensions not only complement the field’s foundational commitments but also push it towards greater reflexivity, precision, and critical depth in addressing the entanglements of language, power, and ideology.

1.6. Major Approaches to CDA

1.6.1. Norman Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach

Introduction: Locating Fairclough within Critical Discourse Studies:

Norman Fairclough remains a foundational figure in the evolution of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), having significantly shaped its theoretical trajectory and methodological rigour through a distinctively dialectical orientation. At the heart of his work lies a profound insistence that language must be viewed not merely as a vehicle for communication but as a form of social practice—deeply interwoven with the mechanisms of power, ideology, and institutional structure (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 2003). His framework situates discourse within the dynamic interplay between structure and agency, thereby exposing the ways in which language both reflects and actively shapes social realities. This perspective gave CDS its critical impetus, allowing it to move beyond descriptive linguistics to interrogate the role of discourse in processes of domination and resistance.

While the field has since diversified—integrating van Dijk’s socio-cognitive paradigm and Wodak’s discourse-historical approach—Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA) retains enduring influence, particularly in contexts where language is mobilised as a vehicle for ideological transformation. His emphasis on the constitutive role of discourse in social practices

makes his model especially apt for analysing extremist propaganda, where linguistic and visual resources are deliberately deployed to naturalise violence, construct moral binaries, and consolidate group identity. In this regard, Fairclough's approach offers invaluable analytical leverage for unpacking the rhetorical strategies employed by ISIS in its English-language magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. These publications exemplify the strategic conflation of language, power, and identity in service of a radical ideological project—an intersection that Fairclough's model is uniquely equipped to illuminate.

1.6.1.1. Theoretical Foundations of the Dialectical–Relational Approach

The DRA integrates key concepts from Marxist theory, particularly Gramsci's notion of hegemony and Althusser's theory of ideology. Fairclough (2001) emphasises that discursive practices are implicated in the maintenance or contestation of hegemonic orders, rendering language a vehicle of both ideological reproduction and resistance. These ideas are methodologically operationalised through a dialectical analysis of the interplay between semiotic elements and other social structures, such as institutions, power relations, and economic processes (Fairclough, 2016; Jessop, 2004).

1.6.1.2. Core Concepts: Discourse, Semiosis, and Social Practice

Fairclough's model revolves around three interlocking concepts: genre, discourse, and style. These are not discrete elements but rather dialectically interrelated modalities through which social practices are enacted, identities are performed, and realities are construed (Fairclough, 2003, 2016). Genres represent ways of acting; discourses denote ways of representing; styles index ways of being. Within the propaganda strategies of ISIS, these modalities are intricately orchestrated—for instance, in the way *Dabiq* constructs martyrdom through narrative genres, invokes eschatological discourses to reframe geopolitical events, and styles jihadist identities as morally superior and divinely sanctioned.

Fairclough (1992) introduces the concept of the "order of discourse" to describe the configuration of genres, discourses, and styles within a given institutional or social field. These

configurations, as observed in ISIS's communicative practices, reveal how religious, political, and military discourses are strategically hybridised to normalise violence and delegitimise opposition.

1.6.1.3 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework

One of the most enduring contributions of Fairclough's DRA is his three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, comprising (1) textual analysis, (2) discursive practice, and (3) social practice (Fairclough, 1992). This framework enables a layered reading of discourse, moving from surface linguistic features to the underlying social and ideological mechanisms. Textual analysis involves the close reading of vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and textual structures. Discursive practice investigates how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. Social practice explores the broader socio-political and institutional contexts that shape and are shaped by discourse.

When applied to *Rumiyah* and *Dabiq*, this framework allows for a granular analysis of how radical messages are linguistically constructed (e.g., through metaphors of purity and contamination), how they circulate across digital platforms, and how they interface with broader ideological and geopolitical configurations (Ingram, 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

1.6.1.4 Transdisciplinarity and Social Theory Integration

A hallmark of Fairclough's approach is its transdisciplinary orientation. Rather than treating CDA as an isolated method, Fairclough insists on its integration with broader social theories to construct rich, explanatory accounts of discourse (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). His collaboration with Jessop in cultural political economy (CPE) exemplifies this integration, combining discourse theory with theories of state power and economic restructuring (Fairclough, 2006; Jessop, 2004). This openness to other disciplines enables DRA to address complex phenomena like globalisation, neoliberalism, or—pertinently—radicalisation.

For example, analysing ISIS discourse through DRA can be enhanced by incorporating securitisation theory (Wæver, 1995), identity politics theories (Hall, 1996), and performative violence theories (Butler, 2004), thereby revealing how discourse legitimates violence under the guise of moral necessity.

1.6.1.5. Application of DRA in Media and Political Discourse

Fairclough's model has been widely applied to political and media texts, particularly in contexts marked by ideological struggle and legitimation crises (Fairclough, 2000; 2010). His analysis of New Labour's discourse demonstrated how political consensus is constructed by suppressing antagonism and promoting a fabricated unity—a pattern echoed in ISIS's narratives, which attempt to erase internal dissent and present a monolithic vision of the ummah (Fairclough, 2006).

1.6.2. Teun A. van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach: A Cognitive–Discursive Lens for Critical Discourse Studies

1.6.2.1. Introduction: Locating van Dijk within CDS

Among the leading architects of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), Teun A. van Dijk stands out for his profound contribution to bridging discourse analysis, cognitive science, and social theory. His socio-cognitive approach (SCA) offers a multilayered framework for examining the reproduction of ideology, power, and social inequality through language. It is particularly well suited to interrogating complex and ideologically loaded texts—such as ISIS's digital propaganda magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumyah*—where discourse is deployed strategically to shape cognition and guide social action. Distinct from Fairclough's dialectical-relational model and Wodak's discourse-historical approach, van Dijk's framework centres on the mediating role of cognition—a theoretical innovation that enhances the explanatory power of CDS in contexts of radicalisation and ideological persuasion (van Dijk, 2008a; 2014).

1.6.2.2. Theoretical Foundations: Discourse, Cognition, and Society

Van Dijk's model is anchored in a socio-cognitive epistemology, where discourse is understood as a triadic interface between language use (text/talk), mental representations (cognition), and societal structures (context) (van Dijk, 1998a; 2014). This positioning emerged as a critique of earlier CDS frameworks that, while insightful, were perceived as overly text-focused or lacking in psychological depth (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Instead, van Dijk foregrounds mental

models—or context models—as the cognitive structures that link individual understanding with group ideologies (van Dijk, 2009).

Crucially, this approach builds upon—and in some respects, critiques—the earlier works of Mead (1934), Vygotsky (1962), Moscovici (1984), and Bartlett (1932), who laid the groundwork for studying social representations and schema-based processing in cognitive psychology. Van Dijk fuses these cognitive insights with critical linguistics, arguing that discourse must be seen not only as a reflection of power but as a cognitive instrument for its reproduction (van Dijk, 1995).

1.6.2.3. Key Concepts: Mental Models, Ideologies, and Context Control

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model operates through several core constructs:

Mental Models: Representations of specific events or experiences held in episodic memory, including contextual and situational knowledge. These models are dynamic, constructed during discourse production or comprehension, and shaped by social schemata (van Dijk, 2014).

Social Cognition: This refers to collectively shared beliefs, norms, values, and ideologies that inform individual mental models. Social cognition, thus, serves as the bridge between individual thought and group discourse (van Dijk, 1998b).

Ideology: Defined as “the foundational beliefs of a group” (van Dijk, 1998b, p. 6), ideologies control the schemata that underlie social representations and influence how people interpret events and others. They are not inherently false or harmful, but they can become tools for exclusion, dominance, and polarisation when manipulated strategically in discourse (Billig, 1991; Foucault, 1972; van Dijk, 2006).

Context Control: Speakers manipulate context models to exert control over interpretation. For instance, by highlighting or omitting information, altering speaker roles, or strategically deploying presuppositions, a speaker can guide how their discourse is cognitively processed (van Dijk, 2008a).

These concepts are indispensable for analysing extremist propaganda like that found in Dabiq and Rummyah, where ISIS discourse seeks to shape readers' social cognition through

emotionally charged narratives, dichotomous in-group/out-group distinctions, and persuasive appeals to Islamic identity, victimisation, and martyrdom (Al Raffie, 2012; Wignell et al., 2017).

1.6.2.4. Levels of Analysis in the Socio-Cognitive Approach

Van Dijk's approach is both multi-levelled and multi-disciplinary, operating across:

Textual and Linguistic Features: Including lexical choice, rhetorical devices (e.g. hyperboles, metaphors, euphemisms), syntactic structures (e.g. passivisation), and coherence strategies. These features are not analysed in isolation but in light of their cognitive effects and ideological functions (van Dijk, 2008b; 2014).

Cognitive Representations: Including the analysis of schemata, knowledge structures, attitudes, and the ideological square (emphasising positive self-representation and negative other-representation) (van Dijk, 1998a).

Macro-Sociopolitical Contexts: Discourse is studied in its institutional, historical, and power-laden environment, with particular emphasis on the ways elites, institutions, and media discourses sustain dominance (van Dijk, 2001; 2006).

1.6.2.5. The Ideological Square and Discourse Strategies

Perhaps van Dijk's most cited heuristic is the ideological square:

1. Emphasise our good properties/actions.
2. Emphasise their bad properties/actions.
3. De-emphasise our bad properties/actions.
4. De-emphasise their good properties/actions.

This framework is central to understanding Dabiq and Rumyah's binary construction of the world. ISIS systematically represents the West as corrupt, violent, and hypocritical while portraying itself as pious, victimised, and righteous (Zelin, 2015). Through rhetorical strategies

such as polarisation, victimisation, and moral legitimisation, these texts reinforce ideological schemata that justify violence and attract recruits (Cottee, 2015).

1.6.2.6. Application in Media, Prejudice, and Extremist Discourse

Van Dijk's early work on news discourse (1988), prejudice (1991), and racism (2008) has particular relevance for studying ISIS propaganda. In *News as Discourse*, he explains how dominant ideologies become "naturalised" through repetitive patterns of language, while in *Prejudice in Discourse, Discourse, and Power*, he outlines how exclusionary narratives are embedded in everyday communication and institutional discourse.

These insights are critical for understanding how Dabiq and Rumyah frame enemies, justify violence, and recruit sympathisers—particularly in Western contexts where such texts are designed to target alienated or marginalised individuals through cognitive resonance and identity appeal (Borum, 2011).

1.6.2.7. Relevance to the Analysis of ISIS Propaganda

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach is exceptionally well suited to this PhD's analytic aims for several reasons:

Cognitive Depth: It illuminates how propaganda shapes not just opinion but long-term social representations and attitudes, particularly those linked to identity, belonging, and grievance (Moghaddam, 2005; van Dijk, 2006).

Ideological Mapping: It allows for a fine-grained analysis of how extremist ideologies are discursively constructed, legitimated, and normalised.

Multimodal Integration: While SCA is primarily text-based, van Dijk (2008a) encourages integration with other modalities—important for analysing Dabiq and Rumyah, which blend language, imagery, and symbolic aesthetics to trigger cognitive effects.

Triangulation with Other Models: SCA complements Fairclough's emphasis on structural power and Wodak's historical contextualisation by adding a cognitive interface—offering a comprehensive understanding of how propaganda works across levels of text, thought, and society.

1.6.3. Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

1.6.3.1. Introduction: Situating DHA within Critical Discourse Studies

Among the most distinctive and context-sensitive models within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) offers a multifaceted theoretical and analytical framework grounded in an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented, and multi-methodological ethos. Initially conceived during an empirical investigation of anti-Semitic discourse during the Austrian Waldheim affair in the 1980s (Wodak et al., 1990; Mitten, 1992; Gruber, 1991), DHA has since evolved into a robust model applied across domains such as political discourse, racism, migration, and identity construction (Wodak, 2009; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016).

1.6.3.2. Core Concepts: Discourse, Context, and Ideology

Wodak conceptualises discourse as a "bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts", realised across semiotic fields and genres (Wodak, 2001, p. 66). Discourse is both socially conditioned and socially constitutive, echoing Fairclough and Wodak (1997). Four contextual layers guide DHA: (1) text-internal co-text, (2) intertextual/interdiscursive relations, (3) situational/institutional context, and (4) the broader socio-political and historical frame (Wodak, 2011).

The DHA framework aligns ideology with Gramsci's concept of hegemony, operating through the naturalisation of dominant worldviews (van Dijk, 1998; Fairclough, 2003). Thus, strategic recontextualisation and discursive repetition render dominant discourses commonsensical (Wodak & Reisigl, 2016; KhosraviNik & Wodak, 2010).

1.6.3.3. Intertextuality, Interdiscursivity, and Recontextualisation

DHA emphasises that discourses are inherently both intertextual and interdiscursive. As Reisigl and Wodak (2016) explain, discourses borrow and embed texts, voices, and genres across temporal and spatial boundaries. Recontextualisation—a key mechanism in DHA—involves the strategic transfer of linguistic or conceptual elements from one context to another, thereby generating new meanings (Bernstein, 1990; Linell, 1998).

This sensitivity to discursive transformation over time renders DHA particularly suited to tracking the diachronic evolution of political or ideological narratives (Wodak, 2009). The historical layering of discourse is not merely additive but constitutive of meaning and social action (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016).

1.6.3.4. Methodological Orientation and Recursive Research Logic

DHA embraces methodological pluralism, integrating qualitative interviews, ethnographic observation, focus groups, and close textual analysis (Krzyżanowski, 2010; Wodak & Krzyżanowski, 2008). The approach is abductive: theory and data inform one another recursively. It draws on both "grand theories" (e.g., critical theory, constructivism) and "middle-range theories" (e.g., nationalism, prejudice, populism) to support nuanced, scalable interpretations (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

While tools such as the five-question strategy, the typology of discursive strategies, and the three-level critique are indispensable to DHA's analytical procedure (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, 2016), their technical elaboration is deferred to the methodology chapter.

1.6.3.5. DHA's Relevance to the Analysis of ISIS Propaganda

Though this section refrains from applied analysis, it is worth noting that DHA's historically grounded and ideologically sensitive lens makes it especially apt for understanding extremist discourse. In publications like *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS strategically draws on historical grievances, recontextualised religious scripts, and nationalist tropes to construct exclusive identities and legitimise violence (Al Raffie, 2012; Wodak & Richardson, 2013). DHA's attention

to discursive change, interdiscursivity, and ideological framing is thus critical to dissecting how such propaganda gains resonance.

1.7. Theoretical Synthesis: Toward a Triangulated Framework

While Fairclough (1995, 2013) provides the foundational three-dimensional model for linking micro-textual features to macro-social practices, a comprehensive Critical Discourse Study (CDS) requires a robust mechanism to explain how these social structures are internalised and reproduced by individual actors. This research argues that cognition, as defined by van Dijk (2014, 2016), serves as the indispensable mediating link between the Text (Fairclough) and History (Wodak). Within this framework, social actors do not simply react to historical contexts or produce texts in a vacuum; rather, they rely on mental models—subjective representations of events—that filter historical socio-political influences before they are manifested in discursive structures. Consequently, Wodak’s (2001, 2011) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) provides the necessary longitudinal depth, ensuring that the ‘text’ is not viewed as a static artefact but as a product of historical evolution, cognitively processed and socially situated.

The synthesis of these three pillars—Fairclough’s textual analysis, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive interface, and Wodak’s historical context—justifies the methodological triangulation employed in this thesis. By integrating these perspectives, the study moves beyond mere description toward an explanatory critique. It acknowledges that the ‘History’ (Wodak) of a discourse provides the conditions for its existence, the ‘Cognition’ (van Dijk) explains how individuals perceive and propagate these ideologies, and the ‘Text’ (Fairclough) serves as the empirical evidence of this interaction. This multi-perspectival approach ensures that the analysis of ISIS propaganda is both historically grounded and cognitively nuanced, effectively avoiding the pitfalls of linguistic reductionism.

1.8. CDS Interests and Agenda: A Critical Orientation Towards Power, Ideology, and Social Change

Following the theoretical exposition of the major approaches within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), it is necessary to reflect critically on the overarching interests and agenda that unify

the field. While Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak offer distinctive epistemological and methodological perspectives, they converge on a shared critical commitment: to uncover and challenge the discursive mechanisms that reproduce social inequality, legitimise power asymmetries, and perpetuate ideological domination (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Waugh et al., 2016).

This thesis fully embraces CDS's transformative and emancipatory mandate by investigating ISIS's online propaganda as a paradigmatic site of ideological manipulation and discursive violence. In line with the agenda of CDS, the aim is not only to deconstruct radical narratives but also to contribute to counter-extremism efforts grounded in critical linguistics and public policy relevance. Thus, this study extends CDS project to digital terrains where discourse weaponisation intersects with religious, geopolitical, and psychological dimensions of radicalisation.

1.8.1. Ideology: Theoretical Foundations, Cognitive Dimensions, and Discursive Reproduction in CDS

1.8.1.2. Introduction: Ideology as a Pillar in CDS

Ideology is one of the most pivotal and contested concepts in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), operating as a foundational lens through which discourse analysts expose the entanglement of language, power, and inequality. While its definitional boundaries are fluid and historically contingent, within CDS, ideology is broadly understood as a system of socially shared beliefs and values that serve to establish, legitimise, and reproduce social dominance (van Dijk, 1998, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Discourse, in this context, becomes a semiotic battlefield where ideological forces struggle over meaning, representation, and control of social knowledge (Fairclough, 1995; Thompson, 1990).

1.8.1.3. Historical and Theoretical Lineages of Ideology

The genealogy of ideology traces back to Enlightenment philosopher Destutt de Tracy, who coined the term in the 18th century as the 'science of ideas. In Marxist thought, however, ideology became a critique of consciousness manipulated by ruling classes to mask exploitation (Marx &

Engels, 1970/1845). For Marx, ideology was not merely mistaken belief but a tool for the mystification of material contradictions (Eagleton, 1991).

Althusser (1971) expanded this by introducing *ideological state apparatuses* (ISAs), emphasising how ideology exists materially within institutions such as schools, the media, and religion. His concept of *interpellation*—where subjects are 'hailed' into social roles—highlights how discourse constitutes identity and maintains social order (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Gramsci (1971), in turn, theorised ideology through *hegemony*: the ability of dominant groups to secure consent via cultural and ideological means rather than coercion. These Marxist and neo-Marxist interpretations laid the groundwork for CDS's understanding of discourse as a site of ideological reproduction.

1.8.1.4. Contemporary Definitions and Cognitive Foundations

In CDS, ideology is no longer seen solely as false consciousness but as a system of normative, socially shared beliefs tied to power and group identity. Van Dijk (1998, 2006) conceptualises ideology as schemata stored in long-term memory, guiding how social groups perceive the world, evaluate events, and engage in communication. These schemata influence mental models—subjective representations of events—that serve as a bridge between ideology and discourse production (van Dijk, 2008).

Van Dijk's *ideological square* succinctly illustrates the polarising logic often present in extremist discourse: (1) emphasise our good properties/actions; (2) emphasise their bad properties/actions; (3) de-emphasise our bad properties/actions; and (4) de-emphasise their good properties/actions. This model reflects the binary construction of the world evident in ISIS propaganda (van Dijk, 2008; Al Raffie, 2012).

Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) treats ideology as a dynamic worldview embedded in discourse and shaped by history, social actors, and institutional practices. Ideologies comprise three components: representational (depictions of current reality), visionary (imagined futures), and programmatic (strategic actions), which makes them particularly potent in mobilising audiences (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009).

Fairclough (1992, 2003) frames ideology as meanings serving the interests of powerful groups, naturalised through routine discursive practices. Through *interdiscursivity*, ideologies are seen as drawing upon and merging genres, styles, and discourses to legitimise certain realities—e.g., how ISIS combines religious, militaristic, and sociopolitical narratives in a cohesive ideological project.

1.8.1.5. Dimensions and Linguistic Markers of Ideology

Ideology manifests through language. As Hart (2010) and Yang (2023) argue, lexical choice, syntactic structure, modality, and transitivity patterns signal ideological stances within discourse. For example, passive voice may obscure agency in violent acts, while evaluative adjectives may frame events or groups in biased ways.

Drawing on Rejai's (1991) model, ideology has five dimensions:

- *Cognitive*: beliefs and knowledge structuring social perception.
- *Affective*: emotional investment in group identity.
- *Evaluative*: normative judgements about social and political structures.
- *Programmatic*: action-oriented strategies to change or maintain power.
- *Social base*: rootedness in group membership and social collectivity.

These dimensions enable ideologies to mobilise support, guide behaviour, and influence discourse.

1.8.1.6. Ideology, Media, and Symbolic Power

Media are crucial ideological apparatuses. According to Croteau & Hoynes (2003) and Fourie (2008), they do not merely mirror social reality but help construct it. By selecting topics, framing narratives, and privileging specific voices, media perpetuate dominant ideologies. For instance, ISIS publications systematically manipulate visual and linguistic cues to glorify martyrdom and vilify dissent, shaping audience perceptions and emotional alignment.

Bourdieu's (1991) concept of *symbolic violence* is useful here: language subtly enacts and legitimises domination. The repeated use of sacred imagery and euphemistic references in ISIS magazines illustrates how ideology operates as a naturalised, symbolic force.

1.8.1.7. Interdisciplinarity and Contextual Dependency

Ideology in CDA is best understood through an interdisciplinary lens that integrates linguistics, sociology, and cognitive science (Dong-mei, 2008; Khudhair, 2022). The interpretation of ideological meaning is also deeply context-dependent—shaped by historical events, sociopolitical environments, and authorial intent (Chamalah et al., 2023). Ideological readings of discourse must therefore consider not just linguistic forms but the social conditions that render those forms meaningful.

Verschueren (2015) reminds us that ideologies are not always negative—they are foundational to meaning-making and necessary for navigating social life. This aligns with van Dijk's (2003) view that progressive ideologies—e.g., feminist, anti-racist—exist in dialectical tension with hegemonic ideologies.

1.8.1.8. Challenges and Evolving Trajectories

While well-theorised, the ideology of CDS continues to face methodological and conceptual challenges. As Zhan-bin (2007) and Yang (2023) note, the dynamic nature of ideology requires continual theoretical refinement and interdisciplinary innovation. Emerging areas such as digital propaganda, algorithmic discourse, and multimodal radicalisation (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018) call for more integrated models of analysis.

1.8.1.9. Relevance to the Present Study

This thesis critically unpacks ISIS's propaganda discourse in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* through the lens of ideology. These magazines serve not only to disseminate strategic messages but also to indoctrinate recruits into a binary moral universe of believers versus enemies. The ideological force of such discourse is found not only in what is said but in how it is said, to whom, and in what context. The integration of Fairclough's, Wodak's, and van Dijk's frameworks will enable a

triangulated deconstruction of this discourse, revealing its cognitive scaffolding, historical roots, and discursive operations.

1.9. Radicalisation: A Multidimensional Process of Ideological Transformation and Discursive Mobilisation

1.9.1. Introduction: Locating Radicalisation within Critical Discourse Studies

Radicalisation has emerged as a critical theoretical construct in both policy and academia, particularly in the context of jihadist violence and the global diffusion of extremist ideologies. Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), radicalisation is not perceived merely as a psychological deviation or a behavioural trajectory towards terrorism but rather as a linguistically and socially mediated process involving ideological construction, identity transformation, and mobilisation for action (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; van Dijk, 2008). This thesis situates radicalisation at the heart of its analysis of ISIS propaganda by exploring how Dabiq and Rumiya strategically deploy discourse to cognitively restructure perceptions and legitimise violence.

1.9.2. Conceptualising Radicalisation: Evolution, Ambiguity, and Contestations

The term radicalisation resists a singular, uncontested definition, owing to its shifting usage across disciplinary, cultural, and political domains (Schmid, 2013; Sedgwick, 2010). Initially signifying political radicalism or ideological commitment, the term has increasingly become synonymous with violent extremism, especially in the aftermath of 9/11 (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010; Neumann, 2013). This semantic drift, while politically expedient, has often led to analytical imprecision and the stigmatisation of dissent.

The PRACTICES Project (2018, p. 5) provides a critical linguistic distinction: radicality is defined as the discursive endpoint—an extreme positioning—while radicalisation is the process by which such positions are formed and enacted. Importantly, not all radical ideologies culminate in violence (Schmid, 2013; McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008), thus necessitating a nuanced differentiation between cognitive radicalisation (belief adoption) and behavioural radicalisation (violent action).

1.9.3. Theoretical Models: Mapping Radicalisation Trajectories

Numerous models attempt to capture the stages, catalysts, and mechanisms underpinning radicalisation:

- Moghaddam's (2005) "staircase model" depicts radicalisation as an upward progression from perceived injustice to acts of terrorism, shaped by blocked mobility and moral disengagement.
- Wiktorowicz (2005) proposes a four-stage journey—cognitive opening, religious seeking, frame alignment, and socialisation in extremist ideology.
- Borum (2011) outlines a cognitive trajectory: (1) perception of injustice, (2) external attribution of blame, (3) negative stereotyping of the out-group, and (4) moral justification for violence.
- Sageman (2004) and Kruglanski et al. (2014) stress identity crises and the “Quest for Significance”, where the drive to restore personal worth is channelled by ideological narratives.

These models converge in emphasising radicalisation as non-linear, contextual, and multilevel, intersecting personal, social, and ideological dynamics (Hafez & Mullins, 2015; Schuurman, 2019).

1.9.4. Cognitive Foundations and Ideological Internalisation

Within the socio-cognitive framework of van Dijk (2006, 2008), radicalisation is anchored in the ideological schemata stored in long-term memory, shaping how individuals interpret reality. These schemata are operationalised through mental models—subjective representations of events filtered through group-based ideologies. In ISIS discourse, these mental models manifest as binaries (believers vs. infidels), justifying violence through selective framing and emotional resonance (Wignell et al., 2017).

Cognitive openings—triggered by crises of meaning, identity loss, or marginalisation—render individuals receptive to reframing by extremist propaganda (Wiktorowicz, 2005). ISIS capitalises on these moments by providing coherent narratives of grievance, redemption, and belonging (Ingram, 2016; Al Raffie, 2012).

1.9.5. Discursive Strategies of Radicalisation

CDS offers critical tools to analyse how radicalisation is linguistically enacted. Following Reisigl & Wodak (2009), ISIS texts employ:

- Nomination: labelling actors as ‘mujahideen’, ‘martyrs’, or ‘apostates’ to establish moral positioning;
- Predication: attributing negative or heroic traits to in-/out-groups;
- Argumentation: invoking religious or historical fallacies to legitimise violence;
- Perspectivisation: framing events from a divine or eschatological standpoint;
- Intensification: deploying repetition and hyperbole to amplify urgency.

Van Dijk's (2008) ideological square embodies these discursive moves, which ISIS texts rigorously implement to build polarisation and in-group superiority (Clifford & Powell, 2019).

1.9.6. Identity Transformation and Group Belonging

Radicalisation is closely linked to identity reconstruction. As Swann et al. (2010) explain, identity fusion occurs when personal and group identities become indistinguishable, prompting self-sacrificial behaviour. For alienated youth, ISIS provides identity scripts rooted in religious eschatology, heroic martyrdom, and moral clarity (Roy, 2017; Hogg & Adelman, 2013). The magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* encode these identities discursively, offering both an imagined ummah and a divine mandate for action.

1.9.7. Online Radicalisation and Algorithmic Persuasion

The digitalisation of jihad has revolutionised radicalisation processes. Social media platforms serve as decentralised recruitment hubs, where individuals encounter, consume, and interact with extremist content (Conway, 2017; Mahood & Rane, 2017). ISIS's media wing exploits multimodality—images, chants, nasheeds, video—to enhance affective impact (Aly et al., 2016). Online anonymity fosters echo chambers that reinforce ideological commitment, especially among lone actors (Torok, 2013).

Dabiq and *Rumiyah* are archetypes of this strategy—hybrid publications blending political commentary, battlefield reports, theological exposition, and instructional guidance to indoctrinate, normalise, and direct violence (Zelin, 2015; Ingram, 2016).

1.9.8. Drivers and Catalysts: From Vulnerability to Mobilisation

Radicalisation is not driven by ideology alone. Scholars categorise its determinants into:

- Push factors: marginalisation, socio-economic exclusion, and political grievances (Schmid, 2013; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010);
- Pull factors: group belonging, ideological coherence, purpose (King & Taylor, 2011);
- Contextual factors: global politics, perceived Muslim victimhood, online radical ecosystems (Roy, 2017; Berger, 2015).

The Staircase to Terrorism (Moghaddam, 2005) and Conversion Models (Lofland & Stark, 1965) underscore how individual vulnerabilities intersect with macro-political narratives to create fertile ground for radicalisation.

1.9.9. Critical Reflections and Limitations in the Literature

Although radicalisation research has proliferated, critiques persist. Kundnani (2015) argues that many models securitise dissent and disproportionately target Muslim communities. Others highlight the epistemological weakness of treating radicalisation as a predictable “pathway” (Schuurman, 2019). Furthermore, an overemphasis on individual psychology often obscures state violence, foreign intervention, and systemic inequality as radicalising agents (Githens-Mazer, 2012; Maskaliūnaitė, 2015).

CDS intervenes here by reframing radicalisation as an ideologically loaded construct, shaped by power and knowledge regimes and reproduced through discourse. This critical stance resists reductionism and foregrounds the need for intersectional, historically grounded analysis.

1.9.10. Conclusion: Towards a CDS-Informed Understanding of Radicalisation

Radicalisation, as examined in this thesis, is a complex, discursively constructed process that cannot be understood in isolation from language, identity, and ideology. Through the triangulated application of Fairclough's dialectical-relational model, van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework, and Wodak's discourse-historical approach, the study interrogates how *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* textualise grievance, legitimise violence, and recruit minds. By analysing radicalisation not merely as a behavioural phenomenon but as a discursive and cognitive architecture of persuasion, this thesis contributes to a robust, critical understanding of one of the most urgent ideological challenges of the contemporary era.

1.10. Identity Construction in Extremist Discourse: A Critical Discourse Studies Perspective

1.10.1. Introduction: Identity and the Radical Discourse of ISIS

Identity is not merely a personal or static attribute; it is an ideological and discursive construction dynamically formed through social, historical, and communicative processes. Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), identity is understood as a product of discourse, forged through linguistic choices, narrative structures, and contextual cues that position social actors in specific ways (Wodak et al., 2009; Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2006). In the context of ISIS's English-language magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, identity emerges as a critical site of manipulation. These publications mobilise identity construction as a strategic mechanism to attract, socialise, and radicalise recruits by cultivating rigid in-group/out-group distinctions, religious imaginaries, and heroic martyr narratives (Wignell et al., 2017; Ingram, 2016).

1.10.2. Theoretical Foundations: Identity in Critical Discourse Studies

Fairclough (2003) conceptualises identity as a facet of discourse-as-social practice, articulated through positioning within genre, discourse, and style. Discourse not only reflects identities but actively shapes them through dialectical relationships with sociocultural practices.

Van Dijk (2008) integrates identity within his socio-cognitive approach, positing that social identities are stored as social representations—ideologically driven, group-shared beliefs and schemata that guide understanding and behaviour. Identity, in this view, is cognitively embedded, and discourse acts as a medium through which identity-related mental models are activated, reinforced, or contested.

Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) foregrounds the contextually embedded nature of identity. She demonstrates how identity is historically recontextualised and negotiated across discourses, especially in nationalist, populist, or exclusionary narratives (Wodak et al., 2009). Through strategies such as nomination, predication, and argumentation, discourse actors are constructed with specific attributes, duties, and relational positions.

1.10.3. Identity and the Construction of Social Actors in ISIS Propaganda

ISIS's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* construct two primary collective identities: the purified in-group (the Ummah, or global Muslim community) and the vilified out-group (apostates, Western powers, and "crusaders"). These identities are constructed discursively, using ideological binaries and polarising narratives (Zelin, 2015; Al Raffie, 2012). The in-group is represented as morally superior, divinely sanctioned, and existentially threatened. The out-group, by contrast, is portrayed as evil, deceptive, and deserving of annihilation.

Such representation aligns with van Dijk's ideological square, which structures discourse around the emphatic positive portrayal of "us" and the demonisation of "them" (van Dijk, 2006). These identity scripts are not neutral; they evoke loyalty, justify violence, and foster emotional commitment by providing a coherent moral order.

1.10.4. Discursive Strategies of Identity Construction

Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) five discursive strategies—nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, and intensification—are central to ISIS propaganda. Through *nomination*, ISIS texts label enemies as "apostates", "crusaders", or "infidels", establishing group boundaries. *Predication* assigns stereotypical attributes, such as cowardice or treachery to out-groups, and bravery and piety to in-group members. *Argumentation* justifies violence through topoi

of defence, threat, and retribution. *Perspectivisation* aligns reader positioning with ISIS's ideological stance, while *intensification/mitigation* modulates the emotional and moral urgency of the message (Wodak et al., 2009).

1.10.5. Historical Recontextualisation and the Politics of Identity: Terrorism as a Discursive Battlefield

ISIS's identity discourse draws heavily on historical recontextualisation—reframing past events (e.g., the Crusades, colonialism, and Western interventions) to construct a continuous narrative of Muslim victimhood and Western aggression (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). This aligns with the DHA's emphasis on historical embeddedness and intertextuality, where identity is constructed through references to canonical texts, foundational myths, and collective memories.

By doing so, ISIS inserts itself into the long arc of Islamic history, portraying its members as rightful heirs of a divine mission. Rumiya, in particular, shifts this focus from territorial identity (as in *Dabiq*) to eschatological and transnational identity, positioning followers within a metaphysical struggle that transcends nation-states (Ingram, 2016; Wignell et al., 2017).

1.10.6. Identity as a Mobilising Force: Recruitment and Martyrdom

Identity construction in ISIS propaganda is not passive; it is performative. Readers are invited to embody the constructed identity through action—hijrah (migration), jihad, or martyrdom. The magazines frame martyrdom not as loss but as ascension, using linguistic intensification and theological framing to sanctify death (Gambhir, 2014).

In doing so, ISIS constructs what Hogg & Adelman (2013) describe as “entitative identity”: a cohesive, emotionally resonant group identity that offers existential meaning and moral clarity. This psychological transformation from an individual to a fused group actor is essential in motivating high-risk commitment.

1.10.7. Conclusion: Identity as Discursive Praxis in Radical Ideology

Identity construction is central to the ideological and operational goals of ISIS. This thesis will interrogate how CDS frameworks—van Dijk’s socio-cognitive interface, Fairclough’s dialectical model, and Wodak’s historical contextualisation—linguistically produce, cognitively internalise, and emotionally mobilise identity in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Such analysis illuminates the discursive anatomy of radicalisation and the mechanisms through which violent identities are naturalised and enacted.

1.11. Ideology and Power in Extremist Discourse: A Critical Discourse Studies Perspective

1.11.1. Introduction: Locating Ideology and Power in CDS

In Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), the concepts of ideology and power are central to understanding how discourse functions as a mechanism of social control, exclusion, and domination. Particularly in the context of extremist discourse—such as that produced by ISIS in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*—ideology is not merely a set of beliefs but a system of meaning that legitimises power structures and justifies violence. Power, in turn, is exercised through discourse by controlling access to knowledge, shaping social identities, and naturalising hierarchies (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). This section investigates the interplay between ideology and power in extremist discourse, highlighting how linguistic and multimodal practices are harnessed to promote radical worldviews, recruit followers, and mobilise action.

1.11.2. Theorising Ideology in CDS

In CDS, ideology is conceptualised as a system of socially shared representations that organises the beliefs, values, and norms of a group (van Dijk, 2006). These representations are not neutral but function to establish and sustain social inequality. Fairclough (1992) treats ideology as embedded in language and institutional practices, serving as a “means of manufacturing consent” (Gramsci, 1971) that stabilises hegemonic power.

Wodak and Reisigl (2001) expand this view by arguing that ideologies are discursively constructed through strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, and mitigation. These strategies, in turn, reflect and reproduce broader systems of domination. In extremist discourse, ideology works to recontextualise religious and political narratives into a coherent worldview that dichotomises reality into binaries such as believer/unbeliever, martyr/infidel, and pure/impure (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2015).

1.11.3. The Discursive Realisation of Power

Power in CDS is understood as both structural and discursive. Structural power is institutional and material, while discursive power operates through the control of meaning and communication (Fairclough, 2013). Van Dijk (1993) describes power as control over and access to discourse, especially by elites who can shape public knowledge and influence ideologies.

In the context of ISIS propaganda, discourse functions as a primary tool for asserting ideological control. Through multimodal texts, ISIS constructs a self-legitimising narrative of divine authority and moral superiority while delegitimising opponents through dehumanisation, historical revisionism, and theological absolutism (Ingram, 2016; Wignell et al., 2017). This discursive practice transforms abstract beliefs into embodied social action—mobilising supporters to commit acts of terror framed as religious obligations.

1.11.4. Interpellation, Identity, and Ideological Positioning

Building on Althusser's (1971) concept of interpellation, CDS scholars argue that ideology "hails" individuals into specific subject positions through discourse. In ISIS's discourse, recruits are positioned not only as Muslims but as soldiers of a divine war, with prescribed roles, missions, and duties. Such subject positions are reinforced through metaphors of purification, brotherhood, sacrifice, and vengeance (Wodak, 2015; van Dijk, 2008).

These identity constructs are deeply gendered and racialised. Women are discursively framed as reproducers of the caliphate (Mahood & Rane, 2017), while Westerners are depicted as morally corrupt aggressors. The repeated invocation of eschatological imagery, martyrdom, and historical

grievances further personalises ideological commitment and fuses individual identity with collective struggle (Roy, 2017; Ingram, 2015).

1.11.5. Ideological Strategies in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*

A close reading of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* reveals consistent patterns of ideological manipulation and power enactment. The discourse operates through what van Dijk (2006) terms the “ideological square”:

- Emphasise the virtues of the in-group
- Emphasise the vices of the out-group
- Mitigate the vices of the in-group
- Mitigate the virtues of the out-group

These strategies are linguistically materialised through presupposition, implication, repetition, metaphor, and euphemism. For instance, ISIS frames civilian deaths as "collateral purification" and celebrates enemy casualties as divine justice (Wignell et al., 2017). Such discursive mechanisms serve to dehumanise the “Other”, foster group cohesion, and eliminate moral ambivalence.

1.11.6. Power, Legitimation, and Religious Discourse

Extremist discourse often fuses ideology with theological legitimacy. Drawing on the work of Chilton (2004) and Richardson (2004), CDS identifies how religious texts and symbols are selectively quoted and recontextualised to confer divine authority through political violence. In *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, Qur’anic verses are stripped of context and interwoven with narratives of grievance and triumph to justify attacks on civilians and apostates (Al Raffie, 2012; Chamalah et al., 2023).

This process of legitimation is not only theological but also moral and historical. By invoking episodes from early Islamic history, the magazines construct a mythic continuity between past and present, casting ISIS as the rightful heir of the prophetic mission (Zelin, 2015). Through this narrative construction, power is naturalised, and resistance to it is framed as blasphemy or betrayal.

1.11.7. Symbolic Violence and Naturalisation of Extremism

Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic violence—the subtle imposition of systems of meaning—is highly relevant to understanding the normalisation of extremist ideologies. ISIS discourse enacts symbolic violence by transforming normative taboos (e.g., killing innocents) into moral imperatives. Terms such as "martyrdom operation" or "purification campaign" become routine, desensitising readers to the brutality they describe and portraying violence as virtuous (Hart, 2010).

In this way, language not only reflects ideology but also shapes what is thinkable and sayable. Fairclough (2003) describes this as the "internalisation of hegemony", where discursive patterns embed power relations so deeply that they become commonsensical.

1.11.8. CDS as a Tool for Ideological Deconstruction

One of the principal goals of CDS is to expose how discourse reproduces ideology and sustains dominance. By analysing linguistic choice, interdiscursivity, and multimodal framing, CDS reveals the hidden mechanisms of ideological manipulation. As Wodak and Meyer (2016) emphasise, such critiques must be historically grounded and context-sensitive.

In the context of this thesis, the tripartite framework of Fairclough's dialectical-relational model, van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory, and Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach offers a powerful lens to examine how ISIS constructs a discourse of power that is at once divine, political, and affective. This framework enables not only the analysis of textual features but also their social, institutional, and psychological ramifications.

1.11.9. Conclusion: Ideology and Power as Analytical Anchors

Ideology and power are not merely abstract concepts but the structural backbone of extremist discourse. In the case of ISIS propaganda, these elements coalesce in a communicative strategy designed to manipulate cognition, construct identity, and mobilise violence. Through the tools of CDS, this thesis seeks to unmask the linguistic architecture of extremism and expose the interplay between discourse, belief, and domination. Understanding this interplay is crucial not only for

academic critique but also for developing effective counter-radicalisation frameworks rooted in discourse awareness and ideological deconstruction.

1.12. Terrorism: Definitions, Dimensions, and Discursive Constructions

The discourse on terrorism is notoriously fraught with ambiguity, politicisation, and ideologically charged constructions. The term itself resists a singular, objective definition, instead functioning as a rhetorical and strategic label employed by state and non-state actors alike. Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), terrorism is viewed not merely as a set of violent acts but as a discursive construct deeply embedded in systems of power, legitimisation, and sociopolitical hegemony (Bhatia, 2018; Jackson, 2005). This section explores the definitional instability of terrorism, its multifaceted dimensions, and the ways in which terrorism is constructed, reproduced, and instrumentalised in discourse.

1.12.1. Definitional Ambiguity and Legal Indeterminacy

Attempts to formally define terrorism in international law have consistently failed to reach universal consensus. Rehman (2005) demonstrates that between 1936 and 1981, proposals for over 109 definitions reflected both legal imprecision and political manipulation. The 1937 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism offered one of the earliest definitions, labelling terrorism as “criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons, or a group of individuals or the general public” (Rehman, 2005, p. 73). However, this and subsequent definitions have been criticised for privileging state security over human rights and being susceptible to geo-political instrumentalisation.

Islamic legal traditions, as explored by Rehman (2005), provide parallel yet distinct understandings. Classical Sharia and Siyar emphasise justice, proportionality, and protecting innocents. *Modern jihadist movements have discursively conflated concepts such as hiraba (unlawful warfare) with legitimate jihad (struggle)*. Both Western securitisation narratives and Islamist propaganda exploit this semantic slippage, making the term terrorism a floating signifier.

1.12.2. Dimensions of Terrorism: Political, Cultural, Ideological

Terrorism transcends physical violence; it is an ideological, psychological, and communicative act. In the post-9/11 landscape, terrorism has functioned as a discursive totem that organises geopolitical antagonisms along binary lines—civilisation versus barbarism, democracy versus tyranny (Lazar & Lazar, 2004). As Bhatia (2018) explains, the "War on Terror" script functions via rhetorical binaries that perform moral outcasting and identity dichotomisation. The construction of terrorism as an existential threat necessitates a corresponding saviour—typically a Western liberal-democratic polity—thereby reinforcing narratives of exceptionalism and legitimising extraordinary state measures (Jackson, 2005, p. 2).

Crucially, terrorism also operates as a technology of governance. Invoking fear legitimises repressive legislation, surveillance regimes, and military interventions. As Bartolucci (2012) notes, the proliferation of fear-laden presidential rhetoric under the Bush administration led to a "zero-sum" framing, whereby any non-violent resolution appeared naïve or treasonous (p. 567). Such discourse not only creates the terrorist but also the national subject, who must be vigilant, patriotic, and supportive of securitisation.

1.12.3. Discursive Constructions: Terrorism as Ideological Narrative

The power of terrorism lies not only in its physical impact but in its semiotic potency. Bhatia's (2015) multidimensional analysis of Bush's post-9/11 speeches renders terrorism as an ontological evil, characterising it as irrational, barbaric, and devoid of legitimate grievances. Discursive strategies include metaphor (e.g., "axis of evil"), temporal appeals (invoking history as moral authority), and personification (e.g., terrorism as a malevolent agent). These devices contribute to what Bhatia terms the "discourse of illusion"—a hegemonic narrative that conflates subjective perception with objective truth.

The same discursive arsenal is wielded by jihadist propaganda. As illustrated in the *Radical Islamist English-Language Online Magazines* report (Bunker & Bunker, 2018), publications like *Dabiq* and *Inspire* employ religious metaphors, martyrdom narratives, and enemy vilification to construct a counter-hegemonic script. These texts reframe Western actions as crusader aggression,

legitimise violence as a sacred duty, and frame martyrdom as transcendental success. The use of open-source jihadist and do-it-yourself terror manuals further blurs the boundary between information and mobilisation.

Importantly, these texts mirror Western constructions in form and function. Both sides invoke binaries, authorise violence through historical analogies, and erase complexity through totalising categories (e.g., *kafir*, *infidel*, "terrorist"). This mutual mirroring reflects what Leudar et al. (2004) call "double contrastive identity," where each side constructs the other as a mirror image of evil, reinforcing a perpetual cycle of antagonism.

1.12.4. Terrorism as a Discursive Battlefield

Critical scholars contend that the discourse surrounding terrorism creates a symbolic arena where individuals contest, impose, and resist meanings. Van Dijk (2001) and Wodak (2001) underscore the role of discourse in shaping public opinion, policy, and power relations. The term 'terrorist' is not merely descriptive but performative: it sanctions targeted killings, suspends civil liberties, and circumscribes public debate.

1.13. Extremism: Conceptual Frameworks and Discursive Constructions

Whereas terrorism implies the enactment of political violence, extremism signifies the epistemological and moral deviance that precedes or justifies it (Sedgwick, 2010). Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), extremism is scrutinised not as a neutral label but as a performative act—constitutive of power relations, epistemic policing, and identity politics (Bhatia, 2015).

1.13.1. Problematics of Definition and the Politics of Labelling

No universally agreed-upon definition of extremism exists across academic, legal, or policy contexts. The UK's Prevent Strategy, for example, defines extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values", a definition so vague that it risks pathologising dissent and stigmatising minority voices (Home Office, 2011). Sedgwick (2010) warns that such definitions often collapse ideological nonconformity into a presumed trajectory toward violence.

This blurring is not merely conceptual but profoundly political, contributing to the securitisation of discourse and the erosion of civil liberties.

From an Islamic *perspective, core texts and classical jurisprudence condemn extremism (ghuluw) and advocate for moderation (wasatiyyah)* as a religious virtue (Haykel, 2009). Yet, extremist ideologues and their opponents alike selectively mobilise Islamic discourse to define and delimit what constitutes true belief or deviance. The theological labelling of mainstream Muslims as *murtaddins* (apostates) by jihadist groups like *ISIS* reveals how extremism is discursively produced from within the ummah as well, not just externally imposed (Ajjoub, 2018).

1.13.2. Discursive Dimensions: Framing the Extremist Other

Extremism is typically constructed through a semiotic architecture of threat and deviance. In Western media and policy discourse, the figure of the extremist is frequently racialised and gendered as brown, male, Muslim, irrational, and hyper-ideological (Jackson, 2007). This essentialised figure serves as the Other against which liberal secular modernity defines itself. Bartolucci (2010) underscores how governments such as Morocco's reframe terms like "extremism" and "radicalism" to consolidate authoritarian control, legitimated under the umbrella of counter-terrorism.

Critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) reveals how extremism is routinely equated with contagion (e.g., "radicalisation as infection"), natural disaster (e.g., "wave of extremism"), or pathology (e.g., "extremist mindset"), all of which depoliticise grievances and foreclose structural critique. These metaphorical framings delegitimise the discursive agency of those so labelled, effectively silencing alternative narratives and rendering violence thinkable and even necessary.

1.13.3. Extremism in Jihadist and State Discourse: A Mirror Image

Notably, extremist discourse is not the sole domain of governments. Jihadist propaganda engages in reciprocal discursive strategies, constructing the West as *taghut* (tyrannical usurpers of divine authority) and mainstream Muslims as hypocrites or collaborators (Manne, 2017). In *The Mind of the Islamic State*, Manne (2017) documents how *ISIS*'s ideology frames its struggle as one

against apostasy, idolatry, and moral corruption, deploying Qur'anic citations and prophetic traditions in support of violent purging.

This ideological construction is neither spontaneous nor merely theological—it is methodically manufactured in jihadist publications such as *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. These magazines construct extremism as a religious duty and moderation as cowardice or betrayal. Thus, while Western discourses vilify extremism as irrational and dangerous, ISIS elevates it as pure, necessary, and divinely mandated (Bunker & Bunker, 2018).

1.13.4. The Hegemony of Moderation and the Risk of Epistemic Closure

The valorisation of moderation as inherently virtuous is itself ideologically laden. Bhatia (2018) and Wodak (2001) remind us that discourses of "common sense" and "balance" often work to exclude radical yet non-violent critiques of political or social structures. In this regard, the liberal democratic state may present itself as post-ideological while enacting ideological policing through educational, legal, and media institutions.

The CDS lens thus challenges the notion of extremism as an empirical descriptor. Rather, it interrogates the conditions under which the label is applied, the actors who benefit from its usage, and the counter-narratives it suppresses. Extremism becomes less of a behavioural diagnosis and more of a floating signifier within an ideological struggle.

Extremism, like terrorism, is not a neutral category but a discursive artefact forged in the context of power and contestation. It functions to delineate the boundaries of permissible dissent, to construct threatening others, and to justify surveillance and repression. Simultaneously, it is embraced by radical groups to confer moral clarity and theological legitimacy. For Critical Discourse Studies, the imperative is not to resolve the ambiguity of extremism but to make visible the power relations that underpin its invocation.

1.14. Media Discourse in Radicalisation

The evolving landscape of radicalisation in the 21st century cannot be fully understood without accounting for the mediatised architecture that enables, intensifies, and legitimises

extremist ideologies. Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), media is not simply a neutral conduit of information but a site of ideological production, where meanings are constructed, contested, and weaponised. Radicalisation, as both a process and a practice, is profoundly shaped by how discourse is generated, circulated, and consumed within digital and mainstream media ecosystems (Carvalho, 2008; van Dijk, 1988).

1.14.1. Discursive Conduits: From Information to Indoctrination

The Islamic State's media strategy exemplifies how radical actors operationalise the media as a tool of ideological warfare. As revealed in Winter's (2017) analysis of an internal ISIS media doctrine, information warfare is not ancillary but central to jihad. The group's propaganda apparatus, including the al-Hayat Media Centre and Amaq News Agency, executes a deliberate three-pronged strategy: constructing an emotionally charged and theologically framed positive narrative, deploying rejectionist counterspeech, and launching calibrated media "projectiles" designed to manipulate the global media cycle (Winter, 2017, pp. 15–17).

This strategy is neither spontaneous nor decentralised. Instead, it constitutes a systematised doctrine whereby media operatives, both formal and informal, are ideologically incentivised to become 'mujahidin' of the information front (Winter, 2017, p. 10). Visual rhetoric, lexical choice, and narrative framing are deployed to venerate martyrdom, demonise out-groups, and render violence palatable and even glamorous. The digital battlefield, thus, becomes a theatre of identity construction and symbolic domination.

1.14.2. Mainstream Media: From Amplification to Complicity

While social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube have often been the focus of concern, Williams (2016) astutely argues that the mainstream media has unwittingly functioned as an amplifier of ISIS propaganda. Sensationalist framing, reliance on pre-packaged jihadist media content, and a preference for spectacle over context have enabled the global diffusion of ISIS's strategic messaging. This is what Awan (2017) terms the transformation of ISIS fighters into the "rock stars of global cyber jihad", a process enabled by the repetition and visibility provided by Western media cycles (p. 140).

The relationship is not unidirectional. ISIS's media operatives are acutely aware of the Western media's aesthetic sensibilities and production values. The design of Dabiq, Rumiyah, and associated videos reveals a hybridised media logic—mixing jihadist semiotics with Western cinematic tropes—to appeal to both global Salafi-jihadist sympathisers and alienated Western youth (Bunker & Bunker, 2018; Cohen & Kaati, 2018).

1.14.3. Social Media and the Affective Dynamics of Self-Radicalisation

The affordances of digital platforms enable a process of "self-radicalisation" that bypasses the traditional gatekeepers of ideology. As Hollewell and Longpré (2021) illustrate, social media not only facilitates exposure to extremist content but also engenders parasocial interactions, echo chambers, and algorithmic reinforcement of violent ideologies. Individuals become co-producers of jihadist narratives through retweets, shares, and participation in ideological forums.

Awan (2017) identifies seven behavioural typologies emerging from ISIS's online propaganda ecosystem, with particular emphasis on emotional manipulation and affective identification. These include the glamorisation of martyrdom, the mythologisation of adventure, and the invocation of grievance politics. These affective economies sustain what Golan and Lim (2016) describe as a third-person effect: the belief that others are more susceptible to propaganda than oneself, thus perpetuating the illusion of invulnerability and eroding critical reflexivity.

1.14.4. Multimodal Propaganda and the Power of Semiotic Saturation

The multimodal nature of ISIS propaganda—through audiovisual media, memes, texts, and aniconic Islamic symbolism—enhances its cognitive stickiness and ideological durability (Cohen & Kaati, 2018). The strategic use of religious language, Quranic exegesis, visual aesthetics, and emotionally charged motifs constructs a symbolic universe where violence is moralised and the caliphate becomes an aspirational utopia (Cohen & Kaati, 2018, pp. 54–58).

Crucially, this propaganda does not operate in a vacuum. As Reed and Dowling (2018) show, historical narratives—such as colonial grievances and the Crusades—are selectively reactivated to create a cyclical temporality of victimhood and resistance. This process contributes to what they term a “competitive system of meaning”, where the extremist discourse offers an all-encompassing

explanatory framework for geopolitical injustice, moral corruption, and religious disempowerment.

1.14.5. CDS and the Critical Analysis of Mediatised Radicalisation

Within CDS, the analysis of mediatised radicalisation necessitates attention to power, ideology, and representation. Van Dijk (2006) highlights the role of media discourse in shaping mental models that legitimise in-group superiority and out-group demonisation. Carvalho (2008) calls for a more integrated analytical approach that combines textual, contextual, and socio-cognitive dimensions when deconstructing media texts.

1.15. The Discursive Construction of Jihad

The term *jihad* has undergone profound discursive transformations, oscillating between a spiritual struggle for moral betterment and an ideological mandate for militant violence. The discursive construction of *jihad*—especially within jihadist propaganda and counterterrorism discourse—functions not only as a mechanism for mobilisation but also as a site for epistemic contestation. Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), jihad is not merely examined through its theological underpinnings but through the socio-political contexts in which it is constructed, disseminated, and reappropriated (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; van Dijk, 2006).

1.15.1. From the Sacred Struggle to the Weaponised Narrative

Classical Islamic jurisprudence defines *jihad* as a multi-dimensional concept, encompassing both the *greater jihad* (al-jihad al-akbar)—the internal moral and spiritual striving—and the *lesser jihad* (al-jihad al-asghar), which includes armed struggle in defence of the ummah under legitimate conditions (Bonner, 2006). However, jihadist movements such as al-Qaeda and ISIS have strategically elided this distinction, constructing *jihad* exclusively as a militarised obligation (*fard 'ayn*) through selective Qur'anic citations, hadith exegesis, and historical revisionism (Ajjoub, 2018; Manne, 2017).

ISIS's discourse, in particular, sacralises violence as an existential rite. As shown in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, jihad is cast as divine warfare against apostasy, secularism, and Western hegemony,

while martyrdom is represented as the highest form of piety (Bunker & Bunker, 2018; Cohen & Kaati, 2018). Through the rhetorical fusion of *takfirism* and utopian eschatology, jihad is not only legitimised but also glorified. The Caliphate is constructed as the spatial realisation of sacred history, a realm wherein jihad is the practice of divine sovereignty (Manne, 2017, pp. 86–94).

1.15.2. Salafi-Jihadism and Theological Reductionism

The epistemology of *jihad* in Salafi-jihadist discourse is reductively literalist. Building on the foundational ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb and Abdullah Azzam, ISIS frames jihad as a binary cosmological conflict between *tawhid* (monotheism) and *shirk* (idolatry), where political dissent and theological difference are constructed as existential threats (Faraj, 1981; Ajjoub, 2018). Salafi-jihadism thus becomes a discursive regime that collapses the distinction between sacred and profane, fusing theology with militarised praxis (Moussalli, 2009; Speckhard & Ellenberg, 2020).

The dogmatic deployment of concepts such as *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* (loyalty and disavowal), *hijrah* (migration), and *bay'ah* (allegiance) reinforces a closed system of ideological belonging. This theological architecture justifies violence not as a response to geopolitical conditions but as the fulfilment of a divine ordinance. Through this lens, jihad is not reactionary—it is teleological.

1.15.3. Digital Multimodality and the Aestheticisation of Jihad

The Islamic State's media apparatus weaponises jihad discursively and visually. The use of high-definition video, nasheed (Islamic chants), and immersive battlefield footage exemplifies what George Michael (2013) terms “exhortatory terrorism”, wherein the primary aim is not merely to terrorise but to inspire action through affective resonance. Propaganda texts like "Flames of War" or "Inside the Khilafah" blend theological justifications with cinematic narration, thereby transforming jihad into both a moral duty and a consumable aesthetic (Winter, 2017; Cohen & Kaati, 2018).

This multimodal strategy creates what Ajjoub (2018) calls a “virtual theology”—an affective regime wherein jihad is experienced not only physically but vicariously, through symbolic participation and ideological intimacy. Recruitment narratives, which sanctify domesticity as a form of jihad, also interpellate women into this discourse (Webber Smith, 2020).

1.15.4. The Politics of Representation: Western Discourses on Jihad

Conversely, Western media and political discourse frequently constructs jihad as a metonym for Islamic violence, reinforcing securitised and essentialist narratives. Such representations deprive the term of its historical complexity, turning it into a meaningless symbol of threat. Lawrence Wright (2016) and others have traced how the post-9/11 discourse equated jihad with terrorism, fostering a cultural imaginary wherein every expression of Islamic political consciousness becomes suspect.

From a CDS perspective, this essentialisation serves to legitimise securitisation, surveillance, and the erosion of civil liberties (Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 2006). It also produces a counter-discursive vacuum—reifying the jihadist narrative as the only visible articulation of resistance, particularly for marginalised Muslim youth.

1.15.5. Discursive Contestation and the Struggle for Meaning

Jihad, then, is not a fixed theological doctrine but a floating signifier within a contested discursive field. Competing actors, including states, religious authorities, jihadist groups, and media institutions, are engaged in a struggle to hegemonise the meaning of Jihad. As highlighted by Moussalli (2009) and Ajjoub (2018), this contestation reveals the deep fracture lines between moderation and militancy, between contextualist and absolutist hermeneutics.

CDS requires a critical examination of the production, naturalisation, and challenge of these meanings. Whether invoked by the Islamic State to glorify bloodshed or by Western media to homogenise Islam, the term *jihad* remains ideologically potent. Only through sustained, critical analysis can its discursive constructions be demystified and its mobilisation for violence resisted.

1.16. Religious Violence: Theological Justifications and Discursive Mobilisations

The concept of religious violence occupies a contested and ideologically charged space within both academic scholarship and public discourse. From a Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) perspective, religious violence is not merely reducible to theological imperatives or psychological

deviance; rather, it is a discursively mediated phenomenon wherein sacred texts, doctrines, and rituals are reinterpreted, reframed, and deployed as instruments of legitimisation and mobilisation (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; van Dijk, 2006).

1.16.1. Theological Ambiguities and Doctrinal Contention

Extremist interpretations strategically isolate and absolutise verses pertaining to combat (e.g., Qur'an 9:5, 8:12), stripping them of context, consensus (*ijma'*), and jurisprudential moderation (Ajjoub, 2018; Moussalli, 2009).

Groups like ISIS construct violence as *ibadah* (an act of worship), a sacred duty integral to their eschatological vision. In their discourse, religious violence is cast not as deviance but as divine mandate, purified of moral ambiguity. As Manne (2017) illustrates, ISIS views the establishment of the Caliphate and the execution of *hudud* punishments not as political acts but as divine imperatives. This sacralisation of violence is not incidental; it is a central pillar of ISIS's ideological coherence.

1.16.2. Takfirism and the Logic of Othering

The theological engine behind much religious violence in jihadist discourse is "*takfir*"—the practice of declaring other Muslims unbelievers. As Ajjoub (2018) and Moussalli (2009) highlight, takfir provides the theological justification for violence against not only perceived enemies of Islam but also against fellow Muslims deemed apostates or hypocrites. This discursive mechanism constructs a binary moral order that obliterates nuance and forecloses dissent.

Such theological reductionism is neither universal nor accepted within mainstream Islamic jurisprudence. The overwhelming majority of Islamic scholars—classical and contemporary—reject the expansionist application of takfir. Nonetheless, its prominence in jihadist propaganda reveals how discursive power operates under conditions of geopolitical dispossession and theological decontextualisation.

1.16.3. Multimodal Justifications and Affective Persuasion

Religious violence in jihadist media is not solely textual. The visual and auditory aesthetics of violence—ritualised beheadings, nasheed-laden execution videos, and choreographed battlefield scenes—serve to aestheticise brutality and cast it as transcendent duty (Cohen & Kaati, 2018; Winter, 2017). These acts are often accompanied by Qur’anic recitations and invocations of *shahada* (testimony of faith), fusing theological resonance with emotional intensity.

This multimodal production of religious violence constructs an immersive ideological world. According to Webber Smith (2020), in the context of female supporters of ISIS, acts of violence are framed not as transgressions but as acts of ultimate loyalty, honour, and faith. Such narratives are deeply persuasive, particularly to individuals in search of purpose, belonging, and agency in a disenchanted world.

1.16.4. Discourses of Legitimation and Counter-Discourses

Western political and media discourses often respond to jihadist violence by essentialising Islam as inherently violent, reinforcing Islamophobic tropes, and securitising representations. This is not only analytically reductive but politically counterproductive. As Wodak (2001) and van Dijk (2006) argue, such essentialist constructions reinforce binary oppositions (civilised/barbaric, secular/religious) and obscure the socio-political roots of extremism.

Conversely, moderate Islamic scholars and civil society actors actively construct counter-discourses that reclaim religious semantics from the grasp of extremism. Movements such as *wasatiyyah* (moderation), the Amman Message (2004), and various fatwas against terrorism issued by authoritative bodies (e.g., Al-Azhar, Dar al-Ifta) represent attempts to delimit the legitimate scope of violence within Islamic theology.

1.16.5. CDS and the Deconstruction of Religious Violence

Critical Discourse Studies offers tools to interrogate how religious violence is constructed, legitimised, and naturalised. It foregrounds the importance of intertextuality, discourse coalitions,

and socio-cognitive models in understanding how violence is moralised and disseminated (van Dijk, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

1.17. *The Islamic State: Origins, Ideological Foundations, and Organisational Evolution*

The Islamic State (ISIS/IS) is not a spontaneous aberration but rather the outcome of a complex convergence of ideological currents, historical ruptures, political vacuums, and discursive recalibrations. From a Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) perspective, ISIS is not merely a terrorist group but a discursive actor that constructs legitimacy, identity, and power through language, theology, and symbolism. This section traces the genealogy of ISIS, unpacking its ideological foundations in Wahhabism, Salafism, and Jihadi-Salafism, along with the strategic evolution of its organisational structure, name, and territorial ambition.

1.17.1. Genealogical Trajectory: From Tawhid wal-Jihad to the Caliphate

The movement that would become ISIS began in the late 1990s with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's formation of *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* in Jordan, which later relocated to Iraq following the U.S. invasion in 2003 (Gerges, 2016, pp. 49–53). In 2004, the group pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, becoming *al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)*. Zarqawi's sectarian violence against Shi'a Muslims and his takfiri extremism were a source of tension with al-Qaeda's central leadership, particularly Ayman al-Zawahiri (Lister, 2015, p. 18). Following Zarqawi's death in 2006, AQI was rebranded as the *Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)* under Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. The group expanded into Syria during the civil war and, in 2013, declared itself *the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS/ISIL)*. By 2014, under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, it declared the restoration of the Caliphate, renaming itself simply *the Islamic State (IS)* (Gambhir, 2016, pp. 5–7).

Each name change marked not only territorial ambition but also discursive rebranding—a recalibration of theological legitimacy, strategic scope, and ideological appeal.

1.17.2. Ideological Architecture: Salafism, Wahhabism, and *Takfirism*

ISIS's ideological core is deeply embedded in *Jihadi-Salafism*, a militant strand of Salafism that advocates for violent jihad as a religious obligation (*fard 'ayn*) (Hafez, 2016, p. 10). Influenced by the doctrinal rigidity of Wahhabism, the group adopts a literalist hermeneutic, purging Islam of what it perceives as innovations (*bid'a*), polytheism (*shirk*), and apostasy (*ridda*) (Bunzel, 2015, p. 13). This theological architecture justifies violence through takfir—excommunication of Muslims deemed impure—and underpins the group's genocidal campaigns against Shi'a, Yazidis, Sufis, and even rival Sunni Muslims.

The writings of Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam, and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi deeply influenced ISIS's ideological trajectory. Qutb's notion of *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic ignorance) and the necessity of a vanguard to implement divine law directly informed the group's apocalyptic vision. However, ISIS diverged from its predecessors by combining theological literalism with modern media strategies and state-building aspirations (Manne, 2017, pp. 34–38).

1.17.3. The Caliphate as a Discursive Project

ISIS's declaration of a *caliphate* in 2014 was not merely political but profoundly discursive. It appropriated Islamic history, selectively invoked prophetic traditions (*ahadith*), and employed Qur'anic citations to frame the Caliphate as the telos of Islamic governance (Bunzel, 2015, p. 18). This construction was not passive—it demanded *bay'ah* (pledge of allegiance) from Muslims globally and redefined political geography through the lens of *wilayat* (provinces), erasing colonial boundaries.

From a CDS perspective, its implementation was a hegemonic move to monopolise religious legitimacy and delegitimise all competing Islamic authorities—state, clerical, and militant. ISIS's *Dabiq* magazine repeatedly invoked eschatological themes, notably the battle of *al-Malhamah al-Kubra* (the grand battle) near Dabiq in Syria, to construct its Caliphate as divinely ordained (Winter, 2017).

1.17.4. ISIS vs. al-Qaeda: Strategic and Ideological Divergence

While both groups share Jihadi-Salafi roots, their trajectories diverged sharply. Al-Qaeda adopted a gradualist, decentralised approach, preferring to embed itself within local contexts and avoid alienating Muslim populations. ISIS, by contrast, pursued maximalist violence, immediate state-building, and overt sectarianism (Weiss & Hassan, 2015, pp. 112–115).

The split became formal in 2014 when Zawahiri disavowed ISIS, and Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria) also broke ties. The rupture was not only tactical but discursive—ISIS accused al-Qaeda of compromising tawhid, while al-Qaeda criticised ISIS for strategic recklessness and theological extremism (Ajjoub, 2018).

1.17.5. Media, Propaganda, and Multimodal Discourse

ISIS's ideological power was amplified through a sophisticated media strategy. Its magazines (*Dabiq*, *Rumiyah*), videos (*Flames of War*), and digital channels weaponise narrative, emotion, and aesthetics. These materials glorified martyrdom, vilified enemies, and framed the Caliphate as a utopia under siege (Cohen & Kaati, 2018; Holbrook, 2015).

The group employed rhetorical tactics such as moral dichotomies (believers vs. apostates), historical analogies (Crusades), and theological citations to recruit and radicalise. As Ingram (2016) notes, ISIS used *us vs. them* polarisation, affective appeals, and future-oriented imaginaries to render violence meaningful.

The Islamic State is not merely a terrorist entity; it is a discursive formation—a crystallisation of ideological currents, theological absolutism, and sociopolitical disintegration. From its inception in Zarqawi's insurgency to its global ambitions under Baghdadi, ISIS evolved through a complicated combination of Salafi-jihadist doctrine, media innovation, and strategic adaptation. Understanding its genealogy and ideological infrastructure is essential not only for mapping its past but for anticipating its potential resurgence. Within Critical Discourse Studies, this entails analysing not only what ISIS says but also how it constructs, legitimises, and circulates meaning through discourse.

1.18. The Islamic Caliphate: Historical Conceptions and Contemporary Appropriations

The concept of the Caliphate (*Khilāfah*) occupies a foundational place in Islamic political imagination and historical consciousness. From the Rashidun era to the Ottoman Caliphate, it has been variously interpreted as a unifying institution, a spiritual symbol of Muslim governance, and a political embodiment of divine law. However, its invocation by ISIS in 2014 marked a radical recontextualisation—a discursive appropriation of Islamic history in the service of hyper-modern extremism. Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), the Caliphate must be examined not as a static legacy but as a semantic battlefield wherein competing actors vie to define its meaning, legitimacy, and future relevance.

1.18.1 Historical Genealogy of the Caliphate

The Caliphate originated after the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE, with the appointment of Abu Bakr as the first Caliph. Classical Islamic political theory regarded the Caliph as the temporal successor to the Prophet—entrusted with maintaining justice, preserving Islamic law (*Shari‘ah*), and protecting the ummah (Crone & Hinds, 1986). Over time, however, caliphal authority became decentralised, contested, and largely symbolic, especially after the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 and the eventual abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Kaya, 2019).

While historically the Caliphate functioned within diverse political and jurisprudential frameworks, modern Islamist movements—such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Muslim Brotherhood, and later ISIS—have projected a romanticised, homogenised vision of the Caliphate as a lost utopia that must be restored (Bunzel, 2015, pp. 4–6).

1.18.2. ISIS’s Caliphate: Rupture and Reinvention

ISIS framed the declaration of the Caliphate in June 2014 as both a theological fulfilment and an eschatological event. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s sermon in Mosul explicitly invoked historical caliphal symbolism—black banners, prophetic hadith, and Qur’anic allusions—to

legitimise the move (Winter, 2017). Yet, unlike historical caliphates that governed with varying degrees of consultation, jurisprudential pluralism, and pragmatism, ISIS constructed its *caliphate* as an absolutist entity rooted in violence, exclusion, and theological reductionism (Ajjoub, 2018).

In ISIS's discursive repertoire—most notably in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*—the Caliphate is presented as both a redemptive return to Islamic purity and a divinely mandated end-times polity. Its ideological architecture relies on narratives of global conspiracy, the delegitimation of nation-states, and the identification of Western and *apostate* Muslim governments as existential enemies (Bunzel, 2015, p. 21; Ingram, 2016).

1.18.3. Discursive Strategies and Symbolic Appropriations

ISIS's construction of the Caliphate employs a repertoire of semiotic devices and discursive tactics:

- **Eschatological framing:** Referencing the *Malhamah al-Kubra* (grand battle) and *al-Masih al-Dajjal* (Antichrist), ISIS links the Caliphate to end-times prophecy (Winter, 2017).
- **Temporal rupture:** The narrative of 'restoration' implies a radical discontinuity from existing Muslim polities, positioning ISIS as the only legitimate successor to the Prophetic model (Bunzel, 2015).
- **Lexical choices:** Terms like *Khilafah 'ala minhaj al-nubuwwah* (Caliphate upon the Prophetic methodology) are discursively loaded to signal authenticity and divine sanction (Manne, 2017, pp. 92–93).
- **Visual and performative propaganda:** Videos of flag-raising ceremonies, execution rituals, and city governance are designed to project statehood and divine sovereignty (Cohen & Kaati, 2018).

These discursive mechanisms serve to reframe the Caliphate not merely as a religious ideal but as a lived, present-tense political reality. The performative aspect—constructing courts, schools, and ministries—was central to this discourse of authenticity.

1.18.4. CDS Perspective: Hegemony and Counter-Discourses

ISIS's Caliphate discourse, when viewed through a CDS lens, represents an effort to assert control over the language of Islamic politics. It seeks to displace both secular nationalism and moderate Islamism by rendering them illegitimate, corrupted, or *taghut* (false gods). Simultaneously, it aims to naturalise its own interpretation of history, theology, and identity.

However, this hegemonic project has been met with widespread contestation. Prominent Muslim scholars, such as those affiliated with Al-Azhar and the International Union of Muslim Scholars, have issued detailed refutations of ISIS's theological claims. Fatwas denouncing the group's abuse of *Khilāfah* are not merely reactive but constitute counter-discourses that challenge ISIS's monopolisation of Islamic symbols (Reed & Dowling, 2018).

The Caliphate, in the hands of ISIS, became not only a territorial claim but also a discursive artefact, weaponised to authorise violence, demand loyalty, and sacralise governance. By selectively invoking Islamic history and theological motifs, ISIS constructed a vision of the Caliphate that was simultaneously utopian and apocalyptic, nostalgic and hypermodern. Within Critical Discourse Studies, this appropriation reveals the power of language and symbolism in shaping political realities. Deconstructing such discourses is vital not only for academic inquiry but also for undermining the ideological allure of extremist narratives.

1.18.5. Identified Gaps in the Literature

This comprehensive review of the literature has exposed several critical lacunae that this study directly addresses. First, there is a clear methodological fragmentation in existing CDA-based analyses of ISIS propaganda. While isolated studies have applied Fairclough, van Dijk, or Wodak independently, no integrated tripartite framework has yet been deployed to analyse ISIS's English-language magazines, despite their global ideological reach. This study fills that void by aligning methodological pluralism with analytical rigour, thereby mitigating a single theoretical bias and producing a multidimensional discourse critique.

Second, there is a notable absence of longitudinal analysis. Few studies track ISIS's discursive evolution over the complete publication span of *Dabiq* (2014–2016) and *Rumiyah*

(2016–2017). This study addresses that deficiency by examining strategic rhetorical shifts as the group adapted to military losses and changing global responses.

Third, existing research often overlooks audience-specific discourse targeting, especially how ISIS tailored its English-language messaging for non-native speakers and vulnerable youth in regions like North Africa. This research foregrounds that demographic and analyses how culturally resonant linguistic and multimodal elements were employed to radicalise peripheral audiences.

Fourth, multimodal discourse analysis remains underdeveloped. Although visuals and layout are acknowledged in general terms, systematic integration of multimodal analysis into CDS remains rare. By incorporating the frameworks of Kress and van Leeuwen, this study examines how textual and visual elements co-construct meaning and enhance ideological resonance.

Fifth, the cognitive mechanisms underpinning radicalisation—mental models, ideological polarisation, and schema manipulation—are seldom interrogated with van Dijk’s socio-cognitive tools. This research operationalises those tools to explore how narratives are internalised cognitively.

Sixth, there is insufficient scholarship translating discursive analysis into actionable counter-narratives, particularly in non-Western, postcolonial contexts. This study directly contributes to the development of pedagogical and policy-oriented frameworks capable of deconstructing extremist narratives and enhancing ideological literacy among educators, policymakers, and at-risk populations.

This critical engagement with the literature has now substantiated the gaps initially anticipated in Chapter One. Together, they underscore the need for a methodologically innovative and context-sensitive study that not only unpacks ISIS’s discursive machinery but also offers strategic insights for counter-extremism efforts. The next chapter demonstrates how these gaps have shaped the selection of analytical frameworks, data sources, and methodological design.

1.19 Conclusion

This chapter has systematically explored the theoretical foundations necessary to contextualise and deconstruct the discursive strategies employed by the Islamic State's English-language propaganda. Through an interdisciplinary synthesis of Critical Discourse Studies, theories of ideology, radicalisation, terrorism, religious violence, and jihad, the literature review has revealed how extremist narratives are ideologically grounded, linguistically encoded, and discursively circulated. The Islamic State emerges not only as a violent political actor but also as a semiotic regime that constructs power, legitimacy, and identity through calculated symbolic practices.

Key conceptual domains—including extremism, takfirism, jihadist theology, and the Caliphate—have been critically unpacked. These analyses have shown that ISIS's discourse is not an isolated linguistic aberration but a sophisticated amalgam of historical grievances, theological manipulation, geopolitical strategy, and modern media orchestration. Of particular importance is the group's reappropriation of the Islamic Caliphate and its deployment of multimodal propaganda, especially through its official magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, which serve as crucial vehicles for the group's ideological dissemination and audience engagement.

In light of the foregoing theoretical exploration, it becomes evident that the Islamic State's ideology, communicative strategies, and symbolic constructions are deeply entrenched in complex discursive practices that demand a systematic and multi-layered analytical approach. The next chapter transitions from conceptual theorisation to methodological operationalisation, introducing the analytical frameworks, data sources, and interpretive procedures used in this study. In particular, it details how the magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*—as primary data—are examined through the lenses of Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach, van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model, and Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach. This methodological framework is designed to critically engage with the linguistic, cognitive, and socio-political dimensions of ISIS's extremist discourse.

This chapter has systematically mapped the theoretical contours of Critical Discourse Studies, identifying the dialectical-relational, socio-cognitive, and discourse-historical models as

the analytical pillars of this research. By synthesising these approaches, the study has established a robust, triangulated framework wherein cognition serves as the indispensable mediating link between micro-textual evidence and macro-historical contexts. However, for this theoretical architecture to yield empirical insights, it must be operationalised through a systematic and transparent research design. Consequently, the following chapter, Chapter Two: Research Methods and Methodology, details the procedural roadmap for this study. It transitions from theoretical abstraction to the rigorous application of CDA, outlining the criteria for data selection, the stages of analysis, and the ethical safeguards employed. Crucially, this includes a reflexive account of the researcher's positionality, transforming personal motivation into a source of analytical sensitivity to ensure both the validity and the interpretive depth of the subsequent findings.

**CHAPTER TWO:
RESEARCH METHODS
AND METHODOLOGY**

2.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted to critically examine ISIS's extremist discourse as constructed in its English-language propaganda magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Grounded in the interdisciplinary tradition of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), this research employs a tripartite analytical framework that integrates Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA). These complementary models enable a nuanced, multi-level analysis of the ideological, cognitive, historical, and linguistic strategies used by ISIS to construct identity, legitimacy, violence, and religious authority.

2.2. Philosophical and Epistemological Foundations

This study operates within a constructivist epistemology and critical realist ontology. Constructivism posits that social reality is co-constructed through discourse, while critical realism recognises underlying structures that influence but do not wholly determine communicative action. This dual paradigm permits engagement with both the discursive production of meaning and the sociopolitical forces shaping it (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

2.3. Critical Discourse Studies as a Methodological Paradigm

CDS is grounded in the ontological assumption that language constitutes social reality and that discourse is both shaped by and shapes ideologies, identities, and power structures (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak & Reisigl, 2016). It rejects positivist neutrality and embraces a critical–interpretivist stance that treats discourse as a site of struggle, reproduction, and transformation. In this light, the current study aligns with CDS's pragmatist orientation, whereby theory and method are chosen and adapted to address socially relevant problems—particularly the weaponisation of language in radicalisation contexts (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 22). As Bhattacharjee (2012) affirms, pragmatism in qualitative research demands methodological pluralism and problem-driven inquiry, both of which are reflected in this study's design.

What distinguishes CDS as a methodological paradigm is its multi-level engagement with discourse. It analyses not only linguistic structures but also the cognitive models, historical narratives, and social conditions that sustain ideology. This aligns precisely with the object of inquiry in this thesis: the discursive construction of radicalisation and ideological authority in ISIS's online propaganda discourse. Such inquiry demands a paradigm capable of navigating textual, cognitive, socio-historical, and multimodal dimensions simultaneously.

Following this rationale, the study employs a tripartite CDS framework, integrating the complementary approaches of Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, each of which brings distinct methodological affordances:

- Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) enables a three-dimensional analysis of discourse as a textual practice, a discursive practice, and a social practice (Fairclough, 1992, 2010). This facilitates an examination of how linguistic choices (e.g., metaphor, modality, cohesion) reproduce, naturalise, or contest social power and ideological assumptions within ISIS's narrative construction.
- van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) enriches the analysis by integrating the role of cognition—particularly mental models, ideological schemata, and ingroup/outgroup polarisation—in the production and reception of discourse (van Dijk, 1998, 2006). His principle of the “ideological square” (emphasising ‘us’ positively and ‘them’ negatively) is especially relevant to this study's analysis of ISIS's dichotomous moral universe (e.g., believers vs. crusaders, martyrs vs. apostates).
- Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) offers a methodologically sophisticated mechanism for tracing intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and the recontextualisation of historical and religious narratives (Wodak & Reisigl, 2016). This is crucial for analysing how ISIS selectively appropriates Islamic tradition, anti-colonial memories, and Western political grievances to produce a sense of historical continuity and theological legitimacy.

By triangulating these three approaches, the study leverages methodological pluralism to gain analytical depth and reliability. This triangulation is not a superficial synthesis, but a carefully considered epistemological strategy that addresses the shortcomings of each model. For instance, while Fairclough's model is strong in socio-structural critique, it tends to overlook cognition; van

Dijk addresses this gap but underemphasises historical embeddedness, which DHA restores. Their integration thus enables a holistic, multi-layered analysis—a necessity when studying ideologically complex and multimodally mediated propaganda.

Aligned with CDS's core tenet of researcher reflexivity, the study also embraces the epistemological necessity of transparency and positionality. The researchers' background—as Algerian researchers shaped by the legacy of the country's "Black Decade" and its entanglements with radical Islamist discourse—offers critical insight while demanding ethical rigour and neutral academic distance (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Reflexive awareness is particularly essential given the sensitive nature of the data, which includes visual glorifications of violence and textual appeals to religious duty.

To ensure credibility, the study incorporates strategies of methodological triangulation, thick description, and analytical memorisation alongside ethical practices that avoid any replication or sensationalisation of violent narratives (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Mertens, 2010). Rather than treating *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* as mere artefacts of linguistic interest, the study engages with them as ideologically potent instruments aimed at real-world cognitive and behavioural influences.

In sum, CDS is employed here not as a static toolbox but as a dynamic, reflexive, and interdisciplinary paradigm that allows for the critical excavation of ideology, identity, and symbolic power in terrorist discourse. It enables this thesis to move beyond surface analysis and towards the deconstruction of radicalisation as a discursive and semiotic enterprise. The integration of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak, supported by visual discourse frameworks and qualitative validity principles, positions this study at the intersection of critical inquiry, methodological innovation, and social relevance.

2.4. Clarifying Corpus Coverage and Thematic Focus

Although this study employs thematic and strategic sampling for analytical focus, it is crucial to clarify that the entire corpus of *Dabiq* (fifteen issues, 2014–2016) and *Rumiyah* (thirteen issues, 2016–2017)—comprising twenty eight issues in total—is fully included in the data analysis. The phrase "thematic sampling" here does not refer to a corpus-reduction technique but rather to an

analytical lens that enables in-depth exploration of ideologically significant themes (e.g., martyrdom, takfir, hijrah) across the complete dataset. In line with CDS's reflexive and problem-oriented orientation (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), sampling is thus guided by the study's theoretical commitments and research questions—not by convenience or surface-level frequency. This methodological clarification ensures rigour in line with qualitative research standards (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Mautner, 2008; Bauer & Aarts, 2000).

2.5. Sampling Strategy: Thematic, Temporal, and Strategic Selection

This study distances itself from the criteria of empirical generalisation, which is epistemologically incompatible with Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Instead, the methodology relies on a purposive, criteria-driven sampling protocol designed to achieve thematic and discursive saturation. The thirty selected multimodal fragments serve as information-rich exemplars, ensuring corpus adequacy and providing the interpretive depth necessary to thoroughly deconstruct the multi-layered layers of the group's communicative architecture.

The sampling strategy adopted in this study is designed to ensure analytical richness and methodological rigour in line with the epistemological and theoretical commitments of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Given the breadth of the dataset—twenty-eight issues comprising *Dabiq* (2014–2016) and *Rumiyah* (2016–2017)—the study does not engage in exhaustive textual analysis. Instead, it employs a carefully triangulated sampling framework that is thematic, temporal, strategic, and multimodal, thereby maintaining depth without compromising contextual breadth.

2.5.1. Rationale for Selective Sampling

In qualitative research—particularly within CDS—sampling is not driven by quantity but by discursive saturation and theoretical relevance (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Bhattacharjee, 2012). The goal is not statistical generalisability but ideological comprehensiveness, which enables the researcher to critically deconstruct how discourse enacts power, constructs legitimacy, and legitimises violence (Fairclough, 2010; van Dijk, 2008). As such, sampling in this study is guided by problem-oriented pragmatism, as advocated by Wodak (2001), where methodological decisions

are tailored to the socio-political problem at hand—in this case, radicalisation through multimodal jihadist propaganda.

2.5.2. Thematic Selection

Thematic sampling is the first axis of selection. Each sampled issue or passage contains ideologically saturated content that exemplifies one or more of the study’s focal themes: takfirism, martyrdom, hijrah (migration), anti-Western invective, apocalyptic eschatology, in-group/out-group dichotomies, and calls to armed jihad. These themes were derived through preliminary scoping of all twenty-eight issues and cross-referenced with academic typologies of ISIS propaganda (e.g., Ingram, 2016; Braddock & Horgan, 2016; Speckhard & Ellenberg, 2020). This thematic selection is directly mapped to the research questions; for example, texts foregrounding polarising binaries are essential for answering **Q1** (Identity Construction), while those focusing on theological and historical recontextualisation are primary data for **Q2** (Authority and Legitimacy).

2.5.3. Temporal and Longitudinal Scope

To capture the strategic evolution of ISIS’s discourse, sampling is distributed across the two publication phases—*Dabiq* (during territorial expansion) and *Rumiyah* (post-caliphate contraction). This enables a diachronic comparative analysis central to **Q3**, which examines the group’s strategic rhetorical adaptation in response to shifting military and geopolitical circumstances. Sampling across time also enhances discourse-historical contextualisation, a key pillar of Wodak’s DHA, by allowing for the tracing of interdiscursive shifts and rhetorical recalibrations in relation to real-world events (e.g., territorial losses, Western interventions, regional insurgencies).

2.5.4. Strategic and Ideological Sampling

Strategic sampling refers to selecting issues that reflect the different stages of ISIS’s ideological and operational agenda—from recruitment and indoctrination to battlefield justification and post-defeat vindication. Issues were chosen not merely for thematic recurrence but for their narrative centrality to the group’s propaganda arc.

Sampling therefore includes:

- Early *Dabiq* issues emphasising utopianism and state-building;
- Mid-phase issues showcasing martyrdom and theological rationalisation;
- Later *Rumiyah* issues promoting decentralised jihad and lone-wolf operations.

This strategy aligns with Fairclough's notion of discursive events (1992), which are embedded in wider socio-political matrices. It also responds to van Dijk's (2006) insistence on considering the situational and socio-cognitive context in which discourse is produced and received.

2.5.5. Multimodal Density as a Sampling Criterion

Given the centrality of multimodal analysis (Primary RQ and Q1), another axis of selection was semiotic complexity. Issues rich in graphic design, Qur'anic calligraphy, martyrdom imagery, typographic foregrounding, and symbolic iconography were prioritised. This enables application of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design and ensures that the study captures the semiotic orchestration through which ISIS constructed persuasive ideological messages.

2.5.6. Sampling Procedure and Data Units

Sampling was conducted in two stages:

- **Initial scanning** of all twenty-eight issues to identify ideologically intense segments;
- **Analytical selection** of ten–twelve issues (approximately five from *Dabiq*, five from *Rumiyah*, and one–two transitionally), with micro-units (e.g., full articles, speeches, image–text combinations) chosen based on thematic and semiotic relevance.
- **Textual fragments** are analysed in full context—not decontextualised—to respect the discursive ecology of the magazines, as cautioned by Wodak (2009).

2.5.7. Alignment with Analytical Frameworks

This sampling strategy is tailored to the analytical affordances of the three CDS.

Table 2.1. Alignment of Critical Discourse and Multimodal Frameworks with Sampling Rationales

Model	Aligned Sampling Rationale
Fairclough (DRA)	Issues with rich lexical patterns, modality, and intertextuality
van Dijk (SCM)	Texts demonstrating ideological polarisation and cognitive schema activation
Wodak (DHA)	Passages invoking Islamic history, colonial memory, or shifting discursive themes across time
Kress & van Leeuwen (Multimodal)	Image-text synergy in martyrdom glorification, anti-Western visual narratives

This ensures triangulation is not abstract, but operationalised through data selection.

2.6. Ethical and Epistemological Reflexivity

Sampling decisions are filtered through the lens of ethical responsibility and epistemological transparency. Content that explicitly glorifies violence, includes graphic imagery, or incites direct action is treated critically and not reproduced. The study does not merely expose radical content but critically interrogates its symbolic construction, resisting any possibility of unintentional sensationalisation.

2.7. Corpus Description of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm grounded in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), drawing on the dialectical-relational, socio-cognitive, and discourse-historical approaches of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak, respectively. Within this epistemological and methodological framework, the corpus comprises all fifteen issues of *Dabiq* and all thirteen issues of *Rumiyah* — two English-language propaganda magazines published by the Islamic State (ISIS) between 2014 and 2017. These texts are not merely repositories of militant rhetoric; they constitute ideologically charged, multimodal artefacts that are central to ISIS's strategic information warfare, recruitment narratives, and identity formation processes.

The corpus for this study consists of the complete collection of ISIS's official English-language propaganda magazines: *Dabiq* (fifteen issues, 2014–2016) and *Rumiyah* (thirteen issues, 2016–2017). These digital magazines represent the most sophisticated and sustained form of ideological communication ever produced by a jihadist organisation for global Anglophone audiences (Ingram, 2017; Winter, 2015). As such, they provide an ideal corpus for a multidimensional Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) investigation into how ISIS constructs and disseminates its radical ideology through multimodal discourse.

2.7.1. Corpus Scope and Boundaries

The full dataset comprises twenty-eight issues (fifteen for *Dabiq* and thirteen for *Rumiyah*), totalling approximately 1,300 pages. To maintain analytical depth while ensuring feasibility, the study employs thematic and strategic sampling, described in the next subsection. Selection is guided by themes of ideological content (e.g., takfirism, martyrdom, hijrah), visual intensity, and rhetorical innovation. Every effort is made to retain contextual integrity, ensuring that analysis does not isolate fragments from their discursive ecosystems.

2.7.2. Corpus Selection Rationale and Objectives

The selection of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is grounded in theoretical, methodological, and contextual justifications. Both magazines serve as seminal sources of ISIS's global propaganda efforts, communicating jihadist ideology and targeting both sympathisers and adversaries alike (Ingram, 2016; Reed & Dowling, 2018). They were disseminated online by ISIS's Al-Hayat Media Center. *Dabiq*, launched in July 2014 following the group's proclamation of its so-called Caliphate, draws its name from an apocalyptic hadith, anchoring its discourse in eschatological prophecy and divine legitimacy. Conversely, *Rumiyah* ("Rome") was introduced in September 2016 as ISIS began losing territory, shifting symbolic focus toward the future conquest of the West.

The present study relies on the complete set of English editions of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, retrieved from two reliable archival sources: the Clarion Project and the Internet Archive, both of which were cross-verified for authenticity. None of the data were obtained via social media,

ensuring methodological integrity and transparency in data sourcing. As we are dealing with secondary data, rigorous critical scrutiny was applied to assess the reliability and relevance of the materials.

This research does not pursue generalisability. As Wodak and Meyer (2001, p. 23) aptly note, “there is no typical CDA way of collecting data,” and van Dijk (cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016) insists that critical discourse studies are necessarily problem-oriented, contextually selective, and analytically purposeful. Thus, in this study, only purposively selected discourse fragments—not whole texts—are examined. These fragments were strategically sampled for their representational and ideological significance in relation to radicalisation and recruitment.

2.7.3. Corpus Composition and Characteristics

The corpus includes twenty-eight magazine issues, spanning from *Dabiq* Issue 1 (July 2014) to Issue 15 (July 2016) and *Rumiyah* Issue 1 (September 2016) to Issue 13 (September 2017). *Dabiq* issues average 60–80 pages, while *Rumiyah* issues range from 40–50 pages. Collectively, the corpus amounts to approximately 1,200–1,500 pages, covering a vast range of discursive themes.

Dabiq reflects ISIS’s early expansionist phase, with content focusing on state-building, Hijrah, theological justifications, martyrdom glorification, and enemy demonisation. As the Caliphate began to crumble, *Rumiyah* replaced *Dabiq* with a leaner, more urgent publication aimed at sustaining jihadist momentum through lone-wolf incitement and decentralised violence (Reed & Ingram, 2017; Ingram, 2018).

Each magazine follows a structured editorial pattern. *Dabiq* includes feature articles, theological essays, “Foreword” editorials, battlefield reports, and women-focused content (e.g., “To Our Sisters”). *Rumiyah*, while retaining similar categories, innovates with the “Just Terror Tactics” segment, which explicitly instructs followers on methods for conducting terror attacks. This transition marks a strategic reorientation from recruitment to remote activation and operationalisation.

2.8. Modes of Discourse and Multimodality

Both magazines are intensely multimodal. ISIS's strategic deployment of visuals—photographs, infographics, montages—works synergistically with text to amplify its ideological narratives. Visuals are not mere illustrations but convey symbolic violence, triumph, and divine justification (van Leeuwen, 2008; Reed & Dowling, 2018).

Dabiq displays polished layouts, high-resolution imagery, and typography designed to mimic Western journalistic standards. Many images are repurposed from mainstream media to lend factual credibility, while others depict executions, military operations, or idealised life under the Caliphate. *Rumiyah* adopts a more minimalist but equally effective design, often using stark visuals (e.g., St Peter's Basilica under crosshairs) to reinforce its targeting of the West.

This integration of linguistic and visual signs supports ISIS's persuasive strategy, aiming not only to inform but to move and mobilise the reader.

2.9. Data Sampling Strategy

Given the scope and multimodality of the corpus, this study adopts a purposive sampling strategy. Specific discourse fragments—including headlines, paragraphs, images, quotations, and visual layouts—are selected based on their relevance to the research objectives. The selection criteria include: the presence of radicalisation strategies, in-group/out-group dichotomies, ideological tropes, theological justifications, and calls to action.

Following Wodak and Meyer (2016), sampling is problem-oriented and analytically driven. In the words of van Dijk (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), CDA analysts must be “strategically selective” to single out what is analytically relevant, as analysing entire texts would be methodologically unfeasible.

Multimodal sampling is also critical. The study considers how semiotic elements—keywords, visuals, and narrative techniques—work together to create ideological coherence. Not all images or texts are analysed; only those with direct relevance to radicalisation strategies are included.

2.10. Justification within the CDS Framework

In line with the CDS paradigm, the analysis operates across three interconnected levels:

- **Textual:** Micro-level linguistic forms, rhetorical structures, and semantic fields.
- **Discursive:** Meso-level practices of production, circulation, and audience targeting.
- **Sociopolitical:** Macro-level ideological, historical, and power-laden dimensions.

Dabiq and *Rumiyah* function as authentic extremist media artefacts that mirror ISIS's evolving strategic discourse—from state-building triumphalism to decentralised insurgency. Their integration into a CDS framework allows for an examination of how discourse functions as a social practice to reproduce ideology, mobilise belief, and legitimise violence (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

2.11. Thematic and Ideological Consistencies and Shifts

Despite evolving political circumstances, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* consistently construct a binary worldview rooted in the Salafi-jihadist narrative. Both magazines reinforce a fundamental “us versus them” paradigm—dividing the ummah (believers) from apostates, infidels, and Western enemies.

The ideological core—legitimising violence, martyrdom, and religious supremacy—remains intact. Nevertheless, the strategy for maintaining relevance evolves: from *Dabiq*'s triumphant outreach to *Rumiyah*'s crisis-driven militancy.

2.12. Differences and Continuities Between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*

While structurally similar and ideologically aligned, the magazines reflect different operational imperatives. *Dabiq* was the magazine of ISIS's ascendancy. It featured longer articles, broader thematic diversity, and original content crafted to project a vision of statehood and religious authority. Its cover designs and segments were rich in symbolism and eschatological references, embodying the Caliphate's ambition.

Rumiyah, by contrast, was a wartime instrument. It adopted a leaner format, often repurposing content from Arabic outlets like *al-Naba* and focussing on inciting immediate action. The tone is time-sensitive, the pieces shorter, and the structure more direct—designed for quick consumption by a dispersed audience of sympathisers. Its recurring “Just Terror” series exemplifies the transition from ideological persuasion to actionable terrorism.

2.13. Analytical Procedures and Triangulation

This section describes the rigorous procedures employed to analyse the data. Adhering to the principles of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and qualitative inquiry, the process entailed five interrelated stages:

2.13.1 Initial Immersion and Open Coding

The first stage involved multiple readings of all twenty eight issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. These readings facilitated familiarity with the corpus and allowed for open coding—an inductive, data-driven approach informed by grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Marginal notes, memo-writing, and descriptive tagging were applied to identify emerging categories.

2.13.2 Thematic categorisation and analysis

Chunking Codes were clustered into thematic categories aligned with the research questions (e.g., martyrdom, takfir, hijrah, anti-Western polemics).

2.13.3. Multimodal Layering and Semiotic

Mapping We conducted a semiotic analysis of image-text interplay using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design and Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework. This format allowed the study to treat multimodality as a core vehicle of ideological transmission.

2.13.4. Triangulation of Analytical Models

The extracted fragments were subjected to a three-phase analytical triangulation, each informed by distinct levels of analysis associated with the CDS models:

- **Fairclough’s DRA:**

- *Textual Level*: Analysis of modality (must, should), transitivity structures (agent–patient roles), nominalisation (e.g., "crusaders," "apostates"), and evaluative lexis.

- *Discursive Practice*: Examination of how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed, especially by Western audiences. Focus on generic conventions (news report, sermon, editorial) and interdiscursivity.

- *Social Practice*: Analysis of ideological reproduction (e.g., legitimisation of jihad), hegemony (e.g., religious authority), and socio-political transformation (e.g., discourse of statehood).

- **Van Dijk’s SCM:**

- *Mental Models*: Focus on how *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* construct mental representations of friends/enemies, utopia/dystopia.

- *Ideological Square*: Positive representation of “us” (believers, mujahideen) and negative representation of “them” (crusaders, apostates). This is operationalised through contrastive semantic fields and repetition.

- *Cognitive Structures*: Emphasis on presuppositions, implicatures, and framing devices that shape reader interpretation (e.g., victimhood narratives, martyrdom glamourisation).

- **Wodak’s DHA:**

- *Discursive Strategies*: Argumentation schemes (e.g., topos of threat, topos of justice), nomination and predication of social actors (e.g., martyr as hero).

- *Historical Embedding*: Tracing references to Islamic history, colonialism, and anti-Western legacies. This situates the magazines in longer ideological narratives.

- *Recontextualisation*: Examining how historical/religious references (e.g., battles, prophecies) are adapted to current events and political aims.

2.13.5 Analytical Sequencing and Iteration

We iteratively analysed each fragment through these lenses, ensuring reflexivity, cross-verification, and theoretical saturation at every phase through memo-writing and coding logs. Coding sheets included categories such as actor-role alignment, image framing, modal force, and discursive role (e.g., legitimator, recruiter, theologian).

2.14. Operationalising the Tripartite CDS Framework

This section outlines how each CDS model is operationalised in structured detail.

2.14.1. Fairclough's DRA

- *Micro-level*: Lexical analysis, modality types, transitivity roles, cohesion devices.
- *Meso-level*: Production/reception, intertextual borrowing, layout structure.
- *Macro-level*: Construction of social identities (e.g., martyr, kafir), ideological legitimisation of violence, normalisation of authority (sharia over democracy).

2.14.2. Van Dijk's SCM

- *Mental Representations*: Belief schemata of victimhood, glory, paradise.
- *Cognitive Frames*: Antagonistic dualities reinforced through images and metaphor (e.g., wolves/lambs, light/dark).
- *Ideological Square*: Identifying symmetry (ingroup = pure, heroic; outgroup = vile, conspiratorial).

2.14.3. Wodak's DHA

- *Argumentation*: Topoi such as danger, burden, necessity (e.g., "It is the duty of every believer...").
- *Interdiscursivity*: Mapping Qur'anic citation chains across issues and their repetition.
- *Historical Anchoring*: Referencing Crusades, Andalusia, colonisation to create a narrative of perpetual victimhood and righteous retaliation.

2.14.4. Triangulated Analytical Grid

Table 2.2. Triangulated Analytical Grid: Operationalising CDS Models and Corpus Application

Model	Analytical Lens	Applied to Corpus Type
DRA	Modality, transitivity, intertextuality	Feature articles, editorials, image captions
SCM	Actor schema, ideological square, frames	Martyrdom tributes, battle reports, image metaphors
DHA	Topoi, recontextualisation, historical narratives	Qur'anic quotes, prophetic hadith, thematic covers

This triangulated framework enables explanatory depth and comparative consistency.

2.15. Trustworthiness and Methodological Limitations

This study incorporates rigorous qualitative criteria to ensure methodological credibility and academic integrity in line with international PhD research standards.

2.15.1. Trustworthiness and Research Validity

The validity of this study is reinforced through multiple forms of triangulation, transparency in sampling, and methodological coherence:

- **Credibility:** Established through prolonged engagement with the full corpus, iterative coding cycles, and detailed analytical documentation. Interpretations are rooted in theoretical constructs and justified through direct data engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- **Transferability:** While the study does not aim for statistical generalisation, it provides rich, context-specific descriptions that allow analytical generalisation and future comparative inquiry.

- **Dependability:** Achieved through an audit trail of coding memos, theoretical decisions, and data selection criteria. We explicitly document the coding frameworks and fragment selection procedures.

• **Confirmability:** Researchers' reflexivity and bracketed positionality minimise interpretive bias. The CDS models serve as external analytical anchors to uphold objectivity (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

2.15.2. Ethical Considerations in Corpus Use

Given the sensitive and violent nature of the materials, the research follows strict ethical protocols:

- We do not reproduce any images or excerpts that glorify violence.
- All analysis remains deconstructive, not descriptive or sensational.
- The corpus is treated as a propaganda artefact, not as a theological text or cultural product.
- The study was conducted within ethical parameters that avoid normalising or disseminating extremist material, aligning with institutional review guidance and the ethical norms of CDS (Wodak, 2009).

In line with Wodak's (2001) ethical commitments in CDS and Creswell & Miller's (2000) emphasis on researcher integrity, the use of this corpus is framed by a commitment to ideological exposure, not reproduction.

ISIS's English-language magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* were strategically crafted to appeal to a transnational audience that included both native English speakers in Western contexts and non-native English speakers in the broader Muslim world. English, deployed as a lingua franca, enabled the group to extend its ideological reach across linguistic and geographical boundaries. This dual-audience strategy reflects ISIS's ambition to foster a globalised ummah rooted not in ethnicity or territory but in shared ideology, identity, and allegiance.

2.15.3. Methodological Limitations

- Due to feasibility constraints, not all twenty eight issues are analysed exhaustively. However, the applied thematic sampling strategy ensures sufficient ideological coverage.
- The study focuses on English-language discourse. While ISIS's Arabic content is acknowledged (e.g., *al-Naba*'), this research limits its scope to Anglophone propaganda.

- Multimodal analysis, while comprehensive, is limited to image–text integration and does not include video propaganda or audio.

2.16. Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) emphasises reflexivity as both a methodological and epistemological imperative (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher is never a neutral observer but an agent embedded in sociohistorical and ideological contexts. In this study, reflexivity functions as an ethical and analytical safeguard, ensuring that interpretations of extremist discourse are critically grounded rather than ideologically absorbed.

As an Algerian researcher situated in a postcolonial and post-conflict context, the researchers' positionality is informed by lived proximity to ideological violence. Algeria's "Black Decade" (1990s)—a period of intense civil war and jihadist insurgency—provides a formative backdrop to this inquiry. This lived historical consciousness deepens the understanding of Islamist narratives and their socio-cognitive resonance, particularly in North African and Arab-Muslim societies. However, this also necessitates heightened reflexive awareness to avoid interpretive over-identification or moral overreaction.

To manage this dual positionality—insider by cultural affinity, outsider by academic distance—several strategies have been employed:

- **Reflexive journaling:** Throughout data collection and analysis, the researcher maintained analytic memos and reflexive notes to bracket personal biases and monitor interpretive shifts.

- **Triangulated analytical frameworks:** The use of three distinct CDS models (Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak) ensured that no single interpretive perspective dominated the reading. Each model challenged and cross-validated insights derived from the others.

- **Problem-oriented selection:** Discourse fragments were not selected based on shock value or personal resonance but through clearly defined thematic and methodological criteria grounded in CDS principles (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

This positionality enriches the study by providing contextual literacy—especially with regard to Arabic expressions, Qur'anic references, and regional discursive nuances often missed in Anglophone scholarship. However, it also demands continuous self-scrutiny. The aim is not to sensationalise ISIS discourse, nor to reproduce its ideological potency, but to deconstruct the discursive strategies that lend it force and plausibility.

The researcher recognises that studying jihadist propaganda—especially in English—poses unique risks of emotional, political, and epistemological entanglement. To mitigate these, the study avoids reproducing graphic imagery or inflammatory content and maintains a critical, deconstructive orientation at all stages.

Ultimately, this reflexive engagement reinforces the trustworthiness, confirmability, and ethical integrity of the research. It aligns with CDS's broader vision of scholarship as both critique and intervention—analysing language not from a position of detachment, but from an informed, ethically accountable stance aimed at intellectual and civic responsibility.

2.17. Appendix

A: Coding and Analytical Templates

A.1 Open Coding Template (Sample Entry)

Table 2.3. Open Coding Template: Sample Analysis of Triangulated Textual Fragments

Fragment ID	Discursive Fragment (Sample)	Discursive Code	Theme	CDS Model Focus	Analytical Note (Intertextuality/Cognition)
F06	"The World Has Divided Into Two Camps"	Binary Polarization	In-group/Out-group Dynamics	DHA: Historical Recontextualisation and Prophetic Continuity	Employs religious intertextuality through prophetic hadith to construct a Topos of Divine Mandate, framing current geopolitical shifts as the fulfillment of eschatological history.

F16	"Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You"	Justification of Enmity	Anti-Western Polemics	DRA: Relational Positioning of Moral Authority and Social Power	Operationalises high epistemic modality and authoritative "we/you" pronouns to negotiate a hierarchical relationship, interpellating the reader into a position of moral obligation to the group.
F20	"The Kafir's Blood is Halal for You"	Sacralisation of Violence	Tactical Incitement	SCM: Socio-Cognitive Polarisation and Ideological Square Operation	Activates a binary mental model through Negative Other-presentation, systematically dehumanising out-group actors as "halal blood" to cognitively desensitise the audience to violence.

Cited: Wodak & Meyer (2016); van Dijk (2008); Fairclough (2003)

A.2 Visual Grammar Coding Template

Table 2.4. Visual Grammar Coding Template: Semiotic Analysis of Multimodal Fragments

Fragment ID	Description	Salience	Gaze (Interaction)	Symbolism	Analytical Insight (Multimodal Grammar)
F19	<i>Rumiyah</i> Issue 1 Cover Page	Compositional Centrality and Chromatic Dominance	Direct Address (Demand Gaze)	Eschatological Triumphalism and Symbolic Rebranding	Subject Interpellation and Authority Construction: The "Demand" gaze of the central figure establishes an immediate power relationship, interpellating the viewer into the group's narrative of conquest and divine legitimacy
F24	"Sinai Wilayah	Linear Order and	Detached Observation (Offer Gaze)	Bureaucratic Normalisation of Violence	Discursive Neutralisation and Analytical Modality: The infographic

	Harvest" Infographics	Informational Framing			operationalises an "analytical" visual process to present violent outcomes as objective, statistical facts, thereby legitimising terror as a routine military and administrative function.
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Cited: Kress & van Leeuwen (2006); Machin & Mayr (2012)

A.3 Model-Based Analytical Questions:

This section provides the specific investigative queries used to interrogate the thirty selected fragments. These questions ensure that the analysis moves systematically from micro-level linguistic features to macro-level ideological and social practices.

1. Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA - Fairclough):

- How do lexical choices, transitivity structures, and modality construct specific social roles and moral authority for the group?
- How is intertextuality (the borrowing of religious or secular texts) used to naturalise ideological assumptions and establish a "Common Sense" worldview?
- In what ways does the text negotiate the social practice of "state-building" versus "insurgent urgency"?

2. Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM - van Dijk):

- How does the Ideological Square (Positive Self-presentation vs. Negative Other-presentation) function to polarise the reader's mental models?
- What specific cognitive frames and schemata are activated to desensitise the audience to violence and sacralise the "Halal" nature of plunder and blood?
- How does the discourse manage the "Crisis Model" following territorial loss to maintain ideological resilience?

3. Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA - Wodak):

- How are historical narratives and prophetic hadiths recontextualised to provide divine legitimacy for current strategic recalibrations?
- Which specific topoi (e.g., Topos of Threat, Topos of Divine Mandate, Topos of History) are employed to justify the call to individualised, decentralised jihad?
- How do nomination and predication strategies dehumanise "The Other" while glorifying the "Mujahid" as a transhistorical hero?

4. Multimodal Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen):

- How do salience, framing, and gaze (Demand vs. Offer) orchestrate a specific power relationship between the image and the viewer?
- How does intersemiotic modality (the synergy between text and image) amplify the ideological message and resolve potential contradictions in the narrative?

Appendix B:

Sample Analysis of Discursive Fragment (Textual)

B.1 Fragment Source: *Dabiq*, Issue 7, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy"

B.2 Extracted Text:

"The Islamic State will never be appeased. It will never be content until it sees the banner of Tawheed raised high, the Rafidah and the apostates extinguished, and the lands cleansed of kufr."

B.3 Model-Based Analysis:

1. Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA - Fairclough):

- **Micro-level Textual Analysis: Transitivity and Agency:** The discourse employs a high frequency of material process verbs ("sees", "cleansed") and active transitivity to assign total

agency to the Islamic State. This positions the group as the primary historical actor while casting the enemy as the passive, "acted-upon" recipient of existential violence.

- **Modal Force and Ideological Commitment:** The use of absolute epistemic modality ("will never be") signals a non-negotiable and divinely sanctioned ideological stance. It removes all space for diplomatic or political ambiguity, framing the conflict as a zero-sum struggle for metaphysical dominance.

- **Lexical Scoping and Affective Load:** The deployment of a purification lexicon ("cleansed", "extinguished") serves to sacralise the act of eradication. These choices transition the discourse from political rhetoric into a form of sacred duty, where violence is rebranded as a necessary ritual for moral hygiene.

2. Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM - van Dijk):

- **Cognitive Strategy:** The Ideological Square: The fragment operationalises a rigid Positive Self-presentation (the banner of *Tawheed*) versus a radical Negative Other-presentation (*Rafidah*, apostates). This binary suppresses any intra-group complexity and maximises out-group demonisation.

Mental Models of Purification: The text constructs a binary cognitive schema that divides reality into "pure" and "defiled" zones. By framing territory as something to be "cleansed," it prepares the reader's mental model to perceive the presence of the "Other" as an inherent contamination that must be removed for the community's survival.

3. Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA - Wodak):

- **Argumentative Strategy:** Topos of Existential Threat: The out-group is discursively constructed as an existential threat to the global *Ummah*. This topos is used to justify "pre-emptive" violence as a form of defensive justice, making the call to armed jihad appear as a logical and moral necessity.

- **Referential/Nomination Strategies:** The use of exclusionary and derogatory theological labels (*Rafidah*, apostates) recontextualises contemporary political or sectarian rivals as transhistorical religious deviants. This nomination strategy strips enemies of their modern political identity and subjects them to the judgment of prophetic history.

B.4 Analytical Insight:

This passage serves as an exemplar of ideological discourse orchestration. It simultaneously leverages textual violence (DRA) to establish agency, cognitive polarisation (SCM) to dehumanise the target, and historical recontextualisation (DHA) to provide a theological mandate for eradication. The synergy between these levels creates a "grammar of radicalisation" that interpellates the audience into a state of permanent ideological and operational mobilisation.

Appendix C: Sample Analysis of Visual Fragment (Multimodal)

C.1 Fragment Source

Rumiyah, Issue 3, Cover Image.

C.2 Image Description

A high-resolution visual composition featuring a masked insurgent wielding a knife, positioned dominantly over a subdued, kneeling figure. The background depicts a desaturated and faded Christian cross, creating a symbolic landscape of religious displacement and conquest.

C.3 Visual Grammar Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)

- **Compositional Salience and Information Value:** The fighter achieves maximum salience through central framing and high-contrast lighting, drawing immediate viewer attention to the act of "Just Terror". This assigns the "Given" information to the group's agency and the "New" information to the inevitable subjugation of the religious "Other".

- **Representational Interaction and Gaze:** The image employs an Offer Gaze (Indirect Address), where the participants do not interact with the viewer. This strategy positions the reader as a detached observer of a "sacred reality," inviting voyeuristic alignment with the group's triumph rather than a direct interpersonal challenge.

- **Framing and Social Distance:** The tight medium cropping creates a sense of "personal distance," forcing the viewer into an intimate proximity with the act of violence. This serves to decontextualise the violence, transforming it from a criminal act into a universalised symbolic ritual.

- **Chromatic Coding and Affective Salience:** The dominance of red and black tones provides a clear semiotic anchor for martyrdom, death, and eschatological struggle. The desaturation of the Christian cross suggests a "theological fading," visually reinforcing the narrative of Islamic supremacy.

- **Symbolism and Iconography:** The faded cross functions as a symbolic attribute representing the "Grayzone" that has been extinguished. Its visual erasure signifies the theological superiority and the inevitable eradication of the Christian presence as prophesied in the group's discourse.

C.4 CDS Alignment

- **DRA (Dialectical–Relational Approach):** The visual hierarchy operationalises intersemiotic modality, where the image performs the "authoritative command" structure found in the text. It assigned total social and physical agency to the insurgent while reducing the victim to a passive "patient" of the material process.

- **SCM (Socio-Cognitive Model):** The composition reinforces the Ideological Square by providing a visual "mental model" of Positive Self-presentation (heroic mujahid) versus Negative Other-presentation (humiliated kuffar). This works to cognitively desensitise the audience by framing the eradication of the "Other" as a moral necessity.

- **DHA (Discourse–Historical Approach):** The visual recontextualises transhistorical "Crusader" tropes to justify immediate tactical violence. By invoking the cross, the image provides a "Topos of History," suggesting that the current conflict is the culminating stage of a divinely mandated civilisational war.

C.5 Analytical Insight

This multimodal fragment functions as a symbolic theatre of triumph, strategically designed to bridge the gap between abstract theology and actionable violence. The synergy between visual grammar and the tripartite CDS framework reveals how ISIS "weaponises the ordinary"—in this case, a knife and a symbol—to construct narratives of martyrdom, supremacy, and divine victory. This sample demonstrates the analytical depth of the study, proving that the thirty selected

fragments are deconstructed not merely for their surface content, but as sophisticated instruments of ideological and cognitive recalibration.

Appendix D: Analytical Workflow Diagram

This diagram illustrates the iterative, multi-stage process used to transform the raw corpus into actionable counter-narrative recommendations.

Stage 1: Corpus Identification & Archival Preparation Comprehensive gathering and authentication of the master corpus (twenty eight issues: fifteen *Dabiq*, thirteen *Rumiyah*).

↓ **Stage 2: Preliminary Immersion & Open Coding** Initial inductive, manual scanning of the 1,500-page dataset to identify recurring linguistic and visual patterns.

↓ **Stage 3: Thematic Clustering & Category Refinement** Grouping initial codes into core ideological themes (e.g., *takfirism*, martyrdom, eschatological branding).

↓ **Stage 4: Purposive Analytical Sampling** Strategic selection of thirty discourse fragments (16 from *Dabiq*; 14 from *Rumiyah*) for deep-dive deconstruction.

↓ **Stage 5: Tripartite Model-Based Interpretation * DRA (Fairclough):** Deconstructing textual structures and social agency.

- **SCM (van Dijk):** Uncovering mental models and the Ideological Square.
- **DHA (Wodak):** Tracing topoi and the recontextualisation of prophetic history.

↓ **Stage 6: Multimodal Layering** Integrating Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design to decode the semiotic orchestration of images and layouts.

↓ **Stage 7: Methodological Triangulation & Reflexive Verification** Cross-validating findings across the three CDS models to ensure interpretive reliability and analytical depth.

↓ **Stage 8: Synthesis & Operational Culmination** Final integration of findings into the "Countering Radicalisation Discourse" recommendations in Chapter Five.

2.18. Data Analysis Procedures and Analytical Stages

This section outlines the systematic procedure by which the selected Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) models—Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)—are operationalised for the analysis of ISIS’s propaganda discourse. The objective is to provide a transparent, replicable, and academically rigorous framework for identifying, interpreting, and triangulating ideological content within both textual and visual fragments.

2.18.1. Analytical Workflow Overview

The analysis proceeds through the following eight structured stages, designed to ensure interpretive depth and methodological reliability:

1. **Corpus Preparation and Archival Pre-processing:** The entire master corpus—comprising twenty eight issues (fifteen of *Dabiq* and thirteen of *Rumiyah*)—was pre-processed in its original PDF format. Visual and textual elements were separated and categorised according to issue numbers, themes, and specific sections to maintain contextual integrity.

2. **Initial Immersion and Open Coding:** Initial inductive coding was conducted using a manual, colour-coded memo system. This deliberate avoidance of CAQDAS software (e.g., NVivo) facilitated a "slow, close reading" and a deeper interpretive immersion in the materials. Codes were assigned to recurring ideological patterns, such as eschatology, *takfirism*, and in-group/out-group binaries.

3. **Thematic Categorisation:** Initial codes were clustered into broader themes aligned with the research questions, including recruitment strategies, the justification of violence, and theological legitimation. During this stage, visual and verbal content were tagged for multimodal interplay.

4. **Purposive Fragment Selection:** To strike a balance between analytical depth and representational breadth, a purposive selection of thirty key discourse fragments was made. This sample consists of 16 fragments from *Dabiq* and 14 fragments from *Rumiyah*, strategically chosen for their ideological density and strategic significance.

5. **Model-Based Interpretation:** Each selected fragment was interrogated through the three integrated CDS lenses:

- **DRA (Fairclough):** Analysis of micro-level textual structures (transitivity, modality, intertextuality) and their relation to meso-level discursive practices and macro-level social practices.

- **SCM (van Dijk):** Deconstruction of cognitive schemata, specifically the operation of the **Ideological Square** and the construction of mental models of friend versus foe.

- **DHA (Wodak):** Investigation of topoi, the recontextualisation of prophetic history, and the use of nomination and predication strategies to anchor current events in a transhistorical narrative.

6. **Multimodal Layering:** Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design was applied to selected visual fragments to decode the semiotic orchestration of symbolism, salience, gaze, and composition. These visual findings were then interpreted in direct conversation with the three CDS models to uncover intersemiotic modality.

7. **Methodological Triangulation:** Findings were cross-validated across the three models to record convergences and contradictions. This stage was supported by reflexive memos maintained during each interpretive round to monitor and bracket researcher positionality.

8. **Synthesis and Empirical Presentation:** The final interpretations integrated all textual, visual, cognitive, and historical dimensions. This synthesis forms the empirical foundation of Chapters Three and Four, where the findings are presented as a longitudinal deconstruction of ISIS's strategic discursive metamorphosis.

2.19. Operationalisation of the Tripartite CDS Framework

This section details the methodological execution of the three integrated Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) models, illustrating how each framework interrogates the thirty selected fragments at distinct yet interconnected levels of abstraction. By operationalising the approaches of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak, the study ensures a multidimensional deconstruction of the linguistic, cognitive, and historical strategies that constitute ISIS's "grammar of radicalisation".

2.19.1. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Fairclough's model is operationalised to examine the dialectical relationship between the text and the social structures it seeks to reproduce or transform.

- **Micro-level Textual Analysis:** This stage involves a meticulous examination of lexicalisation, nominalisation, and transitivity structures to identify how agency and social roles are assigned. Special emphasis is placed on epistemic and deontic modality to uncover how ISIS constructs non-negotiable moral authority and divine obligation.

- **Meso-level Discursive Practice:** The analysis focuses on intertextuality and interdiscursivity, tracing the appropriation of Qur'anic citations and prophetic hadiths. This reveals how the group recontextualises sacred texts to naturalise its political agenda for an Anglophone audience.

- **Macro-level Social Practice:** The findings are situated within the group's broader ideological apparatus, examining how discourse serves as a vehicle for power legitimation and ideological reproduction. This layer addresses the strategic shift from the "utopian state-building" of *Dabiq* to the "insurgent urgency" of *Rumiyah*.

2.19.2. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

The SCM is operationalised to bridge the gap between text and society by uncovering the underlying mental representations that drive radicalisation.

- **Mental Models and Ideological Schemata:** This stage detects the construction of binary oppositions (e.g., believers vs. crusaders) used to polarise the reader's social cognitions. It deconstructs how these models facilitate in-group favouritism and out-group dehumanisation.

- **The Ideological Square:** The analysis identifies strategies of Positive Self-presentation and Negative Other-presentation, particularly how ISIS de-emphasises its own losses while exaggerating the moral and military failures of its adversaries.

- **Semantic Macrostructures:** This involves identifying the global themes and macro-propositions (e.g., "The West is in perpetual war with Islam") that provide the overarching coherence for the group's narrative across different fragments.

2.19.3. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

The DHA provides the historical depth required to understand how ISIS anchors its contemporary propaganda in a transhistorical narrative of struggle.

- **Discursive Strategies (Nomination and Predication):** The analysis interrogates how social actors are labelled and evaluated—glorifying the "mujahid" as a heroic figure while stigmatising enemies as "apostates" (*murtaddin*) or "deviants".

- **Argumentation and Topoi:** This stage identifies recurrent topoi (e.g., the *Topos of Threat*, *Topos of Justice*, and *Topos of History*) used to provide the quasi-logical justification for calls to immediate action.

- **Interdiscursivity and Historical Anchoring:** The analysis traces how historical discourses (e.g., the Crusades or Andalusian memories) are recontextualised to create a sense of historical continuity and divine mandate for the group's strategic recalibrations.

2.20. Coding Protocols and Empirical Documentation

The systematic deconstruction of the corpus is supported by a suite of analytical instruments designed to ensure consistency and transparency. Appendix A provides the Coding and Analytical Templates utilized throughout the study, including standardized matrices for ideological coding, visual grammar deconstruction, and the integrated fragment-model alignment.

To demonstrate the practical application of the tripartite CDS framework, the thesis includes illustrative walkthroughs for both textual and visual data:

- **Appendix C:** A comprehensive analysis of a textual fragment from *Dabiq* Issue 7 ("From Hypocrisy to Apostasy").

- **Appendix D:** A multimodal deconstruction of a visual fragment from *Rumiyah* Issue 3 (exploring religious conquest symbolism).

These walkthroughs serve as procedural exemplars, revealing how the micro-level linguistic and visual features were triangulated through the DRA, SCM, and DHA lenses to uncover macro-level ideological narratives.

2.20.1. Manual Interpretive Engagement vs. CAQDAS

A deliberate methodological choice was made to employ manual coding rather than Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), such as NVivo. This decision was predicated on the need for interpretive immersion and the "slow, close reading" required to detect subtle metaphors, intertextual nuances, and cognitive frames inherent in extremist discourse.

The rigour of this manual process was maintained through the rigorous documentation of analytical logs, coding sheets, and reflexive memos, which collectively provide a detailed audit trail of interpretive decisions. This procedure ensures that the findings are not merely descriptive but are grounded in a deep, triangulated application of CDS theory across multimodal jihadist propaganda.

2.20.2. Purposive Sampling and Representational Breadth

Given the extensive nature of the master corpus—twenty eight issues totalling approximately 1,500 pages—the study employs a purposive sampling strategy to strike an optimal balance between analytical depth. A final sample of thirty key discourse fragments was selected for intensive deconstruction:

- **Sixteen Fragments from *Dabiq***: Capturing the "utopian state-building" and eschatological baseline.
- **Fourteen Fragments from *Rumiyah***: Documenting the strategic recalibration toward "insurgent urgency" and decentralised violence.

A comprehensive overview of this analytical sample is presented in Appendix B: Table of Selected Discourse Fragments. This table catalogues each fragment by source issue, page number, and thematic relevance, ensuring that the research remains replicable and ethically contextualised.

The selected fragments were meticulously chosen to ensure coverage across four critical dimensions:

1. **Thematic Saturation:** Including martyrdom, *takfir*, *hijrah*, and anti-Western polemics.
2. **Longitudinal Development:** Tracking the discursive metamorphosis from early *Dabiq* to the final issues of *Rumiyah*.
3. **Discursive Modality:** Balancing written argumentation with visual symbolism and strategic narratives.
4. **Operational Diversity:** Allowing for the full application of Fairclough's transitivity, van Dijk's ideological square, and Wodak's topoi.

Every fragment was verified against authenticated archival sources, with analytical saturation prioritised over mere statistical representativeness. This sampling logic provides the robust empirical foundation necessary for the thematic synthesis and counter-narrative recommendations presented in the final stages of this investigation.

Appendix B: Table of Selected Discourse Fragments

Table 2.5. Comprehensive Inventory of Selected Discourse Fragments and Primary Themes

ID	Magazine	Issue	Year	Page(s)	Primary Theme
F01	Dabiq	1-15	2014	The Magazine Title	The Name "Dabiq": Eschatological Branding
F02	Dabiq	1	2014	pp. 2–3	al-Zarqawi Quote and Visual Composition
F03	Dabiq	1	2014	1 st Issue Cover Page	The Return of Khilafah
F04	Dabiq	1	2014	pp. 6–7	Khilafah Declared / Glad Tidings
F05	Dabiq	3	2014	3 rd Issue Cover Page	A Call to Hijrah
F06	Dabiq	3	2014	pp. 10–11	The World Has Divided Into Two Camps
F07	Dabiq	3	2014	pp. 10-11	Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrahim
F08	Dabiq	4	2014	p. 43	The Fading Grayzone
F09	Dabiq	7	2015	7 th Issue Cover Page	From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone
F10	Dabiq	10	2015	pp. 38-39	WALĀ' AND BARĀ
F11	Dabiq	11	2015	11 th Issue cover Page & pp. 22-23	The Danger of Abandoning Dārul-Islām
F12	Dabiq	11	2015	pp. 16–17	The Dajjal – The 'Mahdi' of the Rāfidah

F13	Dabiq	14	2016	14 th Cover Page & p. 28	The Murtadd Brotherhood
F14	Dabiq	11	2015	pp. 40-41	To Our Sisters: A Jihad Without Fighting
F15	Dabiq	13	2016	pp. 24-26	Advice on Ihdād
F16	Dabiq	15	2016	pp. 30	Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You
F17	Rumiyah	1-13	2016	The Magazine Title	The Name "Rumiyah"
F18	Rumiyah	1-13	2016	Each Cover Pages	The Recurring Epigraph of <i>Rumiyah</i> Magazine
F19	Rumiyah	1	2016	p. 1	Cover Page
F20	Rumiyah	1	2016	pp. 34-36	The Kafir's Blood is Halal for You, So Shed It
F21	Rumiyah	2	2016	pp. 12-13	Just Terror Tactics
F22	Rumiyah	2	2016	pp. 22-25	Brutality and Severity Towards the Kuffar
F23	Rumiyah	3	2016	pp. 28-30	The Obligation of Exposing Wicked Scholars
F24	Rumiyah	4	2016	pp. 14-15	The Epic Battles of Sirte" and "Sinai Wilayah Harvest"
F25	Rumiyah	5	2017	pp. 2-4	The Syrian Sahwat: Shallow Unity and Reliance on Taghut
F26	Rumiyah	6	2017	pp. 8-10	And Do Not Weaken in Pursuing the Enemy
F27	Rumiyah	8	2017	p. 12	The Kafir's Wealth Is Halal for You, So Take It
F28	Rumiyah	9	2017	9 th Issue cover Page & pp. 04-05	The Ruling on the Belligerent Christians
F29	Rumiyah	11	2017	pp. 4-5	Either We Exterminate the Mushrikin or Die Trying
F30	Rumiyah	13	2017	pp. 14-15	The Position of Imamah in the Religion

The Reproduced fragments in Chapter Four are handled with ethical care. Violent content is described rather than displayed, and all identifiable victims or inflammatory symbols are redacted or abstracted.

2.21. Conclusion

This chapter has presented a rigorous, multi-layered methodological framework for analysing ISIS's English-language propaganda magazines, Dabiq and Rumiyah. Anchored in the epistemological commitments of constructivism and critical realism and implemented through the

methodological paradigm of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), this framework integrates the dialectical–relational, socio-cognitive, and discourse–historical approaches to enable a robust, triangulated analysis of discourse, cognition, ideology, and visual semiotics.

Each stage—from philosophical grounding to corpus design, from purposive sampling to the operationalisation of analytical models—has been carefully justified using the most authoritative scholarship in the field. Ethical integrity has been safeguarded by critical engagement with violent content, avoidance of sensationalism, and the adoption of reflexive and transparent practices.

By combining manual coding, theoretical triangulation, and multimodal analysis, the study produces a methodological design that is flexible yet rigorous and deeply contextualised yet analytically precise. The corpus of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is treated not as a static body of extremist texts but as a dynamic ideological battlefield where discourse serves to construct, justify, and propagate violent jihadist worldviews.

This methodological scaffold sets the stage for Chapter Three, which operationalises these procedures through a systematic analysis of *Dabiq* magazine to establish the 'utopian' and state-building baseline of ISIS's early English-language discourse. Establishing this benchmark is a prerequisite for Chapter Four, which examines the strategic rhetorical shifts in *Rumiyah* as the group transitioned toward a narrative of decentralised insurgency following territorial decline. Ultimately, this progression demonstrates how the tools of CDS, when meticulously applied, can reveal the subtle interplay of language, cognition, history, and power that characterises the strategic evolution of extremist discourse."

CHAPTER THREE:
ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION,
AND DISCUSSION
DABIQ **MAGAZINE**

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a critical and in-depth analysis of *Dabiq*, the flagship English-language magazine of ISIS, published between 2014 and 2016. Drawing on the tripartite framework of Critical Discourse Analysis—Fairclough’s dialectical-relational approach, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model, and Wodak’s discourse-historical perspective—the chapter unpacks the discursive strategies ISIS employed to construct, legitimise, and disseminate its ideological worldview. Special attention is given to how *Dabiq* mobilises language and visual elements to build binary oppositions, glorify martyrdom, delegitimise perceived enemies, and cultivate a heroic Islamic identity. The analysis also traces how narrative, rhetoric, and multimodality are strategically coordinated to appeal to alienated or identity-seeking audiences. By interpreting both textual and visual content across selected issues, this chapter lays the foundation for understanding ISIS’s broader radicalisation mechanisms, which are later compared and contrasted with their successor publication, *Rumiyah*.

The current section inaugurates the analytical chapter by examining how ISIS discursively constructs its legitimacy and authority through its two flagship English-language propaganda magazines, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. These extracts are not ideologically neutral publications but highly curated instruments of persuasion designed to radicalise, recruit, and mobilise. The analysis is grounded in the tripartite CDS framework established in the methodology: Fairclough’s Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). These models allow for the triangulated dissection of linguistic features, cognitive structures, historical allusions, and intertextual strategies.

Before turning to specific discourse fragments, it is methodologically and ideologically vital to understand how the names *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* themselves operate as discursive constructs. The titles are ideologically loaded, both semantically and symbolically, and their strategic deployment reflects the group’s shifting geopolitical realities and theological justifications.

3.2. Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion (*Dabiq* Magazine)

3.2.1. Fragment 1 “Ideological Semiotics of the Magazine Title *Dabiq*”

3.2.1.1. The Semantics of Eschatological Branding

ISIS’s choice of the name *Dabiq* for its first English-language magazine is profoundly significant. *Dabiq* is a town in northern Syria with deep eschatological connotations in Islamic apocalyptic tradition. A hadith cited in *Sahih Muslim* (Book 54, Hadith 247) predicts that the final battle between the forces of Islam and the Romans (often interpreted as the West) will take place in *Dabiq*. By naming its publication *Dabiq*, ISIS invokes not only a geographical marker but also embeds itself in a teleological narrative of divine destiny. From a Discourse-Historical (DHA) perspective, the title functions as a topos of history, where a specific location is sacralised to legitimise the group’s violent jihad as preordained and divinely sanctioned (Ingram, 2015; Winter, 2017).

The magazine consistently reinforces this religious symbolism. The editorial content frequently cites eschatological hadiths and refers to contemporary events as signs of the looming battle. Thus, the magazine title becomes a semiotic anchor for framing ISIS’s state-building efforts as not merely political but eschatologically inevitable (Jacoby, 2023).

3.2.1.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Fairclough offers further insight regarding this transition. At the level of social practice, the renaming signals the recontextualisation of defeat into a renewed call for jihad. At the discursive practice level, the change represents a shift in the target audience: *Dabiq* addressed both fighters and utopian settlers; *Rumiyah* primarily addresses lone-actor terrorists and diaspora sympathisers. At the textual level, *Rumiyah* is linguistically more direct and less ceremonious, reflecting the urgency of decentralised warfare.

3.2.1.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

This strategy aligns with van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) and his notion of cognitive frames: the title *Dabiq* triggers a specific mental model among its target audience—one of ultimate war, religious duty, and historical revival (van Dijk, 2006). This serves the Ideological Square by reinforcing positive self-presentation through the lens of divine selection.

However, the military defeat of ISIS in the town of Dabiq in October 2016 rendered the title counterproductive. Rather than signifying divine ascendancy, *Dabiq* now symbolises a failed prophecy and territorial loss. This situation necessitated a discursive shift. The group rebranded its publication as *Rumiyah* (رُومِيَّة), which means "Rome" in Arabic.

The new title retained theological significance. In several hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have declared the conquest of Rome as one of the eschatological milestones (e.g., *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith 23408). Hence, *Rumiyah* is not a retreat from eschatology but a recontextualisation of the group's narrative. It shifts focus from a failed territorial prophecy to an abstract and still-realizable objective: the conquest of the West. The title signifies continuity within ideological rupture (Ingram, 2016). As Wodak and Meyer (2016) argue, discourse is always situated within specific historical trajectories. The transition from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah* exemplifies ISIS's ability to adapt its propaganda to changing geopolitical conditions while preserving ideological coherence.

3.2.1.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Wodak's DHA helps uncover the historical legitimization strategies embedded in both titles. In *Dabiq*, topoi of restoration, threat, and sacrifice are predominant—constructing the Caliphate as a reclamation of lost Islamic grandeur. In *Rumiyah*, the **topoi** shift towards vengeance, urgency, and divine inevitability, presenting decentralised violence as theologically endorsed and historically justified.

3.2.1.5. Synthesis

The naming of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is not an arbitrary editorial decision but a strategic act of ideological framing. Through the lenses of DRA, SCM, and DHA, these titles can be seen as entry points into ISIS's broader discursive universe—a universe that binds its audience through shared mythologies, collective memory, and semiotic manipulation. The shift from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah* exemplifies how extremist discourse evolves in response to changing material conditions while retaining its core ideological thrust. The CDS framework reveals the nuanced ways ISIS uses language not merely to inform but to position, mobilise, and radicalise.

With this foundational understanding of the discursive architecture, the chapter now proceeds to analyse specific fragments related to the construction of legitimate authority and the Caliphate.

3.2.2. Fragment 2 “*Al-Zarqawi* Quote and Visual Composition”

3.2.2.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

“The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify – by Allah’s permission – until it burns the crusader armies in Dābiq.”

(Attributed to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, featured in the opening pages of Dabiq, Issues 1, 2014)

al-Zarqawi Quote and Visual Composition (*Dabiq* 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014, pp. 2–3)



Figure 3.1. al-Zarqawi Quote and Visual Composition (*Dabiq* 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014, pp. 2–3)

3.2.2.1. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Over-lexicalisation and Metaphor:** The fragment employs powerful metaphorical constructs like “spark”, “heat”, and “burns”—each layered with theological and militant resonance. As Fairclough (1992, p. 193) notes, over-lexicalisation signals an intense ideological preoccupation. Here, the metaphorical density is not only poetic but prescriptive, framing jihad as a divine combustion process aimed at eradicating Western (“crusader”) armies.

- **Presupposition and Definiteness:** The phrase “the spark” functions as a **presupposition**, naturalising a divinely inspired beginning as an unquestioned event. The definite article in “the crusader armies” also constructs a fixed, dichotomous worldview, echoing the **overwording** often found in militant manifestos (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Modality and Certainty:** The high-commitment modal structure in “will continue to intensify” connotes absolute inevitability, bolstering the legitimacy of violence as a future fact.

The phrase “by Allah’s permission” serves as a legitimization strategy, embedding divine sanction into temporal military strategy.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Intertextuality and Genre Hybridisation:** The quote is attributed to a historical jihadi leader, invoking **interdiscursive** resonance from within the Salafi-jihadist tradition. Its repetition across issues elevates it to a canonical status, akin to liturgy. The paratextual placement (at the top of the content page) performs genre hybridisation, transforming a militant quote into a foundational ideological overture.

Social Practice Analysis:

- The fragment functions as a ritualised call to action, aligning with ISIS’s broader mission to historicise and divinise its violent insurgency. The social practice it reflects is one of existential polarisation: believers must participate in a divine military campaign or remain in a state of apostasy.

3.2.2.2. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The dominant semantic macrostructure is: ISIS’s mission is the divine continuation of jihad, culminating in the apocalyptic battle at Dabiq. This frames violence not only as legitimate but as eschatologically inevitable.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**
 - **Positive self-presentation:** ISIS’s cause is positioned as divine, foretold, and blessed.
 - **Negative other-presentation:** The “crusader armies” are not merely political adversaries but blasphemous invaders, drawing on post-Crusade trauma and colonial memory to dehumanise the 'Other'.

- **Cognitive Mental Models:** The quote creates a mental model wherein Iraq becomes sacred ground and Dabiq a prophesied battlefield. This embeds cognitive pressure on the audience to accept militant jihad as a primary religious obligation.

- **Context Model:** Positioned at the front of each issue, the quote functions as a cognitive anchor, priming the reader's interpretive frame for all subsequent content. It encodes a script of sacred violence and martyrdom.

3.2.2.3. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination:** The enemy is categorically labelled “crusader armies”, a referential strategy drawing from medieval Christian-Islamic conflict to construct a fixed historical enemy.

- **Predication:** Through violent predication, the enemy is not simply opposed; they are described as flammable, disposable, and destined for divine destruction.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of History:** The use of al-Zarqawi's words draws on recent jihadist history, anchoring the contemporary campaign within a chain of continuity.

- **Topos of Authority:** The attribution to a slain leader lends weight, deontic legitimacy, and a sense of martyrdom to the statement.

- **Topos of Threat:** The metaphor of burning constructs the enemy as a mortal threat, while simultaneously threatening them with divine retribution.

Interdiscursivity:

- The quote exemplifies recontextualisation, fusing jihadist memoir, Quranic allusion (fire as divine punishment), and apocalyptic hadiths into a single rhetorical artefact. This amplifies its reach across ideological and emotional registers.

3.2.2.4. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis

Applying the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006):

- **Repetition and Placement:** The quote is consistently placed in the paratextual introduction (contents page), achieving maximum compositional salience.

- **Typography:** The font is large, white, and contrasts starkly against a fiery background—enhancing visibility and visual modality.

- **Imagery and Visual Transitivity:** The visuals depict Western soldiers with backs turned, engulfed in flames. This represents an action process where the enemy is the passive goal of divine destruction. The *Dabiq* logo itself is aflame—semiotically linking the act of burning with the 'brand' of the magazine.

- **Colour Scheme:** Dominated by reds, oranges, and blacks—semiotic modes associated with hellfire, urgency, and aggression.

- **Layout Dynamics:** The quote sits in the top-left quadrant, the primary visual anchor point, maximising its cognitive impact.

3.2.2.5. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

Theologically, the quote taps into Quranic imagery of fire and purification. Politically, it legitimises the perpetual conflict between ISIS and Western powers. Psychologically, it primes the audience through semantic violence and emotional spectacle. Strategically, it encodes divine endorsement of insurgency, mobilising readers for radicalisation.

This fragment is not just rhetorical—it is architectural. It structures the cognitive and emotional engagement of the reader across all issues. From a CDS perspective, it exemplifies how language and imagery can orchestrate ideological immersion through repetition, semiotic layering, and interdiscursive borrowing. As with the cover page of Issue 1, this quote demonstrates that the paratext in jihadist propaganda is not merely ornamental—it is foundational. Its presence across issues proves its role as an ideological constant amidst shifting geopolitical conditions.

3.2.3. Fragment 3 Cover Page – “The Return of Khilafah” – *Dabiq*, Issue 1, p. 1

3.2.3.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

“THE RETURN OF KHILAFAH” – prominently displayed on the cover of *Dabiq*, Issue 1 (Ramadan 1435 / June 2014)

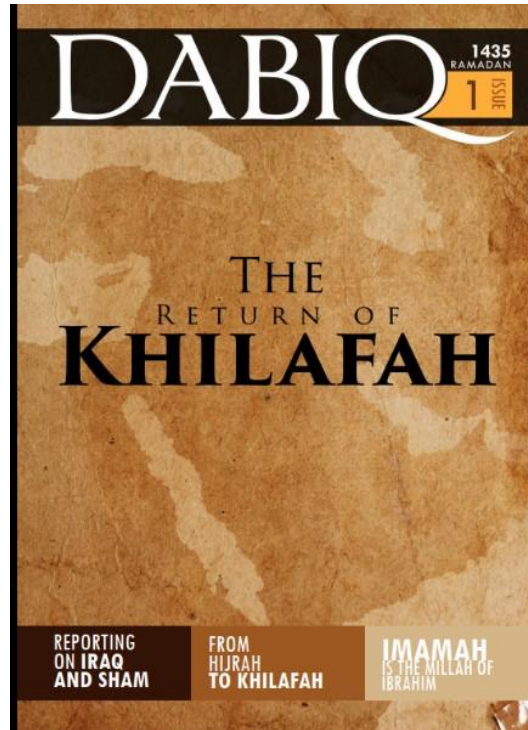


Figure 3.2. 1st Issue Cover Page: The Return of Khilafah (Dabiq 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014)

3.2.3.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Interdiscursivity:** The word *Khilafah* is not a neutral political label; it is a deeply theological and historical term signifying divine governance. The phrase “The Return of Khilafah” carries presuppositional weight, naturalising a historical rupture and subsequent restoration of legitimate Islamic rule. The definite article “the” constructs *Khilafah* as a singular, universally recognised entity, presupposing its past existence and universal desirability.

- **Modality and Grammatical Realisation:** The use of the nominal structure “The Return of Khilafah” implies inevitability and permanence. This high-commitment modality avoids explicit agency through a passive grammatical structure, portraying the Caliphate’s return as a divine or historical necessity rather than a violent political project.

- **Typography and Foregrounding:** The lexical item “Khilafah” appears in a bold, capitalised, enlarged serif typeface, visually dominating the cover. Fairclough’s (2003) principle of textual salience is highly relevant here: ideological lexis is foregrounded, whereas contextual ambiguity is backgrounded to reduce critical resistance.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The cover page blends the visual grammar of modern geopolitical reports (e.g., territorial maps) with religious aesthetics. This genre hybridisation positions the magazine as both contemporarily authoritative and historically sacred.

- **Borrowing and Arabisation:** The use of transliterated Arabic terms (*Khilafah*, *Hijrah*, *Jihad*) serves a dual purpose—preserving Quranic reverence and signalling an 'insider' identity. As Fairclough (1992) notes, discourse producers selectively embed signifiers to reinforce specific ideological frames.

Social Practice Analysis:

- The socio-political backdrop of *Dabiq* Issue 1 coincides with the declaration of a territorial Caliphate. The discourse of the cover constructs a utopian Islamic order as a social practice of resistance against the perceived failure of secular Arab states and Western intervention.

3.2.3.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)**Macrostructure:**

- The global semantic macrostructure is: The long-lost Islamic Caliphate has returned to restore justice, unity, and divine order. This appeals to the audience's deep-rooted eschatological expectations.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- **Positive Self-Presentation:** ISIS presents itself as the righteous heir of prophetic governance, linking the Caliphate to honour and divine legitimacy.

- **Negative Other-Presentation:** This is achieved via contrast with secularism, nationalism, and colonial legacies, which are implicitly framed as 'failed' and 'unjust'.

- **Presupposition and Mental Models:** The phrase activates collective memory schemas of Islamic grandeur. Mental models are shaped to perceive ISIS's political project not as an innovation, but as a sacred, restorative obligation.

Context Models:

- The cover aims to shape audience cognition transnationally. It encodes a context model where the *ummah* transcends modern territoriality, interpellating all Muslims as subjects of the restored *Khilafah*.

3.2.3.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)**Nomination and Predication Strategies:**

- **Nomination:** “Khilafah” is nominated as a sacralised, timeless entity. There is no reference to the contested nature of historical caliphates.
- **Predication:** The group’s declaration is predicated on honour and authenticity, a **legitimation strategy** that bypasses political debate.

Argumentative Topoi:

- **Topos of History:** The “return” motif evokes historical cycles of decline and revival, performing the recontextualisation of prophetic traditions into a modern propaganda format.
- **Topos of Authority:** The invocation of Islamic terminology functions as an epistemic warrant—aligning the group's actions with divine prophecy.
- **Topos of Urgency:** This constructs a mandatory imperative for immediate action—*hijrah*, *bay’ah*, and violent jihad.

Interdiscursivity:

- The cover fuses classical Islamic iconography with postcolonial grievance discourse, creating a potent interdiscursive blend that justifies the present through a selective reading of the past.

3.2.3.5. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) framework:

- **Typography and Layering:** “THE RETURN OF KHILAFAH” achieves maximum **compositional salience**. The size of “KHILAFAH” centralises its discursive importance within the visual field.

- **Conceptual Representation (The Map):** The map background is a conceptual representation rendered in a parchment-like texture without borders. This semiotic erasure of nation-state divisions visually supports a pan-Islamist ambition, rejecting modern geopolitical reality in favour of a 'borderless' caliphate.

- **Colour Scheme and Visual Modality:** Earthy browns and muted beiges evoke historical depth, aligning the magazine with manuscript traditions. This high visual modality (in terms of 'historical truth') contrasts with the glossy aesthetics of Western media.

- **Textual Inserts (Footer):** The bottom tabs function as sub-discursive cues, enriching the ideological layering through allusions to *Imamah* and the *Millah of Ibrahim*.

3.2.3.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

In written discourse, it is essential to acknowledge that readers may choose to stop reading at any moment. Consequently, discourse producers aim to highlight ideologically charged words by placing them in the most prominent and visually striking positions, such as titles and cover pages. These strategies of foregrounding are designed to capture attention and shape perceptions of the world.

The title of the first issue, “THE RETURN OF KHILAFAH”, is explicitly linked to a map devoid of political borders, signalling an intention for global expansion. By prioritising this theme, ISIS highlights the establishment of the caliphate as the central focus of its propaganda. This tactic effectively directs the reader's attention toward the preferred ideologies of ISIS, enabling the construction of a conceptual framework aimed at manipulating reader beliefs.

This cover page is a paradigmatic instance of extremist discourse designed to construct and mobilise ideological allegiance through multimodal semiotics. It distils complex themes—historical grievance, divine mandate, and geopolitical revisionism—into an accessible, symbolic artefact. Unlike mainstream political discourse, this artefact operates on the level of myth,

memory, and messianic expectation. The title alone functions as an epistemic claim grounded in religious tradition and ideological absolutism.

As scholars employing Critical Discourse Studies, it is essential to clarify that the analysis does not conflate Islam with extremism. Rather, the fragment exemplifies how ISIS exploits, decontextualises, and reconfigures sacred symbols to assert theological legitimacy. This opening fragment of *Dabiq* sets the ideological tone for the entire series, enacting what Ingram (2015) describes as “competitive systems of meaning”. The aesthetic, linguistic, and intertextual strategies used here will be expanded throughout the series, warranting further fragment-by-fragment deconstruction.

3.2.4. Fragment 4 Analysis “Khilafah Declared / Glad Tidings for the Muslim Ummah” – *Dabiq*, Issue 1, pp. 6–7

3.2.4.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

A two-page spread combining text and images that announce the declaration of the Caliphate, issue a pan-Islamic call for unity, and visually present armed fighters celebrating the announcement of the “*Khilafah*”.



Figure 3.3. *Khilafah Declared / Glad Tidings* (*Dabiq* 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014, pp. 6–7)

3.2.4.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Over-lexicalisation:** Words such as “Khilafah,” “Ummah,” “dignity,” “leadership,” and “brothers” reflect intense ideological saturation. The phrase “return your dignity, might, rights, and leadership” demonstrates over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992, p. 193), signifying an intense ideological preoccupation with empowerment and echoing collective grievance discourses.

- **Modality and Assertion:** High epistemic modality (“will return”, “you do”) reflects ideological certainty and immediacy. These statements function as categorical assertions, positioning theological and political claims as absolute truths rather than mere propositions.

- **Presupposition and Foregrounding:** The phrase “revival of the Khilafah” functions as a presupposition, naturalising a restorative historical logic. The presupposition that the *Ummah* requires unification implicitly constructs its current state as one of fragmented failure, a standard ideological foregrounding technique (Fairclough, 2003).

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The text performs genre hybridisation, blending the religious sermon with military declarations and media editorials. By stylising the leader's speech as a divine proclamation, the group achieves interdiscursive resonance with Quranic rhythms to establish authority.

- **Recontextualisation of Authority:** By quoting leadership alongside Prophetic references, the discourse performs the recontextualisation of classical authority, elevating contemporary agents to the status of semi-prophetic actors to enhance internal legitimacy.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Counter-Hegemonic Messaging:** This announcement challenges Western-drawn borders, functioning as a social practice that reasserts a divine model of governance. It constructs an alternative political ontology that seeks to subvert secular hegemony.

- **Postcolonial Resonance:** The unity of diverse ethnicities under the *Khilafah* taps into postcolonial frustrations, positioning the group as a pan-Islamic liberator from Western-imposed systems.

3.2.4.3. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Proposition:** The divine restoration of the Caliphate necessitates Muslim unification and obedience. This encapsulates a redemptive cognitive schema: humiliation → jihad → restoration.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** “Believers”, “brothers”, and “Ummah” are valorised through **lexical mitigation** of violence in favour of 'justice'.

- **Negative Out-group Presentation:** “Crusaders” and apostate governments are constructed as dishonourable, divisive forces through hyperbolic depictions of their 'enmity'.

- **Mental Models and Event Models:** The reader is invited to accept a mental model where Islamic dignity has been 'stolen'. The glorified depiction of diverse Muslims as one “brotherhood” shapes a pan-Islamic event model that replaces national identity with religious allegiance.

Context Models: The fragment draws upon specific socio-cultural knowledge: the Sunni–Shi’a divide and colonial history. By presenting idealised unity, the discourse manages the context model to appeal specifically to the diaspora and marginalised Muslim populations.

3.2.4.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategies):** The use of “Khilafah”, “Amirul-Mu'minin”, and “Ummah” serves to nominate the group as the sole legitimate successor to classical Islamic identities.

- **Predication:** The announcement uses evaluative predication to link 'salvation' exclusively to 'unity' under the group. Non-compliance is implicitly predicated as betrayal or apostasy.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of History:** ISIS invokes the glory of the classical Caliphate to justify contemporary expansion as a historical necessity.

- **Topos of Threat and Restoration:** This functions as a conclusion rule: if current oppression exists, then a decisive return to the group's governance is the only logical remedy.

- **Topos of Unity:** Divisions are blamed for weakness, constructing unity as an urgent, divinely mandated topos of advantage.

Interdiscursivity:

- The text exemplifies **interdiscursivity** by fusing theological concepts (*Hijrah, Tawheed*) with modern military rhetoric, allowing it to address spiritual and militant registers simultaneously.

3.2.4.5. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Narrative Process and Transitivity:** The left page features militants atop a US-made vehicle. This is an action process where the militants are the 'Actors', and the captured vehicle is the 'Goal', visually asserting a symbolic inversion of Western power.

- **Symbolic Suggestive Process:** The black banners reinforce visual claims to legitimate statehood. The compositional salience of the flag functions as a symbolic attribute of divine sanction.

- **Colour Saturation and Modality:** The warm yellows of the "Glad Tidings" box contrast with the dark militarised imagery. These semiotic modes symbolise ideological warmth and redemptive hope amidst conflict.

- **Interactive Meaning (Body Positioning):** The fighters' upward-pointing weapons signify 'militant optimism' and power. Their stances create a social distance of authority and triumph.

- **Information Value and Layout:** The word “Khilafah” is rendered in bold, yellow uppercase, asserting its primacy in the Given/New or Ideal/Real layout structure, guiding the viewer’s ideological interpretation.

3.2.4.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

In line with CDS’s ethical commitments, it is critical to emphasise that this discourse does not reflect Islam but is a violent manipulation of sacred traditions. The exploitation of eschatological motifs, selective use of classical terminology, and glorified depictions of jihad reveal a political project cloaked in spiritual garb.

This fragment solidifies ISIS’s central thesis: that its authority is divinely ordained, historically inevitable, and universally inclusive—claims that will be further scrutinised in the following fragment analyses. Through the integration of DRA, SCM, and DHA, it becomes evident that the 'Glad Tidings' offered are not merely informative but are designed to restructure the cognitive and social reality of the reader.

3.2.5. Fragment 5 Analysis “A Call to Hijrah” – *Dabiq*, Issue 3, p. 1

3.2.5.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

The cover of *Dabiq*, Issue 3, displays the headline "A CALL TO HIJRAH" over a dramatic photograph of armoured vehicles driving across a barren, reddish desert. The image is saturated with symbolism, while the bold textual command functions as an urgent religious directive.

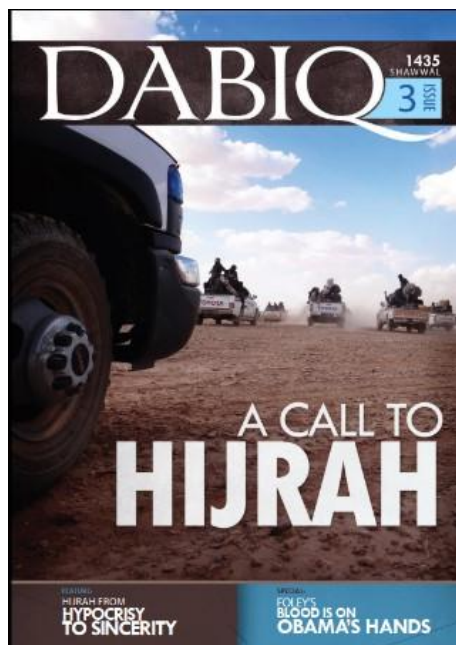


Figure 3.4. 3rd Issue Cover Page: A Call to Hijrah (Dabiq 3, Shawwal 1435 / Aug 2014)

3.2.5.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Imperative Mood:** The central lexical unit, "*Hijrah*," is a highly ideologically charged term. Unlike the neutral "migration," the Arabic form invokes sacred connotations. The verb "call" functions as a speech act of divine summoning, indicating high epistemic modality and necessity.

- **Typography and Compositional Meaning:** The phrase "A CALL TO HIJRAH" appears in a bold, all-caps, centre-aligned white serif font, suggesting divine authority. *Hijrah* occupies the **semantic nucleus**, placed at the terminus for emphasis to guide the reader's interpretation.

- **Foregrounding and Agent Deletion:** The absence of auxiliary verbs renders the title unmitigated. The **agentless passive** structure obscures the caller—suggesting the summons is not human but divine. This grammatical strategy serves to elide accountability and evoke religious inevitability (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Topic Prioritisation:** By placing this message on the cover, the producers apply topic prioritisation, a strategy for schema construction. The featured article, "Hijrah from Hypocrisy to Sincerity," functions as a supporting textual anchor for this discursive thrust.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Recontextualisation:** The cover performs interdiscursive hybridity, blending the religious sermon with militant journalism. This hybrid genre is essential for building legitimacy: religious sanctity is grafted onto modern media stylisation.

- **Intertextuality and Voice:** The title performs intertextual referencing of the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, embedding the call within foundational Islamic memory. The visual frame invites the reader to interpret the kinetic movement of the vehicles as a contemporary reenactment of that original *Hijrah*.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Geopolitical Context:** Capturing substantial territory necessitated a social practice of recruitment. This cover operates as a tool designed to capitalise on momentum.

- **Political Function:** *Hijrah* is redefined as a militant act—a journey from the *Dar al-Kufr* (land of disbelief/hypocrisy) to participation in global jihad. It constructs an alternative social reality where secular societies are morally bankrupt.

3.2.5.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)**Macrostructure:**

- **Global Meaning:** The legitimacy of the Islamic State demands a behavioural response: *Hijrah*. This is not a metaphorical shift but a physical and ideological obligation.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** Those who make *Hijrah* are described as sincere and pure.
- **Negative Other-Presentation:** Those staying in secular lands are indirectly portrayed as hypocrites, cowardly, or apostate through lexical exclusion.

- **Mental Models and Event Models:** The cover activates a mental model equating migration with piety. The desert terrain and speeding vehicles serve as visual triggers for an event model defined by urgency and heroic struggle.

Context Models:

- **Diaspora Address:** This call is explicitly crafted for Muslims in the West. It manages the context model by exploiting alienation and spiritual yearning to reframe migration as a sacred, mandatory duty.

3.2.5.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** The concept of "*Hijrah*" is nominated as a unifying religious duty, where 'migrants' are referentially transformed into '*mujahideen*'.

- **Predication:** Evaluative **predication** marks responders as 'noble', while those who fail to heed the call face accusations of 'hypocrisy' in related content.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Duty:** *Hijrah* is presented as a religiously mandated topos of obligation.

- **Topos of Threat and Salvation:** The cover suggests a binary conclusion rule: heed the call for salvation or face spiritual condemnation.

- **Topos of Purification:** This suggests that migration 'cleanses' the soul, functioning as a topos of advantage for the believer.

Interdiscursivity and Fallacies:

- **Interdiscursivity:** The discourse references the early Islamic period while mirroring modern military campaigns to amplify legitimacy.

- **Logical Fallacies:** The juxtaposition of "hypocrisy" and "sincerity" creates a false dilemma, excluding all intermediary positions. It further employs an appeal to fear and guilt regarding moral failure.

3.2.5.5. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Narrative Representation and Vectors:** The armoured vehicles create strong horizontal vectors, moving from left to right. In Western visual grammar, this represents Information Value moving from 'Given' to 'New'—suggesting a narrative of inevitable progression toward a new future.

- **Symbolism and Archetypes:** The arid desert is a symbolic suggestive process evoking prophetic struggle. The anonymity of the fighters (unseen) allows for viewer identification, making them archetypal heroes.

- **Visual Modality and Colour:** Earth tones reinforce a 'natural' and 'humble' visual modality. The contrast between the calm sky and dynamic ground action conveys a semiotic mode of divine serenity guiding earthly conflict.

- **Salience and Layering:** The white typography achieves high compositional salience against the reddish terrain, visually uniting spiritual 'purity' with kinetic military action.

3.2.5.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This cover page is a powerful propaganda artefact that synthesises religious tradition, political urgency, and visual symbolism into a singular call to action. The term "*Hijrah*" is no longer a mere reference to historical migration but a semiotic container for revolutionary allegiance, militant mobilisation, and religious fulfilment.

Fairclough's DRA reveals how grammatical structures and visual salience are used to produce a sense of inevitability. Van Dijk's SCM exposes the underlying cognitive schema, specifically the scaffolding of moral obligation through group identity and exclusion. Wodak's DHA elucidates how the magazine draws upon shared historical narratives and legitimising topoi to convert belief into behaviour.

This artefact is particularly effective because it preys on the existential and spiritual anxieties of young Muslims in Western societies. Through rhetorical condensation, metaphor, and visual affect, it renders complex geopolitical decisions into simple moral imperatives. In keeping with

our scholarly ethics, we reiterate that the invocation of *Hijrah* here represents a violent distortion of religious vocabulary for ideological and tactical gain. This fragment lays the groundwork for further deconstruction of *Hijrah* discourses as they appear in narrative and instructional formats later in the series.

3.2.6. Fragment 6: “THE WORLD HAS DIVIDED INTO TWO CAMPS / A CALL TO HIJRAH” – *Dabiq*, Issue 3, pp. 10–11

3.2.6.1. Textual–Visual Fragment

This double-page spread from *Dabiq*, Issue 3 (1435 AH / July 2014), boldly proclaims the division of the world into binary ideological zones: Islam versus *kufir* (disbelief), Muslims versus 'crusaders', and legitimacy versus apostasy. The layout operates as a visual and rhetorical crescendo through three intersecting subtexts: (1) “The World Has Divided into Two Camps”, (2) “A Call to Hijrah”, and (3) “A Call to All Muslim Doctors, Engineers, Scholars, and Specialists.” This configuration heightens the urgency of mass mobilisation and religious duty, framed by eschatological logic and militant appeal.

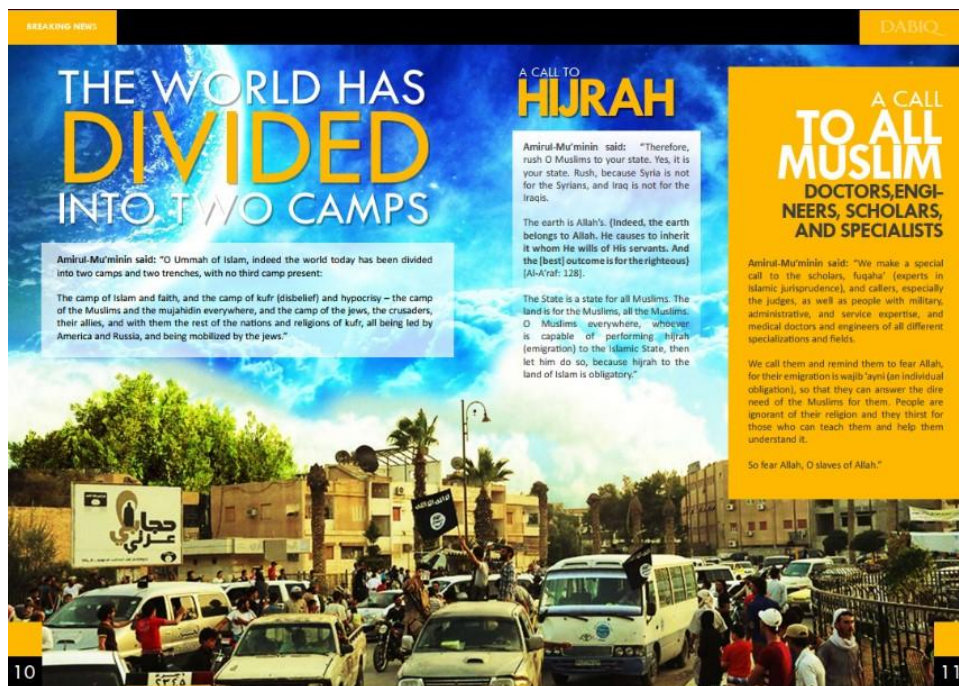


Figure 3.5. The World Has Divided Into Two Camps (*Dabiq* 3, Shawwal 1435 / Aug 2014, pp. 10–11)

3.2.6.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Ideological Load:** The terminology—*kufr*, faith, camp, crusaders, 'mobilised by the Jews'—reveals a classic binary opposition. The use of the noun “camp” functions as over-lexicalisation, evoking military frontlines and entrenched ideological positions (Fairclough, 1992).

- **Modality and Epistemic Commitment:** Statements like “the world today has been divided” express an absolute epistemic modality. These are declarative, indisputable, and presented as divinely authorised truths. The imperative mood in “Rush O Muslims, to your state” reflects a high deontic modality, framing the summons as a non-negotiable command.

- **Presupposition and Cohesion:** The text presupposes that the world is binary and that every Muslim must act. Structural logic treats *hijrah* as an axiomatic duty. Cohesion is achieved through the thematic repetition of 'state', 'division', and 'Muslims', creating a tight discursive chain.

- **Intertextuality and Semantic Hyponymy:** Qur’anic references (e.g., Al-A’rāf: 128) are used to sacralise territorial ambitions, performing a recontextualisation of divine sovereignty into modern jihadist geography. Professional terms like “doctors” and “engineers” are absorbed as hyponyms of the 'Islamic State' project, juxtaposed against the antonyms of “apostates” and “crusaders”.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The fragment performs interdiscursive hybridity, blending the political manifesto with the missionary sermon. This is crafted for global online audiences, using English and modern infographics to facilitate digital-age radicalisation.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context:** Released during the group's territorial zenith in 2014, the content reflects aggressive expansionism. The appeal to professionals reflects a social practice aimed at state-building. By reframing secular expertise as religious betrayal if not redirected, the group weaponises identity and guilt to subvert established social structures.

3.2.6.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Meaning:** The world is at war; neutrality is no longer an option. This semantic macrostructure mandates that all Muslims must migrate and serve the Caliphate.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square: * Positive In-group Presentation:** Professionals (doctors, engineers) and migrants are valorised as the 'pure' vanguard.

- **Negative Other-Presentation:** Western governments, Jews, and non-militant Muslims are cast as 'apostates' through hyperbolic characterisation.

- **Mental Models and Schemata:** The fragment constructs a mental model where *hijrah* is an existing internal obligation. The viewer is not being introduced to a new idea but is 'reminded' to fulfill a pre-existing religious duty. The cognitive schemata include enemy-versus-*ummah* logic and guilt-framed mobilisation.

- **Presupposition:** There is no 'third camp'. This binary event model interpellates every reader as either a potential migrant or a traitor to the faith.

3.2.6.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategies):** Saviours (*ummah*, specialists) and betrayers (crusaders, apostates) are clearly categorised.

- **Predication:** Evaluative predication portrays Muslims as God's 'vanguard' while characterising the 'Other' as a manipulative force (“mobilised by the Jews”).

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of History:** Implicitly refers to the prophetic act of *Hijrah* to justify contemporary migration.

- **Topos of Divine Will:** Since the land belongs to Allah, Muslims have a topos of responsibility to reclaim it.
- **Topos of Threat:** Remaining in the West is predicated as spiritually dangerous, creating a topos of urgency.

Logical Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:

- **False Dichotomy:** The "two camps" logic excludes any middle ground.
- **Slippery Slope:** The discourse implies that failure to migrate leads inevitably to apostasy.
- **Interdiscursivity:** The spread fuses Salafi jurisprudence with professional discourse and apocalyptic dualism, creating a potent perspectivisation of reality.

3.2.6.5. Multimodal and Visual Semiotic Analysis

Applying **Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006)** framework:

- **Visual Transitivity and Imagery:** The convoy of cars creates a narrative vector suggesting movement and progression—symbolising *hijrah*. Urban architecture provides a symbolic attribute of physical territoriality.
- **Typography and Salience:** The bold, orange “DIVIDED” achieves high compositional salience, functioning as a visual signal for conflict.
- **Colour Saturation and Modality:** Yellow is used as a semiotic mode to command attention, particularly for professional conscription, while blue tones paradoxically communicate a sense of divine 'calm' urgency.
- **Information Value and Space:** The layout guides the eye from the 'Ideal' (theological framing) to the 'Real' (vocational duty), using spatial composition to transform ideological abstraction into physical requirement.

3.2.6.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment illustrates how ISIS weaponises not only religious doctrine but also social identity and professional aspirations. It is an iconic piece of discursive coercion, embedded in a multimodal apparatus that transforms migration into sacred duty and secular expertise into jihad.

Fairclough's DRA reveals how the call to serve is nested in absolutist, war-framed logic. Van Dijk's SCM shows how this structure constructs the reader's cognition to feel complicit in betrayal if they remain inactive. Wodak's DHA illustrates how the interweaving of historical and social threads creates a compelling call for loyalty.

Unlike abstract theological tracts, this fragment is functionally performative: it does not just reflect ideology; it commands a response. The modular nature of the appeals reflects a sophisticated strategy of audience segmentation. The visual grammar subtly aligns physical migration with spiritual ascension, while lexical strategies recast guilt and belonging in divine terms. In sum, this fragment functions as a theological mobiliser and ideological gatekeeper, demonstrating a capacity to blend eschatology, identity politics, and media-savvy persuasion into an irresistible propaganda artefact for the alienated and the skilled.

3.2.7. Fragment 7 Analysis: “Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrahim” – *Dabiq*, Issue 3, pp. 10–11

3.2.7.1. Textual Fragment

This article titled “*Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrahim*”, published on pages 10–11 of *Dabiq* Issue 3, presents a theologically dense and ideologically manipulative justification for migration to Syria (Sham). Drawing from a multitude of hadiths and selectively interpreted Islamic traditions, it positions hijrah as not only a historical precedent but a divine imperative, specifically aligned with the example of the Prophet Ibrahim. The article combines religious narration with militaristic ambition, framed in a language of duty, prophecy, and eschatological urgency.



Figure 3.6. Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrahim (Dabiq 3, Shawwal 1435 / Aug 2014, pp. 10–11)

3.2.7.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexical Style & Repetition:** Lexical repetition of "Hijrah", "Sham", "Ibrahim", and "Messenger" forms a semantic core that reinforces the sacredness of migration. This over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992) anchors the text in prophetic legitimacy. The consistent invocation of divine names and titles (e.g., *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) cultivates a sacred discursive field.

- **Presupposition and Propositional Structure:** Assertions such as “The best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrahim’s hijrah” (p. 10) function as presuppositions, constructed as taken-for-granted truths. They embed ideological propositions that mask the radical recontextualisation of *hijrah* as militant relocation (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Cohesion and Coherence:** Logical connectors such as “so”, “then”, and “therefore” guide the reader through a structured argumentative flow. This textual cohesion gives a sense of rational progression, though it often conceals underlying logical fallacies.

- **Syntactic Structures & Modality:** Declarative sentences dominate, many containing high epistemic modality (“will”, “must”) indicating certainty and inevitability. The absence of conditionals constructs a discourse of deontic obligation, leaving no room for alternatives.

- **Intertextual Borrowing:** Heavy use of religious rhetoric (allusions to hadiths and classical scholarship) constructs interdiscursive continuity with sacred texts, which serves as a marker of interdiscursive power appropriation.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The article merges Quranic exegesis, military propaganda, and pseudo-academic commentary. This genre hybridisation legitimises the project by embedding it in a scholarly-appearing framework.

- **Recontextualisation:** The article strategically recontextualises classical sources like Ibn Taymiyyah to justify contemporary militant acts, creating a narrative of historical continuity that normalises terrorism as a divine inheritance.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Socio-political Context:** Published during the 2014 territorial peak, the text functions as a **social practice** of recruitment. It responds to widespread Muslim hesitance by transforming theological doctrine into a mandatory call to action.

- **Ideological Goal:** *Hijrah* is presented as a pledge of allegiance to a divinely mandated state, aligning with the group's broader objectives of state-building and religious puritanism.

3.2.7.3. Van Dijk’s Socio–Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Semantic Proposition:** Migration to Sham aligns one with prophetic precedent; avoiding it equates to religious failure.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

○ **Positive In-group Presentation:** *Mujāhidīn* and *muhājirīn* are depicted as fulfilling the *Sunnah*.

○ **Negative Out-group Presentation:** Critics, "theorists", and the "weak-hearted" are categorised as apostates or hypocrites through lexical derogation.

• **Mental Models:** Readers are guided to construct mental models that equate migration to ISIS territory with piety. Religious cues (Ibn Taymiyyah) activate stored socio-cultural knowledge, facilitating ideological compliance.

• **Context Models:** This fragment directly manages the context model of diasporic Muslims, inviting them to interpret their personal alienation in the West as a divine signal to migrate.

3.2.7.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)**Nomination and Predication Strategies:**

• **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** Prophet Ibrahim and Ibn Taymiyyah are nominated as the ultimate authorities, with the group positioned as the implied inheritor of their legacy.

• **Predication:** Emigrants are described through evaluative predication as the "best of Allah's slaves". Opponents are predicated as "hypocrites" or "those following *rukhas*" (concessions).

Argumentation Topoi:

• **Topos of History:** Reenacting Ibrahim's legacy constructs a cyclical view of history—a common **DHA** strategy of historical justification.

• **Topos of Threat:** Failure to heed the call is predicated as leading to spiritual death.

• **Topos of Authority:** Scripture is invoked as an unchallengeable source to short-circuit debate.

• **Topos of Divine Reward:** Migration is linked to the topos of advantage (Paradise).

Interdiscursivity and Fallacies:

- **Interdiscursivity:** The text fuses religious discourse with apocalyptic urgency (*al-Malhamah al-Kubrā*).

- **Logical Fallacies:** This includes an appeal to authority (Ibn Taymiyyah), false cause (equating migration with moral victory), and binary opposition (the "path of Ibrahim" vs. "apostates").

3.2.7.5. Multimodal and Visual Analysis

Applying **Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006)** framework:

- **Image Placement and Symbolism:** The desert image with riders moving in formation evokes early Islamic campaigns. Their placement in the "golden-hued" desert functions as a symbolic suggestive process representing eschatological destiny.

- **Typography and Visual Modality:** The blue and white title combines sacred naming with modern design. The cool colours evoke 'trust', while the white serif font provides a visual modality of purity and 'truth'.

- **Compositional Salience:** The earthy background hues anchor the discourse in 'authenticity', while the layout mimics the information value of a legitimate religious tract.

3.2.7.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

The repetition of sacred figures and events constructs a mythological continuum to which readers are invited. Fairclough's DRA elucidates how the linguistic structuring of obligation, presupposition, and salience transform *hijrah* into an inescapable command. van Dijk's SCM reveals how this discourse structures reader cognition: identity, duty, and salvation become tightly intertwined. Wodak's DHA exposes the argumentative scaffolding used to justify violence while embedding the discourse in theological legitimacy. Ultimately, the fragment uses these combined strategies to turn a historical religious concept into a modern tool of militant mobilisation.

3.2.8. Fragment 8 Analysis: " The Fading Grayzone " – *Dabiq*, Issue 4, p. 34

3.2.8.1. Textual–Visual Fragment

DABIQ

THE FADING GRAYZONE

Since the beginning of this crusade on the media frontline, self-styled jihadist ideologues and quasi-mujāhidin have tried to position themselves in an area that is neither Islamic State nor Sahwah... only to be sucked into the trenches of the apostate media and religious scholarship of the Arab tawāghīt. They even imitated the nusayriyyah and secularist opposition by labelling the Islamic State as "Daesh" and "Tandhim ad-Dawlah," in a manner precisely mimicking the satellite channels and palace scholars of Āl Salūl and Qatar. One of the top "jihadist ideologues" presented a verdict entailing ways to confront the "extremism and takfir" of "Jamā'at ad-Dawlah" matching those expressed by Obama, Chuck Hagel, Dempsey, and the US State Department. His suggestions included preventing financial and human resources from reaching the Islamic State as well as religiously delegitimizing the State in a manner US officials said "Muslim" scholars must do. And yet he and his likes claim they are neutral!

It is as if they haven't read the verses of the Qur'an teaching us that the Jews and Christians fight the Muslims for their religion and that the more one is fought by them for his religion the closer he is to the path of the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). [And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper] [Al-Baqarah: 120]. [And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever – for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire, they will abide therein eternally] [Al-Baqarah: 217].

To paraphrase Shaykh Anwar al-Awlakī (rahimahullāh), if one wants to know the people of truth, then let him observe where the enemies' arrows

are aimed. Most of them – if not all – are now pointed at the Islamic State, its leaders, soldiers, and subjects.



This crusade against the Islamic State is the greatest testimony from Allah for the proper manhaj of this Khilāfah. Anyone who says otherwise now should review his faith before death suddenly takes him while he stands with one foot in the trench of the crusaders and the other in the trench of the hypocrites whilst claiming he is in the grayzone! The mujāhid knows no grayzone. As the liar Bush truthfully said, "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."

Shaykh Usāmah Ibn Lādīn (rahimahullāh) commented, "So the world today is divided into two camps. Bush spoke the truth when he said, 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.' I.e. either you are with the crusade or you are with Islam. Bush today is in the frontline carrying a huge cross and treading. I swear by Allah the Great that everyone who treads behind Bush in his plan has apostatized from the religion of Muhammad (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). This ruling is from the clearest of rulings in the Book of Allah and Sunnah of the Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). The scholars have said this as I have mentioned before. The proof for this is the statement of Allah subhānahu wa ta'ālā in which he addresses the believers saying, [O you who have believed, do not

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Figure 3.7. The Fading Grayzone (Dabiq 4, Dhul-Hijjah 1435 / Oct 2014, p. 43)

The selected fragment is a full-page propaganda article titled "The Fading Grayzone", located on page 43 of *Dabiq* Issue 4. The article features a photo of Anwar al-Awlaki and outlines the ideological logic of polarisation between Muslims and non-Muslims. The article reflects ISIS's strategy to eliminate ambiguity (the so-called "Grayzone") and force Muslims globally into a binary of loyalty or hostility toward the Islamic State.

3.2.8.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

• **Lexicalisation and Topic Selection:** The title itself—“The Fading Grayzone”—is ideologically loaded. It metaphorises moral ambiguity as a zone destined to disappear. The use of terms like “apostates”, “hypocrites”, and “crusaders” functions as over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992), constructing a discursive world where ideological neutrality is impossible.

• **Word Order and Syntactic Structures:** Statements such as “The crusade against the Islamic State is the greatest testimony from Allah...” employ emphatic subject-fronting and **nominalisation**. This reifies abstract theological claims and masks human agency behind divine determinism.

• **Modality and Speech Acts:** High epistemic modality and performative declaratives dominate the text—e.g., “There is no grayzone!” These assertive constructions function as deontic edicts, leaving no interpretative space for the reader and positioning the group as the sole arbiter of truth.

• **Presupposition and Cohesion:** Phrases like “the liar Bush” and “apostates” function as **presuppositions**, naturalising shared negative evaluations to foreclose alternative readings. The use of deictics and the repetition of binary oppositions reinforces textual cohesion and narrative closure (Fairclough, 2003).

• **Figures of Speech and Intertextual Markers:** Rhetorical devices such as antithesis (“with us or with them”) and loaded epithets signal ideological intensity and draw upon interdiscursive echoes from Bush-era war-on-terror rhetoric.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

• **Genre Recontextualisation:** While posing as theological exegesis, the article performs genre hybridisation, functioning as ideological indoctrination. Quranic verses are selectively recontextualised into polarising narratives to justify contemporary political goals.

• **Intertextuality:** References to Bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki construct interdiscursive legitimacy. This manufactured genealogy creates a sense of scholarly continuity between the group and historical figures of jihadist thought.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context:** Produced in mid-2014, the strategic goal was to isolate Muslims in the West. This represents a social practice aimed at pushing the diaspora toward *hijrah*.

- **Cultural Hegemony:** The article attempts to delegitimise any form of moderate Islam by casting it as 'hypocrisy', thereby seeking to establish a new discursive hegemony over Islamic identity.

3.2.8.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)**Macrostructure:**

- **Global Meaning:** Muslims must abandon neutrality; coexistence is impossible. This **semantic macrostructure** serves as the principal ideological conclusion of the fragment.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** ISIS and its *mujahidin* are righteous and aligned with divine will.

- **Negative Out-group Presentation:** Western governments and secular scholars are portrayed as 'apostates' through lexical derogation and hyperbole.

- **Mental Models:** The reader is invited into a mental model equating ISIS-loyalty with piety. Mention of scripture and jihadist authorities activates shared socio-cultural knowledge of eschatological conflict.

- **Local Semantic Moves:** Polarisation tactics and disclaimers (e.g., "Those who say they are Muslim but...") reinforce the Ideological Square, simplifying complex identities into stark, manageable oppositions.

Context Models:

- **Reader Cognition:** The target reader is interpellated as a disaffected Muslim. The text manages the context model by appealing to religious anxiety and offering moral certainty in a climate of sociopolitical ambiguity.

3.2.8.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** Terms like "apostate scholars" and "liar Bush" frame out-groups as morally corrupt. Al-Awlaki is nominated as a 'prophetic voice' to bolster the authenticity of the message.

- **Predication:** Those who do not align with the group are predicated as 'condemned'. The discourse reinforces the presupposition that failure to join the Caliphate equates to apostasy.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Threat:** Western secularism and Muslim 'inaction' are constructed as existential threats.

- **Topos of Divine Will:** Obedience to the group is framed as obedience to Allah—a topos of authority.

- **Topos of History:** References to historical battles evoke a sense of historical destiny and continuity.

Interdiscursivity and Fallacies:

- **Logical Fallacies:** This includes a false dichotomy ("with us or with the crusaders"), **appeal to divine authority**, and ad hominem attacks against moderate scholars.

- **Interdiscursivity:** The concept integrates elements from Islamic jurisprudence, political rhetoric, and apocalyptic dualism, performing a potent recontextualisation of the "Grayzone" concept.

3.2.8.5. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Visual Salience and Gaze:** The photograph of Anwar al-Awlaki is centrally placed, achieving high compositional salience. If he is looking at the camera, it functions as a Demand Gaze, establishing a direct, authoritative relationship with the viewer.

- **Visual Transitivity:** The bold headings and scriptural text boxes function as symbolic suggestive processes, framing the linguistic claims as absolute, naturalised truths.
- **Information Value:** The layout places "The Fading Grayzone" in a position of Ideal information value, while the call to action represents the Real requirement for the reader.

3.2.8.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment represents a paradigmatic example of how ISIS collapses moral complexity into theological absolutism. The title “The Fading Grayzone” is not just a description—it is a commandment against ambiguity. Through linguistic strategies of foregrounding and binary framing, the discourse functions to outlaw neutrality. Fairclough’s DRA highlights how linguistic choices create discursive inevitability. Van Dijk’s SCM explains the cognitive schema the text implants: if one is not actively with ISIS, one is deemed an enemy. Wodak’s DHA unearths the historical legitimization that threads together past jihadist figures and current events.

The socio-political function of this article is both to delegitimise Muslim identity outside the Caliphate and to justify future violence. Its multimodal structure—bold headings and visual placement of authorities—deepens its impact. This discourse is especially dangerous because it appropriates legitimate Islamic references and distorts them into tools for coercion. It serves as an essential example of how the group’s discourse constructs ideological certainty through linguistic absolutism and theological hijacking.

3.2.9. Fragment 9 Analysis: “From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone” — *Dabiq*, Issue 7, p. 1

3.2.9.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

The cover image of *Dabiq* Issue 7 (Rabi’ al-Akhir 1436 / February 2015) depicts elderly men in traditional Muslim attire holding placards that read “Je Suis Charlie”—a slogan that became a global symbol of solidarity after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris. However, the *Dabiq* cover pejoratively frames the slogan as the visual embodiment of apostasy. The issue’s title, “From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone”, is superimposed beneath the image in bold capital letters, serving as both a thematic encapsulation and ideological indictment.



Figure 3.8. 7th Issue Cover Page: From Hypocrisy to Apostasy (*Dabiq* 7, Rabi' al-Akhir 1436 / Feb 2015)

3.2.9.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Topic Selection:** The lexical contrast between “hypocrisy” and “apostasy” reflects a deliberate semantic intensification. While “hypocrisy” implies hidden disloyalty, “apostasy” (*riddah*) carries severe juridical weight. This over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992) signals an obsessive focus on purifying the *ummah* from internal dissent.

- **Syntactic Trajectory:** The structure “From... to...” suggests an inevitable discursive trajectory, implying that ambiguity or neutrality naturally terminates in the rejection of Islam. This sequence is discursively coercive, naturalising a radical shift in status.

- **Modality & Presupposition:** The categorical modality is absolute and non-negotiable. The phrase “Extinction of the Grayzone” employs nominalisation, transforming a complex socio-

political process into an established fact. It presupposes the end of any middle ground, performing a speech act designed to eliminate the possibility of neutral identity (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Rhetorical Figures:** The use of visual irony—placing elderly Muslims in traditional garb holding a Western secularist slogan—functions as a foregrounding device, shocking the viewer into a state of theological urgency.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The fragment performs interdiscursive hybridity, blending the visual grammar of a news magazine with the authority of a religious *fatwa*. There is clear intertextual chaining between the theoretical "Grayzone" article in Issue 4 and this visual "verdict" in Issue 7.

- **Recontextualisation:** The “Je Suis Charlie” slogan is appropriated and inverted; what the West uses as a symbol of pluralism is recontextualised here as irrefutable evidence of spiritual treason.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context:** Following the January 2015 attacks, the release seeks to criminalise Muslim solidarity with the victims. It acts as a social practice of communal policing, redefining the boundaries of the 'permissible' Muslim response to Western events.

3.2.9.3. Van Dijk’s Socio–Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Meaning:** Alignment with secular Western values constitutes apostasy. This **semantic macrostructure** renders neutrality synonymous with enmity.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** The *mujahidin* are the only 'true' Muslims who reject secularism.

○ **Negative Other-Presentation:** “Je Suis Charlie” Muslims are categorised as 'apostates' through **negative lexicalisation**, stripped of their religious legitimacy.

• **Mental Models and Event Models:** The image triggers cognitive dissonance. Traditional clothing (visual signals of piety) is juxtaposed with signs of secular allegiance, forcing the reader to update their mental model of what a 'traitor' looks like. It constructs a specific event model of the Paris attacks as a moment of final separation.

• **Cognitive Frame Activation:** The discourse activates a binary frame where the reader must choose—remain “pure” within the Caliphate or fall into apostasy.

3.2.9.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication:

• **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** The unnamed elderly men are used as visual metonyms for the global *ummah*. They are nominated not by name, but as proxies for "the hypocrites."

• **Predication:** The text visually predicates them as 'betrayers'. Their appearance is used in a predicational strategy of internal betrayal—a visual instantiation of the “wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

Argumentative Topoi:

• **Topos of Threat:** Ambiguity is dangerous because it dilutes divine commands, leading to spiritual death.

• **Topos of Religion:** Aligning with the group signifies obedience, while secular slogans signify apostasy—a topos of consequence.

• **Topos of Urgency:** This functions as a conclusion rule: the time for neutrality has passed; the 'Grayzone' is extinct.

Fallacies and Strategic Framing:

• **Logical Fallacies:** The spread relies on a false dichotomy (Muslim vs. Free Speech advocate), a visual strawman, and ad hominem by association.

- **Interdiscursivity:** The fragment interweaves jihadist ideology, post-9/11 'war on terror' rhetoric, and global media narratives, performing a complex perspectivisation of a global news event.

3.2.9.5. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment exemplifies a masterful use of semiotic warfare. ISIS deploys a powerful visual-theological indictment by fusing Western media icons with Islamic aesthetics. The elderly men holding “Je Suis Charlie” placards are made to represent the ultimate betrayal—apostasy disguised as piety.

Fairclough’s DRA reveals how textual salience, word order, and categorical modality craft this as a verdict rather than a debate. Van Dijk’s SCM assists in comprehending how this discourse dismantles cognitive ambiguity, compelling a radical identity dichotomy through the manipulation of mental models. Wodak’s DHA exposes how ISIS situates this moment in historical cycles of betrayal, linking it with the eschatological 'end of times' logic.

The socio-political function is to delegitimise all Muslim attempts to integrate within Western society. It signals a shift from persuasion to ritualised denunciation, transforming public solidarity gestures into theological crimes. ISIS’s strategy here is to reshape the entire terrain of Muslim political identity: visual design enacts theological judgement, neutrality becomes impossible, and public piety becomes suspect. This fragment is a critical node in your analysis, showing the group's transition into a more aggressive phase of discursive policing.

3.2.10. Fragment 10 Analysis “WALĀ’ AND BARĀ’” – *Dabiq*, Issue 10, pp. 38–39

3.2.10.1. Textual-Visual Fragment

This double-page visual-textual artefact from *Dabiq*, Issue 10 (1436 AH / June 2015), entitled “WALĀ’ AND BARĀ’”, showcases a tightly woven integration of militant iconography, Qur’anic citations, and ideological imperatives. The left page displays bullet-ridden Western passports on a desert background, while the right page features a militant pointing a firearm

directly at the reader. The theme advances the notion that allegiance (*walā'*) must be exclusive to the Islamic State, while disavowal (*barā'*) must be violently directed at non-believers, secular states, and 'apostates'.



Figure 3.9. WALĀ' AND BARĀ' (Dabiq 10, Ramadan 1436 / June 2015, pp. 38–39)

3.2.10.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Ideological Framing:** The central terms *walā'* (loyalty) and *barā'* (disavowal) are preserved without translation to maintain their radical Salafī-jihadi resonance. The juxtaposition of love and hate in the phrase “Love for the sake of Allah, hate for the sake of Allah” demonstrates over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992), constructing a dualistic, binary social reality.

- **Modality and Epistemic Authority:** Modal verbs (e.g., “should beware”) and categorical declaratives denote absolute certainty. These are presented as non-negotiable divine rulings rather than human opinions, establishing a high epistemic modality that discourages critical questioning. The use of deontic modality in the imperatives frames the ideological shift as a mandatory religious obligation.

- **Grammatical Structures and Speech Acts:** Declarative structures, such as “The strongest bond of Islam is...”, operate as performative speech acts in the form of ideological commandments. Nominalisation is used to turn abstract concepts into fixed, unchallengeable entities (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Cohesion and Rhetorical Coherence:** The flow of citations (Qur’an, hadith, scholars) creates intertextual cohesion. The structural consistency reinforces one primary message: that loyalty to the group is a divine requirement.

- **Metaphor and Binary Framing:** The physical destruction of national identity is metaphorically enacted through bullet-ridden passports, symbolising ideological purification. The use of antonyms (believer/disbeliever) reinforces the totalising binary of the discourse.

3.2.10.3. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Semantic Meaning:** True faith requires the total disavowal of Western national affiliation and the embrace of the group’s project. Coexistence and neutrality are redefined as violations of divine law.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** Those who reject national identity and embrace militant jihad are valorised as the 'saved'.

- **Negative Out-group Presentation:** Secular Muslims, interfaith sympathisers, and Western citizens are cast as 'enemies' through negative lexicalisation.

- **Mental Models and Event Models:** The fragment compels the reader to construct a mental model where holding a Western passport is synonymous with apostasy. The image of the gun aimed at the reader completes the cognitive coercion, forcing an immediate update to the reader's event model of religious duty.

- **Presuppositions and Schemata:** The text builds a rigid belief schema where identity is singular and neutrality is betrayal. It presupposes that friendship with non-Muslims automatically invalidates one’s faith.

3.2.10.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA) Nomination and Predication

Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** Western identities (symbolised by passports) are nominated as markers of 'apostasy'. The phrase “a person is upon the religion of his close friend” functions as a referential strategy that frames interpersonal relationships as existential threats.

- **Predication:** Evaluative predication associates Western citizenship with 'treachery'. Conversely, positive predicates (e.g., “slaves of Allah”) are reserved exclusively for group members, a strategy of perspectivisation that narrows the path of legitimacy.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Threat:** Relationships with non-Muslims are predicated as a mortal threat to the soul.

- **Topos of Divine Legitimacy:** Scriptural references are recontextualised to establish the religious necessity of violence.

- **Topos of History:** Early Islamic battles are invoked to justify present-day actions as a continuation of sacred history.

Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:

- **Logical Fallacies:** The text relies on a false dichotomy (Loyalty to ISIS vs. *Kufr*), ad hominem attacks (labelling dissenters as apostates), and an appeal to tradition that ignores contextual nuance.

- **Interdiscursivity:** The spread combines jihadist legalism, military aesthetics, and scriptural legitimacy into a coherent ideological weapon.

3.2.10.5. Multimodal Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

Page 38: Visual Rhetoric

- **Symbolic Suggestive Process:** American, Canadian, and European passports riddled with bullets are symbolic attributes of the disavowal of Western identity. The semiotics imply a call for the physical destruction of the 'Other'.

- **Visual Modality:** The background mimics aged parchment, providing a visual modality of authenticity and reverence. The bullet casings offer a stark, metallic contrast, representing visual transitivity—the intrusion of death into the 'sacred' space.

Page 39: Interpersonal Address

- **Demand Gaze and Direct Address:** The militant is looking straight at the viewer while pointing a pistol. This Demand Gaze establishes a direct, coercive relationship. The image represents an action process where the viewer is the 'Goal' of a symbolic execution.

- **Social Distance and Lighting:** The close-up shot reduces social distance, making the threat intimate. The illumination of the militant's face portrays him as a virtuous enactor of divine will, using lighting to suggest 'purity' in the act of violence.

3.2.10.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment exemplifies the mastery of ideological engineering through discursive and visual extremism. *Walā' wa barā'* is transformed from an abstract theological principle into a militarised identity doctrine. While traditional Islamic thought recognises these concepts in specific spiritual contexts, ISIS has politicised and literalised them to criminalise national allegiance, cultural plurality, and coexistence.

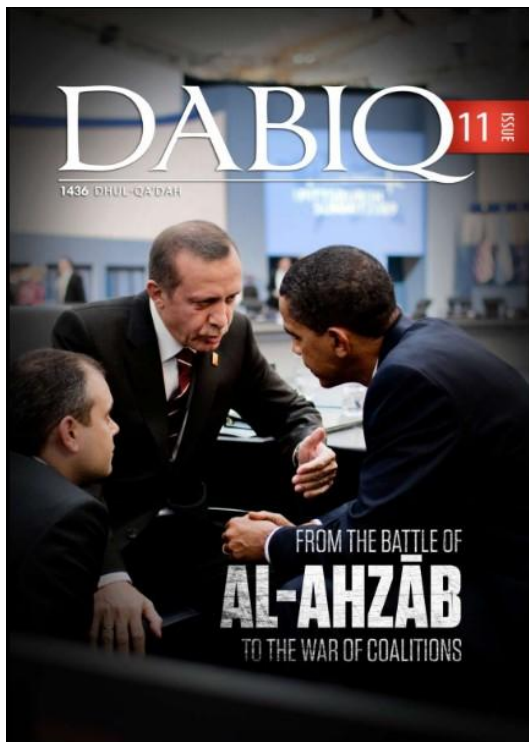
Fairclough's DRA reveals how this message is constructed through categorical modality to sound divine and immovable. Van Dijk's SCM shows how the reader is neurologically conditioned to fear apostasy. Wodak's DHA uncovers the strategic invocation of religious history to anchor this radical shift. What makes this fragment uniquely potent is its semiotic density—bullet-ridden passports and a gun aimed at the reader collide to create a totalising worldview. Loyalty is absolute, and disavowal must be performative. In the broader structure of *Dabiq*, this passage seeks to destroy any remaining space of negotiation, effectively obliterating the “grayzone.” This analysis

stands as a pivotal example of how radical discourse fuses language, imagery, and scripture into a weapon of ideological mobilisation.

3.2.11. Fragment 11 Analysis “The Danger of Abandoning Dārul-Islām” – *Dabiq*, Issue 11, Cover Page & pp. 22–23

3.2.11.1. Textual–Visual Fragment

The visual-textual ensemble comprises the cover of *Dabiq* Issue 11, titled “From the Battle of Al-Ahzāb to the War of Coalitions”, and the interior article “The Danger of Abandoning Dārul-Islām”. Dated 1436 *Dhul-Qa’dah*, it thematically connects the Seventh-century Battle of the Trench (*al-Ahzāb*) with contemporary global political alliances. The article’s main thrust is an urgent call to reject Western asylum in favour of *Hijrah* to ISIS territory. This call is emotionally reinforced through the appropriation of the iconic photo of the drowned Syrian child, Alan Kurdi.



The repeated events of Syrians and Libyans dying on the shores of Turkey, Libya, and Italy, or even on the highways of Austria, is one that should awaken the heart into reflecting upon the issue of hijrah.

[Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves – [the angels] will say, “In what [condition] were you?” They will say, “We were oppressed in the land.” The angels will say, “Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?” For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil is it as a destination. Except for the oppressed among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way – For those it is expected that Allah will pardon them, and Allah is ever Forgiving] [An-Nisā: 97-99].

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Allah ﷻ does not accept any deed from a *mushrik* after he accepts Islam until he departs from the *mushrik* and goes to the Muslims” [Reported by an-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah on the authority of Mu’awiyah ibn Haydah].

Although the obligation of hijrah is clear, a mistake is regularly committed by claimants of Islam, and that is in choosing their destination for “hijrah.” They always choose the lands of the Christians for their destination. But after the establishment of the prophetic state, hijrah was to al-Madinah not al-Habashah. And during the Umayyid and ‘Abbasid rule, hijrah was to the lands of the Khilāfah not Rome and Constantinople. And with the revival of Islam’s state, hijrah is to the wilayah of the Khilāfah, not to Nasayrī, Rafidī, Sabwah, or PKK territory, not to America, Europe, and their *shaykh* allies.

Hijrah is an obligation from *dārul-kufr* to *Dārul-Islām*. Ibn Qudāmah, for example, said, “Chapter on Hijrah: Hijrah is to abandon *dārul-kufr* for *Dārul-Islām*.” He then quoted the verses referenced earlier and other proofs. He then said, “The ruling of hijrah will remain and will not cease until Resurrection Day” [Al-Mughni]. Ibnul-Qayyim ﷺ said that “if the laws of Islam are not

implemented somewhere, it is not *Dārul-Islām*” [Ahkām Alī al-Dīnawālī]. This is evident, as the Sabwah did not consider the lands *ruccama* by the false prophets or the resistance against *zakah* to be anything but *dārul-kufr*. The *fiyah* after them did not consider the lands ruled by the Tatar or ‘Uyghur rulers to be *Dārul-Islām*, for although these rulers claimed Islam and ruled by some of its laws, they committed *spontaneity* by abandoning some of its laws or teachings. Accordingly, moving to the lands of Al Sa‘ūd or the Sawāhī is not hijrah, as the rulers of these lands – in addition to them allying with the crusaders and apostates against Islam – abandon and resist many of the laws of the Shar‘ah. There is no *wālī* and *ba‘d* there except on a nationalist basis.

Sadly, some Syrians and Libyans are willing to risk the lives and souls of those whom they are responsible to raise upon the Shar‘ah – their children – sacrificing many of them during the dangerous trip to the lands of the warring crusaders ruled by laws of *arbitrariness* and *indecency*. Although most of these families leave from *dārul-kufr* – Sabwah, PKK, or regime territory – to the crusaders’ lands, the possibility of families leaving the Khilāfah for America or Europe in pursuit of the *Dunya* is a matter that should bring focus to the ruling of abandoning *Dārul-Islām* for *dārul-kufr*.

Therefore, it should be known that voluntarily leaving *Dārul-Islām* for *dārul-kufr* is a dangerous major sin, as it is a passage towards *kufr* and a gate towards one’s children and grandchildren abandoning Islam for Christianity, atheism, or liberalism. If one’s children and grandchildren don’t fall into *kufr*, they are under the constant threat of *fornication*, *adultery*, *drugs*, and *alcohol*. If they don’t fall into sin, they will forget the language of the Qur‘ān – Arabic – which they were surrounded by in Sham, Iraq, Libya, and elsewhere, making the return to the religion and its teachings more difficult.

There are several narrations in the Sunnah on the prohibition of going back to one’s homeland after hijrah, a case similar to that of abandoning *Dārul-Islām* for *dārul-kufr*.



Figure 3.10. The Danger of Abandoning Dārul-Islām (Dabiq 11, Dhul-Qa'dah 1436 / Sept 2015)

3.2.11.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Over-lexicalisation:** The article uses intense, ideologically loaded diction. Terms like “apostasy,” “abandonment,” and “martyrdom” demonstrate over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992), indicating an obsession with ideological purity. “Dārul-Islām” is deployed as a metaphysical and ontological ideal—a divine order rather than merely a territory.

- **Presuppositions and Propositional Structures:** The text is saturated with presuppositions that take the group's territory as the only legitimate “Abode of Islam”. Phrases like “Abandoning Dārul-Islām is apostasy” function as naturalised truth claims, foreclosing any debate on the status of refugees.

- **Modality and Typology:** High epistemic modality is present in assertive declaratives such as “The land of Allah is vast.” Imperative sentences act as deontic injunctions, framing migration as a mandatory religious duty (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Foregrounding and Rhetorical Inversion:** The text employs declarative fronting to highlight the suffering of refugees, only to perform a rhetorical inversion that blames the victims for their own demise, framing it as divine punishment for seeking 'crusader' protection.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The text functions as a hybrid genre, blending the theological sermon (*khutbah*) with policy directives and moral fables. It mimics the authoritative style of a *fatwa* while utilizing modern media imagery.

- **Interdiscursivity:** The article weaves together citations from the Qur'an and Ibn Taymiyyah with modern geopolitical reporting. The reference to *al-Ahzāb* invokes historical war as a divine precedent for current coalitional conflict.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Macro-Sociopolitical Context:** Published during massive refugee outflows, this fragment seeks to capitalise on displacement. It reframes the search for safety as a social practice of apostasy.

- **Cultural Reappropriation:** The visual use of the Alan Kurdi image is a strategic recontextualisation—turning a Western media symbol of humanitarian failure into a jihadist cautionary tale against 'disobedience'.

3.2.11.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Meaning:** Fleeing for Western asylum is an act of spiritual treason. *Hijrah* is an obligatory script, and rejecting it leads to physical and eternal destruction.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** Those who remain and uphold *jihad* are 'chosen' and 'blessed'.

○ **Negative Other-Presentation:** Refugees and Western NGOs are cast as 'apostates' and 'crusaders' through negative lexicalisation.

• **Mental Models and Event Models:** The fragment implants a mental model equating asylum with sin. The image of the drowned child is manipulated to update the reader's event model of the refugee crisis, linking it to divine wrath rather than political conflict.

• **Cognitive Schemata:** A binary schema is activated: residency in the 'Caliphate' equals salvation; residency in the West equals spiritual 'extinction'.

3.2.11.4. Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

• **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** Social actors are named as “crusaders” or “traitors”. The child's corpse is used **metonymically** to represent the 'failure' of all migration toward the West.

• **Predication:** Evaluative predication reserves noble attributes for the *mujahidin*, while refugees are predicated as “abandoning” and “apostatizing”.

Argumentation Topoi:

• **Topos of History:** Reference to the Battle of *al-Ahzāb* performs a historical comparison, aligning modern coalitions with the enemies of the Prophet.

• **Topos of Threat:** Emigrating to the West is predicated as an existential threat to one's religion.

• **Topos of Responsibility:** The discourse employs a conclusion rule that blames families for their suffering because they abandoned 'Islamic' governance.

Logical Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:

• **Logical Fallacies:** The text employs a slippery slope (asylum leads to apostasy), an appeal to fear (the graphic image), and a false analogy between modern refugees and Seventh-century disbelievers.

- **Interdiscursivity:** It cross-pollinates early Islamic jurisprudence with modern media events to craft a unified, coercive call to action.

3.2.11.5. Multimodal and Visual Semiotic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Symbolic Suggestive Process (Alan Kurdi):** Appropriated as a symbol of 'consequence'. The colour saturation of his red shirt is semiotically linked to blood and martyrdom, but here it is twisted to represent the blood of those who 'flee' the faith.

- **Salience and Information Value:** The image is positioned at the top of the article (the Ideal), triggering immediate emotional dissonance that is then redirected by the text.

- **Red headers:** The typography uses red for the title ("THE DANGER..."), acting as a **semiotic mode** of alarmism and warning.

- **Interactive Meaning:** Page 23 features children in a van—the social distance and 'hidden' nature of the shot interpellates the reader as a protector, creating a sense of urgency.

- **Compositional Conflict:** The layout constructs an opposition between 'Human Suffering' (the Goal) and 'Divine Obedience' (the Actor), forcing a visual resolution in favour of the latter.

3.2.11.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment represents one of the most sophisticated exploitations of Western media imagery in the *Dabiq* series. By recontextualising the Alan Kurdi tragedy, ISIS attempts to hijack a global humanitarian narrative and transform it into a tool of ideological policing.

Fairclough's DRA reveals how lexical intensity and unmitigated epistemic modality are used to project divine authority. Van Dijk's SCM exposes the cognitive manipulation involved in linking tragedy to divine punishment rather than political reality. Wodak's DHA uncovers the historical scaffolding that justifies this cruelty by framing it as a reenactment of sacred battles. Ultimately, the fragment seeks to destroy the very idea of 'refuge' outside the group's territory, enforcing a totalising world where the only alternative to their rule is death—spiritually, physically, and visually.

3.2.12. Fragment 12 Analysis “The Dajjal – The ‘Mahdi’ of the Rāfidah” – *Dabiq*, Issue 11, pp. 16–17

3.2.12.1. Textual–Visual Fragment

This two-page spread from *Dabiq*, Issue 11 (1436 AH / September 2015), is titled “The Dajjal – The ‘Mahdi’ of the Rāfidah”. It is a calculated example of sectarian demonisation, intertextual theological warfare, and mythologised binary opposition. Through invoking eschatological prophecy, the authors frame the Shia tradition—particularly Twelver Shiism—as a deceitful, heretical, and ultimately apocalyptic enemy of “true” Islam. This fragment intensifies intra-Muslim hostilities, not merely marginalising but utterly dehumanising the Shia (here referred to pejoratively as “Rāfidah”), situating them as existential threats.

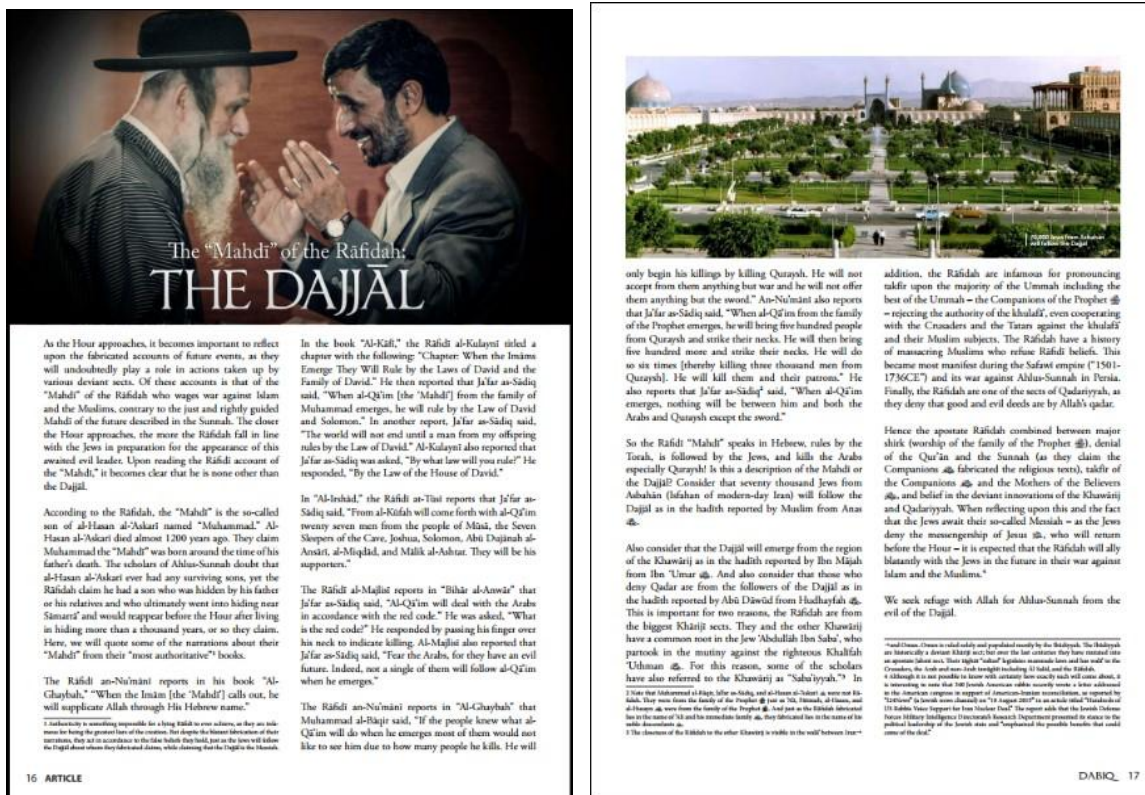


Figure 3.11. The Dajjal – The ‘Mahdi’ of the Rāfidah (*Dabiq* 11, Dhul-Qa’dah 1436 / Sept 2015, pp. 16–17)

3.2.12.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation & Ideological Encoding:** Terms such as “*Rāfidah*”, “*Dajjāl*”, “apostates”, and “Jews” are used as ideologically dense signifiers. The conflation of diverse groups into a singular eschatological enemy demonstrates over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992), naturalising antagonisms to serve the group's hegemonic interests.

- **Modality and Certainty:** The declarative syntax—e.g., “the *Rāfidī* ‘*Mahdī*’ speaks in Hebrew”—establishes absolute epistemic modality. The use of scriptural citations and hadiths embeds these claims within a register of divine authority, presenting them as unchallengeable facts.

- **Presupposition and Intertextual Inference:** The text presupposes that readers accept a specific Salafī-Sunni eschatological framework. Scriptural citations (e.g., *Al-Kāfi*) are selectively recontextualised to suggest that Shia messianism is synonymous with the arrival of the Antichrist, performing a radical inversion of sacred figures.

- **Cohesion & Rhetorical Tropes:** Repetitive use of the pejorative “*Rāfidah*” creates a closed semantic system. The article employs antonomasia, substituting sociopolitical subjects with mythical archetypes (“sons of Israel”), transforming contemporary geopolitical actors into ancient, predestined villains.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** This text performs interdiscursive hybridity, blending theological critique, sectarian polemic, and apocalyptic vision. It integrates political commentary into the genre of a sacred tract to justify violent intra-Muslim conflict.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context:** Published during active conflict with Shia-affiliated regimes (Iran, Iraq), the fragment serves as a social practice of legitimation. It reframes massacres as prophetic fulfilment rather than political warfare, leveraging cultural memory of the Safavids to embed the current conflict in a long genealogy of antagonism.

3.2.12.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Theme:** The Shia (*Rāfidah*) are traitors aligned with the Antichrist. This semantic macrostructure mandates that ISIS confront them as a divine obligation.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive Self-Presentation:** Sunnis (*Ahl al-Sunnah*) are the sole protectors of the faith.
- **Negative Other-Presentation:** Shia are framed as a "spiritual cancer" through negative lexicalisation and hyperbole.

- **Mental Models:** The reader is offered a mythic mental model where the Shia *Mahdi* is the *Dajjal*. This cognitive frame positions an entire religious community as an existential threat.

- **Cognitive Schemata & Polarisation:** The text leverages a schema of betrayal by internal enemies. It employs strategic polarisation, allowing for no middle ground; neutrality towards the Shia is interpellated as treason.

3.2.12.4. Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination & Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategies):** Shia are nominated using sectarian referents such as "*Rāfidah*", "sons of Israel", and "supporters of the *Dajjāl*".

- **Predication:** They are associated with deceit and mass slaughter through evaluative predication. They are predicated as "killing the *Quraysh*" and "speaking Hebrew," linking them to a Jewish-conspiracy narrative.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Threat:** The *Mahdi* will "strike the necks" of Muslims, a topos of danger used to incite existential fear.

- **Topos of History:** Invokes historical betrayals to build an intergenerational narrative of enmity—a historical comparison strategy.
- **Topos of Religion:** Embedded scriptural citations establish the divine legitimacy of the call to violence.

Logical Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:

- **Logical Fallacies:** This includes False Cause (allegiance to the *Mahdi* proves allegiance to the *Dajjal*), Ad Hominem (reducing doctrine to conspiracies), and Guilt by Association (lumping Shia with "Safavids" and "Jews").
- **Interdiscursivity:** The fragment performs a perspectivisation that blends apocalyptic genre with modern geopolitical commentary.

3.2.12.5. Multimodal and Visual Semiotic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Visual Transitivity (Image 1):** The depiction of a Rabbi and an Iranian official in conversation uses their clasped hands as a narrative vector signifying alliance. This visual provides 'evidence' for the linguistic claim of collaboration.
- **Symbolic Suggestive Process (Image 2):** The panorama of Isfahan reinforces the geopolitical salience of the threat. It represents the Shia epicentre as a target.
- **Typography & Layout:** The bold, gothic "DAJJAL" headline achieves maximum compositional salience, coded with a visual modality of danger and urgency.
- **Colour Palette:** The dominance of black and earth tones functions as a semiotic mode of menace and ideological gravity.

3.2.12.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is among the most sophisticated and dangerous instances of ISIS's sectarian discourse. It deploys classical Sunni eschatology, Shia texts, and modern geopolitics to build an all-encompassing demonology. Fairclough's DRA reveals how the textuality constructs a mythic binary through syntactic absolutism. Van Dijk's SCM shows how cognition is shaped to accept

internecine warfare as predestined. Wodak's DHA lays bare the rhetorical machinery that draws upon cultural memory to naturalise hatred.

It is vital to stress that this fragment is not merely ideologically repugnant; it is functionally genocidal. By reframing religious others as apocalyptic threats, it removes ethical barriers to mass violence. Importantly, this analysis affirms that the threat posed by ISIS extends aggressively to Muslim communities themselves, demonstrating that the group's extremism is indiscriminately anti-human. The critical rigour of this study aims to expose—not echo—this propagandistic grammar of dehumanisation, which threatens all who diverge from the group's radical ideology.

3.2.13. Fragment 13 Analysis “The Murtadd Brotherhood” – *Dabiq*, Issue 14, Cover Page & p. 28



Figure 3.12. The Murtadd Brotherhood (*Dabiq* 14, Rajab 1437 / April 2016)

3.2.13.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

This fragment comprises two integrated parts from *Dabiq* Issue 14: the cover page titled “The Murtadd Brotherhood” featuring Egypt’s ousted president Mohamed Morsi, and a follow-up feature article on page 28. This discourse targets the Muslim Brotherhood, depicting them as apostates (*murtaddīn*), secular infiltrators, and democratic usurpers of divine authority. The composition reflects the group's broader narrative warfare against all non-affiliated Islamist currents.

3.2.13.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation & Ideological Load:** The term “*Murtadd*” (apostate) is the semantic nucleus of the fragment, a lexeme that delegitimises opponents as religious traitors. The use of “cancer”, “poison”, and “deception” represents over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992), serving a function of lexical degradation to dehumanise the subject.

- **Nominalisation & Agency Suppression:** Abstract nouns like “democracy” and “secularism” are used through nominalisation, obscuring human agency and presenting these ideologies as external, invasive threats rather than political choices.

- **Grammatical Mood & Modality:** Assertive declaratives (e.g., “A devastating cancer has emerged...”) establish epistemic modality in its most absolute register. The imperative tone throughout the article functions as deontic modality, framing the rejection of the Brotherhood as a mandatory religious decree.

- **Syntax and Cohesion:** Tight syntactic cohesion is achieved through lexical chains (e.g., “democracy → secularism → apostasy”), reinforcing a linear, inescapable ideological narrative.

- **Presupposition & Propositional Framing:** The text presupposes that democracy is inherently polytheistic (*shirk*). This naturalisation of a radical claim forecloses any discursive space for debate or refutation (Fairclough, 2003).

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The fragment performs interdiscursive hybridity, blending political journalism with the authority of a *fatwa*. It weaponises media conventions to deliver a religious verdict, targeting Sunni Muslims who may be sympathetic to populist Islamist movements.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context:** Published following the 2013 Egyptian coup, the fragment reflects the acute tension between jihadi-Salafism and political Islamism. It seeks to establish a new discursive hegemony by framing democratic engagement as a form of heresy (*Hakimiyyah*).

3.2.13.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)isual–Textual Fragment**Macrostructure:**

- **Global Meaning:** The Muslim Brotherhood are not reformers but 'apostate' facilitators of Western hegemony. This semantic macrostructure serves to justify violence against other Muslim political groups.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** ISIS frames itself as the sole guardian of *Tawhid* (monotheism).
- **Negative Other-Presentation:** The Brotherhood is portrayed as "deceivers" and "democrats" through hyperbolic characterisations of their 'betrayal'.

- **Mental Models:** The narrative guides readers to update their mental model of Morsi from 'victim of a coup' to 'apostate enemy'. By foregrounding 'betrayal', the text evokes a specific cognitive schema of indignation and urgency.

- **Cognitive Manipulation:** The fragment performs strategic re-categorisation, stripping the Brotherhood of their long-standing historical legitimacy and re-labelling them as a 'malignant' entity within the *ummah*.

3.2.13.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)**Nomination & Predication:**

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** The subject is nominated through pathological metaphors ("apostate cancer", "poison"), portraying the movement as an invasive biological threat to the 'body' of Islam.

- **Predication:** Evaluative predication labels the Brotherhood as “collaborators” and “enemies of Islam”, a strategy of criminalisation that bypasses political analysis.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of History:** Reframes the origins of the Brotherhood as a 'deviant mutation' rather than a legitimate Islamic revival.

- **Topos of Threat:** The movement is predicated as a threat to the very existence of the faith.

- **Topos of Definition:** Uses a perspectivisation strategy to redefine 'authenticity' exclusively as the rejection of democratic engagement.

- **Topos of Purity:** Mandates that the *ummah* must 'purify' itself of internal hypocrites to achieve success.

Logical Fallacies:

- **Hasty Generalisation:** Equating all participants in political Islam with absolute apostasy.

- **Ad Hominem:** Attacking Morsi’s religious standing to invalidate his political legitimacy.

- **Appeal to Fear:** Using disease metaphors to frame dissenters as existential biological threats.

3.2.13.5. Multimodal and Visual Semiotic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) framework:

- **Visual Metonymy (The Cover):** The image of Morsi voting functions as a visual metonym for the 'sin' of democracy. Framed in darkness, it provides a visual modality of 'clandestine betrayal'.

- **Symbolic Suggestive Process:** The green hue of the word “Brotherhood” is contrasted with the white of “*Murtadd*”. This semiotic mode represents a corrupted Islam (green) being judged by the 'purity' of the group's verdict (white).

- **Compositional Salience:** The separation between the images and the text box enacts a **symbolic distancing**, visually isolating the Brotherhood as a distinct, 'othered' entity.

- **Typography:** The use of austere serif fonts for the judicial verdict connotes compositional salience and 'gravitas', mimicking the look of formal legal documentation.

3.2.13.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This analysis reveals that the threat posed by ISIS is not confined to the West; it targets mainstream and dissenting Muslim voices—scholars, activists, and rival political groups alike. The scope of this takfiri discourse is globally totalitarian. Fairclough's DRA elucidates how the linguistic structuring of 'cancer' and 'betrayal' transforms the subject into a legitimate target for violence. Van Dijk's SCM exposes the process of cognitive restructuring where long-standing community references are re-assembled into lethal ideological artefacts.

Therefore, one should not mistake this research for aligning with Islamophobic narratives. Instead, the analysis unveils a propagandistic grammar of dehumanisation that threatens any individual or group—Muslim or otherwise—who diverges from the group's radical ideology. By deconstructing "The Murtadd Brotherhood," we see the final step in the group's effort to monopolise the definition of Islam by criminalising political plurality.

3.2.14. Fragment 14 Analysis “To Our Sisters – A Jihad Without Fighting” – *Dabiq*, Issue 11, p.p. 40-41

3.2.14.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

This fragment appears on page 41 of *Dabiq*, Issue 11, titled “To Our Sisters: A Jihad Without Fighting”. The article functions as a gender-targeted call to action, directed at Muslim women worldwide. It urges them to support the Caliphate through moral, maternal, and ideological labour. The text, laced with Quranic references and gendered appeals, reframes the domestic sphere as a site of jihad and women's bodies as instruments in the ideological reproduction of ISIS's worldview.

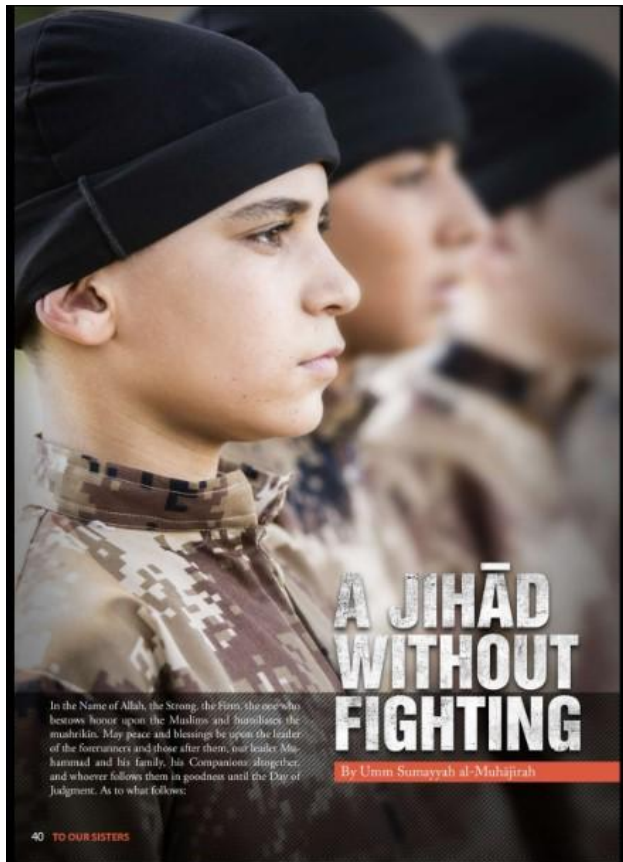


Figure 3.13. To Our Sisters: A Jihad Without Fighting (Dabiq 11, Dhul-Qa'dah 1436 / Sept 2015, pp. 40–41)

3.2.14.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Ideological Load:** The repeated use of terms like “jihad”, “honour”, “responsibility”, “loyalty”, and “obedience” positions femininity within an ideological matrix. Women are valued, not through agency but through service, submission, and reproductive fidelity. This over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992) signals an obsessive focus on the control of the domestic sphere.

- **Modality and Sentence Mood:** The text features high epistemic and deontic modality (e.g., “you must”, “you should”, “your responsibility”), indicating authority, obligation, and moral absolutism. Declaratives dominate, with prescriptive undertones—framing the discourse as a didactic deontic injunction.

Indeed, when Allah obligated jihad for His cause upon his male slaves and placed a tremendous reward in it not found in other duties, some women became jealous and envious. So the Mother of the Believers, Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها, asked the Prophet ﷺ, according to the hadith of Mujahid, “O Messenger of Allah, the men go out to battle and we do not go out to battle...” So Allah ﷻ revealed: [And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others] [An-Nisā': 32], as reported by at-Tirmidhi and others.

Still, the absence of an obligation of jihad and war upon the Muslim woman – except in defense against someone attacking her – does not overturn her role in building the Ummah, producing men, and sending them out to the fierceness of battle.

Therefore, I write this article for my Muslim sister, the wife of a mujahid and the mother of lion cubs.

Allah ﷻ said, [But among them is he who says, “Our Lord, give us good in this dunya and good in the Hereafter and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.” Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift in account] [Al-Baqarah: 201-202].

According to ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, [good in this dunya] refers to “the righteous wife” [Zal al-Ma'rif].

Thawbin said, “When the revelation concerning silver and gold came down, they said, ‘So what wealth should we seek to possess?’ Umar said, ‘I will find out for you.’ He then rode quickly on a camel and reached him while I was on his heels. So he said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what wealth should we seek to possess?’ He said, ‘Let one of you possess a thankful heart, a tongue that remembers Allah, and a wife that helps him in the matter of the Hereafter.’ [Hasan: Reported by Imām Ahmad and Ibn Majah].

May my father, mother, and myself be sacrificed in defense of Allah’s Messenger, who was bestowed with comprehensive speech: “A wife that helps him in the matter of the Hereafter,” the Hereafter, the important matter, the ultimate goal, and the concern of the intelligent, discerning believer. How eloquent is the statement of the woman who said to her spouse when she saw him worried one day, “Why are you sad? Is it because of the Dunya, then Allah has finished decreeing it. Or is it because of the Hereafter? In which case may Allah increase you in worry?”

And you, O sister in Islam, O wife of a mujahid, your

husband is one whom the world today agreed upon waging war against. My sister, do you know who the mujahid is? A man who turned his back on the Dunya and went out seeking his death so that the Ummah may live. And I think that on the day he came forward to marry you, if he was not a mujahid then, he was a mujahid in the making. At the very least, you were aware of his methodology and creed, and you knew what type of life he sought to live. And if he was a deviant coming back from jihad at the time, he has repented to Allah, and Allah is more joyed by the repentance of His slave than a man who wakes up and finds his camel next to him after losing it in the desert! So why do we find some of the mujahid’s wives complaining about their lives? If she hears of an imminent battle that he will be in, she gets angry. If she sees him putting on war armor, she gets upset. If he goes out for rihab, she gets in a bad mood. If he returns late, she complains. O my sister, who defuded you and told you that the life of jihad is one of comfort and ease? Do you not love jihad and its people? Please listen. Indeed you are in jihad when you await the return of your husband patiently, anticipating Allah’s reward, and making du‘a’ for him and those with him to attain victory and consolation. You are in jihad when you uphold your loyalty to him in his absence. You are in jihad when you teach his children the difference between the truth and falsehood, between right and wrong. Indeed, my precious sister, are today the wife of a mujahid, and tomorrow you might be the wife of a shahid, or an injured fighter, or a prisoner – so how ready is your supply of patience and steadfastness? If you are discontent and complain in times of ease and comfort, how will you be in times of hardship and affliction? Will you be patient if he returns to you being carried with his blood pouring, or do you want your husband only when he is well?

Ibn Kathir رحمه الله said, “The scholars of tafsiir and history, as well as others, said that Ayyub رضي الله عنه was a wealthy man who possessed many different types of wealth, including livestock, slaves, cattle, and ample land in the region of al-Buthaynah in the land of Hiraan. And Ibn Asakir narrated that all of it belonged to him and that he had sons and many relatives. Then he was beset with these things altogether and his body was afflicted with various illnesses and no healthy organ remained in him except for his heart and his tongue, with which he remembered Allah ﷻ, and throughout all that he was patient, anticipating reward from Allah and remembering Allah ﷻ day and night. His illness was so long, that even his friends and companions deserted him. He was expelled from his land and cast onto a garbage heap outside of it. The people cut ties with him and none remained having

- **Grammatical Structures:** The discourse frequently uses passive voice and impersonal constructions, distancing agency and embedding ideology as divine or natural rather than constructed. For example, the text states, "You are the mothers" and "You are the nurturers," using nominalisation to fix women into static, immutable roles (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Presuppositions & Propositional Framing:** The text presupposes that every Muslim woman's duty is to support jihad, even if not through combat. It takes for granted that motherhood and loyalty to the Caliphate are equivalent to spiritual fulfilment.

- **Rhetorical Figures & Cohesion:** The text employs anaphora (repeated sentence openings), metaphor ("jihad of loyalty"), and synecdoche (reducing women to roles—wives, mothers, symbols). The textual cohesion is reinforced by parallelism and thematic consistency across sentences.

- **Word Order and Emphasis:** The frontloading of phrases like "O sister" and "O mother" personalises the message while emphasising obligation and identity.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Recontextualisation:** The fragment performs interdiscursive hybridity, combining the sermonic tone of Islamic *da'wah* literature with modern political propaganda. The format imitates religious exhortation but serves militant objectives.

- **Intertextual Borrowings:** The integration of Quranic and hadith references without complete citation provides a façade of scriptural legitimacy. By reinterpreting classical Islamic texts for ideological reproduction, the group performs a recontextualisation of gender roles to suit militant objectives.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociocultural Context:** This responds to the sociopolitical need to legitimise women's roles within jihadist discourse without contravening Salafi-jihadist gender norms. The text validates women's roles in sustaining ISIS's ideological and familial infrastructure.

- **Cultural Reproduction:** It constructs an archetype of the *mujahidah* mother—an idealised figure who educates children in jihad and supports husbands. This aligns with Fairclough's insight that discourse naturalises social roles under dominant ideologies.

3.2.14.3. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Meaning:** Women’s support for jihad is indispensable. Non-combatant contributions are equally valid, sanctified forms of jihad.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation (ISIS women):** Loyal, pious, supportive, and essential.

- **Negative Out-group Presentation:** Westernised women, secular feminists, and apathetic Muslims—framed as disobedient and corrupt through negative lexicalisation.

- **Mental Models and Schemata:** The text constructs a mental model in which supporting ISIS is not only a choice but a divine imperative. Concepts like honour and Islamic femininity are redefined in an ISIS-compatible schema.

- **Presuppositions:** The text assumes that women's value stems from their closeness to the cause, such as raising combative children, supporting their husbands, and maintaining modesty.

- **Cognitive Manipulation:** It frames non-supportive behaviour as a 'betrayal' of the *ummah*, managing the reader's context model by equating loyalty with existential value.

3.2.14.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination & Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** Women are framed as “sisters”, “mothers”, and “wives”—relational identities and gendered deictics that link their worth to male jihadists.

- **Predication:** They are described as “nurturers of men” and “the roots of our lions”, positioning them as ideological incubators through evaluative predication.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Duty:** Posits that women have a religious obligation to support jihad—a topos of responsibility.
- **Topos of Threat:** Suggests that deviation from these roles threatens the survival of the *ummah*.
- **Topos of Sacrifice:** Highlights martyrdom through motherhood and moral education.

Interdiscursivity and Fallacies:

- **Interdiscursivity:** The text draws upon religious *da'wah*, Arab familial traditions, and revolutionary propaganda. This perspectivisation expands its appeal and moral legitimacy.
- **Logical Fallacies:** This includes an appeal to emotion (using emotive imagery of sacrifice), and a false dichotomy (suggesting women must either support jihad or betray the *ummah*).

3.2.14.5. Multimodal and Visual Semiotic Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Imagery & Visual Modality:** The page features a conservative aesthetic—no depictions of women. This visual modality of absence aligns with Salafi-jihadist sensibilities regarding 'modesty'.
- **Typography & Salience:** High-contrast fonts and framed text boxes highlight selected phrases. Sentences such as "a jihad without fighting" receive high compositional salience.
- **Composition:** The fragment is structured to maximise readability and emphasise action verbs. Phrases like “your loyalty” and “your reward” are centralised, serving as a semiotic mode of personal interpellation.
- **Visual Symbolism:** The minimalistic design reinforces seriousness, spirituality, and sanctity.

3.2.14.6. Intertextuality

- **Quranic Parallels:** Implicit allusions to verses on obedience, motherhood, and moral upbringing.

- **Hadith References:** While not explicitly cited, the discourse echoes hadiths about women's paradise being under their husbands' pleasure or through childbearing.

- **Historical Echoes:** Recalls early Islamic narratives of women like Sumayyah and Umm Ammara, figures mythologised in Islamic tradition for their sacrificial roles.

3.2.14.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is a sophisticated ideological construct designed to integrate women into ISIS's totalising vision without disrupting its gender orthodoxy. It reframes traditional Islamic femininity in militant terms, equating motherhood, moral loyalty, and spousal support with battlefield jihad.

From a CDS perspective, this strategy is vital to sustaining long-term ideological reproduction. The prescribed roles elevate women to sacred acts, denying them autonomy—"a jihad without fighting". Fairclough's model shows how modality and nominalisation frame loyalty as identity. Van Dijk exposes the mental scaffolding: the notion that a woman's value is conditional on proximity to jihad. Wodak unveils the discursive mechanisms that fuse history, obligation, and gender ideology.

Moreover, this discourse manipulates the intertextual weight of religious tradition while circumventing Islamic scholarly nuance. It never openly distorts verses but strategically abstracts them into rhetorical tools. The fragment also reveals ISIS's adaptive propaganda logic: while men are radicalised for combat, women are co-opted to sustain the ideological infrastructure. This bifurcated gender jihad ensures the Caliphate reproduces itself through generational indoctrination. This research highlights the importance of analysing such discourse not as a representation of Islam, but rather as an ideological weaponisation of religious heritage.

3.2.15. Fragment 15 Analysis “Advice on Ihdād” – Dabiq Issue 13, pp. 24–26



Figure 3.14 Advice on Ihdad (Dabiq 13, Rabi' al-Akhir 1437 / Jan 2016, pp. 24–26)

3.2.15.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

This three-page article, situated under the "To Our Sisters" section, presents a didactic exposition on Islamic mourning regulations (*ihdād*) for widows. It functions as a discursive

ensemble using selective interpretations of Islamic rulings to instil behavioural discipline aligned with the group's ideology. The message is that widows, particularly those of fallen *mujahidin*, must maintain a visibly austere, pious, and secluded lifestyle. The fragment reinforces a specific gender ideology by prescribing strict rules on mourning, fashion, mobility, and social interaction.

3.2.15.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexical Style & Ideological Load:** The terminology is infused with religious and legalistic gravitas: “obligation”, “ruling”, and “permitted”. These lexico-semantic choices represent over-lexicalisation (Fairclough, 1992), cultivating an atmosphere of legalistic submission. Repeated references to hadith and scholars like “Imām Mālik” and “al-‘Uthaymīn” add doctrinal legitimacy.

- **Modality:** Heavy use of deontic modality (“must”, “should”, “is forbidden”) underscores the prescriptive tone. These rules are presented as absolute and unchallengeable, reflecting the group's claim to total moral authority.

- **Syntactic Structures:** Declarative and instructional forms dominate, aligning with the genre of fatwa discourse. Frequent negative imperatives (“do not dye”, “do not leave the house”) function as behavioral restrictions that eliminate individual agency.

- **Presuppositions & Propositional Framing:** The discourse presupposes that the widow is both morally accountable and socially monitored. It assumes she already desires to act piously and requires guidance to remain within *sharī‘a*-defined bounds, thereby naturalising her surveillance (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Cohesion & Coherence:** The text is segmented into sections (appearance, perfume, movement). This textual cohesion reinforces a sense of bureaucratic and spiritual micromanagement.

- **Word Order:** Key actions (“she must remain...”, “she should not”) are front-loaded to emphasise piety and duty as the primary markers of identity.

- **Rhetorical Devices:** Appeals to tradition and moral storytelling serve to moralise and generalise specific behaviours, performing the ideological reproduction of domestic control.

3.2.15.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- **Global Macro-proposition:** The true Muslim widow adheres strictly to the regulations of *iḥdād* as a sign of her faith and loyalty to Allah and the *Ummah*.

Microstructure & Cognitive Framing:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group Presentation:** Widows of *mujahidin* who remain secluded, pious, and visually unadorned are valorised.

- **Negative Other-Presentation:** Westernised, immodest, or "disobedient" Muslim women are cast as 'deviant' through negative lexicalisation.

- **Mental Models:** The fragment constructs a mental model where the grieving process is not emotional but legalistic. Grief must be ritualised and socially regulated. Modern practices like public condolences are cognitively reframed as examples of Western deviance.

- **Cognitive Manipulation:** The text imposes rigid cognitive schemata: deviation = sin; privacy = piety; modesty = jihad. Emotional mourning is suppressed in favour of codified behaviour, redefining femininity as a state of moral containment.

3.2.15.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** Labels such as "widow", "mourner", and "wife of the mujahid" anchor women's identity exclusively to their relational and religious status within the group's hierarchy.

- **Predication:** Positive attributes are reserved for the "obedient," while negative evaluative predication targets the "careless" and "immodest," creating a clear boundary of communal belonging.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Duty:** Obedience to Allah requires mourning in accordance with these rules—a topos of responsibility.
- **Topos of Threat:** Failure to follow these prescriptions results in Allah’s anger and the betrayal of the *mujahidin* legacy.
- **Topos of History:** Cites historical examples (e.g., Umm Ḥabībah) to perform a historical comparison and claim continuity with prophetic tradition.

Interdiscursivity & Fallacies:

- **Interdiscursivity:** The article performs interdiscursive hybridity, integrating legalistic *fiqh* discourse with jihadist militarism to create a framework of behavioural confinement.
- **Logical Fallacies:** This includes an appeal to authority (“Imām Mālik ruled...”) to short-circuit debate, and an appeal to fear regarding the spiritual consequences of disobedience.

3.2.15.5. Multimodal and Visual Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) framework:

- **Imagery & Visual Modality:** The stylised red envelope on the front page invokes seriousness, where red functions as a semiotic mode for both blood and piety. The visual modality of absence (no human figures) adheres to strict radical sensibilities.
- **Typography & Saliency:** Serif fonts suggest religious gravity. The use of red or bold for prohibitions (e.g., "do not apply kohl") achieves high compositional saliency, indicating moral urgency.
- **Layout & Information Value:** The structured columns and boxed quotes mimic the information value of a traditional Qur’anic exegesis, lending the propaganda the 'look' of authentic sacred scholarship.

3.2.15.6. Intertextuality

- **Explicit Religious Intertextuality:** The article cites prophetic traditions and rulings from scholars such as an-Nawawī and al- ‘Uthaymīn. These references to authoritative Sunni legal schools are used to perform the recontextualisation of orthodoxy to support a radical political agenda.

- **Cultural and Gendered Intertextuality:** The discourse evokes Arab-Muslim norms of private mourning to intertextually **contest** modern feminist ideals of expressive grief and public self-assertion.

3.2.15.7. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

The repetition of sacred figures and events constructs a mythological continuum to which readers are invited. Fairclough’s DRA elucidates how the linguistic structuring of obligation, presupposition, and salience transform *hijrah* and *iḥdād* into inescapable commands. Van Dijk’s SCM reveals how this discourse structures reader cognition: identity, duty, and salvation become tightly intertwined. Wodak’s DHA exposes the argumentative scaffolding used to justify violence and exclusion while embedding the discourse in theological legitimacy.

By codifying the widow's grief into a series of prohibitions, ISIS ensures that even death does not release the individual from the group's biopolitical control. This fragment demonstrates that the group’s "state-building" project is as much about the minute regulation of the female domestic life as it is about territorial conquest.

3.2.16. Fragment 16 Analysis “Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You” – *Dabiq*, Issue 15, p. 30



Figure 3.15. Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You (*Dabiq* 15, Shawwal 1437 / July 2016, p. 30)

3.2.16.1. Visual–Textual Fragment

This three-page article titled “Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You”, beginning on page 30 of *Dabiq*, Issue 15, constitutes one of the clearest ideological manifestos issued by the group. The text repudiates Western misreadings of their motivations and explicitly lists theological, political, and historical rationales for violent jihad. With militant directness, it frames hatred as an Islamic virtue and violent action as a religious necessity.

3.2.16.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Over-lexicalisation:**

- Lexemes like *hate*, *fight*, *crusaders*, *apostates*, *punishment*, and *war* are saturated throughout the text. The over-lexicalisation of hatred, framed as doctrinally pure and divinely required, indicates ideological obsession (Fairclough, 1992). The rhetorical repetition of “*we hate you*” produces discursive saturation, constructing hate as a theological virtue.

- **Modality and Epistemic Certainty:**

- The frequent use of highly certain modal verbs (“we will not stop hating you”, “we fight you because...”) creates a tone of dogmatic finality. The article eliminates doubt and constructs violence as epistemically grounded in divine will.

- **Grammatical Realisation and Syntactic Structures:**

- Sentences are short, declarative, and assertive, reinforcing the tone of absolute authority. Imperative clauses (e.g., “Know that fighting you will not stop...”) assert domination over reader interpretation, embedding coercive speech acts (Fairclough, 2003).

- **Presupposition and Propositional Framing:**

- The text presupposes that Western governments, values, and populations are inherently hostile to Islam, thereby legitimising perpetual conflict. Statements like “*you will never stop fighting us*” contain strategic presuppositions that frame violence as both defensive and pre-emptive.

- **Rhetorical Figures and Word Order:**

- The frequent use of anaphora (“We hate you because...”) reinforces message cohesion and thematic priority. Parallelism is employed to structure a climactic ideological crescendo across listed reasons for hatred.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Intertextuality and Genre Hybridisation:**

- The text merges genres of fatwa, polemic, and war manifesto. Scriptural citations are interwoven with political commentary, producing a hybrid form that feigns theological legitimacy while serving as strategic incitement.

- **Interdiscursivity:**

ISIS draws on Bush-era rhetoric (“*with us or against us*”), Western human rights discourse, and mediaeval Islamic jurisprudence to strategically recontextualise hate and violence. This discursive mimicry reinforces its oppositional stance.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context:**

- Released after the Orlando nightclub attack in 2016, the article responds to Western political interpretations that sought to frame the attack as isolated or based on personal grievance. ISIS explicitly reclaims ownership of the act, asserting ideological continuity.

- **Strategic Framing:**

- The text aims not only to reinforce internal support among supporters, but also to provoke Western publics, polarise Muslim communities, and validate takfirist justifications.

3.2.16.3. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The global semantic proposition is that hatred and violence are divinely mandated and morally superior to Western tolerance. The semantic macrostructure functions as an inversion of liberal universalist narratives, asserting the primacy of theological animosity.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive self-presentation:** ISIS frames its actions as expressions of purity, truth, and obedience to divine commands.

- **Negative other-presentation:** The West is constructed as morally bankrupt, Islamophobic, and irredeemably corrupt. Even tolerant Westerners are rejected (“*We hate you for your secularism... your permissiveness... your liberalism...*”).

- **Mental Models:**

- The *author* guides the reader in creating a mental framework that elevates hatred to a religious obligation and views violence as the only justifiable response to unbelief. Terms like “punishment”, “hatred”, and “fighting” function as cognitive scaffolding for action.

- **Presupposition and Context Models:**

- The text presupposes that the audience already shares a belief in Western decadence and moral decline. It reactivates mental models that equate secular governance with enmity toward Islam and portrays every non-Muslim as an ideological enemy.

3.2.16.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination:**

The enemy is consistently labelled with negatively charged collective identities—*crusaders*, *secularists*, *kuffār*, *liberals*, and *homosexuals*. These nominations dehumanise and generalise, facilitating moral distancing.

- **Predication:**

Westerners are not merely wrong but existentially detestable. They are “*pagan*”, “*evil*”, “*filthy*”, etc. The West presents Muslims as *apostates* and *hypocrites*, deserving of equal violence.

Topoi of Argumentation:

- **Topos of Threat:**

- The article constructs the West as a mortal danger to Islam, justifying violence as pre-emptive and defensive.

- **Topos of Divine Will:**

- The repeated citation of hadith and invocation of Allah’s command constructs an unquestionable divine imperative for hatred and violence.

- **Topos of History:**

- The Crusades are invoked as a historical precedent to frame modern conflict as a continuation of centuries-old religious war.

Logical Fallacies:**• False Dichotomy:**

• The article frames the world as divided between believers and enemies, erasing nuance and moral complexity.

• Appeal to Divine Authority:

• The article selectively invokes scriptural references to suppress debate.

• Ad Hominem:

• Moderate Muslims and liberal Westerners are discredited without argument, labelled as traitors or apostates.

Interdiscursivity:

• ISIS fuses eschatological hadith, jihadist polemic, anti-colonial memory, and war-on-terror discourse to forge a self-righteous ideological core.

3.2.16.5. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis**• Typography and Visual Framing:**

• The title uses bold white-on-black serif font with a red subtitle, resembling war-themed propaganda posters. The exclamation mark in the background is constructed from lexical items (e.g., *apostasy*, *democracy*, *liberalism*)—a symbolic condensation of everything ISIS claims to fight.

• Visual Composition:

• The background is dark and ominous, suggesting threat and urgency. The bright red ampersand visually ties “hate” and “fight,” reinforcing the semantic bond between the emotional and physical components of jihad.

• Colour, Palette and Texture:

• Black, grey, and crimson dominate—colours often used in jihadist visuals to connote martyrdom, bloodshed, and divine wrath. The metallic shine and layered background texture simulate gravity and violence.

- **Layout and Impact:**

- The exclamation mark as a typographic visual metaphor punctuates the militant tone. It acts as a semiotic trigger for alarm, finality, and confrontation, strategically placed at the top to dominate the visual field.

3.2.16.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is one of the most brazen expositions of ISIS's ideological programme. Unlike veiled allusions or theological softening, the article proudly reclaims hatred and war as virtuous obligations. It serves to correct external misrepresentations of ISIS's motivations, rejecting the idea that economic deprivation, political alienation, or emotional trauma alone drives jihadism.

From a CDS standpoint, Fairclough's framework reveals how modality, lexical saturation, and presupposition are mobilised to produce an aura of unchallenging truth. Van Dijk shows how mental models are engineered to normalise hatred, and Wodak reveals how argumentation strategies construct a timeless enemy in the Western liberal order.

The article functions both as internal validation and external provocation. Internally, it serves as moral reassurance for militants and supporters—justifying acts of extreme violence with theological resolve. Externally, it is a tool of polarisation, pushing Western societies into reactive discourses that validate the narrative of the "clash of civilisations."

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a multi-dimensional deconstruction of sixteen fragments from *Dabiq* magazine, uncovering the sophisticated linguistic and multimodal machinery ISIS employed to manufacture legitimacy and social control during its territorial peak. By operationalising the tripartite CDS framework, the analysis has demonstrated how the group's discourse successfully synthesised eschatological prophecy (DHA), binary cognitive models (SCM), and authoritarian textual structures (DRA) to construct a compelling, albeit violent, utopian worldview. The findings indicate that during this phase, ISIS's discursive strategy was defined by a rhetoric of triumphalism, the promise of a borderless state, and the systematic elimination of moral ambiguity through the "extinction of the grayzone".

However, as the group's geopolitical fortunes began to wane in 2016, this utopian narrative faced an existential crisis of credibility. To understand how ISIS's ideological apparatus responded to these material pressures, the thesis must now transition from the state-building rhetoric of *Dabiq* to the insurgent urgency of its successor, *Rumiyah*. Consequently, Chapter Four provides a comparative analysis of the *Rumiyah* corpus, tracking the strategic discursive recalibration from territorial governance to decentralised, individualised violence. This longitudinal shift is critical for revealing the resilience and adaptability of the "grammar of radicalisation" that continues to inform global extremist narratives

CHAPTER FOUR:
ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION,
AND DISCUSSION
***RUMIYAH* MAGAZINE**

4.1. Introduction

Chapter Four serves as the comparative and longitudinal counterpoint to the preceding analysis of *Dabiq*, documenting the discursive metamorphosis of ISIS's flagship English-language propaganda during its phase of territorial contraction. As the group's geopolitical project encountered the material reality of military defeat between 2016 and 2017, its communicative strategy shifted from a "utopian state-building" narrative to one of "insurgent urgency" and "everyday jihadism". This chapter operationalises the tripartite CDS framework—integrating Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)—to deconstruct fourteen fragments from *Rumiyah* magazine.

The analysis interrogates how the group enacted a "strategic recalibration," re-anchoring its legitimacy in civilisational metaphors and eschatological prophecy rather than physical landholding. By examining the semiotics of individualised violence, the delegitimisation of traditional religious authorities, and the sacralisation of plunder, this chapter reveals the extreme adaptability of the "grammar of radicalisation" in a post-territorial context. Ultimately, these findings provide the empirical foundation for the practical counter-narrative recommendations and policy interventions presented in the final stage of this study.

4.2. Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion (*Rumiyah* Magazine)

4.2.1. Fragment 17 Analysis The Name "*Rumiyah*" - Ideological Semiotics of the Title "*Rumiyah*"

Fragment Overview

This fragment focuses on the ideological and discursive construction of the magazine title *Rumiyah* (رُومِيَّة), which succeeded *Dabiq* as ISIS's flagship English-language propaganda outlet. The name change was not a mere rebranding but a strategic discursive recalibration—one that reflects and reconfigures ISIS's rhetorical priorities after significant territorial losses in Iraq and

Syria. The title *Rumiyah*, meaning “Rome”, is semantically and eschatologically charged, deeply rooted in Islamic apocalyptic narratives and deployed by ISIS to construct continuity amid crisis.

4.2.1.1. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Level:

- **Lexical and Symbolic Weight:**

- *Rumiyah* invokes the Arabic form of “Rome”, a loaded symbol in Islamic eschatology. Unlike *Dabiq*, which refers to a literal town in Syria (and a prophetic battlefield), *Rumiyah* is more abstract, representing Western civilisation as a whole. The title thus shifts from geographical literalism to civilisational metaphor.

- **Structural Significance:**

- The cover of *Rumiyah* Issue 1 gives central visual priority to the magazine’s name, using large serif typography to announce a new phase in ISIS’s propaganda strategy. The prominence of the name itself is a discursive act—foregrounding a message of vengeance and unfinished religious destiny.

- **Intertextuality and Referentiality:**

- The name *Rumiyah* draws on prophetic hadith, notably those attributed to Musnad Ahmad (Hadith 23408) and Sunan Abu Dawud, which predict the fall of Rome following the conquest of Constantinople. This enables a re-framing of failure in *Dabiq* (the town fell to anti-ISIS forces in 2016) into an open-ended eschatological mission.

Discursive Practice Level:

- **Recontextualisation of Loss:**

- ISIS rebrands through *Rumiyah* to recontextualise the military loss of Dabiq as a temporary setback rather than a theological defeat. This aligns with Fairclough’s notion of ideological repositioning through discursive shifts (Fairclough, 1992; 2003).

- **Audience Reconfiguration:**

- *Dabiq* targeted fighters and settlers committed to state-building; *Rumiyah* targets lone-actor terrorists, diaspora sympathisers, and ideological amplifiers. The name thus realigns the magazine with a more mobile, decentralised readership.

Social Practice Level:

- The renaming is embedded in a broader context of geopolitical retrenchment. The shift from utopian narrative (*Dabiq* as a realised caliphate) to insurgent narrative (*Rumiyah* as global, deferred victory) represents a pragmatic ideological adjustment.

4.2.1.2 Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)**Macrostructure:**

- The global semantic proposition conveyed by the name *Rumiyah* is that the fight against the West is unfinished and divinely mandated. The title positions ISIS as the eternal antagonist of Western civilisation.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: Believers striving for eschatological fulfilment by targeting Rome.
- *Negative Out-group*: Western powers (Rome), framed as spiritually corrupt and politically oppressive.

• Mental Models:

- For an ISIS-supporting reader, *Rumiyah* activates cognitive schemas of vengeance, religious duty, and sacred prophecy. The magazine title is not merely a label—it is a mental trigger for mobilising sacrificial action.

• Presuppositions:

The use of the term *Rumiyah* presupposes both the audience’s familiarity with apocalyptic hadiths and their ideological commitment to the concept of an impending civilisational war. The choice is exclusionary and selective—intended for an ideologically literate reader.

4.2.1.3. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)**Nomination and Predication Strategies****• Nomination:**

Rumiyah is nominated not as a city, but as a civilisational totem. The West becomes “Rome”, evoking a binary clash between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb.

- **Predication:**

The magazine title predicates *Rome* as the final enemy, the fulfilment of the ultimate jihad. This activates long-standing theological and historical binaries.

Topoi of Argumentation

- **Topos of History:**

- *Rumiyah* is grounded in the prophetic sequence of eschatological conquest—Constantinople first, then Rome. This grants *Rumiyah* theological continuity despite the loss of physical territory.

- **Topos of Divine Mandate:**

- The naming implies inevitability: Rome *will* fall. ISIS thereby redeploys the failed *Dabiq* prophecy as a delayed but unstoppable script.

- **Topos of Threat and Sacrifice:**

By naming the magazine after the ideological endpoint, the threat becomes urgent and the call to sacrifice becomes sanctified.

Fallacies and Strategic Argumentation

- **Appeal to Tradition and Authority:**

- The eschatological framing of *Rumiyah* appeals to classical Islamic prophecy without nuance or context—relying on selective literalism.

- **False Equivalence:**

Interdiscursivity

- Draws from Qur’anic imagery, jihadist historiography, modern insurgent rhetoric, and digital marketing strategy. The name *Rumiyah* is not simply religious—it is interdiscursively modern and weaponised.

4.2.1.4. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

The choice of *Rumiyah* as the magazine’s title is a masterclass in discursive resilience. Following the symbolic failure of *Dabiq*, ISIS needed a name that could:

1. Retain theological weight,
2. Signal continuity, and
3. Adapt to a stateless insurgent phase.

Rumiyah accomplishes all three. It maintains ideological coherence by invoking the next stage in the eschatological timeline, while deferring concrete outcomes and allowing ideological time to “stretch”. This enables ISIS to preserve faith in divine destiny even when material reality contradicts it.

From a CDS lens:

- **Fairclough’s DRA** reveals how naming practices function as recontextualisation of defeat and ideological renewal.

- **van Dijk’s SCM** shows how the title activates belief structures of final victory and theological antagonism.

- **Wodak’s DHA** exposes the reliance on sacred history and argumentation strategies that *mask strategic recalibration as spiritual perseverance*.

4.2.1.5. Synthesis and Implications

The title *Rumiyah* serves not just as a label, but as an ideological framework, a semiotic battlefield, and a mobilisation device. It constructs a new discursive reality where ISIS is no longer a caliphate rooted in territory but a transnational ideological force whose aim is not to hold land, but to strike fear, inspire allegiance, and endure until prophecy is fulfilled.

Understanding the shift from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah* is vital for:

- **Counter-terrorism practitioners** developing strategic narratives,
- **Policymakers** seeking to understand ideological resilience,
- **Educators** combating theological manipulation,
- **Community leaders** crafting counter-discourses.

This analysis inaugurates the *Rumiyah* series of fragments, revealing how language and naming are central to violent ideological persistence, especially in times of strategic loss.

4.2.2. Fragment 18 Analysis The Recurring Epigraph of *Rumiyah* Magazine

In each cover page issue, we find the following quote:

“O muwahhidin, rejoice, for by Allah, we will not rest from our jihad except beneath the olive trees of Rumiyah (Rome).” — Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir

Visual–Textual Fragment Overview:

This quote appears on the cover of every issue of *Rumiyah* (Issues 1–13), positioned at the top beneath the magazine title. It serves as a ritualised discursive epigraph, anchoring each issue with a consistent ideological tone. Attributed to Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir—a senior al-Qaeda in Iraq ideologue and former leader of ISIS’s predecessor—this statement encapsulates a theology of unending jihad, eschatological anticipation, and spiritual perseverance. The phrase functions as a quasi-liturgical invocation, combining direct address, theological reference, and militarised resolve. It is central to understanding *Rumiyah*’s communicative strategy, as it establishes the magazine’s narrative trajectory across all issues and links the current struggle with divine inevitability.

4.2.2.1. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Level:

• Lexicalisation and Modality:

- The term “*muwahhidin*” (true monotheists) designates the in-group as ideologically pure, in contrast with apostates and disbelievers.
- The imperative “rejoice” juxtaposes spiritual celebration with the brutality of jihad.
- High epistemic modality in “we will not rest” signals unwavering certainty and commitment.
- This constructs a tone of absolute divine endorsement, leaving no space for ambiguity or dissent.

• Syntactic and Rhetorical Structure:

- The sentence reflects the rhetorical style of the Qur’an, which follows a structure of imperative, declarative, and conditional clauses.

○ This triadic formula creates theological rhythm and sermonic cadence, adding persuasive solemnity.

• **Semantic Anchoring via Metaphor:**

- The image of “the olive trees of Rumiyah” is symbolically rich.
- Olives, traditionally associated with peace and prophetic purity (cf. Qur’an 95:1), are now recontextualised to refer to the site of an eschatological final battle.
- This semantic inversion turns peaceful imagery into a legitimate reference to holy war.

Discursive Practice Level:

• **Repetition as Ritualisation:**

- Its unwavering repetition across all thirteen issues ritualises the discourse.
- As a framing device, it declares each issue’s ideological posture before any article begins.
- In Fairclough’s terms, it performs the discursive structuration of jihadist logic through ritualised linguistic patterns (Fairclough, 2003).

• **Intertextual Allusion:**

- The quote draws from eschatological hadith (e.g., *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith 23408) predicting the fall of Rome after Constantinople.
- This intertextual invocation of sacred prophecy creates continuity with Islamic tradition while justifying contemporary violence.

Social Practice Level:

• **Geopolitical Contextualisation:**

- The quote must be read against the backdrop of ISIS’s territorial losses.
- Following the fall of Dabiq (October 2016), this eschatological epigraph reorients strategic focus from landholding to insurgent perseverance, refashioning defeat as delay, not denial.

• **Audience Repositioning:**

- The framing shifts from addressing utopian state builders (as in *Dabiq*) to a decentralised base of global sympathisers and lone actors.
- The quote encourages perseverance, not governance; vengeance, not administration.

4.2.2.2. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The dominant semantic macrostructure conveyed is that jihad will continue until the West (Rome) is conquered and that this struggle is a divine obligation and source of spiritual joy.

Microstructure:

• Ideological Square:

- **Positive In-group:** “muwahhidin” – pure, committed monotheists aligned with God’s cause.
- **Negative Out-group:** “Rome” – a representation of Christian civilisation, secularism, and global oppression.

• Mental Models and Framing:

- The quote activates a mental schema of duty, divine destiny, and unceasing struggle.
- Readers are expected to internalise a cognitive script of resistance, sacrifice, and eventual eschatological fulfilment.

• Presuppositions: It presupposes that:

- The speaker and audience are part of a singular, unified religious struggle.
- Rome is an enemy of Islam.
- Death or conquest are the only legitimate endpoints of jihad.

• Emotion and Cognition:

- The juxtaposition of “rejoice” with “jihad” engages affective processing—conditioning the audience to feel exaltation, not dread, when facing violence and self-sacrifice.

4.2.2.3. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

• Nomination (Referential Strategy):

- “**Muwahhidin**” nominates a theologically elite class—excluding Shiites, secular Muslims, and the general *ummah*.

- “Rome” operates as both a geographical and symbolic nomination of the Other: enemy, heretic, oppressor.

- **Predication:**

- Rome is not described explicitly but is predicated by its role as the eschatological target, object of conquest, and symbol of *kufur*.

- The *muwahhidin* are framed as righteous, patient, and spiritually superior.

Topoi of Argumentation:

- **Topos of Divine Legitimacy:**

- The use of “by Allah” provides religious validation for the vow. There is no argument—only divinely anchored assertion.

- **Topos of Destiny:**

- The inevitability of jihad and the fall of Rome are presented as part of a fixed, divine script.

- **Topos of Threat:**

- Although implicit, the mention of jihad and Rome signals an existential confrontation between ISIS and Western civilisation.

Fallacies and Omissions:

- **Appeal to Authority:**

- The citation of Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir (killed 2010) elevates the quote to quasi-scriptural authority, lending it weight and historical legitimacy.

- **Strategic Ambiguity and Abstraction:**

- The use of *Rumiyah* (Rome) instead of specific enemies allows ideological flexibility—Rome can symbolise any modern Western power.

- **Interdiscursivity:**

- Combines apocalyptic Islamic tradition, modern jihadist martyrdom discourse, and digital-era propaganda branding.

- The positioning at the head of every issue signals ritualised interdiscursivity, framing each issue as a continuation of a sacred war.

4.2.2.4. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This epigraph serves as the ideological liturgy of *Rumiyah*. While *Dabiq* titles referenced a specific battlefield, *Rumiyah* invokes unconquered prophecy. The placement and repetition of the quote across all issues confirm its performative function: to re-mythologise jihad and reframe strategic setbacks into theological perseverance.

From a CDS perspective:

- **Fairclough’s DRA** highlights the syntactic mimicry of sacred scripture and the role of ritualised repetition in naturalising ideology.
- **van Dijk’s SCM** exposes how this quote constructs mental scripts of divine duty, enemy vilification, and ideological superiority.
- **Wodak’s DHA** reveals the interweaving of tradition, prophecy, and threat into a coherent discourse of perpetual war and sacred purpose.
- This quote encapsulates ISIS’s resilience-through-discourse: though its territorial project collapsed, its ideological project endured by transforming the loss into delayed victory—rendered inevitable through theological anchoring.

The recurring epigraph across *Rumiyah* issues is a deliberate discursive ritual, reaffirming ISIS’s core themes: identity, vengeance, endurance, and destiny. It is a symbolic compass orienting readers toward jihad, promising not earthly governance but eschatological triumph. This fragment, in conjunction with the title *Rumiyah*, establishes the ideological architecture upon which every issue is constructed. It must therefore be read not as a mere motto but as a sacred imperative—a cognitive blueprint that informs the logic of every article that follows.

4.2.3 Fragment 19 Analysis: Cover Page– *Rumiyah*, Issue 1, Cover Page & p. 1

Visual–Textual Fragment Overview

This cover page inaugurates *Rumiyah* Magazine (Issue 1, Dhul-Hijjah 1437 / September 2016), which was launched shortly after *Dabiq* ceased publication. The visual centre features a heavily armed militant figure flanked by others, foregrounded against a desert sky. The layout

combines a bold headline, sectioned contents, and a superimposed quote from Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir.

Visually, the title occupies the semantic nucleus of the cover, rendered in large, stylized serif typography that conveys authoritative gravitas. This front page functions as both a discursive rebrand and a strategic recalibration of ISIS propaganda, marking a shift from *Dabiq*'s utopian territorial rhetoric to *Rumiyah*'s decentralised, mobile, and insurgent jihadist model.

The compositional salience of the lone mujahid—whose direct Demand Gaze asserts leadership and assertive masculinity—visually encodes a shift toward individualised jihad. The page effectively utilizes intersemiotic modality, where the military vest, weapons, and orange-highlighted text (drawing from martyrdom aesthetics) work together to signal a transition from state-building to sacred vengeance. The inverted layout, placing the ritualized epigraph at the top (the Ideal), grants the quote interpretive primacy, signalling a discursive priority shift from a standard magazine format to a militant manifesto.



Figure 4.1. 1st Issue Cover Page: Strategic Rebranding (Rumiyah 1, Dhul-Hijjah 1437 / Sept 2016)

4.2.3.1. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Symbolic Title:** The choice of “Rumiyah” (Rome) symbolically signals eschatological ambition. The term is semantically loaded, evoking the Prophet Muhammad’s apocalyptic prophecy of Rome’s conquest. This selection signals a rhetorical repositioning: while *Dabiq* anchored ISIS to geographic control (Syria), *Rumiyah* universalises jihad as a borderless ideological mission. The Arabic-to-English transliteration without translation maintains religious-militant authenticity and insider exclusivity.

- **Foregrounded Quote (Epistemic Modality):** The top-centre quote— “By Allah, we will not rest from our jihad except beneath the olive trees of Rumiyah”—expresses absolute epistemic certainty. The modal “will not rest” asserts total ideological commitment. The conditional clause “except beneath...” frames death as the only endpoint of jihad, embedding theological legitimacy into militancy.

- **Structural and Thematic Layout:** The threefold structure (Foreword, Articles, News) mimics mainstream journalism, masking incitement with quasi-legitimate editorial presentation. Each section title carries ideological weight: “Stand and Die...”, “The Religion of Islam...”, “The Wicked Scholars...”, and “So Shed It...”, all rhetorically implying action, purging, and binary allegiance.

- **Intertextuality:** The citation of Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir, a former al-Qaeda figure, invokes historical jihadist continuity and ideological lineage. The reference constructs a discursive bridge linking current propaganda with earlier global jihad doctrines, re-legitimising the group in the wake of battlefield losses.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:** The page performs interdiscursive hybridity, combining elements of a magazine, military communique, martyr commemorative, and religious tract to “naturalise ideology” (Fairclough, 1992).

- **Production and Consumption Framing:** The magazine is now framed for digital consumption—circulated online in multilingual editions—reflecting an adaptive communicative

strategy post-territory. The visual formatting encourages sharing, decontextualisation, and virality, enabling transnational reach.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Sociopolitical Context and Shift:** The publication coincided with the fall of key strongholds (Manbij, Fallujah, Sirte). The loss of symbolic territory led to a pragmatic narrative shift—from caliphal governance to asymmetric, global jihad. *Rumiyah* begins to normalise small-scale attacks, remote indoctrination, and decentralised operations.

- **Ideological Continuity through Reframing:** While *Dabiq* framed legitimacy through state-building, *Rumiyah* re-emphasises it through sacred perseverance and vengeance. The invocation of Rome substitutes a theological promise for geopolitical loss.

4.2.3.2. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The overarching meaning is that ISIS is far from defeated—its mission transcends borders, and its operatives remain globally mobilised. The cover page conveys that jihad is a divine inevitability, not a localised rebellion.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- **Positive In-group:** The mujahid in the centre is valued—firm, stoic, and prepared, representing the ideal Muslim warrior.

- **Negative Out-group:** Implicit enemies (Rome, the West, and local apostates) are unnamed but ever-present, symbolised by the allusion to the "olive trees of Rumiyah"—a historical eschatological target.

- **Mental Models and Script Activation:** The quote and visual activate mental schemata of eschatological fulfilment (“conquest of Rome”), perpetual resistance (“we will not rest...”), and spiritual heroism (militant as righteous defender).

- **Presuppositions:** The text presupposes the reader's ideological familiarity, as there is no explanation of *Rumiyah*'s meaning or Abu Hamzah's identity. This positions the reader as an "insider", fostering identification and belonging.

4.2.3.3. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination (Referential Strategy):** The cover strategically avoids naming enemies directly; instead, "Rome" (*Rumiyah*) is nominated as both a target and a destination—a metonym for Western civilisation.

- **Predication:** The mujahid is constructed through evaluative predication as honourable, brave, and disciplined. The viewer's gaze meets his, encouraging visual alignment and admiring emulation.

Topoi of Argumentation:

- **Topos of History:** The title *Rumiyah* resurrects early Islamic eschatology—"Rome shall fall after Constantinople"—tying the present struggle to prophetic tradition.

- **Topos of Threat and Mission:** The persistent frame is one of unfinished divine obligation. The quote positions global jihad as a moral imperative and universal destiny.

Fallacies and Strategic Omissions:

- **False Continuity Fallacy:** The magazine implies an unbroken lineage from Muhammad's prophecy to current actions, ignoring doctrinal differences and political fragmentation.

- **Appeal to Authority:** The invocation of Abu Hamzah, without context or critique, serves as a substitute for argument.

- **Interdiscursivity:** It integrates elements of eschatological Islamic prophecy, contemporary war media, militant communiqués, and magazine culture. The interdiscursive synergy constructs a layered narrative of sacred insurgency.

4.2.3.4. Multimodal Analysis

Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework:

- **Visual Symbolism and Gaze:** The mujahid's central position and direct gaze (Demand Gaze) assert leadership and assertive masculinity. The desert background reinforces a visual modality of authenticity, asceticism, and resistance. The absence of flags or utopian symbolism (as in *Dabiq*) marks a shift towards individualised jihad.

- **Colour Scheme and Typography:** The orange-highlighted contents draw inspiration from martyrdom aesthetics (prison jumpsuits), signalling fire or divine wrath. The black header and military vest contrast light and darkness—a motif of the moral binary.

- **Semiotic Foregrounding and Information Value:** The quote at the top (the Ideal), rather than a title, claims interpretive primacy. This inverted layout signals a discursive priority shift from magazine to manifesto.

4.2.3.5. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment marks a discursive inflection point in ISIS propaganda history. *Rumiyah* Issue 1's cover page announces a new communicative mode, one no longer anchored to territorial governance but to ideological perpetuation. The end of *Dabiq* coincided with territorial loss—*Rumiyah* fills this vacuum by reconstructing legitimacy not through statehood but through the continuity of struggle, death, and divine promise.

From a Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) perspective, Fairclough's DRA shows how the militant's gaze, quote positioning, and lexical saturation create a coherent narrative of sacred resistance. Van Dijk's SCM exposes the mental model construction for loyalty, sacrifice, and ongoing violence as divinely framed obligations. Wodak's DHA unpacks the topoi and argumentation tactics that sanitise war while sanctifying vengeance.

The *Rumiyah* cover, therefore, is not just a visual artefact—it is a condensed ideological primer, recalibrating the global narrative post-territory. Through sacred legitimisation and militant aesthetics, it appeals to existing fighters, potential lone actors, and ideological sympathisers. Its

simplicity masks a profound strategic pivot: from a geopolitical dream to a decentralised insurgency—still faithful, still active, and now everywhere.

4.2.4 Fragment 20 Analysis “The Kafir’s Blood is Halal for You, So Shed It” – *Rumiyah*, Issue 1, pp. 34–36



Figure 4.2. The Kafir’s Blood is Halal for You, So Shed It (*Rumiyah* 1, Dhul-Hijjah 1437 / Sept 2016, pp. 34–36)

4.2.4.1. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and theological loading:**
- The repeated use of terms like *kafir*, *halal*, *blood*, *martyrdom*, *apostasy*, and *tyrants* construct a discursive field saturated with religious-legal semantics. The stark binary between believers and unbelievers is linguistically encoded through negative hyponyms (e.g., *apostates*, *crusaders*, *infidels*) and positive prescriptive lexemes (*shed it*, *obligation*, *command*).

- **Modality and Epistemic Certainty:**

- The article is dominated by high-modality declaratives: “*The blood of a kafir is cheap, filthy, and permissible to shed.*” This declarative epistemic mode leaves no space for interpretive flexibility—reinforcing the impression of divine absolutism.

- **Nominalisation and Authority Construction:**

- Nominal phrases *such as "the shedding of disbelievers' blood"* remove the sense of agency and present violence as a divine command instead of a human choice. This aligns with Fairclough’s observations on how grammar can naturalise ideology.

- **Intertextuality and Religious Legitimacy:**

- Citing early Islamic authorities (e.g., Ibn Taymiyyah, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Shafi’i, Al-Khattabi) without full context or scholarly critique, the article constructs intertextual authenticity—weaponising religious tradition to legitimise contemporary terrorism.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Hybridisation:**

- The article reads as a fatwa disguised as journalism. It blends exegesis, jurisprudence, and militant exhortation in a genre that mimics religious instruction but delivers political incitement.

- **Production and Targeting:**

- Framed for lone-actor extremists in the West, it provides theological validation for attacks against ordinary civilians—explicitly referencing “*market-goers*” in Europe. It aims to inspire **autonomous acts of terror** grounded in perceived sacred law.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Contextual Function:**

- The article emerged shortly after major lone-actor attacks in Europe and the U.S. (e.g., Orlando, Nice, and Berlin in 2016). It aims to capitalise on discursive momentum, furnishing theological cover for acts already underway and stimulating new ones.

- **Strategic Objective:**

- This piece transforms religious doctrine into tactical insurgency. The ideology encodes the shift from collective jihad to individual assassination as a necessary evolution of Islamic obligation.

4.2.4.2. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The overarching meaning is that killing non-Muslims is not only permitted but divinely commanded. The article constructs civilian bloodshed as an act of piety, rather than a moral or political crime.

Microstructure:

• Ideological Square:

- *Positive In-group*: Mujāhidīn, lone wolves, “muwahhidin” (true monotheists), scholars who support bloodshed
- *Negative Out-group*: Crusaders, apostates, secular Muslims, market-goers, non-combatants

• Mental Models and Framing:

- This article builds a schema in which murder is not only justifiable but holy. The article instructs the reader to reframe the act of killing as an act of obedience and reward.

• Presuppositions:

- The underlying assumption is that all non-Muslims are legitimate targets.
- It is believed that the Prophet Muhammad approved of this approach.
- Islamic scholars unanimously endorse this interpretation.

The article presents these presuppositions as unquestionable facts without arguing them.

• Cognitive Manipulation:

- The article manipulates theological memory, deliberately collapsing distinctions between classical jurisprudence and contemporary terrorism. The article constructs a narrative that imagines acts such as the stabbings in the London market or the truck attacks in Nice as continuations of prophetic precedent.

4.2.4.3. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication

- **Nomination:**

- Enemies are collectively nominated as *kuffār*, *tyrants*, *market-goers*, and *Crusaders*.
- Heroes are *muwahhidin*, *lions*, *followers of truth*, or *the mujahid*.

- **Predication:**

- Non-Muslims are predicated as impure, guilty by belief, and inherently hostile.
- The presumption is that violence is sacred, obligatory, and rewarding.

Topoi of Argumentation:

- **Topos of Divine Command:**

- Violence is framed as commanded by Allah: “*Their blood is cheap...*” and “*shed it*” are not suggestions but imperatives.

- **Topos of Justice:**

- The article posits that the West is guilty of oppression, and thus, any retaliatory killing is justice—even when targeting civilians.

- **Topos of Religious History:**

- The article deploys selective hadith and mediaeval fatwas to construct historical legitimacy. Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, and Shafī'i are invoked to portray universal consensus.

Fallacies and Strategic Silences:

- **Appeal to Authority Fallacy:**

- The citation of multiple classical scholars occurs without context, assuming their consensus while ignoring opposing scholarly traditions.

- **Dehumanisation and Slippery Slope:**

- **The grouping** of all non-believers into a single enemy category collapses ethical distinctions and removes moral constraints on killing.

Interdiscursivity:

- *This approach integrates mediaeval Islamic jurisprudence, modern jihadist polemic, and lone-actor tactical manuals such as Just Terror Tactics. This article functions as a discursive bridge between doctrine and execution.*

4.2.4.4. Multimodal Analysis**• Visual Foregrounding:**

- The headline— “*The Kafir’s BLOOD is Halal for You, So Shed It*”—is splattered with digital blood, simulating violence. The typography mimics brush strokes, linking bloodshed to artistic or divine inscription.

• Image–Text Integration:

- The juxtaposition of the bloodied knife, red splatter, and an image of a smiling civilian (Issue 1, p. 36) links theological instruction with real-world application—explicitly identifying everyday Westerners as permissible targets.

• Semiotic Coding:

- Blood functions as both a metaphor and a metonym: it symbolises divine justice while also serving as a literal instruction.

4.2.4.5. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is one of the most explicit acts of ideological weaponisation in the *Rumiyah* corpus. Its aim is not merely to justify but also to normalise and ritualise the killing of civilians. From a CDS standpoint:

- **Fairclough** shows how linguistic structure constructs moral inversion—sanctifying murder and criminalising mercy.

- **van Dijk** reveals the manipulation of cognitive schemata that turn religious purity into violent absolutism.

- **Wodak** exposes how ISIS hijacks Islamic scholarly traditions, stripping nuance to forge a theology of fear, rage, and legitimacy.

This fragment represents the discursive endpoint of ISIS's ideological escalation: sacred slaughter as divine duty. Counter-terrorism education, religious literacy programmes, and digital deradicalisation frameworks must precisely deconstruct, delegitimise, and expose this kind of discourse.

It underscores the necessity for:

- **Robust theological rebuttals** by credible Islamic scholars,
- **Forensic linguistic counter-narratives** in social media,
- **Targeted educational interventions** addressing scriptural distortion.

This analysis confirms that *Rumiyah* is not merely a propaganda magazine—it is a manual of doctrinal violence, intended to convert belief into bloodshed.

4.2.5 Fragment 21 Analysis “Just Terror Tactics” – *Rumiyah*, Issue 2, pp. 12–13

Visual–Textual Overview:

This two-page article, labelled “Exclusive”, appears in *Rumiyah* Issue 2 and serves as an instructional manual for lone-actor knife attacks. It marks a profound shift in ISIS propaganda—from state-building narratives (*Dabiq*) to strategic decentralisation (*Rumiyah*). With graphic imagery, diagrammatic targeting instructions, and explicit justification, it offers a step-by-step guide to executing domestic terror operations. This fragment is not merely an incitement but an embodiment of ISIS's doctrinal pivot to what I term “everyday jihadism”—weaponizing the ordinary to sustain ideological warfare.



thus readily accessible. They are extremely easy to conceal and highly lethal, especially in the hands of someone who knows how to use them effectively. Also, due to their accessibility, were a person to conduct a campaign of knife attacks, he could dispose of his weapon after each use, finding no difficulty in acquiring another one.

When choosing a knife, one should focus firstly on sharpness. He should then consider the strength of the blade and handle, and seek something reasonably sized for the job at hand. Also, it should not be too large, making it difficult to conceal, nor lacking a strong grip: let it be easily dismantled. serrated or partially-serrated blades make for good combat knives.

It is explicitly advised not to use kitchen knives, as their basic structure is not designed to handle the kind of vigorous application used for assassinations and slaughter.

Something important that one should consider before acquiring a knife is to avoid troublesome knives, those that can cause harm to the user because of poor manufacturing. There are certain features that should be avoided when acquiring a knife.

- If it lacks a guard, which is a protruding piece of metal or other material between the blade and the handle, the wielder may be harmed during the operation, as this guard is to prevent one's hand from sliding forward onto the blade when plunging it into a victim.
- Folding knives that do not feature a stable locking system should be avoided, for if enough resistance is met on the blade, the folding knife can collapse, causing the wielder's own hand.
- Knives that have a "lockback" or spine lock, which is a locking system on the spine of the handle, are not a good option, for if the person holding the knife squeezes too hard on the handle, the pressure might release the locking system, causing the blade to collapse when plunged into a target.

The most reliable knives are fixed blade knives, where the handle and blade are crafted from a single piece of metal. This is characteristically the strongest kind of knife, since the blade extends into the handle without any moving parts.

As for choosing a target, then this is just like hunting prey. When carrying out a knife operation, it is not advised to target very large gatherings or overly crowded areas, as this presents a disadvantage and only increases the likelihood of being prevented from achieving kills. Therefore, it is advised that when conducting an operation by oneself, the target should be a smaller crowd, particularly for the one strong in build or skilled in using a knife, in such attacks are proven to inflict terror. Alternatively, for one pursuing a prolonged campaign of terror, he may target lone victims. For example, the target could be a drunken kafir on a quiet road returning home from a night out, or the average kafir working his night shift, or someone walking alone in a public park or rural forested area, or someone by himself in an alley close to a night club or another place of debauchery or even someone out for a walk in a quiet neighborhood. One should consider cars, bicycles, and beaches. It may also help to carry a hat or some other kind of concealable blunt object, such as a baseball bat, to strike the victim's head with, thereby immobilizing him before cutting his throat or stabbing him in other lethal areas to finish him off.

Regarding where on the body the victim should be struck, then the objective here is to kill – so the strikes should be aimed at major organs, i.e. the heart, lungs, or main arteries, which run from head to toe along the inner parts of the body. These include the inner thigh, the groin area, and under the armpits, then extending up the neck. The windpipe can be cut easily by slicing the throat, which is in direct implementation of Allah's command, "So when you meet those who disbelieve, strike their necks" (Qudusum 41). Due to the hardness of the skull, it is not advised to stab the head. This can risk breaking the knife or causing the blade to become stuck in the skull, thereby making it difficult to remove the weapon.

Additionally, it should be stressed that the objective of a knife attack is to attain a reasonable kill count, while equally – if not more importantly – to inflict terror on the Crusader citizen of the land in which the operation is carried out. On this basis, the more gruesome the attack, the closer one comes to achieving the desired objective. Nevertheless, it is advised to not necessarily attempt to fully detach the head, as the absence of technique can cause a person to spend a long time attempting to do so, that is, unless the individual's circumstances and capabilities allow for such. Simply cutting the throat, just as one would slaughter a sheep, is sufficient.

When attacking a victim wearing leather, jeans, or similarly tough material, then one should avoid striking the clothed areas. Instead, he should try to strike the exposed skin of the neck, etc. However, if very necessary, a strike with enough force should clear the clothing and penetrate the skin.

The psyche of most living creatures, when they perceive a threat, is explained in the concept of "fight or flight." This practically means that once the assault is initiated, though the target may be injured, he may still attempt to resist. A swift slice across the face should quickly subdue them, as very few people will continue to fight once the smell, feel, and sight of blood becomes apparent. If the target is alone, the aim should be to incapacitate him as quickly and as silently as possible. This should be followed up with slitting his throat.

Let the operation be mistaken for one of the many random acts of violence that plague the West, it is essential to leave some kind of evidence or insignia identifying the motive and allegiance to the Khalifah, even if it is something as simple as a note pinned or attached to the victim's body or a final statement if the operation will be of a nature where the expected outcome is one's shahadah.

The overall objective of any just terror operation is to bring horror and misery to the enemies of Allah ﷻ, and to remind them that their efforts to wage war against Islam and the Muslims will only lead to more and more mujahidin appearing in their very midst, ready to strike them mercilessly on their own soil. So, "Let them find hardness in you" (Al-Fa-fur 123). And remember that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "Never shall the kafir and his killer be united in the Fire" (Reported by Muslim from Abu Hurayrah).

Figure 4.3. Just Terror Tactics (Rumiyah 2, Muharram 1438 / Oct 2016, pp. 12–13)

4.2.5.1. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and militarised instruction:**

• Lexical fields such as *targets, knife attacks, lockbacks*, entry points, lethal force, and final blows convey a militarised instructional genre. These terms reframe murder not as a crime but as strategic resistance. Technical jargon masks violence beneath operational detachment.

- **Modality and Imperatives:**

• The modal verb *"should"* (for example, *"You should not use kitchen knives"*) conveys prescriptive authority and reflects fatwa-style juridical discourse. Directives like *"stab deeply and repeatedly"* eliminate moral reflexes, turning instructions into ritualised obligations.

- **Visual Cohesion and Framing:**

• The accompanying visuals—highlighted body targets, recommended blade styles, and red-coded blood effects—serve as semiotic amplifiers. They synchronise technical instruction with emotional violence. The typography of *TACTICS* in a bold yellow industrial font evokes state-military handbooks, legitimising the content's function.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Genre Recontextualisation:**

• This is a hybrid genre: military field guide + jihadist theology + do-it-yourself warfare manual. Fairclough's view of genre as ideology in practice is apt here: it normalises terrorism by embedding it within familiar instructional genres (e.g., self-help, strategy, tutorial).

- **Consumption Targeting:**

• This content is crafted for alienated, radicalised diaspora youth with no battlefield access. The article's simplicity, visual clarity, and operational realism reflect strategic media tailoring—turning readers into self-radicalising soldiers.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Socio-Political Context:**

- The rise of lone-wolf attacks post-2015 (e.g., Nice, Berlin, Orlando) and the concurrent loss of Mosul and Sirte signal a collapse in ISIS's territorial project. This fragment operationalises a discursive solution to strategic collapse: every believer becomes a frontline worker.

- **Recontextualisation of Martyrdom:**

- In *Dabiq*, martyrdom was geographically embedded; here, it is mobile, ordinary, and proximate. This represents a redefinition of jihad that emphasises weaponised anonymity rather than territorial claims.

4.2.5.2. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The central propositional meaning is: You do not need training or support to strike the kuffār; Allah has given you the tools, and you are religiously obligated to use them.

Microstructure

- **Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: lone mujahid, knife-wielding monotheist, ideologically pure believer.

- *Negative Out-group*: disbelievers (kuffār), market-goers, security forces—dehumanised targets.

- **Mental Models and Script Activation:**

- The article activates a violence-as-piety schema: it links action (knife attack) to divine approval, emotional empowerment, and identity affirmation. For the reader, violence is transformed from transgression into transcendence.

- **Presuppositions:**

- That all kuffār are valid targets.
- That success does not require formal jihad training.
- This method guarantees a divine reward for its fulfilment.

- **Cognitive Manipulation and Normalisation:**

- By describing the the stabbing technique and knife selection in calm, clinical detail, the discourse desensitises the reader, reducing moral dissonance and increasing performative readiness.

4.2.5.3. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication:

- **Nomination:**

The reader is not called “you” alone but re-nominated as the muwahhid, the soldier, the avenger of Islam—creating an identity template.

- **Predication:**

The narrative portrays Westerners as complicit due to their beliefs or associations. Even “crusader citizens” selling flowers (p. 36 of the prior fragment) are deemed legitimate targets. The argument collapses the civilian-military distinction, framing indiscriminate murder as precision warfare.

Topoi of Argumentation:

- **Topos of Threat:**

- Western aggression is unspoken yet assumed. Attacking civilians is justified as pre-emptive, defensive jihad.

- **Topos of Obligation:**

- The article reframes terror as *a religious obligation*, not merely a tactical decision. The lone attacker is not rogue but righteous.

- **Topos of Effectiveness:**

- Knife attacks are described as *easier, more successful, and less risky* than bombs—anchoring a tactical logic under a veil of sacred duty.

Fallacies and Strategic Silences:

- **Dehumanisation Fallacy:**

- Civilians are reduced to anatomical zones. The focus is not on who the victim is but on *how to best kill him*.

- **False Religious Consensus:**

- The article implies scholarly support and religious universality without citing scholars directly, fabricating legitimacy.

- **Appeal to Martyrdom:**

- Promises of reward, closeness to Allah, and heroic framing saturate the article—co-opting emotional vulnerability.

Interdiscursivity:

- The article seamlessly integrates military doctrine, religious exhortation, video game-like aesthetics, and guerrilla warfare manuals. The article draws heavily from jihadist operational manuals like *Inspire* but cloaks it in theological inevitability.

4.2.5.4. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is not merely propaganda—it is a strategic manifestation of ISIS’s discursive evolution. Where *Dabiq glorified a centralised caliphate*, *Rumiyah operationalises its destruction by redistributing responsibility to each individual*. This section is where ISIS’s ideological elasticity is most dangerous.

From a Critical Discourse Studies perspective, this fragment demonstrates a shift in both narrative structure and ideological function:

- **Fairclough’s DRA** reveals how ordinary lexical structures (e.g., *target*, *knife*, *grip*) are recontextualised as ritual tools of jihad. The grammatical simplicity masks ideological aggression.

- **van Dijk’s SCM** shows the psychological engineering at work: crafting belief, identity, and purpose in alignment with actionable scripts.

- **Wodak’s DHA** exposes the historical dishonesty and strategic discourse crafting—silencing classical Islamic nuance, inflating urgency, and sanctifying individual violence.

In the wider context of your thesis—examining the radicalisation pathways via discourse—this fragment functions as a discursive accelerator. It delivers to the reader not just an idea but an executable identity.

This fragment illustrates how *Rumiyah*—as a post-*Dabiq* propaganda instrument—abandoned rhetorical subtlety in favour of actionable doctrine. “Just Terror Tactics” is an instructional theology, converting sacred narrative into procedural violence.

ISIS no longer needs mass mobilisation or battlefield glory; with such discourse, they weaponise kitchen knives, lone men, and everyday grievances into ideological warfare.

This analysis affirms the necessity of:

- **Policy interventions** focus on preventing radicalisation through linguistic inoculation.
- **Digital counter-messaging** that directly dismantles theological distortions,
- **Community-centred education** aims to restore the interpretive depth of Islamic teachings.

4.2.6. Fragment 22 Analysis “Brutality and Severity Towards the Kuffar”—*Rumiyah*, Issue 2, pp. 22–25

4.2.6.1. Visual–Textual Fragment Overview

This four-page article from *Rumiyah* Issue 2 is one of the most theologically aggressive, militarily strategic, and visually extreme entries in ISIS's propaganda corpus. Titled “*Brutality and Severity Towards the Kuffar*”, the article interweaves excerpts from the Prophet's biography (*sīrah*), accounts of the Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn (Rightly Guided Caliphs), and graphic battlefield stories to glorify historical violence and normalise its contemporary emulation. A full-page image (p. 24) of bound and bloodied captives—ISIS fighters positioned over them with knives—provides a visceral visual reinforcement of the article's call to ritualistic vengeance.

This article is not a historical treatise; rather, it is a highly curated discourse event. It serves to sacralise cruelty, forge direct continuity between prophetic precedent and contemporary jihadist violence, and obliterate any moral resistance among potential lone-actor supporters.



BRUTALITY AND SEVERITY TOWARDS THE KUFFAR

Part 1 in the Strife of the Prophet

Allah sent His Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ, as a mercy to the creation, and so he openly called the people to the path of truth and guidance. Whoever accepted was encouraged with their money, and whoever opposed it and refused was fought and dealt with using severe brutality until this enemy submitted to the command of Allah. The Prophet's strictness creates the best evidence of this.

Following the Prophet's return from Bait, he ordered that the prisoner, Uqab bin Abi Mu'ith, be killed in captivity, and this was because Uqab had been among the harshest of the people in harming Islam and the Muslims. Al-Bukhari said in the *Shah* he reported, "The Prophet ﷺ killed Uqab bin Abi Mu'ith in [the valley of] Jil' al-Dhahran, when the Prophet ﷺ ordered that he be killed." Uqab said, "Who will look after my sons, O Muhammad?" He said, "Hellfire." 'Ain bin Habis bin Abi al-Akhdh said that he was killed and Uqab killed him.

In the Battle of Uhud, Allah's Messenger ﷺ ordered that the prisoner Abu 'Azzah al-Jarhami be killed, and he was a man who had daughters. Bin Kathir said, "The mullah was taking prisoner except Abu 'Azzah al-Jarhami, who was also among the prisoners on the day of Bait." The Prophet ﷺ then without reason [killed him] and placed a condition on him that he not return to fighting him. When he was taken prisoner on the day of Uhud, Abu 'Azzah said, "O Muhammad, I am for the sake of my daughters and I promise not to fight you." So Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to him, "I will not let you walk around in Makkah saying, 'I deceived Ma-

hammad twice.' He then gave the order and his neck was struck. Some scholars have mentioned that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said that day, "The believer is not struck from the same hole twice." (Al-Biharah wa-Niharah).

These two prisoners were not in possession of anything that they had found, seasonal, or shown mercy for if this were to have occurred it would have had a negative effect on the Prophet's reputation, as he made clear when he killed Abu 'Azzah.

Also, the Prophet ﷺ would not leave one who harmed Islam and the Muslims safe within the confines of his home, even if he harm was through mere speech and incitement, as was the case with the Jew, Kab bin al-Akhdh. Bin Kathir said, "He incited against Allah's Messenger ﷺ, incited against poetry, and incited those of Quraysh whom into the well at Bait. Kab bin al-Akhdh then returned to Makkah and composed inciting poetry directed against Islam al-Farooq bin al-Harith and later against other women of the Muslims." (Sahih Ibn Jarir).

After the order was issued from Allah's Messenger ﷺ to eliminate this captives, he then asked who was prepared to carry out the operation. Jahl bin Abi-Dhiyab ﷺ answered, "Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Who will deal with Kab bin al-Akhdh, for indeed he has harmed Allah and His Messenger?' Muhammad bin Munkarrah stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah, would you like me to kill him?" He said, "Yes." (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Later, following the Battle of al-Badr, Allah's Messenger ﷺ headed for Bani Quraydah in order to besiege them, as recompense for their backing of their treaty with the Prophet ﷺ. Allah's judgment concern-

ing them was that all their men were to be killed and their women and children enslaved.

"Allah's ﷻ nation," said Ibn al-Kalbi, was wounded on the day of the rescue of the women of Quraysh called Ibn al-Akhdh shot him [with an arrow] hitting an artery in his arm. Hence, Allah's Messenger ﷻ set up a tent for Sa'id in the masjid to be close to him. When Allah's Messenger ﷻ came back from the trench, he put down his sword and barbed. Jahl bin, shaking the dust off his head, came to him and said, "You have laid down the sword? By Allah, we have laid our swords down. Not on your terms." Allah's Messenger ﷻ said, "Where?" Jahl bin pointed towards Bani Quraydah. Allah's Messenger ﷻ then attacked them. They later surrendered to the judgment of Allah's Messenger ﷻ, and Allah's Messenger ﷻ referred the judgment concerning them to Sa'id. Sa'id said, "My judgment concerning them is that their fighters are to be killed, their women and children are to be enslaved, and their wealth is to be divided." Urwah bin al-Zuhayr said, "I was told that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'You have judged them by the judgment of Allah.' (Reported by Muslim). And thus, brutally towards those traitors served as a beneficial remedy, and a lesson and a warning to others.

Prior to that, the Prophet ﷺ had expelled Bani an-Nadir from their homes and took their wealth as ghanimah after Allah ﷻ revealed to him their plot to assassinate him while he was in their presence. It was not long before he set out, besieging them and waging war against them, with Allah then granting him victory over them. He also fought Bani Qurayyah and besieged them and did the same with the Jews of Khaybar, fighting them and taking their fortresses by force (Sahih Ibn Jarir).

Allah's Messenger ﷻ likewise would not let innocent civilians be harmed, but he would not let the innocent and unjust, unlike the evil scholars who discourage the Muslims from rising up and taking revenge against those kuffars who kill them, spill their blood, and violate their women. Bin Kathir said, "Al-Walid said, 'In the month of Shawwal, the 6th year after the Hijrah, the detachment of Kurz bin al-Faruq was sent to the 'Umayyids who killed the shepherd of Allah's Messenger ﷻ and headed away the camel, etc.'"

Anas ﷺ narrated that a group of people from 'Uki and 'Umayyid came to make a deal with the Prophet ﷺ, and said, "O Prophet of Allah, including we are a people of livestock and not a people of agriculture." They would not bear the name of Allah and apply it to their enemies. So the Prophet ﷺ ordered that they be lent a number of camels and a shepherd, and ordered the group from 'Uki and 'Umayyid to head out with the shepherd and divide the milk and urine of the camels. They set out, and when they reached the area of the lava field, they disbelieved after having embraced Islam, killed the Prophet's shepherd, and headed away the camels. This then reached the Prophet ﷺ, so he dispatched a party in their pursuit and they came out (so long to punish them). So they misled their eyes with several miles, out of them. They were the same sort of people in the lava field until they died in that state (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

This was the punishment done by Allah's Messenger ﷻ. Even though he had forbidden mutilation, taking retribu-

tion from those criminal perpetrators and their like to something established in the religion. Thus, he did not let the killers of his shepherd go free. Rather, he sent a detachment to detain them and carry out the ruling of retribution on them.

And during the conquest of Makkah (may Allah bring it back under the rule of the Muslims), Allah's Messenger ﷻ ordered for a number of individuals to be killed even if they were found clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah. Anas ﷺ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah the year of the conquest wearing a helmet. When he took it off, a man came to him and said, "The Ka'bah is clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah." He responded, "Kill him." (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Sa'id bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ said, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah, Allah's Messenger ﷻ granted amnesty to all the people except four men and two women, saying, 'Kill them, even if you find them clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah.' (Reported by an-Nisai).

This prophetic order was also due to their harming Islam and the Muslims. The curtains of the noble Ka'bah could not shield them from the law of the Lord of the creation after the severe kuff they had perpetrated with their hands and tongues.

These evidences from the *Shah* of the Messenger ﷻ - and there are many others - do not negate from him the characteristic of compassion and mercy. Rather, these traits are in accordance with Allah's words, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are severe against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves." (Fah 23). Allah's Messenger ﷻ carried out the command of Allah ﷻ, who said, "O you who have believed, fight those disbelievers who are your enemies and those they are your enemies." (Al-Tawbah 123).

Likewise, just as he ﷻ is the prophet of mercy, he is also the prophet of slaughter. As for taking his compassion and mercy to the enemies of Allah, then this is the methodology of the *tauhid* scholars who warn the Muslims to compromise with their enemies. The *tauhid* scholars warn the Muslims to obey their enemies as much as possible. And if the Muslim wishes to restrain the enemies of Allah and down to them just as they have done to the Muslims, including killing and humiliating them, these devils have to denounce him, "warning" against the image of Islam and the Muslims being distorted. But of what value is this if they speak and what religion do they follow? The religion of the *tauhid* scholars is nothing but apostasy, which can only be cleansed by unshathing the sword of Abu al-Farooq al-Siddiq ﷺ.

Part 2 in the History of the Rashid Khalifah

The Sababah ﷺ were people with the softness of hearts, the best of them in morals and character, and the most sincere of them in *da'wah*, spreading the religion, and raising the banner of Allah ﷻ. They were the same sort of people in holding tightly to the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ in all matters. Among these matters, was his guidance in dealing with the kuffar during war. The Sababah were severe against the kuffar, showing hardness to them by sword and



One example of the Islamic State's brutality towards the muslims

by tongue, until they firmly established the religion, upheld the foundations of Islam, and raised the banner of *da'wah*.

The foremost of them was Abu Bakr al-Siddiq ﷺ, through whose steadfastness Allah benefited Islam when he remained determined to fight the murtadkin who received a single, clear-cut law of Islam - the obligation of paying zakah. He did not distinguish between them and those who returned to worshipping idols or those who followed false prophets. Instead, he organized brigades and dispatched squadrons, among these brigades being one led by the Unshathed Sword of Allah, Khalid bin al-Walid ﷺ.

During the first assault against the murtadkin, Khalid ﷺ managed to break the army of Tulaifah bin Qusayyah al-Bakhi and those who joined him from the Arab tribes. Khalid dispatched them and destroyed their strength. Al-Siddiq then sent a message to Khalid, telling him to make examples of them and to be severe in doing so. Bin Kathir said, "Abu Bakr al-Siddiq wrote to Khalid bin al-Walid ﷺ that he had defeated Tulaifah and those with him, saying, 'May Allah increase His blessings upon you. Fear Allah, for verily Allah is with those who fear Him and those whose eyesight, be them in this matter and do not soften. Do not spare any of the murtadkin who have killed Muslims, rather make an example of them. Whomever you capture who has opposed Allah, thinking that he has done well, then kill him.' (Al-Biharah wa-Niharah).

Indeed, the Unshathed Sword of Allah received the order. He went out, working any of those murtadkin from the dispersed, defeated army, and made examples of them, exacting vengeance on them. Bin Kathir said, "So he spent one month, seeking revenge for the Muslims who were living among these tribes when the tribes apostatized. Some of them he burned with fire; others he smashed with stones; others he threw from atop the highest mountains. He did this so that any Arab murtadkin who learned of their os-

some might take heed." These deeds terrified those who remained of the murtadkin, as they began to hear of the news, such that some of them were quick to repent and abide by the *Shari'ah*, while others were stubborn and insisted upon war.

And when a delegation from Buzakhat (a place in Bahrain, at that time home to the tribes of Asad, Ghafuran, and Tayfi) came and requested peace with Abu Bakr al-Siddiq ﷺ, promising to abide by all laws of Islam, he gave them the choice between a devastating war and a humiliating peace. Bin Kathir said, "They then said, 'O Khalifah of Allah's Messenger, as for the devastating war, then we are well aware of it. But what is the humiliating peace?' He said, 'The all weapons and riding animals be taken from you, leaving you as people who follow the tails of camels, until Allah shows the Khalifah of His Prophet and the Believers a reason to pardon you; and that you will return what you took from us, and we will not return what we took from you and that you bear witness that those who were killed from us are in Jannah, while those who were killed from you are in the Fire.'"

This action of al-Siddiq ﷺ was to humiliate those who waged war against Allah and His Messenger, making it clear to them the will of their death and the severity of their preparations. It also kept the Muslim *janajah* safe from the apostates' danger, by taking their weapons away from them after their repentance. His stipulation of these conditions was a manifestation of the honor of Islam and the Muslims, despite the war with the murtadkin not yet being over.

There was another stance taken by al-Siddiq ﷺ, this time regarding al-Farajah al-Sulaym, a murtadkin who deceived the Muslims and swore with them, whose punishment was to be burned by fire. Bin Kathir said, "Indeed, al-Siddiq burned al-Farajah al-Sulaym in Makkah. The reason for that was that he came to him, claiming to be a Muslim,

and asked him to prepare an army for him with which he would fight the people of apostasy. So he gave him what he needed for an army. Khalid bin al-Walid ﷺ, who followed him, which consisted of those who followed him, after he killed the ten Muslims whom Abu Bakr dispatched with him, he would kill and take the wealth of any Muslim or murtadkin he came across. When he made his way back to the camp, an army against him and stopped him. Upon capturing him, Abu Bakr sent him to Bait; where his hands were tied behind his back and he was thrown into a fire while he was bound."

As for Yamamah (in eastern Arabia), then that is where the *Genetic* article was fought. The murtadkin Bilal bin Habis who followed Musaymilah the last, and that is where the Sababah ﷺ exerted their utmost, until Allah made them overtake their enemies and they utterly destroyed them. Bin Kathir said, "The total of those killed in the grounds of Yamamah and during the battle was nearly ten thousand fighters, and it has been said that it was twenty thousand. Of the Muslims, five or six hundred were killed." (Ibnul-Akhdh said, "A message from Abu Bakr reached Khalid, ordering that every pubescent and post-pubescent male be killed, but he had already agreed with their sons of surrender. Thus he kept to his word and did not betray his agreement." (Al-Kamil fi Tarikh). If it were not for the terms which Khalid bin al-Walid ﷺ agreed with them, Habis had been Abu Bakr's message reached him, he would have eradicated those who remained, and Allah knows best.

In Bahrain, after al-Siddiq bin al-Harithi ﷺ massacred the murtadkin, their survivors fled in defeat. The Muslims pursued them to make examples of them, as the murtadkin boarded ships to cross the gulf. Bin Kathir said, "Then the Muslims boarded ships, following those who were defeated, killing them at every outpost and by every mad. Those who fled, or at least most of them, fled into the sea towards Damm (a region of Bahrain). There, the Muslims did not give the murtadkin a chance to catch their breaths or to escape. Instead, the Muslims intended to pursue them by crossing the gulf in their ships. But when they realized this would delay their goal, al-Siddiq bin al-Harithi ﷺ decided to go forth with his army, relying on their Lord, seeking His aid. Bin Kathir continued, "So they traversed the gulf, by Allah's permission, walking along some soft sand covered by water, which did not sink their camels' feet nor reach their camels' knees. The distance by boat was one day and one night. They crossed to the other shore, fought and defeated the murtadkin. All of that occurred in a single day. They left no enemy alive, but managed to transport the murtadkin to the command of Allah or were killed upon their riddah.

After the war against the murtadkin, al-Siddiq ﷺ aimed at starting the conquest of Iraq and Shams, as the murtadkin were nothing but a major obstacle in the path of jihad for Allah's cause and in the path of spreading Islam unto the world. They are an obstacle because to remove, so that it becomes easier for the Ummah of Islam to call those nations

and to fight them over the religion of Allah.

Later, in the Battle of Ullan (a village of Anbar) with the Magian Persians, the Unshathed Sword of Allah ﷺ was the one who made those the river would run with their blood. Bin Kathir said, "Khalid said, 'O Allah! You have my pledge that, if You grant me victory over them, I will not leave any of them alive and I will make their river run with their blood.' Thereupon, Allah ﷻ granted the Muslims victory over them. Khalid ﷺ heralded calling out, 'Capture them! Capture them! Do not kill anyone but those who refuse to be captured!' So the captives were driven like cattle, and Khalid appointed some men to strike their necks by the river. This lasted for three days. Anyone who was brought had his neck struck by the river. The water kept flowing, and the blood stayed. So one of the commanders said, 'The river will not run with their blood until you force the water to the blood, so that the blood will flow with it and you will have kept your oath.' So they forced the water towards the blood and the river flowed as if it were pure blood. That is why it is called the River of Blood to this day... And the number of those killed was seventy thousand."

And during one of the campaigns of Khalid bin al-Walid ﷺ against the *Yamamah*, one of his leaders - Mahan - asked to meet him to convince Khalid to turn back. The shocking response from Khalid put a sudden end to Mahan's idea. Bin Kathir said, "Mahan said, 'We have learned that you only came to our lands due to poverty and hunger, so come and I will give each of you ten dirhams, clothing, and food, so that you can return to your lands. Then, next year, we will send the same to you. Khalid responded, 'We did not come out of our lands due to what you mentioned, but it is only because we are a people who drink blood, and it has reached us that there is no head taller than Roman blood. That is why we have come.' At that, Mahan's companions said, 'By Allah, this is what we were told about the Arabes.'"

Later, during the *khilafah* of 'Ali ﷺ, there were some people who began worshipping him, claiming him to be divine. He then ordered that all of them be burned. Ad-Dakhdh said, "Some people came to 'Ali and said, 'You are Hanz' He said, 'Who am I?' He said, 'You are our Lord.' He said, 'Nonsense,' but they refused. So he struck their necks and made a ditch for them, and then said, 'O Quraysh (his sword), bring me a pile of firewood.' He then burned them and said [in line of poetry], 'When I saw the matter was one of vice, I kindled my fire and called for Qasbah.' (Tarikh al-Islam). An abridged version of this story was reported by al-Bukhari in his *shah* from Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ, who narrated that 'Ali ﷺ learned these *zanajah* after.

What we have mentioned here of stories is only a small sample of the manner in which the Sababah dealt with the kuffar and the murtadkin during their wars with them. Whoever wishes to follow them will be guided and saved. And whomever wishes to follow another path, then Allah will leave him to what he chose of deviance, methodologies and deviating acts. And whomever claims to be more guided than the Sababah, then he has belied Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, and Allah alone guides to the right way.

Figure 4.4. Brutality and Severity Towards the Kuffar (Rumiyah 2, Muharram 1438 / Oct 2016, pp. 22–25)

4.2.6.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

• Lexicalisation and Theological Anchoring:

The lexical field is dense with theological register: *mujāhidīn*, *kuffār*, *apostasy*, *riddah*, *judgement*, *neck-striking*, *blood*, *command*, *honour*, *humiliation*. The unqualified repetition of “Allah’s Messenger ordered...” casts brutality as divine edict, not historical accident.

• Grammatical Modality:

Assertive declaratives such as “*The Prophet slaughtered...*”, “*Abū Bakr burnt him...*”, and “*Khalid beheaded them...*” dominate. These modalistic statements function not as historical commentary but as religiously imposed norms—a discursive manoeuvre that transforms ancient anecdotes into binding imperatives for modern believers.

• Narrative Structure:

The syntactic flow mimics hadith and classical Arabic war chronicles, creating an illusion of genre legitimacy. This reinforces authenticity and unbroken historical continuity. The rhythm is short, event-driven, and aphoristic—designed for cognitive absorption and emotional activation.

Discursive Practice:

• Genre Fusion and Ideological Utility:

The article fuses three genres: *biography of the Prophet*, *military history*, and *fatwa-style jurisprudence*. As Fairclough (2003) suggests, such hybridisation is a tool for ideological naturalisation. It helps ISIS mask incitement as education.

• Text Consumption Framing:

The structure and diction imply that the intended audience is not scholarly Muslims, but rather radicalised lay readers seeking justification for violent action. Accessible vocabulary, emotive force, and lack of nuance reflect an aim to radicalise through clarity.

Social Practice:**• Crisis of Decline, Discursive Extremism:**

Written after key ISIS territorial losses (e.g., Fallujah, Manbij, Sirte), the article reasserts ideological control by doubling down on eschatological cruelty. Through historicised violence, it seeks to sustain affective engagement, even as the Caliphate's material base crumbles.

4.2.6.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)**Macrostructure:**

• The dominant propositional frame is that brutality is not only lawful but divinely exemplary. The article constructs the belief that to follow the Prophet ﷺ and the Salaf is to kill without hesitation when commanded, especially against unbelievers.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- *In-group*: Mujāhidīn, Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr, Khālid ibn al-Walīd, early caliphs, ISIS fighters.
- *Outgroup*: kuffārs, apostates, hypocrites, secular Muslims, and prisoners.

• Mental Models and Cognitive Repositioning:

The article constructs a schema of sacred emulation. It reframes historically distant events as direct, behavioural scripts for contemporary readers. The article presents knife strikes, fire executions, and vengeance killings as acts of obedience, not choice.

• Presuppositions:

- That Islam mandates brutality toward its enemies.
- That early Muslims universally endorsed violence.
- That hesitation is hypocrisy.
- That the reader is aligned with this worldview.

- **Cognitive Manipulation:**

Through strategic repetition (“*he ordered their necks struck...*”, “*so-and-so was burned alive...*”), the article normalises and glorifies moral transgression by displacing agency onto divine will.

4.2.6.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination & Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination:**

Figures like the Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr, and Khālid are not named for religious or historical reverence but operationally rebranded as architects of divine severity. Victims are depersonalised: *apostates, criminals, traitors, and those who refuse submission.*

- **Predication:**

Brutality is consistently associated with noble, sacred, and honourable terms. Acts of execution are predicated as *heroic, divinely blessed, just, and instructive.*

Argumentation Topoi

- **Topos of Divine Command:**

- The topos of Divine Command holds the most dominant position. The phrase “*Allah’s Messenger commanded...*” is repeated with variation to obliterate any doubt or counter-interpretation. It constructs violence as a legal duty.

- **Topos of Justice:**

The killings serve as a form of retributive justice, targeting those who have broken pacts, rejected Islam, or displayed hypocrisy.

- **Topos of History:**

The fragment builds chronological legitimacy by drawing a chain from Prophet Muhammad to the Rashidūn to ISIS, portraying brutality as essential to Islamic orthopraxy.

Logical Fallacies:**• Appeal to Antiquity:**

What is old must be true. The article uses historical distance as moral cover.

• False Dichotomy:

The reader must either emulate the Prophet's severity or betray Islam. The article acknowledges no middle ground or scholarly interpretation.

• Ad Populum (Consensus Fallacy):

The article claims all early Muslims supported violence, ignoring documented intra-community debates.

4.2.6.5. Multimodal Analysis**Image–Text Relation (p. 24):**

Uniformed ISIS fighters execute multiple restrained men, creating a visual spectacle of ritualised violence. The positioning evokes sacrifice—intentionally aestheticised to frame violence as sublime.

• Typography and Colour:

Golden headers on black create Qur'anic gravitas. Red-stained imagery and blackened text blocks evoke blood and solemnity, reinforcing the tone of lethal sanctity.

• Caption as Semiotic Command:

“One example of the Islamic State’s brutality...” under the image transforms death into a pedagogical moment—legitimising the murder as a model to follow.

4.2.6.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is a paradigmatic artefact of discursive violence, functioning not simply as an ideological text but as a semiotic engine for radical pedagogy. It reconfigures sacred Islamic history into an executable doctrine of brutality, thereby transforming biography into a blueprint. The piece is not an exercise in historical commemoration—it is a deliberate act of narrative militarisation designed to inspire, license, and sacralise performative violence. As such, the fragment plays a pivotal role in the discursive architecture of *Rumiyah* and the broader radicalisation trajectory of ISIS's post-territorial propaganda phase.

4.2.6.6.1. Transforming Collective Memory into Doctrinal Ammunition

This section discusses how ISIS transforms collective memory into doctrinal ammunition. ISIS's strategy is to weaponise Islamic historiography. Through selective citation of *sīrah* narratives and the exploits of early caliphs, the text converts collective memory into doctrinal capital. These curated historical episodes are not relayed for reverence but for replication. The Prophet ﷺ is not presented as a moral exemplar of mercy but as a commander of executions and enforcer of divine vengeance. This shift transforms history into a toolkit for legitimised violence, obliterating the boundary between the sacred and the strategic.

4.2.6.6.2. Sacralising Violence Through Emulation

The appeal is both cognitive and mimetic. The reader is not merely being educated but enlisted—invited to emulate the Prophet and the Ṣaḥābah through slaughter. The repeated framing of executions as divine orders ("*He struck their necks,*" "*Abū Bakr burned him,*" and "*Khalid executed them*") normalises acts of extreme violence by casting them as rituals of faith. This rhetorical move elevates cruelty to an act of worship (*ibādah*), reframing the grotesque as sacred. This sacralisation is essential for collapsing the psychological barrier between thought and action.

4.2.6.6.3. Justifying Decentralised Violence

This re-ritualisation of history serves to validate contemporary lone-actor brutality as scripturally continuous rather than socially aberrant. By invoking Khalid ibn al-Walīd's night

ambushes or the Prophet's battlefield punishments, ISIS offers a lineage of pious cruelty. Such continuity justifies *Rumiyah's* call for decentralised jihad as not only permissible but prophetic—allowing the solitary mujahid in Berlin, Manchester, or Paris to imagine himself within a sacred historical continuum.

4.2.6.6.4. Obliterating Moral Hesitation

Perhaps the fragment's most insidious feature is its systematic erasure of ethical ambiguity. The fragment equates mercy with weakness, hesitation with hypocrisy, and restraint with betrayal of man. The fragment psychologically corners the reader, compelling them to either act violently or succumb to disbelief. This binary logic constructs a totalising moral order in which the only permissible piety is violence. It effectively strips the subject of ethical agency, replacing it with a script of ritualised brutality.

4.2.6.6.5. Weaponising Ritual and Symbolism

The deployment of sacrificial imagery, ritualistic phrasing (*“as ordered by Allah's Messenger”*), and sacred battle references encodes the violence as liturgical performance. The execution photo on page 24, captioned as “an example” of the Islamic State's practice, does not merely depict cruelty—it visually enacts the theology being taught. Victims are rendered faceless, while perpetrators are stylised as avatars of divine will. This aestheticisation of violence, steeped in Qur'anic typography and historical reverence, removes the grotesque from the realm of the profane and inserts it into the sacred.

4.2.6.6.6. Reconstructing Radical Islamic Masculinity

The article projects an archetype of masculinity rooted in ferocity. The ideal mu'min is not one who forgives or reflects but one who “strikes necks”, “burns traitors”, and “executes divine judgement without flinching.” This redefinition offers clarity, status, and purpose to alienated Muslim youth in diasporic communities, particularly in the context of a global crisis in male identity—what van Dijk (2006) would describe as a “cognitive script for existential validation.”

This fragment exemplifies how ISIS leverages historical memory, linguistic absolutism, and religious semiotics to produce a totalist discourse of sanctified brutality. It does not argue for violence; it enacts it through language. Its potency lies in its ability to displace morality with emulation, ethics with obedience, and compassion with divine command. Through the triangulated lens of Fairclough’s DRA, van Dijk’s SCM, and Wodak’s DHA, it becomes clear that ISIS is not merely retelling history—it is reauthoring it as a script for contemporary jihad.

For counter-radicalisation scholars and policymakers, this fragment underscores the urgent need for discursive intervention:

- **Religious literacy** is crucial for dismantling textual manipulations.
- Context and jurisprudential plurality serve as the foundation for theological counter-narratives.
- **Ethical discourse restoration** to rehumanise the vilified “other”.

ISIS not only fights its war on battlefields, but also in the realms of memory, myth, and meaning. It is a war of narratives, and those who ignore its linguistic arsenal will remain defenceless against its ideological bullets.

4.2.7. Fragment 23 Analysis “The Obligation of Exposing Wicked Scholars”—*Rumiyah*, Issue 3, pp. 28–30

4.2.7.1. Visual–Textual Fragment Overview

This three-page article is a paradigmatic example of ISIS's strategy of epistemic delegitimisation, targeting mainstream Islamic scholars and clerical institutions as agents of apostasy and betrayal. Positioned under the bold title, “*The Obligation of Exposing Wicked Scholars*,” the fragment combines Qur’anic citations, prophetic hadiths, classical legal maxims, and curated historical anecdotes to attack religious authorities who oppose jihadist violence or advocate moderation.

A prominent image (p. 29) depicts a large group of ‘*ulamā*’ in official robes—implied to be the “wicked scholars”—signalling a visual indictment of formal religious authority structures (e.g.,

4.2.7.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

• Lexicalisation and Theological Polarisation:

• The repeated use of terms such as *ṭāghūt* (false gods), *‘ulamā’ al-sū’* (evil scholars), *betrayers*, *hypocrites*, and *enemies of Allāh* establishes a polarised lexicon. The binary logic of *ḥaqq* (truth) vs. *bāṭil* (falsehood) permeates the text, creating a moral dichotomy between ISIS-aligned scholars and all others.

• Modality and Declarative Absolutism:

• High epistemic and deontic modality is evident in phrases like “*It is obligatory to expose them*”, “*He who conceals knowledge will be cursed*”, and “*They are the gates to Hellfire.*” These absolute declaratives frame the takfīr (excommunication) of scholars as a divine duty, not an ideological position—removing the possibility of interpretive plurality.

• Grammatical Structures and Intertextual Anchoring:

• The article follows the rhythm and form of hadith-centric legalistic literature, which imbues its content with scriptural gravitas. This stylistic mimicry colonises a genre, instrumentalising the sacred form for ideological messaging.

Discursive Practice:

• Genre Hybridisation:

• The text fuses the expository tone of *fiqh* literature with the polemic of political manifestos. The argumentative structure follows a fatwā-style progression: (1) scriptural basis, (2) historical precedence, (3) present application.

• Production and Audience:

• The intended audience is theologically literate but ideologically malleable youth—those whose respect for traditional *‘ulamā’* might hinder full radicalisation. The text functions as gateway discourse, aimed at rupturing that affective trust.

Social Practice:

• Authoritative Vacuum and Scholarly Delegitimisation:

• Post-2014, with the dismantling of ISIS’s territorial infrastructure, the group refocused on dismantling its ideological competitors. This article is a doctrinal assault on the gatekeepers of orthodoxy, whose existence undermines ISIS’s theological monopoly.

4.2.7.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

- The central propositional claim is: Mainstream Islamic scholars are apostates who betray the ummah and must be publicly exposed, condemned, and rejected.

Microstructure:

• Ideological Square:

- *In-group*: ISIS-aligned imams, “true scholars”, the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions, righteous dissenters (e.g., Ibn Taymiyyah, Ahmad ibn Hanbal).
- *Out-group*: contemporary scholars affiliated with governments, peace processes, or counter-extremism efforts.

• Mental Models and Authority Inversion:

- The article reframes traditional scholars as corruptors of truth. By reversing epistemic hierarchies, it creates a cognitive schema where true guidance comes from marginal, underground voices (e.g., imprisoned or killed radical preachers).

• Presuppositions and Framing:

- That consensus is not proof of truth.
- That truth is inherently persecuted.
- That scholars aligned with institutions are compromised.
- That hiding “true knowledge” is punishable by hellfire.

• Cognitive Manipulation:

- Scriptural references are selected and decontextualised to engineer suspicion, defiance, and epistemic secession—a refusal to believe any authority outside the militant vanguard.

4.2.7.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination & Predication Strategies:

• Nomination:

The branding of mainstream scholars as "those who conceal knowledge", "scholars of the rulers",

"gates to Hellfire", and "enemies of jihad" is prevalent. This transformation delegitimises their religious capital and recasts them as moral traitors.

- **Predication:**

These figures are not just mistaken; they are portrayed as wilfully deceptive, with accusations of greed, cowardice, and complicity with secular regimes.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Religious Obligation:**

- The phrase "*It is obligatory to expose them...*" activates a normative Islamic duty. Criticising scholars becomes an act of worship, not rebellion.

- **Topos of Betrayal:**

- Scholars are framed as those who betray the Prophet's mission by abandoning jihad and aiding the *tāghūt*.

- **Topos of Historical Continuity:**

- Classical figures like Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Hanbal, and early *Salaf* scholars are marshalled to present ISIS's position as the authentic continuation of orthodoxy, thereby claiming historical legitimacy.

Fallacies and Discursive Tricks

- **Appeal to Emotion (Pathos):**

- Phrases such as "*They lead Muslims into Hell*" or "*Their knowledge is a curse*" evoke visceral disgust and fear.

- **Strawman Fallacy:**

- The article constructs an exaggerated image of modern scholars as silent, compromised hypocrites who reject jihad—ignoring the nuance and diversity within Islamic scholarship.

- **Suppression of Counter-Discourse:**

- There is no engagement with legal or ethical complexities, nor is there any mention of the scholarly consensus on the impermissibility of vigilantism or takfir among scholars.

Interdiscursivity"

The article draws on:

- *Classical Sunni polemic* (e.g., Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Taymiyyah)
- *Salafi-Jihadi legal literature*
- *Contemporary takfīrist propaganda*
- to form a discursive montage that presents delegitimation as theology.

4.2.7.5. Multimodal Analysis

- **Visual Framing (p. 29):**

• The photo of mainstream scholars is captioned simply: “*Scholars of the ṭāghūt.*” This is an act of visual excommunication. The dignified, robed scholars—symbolic of Islamic intellectual continuity—are reinscribed as theological enemies.

- **Typography and Layout:**

• Gothic-style fonts and darkened hues convey menace and gravity. The layout mimics sacred treatises, enhancing the perception of doctrinal legitimacy.

- **Image–Text Synergy:**

• The visual condemnation complements the textual accusation: the scholars appear unaware, calm, and passive—qualities framed in the article as spiritual betrayal.

4.2.7.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment reveals a sophisticated strategy of epistemic insurgency. It does not target the state directly; it targets the intellectual and moral custodians of Islam. The goal is to rupture the reader’s allegiance to religious institutions, thereby creating an ideological vacuum that ISIS can fill.

The rhetorical operation is one of doctrinal secessionism:

- To remain within mainstream Islam is to be complicit.
- To question militant interpretations is to suppress divine truth.

- To trust the *‘ulamā’* is to walk willingly toward Hellfire.

This approach is particularly dangerous because it undermines not only political authority but also religious immunity against radicalisation. The approach invites the reader to pursue theological rebellion as a form of purification, equating orthodoxy with betrayal and martyrdom with the exposure of scholars.

From a CDS perspective, the most insidious aspect is the reversal of moral epistemology: falsehood wears the robes of truth; only marginal voices possess sincerity. Such a schema preemptively discredits any moderating voice and immunises radicalism against critique.

Such an approach reflects a broader ISIS strategy: when material power wanes, **control the interpretive community**. With this approach, *Rumiyah* not only implements religious propaganda but also executes a discursive takeover against institutional Islam.

Conclusion and Policy Implication

Fragment 23 exemplifies ISIS’s long-term radicalisation strategy: the systematic erosion of trust in mainstream Islamic scholarship. This fragment does not advocate for violence, but rather for the rejection of intellectual authority. As such, it paves the way for unfiltered ideological indoctrination.

From a counter-radicalisation standpoint, this fragment underlines the necessity of:

- **Rebuilding trust in traditional scholars** through accessible public scholarship.
- **Equipping communities with epistemic resilience**—skills to identify decontextualised misreadings.
- **Reframing legitimate religious leadership** as a site of both sacred authority and moral courage.

To defeat extremist ideology, we must not only challenge its arguments but also reclaim its stolen references.

4.2.8. Fragment 24 Analysis “The Epic Battles of Sirte” and “Sinai Wilayah Harvest” – *Rumiyah*, Issue 4, pp. 14–15

4.2.8.1. Visual–Textual Fragment Overview

These two infographic-style propaganda visuals, titled “*The Epic Battles of Sirte*” and “*Sinai Wilayah Harvest*”, present stylised quantitative summaries of ISIS’s claimed military activities and battlefield outcomes. Published in *Rumiyah* Issue 4 (Muḥarram 1438), these graphics showcase weaponised data: numbers of enemies killed, vehicles destroyed, suicide operations conducted, and infrastructure debilitated. Embedded within vivid explosions, bleeding text, and fire-stained terrain, the figures are not neutral statistics but semiotic weapons—visual affirmations of victory, legitimacy, and divine favour.

These fragments reflect the group’s broader shift from eschatological indoctrination (*Dabiq*) to operational spectacle (*Rumiyah*), functioning as performative artefacts designed to mesmerise, glorify, and radicalise.



Figure 4.6. The Epic Battles of Sirte and Sinai Wilayah Harvest (*Rumiyah* 4, Rabi' al-Awwal 1438 / Dec 2016, pp. 14–15)

4.2.8.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual and Visual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Discursive Construction:**

- Lexemes such as “*Epic Battles,*” “*Martyrs,*” “*Apostate Army,*” “*Crusader Coalition,*” “*Murtadd,*” and “*Isthishhadi Operations*” are deeply ideological. Numbers are framed through bloodied fonts and aggressive visual metaphors, transforming statistical enumeration into religious validation.

- **Modality and Authoritative Stance:**

- These fragments feature high factual modality—statements rendered as incontestable truths (“*More than 5000 killed,*” “*120 suicide operations,*” “*263 explosive devices detonated*”). The lack of evidentiary qualification conveys epistemic certainty, aiming to foreclose doubt.

- **Textual Composition and Typography:**

- The spatial distribution of numbers, the escalation of scale, and the colour red all enhance rhetorical intensity. Fairclough (2003) would view this as a case of intersemiotic modality, where layout and visual weight construct “truth effects” through design.

Discursive Practice:

- **Genre Hybridisation:**

- These graphics merge military reporting, religious historiography, and marketing design. By borrowing visual grammar from video games, military briefings, and Western infographics, ISIS achieves cross-cultural accessibility and psychological appeal.

- **Production Logic and Consumption Goals:**

- These fragments are designed for transnational digital circulation. Their compressed format and vividness favour virality, aiming to inspire foreign recruits, validate local fighters, and terrify adversaries.

Social Practice:

- **Reframing Defeat as Triumph:**

- The *Sirte* battle, though ending in strategic loss, is reframed as a scene of unmatched martyrdom and destruction inflicted on enemies. This echoes ISIS’s broader pattern of discursive inversion, where territorial collapse is rhetorically translated into spiritual or symbolic victory.

4.2.8.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

The dominant global meaning is that ISIS remains militarily potent, divinely supported, and operationally active, regardless of territorial contraction. The implied proposition: “*We are winning—even when you think we are losing.*”

Microstructure:

• Ideological Square:

- *Positive In-group*: Mujāhidīn, martyrs (*shuhadā*), suicide operatives (*istishhādiyyīn*).
- *Negative Out-group*: Murtaddīn (apostates), Crusader-backed regimes, apostate armies.

• Mental Models and Belief Schema:

• These infographics cultivate a schema of heroic militancy: religious fulfilment equals material destruction of the enemy. Viewers are conditioned to interpret bloodshed as achievement and high casualties as glory.

• Cognitive Priming and Numerical Persuasion:

• The use of precise figures (e.g., “*263 explosive devices,*” “*15 police officers,*” “*246 vehicles*”) instils a perception of military credibility, while their stylised presentation triggers emotional salience—especially among thrill-seeking or grievance-fuelled audiences.

• Presuppositions and Scripting:

- The infographics presuppose:
 - That state and national identities are invalid.
 - That all opposition is apostasy.
 - That martyrdom is a measure of legitimacy.
 - That tactical success is evidence of divine support.

4.2.8.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication:

- **Nomination:**

State institutions are referred to as “*apostate armies*” and “*Murtadd government forces*”, stripping them of legitimacy and Islamically reframing them as theologically deviant targets.

- **Predication:**

ISIS fighters are portrayed as *steadfast*, *triumphant*, and *divinely guided*, while their enemies are *exposed*, *destroyed*, and *humiliated*.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Threat and Defence:**

• Both fragments construct an existential war narrative. Enemy losses are justified as divinely mandated self-defence and pre-emptive strikes.

- **Topos of Achievement:**

• Enumerated statistics represent narrative trophies, not evidence. They serve the topos of “proven success,” aimed at deterring doubters and luring aspirants.

- **Topos of Divine Endorsement:**

• The phrase “*by Allah's grace*” or allusion to *sharī'ah defence* embeds every act of violence within a divine mission framework.

Interdiscursivity:

The infographics draw on:

- **Military aesthetics** (battlefield simulation, metrics),
- **Salafi-jihadist rhetoric**, and
- **Media spectacle logic** (echoing social media war gaming and martyrdom posters).

4.2.8.5. Multimodal Analysis

- **Colour and Symbolism:**

- **Red:** Signifies blood, urgency, and divine wrath.
- **Yellow/orange:** Connotes fire, martyrdom, and explosive fervour.
- **Typography:** The fonts simulate *officiality* and *urgency*, lending authority to fabricated or exaggerated claims.

- **Layout and Semiotic Sequencing:**

- The figures are organised in circular clusters and exploded diagrams, emulating infographics from digital media and tactical briefings. This lends functional legitimacy and cognitive digestibility.

- **Visual Framing of Martyrdom and War:**

- Images of burning vehicles, mushroom clouds, and war-torn landscapes visually encode divine approval of destruction. It frames the mujāhid not just as warrior, but as media symbol.

4.2.8.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This double-fragment is emblematic of ISIS's post-Dabiq discursive recalibration. With mounting military defeats and the fall of symbolic strongholds like Dabiq, the group shifted toward quantitative myth-making to maintain the illusion of ascendancy. In place of territorial claims, ISIS offers statistical victories. In lieu of ideological exposition, it performs operational **spectacle**.

These visuals represent a hybrid propaganda model that combines:

- Religious framing (*jihad, martyrdom, shari'ah defence*);
- Military boasting (numbers, weapons, logistics);
- Digital aesthetics (layout, colour, formatting);
- Psychological persuasion (emotional priming, dehumanisation of the enemy).

They are designed to:

1. **Sustain morale** among dispersed cells and disillusioned followers.
2. **Recruit thrill-seekers** drawn to glory and measurable impact.

3. **Legitimise continued violence** despite territorial collapse.
4. **Normalize death metrics** as signs of theological approval.

Critically, these infographics mark a semiotic shift in *Rumiyah*: they no longer merely narrate jihad—they *visualise* it, *gamify* it, and *statistically enshrine* it. The killing of 5000 is not described—it is counted. The loss of a city is not lamented—it is backgrounded beneath fire, numbers, and graphics.

This fragment exemplifies how ISIS leverages the aesthetics of data and spectacle of war to sustain ideological mobilisation in times of material decline. It demonstrates how quantified violence becomes a communicative ritual, not merely an act of war.

From a counter-extremism perspective, this calls for:

- **Media literacy education** that unmasks propaganda design.
- **Theological reframing** to separate divine will from fabricated glory.
- **Disruption of spectacle logic**, preventing the absorption of such visuals into social media ecologies unchecked.

This fragment affirms a crucial insight: in the ISIS ecosystem, data is never neutral—it is divinely soaked, rhetorically weaponised, and visually sanctified.

4.2.9. Fragment 25 Analysis: “The Syrian Sahwat: Shallow Unity and Reliance on Taghut”—*Rumiyah*, Issue 5, pp. 2–4

4.2.9.1. Visual–Textual Fragment Overview

This foreword, headlining *Rumiyah* Issue 5, functions as a polemical exegesis on the perceived betrayal of Islam by Syrian rebel factions (labelled "*Sahwat*") who are accused of abandoning divine law in favour of unity with secular, nationalist, or externally backed actors. It accuses them of apostasy (*ridda*) by virtue of their cooperation with *tāghūt* regimes (i.e., non-Islamic state systems) and failure to embrace ISIS's claim to legitimate jihad.

Visually, the fragment is saturated in blood-red tones, with an image of Turkish and Western-aligned figures shaking hands superimposed over images of armed rebel fighters—suggesting complicity, betrayal, and ideological corruption.



Figure 4.7. The Syrian Sahwat: Shallow Unity and Reliance on Taghut (Rumiyah 5, Rabi' al-Akhir 1438 / Jan 2017, pp. 2–4)

4.2.9.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Ideological Polarisation:**

- Terms such as “*Sahwat*”, “*taghūt*”, “*apostates*”, “*enemies of Allah*”, and “*false unity*”

frame the opposition not merely as strategic rivals but as religiously deviant actors. Lexical binaries (truth vs. treachery, *īmān* vs. *nifāq*, *tawhīd* vs. *taghūt*) structure the moral universe of the text.

- **Modality and Moral Absolutism:**

- Declarative modality dominates: “*They have disbelieved*”, “*They will be destroyed*”, and “*The curse of Allah is upon them.*” These statements convey high epistemic certainty and zero interpretive openness, reinforcing doctrinal absolutism.

- **Grammatical Structure and Intertextual Anchoring:**

- Frequent citation of Qur'anic verses (e.g., al-Mā'idah 51, al-Tawbah 65–66) and hadiths constructs intertextual cohesion and theological authority. These references are detached from historical context, functioning instead as divine warrants for takfīr.

Discursive Practice:

- **Genre Imitation and Recontextualisation:**

- The article mimics the expository tone of *tafsīr* and polemical jurisprudence but is recontextualised as militant propaganda. Its didactic register aims not to teach, but to incite disassociation from rival jihadist groups.

- **Target Audience and Consumption Logic:**

- The intended readership includes young Arabic-speaking fighters disillusioned with mainstream opposition coalitions. The text performs epistemic purification—severing reader loyalty from pluralist rebel factions and redirecting it to ISIS.

Social Practice:

- **Strategic Takfīr and Intra-Movement Hegemony:**

- This fragment reflects ISIS's broader project of securing ideological monopolies by delegitimising all non-ISIS Islamic actors, particularly those engaged in national liberation or democratic transitions. The Sahwat narrative is a historical carryover from ISIS's Iraq theatre, now exported to Syria.

4.2.9.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

The global meaning is that Syrian rebel groups are hypocrites and apostates whose allegiance to secularism, democracy, or nationalist projects has rendered them enemies of Islam.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: ISIS, “the sincere mujāhidīn”, true monotheists, the early Salaf.
- *Negative Out-group*: FSA, Turkish-aligned factions, democratic Muslims, coalition-partnered rebels.

• Mental Models and Cognitive Framing:

• The text constructs the “Sahwat” as having betrayed divine commands for worldly alliances. The text primes readers to view unity, compromise, and pluralism as spiritual treason.

• Presuppositions:

- That any cooperation with non-Muslims invalidates one's Islam.
- That political or military pluralism is equivalent to religious hypocrisy.
- That only ISIS embodies true jihad and *tawhīd*.

• Cognitive Manipulation:

• Through selective quotation and narrative framing, the article rewires readers' schema around allegiance, enmity, and legitimacy. Opposition fighters are cognitively repositioned as *munāfiqūn* (hypocrites) or *murtaddīn* (apostates), not misguided Muslims.

4.2.9.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)**Nomination and Predication:****• Nomination:**

Rebel factions are labelled as “*Sahwat*”, “*apostates*”, “*traitors*”, and “*aiding the enemies of Allah*”. These designations tie the Syrian context to the Iraq *Sahwat* narrative of betrayal and Western puppetry.

• Predication:

These actors are described as “*relying on taghūt*”, “*dividing the ummah*”, and “*preferring worldly unity to divine law*”. The negative predicates foreclose any possibility of reconciliation or alternative jihad.

Argumentation Topoi:**• Topos of Threat:**

• Rebel groups are framed as existential threats to Islam by undermining the Caliphate and siding with enemies.

• Topos of Divine Command:

• Takfir is rendered not as political rebellion but as divine duty: *“You will not find people who believe in Allah making allies with those who oppose Him” (Qur’an 58:22).*

• Topos of Historical Precedent:

• The Sahwat framing draws on the Iraq War context, positioning all attempts at Sunni moderation or alliances with the West as doomed precedents.

Interdiscursivity:

The article fuses:

- Qur’anic exegesis,
- Salafi-jihadist legalism,
- Sectarian war logic,
- Post-Arab Spring disillusionment, a totalising argument for exclusive loyalty to ISIS.

4.2.9.5. Multimodal Analysis**• Visual Framing:**

• The image of two suited men shaking hands, overlaid with scenes of armed rebel forces, establishes a visual juxtaposition of political betrayal and military corruption. The implication: these rebels are no longer *mujāhidīn* but diplomats of kufr.

• Colour Semiotics:

• The heavy use of blood red, along with blacked-out figures and flames, symbolises divine wrath, apostasy, and war. The entire foreword visually echoes execution posters, implying imminent judgement.

- **Typography and Layout:**

- Sharp typefaces, bold declarations, and boxed Qur'anic verses isolate religious truth as inviolable, visually separating it from the contaminated human actors under criticism.

4.2.9.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This foreword is more than a polemic—it is a calculated act of intra-jihadist warfare. It enacts discursive takfir on a strategic scale, aiming to disarm the ideological legitimacy of all non-ISIS Syrian armed actors. The rhetorical strategy is not simply exclusion—it is annihilation of legitimacy.

ISIS here capitalises on real political fractures within the Syrian opposition. By invoking the label “Sahwat”—a reference to U.S.-backed Sunni tribes that turned against ISIS in Iraq—it activates memories of betrayal, seduction by the West, and collapse of jihadist purity.

From a CDS standpoint, the fragment reveals a hybrid mode of theological delegitimation, where political alliances are rendered as spiritual apostasy, and strategic unity is framed as doctrinal polytheism.

The broader function of this discourse is to:

- Consolidate ISIS's theological monopoly,
- Sever readers from alternative Islamic authorities,
- Recast the Syrian battlefield as a divine test, where only ISIS embodies legitimate Islam.

This fragmentation of religious trust is not a by-product—it is the strategy. By defining “reliance on taghūt” as the red line, ISIS crafts a hermeneutic trap: any deviation becomes apostasy.

This fragment is a textbook case of how discursive takfir is weaponised to delegitimise moderate or rival Islamist actors. The implications are critical:

- **For counter-radicalisation**, it underscores the importance of intra-Muslim theological solidarity and clear doctrinal red lines that do not tolerate weaponised excommunication.

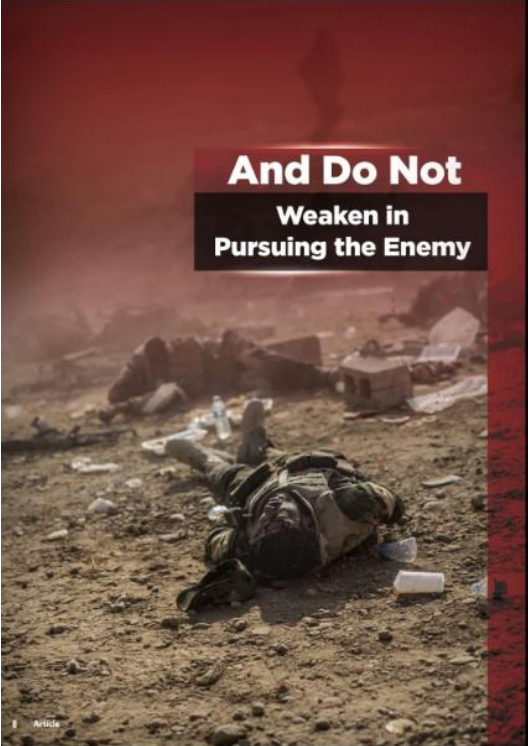
- **For policymakers**, it demonstrates how fragmented oppositional movements can be turned against each other when theological cohesion is lacking.
- **For researchers**, it reflects the enduring power of *Rumiyah*'s rhetorical shift: from eschatological prediction (*Dabiq*) to *ideological purging*.

4.2.10. Fragment 26 Analysis “And Do Not Weaken in Pursuing the Enemy”—*Rumiyah*, Issue 6, pp. 8–10

4.2.10.1. Visual–Textual Overview

This three-page article, framed by Qur'anic allusion and brutal battlefield imagery, is a rallying cry for theological perseverance in warfare. It urges ISIS sympathisers to continue fighting despite injuries, losses, or fatigue, equating any cessation of violence with spiritual weakness and divine betrayal. The cover shows a corpse of a regime soldier in the foreground of rubble and ruin, paired with the emphatic imperative: “And Do Not Weaken in Pursuing the Enemy.”

This fragment functions as both psychological inoculation and doctrinal fortification in the wake of mounting territorial losses. It reframes defeat and exhaustion as divine tests, encouraging readers to interpret persistence in violence as worship and martyrdom.



And Do Not Weaken in Pursuing the Enemy


The mushrikin of the People of the Book and their apostate agents and allies will not cease to spread lies about the heavily inflated number of Islamic State soldiers whom they claim to have killed in battles or in airstrikes. Their goal in that regard is to fill the mujahidin with despair by terrifying them with the threat of a large number of losses in their ranks if they continue in their fight and jihad against the mushrikin and their insistence on removing shirk and establishing the religion.

This is the habit of the kuffar in every era, and that is because they measure all affairs based on material, dunya-oriented results, which is all that they know. This is just the same as what was previously done by one of their leaders following the battle of Uhud, when he boasted about killing the companions of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, seeking therewith to fill the remaining Muslims with sorrow. But they replied to him saying that they were not equal, for those killed from among the Muslims were in Jannah, and those killed from among the mushrikin were in Hellfire.

And Allah's ﷻ command has come to His muwahhid slaves in every era that their wounds must not stop them from increasing their pursuit of the mushrikin and their endeavor to fight them, kill them, and seize their land and wealth, as in His ﷻ statement, "And do not weaken in pursuing the enemy. If you should be suffering - so are they suffering as you are suffering, but you expect from Allah that which they expect not. And Allah is ever Knowing and Wise" (An-Nisa 104). So war is not only conquest and ghanimah. Rather, it includes wounds, pain, weariness, fatigue, the exhaustion of men and equipment, and the depletion of wealth and resources.

But with everything they sacrifice for the cause of Allah, the muwahhidin hope to attain nearness to Him ﷻ, and to draw more of the victory which He grants to His slaves when He sees the truthfulness of their jihad. And even as they seek victory against their enemies, they know with certainty that there is even greater reward for them if they are defeated in war after having purified their intentions and exerted their efforts, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "No fighter or detachment carries out a raid, takes ghanimah, and returns safely except that they have received two thirds of their reward, and no fighter or detachment fails to acquire ghanimah and is afflicted except that their rewards will be given in full" (Reported by Muslim). So after every defeat, they make more sacrifices for the sake of pleasing the Lord of the heavens and the earth, until the religion becomes entirely for Allah or they perish in the process, just as their Lord ﷻ described them in

The mujahidin continue to pursue and punish the kuffar



RUMIYAH 9



A dead mujahid killed while fighting for the Haqqari regime

His statement, "Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward" (Al 'Isran 172).

Alternatively, we find the parsons of the taghut having no hope for any of that. So what they expend in their battles becomes nothing other than a source of regret for them, and with every defeat they suffer at the hands of the muwahhidin, their spirit is even more broken, and with every loss they suffer in wealth and in personnel, their drive to continue fighting is further weakened, until eventually they are broken and suffer a turn for the worst. For this reason, Allah ﷻ commanded His slaves not to hold back from them and reminded them of the effect that defeat has on them, and that their final outcome will be nothing other than Allah destroying them.

And we have seen this being confirmed many times throughout the history of this blessed jihad, which has not stopped since Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his noble companions commenced it. Makkah and the Arabian Peninsula yielded to the Muslims in a number of years, and they eliminated Khosra's empire after engaging the Persian pagans in long battles, during the course of which the Muslims suffered what they did of injuries, until eventually Allah brought down Khosra's throne. They then dealt with the Roman state, which the Muslims continued to attack for several centuries, until Allah permitted that it be elimi-

nated and that its traces be wiped out. Then, there was what the Muslims did with many of the taghawit and the nations of kufi, which the Muslims did not tire of fighting against, until Allah eventually permitted their defeat and there remained for the Muslims their religion and their lands.

And likewise is what we see today in these current rounds of the mujahidin's war with all the nations of shirk and kufi - at the head of which are the Crusader nations of the West - specifically over the past two decades, for the banner was clear, and the goal was sincere. Thus, the affair of the muwahhidin continued - by Allah's grace - to rise and to flourish. Allah increased them in numbers, weapons, and wealth, granted them consolidation on His earth, and supported them in establishing His religion and reviving the jam'ah of the Muslims, which is led today by Amir-ul-Muminin Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi r.l. The affair of the mushrikin, meanwhile, continues to decline and deteriorate, and this is through Allah ﷻ keeping the mujahidin steadfast in waging jihad against them, and through His defeat of the kuffar and mushrikin, until Allah eventually breaks them just as He broke those before them. "That is because Allah is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protectors" (Muhammad 11).

Figure 4.8. And Do Not Weaken in Pursuing the Enemy (Rumiyah 6, Jumada al-Ula 1438 / Feb 2017, pp. 8-10)

4.2.10.1. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Theological Framing:**

• Lexemes such as “*mushrikīn*”, “*Nusayrī regime*”, “*kuffār*”, “*martyrdom*”, “*victory*”, and “*sacrifice for the cause of Allah*” encode the text with doctrinal polarity. The vocabulary is spiritually charged and exclusionary, creating a black-and-white cosmos of *mujāhidīn* vs. *kuffār*, *steadfastness* vs. *apostasy*.

- **Modality and Imperative Structures:**

• The use of deontic modality is categorical: “*do not weaken*”, “*respond to the call of Allah*”, “*continue pursuing them*”, and positions violence as a moral command, not an option. This type of usage corresponds to what Fairclough (2003) calls “authoritative modality” aimed at identity regulation.

- **Grammatical Cohesion and Intertextual Authority:**

• Scriptural citation dominates: verses from *Āl ‘Imrān* (3:172), *al-Nisā’* (4:104), and *al-Mā’idah* (5:35) appear as authoritative scaffolding. This allows the article to mimic the tone of classical *tafsīr* while weaponising it for political mobilisation.

- **Speech Acts and Nominalisation:**

• Phrases such as “*pursuing the kuffār*” or “*sacrifice for the cause of Allah*” are not merely descriptive—they act as commissive speech acts, implicitly binding the reader to these rituals. Nominalisation decontextualises violence, transforming “*killing*” into “*sacrifice*” and “*persistence in combat*” into “*steadfastness in īmān*.”

Discursive Practice:

- **Genre Hybridisation:**

• The text fuses devotional rhetoric, military chronicle, and martyrdom theology. The text presents itself as religious instruction, but it also serves as an incitement. Its genre-shifting increases its interpretive reach—targeting both devout laymen and operational fighters.

- **Production/Consumption Context:**

- Positioned within *Rumiyah*'s Issue 6—amid territorial collapse in Mosul and Raqqa—this text serves to immunise loyal readers against psychological demoralisation. It creates continuity between divine history and present struggle.

Social Practice:

- **Narrative of Endurance as Legitimacy:**

- At the level of social practice, this text serves ISIS's need to frame its resilience as theological proof of authenticity. By promoting an ethos of relentless pursuit, the group positions itself as the inheritor of prophetic militancy even in adversity.

4.2.10.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

The dominant global meaning: persisting in violent jihad is a religious obligation that ensures victory and divine reward; abandonment signals hypocrisy and spiritual ruin.

Microstructure:

- **Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: True believers, injured fighters, steadfast *mujāhidīn*, divinely aided martyrs.

- *Negative Out-group*: Kuffār (especially the Syrian army, referred to as “Nusayrī”), apostates, hypocrites, and traitors who abandon jihad.

- **Mental Models and Identity Conditioning:**

- The article creates a cognitive schema that reinterprets physical weakness as a divine trial and equates perseverance with piety. The dead are not mourned but glorified; suffering is rebranded as sanctification.

- **Presuppositions and Propositional Framing:**

- That jihad is an eternal state—not bound by time, territory, or politics.
- That fatigue is a test, not a cause for retreat.

- That martyrdom is the only valid closure to the believer's life.
- **Cognitive Manipulation:**
 - Readers experience a neurological conditioning that equates horror with holiness through high emotional salience, doctrinal references, and images of mutilated corpses and burning wreckage. The trauma of violence is reprocessed as redemption.

4.2.10.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

- **Nomination:** Rebels and opposition soldiers are called “Nusayrī regime”, “agents of kufī”, “mushrikīn”, and “apostates”—labels that mark them as targets of divine wrath.
- **Predication:** These figures are described as defeated, corrupted, cowardly, and destined for divine judgement. Conversely, *mujāhidīn* are described as enduring, victorious (even in death), and chosen.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Divine Reward:** Sacrifice guarantees jannah. Victory may be spiritual, not military.
- **Topos of History:** Recalling battles from the Prophet's time and verses from *Āl 'Imrān* positions ISIS in a divine continuum of holy struggle.
- **Topos of Threat:** Weakening or retreating will empower the enemy and risk Allah's punishment.
- **Topos of Obligation:** Qur'anic imperatives render the call to violence non-negotiable.

Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:

- **False Dichotomy:** Only two options exist: fight or perish as a hypocrite.
- **Appeal to Tradition:** Historical Islamic battles are cited without context to justify endless war.
- **Interdiscursivity:** Combines military communiqués, martyrdom manuals, and religious *khutbah*-style exhortation.

4.2.10.5. Multimodal Analysis

Imagery:

- Page 8: A corpse in a bombed-out battlefield with the title “And Do Not Weaken...” suggests glorified death as continuity with jihad.
- Page 9: Exploding armoured vehicles and armed ISIS fighters evoke victory amid chaos.
- Page 10: Close-up of a mutilated Syrian regime soldier’s corpse—personalising vengeance, dehumanising the enemy.

• Colour and Layout:

- Red gradients across the spread signify both martyrdom and divine wrath. Black-and-white font boxes isolate moral commands from descriptive narrative, creating visual sanctity for doctrinal points.

4.2.10.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment exemplifies the *Rumiyah* shift from utopian state-building to post-territorial endurance theology. It no longer promises lands or governance but frames endless violence as divine vocation. It transitions ISIS propaganda from political aspiration to transcendental martyrdom.

Here, violence is not merely encouraged—it is ritualised. The text constructs a worldview in which the battlefield is sacred, suffering is spiritual cleansing, and death is graduation. The cost of war is converted into the currency of salvation.

The article's most insidious innovation is *its epistemic trap, which suggests that individuals who grow tired or hesitate are not merely mistaken, but rather, they are betraying Allah*. Such binary discourses reduce the ethical middle ground, replacing nuance with total allegiance. It reconditions fatigue into failure of faith.

From a policy standpoint, such an environment makes disengagement especially difficult. If jihad becomes an end in itself, not a means to a goal, then de-radicalisation efforts must directly dismantle the sanctification of persistence. This requires:

- **Religious counter-narratives** that restore the ethics of peace, patience, and proportionality.
- **Psychological interventions** to deconstruct jihadist identity scripts built on suffering and struggle.
- **Strategic communications** that disrupt the semiotics of sacrifice—removing martyrdom from the propaganda economy.

4.2.11. Fragment 27 Analysis “The Kafir’s Wealth Is Halal for You, So Take It” – *Rumiyah*, Issue 8, p. 12

4.2.11.1. Visual–Textual Overview

This single-page propaganda piece is one of the most overtly criminalised and economically charged artefacts in *Rumiyah*. It features the title “**The Kafir’s Wealth Is Halal for You, So Take It**”, accompanied by a staged photograph of luxurious material possessions: cameras, watches, rings, cards, electronics, and wallets— items of Western capital and identity.

Unlike previous fragments grounded in battlefield imagery or martyrdom, this piece promotes theft, looting, and plunder as a religious obligation. It elevates criminal appropriation into an act of *‘ibādah*, equating it with divine entitlement.



Figure 4.9. The Kafir's Wealth Is Halal for You, So Take It (Rumiyah 8, Rajab 1438 / April 2017, p. 12)

4.2.11.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Ideological Framing:**

- The use of “kāfir” (disbeliever) vs. “you” (mujāhid/muwahhid) maintains strict ideological binaries. The possessive construction “the kāfir’s wealth” inherently delegitimises non-Muslim ownership, while “halal for you” religio-legalises theft as divine law.

- **Imperative Mood and Modality:**

- The command “*So Take It*” is delivered with no qualification—high deontic modality. This stylistic choice eliminates ambiguity. It becomes what Fairclough (2003) identifies as “*naturalised command*”, masked as divine decree.

- **Nominalisation and Presupposition:**

- “Wealth” becomes a static object, detached from context or legality. There is a presupposition that all possessions of disbelievers are unjustly held and thus *already forfeit*.

- **Intertextuality and Theological Echo:**

- Despite the absence of a direct Qur'anic text citation, the layout and tone closely align with fiqh rulings. The layout resembles a *ḥukm* (ruling) board or fatwa-style declaration—creating semantic proximity to divine legitimacy.

Discursive Practice:

- **Genre Hybridisation:**

- The fragment fuses criminal incitement with pseudo-religious legalism. Its format simulates the authoritative style of an Islamic ruling but manipulates it to justify opportunistic theft.

- **Production Context:**

- Released post-2016 during a period of ISIS decentralisation, the text reflects a pivot toward **low-resource jihad**—encouraging material self-sufficiency through looting by lone actors or “microcells” in the West.

Social Practice:

- **Radical Economic Theology:**

- This fragment reflects ISIS’s attempt to re-theologise material acquisition. Capitalist objects—symbols of Western power—are reframed as *spoils* (*ghanīmah*) divinely destined for believers.

- **Criminalisation of the Other:**

- Ownership itself is delegitimised. By constructing the *kāfir* as existentially undeserving, the text redefines private property norms and frames plunder as moral correction.

4.2.11.3. Van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

Global Semantic Meaning: All wealth possessed by disbelievers is lawfully claimed by true Muslims, especially in the context of jihad. Appropriating such wealth is not theft but a divine right.

Microstructure:**• Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: Mujāhidīn, monotheists (*muwahhidīn*), those who implement divine rulings.
- *Negative Out-group*: Kāfirīn (non-Muslims), materially decadent Westerners, enemies of Allah whose wealth is corrupt and therefore illegitimate.

• Mental Models and Identity Formation:

- The reader is conditioned to associate material deprivation with victimhood and sees violent appropriation as restorative justice. Theological reframing neutralises the cognitive dissonance around theft.

• Presuppositions:

- That Western wealth is inherently illegitimate.
- That jihad grants entitlement to enemy property.
- That economic disparity is a divine imbalance to be corrected through *ghanīmah*.

• Cognitive Manipulation:

- Material desire is sanctified. Religious motivation becomes a vehicle for criminal expression—allowing radicalised individuals to reconcile piety with greed and ideology with criminality.

4.2.11.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)**Nomination and Predication Strategies:**

- **Nomination**: The enemy is named strictly by religious identity: “*kāfir*”. No nationality, ethnicity, or profession is needed. This generic designation facilitates moral dehumanisation.
- **Predication**: The *kāfir* is implicitly portrayed as corrupt, rich, and unjustly in possession of wealth. The narrative portrays the self as possessing divine entitlement.

Argumentation Topoi:

- **Topos of Divine Legitimacy:** God has made their wealth *ḥalāl*. No earthly law applies.
- **Topos of Justice:** Taking back what the enemy “unjustly possesses” is framed as retribution.
- **Topos of Threat:** The presence of this wealth in disbeliever hands is itself a danger.
- **Topos of Necessity:** In times of hardship, “*taking what is due*” becomes an obligation.

Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:

- **Moral Equivocation:** Looting is equated with justice.
- **False Dichotomy:** Either you seize *kāfir* wealth or you disobey Allah.
- **Appeal to Tradition:** The visual and textual structure mimics fiqh rulings and classical ghazw narratives.
- **Interdiscursivity:** This fragment fuses early Islamic historiography (spoils of war), jihadist financial manuals, and Western consumerist imagery to radicalise both ideology and economic desire.

4.2.11.5. Multimodal Analysis

- **Visual Semiotics:**
 - The image features cameras, watches, travel wallets, and high-end goods—all icons of Western affluence.
 - The colour scheme (gold, burgundy, and black) evokes wealth, power, and luxury but recontextualises them through an Islamic judgement lens.
- **Spatial Layout and Text Typography:**
 - The command “So Take It” is foregrounded in a large, bold serif font, implying finality and non-negotiability. The phrase resembles a Qur’anic imperative or prophetic hadith.

- **Symbolic Juxtaposition:**

- Western commodities—traditionally desired by radicalised youths—are simultaneously demonised and deified. This approach enables psychological resolution between materialism and piety.

4.2.11.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment *is one of the most strategically sophisticated artefacts in Rumiyah*. It exploits a discursive lacuna: the absence of a mainstream theology of economic justice in jihadist discourse. By filling that void, ISIS positions itself not just as a military or religious actor but as an economic liberator. The fragment constructs a seamless moral world where crime is no longer sin but sanctity. Religious categories (ḥalāl/ḥarām) and the register of divine rulings effectively hijack Islamic legal discourse. *Looting becomes fatwa*.

This approach serves multiple ideological purposes:

- **Justification of Opportunistic Violence:** It permits radicalised individuals—especially in Western societies—to act on ideological hatred while satisfying material urges.

- **Moral Shielding:** By turning theft into an obligation, the psychological guilt is removed. Economic violence is no longer criminal but sanctified.

- **Legitimisation of Decentralised Jihad:** In a post-Caliphate context, this logic empowers lone actors to survive financially while perpetuating ideological warfare.

- **Anti-Capitalist Symbolism:** The Western goods shown are not merely targets of theft but representations of *kufri* materialism. Their seizure is both destruction and desecration.

This strategy is dangerous because it fuses three powerful logics: religious command, material aspiration, and legalistic framing. The enemy is stripped of moral and legal protection, while the jihadi is granted both permission and spiritual superiority.

Fragment 27 reconfigures economic theft as jihad. It appropriates the semantics of ḥalāl to convert robbery into religious ritual. Through discursive and visual strategies, ISIS here constructs a theology of plunder—a jihad of consumption masked as piety. From a counter-radicalisation perspective, dismantling such narratives requires not only religious literacy but also economic

ethics grounded in mainstream Islamic jurisprudence. Efforts must confront this propaganda with theological clarity and material equity. This fragment demonstrates that ISIS's war extends beyond the battlefield, encompassing bank accounts, store aisles, and luxury displays. In the hands of extremist discourse, even looting is *'ibādah*.

4.2.12. Fragment 28 Analysis “The Ruling on the Belligerent Christians”—*Rumiyah*, Issue 9 (Cover + pp. 4–5):





Figure 4.10. 9th Issue Cover Page: The Ruling on the Belligerent Christians (Rumiyah 9, Sha'ban 1438 / May 2017)

4.2.12.1. Visual–Textual Fragment Overview

This fragment marks one of the most theologically aggressive and visually coded propaganda deployments in *Rumiyah*. The cover features a shattered Christian cross lying on a stained cushion amidst debris, while the interior opening spread (p. 4) shows a solemn Coptic-looking priest in a desaturated, war-torn background. The article itself invokes Qur'anic verses and hadiths to justify violence against Christians by framing them as "belligerent" and, by extension, legitimate targets of jihad.

4.2.12.2. Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis:

- **Lexicalisation and Ideological Framing:**
- Terms such as *mushrikīn* (polytheists), *belligerent*, *killed*, *disbelievers*, *apostasy*, and *shed their blood* are saturated with theological and militant implications. The term "belligerent

Christians" is not simply descriptive—it is a discursively constructed legal category that removes civilian status and reframes entire groups as enemy combatants.

- **Modality and Imperatives:**

- Phrases like “kill the mushrikīn wherever you find them” (p. 5) are high in deontic modality—functioning as divine imperatives. This modality constructs a narrative of command, not interpretation, echoing what Fairclough (2003) calls *epistemic authoritarianism*.

- **Presuppositions and Nominalisations:**

- The article presupposes that “Christians in the East and the West” are complicit in a global war against Islam. This nominalisation turns abstract identities into static categories of guilt—eliminating nuance and anchoring collective punishment.

- **Intertextuality:**

Qur'anic verses (e.g., Q. 9:5) and hadiths, when selectively invoked, detach themselves from exegesis and context. The textual tone mimics *fatāwā* or legal manuals, mimicking sacred legitimacy while strategically omitting the hermeneutic tradition.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

- **Recontextualisation:**

The text lifts scriptural fragments and recontextualises them into a wartime legal edict. This recontextualisation transforms spiritual sources into militant mandates.

- **Genre Hybridisation:**

- The article blends the format of a legal-ethical ruling (*ḥukm*) with the visual and rhetorical drama of a war manifesto—what Fairclough (1992) identifies as *ideological genre mixing*.

Social Practice Analysis:

- **Strategic Polarisation:**

- The fragment escalates *takfīr* and *istihlal al-dam* (blood-permissibility) by blurring distinctions between combatants and civilians, clergy and politicians. It fits within broader social practices of religious dehumanisation and geopolitical vengeance.

4.2.12.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure:

The global semantic proposition is: “Christians are actively waging war on Muslims and must be fought accordingly.” This macro-theme constructs the discursive foundation for theological war.

Microstructure:

• Ideological Square:

- *Positive In-group*: Believers who support jihad, honour the Qur’an, and avenge Islamic blood.
- *Negative Out-group*: Christians collectively framed as hostile, deceptive, and historically complicit in Muslim suffering.

• Mental Models and Schemata:

- The author positions readers to form mental schemata that portray Christian clergy as ideological generals rather than religious figures. The visual of the solitary priest under dim lighting suggests complicity and guilt, emotionally priming the viewer to devalue Christian innocence.

• Framing and Presupposition:

- The article presupposes historical continuity between the Crusades and modern Christian-majority governments—constructing a temporal bridge that supports ongoing jihad.

• Emotion and Cognition:

- The juxtaposition of ancient Islamic rulings with modern imagery triggers affective dissonance—evoking moral clarity, spiritual fear, and militant pride.

4.2.12.4. Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies:

• Nomination:

Christians are not named by denomination but re-labelled as “belligerent mushrikīn,” a term that aligns them with Qur’anic enemies of the Prophet.

- **Predication:**

The description of Christians as killers, desecrators, supporters of tyranny, and violators of pacts serves to discursively justify bloodshed.

- **Topoi of Argumentation:**

- **Topos of History:**

- The article explicitly frames Christian-Muslim relations as an unbroken sequence of war, anchoring contemporary violence in sacred history.

- **Topos of Threat and Defence:**

- The article claims that Muslims are attacked “in the east and in the west”, justifying defensive jihad. It calls upon readers to act as protectors of faith and victims.

- **Topos of Divine Mandate:**

- The justification of violence is not pragmatic but moral—anchored in God’s law and prophetic example. This perspective strips any space for legal or theological dissent.

- **Fallacies and Interdiscursivity:**

- **False Equivalence:**

- Civilian Christians are equated with Crusaders and soldiers—collapsing moral categories.

- **Appeal to Authority:**

- The text cites classical scholars without context, presenting their views as absolute and final.

- **Interdiscursivity:**

The text integrates Islamic jurisprudence, historical trauma, militant manifestos, and counter-colonial rhetoric, thereby fostering an impression of theological necessity and historical justice.

4.2.12.5. Multimodal and Visual-Stylistic Analysis

- **Cover Page Imagery:**

- The broken cross is positioned diagonally, embedded in dirt and blood-like stains. This destruction is both literal and symbolic—depicting the fall of Christianity’s moral authority and divine protection.

- **Interior Imagery:**

- The priest's bowed head and dim-lit surroundings evoke guilt and introspection. The composition is darkly cinematic—suggesting an almost funeral-like moment of judgement.

- **Typography and Colour:**

- Heavy, capitalised typography in bronze/black tones lends the title authoritarian solemnity.

It reads not as an article—but as a verdict.

4.2.12.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

In *Rumiyah*, this passage is among the clearest instances of collective theological demonisation. It abandons metaphor, implication, or tactical restraint. Instead, it constructs a pseudo-judicial framework for religiously sanctioned violence against an entire religious community—justified through distorted jurisprudence, selective scripture, and emotionally charged visual rhetoric.

From a CDS standpoint:

- **Fairclough** demonstrates how grammatical modality, theological recontextualisation, and discursive genre-mixing create a coercive narrative of divine obligation.

- Van Dijk reveals the engineering of mental schemata for sacrificial action and ideological entrenchment.

- **Wodak** uncovers the reliance on historical topoi and argumentation fallacies that naturalise violence as virtue and religious hatred as righteousness.

The propaganda here serves three key discursive purposes:

1. **Delegitimisation of religious pluralism** – through totalising *takfīr*.
2. **Reactivation of historical grievance** – via Crusader allusions.
3. **Radical mobilisation of readers** – by weaponising theology and emotion alike.

This fragment illustrates the **discursive entrenchment of inter-religious conflict** as an ideological pillar of ISIS. It demands not simply rebuttal—but structural counter-discourse:

- Theologically literate counter-narratives that challenge *istihlal al-dam* (blood permissibility).
- Media literacy programmes that reveal the visual manipulation of symbols like the cross.
- Scholarly exegesis campaigns to restore the contextual integrity of Qur’anic rulings.

4.2.13. Fragment 29 Analysis “Either We Exterminate the Mushrikin or Die Trying” – *Rumiyah*, Issue 11, Foreword, pp. 4–5

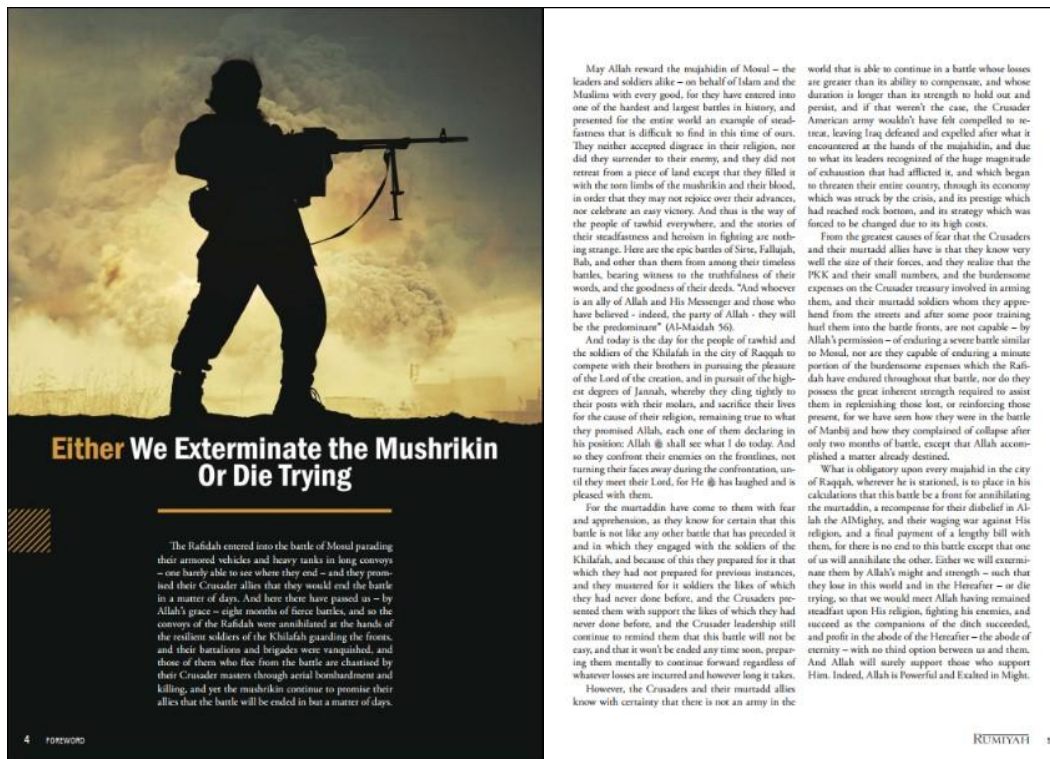


Figure 4.11. Either We Exterminate the Mushrikin or Die Trying (*Rumiyah* 11, Shawwal 1438 / July 2017, pp. 4–5)

4.2.13.1. Visual–Textual Overview

The fragment opens with a visually striking silhouette of an armed militant, foregrounded against a fiery mushroom cloud and dusk sky. The large-font slogan “*Either We Exterminate the Mushrikin or Die Trying*” dominates the frame, couched in bold white and yellow-orange text. Below, the two-page foreword presents a polemic against Shia Muslims (derogatorily labelled “Rafidah”) and their alliance with Western powers, celebrating the endurance of ISIS fighters in Mosul and calling for continued war without compromise.

4.2.13.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis

- **Lexicalisation and Semantic Fields:**

• Key terms such as *mushrikin*, *Crusaders*, *Rafidah*, *blood*, *annihilation*, *martyrs*, *cowards*, and *supporters* construct a semantic field of holy war, sacrifice, and dualism. Lexical polarisation reinforces the "us vs. them" ideology.

- **Modality and Epistemic Certainty:**

• Statements such as “*Allah will surely support those who support Him*” and “*they shall be the victorious*” express absolute modality—imbuing the text with divine inevitability and teleological closure. There is no space for doubt, only affirmation.

- **Grammatical Structures and Syntactic Constructions:**

• The heavy use of declarative clauses and passive constructions (e.g., “*the Rafidah were annihilated*”) conceal agency behind divine will and collective heroism. This aligns with Fairclough’s (2003) concept of syntactic mystification.

- **Intertextuality:**

The text draws heavily on Qur’anic citations (e.g., Q. 61:4, Q. 47:7) to frame the ongoing battle as a sacred duty. These intertextual insertions are decontextualised and refunctionalised as justifications for military resilience and ideological absolutism.

Discursive Practice Analysis

- **Genre Hybridisation:**

• The piece merges genres: it is part *editorial*, part *battle report*, and part *religious sermon*. This genre-mixing creates affective credibility, mimicking legitimate genres to mask militant incitement.

• **Production and Reception Framing:** The Foreword frames the Battle of Mosul as both historical testimony and divine theatre. The intended audience consists of global ISIS sympathisers seeking validation, especially after significant territorial losses.

Social Practice Analysis

- **Normalisation of Perpetual Violence:**

- The text asserts that war is not a temporary necessity but an ongoing, divinely ordained mode of existence. This version marks a shift from territorial conquest to eschatological warfare, reflecting the transition from Dabiq-style utopianism to Rumiyah-style insurgency.

- **Delegitimisation of Political Solutions:**

- Any path apart from annihilation is rejected. Political negotiation, retreat, or internal criticism are framed as betrayal—foreclosing peaceful alternatives.

4.2.13.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure

The macro-semantic proposition is:

“Victory lies in total annihilation of the mushrikin; hesitation equals hypocrisy.”

This macrostructure underpins the rhetorical call to absolute commitment and existential jihad.

Microstructure

- **Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: Resilient ISIS fighters enduring siege with divine favour.
- *Negative Out-group*: Rafidah, Crusaders, cowardly Muslims, and any who hesitate.

- **Mental Models and Cognitive Scripts:**

- The militant is framed as an idealised martyr, unyielding in the face of overwhelming odds.

The subject constructs a mental schema of *heroism through hardship*, where loss is proof of sincerity and death is preferable to surrender.

- **Presuppositions:**

It presumes that the audience believes in a zero-sum cosmology, which suggests that Islam's future relies on a complete rejection of compromise, leading to inevitable divine rewards or punishments.

- **Emotion and Cognition:**

- The use of metaphors such as “*they retreated behind their Crusader masters*” and “*the rafidah entered... only to be annihilated*” evokes emotional gratification through destruction—normalising mass violence as justice.

4.2.13.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies

- **Nomination:**

- *Rafidah* (a pejorative for Shia Muslims) and *Crusaders* are nominated as aggressors, traitors, and false Muslims.

- *Mujahidin* are nominated as righteous warriors, representatives of divine will.

- **Predication:**

The enemy are described as weak, cowardly, and doomed, while ISIS fighters are portrayed as spiritually superior, divinely guided, and victorious even in death.

Topoi of Argumentation

- **Topos of Divine Command:**

- Fighting is presented not as tactical necessity but as theological obligation. The Qur’anic quote, “Allah will support those who support Him,” provides doctrinal anchoring.

- **Topos of Threat:**

- The construction of the “Crusader-Rafidah alliance” as an existential threat justifies aggressive retaliation and permanent mobilisation.

- **Topos of Glorification and Martyrdom:**

- The endurance of fighters under siege is glorified as proof of their moral and spiritual supremacy. Suffering is recontextualised as sacred evidence of piety.

Fallacies and Interdiscursivity

- **False Binary:**

- The phrase “*either we exterminate... or die trying*” creates a binary with no room for negotiation, reform, or dissent.

- **Appeal to Divine Authority:**

- Scriptural references are presented as absolute proof—foreclosing hermeneutical debate or contextual reading.

- **Interdiscursivity:**

This approach integrates various genres such as battlefield reportage, Qur'anic tafsir, martyrdom literature, and revolutionary journalism. This amplifies perceived legitimacy by blending divine reference with practical militancy.

4.2.13.5. Multimodal and Visual Analysis

- **Silhouetted Mujahid with Gun:**

- The militant figure, standing defiantly before an explosive cloud, symbolises divine resistance. The imagery is theatrical, evoking cinematic tropes of apocalyptic heroism.

- **Colour Palette and Typography:**

- The dark silhouette against a fiery background connotes cosmic war. The orange-yellow emphasis on “*Either*” signals urgency and doctrinal ultimatum.

- **Semiotic Convergence:**

- The visual narrative reinforces the textual ultimatum: death and destruction are the only valid outcomes. Heroism is measured not by victory but by the willingness to die in resistance.

4.2.13.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment represents one of ISIS’s clearest attempts at sacralising endless war. It commemorates battlefield resistance while simultaneously preparing audiences for ideological continuation after loss. The collapse of ISIS’s territorial control in Mosul is not framed as defeat but as purification.

From a CDS perspective:

- **Fairclough** exposes how modal certainty and syntactic mystification sanctify violence and obscure agency.

- **van Dijk** illustrates the construction of absolute mental models—eliminating ambiguity and demanding binary allegiance.

• **Wodak** reveals the strategic use of historical and theological topoi to silence doubt and sustain mobilisation.

The slogan “*Exterminate... or die trying*” is not mere bravado. It is a doctrinal narrative trap: exit is death, survival is war, and doubt is treason.

4.2.13.7. Strategic Implications

- **For counter-radicalisation**, this fragment necessitates a semantic disruption—challenging the linguistic normalisation of martyrdom and eternal violence.
- **For theological scholars**, it underlines the need to contextualise Qur’anic verses and publicly refute their selective mobilisation.
- **For policy and community stakeholders**, it reinforces the urgency of deconstructing visual martyrdom aesthetics that turn battlefield death into aspirational iconography.

4.2.14. Fragment 30 Analysis “The Position of Imamah in the Religion”—*Rumiyah*, Issue 13, pp. 14–15

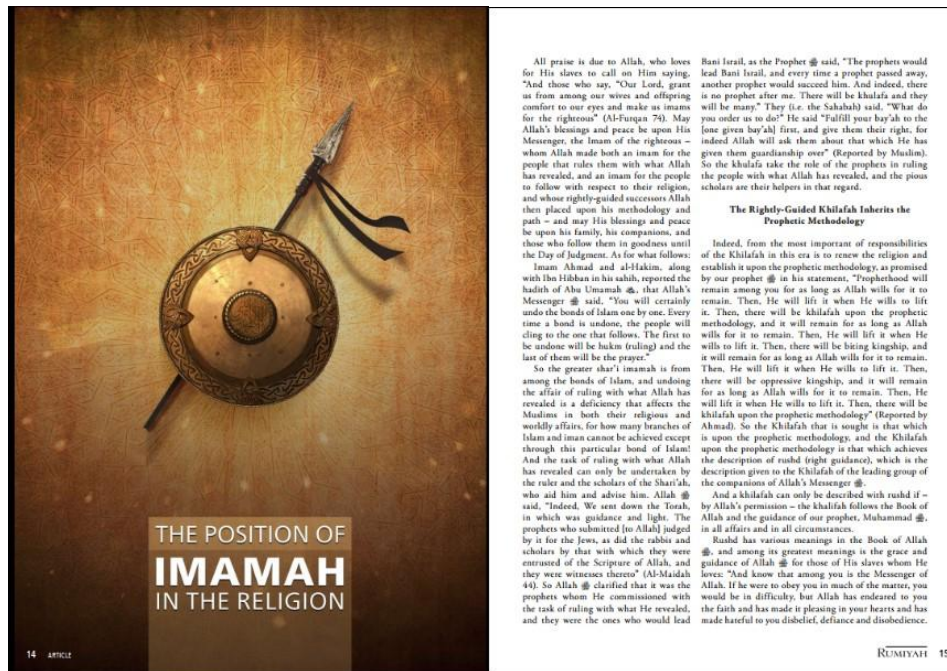


Figure 4.12. The Position of Imamah in the Religion (Rumiyah 13, Dhul-Hijjah 1438 / Sept 2017, pp. 14–15)

4.2.14.1. Visual–Textual Overview

The visual on page 14 presents a symmetrical, stylised depiction of a golden shield and a lance framed by intricate Islamic geometric patterns. This highly aestheticised image evokes both spiritual protection and martial legitimacy. Below the visual, the headline reads, “*The Position of Imamah in the Religion.*” The accompanying text on page 15 lays out a doctrinal argument about the necessity of Imamah (leadership) in Islam, emphasising that legitimate governance must follow the prophetic model and be based on divine appointment or consensus according to the Qur’an and Sunnah. The text heavily references Salafi theological sources and asserts the legitimacy of the Caliphate, implicitly reaffirming ISIS’s claim to authority.

4.2.14.2. Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA)

Textual Analysis

- **Lexicalisation and Theological Loading:**

- Lexemes such as “*Imamah*”, “*Khilafah*”, “*rightly guided*”, “*revelation*”, and “*obedience*” construct a sacred field of governance. The discourse redefines political leadership not as a secular arrangement but as a religious obligation derived from divine law.

- **Grammatical Modality and Imperatives:**

- Modal verbs such as “*must*”, “*will*”, and “*should*” dominate the text, signifying deontic modality — obligations imposed by God, not choices by humans. For example, “*Indeed, Allah will ask them about what He has given them guardianship over*” implies both duty and eschatological consequence.

- **Intertextuality:**

The text is saturated with Qur’anic verses and Hadiths, such as “*You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you...*” and “*Fulfil your bay’ah to the one given by all first...*” These function as authoritative anchors, legitimising the caliphate narrative while delegitimising other forms of government.

- **Syntactic Hierarchy and Enumeration:**

- The structure divides the text into phases: the necessity of Imamah, prophetic inheritance, and the divine mandate to obey the Caliph. This enumerative pattern mirrors classical theological treatises, simulating legitimacy through form.

Discursive Practice Analysis

- **Genre and Form Recontextualisation:**

- The article mimics the structure of a traditional *usūl al-dīn* (fundamentals of religion) treatise. However, rather than simply educating, it serves as legitimate propaganda for ISIS's religious claim to leadership.

- **Audience Positioning:**

- The text targets readers who are ideologically sympathetic or uncertain, drawing them into a structured worldview where disobedience to the Caliphate is equated with disobedience to Allah.

Social Practice Analysis

- **Institutional Delegitimisation:**

- While never explicitly naming rival Muslim governments or secular regimes, the article implies their illegitimacy by contrasting “true imams” (i.e., those ruling by what Allah revealed) with other leaders.

- **Doctrinal Absolutism:**

- By reframing governance as worship, the article sacralises ISIS's political project, shifting it from a contested claim to a religious imperative.

4.2.14.3. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM)

Macrostructure

The global propositional structure is:

“Imamah is a divine obligation, and obeying legitimate rulers who implement Allah's law is a religious duty.”

Microstructure

- **Ideological Square:**

- *Positive In-group*: The rightly guided caliphs, imams who implement Shari'ah, and their followers.

○ *Negative Out-group*: Any rulers who govern by man-made laws or deviate from prophetic methodology.

- **Mental Model and Identity Schema:**

- The article shapes a cognitive script wherein the Caliph is both spiritual and political heir to the Prophet ﷺ. This reinforces mental schemas of *divine succession*, leaving no space for pluralistic governance.

- **Presupposition and Inferencing:**

- The assumption that the ummah must always have an imam is not argued — it is presupposed. Thus, the article treats the absence of the Caliphate as a crisis, and the establishment of one as the normative default.

- **Epistemic Authorisation:**

- The article creates an illusion of scholarly consensus by citing scholars like Imam Ahmad and Ibn Ḥibbān, but the selected views reflect a specific Salafi-jihadist interpretive tradition.

4.2.14.4. Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)

Nomination and Predication Strategies

- **Nomination:**

Leaders are labelled “imams of the righteous”, “those whom Allah made imams”, and “rightly guided caliphs”. These nominations carry moral, spiritual, and legal connotations.

- **Predication:**

Such leaders are said to “*rule by what Allah has revealed*” and “*guide the ummah*”. Those who follow them are promised “*blessing*”, “*justice*”, and “*safety*”. Conversely, disobedience is linked to **humiliation** and divine punishment.

Topoi of Argumentation

- **Topos of Divine Mandate:**

- Since the Qur’an commands obedience to Allah and His Messenger and to “those in authority,” following the Caliph becomes a divinely sanctioned obligation.

- **Topos of Eschatological Accountability:**

- The fragment warns that leaders and subjects will be held accountable on the Day of Judgement for their role in Imamah — linking political obedience to salvation.

- **Topos of Prophetic Tradition:**

- Leadership succession is modelled on the methodology of the Prophet ﷺ and the rightly guided caliphs, serving as a historical and moral benchmark.

Fallacies and Strategic Silences

- **False Consensus:**

- By omitting mention of scholarly dissent or alternative views (e.g., Ash‘arī, Māturīdī, or modern juristic pluralism), the article falsely implies unanimous scholarly support.

- **Suppression of Counterexamples:**

- No references are made to abuses under historical caliphates or the theological debates on the necessity of Imamah — these omissions serve ideological purification.

4.2.14.5. Visual and Multimodal Analysis

- **Shield and Spear Imagery:**

- These objects evoke both defensive authority and armed readiness, signifying that Imamah is both guardianship and sovereignty — spiritual and militant.

- **Golden Hue and Geometric Background:**

- The warm, luminous aesthetic connotes divine legitimacy and sacred tradition, borrowing from classical Islamic manuscript design to invoke historicity and authenticity.

- **Typography:**

The bold rendering of “IMAMAH” visually centres the term, suggesting its pivotal place in the religion and demanding epistemological centrality in the reader’s worldview.

4.2.14.6. Interpretive and Contextual Discussion

This fragment is a theological justification for political obedience to ISIS’s claimed Caliphate, couched in traditionalist language and visual serenity. Unlike explicit calls to violence, it performs a discursive recalibration: sacralising the Caliphate not as a battlefield ambition but as

a religious default. By invoking traditional authority and eschatological imagery, the article normalises ISIS's claim to religious leadership.

From a CDS perspective:

- **Fairclough** reveals how sacred grammar and genre mimicry produce legitimacy through familiarity.

- Van Dijk reveals the shaping of mental models of religious leadership to exclude all governance other than that of ISIS.

- **Wodak** illustrates how topoi of divine command and historical continuity delegitimise dissent while glorifying obedience.

4.2.14.7. Strategic Implications

- **Counter-radicalisation efforts** must challenge not only the violence in jihadist rhetoric but also its soft-theological foundations like this article, which mask radical authority as normative faith.

- **Theological responses** from credible scholars should highlight legitimate diversity of opinion in Sunni Islam about Imamah and Khalifah, especially under modern nation-state systems.

- **Visual counter-narratives** must address the aesthetic sanctification of political obedience, which ISIS here reinforces with geometry, gold, and prophetic metaphor.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a rigorous longitudinal deconstruction of fifteen fragments from *Rumiyah* magazine, documenting the strategic discursive recalibration ISIS enacted in response to its territorial decline. By operationalising the tripartite CDS framework, the analysis has revealed a profound shift from the "utopian state-building" narrative of *Dabiq* to a rhetoric of "insurgent urgency" and "everyday jihadism". The findings indicate that in this phase, ISIS's "grammar of radicalisation" evolved to sacralise decentralised violence, delegitimise mainstream religious authorities through epistemic insurgency, and weaponise the ordinary—transforming mundane objects and economic desire into instruments of sacred warfare.

However, the value of this critical deconstruction lies not merely in its descriptive depth but in its potential for social and pedagogical transformation. Having established the "diagnostic baseline" of how extremist discourse interpellates vulnerable audiences, the thesis must now bridge the gap between academic analysis and practical engagement. Consequently, Chapter Five, Recommendations for Countering Radicalisation Discourse, serves as the operational culmination of this research. It synthesises the empirical evidence gathered from the thirty fragments of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* to propose evidence-based, context-sensitive strategies for educational reform, digital policy, and community resilience. Ultimately, this transition from deconstruction to recommendation empowers stakeholders to disrupt the ideological transmission of extremism by fostering the "ideological literacy" necessitated by the findings of this study

**CHAPTER FIVE:
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR COUNTERING
RADICALISATION
DISCOURSE**

5.1. Introduction

The present chapter constitutes the operational and translational culmination of this doctoral thesis. It aims to synthesise the findings of a sustained, critical, and interdisciplinary analysis of ISIS's English-language propaganda magazines—*Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*—into a concrete set of evidence-based, context-sensitive, and theoretically informed recommendations. These recommendations are derived from the application of a tripartite Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) framework that integrates Fairclough's Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak's Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA). Each model contributed a distinct yet complementary lens through which the linguistic, multimodal, cognitive, and historical dimensions of extremist discourse were interrogated in detail.

Drawing on the micro-, meso-, and macro-level analyses of thirty systematically selected propaganda fragments from *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, this chapter bridges the gap between academic deconstruction and practical engagement. ISIS's messaging strategy has been shown to operate not merely as an assemblage of theological citations and ideological slogans but as a strategically orchestrated discourse that fuses language, imagery, narrative, and historical recontextualisation to radicalise, legitimise violence, and construct binary worldviews. These semiotic operations were designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of English-speaking audiences, particularly vulnerable youth, non-native speakers, and marginalised Muslim communities in Western and North African contexts.

This thesis demonstrates how ISIS weaponised English discourse to achieve ideological internalisation and identity reform among its audience. Through the instrumentalisation of theological authority (e.g., *takfir*, *hijrah*, or *jihad*), the glorification of martyrdom, the rhetorical delegitimisation of mainstream scholars, and the emotional reframing of political grievances, the group created a persuasive, multimodally encoded ideological universe. Importantly, the longitudinal nature of the analysis—spanning the transition from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah*—has revealed how ISIS recalibrated its messaging strategies in response to changing geopolitical realities, territorial losses, and counter-terrorism pressures.

This chapter is situated against the backdrop of multiple critical gaps identified in both the academic literature and policy frameworks. These include the absence of a triangulated CDS model in radicalisation studies, the lack of multimodal, cognitively grounded discourse analyses of jihadist texts; and the dearth of counter-narrative recommendations tailored for postcolonial, multilingual, and socio-politically fragile contexts such as Algeria. This thesis addresses these voids by offering a unique model of analysis and, now, a novel suite of counter-radicalisation interventions.

The structure of this chapter reflects the complexities of the phenomenon under study. The chapter groups the recommendations thematically into five domains:

1. **Ideological and Cognitive Countermeasures**, addressing schema reformation, belief inoculation, and van Dijk's ideological square;
2. **Media and Multimodal Literacy Interventions**, drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen and Fairclough's interdiscursive analysis;
3. **Curriculum and Pedagogical Innovations**, with a focus on resilience-building and critical religious education;
4. **Digital and Algorithmic Policy Reform**, involving the role of tech platforms in disrupting radical narrative cycles;
5. **Policy-Level and Institutional Engagement**, integrating findings with international counter-extremism models and national deradicalisation needs.

Each section will directly link back to the analytical insights gained from the fragment-by-fragment analysis in Chapters Four and Five and respond explicitly to the primary and secondary research questions:

- **Primary RQ:** How did ISIS employ linguistic and multimodal strategies in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* to construct ideology and narratives aimed at radicalising English-speaking audiences between 2014 and 2017?
- **Q1:** What discursive, cognitive, and visual techniques are used to represent the Self (the in-group) and the Other (the out-group)?

- **Q2:** How are legitimacy, authority, and religious identity constructed through the recontextualisation of historical and theological narratives?
- **Q3:** How did ISIS's discourse evolve strategically from the state-building rhetoric of *Dabiq* (2014–2016) to the insurgent urgency of *Rumiyah* (2016–2017)?
- **Q4:** How can the findings of a tripartite CDS analysis inform the design of effective counter-radicalisation strategies?

Importantly, the proposed recommendations are not abstract or speculative. They are rooted in authentic not self-reported data, reinforced by contemporary radicalisation and terrorism research (e.g., Braddock & Horgan, 2016; Boukhars, 2017; Prentice et al., 2021), and justified through methodological triangulation and contextual relevance. In doing so, this chapter contributes not only to scholarly knowledge production but also to the practical domain of counter-extremism strategy formulation and ideological resilience building.

In summary, this chapter steers towards the following objectives:

1. To transform the thesis's analytical findings into structured, feasible, and interdisciplinary counter-radicalisation strategies;
2. To offer linguistic and multimodal tools for early detection, discursive disruption, and cognitive reframing of extremist messages;
3. To propose a CDS-informed, contextually grounded counter-narrative model applicable in postcolonial, multilingual, and digital environments.

What follows is a thematic exposition of these recommendations, each supported by its analytical rationale, theoretical foundation, and practical pathway for implementation. The ultimate aim is not merely to critique ISIS discourse but to empower educators, policymakers, tech platforms, and communities to actively engage in its deconstruction and to foster ideological literacy that pre-empts future radicalisation.

5.2. Linguistic and Discursive Recommendations: A Dialectical–Relational (DRA) Intervention

This section presents a set of linguistically grounded and discourse-theoretically informed recommendations designed to neutralise and reverse the ideological potency of ISIS’s English-language propaganda. Drawing upon the tripartite CDS analysis developed across this thesis—Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach (DHA)—the proposed recommendations target the deep semiotic, cognitive, and historical structures that enable extremist narratives to gain epistemic authority and psychological traction.

5.2.1. Countering Lexical Engineering and Semantic Manipulation

One of the most insidious features of ISIS propaganda is its capacity to redefine theological and political concepts through lexical engineering. Terms such as “caliphate”, “jihad”, “martyrdom”, “hijrah”, and “taghut” are semantically reloaded to support violent action while appearing scripturally legitimate. These terms function ideologically like what Fairclough (1992) refers to as “nodal points” in a hegemonic project—terms that anchor broader discursive formations and normalise radical interpretations.

Recommendations:

- Develop lexicon-based counter-discourse materials that reclaim these key terms within traditional jurisprudential frameworks. This strategy of semantic re-appropriation is a direct empirical response to the findings in Chapter Three (specifically the analysis of fragments F10 and F16), which illustrated how ISIS weaponises nodal points to normalise violence. By restoring the 'lost theological depth' identified in these fragments, practitioners move beyond description to active discursive resistance.

- Construct digital glossaries and video explainers to demystify theological terminology, foregrounding ambiguity, contested interpretations, and historical plurality in Islamic jurisprudence.

- Integrate semantic deconstruction exercises into educational curricula, especially in Islamic studies, to develop lexical critical awareness in youth and teachers.

5.2.2. Reversing the Ideological Square and Binary Thinking

ISIS's discourse is structured around van Dijk's (1998, 2006) "ideological square"—a polarising schema that emphasises in-group virtues and out-group vices. This dualism manifests in lexical dichotomies (e.g., mujahid vs. murtadd, tawhid vs. kufr) and is sustained through a rigid moral logic that simplifies complex sociopolitical realities into divine binaries.

Recommendations:

- Design intervention materials that explicitly identify and reverse the ideological square by showing positive examples of 'the Other' and critically reflecting on the internal contradictions within ISIS's own in-group.
- Introduce dialogic discourse formats—such as moderated debates, fictional dialogues, and interfaith testimonies—that blur dichotomies and promote cognitive complexity over dogmatic clarity.
- Employ counter-discourses using humour, irony, and narrative dissonance to subvert absolutist binaries and re-humanise out-group members.

5.2.3. Multimodal Counter-Discourses and Visual Literacy

ISIS propaganda does not rely on text alone—it is profoundly multimodal. Through the visual tropes of heroism, martyrdom, and divine destiny, Rumiya and Dabiq normalise violence and sanctify bloodshed. Yet multimodality also offers fertile ground for resistance, as visual registers are more easily disrupted by aesthetic subversion and emotional inversion.

By deconstructing the visual syntax of the magazines, this approach disrupts the positive self-presentation inherent in the Ideological Square, exposing the manipulative framing used to sanctify violence.

Recommendations:

- Produce multimodal counter-propaganda employing visually compelling narratives of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and post-conflict resilience. These should be tailored for digital platforms frequented by youth (e.g., Instagram, YouTube Shorts, TikTok).
- Partner with digital artists, illustrators, and video editors to deconstruct the visual syntax of martyrdom, replacing heroic imagery with scenes depicting human cost, suffering, and trauma.
- Teach critical visual literacy using frameworks like Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) multimodal discourse analysis to empower learners to decode manipulative images and ideological framing.

5.2.4. Disrupting Discursive Memory and Historical Myth-Making

Through the DHA lens, ISIS discourse is shown to recontextualise selective historical events into simplified myths of victimhood and glory. This strategy relies on intertextuality and recontextualisation, where sacred narratives are stripped of their historical nuance to justify contemporary violence. These “topoi of history” serve to frame violence as a redemptive continuation of an imagined golden past.

Recommendations:

- Generate historically grounded counter-narratives that deconstruct the selective historicisation used by jihadist discourse. Highlight Islamic traditions of coexistence, intellectual pluralism, and anti-violence.
- Support digital archives and interactive timelines that offer more balanced, inclusive histories of Islam's global civilisational contributions, undermining the apocalyptic and exclusionary historiography of ISIS.
- Collaborate with historians and religious educators to produce popular podcasts, comics, and documentaries correcting historical misappropriations.

5.2.5. Enhancing Cognitive Immunity through Critical Discourse Literacy

The long-term resilience against extremist discourse lies not only in countering messages but in equipping audiences with tools of critical engagement. This involves developing 'discourse literacy' to identify van Dijk's 'Ideological Square', exposing how rhetoric manufactures a 'positive Self' while dehumanising 'the Other'. This approach fosters discourse awareness, ideological sensitivity, and cognitive reflexivity.

Recommendations:

- Embed Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) content in school and university curricula, particularly in media literacy, language, and civic education modules.
- Train educators in van Dijk's socio-cognitive principles and Fairclough's relational dialectics to help them teach students how power and ideology operate through language and images.
- Launch multilingual MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) on ideological discourse analysis, targeted at youth in high-risk regions including North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East.

5.2.6. Tailoring Content for Psycholinguistic Vulnerabilities

The persuasive efficacy of ISIS's propaganda also stems from its manipulation of psycholinguistic cues—emotive metaphors, simplified narratives, authority markers, and repeated frames. These resonate particularly with youth facing existential crises or seeking identity anchorage.

Recommendations:

- Commission psycholinguistically attuned counter-narratives that employ emotionally resonant stories of former extremists, victims of terrorism, or resilient communities.
- Use metaphor analysis to expose and reframe ISIS's core metaphors (e.g., "the path", "the flame", "the fortress of Islam") by replacing them with narratives of reconciliation, humanity, and shared struggle.

- Apply repetition, rhythm, and narrativity in pro-social discourse, emulating ISIS's techniques for engagement while subverting their content.

These recommendations provide the foundation for a new generation of counter-extremism strategy—one not merely reactive, but epistemically and emotionally competitive. Through linguistically and cognitively precise interventions, we move closer to a world where radical narratives are not only refuted but disarmed at their very source: the discursive and psychological imagination of those they seek to captivate.

5.3. Policy and Institutional Recommendations

The following section translates the analytical insights of this thesis into strategically actionable recommendations for policymakers, institutional actors, and international stakeholders. These recommendations are grounded in the tripartite CDS model—Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)—and reflect the urgent need for ideological engagement in counter-terrorism strategies.

5.3.1. Embed Ideological and Discursive Literacy in National Security Frameworks

ISIS propaganda is not merely theological; it is a linguistically encoded, cognitively targeted form of warfare. Security institutions must therefore move beyond kinetic responses and invest in ideological competence by:

- **Institutionalising discourse awareness** through specialist training programmes for counter-terrorism officers, civil servants, and judicial actors. These should be based on linguistic frameworks that decode takfir rhetoric, Qur'anic intertextuality, and multimodal signification.

- **Establishing national ideological observatories**, composed of CDS scholars, Islamic theologians, psychologists, and policy experts, to analyse emerging extremist narratives and advise on preemptive policy measures.

- **Integrating discourse analysis into early warning systems** enables analysts to detect discursive shifts that signal radicalisation escalations before they manifest violently.

This responds to a core gap in existing CT policy, where “discourse” is either marginalised or misunderstood as mere rhetoric rather than a structured ideological apparatus (Neumann, 2017; Heath-Kelly, 2012).

5.3.2. Design Counter-Narratives Grounded in Cognitive and Cultural Contexts

As demonstrated in Chapters Four and Five, ISIS propaganda exploits group schemata, binary oppositions, and affective scripts to cognitively anchor its ideology. To disrupt this:

- **Avoid generic CVE messaging** and instead develop targeted counter-narratives that deconstruct ISIS discourse using the same cognitive frames and theological registers employed in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.

- Collaborate with credible cultural mediators, including former extremists, local imams, and educators, to craft messages that resonate cognitively, emotionally, and linguistically with at-risk youth in postcolonial contexts.

- Use the “ideological square” (van Dijk, 1998) as a template to invert and reframe extremist binaries, thereby dismantling in-group moral superiority and out-group demonisation.

This requires rethinking counter-narratives not as public relations tools but as epistemological challenges to radical worldviews (Braddock & Horgan, 2016).

5.3.3. Regulate Multimodal Extremist Content with Discursive Intelligence

A critical finding of this thesis is that ISIS’s propaganda operates as multimodal discourse—images, colours, layouts, Qur’anic verses, and headlines are designed to function in synergy. Policymakers must:

- Develop AI systems trained on multimodal discourse schemata (not just text keywords) to detect layered ideological signals in propaganda.

- Mandate tech platform cooperation in flagging multimodal radicalisation strategies, including infographic glorifications (e.g., “Martyrdom Charts”) and ritualised imagery (e.g., Jihād weapons paired with Qur’anic calligraphy).

- Create discursive audit frameworks for platforms like Telegram and Rocket.Chat, based on the methodologies used in this thesis (see Fairclough, 1992; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020).

This work directly addresses the regulatory vacuum in how extremist visual discourse circulates with impunity (Gambhir, 2016).

5.3.4. Protect Digital Spaces for Dissenting Religious Voices

Wodak’s DHA reveals how ISIS systematically delegitimises religious scholars who oppose its interpretations. States and institutions should:

- Protect and promote the visibility of moderate digital Islamic scholarship, especially scholars trained in both classical jurisprudence and modern communication theory.

- Fund transnational digital initiatives that make space for intra-Muslim theological debate outside state control, shielding dissenting scholars from both state repression and extremist takfirism.

- Institutionalise discourse amplification algorithms that boost moderate theological content in regions susceptible to online radicalisation.

Without these protections, well-funded and algorithmically sophisticated extremist platforms drown out moderate voices (Vidino & Hughes, 2015).

5.3.5. Establish CDS-Based Think Tanks in Counter-Extremism Policy Design

Given the lack of linguistic expertise in traditional CVE strategies, there is an urgent need to:

- Establish independent Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) centres as formal policy advisory bodies, modelled after media observatories or strategic communications units.

- Fund interdisciplinary fellowships bringing together CDS scholars, theologians, psychologists, and policymakers to develop multi-perspective, data-driven interventions.
- Ensure these centres have access to real-time propaganda materials, enabling rapid discourse response teams to address emerging ideological threats with scholarly, informed framing.

This also creates a pipeline for scholars like the current researcher to become leading global consultants and expert advisors at institutions such as Hedayah, RAN, or UN CTED.

Summary

This section offered a structured and comprehensive set of policy and institutional recommendations derived from the rich empirical and theoretical findings of this thesis. By addressing the cognitive, textual, visual, historical, and sociopolitical dimensions of ISIS propaganda, these proposals move beyond superficial deradicalisation slogans and enter the realm of deep ideological engagement. They offer actionable solutions to policymakers seeking long-term resilience and position this doctoral research at the frontier of international CVE discourse innovation.

These recommendations are grounded in the empirical findings of Chapters Three and Four, which revealed the sophisticated use of the Ideological Square to polarise identities and the strategic use of intertextuality to weaponise historical narratives. By deconstructing how ISIS manufactures legitimacy, this chapter provides a framework for ideological resilience.

5.4. Educational and Pedagogical Recommendations: Targeting Socio-Cognitive (SCM) Resilience

A central argument emerging from this thesis is that the radicalisation process is not merely a product of theological deviation or social marginalisation but rather of discursive manipulation targeting cognitive vulnerabilities—particularly among youth navigating identity, disempowerment, and information overload. As such, educational institutions must become front-line actors in developing ideological immunity through critical literacy. This section outlines a

pedagogical blueprint grounded in the findings of this study and framed within the tripartite Critical Discourse Studies model.

5.4.1. Integrate Ideological Literacy into Curricula

Education must extend beyond textbook knowledge to build critical resilience against ideological persuasion. Based on van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, we propose the following:

- Develop modules on media and ideological literacy in secondary and tertiary curricula, emphasising how discourse shapes perceptions and group identities. These modules should train students to decode persuasive devices, narrative structures, and cognitive frames typical of extremist texts.
- Employ fragment analysis from ISIS's Dabiq and Rumiyah (appropriately adapted) as case studies to demystify the mechanics of discursive radicalisation, similar to how Orwell's *1984*, or *propaganda from totalitarian regimes*, is taught.
- Promote classroom discussions on in-group and out-group dichotomies, lexical polarisation, and intertextuality, using Fairclough's framework to foster critical reflection on how language normalises power hierarchies and symbolic violence.

This strategy cultivates early-stage ideological vigilance, particularly among students from postcolonial, conflict-affected, or identity-marginalised settings.

5.4.2. Train Educators in Discursive and Visual Radicalisation Indicators

Most frontline teachers are ill-equipped to recognise the semiotic architecture of radical content. This gap can be closed through:

- Nationwide educator training programmes on radicalisation discourse patterns, using this thesis's findings on visual–textual synergy, symbolic frames, takfir rhetoric, and jihadist metaphors.
- Practical workshops introducing Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar theory, enabling teachers to detect meaning-making in seemingly innocuous visual elements.

- Establish CDA-informed teacher manuals, providing annotated examples of radical discourse elements and guiding questions to foster reflexive teaching.

These tools transform teachers from passive bystanders into proactive ideological moderators capable of initiating healthy classroom counter-discourses.

5.4.3. Embed Multimodal Critical Thinking in Religious and Civic Education

As shown in this thesis, ISIS does not simply preach theology—it visualises it through infographics, colour schemes, martyrdom charts, and typographic stylisation. To disrupt this:

- Revise religious education curricula to include critical engagement with media representations of Islam, jihad, and martyrdom, deconstructing distorted intertextual references and framing devices.

- Develop specialised 'Visual Decoding Modules' that specifically train learners to identify the intersemiotic modality analysed in Chapter Four. These modules must go beyond general image analysis to deconstruct the specific use of salience, gaze (offer vs. demand), and chromatic coding identified in the fragments of Rumiya. By teaching youth to recognise these as manufactured semiotic strategies used to sacralise violence, the 'theatre of triumph' constructed by ISIS is effectively demystified.

- Encourage interfaith dialogue modules that explore how religious imagery can be weaponised—and how to resist such instrumentalisation.

- Develop cross-disciplinary civic education programmes in secondary schools and youth centres, combining religious literacy with discursive awareness and digital citizenship.

This approach blends DHA's focus on historicity and cultural context with van Dijk's mental model theory, ensuring learners are equipped to resist both semantic seduction and visual radicalisation.

5.4.4. Empower Students as Producers of Counter-Discourse

Resistance to extremist ideology should not be confined to theoretical critique; students must be given the tools to construct competing narratives that are affective, informed, and public. Thus:

- Create “Youth Counter-Narrative Labs” in universities and secondary schools, where students collaborate with linguists, artists, theologians, and designers to produce podcast episodes, short videos, memes, and digital stories that counteract radical narratives.
- Fund student-led digital campaigns that reappropriate religious and cultural symbols for peacebuilding, empathy, and intra-faith solidarity.
- Encourage peer-led critique sessions of online content, training students to critique language, rhetoric, and visuals used in viral extremist material.

This is the educational translation of the multimodal CDS lens—empowering students to move from passive receivers to discursive agents of counter-radicalisation.

5.4.5. Institutionalise Academic Research-Practice Linkages

Finally, universities must serve not only as research hubs but also as partners in public pedagogy. To this end:

- Establish CDA-based research centres focused on online radicalisation, partnering with ministries of education and youth to translate findings into classroom strategies.
- Support Master’s and PhD theses applying CDS to extremism discourse in Algeria and similar contexts, creating a scholarly infrastructure for long-term expertise.
- Encourage international collaboration between global CDA scholars and local pedagogical institutions to build regionally sensitive, globally informed counter-educational tools.

By doing so, academia moves from isolated theorisation to direct ideological inoculation in future generations.

Summary

The educational sphere is not merely an auxiliary tool in the fight against radicalisation—it is its ideological battleground. By embedding the cognitive, historical, and multimodal insights of this thesis into curricular, pedagogical, and institutional structures, stakeholders can foster resilience, criticality, and discursive agency among young people. These recommendations offer a transformative educational model that is both preventive and emancipatory, ensuring that

classrooms become sites of ideological resistance and not inadvertent breeding grounds for discursive vulnerability.

5.5. Recommendations for Religious Institutions and Leaders

Religious institutions and leaders occupy a critical intersection between theological authority, community influence, and ideological legitimacy. As this thesis has demonstrated through a rigorous fragment-level analysis of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS systematically delegitimizes mainstream clerics (e.g., through *takfir* rhetoric), instrumentalises sacred texts to construct hegemonic interpretations, and recasts Islamic history in selective and emotionally charged ways. Countering such behaviour requires not only theological refutation but also discursive, cognitive, and semiotic engagement grounded in the tripartite Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) framework.

This section therefore provides a set of actionable, context-sensitive recommendations for religious leaders, mosque institutions, and Islamic educational bodies seeking to immunise communities—particularly youths—against discursive radicalisation. Each recommendation is grounded in the analytical findings of this thesis and reflects the CDS dimensions articulated in Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach, van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model, and Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach.

5.5.1. Reclaiming Theological Discourse through Discursive Authority

ISIS’s power lies not in theological innovation but in discursive appropriation. Its messaging strategically fuses Qur’anic citations with emotionally charged frames and binary ideologies. This was particularly evident in the analysis of fragment F16 (Why We Hate You), where presupposition and selective intertextuality were used to manufacture an existential threat. Religious leaders must therefore shift towards a model of discursive authority:

- Train imams and khatibs in discourse analysis frameworks, enabling them to recognise and refute the rhetorical strategies—such as metaphorisation and binary oppositions—identified in the analysis of *Dabiq*.

- Deliver khutbahs that explicitly deconstruct the argumentative logic and epistemic modality used by ISIS to claim divine mandate, thereby fostering ideological transparency.
- Engage youth in dialogic settings to expose the discursive mechanisms behind the misuse of concepts like jihad and hijrah, specifically addressing the semantic reloading identified in Chapter Three.

5.5.2. Constructing Intra-Faith Counter-Narratives within Local Mosques

As shown in Chapters Three and Four, ISIS's propaganda employs aggressive delegitimisation campaigns against scholars it labels as “apostate” (murtadd) or “palace scholars” (murji'ah). This “Topos of the Traitor,” identified in the DHA analysis of *Rumiyah*, seeks to isolate youth from traditional authority. Religious institutions must respond by:

- Facilitating public dialogues between scholars of different traditions to demonstrate jurisprudential plurality, directly refuting the absolutist epistemology propagated in extremist fragments.
- Establishing mosque-based “Ideological Clinics” where young people can discuss controversial theological questions with scholars trained to respond through an empathetic and discursive lens.
- Producing khutbah toolkits that identify and deflate extremist narrative tropes, such as the “Topos of Victimhood” used to justify retaliatory violence.

5.5.3. Disseminating Visual and Multimodal Theological Content

Given the centrality of intersemiotic modality in ISIS propaganda—analysed extensively in Chapter Four—religious institutions must compete in the visual arena with theologically accurate and semiotically sophisticated materials:

- Launch mosque-affiliated digital channels (YouTube/TikTok) that utilise the findings on visual grammar to produce counter-materials. These should counteract the salience and chromatic coding (e.g., the use of black and gold for sacralisation) identified in *Rumiyah* covers.

- Train young content creators in the principles of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen), enabling them to produce materials that use gaze (offer vs. demand) and framing to promote social cohesion rather than polarization.

- Sponsor artistic competitions that visually displace the “theatre of triumph” with a compelling ethical aesthetic grounded in Islamic values of mercy and justice.

5.5.4. Recontextualising Historical Islamic Narratives

ISIS thrives on a reified historical memory that recontextualises events as modern calls to violence. The Discourse-Historical (DHA) analysis in Chapter Three revealed how the group employs the “Topos of History” to anchor modern terror in prophetic mandates. Religious leaders must contest this by:

- Developing podcasts and illustrated booklets that explain the historical context of key events cited in propaganda, highlighting the diversity and pluralism within Islamic history that extremist discourse intentionally erases.

- Incorporate topos-deconstruction exercises into study circles to interrogate the “topoi of glory” and “betrayal” that underpin the ideological scaffolding of the thirty fragments.

- Collaborating with historians to produce timeline-based tools that disrupt the myth of a singular, violent tradition through historical interdiscursivity.

5.5.5. Empowering Religious Leaders as Cognitive Gatekeepers

It is crucial to equip religious leaders as socio-cognitive gatekeepers who can dismantle the radical mental models identified through van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM).

- Integrate SCM concepts—specifically the Ideological Square (Us vs. Them)—into imam training to help them identify and dismantle group polarisation in student discourse.

- Offer CDS-based certification for preachers, evaluating their ability to produce counter-narratives that reverse the Negative Other-presentation found in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.

- In the Algerian context, create multilingual resource banks (Tamazight, Algerian Arabic, French, and English) to address the linguistic hybridity and post-colonial identity tensions that recruiters exploit. This ensures the defense is anchored in the nation's unique sociolinguistic reality.

Summary

Religious institutions are not merely cultural heritage sites—they are frontline arenas in the ideological battle against extremist discourse. This section has translated the thesis's linguistic, cognitive, and historical findings into strategic recommendations for mosques, imams, and religious educators. These actors must move beyond theological refutation towards discursive reconstruction, semiotic competition, and narrative reframing. Equipped with tools from Critical Discourse Studies and embedded in their communities, religious leaders can serve not only as spiritual guides but also as ideological inoculators against the semiotic seduction of violent extremism.

5.6. Media and Tech-Based Recommendations: Countering Extremist Narratives in the Digital Ecology

This section addresses the strategic imperative of engaging media and technological platforms in the fight against online radicalisation. Building on the thesis's tripartite CDS framework and the fragment-by-fragment analysis of ISIS propaganda in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, this section translates theoretical and empirical findings into a suite of concrete, actionable recommendations for tech developers, media regulators, content creators, and AI governance bodies. ISIS's digital strategy exemplifies a calculated exploitation of contemporary media ecosystems—particularly their algorithmic, multimodal, and interactive affordances—to disseminate extremist content, gamify violence, and orchestrate transnational recruitment.

The analysis across Chapters Four and Five revealed how ISIS deployed a media-savvy repertoire of tactics, including:

- Multilingual semiotic tailoring to reach English-speaking, non-Arabic populations;
- Gamified aesthetics and cinematic visuals to glorify jihad;

- Infographics, anashid, and "Just Terror" tutorials are examples of viral micro-content that have been engineered for propagation on social media.
- Encrypted platforms such as Telegram and Rocket.Chat for echo chamber construction and decentralised mobilisation.

These findings demand a response that is as nuanced and technologically adaptive as the threat itself.

5.6.1. Integrate Discourse-Aware AI Moderation Tools

Contemporary content moderation systems tend to operate via keyword flagging and surface-level metadata analysis. However, as this thesis has shown, extremist discourse—particularly in Rumiya—relies on coded language, theological intertextuality, and multimodal symbolism to evade detection.

Recommendations:

- Develop AI moderation systems trained in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) principles to detect not just words but *discursive schemata*, including patterns of takfirism, glorification metaphors, and ideological square formations (van Dijk, 1998).
- Train content moderation algorithms to recognise semantic shifts and recontextualisations (e.g., the use of “Rome” as an eschatological metaphor; the euphemisation of violence via religious idioms like *istishhād*).
- Integrate visual grammar models (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020) into AI systems to flag radicalising images (e.g., weapons sanctified with Qur’anic verses; glorified martyrdom charts).

This advanced moderation model aligns with Fairclough’s (2001) emphasis on interdiscursivity and with recent demands in digital governance to move beyond black-box AI (Brundage et al., 2018).

5.6.2. Support Multimodal Counter-Narrative Campaigns on High-Risk Platforms

ISIS's media warfare relies on high visibility, rhythmic language, and accessible formats (memes, reels, GIFs, and short-form video). The counter-strategy must embrace these same channels but infuse them with criticality, empathy, and deconstructive intelligence.

Recommendations:

- Partner with local creatives, NGOs, and former extremists to co-produce emotionally resonant counter-narratives in formats suited to TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts.
- Use “prosocial hijacking” techniques to intercept trending hashtags or themes and inject ideological critique, such as exposing the realities of failed hijrah attempts or the suffering caused by ISIS violence.
- Support counter-visual campaigns featuring real stories from defectors, victims, and moderate scholars, framed through a visual-discursive grammar that humanises the “Other” and reclaims hijacked religious symbolism.

This builds on Wodak's DHA focus on historical recontextualisation and aligns with Braddock and Horgan's (2016) research showing that credible messengers outperform abstract appeals.

5.6.3. Create Algorithmic Incentives for Moderate Theological Content

Algorithms on major platforms often amplify sensational or emotionally charged content. This gives polarising and radical messages an inherent visibility advantage.

Recommendations:

- Encourage regulatory frameworks that require platforms to adjust ranking algorithms in high-risk regions to boost moderate, theologically grounded content (e.g., fatwas against takfir, contextualised Qur'anic exegesis).

- Implement “discourse amplification protocols” where content produced by verified, non-sectarian Islamic scholars is promoted during periods of geopolitical tension or terrorist activity to provide an immediate counterweight.

- Employ engagement metrics tailored for resilience-building, such as the number of youth interactions with empathy-based content or discourse literacy posts.

Such incentives foster an ethical algorithmic ecology (Gillespie, 2018), creating an online environment where extremist content is no longer algorithmically privileged.

5.6.4. Establish Secure Digital Hubs for Youth Engagement and Ideological Literacy

ISIS’s appeal stems in part from offering a perceived *epistemic refuge*—a place of clarity amid moral ambiguity. Alternative digital spaces must respond with equal epistemic conviction.

Recommendations:

- Build interactive web platforms and apps where youth can engage in anonymous dialogue with credible religious figures, psychologists, and ex-extremists.

- Gamify ideological literacy through quizzes, interactive timelines, and myth-debunking games built around common radicalisation themes identified in Dabiq and Rumiyah.

- Launch moderated forums for theological Q&A, using CDS-informed prompts to detect early signs of radical schema adoption and intervene preemptively.

Such hubs should be locally contextualised for postcolonial and multilingual settings—especially North African and European diasporic audiences—echoing the thesis’s findings on semantic reorientation and group schemas.

5.6.5. Promote Intersectoral Media Literacy Campaigns

Tech-based responses alone are insufficient without societal awareness. Media literacy must be activated at the intergenerational and intersectoral levels.

Recommendations:

- Launch national and regional media literacy campaigns that train parents, teachers, religious leaders, and community activists to decode visual, textual, and rhetorical radicalisation strategies.
- Distribute open-access toolkits with annotated propaganda fragments (e.g., from *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*), demonstrating how seemingly innocuous phrases or images encode violent ideologies.
- Partner with schools, mosques, and community centres to host CDS-based digital literacy events, making the insights from this thesis accessible beyond the academy.

Such efforts directly respond to the fragmentation of interpretive authority online and the rise of peer-to-peer radicalisation networks (Vidino & Hughes, 2015).

Summary

This section has advanced a set of media- and technology-based counter-extremism strategies derived from the thesis's detailed Critical Discourse Analysis of ISIS propaganda. By mobilising discourse-aware AI, multimodal narrative disruption, algorithmic equity, and digital hubs for youth engagement, these recommendations operationalise the thesis's core insight: that radicalisation is a discursive process embedded in technological ecologies. The recommendations propose responsive interventions and seek to reshape the very architectures that allow extremist content to flourish—offering a rigorous, interdisciplinary roadmap for sustainable ideological resilience.

5.7. Recommendations for Youth and Community-Based Interventions

Youth are not merely the most targeted demographic in ISIS propaganda—they are its ideological battleground. As shown in the fragment-by-fragment analyses across *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS consistently exploits the psychosocial vulnerabilities of young people by offering a grand narrative of purpose, belonging, and heroic struggle. Through identity-fracturing discourses and emotionally potent metaphors (e.g., *the path*, *the flame*, *the fortress*), the organisation constructs a persuasive vision of martyrdom, community, and sacred mission. These appeals are intensified in postcolonial contexts, such as North Africa, where youth often face

structural marginalisation, identity dissonance, and epistemic alienation. This section develops community-based, youth-focused interventions informed by the tripartite CDS framework—Fairclough’s DRA, van Dijk’s SCM, and Wodak’s DHA—and contextualised within the psychosocial dynamics revealed throughout this thesis.

5.7.1. Build Identity-Affirming, Culturally Resonant Youth Spaces

The analysis consistently reveals that ISIS fills a void of meaning, dignity, and empowerment in the lives of young people. Contexts marked by colonial trauma, religious confusion, and civic disenfranchisement exacerbate this. Thus, we recommend:

- Establishing youth cultural hubs that combine creative expression (poetry, rap, spoken word, visual arts) with critical discourse literacy. These should serve as ideological “safe zones” where religious identity, civic belonging, and global awareness are explored constructively.

- Partnering with youth influencers and peer leaders to co-create digital narratives that reframe success, honour, and struggle in non-violent, pluralistic terms. Such initiatives can tap into van Dijk’s (1998) schema theory by reconstructing the mental models through which youth perceive legitimacy and resistance.

- Integrating local dialects and idioms into counter-narrative materials to foster linguistic authenticity and minimise the alienation often produced by formal or Westernised deradicalisation content.

5.7.2. Mobilise Former Extremists and Survivors as Narrative Witnesses

Personal stories are among the most emotionally powerful tools for disrupting radical narratives. The use of testimonial discourse, as indicated in Wodak’s DHA, can dismantle monologic ideologies by reintroducing plural voices and moral ambiguity.

- Develop community storytelling programmes where former radicals, defectors, and victims of terrorism recount their journeys through professionally facilitated formats (videos, podcasts, school visits, community events).

- Implement youth-to-youth testimonial exchanges that humanise ideological dissent and highlight the costs of extremism. These formats should model narrative dissonance and self-reflexivity, disrupting the totalising logic of ISIS propaganda.
- Construct digital platforms archiving such testimonies, ensuring multilingual access and cultural sensitivity for Algerian and broader MENA audiences.

5.7.3. Train Local Youth Workers in Cognitive and Discourse-Based Engagement:

Youth workers are often the first to notice early signs of ideological withdrawal, yet they remain undertrained in the discursive dimensions of radicalisation. Building on the analytical tools developed in this thesis, we propose:

- Training youth centre staff and local mentors in recognising the rhetorical and multimodal patterns of radical discourse (e.g., takfir language, martyrdom iconography, binary logic). This builds localised counter-discourse capacity.
- Creating toolkits informed by van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, offering practical ways to decode radical narratives and foster ideological immunity through mental model recalibration.
- Equipping youth workers with Fairclough's interdiscursive analysis skills to trace how radical ideas surface subtly in everyday discourse (e.g., lyrics, memes, slogans).

5.7.4. Facilitate Community-Based Dialogues on Faith, Identity, and Resistance:

Extremist discourse thrives where legitimate grievance has no forum for expression. By offering alternative spaces for collective sense-making, communities can reclaim interpretive authority and inoculate youth against violent ideologies.

- Host regular intra-community forums (e.g., town hall meetings, mosque-based workshops, school debates) that address topics such as injustice, foreign policy, religious interpretation, and belonging in the digital age.

- Involve religious, academic, and civil society actors in these forums to ensure multidimensional perspectives and challenge ideological monopolies.
- Model dialogic practices that disrupt absolutist narratives and support youth in navigating complexity, doubt, and plural truths—a method drawn from DHA’s emphasis on interdiscursivity and polyphony.

5.7.5. Create Resilience Pathways Through Employment, Volunteering, and Digital Advocacy

The absence of meaningful life trajectories often leads to radicalisation. Therefore, interventions must not stop at ideological critique—they must offer tangible alternatives.

- Develop youth volunteering programmes centred on civic engagement, peacebuilding, and interfaith service, reframing struggle and sacrifice within ethical, non-violent frameworks.
- Partner with tech companies and media agencies to train youth in digital advocacy, giving them the skills to shape online discourse and challenge hate speech creatively.
- Integrate radicalisation awareness into career counselling, ensuring that young people see deradicalisation not as state surveillance but as self-empowerment.

Summary

This section foregrounds youth and community resilience not as ancillary to counter-extremism but as its ethical and epistemic core. By empowering young people to critically engage with discourse, rewrite their narratives, and participate in culturally grounded meaning-making, we neutralise the seductive pull of jihadist propaganda. Rooted in the empirical and theoretical findings of this thesis, these recommendations align linguistic precision with sociocultural empathy—ensuring that youth are not merely protected from radicalisation but positioned as co-constructors of ideological resistance.

5.8. Final Integrative Reflections and Roadmap for Future Action

The empirical, theoretical, and interpretive journey undertaken in this thesis has demonstrated with clarity and depth how ISIS’s propaganda discourse—across *Dabiq* and

Rumiyah—functions not only as a rhetorical device but also as an ideological infrastructure capable of shaping cognition, mobilising affect, and guiding behaviour. Through an interdisciplinary, multimodal, and model-driven lens—namely, Fairclough’s Dialectical–Relational Approach, van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Model, and Wodak’s Discourse–Historical Approach—this thesis has unveiled the granular mechanisms by which violent extremism is normalised, aestheticised, and sacralised in online jihadi texts.

But scholarly critique alone is insufficient in the face of such an evolving threat. The value of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), as applied here, lies not merely in its diagnostic capacity but in its translational and interventionist potential. This concluding section offers a holistic synthesis of the analytical insights, highlighting cross-cutting themes and forward-looking implications while also laying out a strategic roadmap for sustained academic, civic, institutional, and policy-based engagement with radicalisation discourse in the digital age.

5.8.1. From Analysis to Application: Bridging Scholarship and Policy

The findings across the thirty analysed fragments reveal how ISIS constructs a parallel reality marked by dualistic ethics, delegitimised moderation, and sanctified violence. These discursive logics are not limited to the abstract or theological; they are operationalised through visual symbols, semantic frames, intertextual citations, and narrative structures that resonate with youth, bypass traditional authority, and recalibrate notions of truth, duty, and identity.

The thesis has shown that:

- Discursive construction of legitimacy is deeply multimodal, merging mediaeval jurisprudence with contemporary grievances;
- Delegitimation of religious scholars and state institutions is central to creating ideological voids filled by ISIS dogma;
- Emotional, theological, and cognitive appeals are tightly interwoven to circumvent rational critique and forge an affective community of believers.

Hence, future counter-radicalisation strategies must not only respond reactively to content but proactively contest its epistemic foundations. This calls for a paradigm shift: from securitised

responses to culturally literate, linguistically grounded, and community-empowered frameworks of resistance.

5.8.2. Towards a CDS-Informed Counter-Radicalisation Model

One of the thesis's core contributions is its methodological innovation: applying the triangulated model of DRA–SCM–DHA to visual-textual propaganda in a systematic, fragment-based manner. This model offers:

- Context-sensitive interpretive depth (Wodak),
- Cognitive schema mapping and ideological decoding (van Dijk),
- Linkages to broader sociopolitical structures and discursive power (Fairclough).

This model could be institutionalised in future practice through:

- Academic training programmes in applied CDS for counter-extremism researchers, journalists, and religious educators;
- Monitoring frameworks for tech companies and civil society actors to identify radical discursive cues before behavioural radicalisation manifests.
- Collaborative think tanks where CDS scholars work alongside policymakers to co-design interventions informed by linguistic insights and field data.

5.8.3. Embedding Preventative Discourse Literacy in Education

The thesis has underscored the necessity of integrating preventative discourse literacy into curricula, especially in postcolonial and post-conflict contexts. Youth must be trained not only in what to think but also in how discourses shape thought. This entails:

- Analysing extremist propaganda in safe, guided academic settings;
- Comparing manipulative and emancipatory discourse styles;
- Developing critical media literacy that targets intertextuality, modality, presupposition, and semantic framing.

This pedagogical shift transforms passive recipients of ideology into active agents of meaning-making, thereby undermining the discursive preconditions for radicalisation.

5.8.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this research provides an original and rigorous interrogation of the strategic communicative apparatus of the Islamic State, it is imperative to acknowledge the specific boundaries that define its scope. These limitations do not detract from the study's validity but serve to contextualise the findings within the selected theoretical and empirical parameters.

5.8.4.1. Limitations of the Study

- **Linguistic and Corpus Boundaries:** The investigation is exclusively confined to the English-language periodicals *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Consequently, the findings reflect the discursive strategies tailored for a global, Western-educated, or English-speaking audience. This study does not account for potential linguistic variations, theological depths, or rhetorical shifts present in the group's Arabic-language output (such as the *An-Naba* newsletter) or its diverse non-textual propaganda forms, including *nasheeds* (chants), video productions, and encrypted social media communications.

- **Temporal and Synchronic Focus:** This research constitutes a synchronic analysis of a specific epoch in the Islamic State's history (2014–2017). As such, the findings capture the discourse of a "proto-state" at its territorial and communicative zenith. It does not aim to provide a diachronic longitudinal study of how extremist rhetoric has evolved in the "post-caliphate" or insurgent phase, where narratives of governance have largely been replaced by narratives of survival and attrition.

- **Methodological Subjectivity and Reflexivity:** As a qualitative inquiry grounded in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), the analysis is inherently interpretative. While the researcher employed methodological triangulation—integrating the frameworks of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak—to ensure analytical rigor, the interpretations are a product of the researcher's interaction with the text. This study does not claim to offer an absolute or singular "objective" truth, but rather a theoretically grounded interrogation of how power and ideology are linguistically constructed.

- **Absence of Reception Analysis:** The analytical focus remains strictly on producer discourse and internal discursive mechanisms. This research investigates how meaning is *constructed* by the authors of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, not how it is *consumed* or interpreted by diverse audiences. Therefore, no empirical claims are made regarding the actual psychological impact, resonance, or radicalisation efficacy of these texts on specific individuals or groups.

- **Geographical and Contextual Delimitation:** To maintain a focused interrogation of the movement's universal ideological constructs, this study does not empirically ground its analysis within specific regional or local sociopolitical landscapes. Specifically, the findings are not framed through the lens of the Algerian or broader MENA context. The application of these global findings to localised North African vulnerabilities remains a theoretical proposition for future research rather than an empirical claim of the present work.

- **Theological and Conceptual Translation:** *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* often serve as "bridge" texts, translating complex Salafi-Jihadi theological concepts into an English-speaking framework. This study focuses on the discursive manifestation of these concepts rather than their theological accuracy or pedigree within Islamic jurisprudence. It acknowledges a potential "translation gap" where the English texts may simplify or adapt deep-seated religious doctrines for strategic recruitment purposes.

5.8.4.2. Future Research Trajectories

The conclusions drawn here open several critical avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation:

- **Linguistic and Platform Evolution:** Future research should interrogate how jihadist discourses—specifically those targeting female audiences—evolve across diverse platforms and vernacular languages beyond the flagship periodicals.

- **Regional and Localised Interrogations:** There is a pressing need to investigate how global extremist narratives are adapted through vernacular languages, memes, and micro-formats within specific local contexts, such as North Africa, to exploit regional identity tensions.

- **Computational Integration:** Methodologically, integrating Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools offers a path toward detecting and analysing emerging radical narratives in real-time.

5.8.5. Final Reflections

This thesis concludes with the firm conviction that language is not merely a communicative tool but a primary battleground of power, identity, and ideology. By meticulously dissecting the discursive machinery of ISIS's propaganda through a tripartite CDS lens, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how violent ideologies achieve internal coherence.

Ultimately, this work serves as a scholarly resource for policymakers, educators, and international institutions. It is a call to reinvest in discourse-informed, ethically grounded interventions that empower ideological resilience and dismantle the sophisticated narratives of extremism.

5.9. Conclusion

Ultimately, this chapter posits that the semiotic and cognitive architecture of radicalisation requires a robust and targeted discursive response. While material or territorial shifts may impact the operational capacity of extremist organisations, the ideological, theological, and epistemological narratives that sustain them demand proactive, multifaceted interventions. The path forward involves a transition from passive consumption to a model of Critical Discourse Literacy (CDL)—a systematic engagement with the mechanisms of systemic deception.

By translating the analytical rigour of the Tripartite Framework into actionable praxis, this work provides a blueprint for enhancing ideological and semiotic resilience on an international scale. This research affirms that even in the most pervasive forms of propaganda, a "counter-light" can be constructed—one word, one voice, and one community at a time—fostering a deeper understanding of the power of discourse in the restoration of human dignity and the advancement of global security.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This doctoral research has delivered a critical, interdisciplinary, and methodologically triangulated investigation into the strategic communicative apparatus of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as articulated through its flagship English-language periodicals, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. The study is situated at the nexus of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), terrorism studies, multimodal semiotics, and socio-cognitive psychology. By synthesising these diverse theoretical lenses, the investigation has provided a comprehensive interrogation of how extremist narratives are constructed and disseminated to a global audience, highlighting the sophisticated discursive mechanisms employed to foster radicalisation.

The core problem identified at the outset was a significant scholarly lacuna: the absence of a unified, empirically grounded model capable of deconstructing the complex multimodal and cognitive synergies that drive extremist indoctrination. Previous literature often treated linguistic, visual, and cognitive dimensions in isolation, failing to account for the "inter-semiotic" nature of modern propaganda. This thesis successfully addressed this gap by developing and operationalising a Tripartite CDS Framework, providing a holistic diagnostic tool for the "grammar of radicalisation".

The trajectory of this research was defined by a primary inquiry:

Primary RQ: How did ISIS employ linguistic and multimodal strategies in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* to construct ideology and narratives aimed at radicalising English-speaking audiences between 2014 and 2017?

Within the framework of this main inquiry, a series of secondary questions were derived to unpack the specific mechanisms at play:

- **Q1:** What discursive, cognitive, and visual techniques are used to represent the Self (the in-group) and the Other (the out-group)?
- **Q2:** How are legitimacy, authority, and religious identity constructed through the recontextualisation of historical and theological narratives?
- **Q3:** How did ISIS's discourse evolve strategically from the state-building rhetoric of *Dabiq* (2014–2016) to the insurgent urgency of *Rumiyah* (2016–2017)?

• **Q4:** How can the findings of a tripartite CDS analysis inform the design of effective counter-radicalisation strategies?

In line with the evidence derived from the systematic, longitudinal analysis of the thirty fragment corpus, the results of this study allow for the following formal attestations:

• **H1: Cognitive Polarisation (Confirmed):** The data verifies that ISIS discourse constructs a rigid cognitive model—the "Ideological Square"—where the in-group is sanctified and the out-group is dehumanised. The analysis of fragments such as F16 (*Why We Hate You*) confirmed that the "Other" is reduced to a theological category of "halal blood," effectively stripping the target audience of human complexity through radical Negative Other-presentation.

• **H2: Manufactured Legitimacy through Recontextualisation (Confirmed):** The study confirms that the group's authority is not inherent but is linguistically manufactured through the selective re-appropriation of historical Islamic narratives. By weaponising classical nodal points (e.g., *jihad*, *hijrah*), the discourse fabricates a persuasive but artificial prophetic mandate.

• **H3: Strategic Metamorphosis (Confirmed):** The longitudinal analysis verified a measurable strategic evolution. While *Dabiq* (2014–2016) prioritised a "utopian state-building" narrative, *Rumiyah* (2016–2017) recalibrated toward a rhetoric of "insurgent urgency" and decentralised violence in response to territorial loss, effectively "weaponising the ordinary."

H4: Methodological Utility for Counter-Narrative Design (Confirmed): The results prove that the Tripartite CDS Framework (DRA, SCM, DHA) reveals deep-seated cognitive and historical mechanisms that a mono-methodological approach would overlook, providing a functional diagnostic baseline for the design of culturally resonant counter-radicalisation strategies.

The findings were inductively derived from the analysis of thirty fragments, revealing a sophisticated and adaptive discursive machinery:

• **Lexical Engineering and Semantic Hijacking (DRA Focus):** The analysis of fragments such as F10 (*Wala' and Bara'*) and F16 (*Why We Hate You*) demonstrated that ISIS does not merely use language; it re-engineers it. By weaponising classical Islamic nodal points (e.g., *jihad*,

hijrah, taghut), the discourse establishes a restricted "moral lexicon" that eliminates ambiguity and normalises existential violence as a divine imperative.

• **Cognitive Polarisation and the Ideological Square (SCM Focus):** The application of van Dijk's model revealed a consistent cognitive architecture designed to manage the reader's mental models. Through Positive Self-presentation and radical Negative Other-presentation, the propaganda achieves a state of "cognitive closure," where the out-group is stripped of human complexity and reduced to the theological category of "halal blood".

• **Multimodal Mythologisation and Historical Topoi (DHA Focus):** The research uncovered a "theatre of triumph" where visual grammar—specifically salience, gaze, and framing—works in synergy with historical narratives. By utilizing topoi such as the *Topos of Threat* and *Topos of Divine Mandate*, ISIS recontextualises contemporary geopolitical events as a continuation of seventh-century conquests, thereby sacralising modern terror as eschatological fulfilment.

• **The Strategic Metamorphosis: From Statehood to Insurgency:** A critical longitudinal finding was the discursive shift from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah*. As territory was lost, the narrative transitioned from a "utopian state-building" discourse (defined by triumphalism and governance) to a rhetoric of "insurgent urgency". This recalibration effectively "weaponised the ordinary," inciting decentralised, lone-actor violence as a means of maintaining ideological relevance in the face of material defeat.

• **Affective and Psycholinguistic Resonance:** Beyond logic, the propaganda activates deep emotional schemata—specifically shame, revenge, and pride. Through metaphor and symbolic resonance, ISIS interpellates the audience not just as believers, but as "warriors" whose personal identity is inextricably linked to the survival of the global *Khilafah*.

This thesis provides a substantial and original contribution to the fields of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), Political Semiotics, and Counter-Terrorism Research. By transcending the descriptive boundaries of previous scholarship, this research offers several landmark advancements:

The primary contribution of this study is the development and operationalisation of a unified Tripartite CDS Framework. While previous research often relied on mono-methodological approaches, this thesis is the first to systematically triangulate Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA), van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), and Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) into a single analytical workflow. This synthesis allows for a multi-layered deconstruction of extremist discourse that captures textual agency, cognitive mental models, and historical recontextualisation simultaneously. This framework provides future researchers with a robust, replicable model for investigating complex ideological phenomena where micro-linguistic evidence must be linked to macro-social structures.

This research advances the theoretical understanding of intersemiotic radicalisation. By integrating Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar into a socio-cognitive framework, the thesis moves beyond simple image analysis to reveal how visual and textual modes work in a state of "functional synergy" to manage audience mental models. The study identifies the specific semiotic mechanisms—such as salience, gaze, and chromatic coding—through which ISIS sacralises violence and constructs its "theatre of triumph." This contribution provides a new theoretical lens for understanding how digital propaganda achieves cognitive closure in an era of multimodal information saturation.

Finally, this work executes a significant shift from descriptive critique to prescriptive praxis. In the tradition of problem-oriented CDS, the thesis moves beyond the "hermeneutics of suspicion" to offer a functional bridge to policymaking. By mapping the "grammar of radicalization" directly to specific Counter-Discourse Strategies and Pedagogical Innovations, the research establishes a new standard for "applied" discourse studies. This contribution demonstrates that academic deconstruction can serve as a diagnostic baseline for national security, educational reform, and the restoration of civic dignity.

The analytical insights derived from the deconstruction of the thirty fragment corpus are operationalised into a multi-tiered framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE). By bridging the "diagnostic baseline" established in the analysis with social praxis, this research offers the following strategic interventions:

• **Operationalising Discursive Resistance (DRA and SCM Focus):** Counter-discourse strategies must move beyond generic messaging to target the specific "Lexical Engineering" identified in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. This involves the development of **Counter-Lexicons** designed to reclaim hijacked nodal points—such as *jihad*, *hijrah*, and *shuhada*—from their extremist recontextualisation. By reversing the Ideological Square, practitioners can dismantle the binary mental models of "Us vs. Them," replacing the "Positive Self-presentation/Negative Other-presentation" schema with a discourse that restores human complexity and social plurality.

• **Educational Transformation through Critical Discourse Literacy (CDL):** A core contribution of this work is the blueprint for integrating Critical Discourse Literacy into national curricula. This pedagogical shift empowers youth to decode the "intersemiotic" power of extremist imagery, fostering an "ideological immunity." By teaching students to identify topoi (e.g., the *Topos of Threat* or *Topos of History*) and the strategic use of salience and gaze in visual propaganda, the classroom becomes a primary site for dismantling the "Caliphate of the Mind."

• **Institutional Realignment and Historical Recontextualisation (DHA Focus):** For security sectors and religious leadership, this research provides the linguistic and historical tools necessary to challenge the "Strategic Metamorphosis" of propaganda. Institutional training should focus on the Discourse-Historical (DHA) findings, specifically how ISIS recontextualises sacred history to legitimise modern violence. By restoring the "theological depth" that extremist discourse intentionally erases, religious authorities can provide culturally resonant counter-narratives that address postcolonial identity tensions and the linguistic hybridity of the North African context.

• **Advancing Digital and Algorithmic Governance:** In response to the high-gloss multimodal density of *Rumiyah*, this thesis advocates for the design of AI-driven detection systems that transcend keyword filtering. Future digital governance should be informed by the semiotic markers discovered in this study—such as Qur’anic-infused visual framing and martyrdom iconography—enabling platforms to identify the "intersemiotic orchestration" of radicalisation in real-time. This ensures that technological interventions are as linguistically and visually sophisticated as the propaganda they seek to disrupt. This multi-dimensional approach ensures that the findings of this thesis are not merely a descriptive exercise but a functional tool for national security, educational empowerment, and the restoration of civic dignity.

In the interest of reflexive scholarship and methodological transparency, this study acknowledges specific boundaries that, while defining the scope of the current inquiry, offer fertile ground for subsequent academic investigation:

While this thesis provided a definitive deconstruction of the English-language periodicals *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, the "grammar of radicalisation" remains a transnational and multilingual phenomenon. Future research should apply the Tripartite CDS Framework to primary Arabic-language sources, such as the weekly newsletter *an-Naba*, to ascertain whether the discursive strategies identified here—such as lexical engineering and historical recontextualisation—are universal extremist tropes or language-specific constructs. Furthermore, expanding the analysis to include video-based propaganda and audio-narratives (nasheeds) would allow for a more exhaustive testing of the model's cross-modal reliability in even higher-density semiotic environments.

This research was primarily producer-oriented, focusing on the "encoded" ideological intent within the thirty fragment corpus. However, Critical Discourse Studies recognises that discourse is a dialectical process; there remains a critical "enunciative gap" between the producer's intent and the audience's uptake. Future inquiries should employ ethnographic and socio-psychological methodologies to measure how these multimodal strategies resonate with diverse audiences in real-time. Investigating the "decoding" process—specifically how linguistic hybridity and local socio-political grievances influence the reception of global narratives—would provide a vital completion to the discursive circuit established in this study.

The manual qualitative rigour applied in this thesis allowed for deep, "thick" descriptions of ideological nuances. However, to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving digital landscape, there is a significant opportunity to integrate this framework with Computational Linguistics. Future research should explore the synergy between manual CDS and Natural Language Processing (NLP) or machine learning algorithms. By "training" AI systems to recognise the specific semiotic markers and topoi discovered in this research, scholars can move toward the large-scale, automated detection of extremist discursive shifts, enabling a more proactive and scalable response to digital radicalisation.

This doctoral inquiry concludes with the firm conviction that language is not a passive vehicle for communication, but the foundational battleground upon which power, identity, and sovereignty are contested in the twenty-first century. By systematically deconstructing the discursive architecture of ISIS, this research has provided a rigorous methodological scaffold for fostering semiotic resilience and academic empowerment. The application of the Tripartite CDS Framework has demonstrated that the "Caliphate of the Mind" is built upon a sophisticated orchestration of semiotic deception; thus, it can only be effectively dismantled through a context-sensitive, ethically grounded, and linguistically informed critique of power. Ultimately, this work stands as an urgent call to reinvest in the critical study of discourse—not merely as an academic exercise, but as a vital prerequisite for global security, epistemic justice, and the restoration of human dignity in the face of extremist narratives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

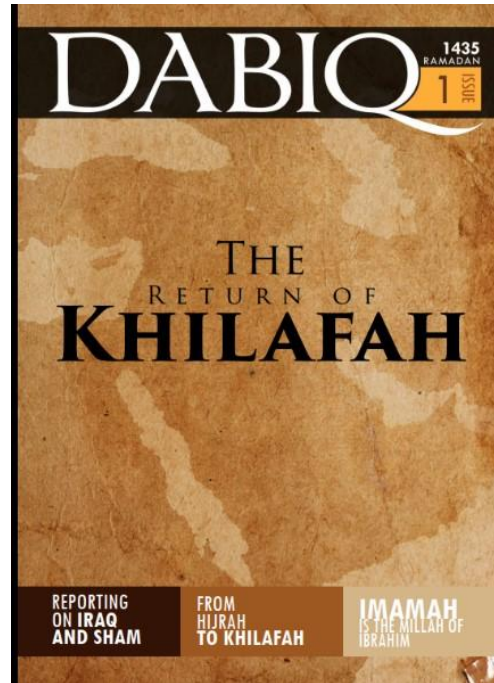
Dabiq Discourse Fragments (F01–F16):

This section lists the primary data units selected from the *Dabiq* periodical.

- **Fragment ID: F01**
 - **Type:** Structural/Textual Constant (**Periodical Title**)
 - **Source:** *Dabiq*, Issues 1–15 (Ramadan 1435 – Shawwal 1437 / July 2014 – July 2016)
- **Figure 1 (Fragment F02):** al-Zarqawi Quote and Visual Composition (*Dabiq* 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014, pp. 2–3)
 - **Content:** “*The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify – by Allah’s permission – until it burns the crusader armies in Dābiq.*” — *Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi*



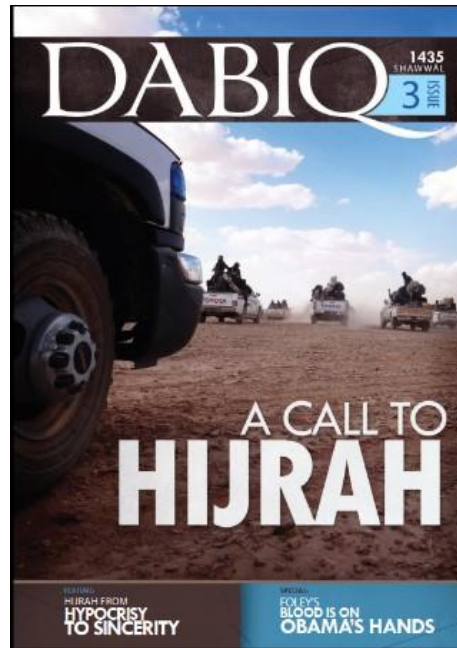
- **Figure 2 (Fragment F03):** 1st Issue Cover Page: The Return of Khilafah (*Dabiq* 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014)



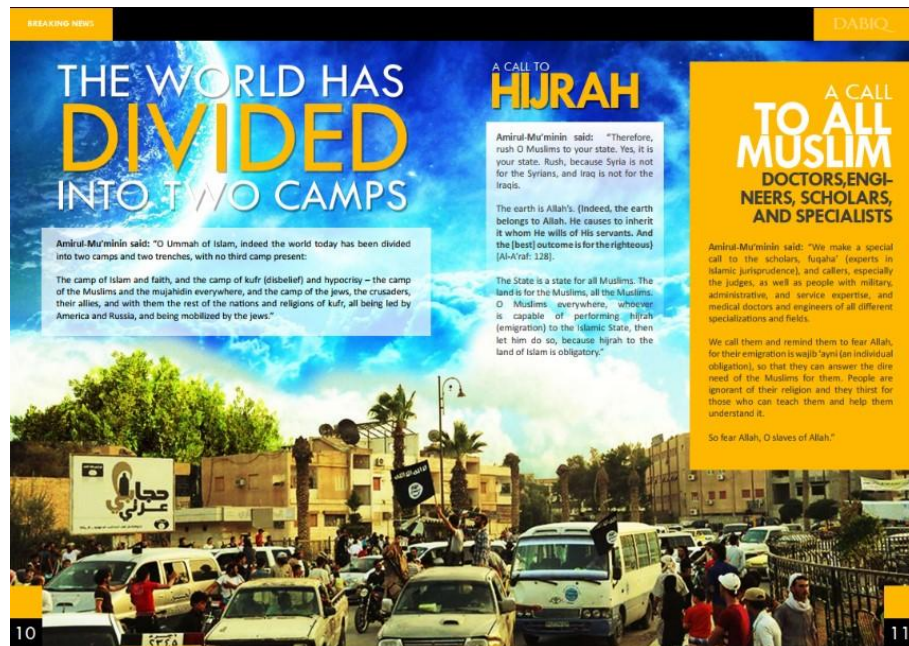
- **Figure 3 (Fragment F04):** Khilafah Declared / Glad Tidings (Dabiq 1, Ramadan 1435 / July 2014, pp. 6–7)



- **Figure 4 (Fragment F05):** 3rd Issue Cover Page: A Call to Hijrah (*Dabiq* 3, Shawwal 1435 / Aug 2014)



- **Figure 5 (Fragment F06):** The World Has Divided Into Two Camps (*Dabiq* 3, Shawwal 1435 / Aug 2014, pp. 10–11)

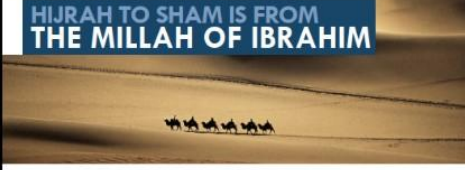


- **Figure 6 (Fragment F07):** Hijrah to Sham is from the Millah of Ibrahim (*Dabiq* 3, Shawwal 1435 / Aug 2014, pp. 10–11)

ARTICLE

PART 4:

HIJRAH TO SHAM IS FROM THE MILLAH OF IBRAHIM



The hijrah of the strangers to Sham was in adherence to the path of Ibrahim (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) who established for them the tradition of declaring enmity and hatred towards the mushrikīn and their twilight.

Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiyallahu 'anhuma) said that Allah's Messenger (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "There will be hijrah after hijrah. The best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrahim's hijrah. Then there will remain on the earth the worst of its people. Their lands will cast them out, Allah will hate them, and the fire will gather them together with the apes and swine" [hasan – reported by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawūd, and al-Hākim].

The Prophet's statement, "And on the earth will remain the worst of the people [to the end of the hadith]" refers to the period after "Allah sends the pleasant breeze and it causes every person who has so much as the weight of a mustard seed of faith in his heart to pass away. Then there will remain only those who have no good in them whatsoever" [Sahih Muslim].

In another narration, "So it [the breeze] grasps them under their armpits, taking the soul of every believer and every Muslim. And there will remain the worst of the people, having intercourse as donkeys do [in front of other people as they watch]. So it is upon them

that the Hour will be established" [Sahih Muslim].

And in another narration, "Allah will send a cold breeze from the direction of Sham, so no one will remain on the face of the earth with so much as the weight of a mustard seed of goodness or faith in his heart except that it takes him. Even if one of you were to enter into the center of a mountain, the breeze would enter into it, until it takes him. Then there will remain the worst of the people, who have the agility of birds [in their haste to commit evil and satisfy their lusts] and the wits of vicious, predatory animals [in their hostility and oppression of one another]. They do not know any good, nor do they denounce any evil" [Sahih Muslim].

This pleasant breeze takes the souls of the believers everywhere on the earth: al-Hijāz, Iraq, Yemen, Sham, and so on. It will be sent forth a number of years after the demise of the Dajjal and the passing away of the Masih 'Isā (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullāh) said, "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" [Majma'ul-Fatawa].

10

DABIQ

Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullāh) also said, "So he informed that the best of the people on the earth are those who keep to the land of Ibrahim's hijrah, in contrast to those who pass through it or leave it". The land that Ibrahim made hijrah to is Sham. In this hadith, there are glad tidings for our companions who made hijrah from Harran (an area of Iraq) and elsewhere to the land of Ibrahim's hijrah, and followed the path of Ibrahim and the religion of their prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). Likewise, this hadith contains a clarification that this hijrah of theirs is equal to the hijrah of the Companions of Allah's Messenger (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to Madinah, because hijrah is made to wherever the Messenger is and left an impact. And the land of Ibrahim's hijrah, has been made for us equal to the land of our Prophet's hijrah, because hijrah to Madinah was discontinued after the conquest of Makkah" [Majma'ul-Fatawa].

Abdullah ibn Hawālah (radiyallahu 'anhu) said that Allah's Messenger (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) 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." Ibn Hawālah said, "Choose for me [which army to join] if I reach that time." He said, "Go to Sham, for it is the best of Allah's lands, 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." [Sahih – reported by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawūd, al-Hākim].

So those who left their tribes – the best of Allah's slaves – rallied together with an imam and a jama'ah upon the path of Ibrahim. They gathered together in the land of mada'in shortly before the occurrence of al-Malahmah al-Kubrah, announced their enmity and hatred for the cross worshippers, the apostates, their crosses, their borders, and their ba'lo-

bows, and pledged allegiance to the Khilāfah, promising to die defending it. Then, they were opposed and forsaken by "the wise ones," the "theorizers," and "the elders," who labeled them as being khawārij, harūriyyah (a branch of the khawārij), hashshīn (a heretical sunni sect), the grandsons of Ibn Mujlim (the kharij who killed 'Ali ibn Abi Talib), and the dogs of Hellfire! So if the mujahidīn of the Islamic State in their thousands are the dogs of Hellfire, then who are the ones referred to in the hadith as being "those who break off from their tribes" and "the best of Allah's slaves"? Apart from them, there are no other mujahidīn left in Sham, except for a small number whose hearts yearn for the Islamic State and for giving bay'ah to the Imam. Then there will remain outside of the Islamic State only he who is obstructed from it by mountainous waves of envy and arrogance, so that he drowns in the methodologies of the hypocrites, the numormongers, and the weak-hearted, and he aids the saha'at of apostasy, following rukhas (concessions) on his path to heresy. We ask Allah for forgiveness and well-being in this life and in the hereafter.

11

- **Figure 7 (Fragment F08):** The Fading Grayzone (*Dabiq* 4, Dhul-Hijjah 1435 / Oct 2014, p. 43)


DABIQ

THE FADING GRAYZONE

Since the beginning of this crusade on the media frontline, self-styled jihadist ideologues and quasi-mujahidīn have tried to position themselves in an area that is neither Islamic State nor Sahwah... only to be sucked into the trenches of the apostate media and religious scholarship of the Arab twilight. They even imitated the nusayriyyah and secularist opposition by labelling the Islamic State as "Daesh" and "Tandhim ad-Dawlah," in a manner precisely mimicking the satellite channels and palace scholars of Al-Salaf and Qatar. One of the top "jihadist ideologues" presented a verdict entailing ways to confront the "extremism and takfir" of "Jama'at ad-Dawlah" matching those expressed by Obama, Chuck Hagel, Dempsey, and the US State Department. His suggestions included preventing financial and human resources from reaching the Islamic State as well as religiously delegitimizing the State in a manner US officials said "Muslim scholars must do. And yet he and his likes claim they are neutral!

It is as if they haven't read the verses of the Qur'an teaching us that the Jews and Christians fight the Muslims for their religion and that the more one is fought by them for his religion the closer he is to the path of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). (And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper) [Al-Baqarah: 120]. [And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever – for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire, they will abide therein eternally] [Al-Baqarah: 217].

To paraphrase Shaykh Anwar al-Awlaki (rahimahullāh), if one wants to know the people of truth, then let him observe where the enemies' arrows are aimed. Most of them – if not all – are now pointed at the Islamic State, its leaders, soldiers, and subjects.



This crusade against the Islamic State is the greatest testimony from Allah for the proper manhaj of this Khilāfah. Anyone who says otherwise now should review his faith before death suddenly takes him while he stands with one foot in the trench of the crusaders and the other in the trench of the hypocrites whilst claiming he is in the grayzone! The mujahid knows no grayzone. As the liar Bush truthfully said, "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."

Shaykh Usamah ibn Ladin (rahimahullāh) commented, "So the world today is divided into two camps. Bush spoke the truth when he said, 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.' I.e. either you are with the crusade or you are with Islam. Bush today is in the frontline carrying a huge cross and treading. I swear by Allah the Great that everyone who treads behind Bush in his plan has apostatized from the religion of Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). This ruling is from the clearest of rulings in the Book of Allah and Sunnah of the Messenger (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). The scholars have said this as I have mentioned before. The proof for this is the statement of Allah subhānahu wa ta'ālā in which he addresses the believers saying, [O you who have believed, do not

43

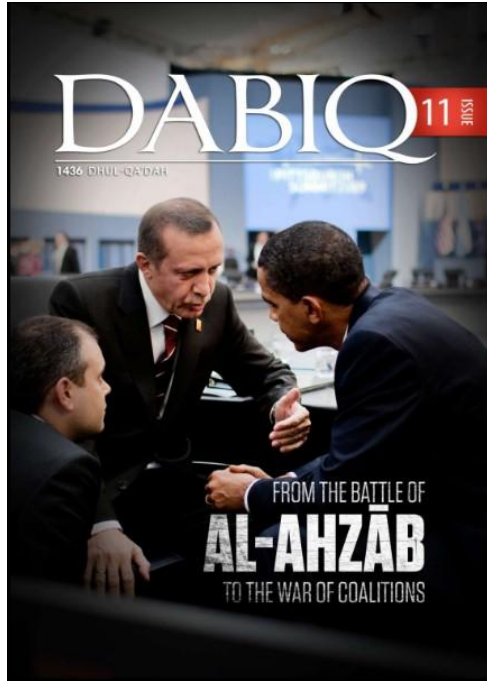
- **Figure 8 (Fragment F09):** 7th Issue Cover Page: From Hypocrisy to Apostasy (*Dabiq* 7, Rabi' al-Akhir 1436 / Feb 2015)



- **Figure 9 (Fragment F10):** WALĀ' AND BARĀ' (*Dabiq* 10, Ramadan 1436 / June 2015, pp. 38–39)



- **Figure 10 (Fragment F11): The Danger of Abandoning Dārul-Islām (Dabiq 11, Dhul-Qa'dah 1436 / Sept 2015)**



The repeated events of Syrians and Libyans dying on the shores of Turkey, Libya, and Italy, or even on the highways of Austria, is one that should awaken the heart into reflecting upon the issue of hijrah.

[Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves – [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil it is a destination. Except for the oppressed among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way – For those it is expected that Allah will pardon them, and Allah is ever Pardonng and Forgiving] [Aan-Nisa: 97-99]

Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Allah ﷻ does not accept any deed from a man after he accepts Islam until he departs from the mushrikim and goes to the Muslimin" [Reported by an-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah on the authority of Mu'awiyah bin Haydah].¹

Although the obligation of hijrah is clear, a mistake is regularly committed by claimants of Islam, and that is in choosing their destination for "hijrah." They always choose the lands of the Christians for their destination. But after the establishment of the prophetic state, hijrah was to al-Madīnah over al-Mushrikah. And during the Umayyad and 'Abbasid rule, hijrah was to the lands of the Khilāfah: not Rome and Constantinople. And with the revival of Islam's state, hijrah is to the wilayah of the Khilāfah, not to Nizariy, Rafīqī, Salwāh, or PKK territory, nor to America, Europe, and their rightist allies.

Hijrah is an obligation from dārul-kufr to Dārul-Islām. Ibn Qudāmah, for example, said, "Chapter on Hijrah: Hijrah is to abandon dārul-kufr for Dārul-Islām." He then quoted the verse referenced earlier and other proofs. He then said, "The riding of hijrah will remain and will not cease until Resurrection Day" [Al-Mughnī]. Rashīd-Qayyim ﷻ said that "If the laws of Islam are not implemented somewhere, it is not Dārul-Islām" [Ishāh Ahl al-Dīnīyah]. This is evident, as the Salāhah did not consider the lands overrun by the false prophets or the resistance against zakāh to be anything but dārul-kufr. The fugitive after them did not consider the lands ruled by the Tatar or 'Ubaydī rulers to be Dārul-Islām, for although these rulers claimed Islam and ruled by some of its laws, they committed apostasy by abandoning some of its laws or teachings. Accordingly, moving to the lands of Al Salāh or the Sabā'ah is not hijrah, as the rulers of these lands – in addition to them allying with the crusaders and apostates against Islam – abandon and resist many of the laws of the Shar'ah. There is no wa'f' and haif' there except on a nationalistic basis.

Sadly, some Syrians and Libyans are willing to risk the lives and souls of those whom they are responsible to raise upon the Shar'ah – their children – sacrificing many of them during the dangerous trip to the lands of the warring crusaders ruled by laws of atheism and indecency. Although none of these families leave from dārul-kufr – Salwāh, PKK, or regime territory – to the crusaders' lands, the possibility of families leaving the Khilāfah for America or Europe in pursuit of the Dunyā is a matter that should bring focus to the ruling of abandoning Dārul-Islām for dārul-kufr.

Therefore, it should be known that voluntarily leaving Dārul-Islām for dārul-kufr is a dangerous major sin, as it is a passage towards kufr and a gate towards one's children and grandchildren abandoning Islam for Christianity, atheism, or Islamism. If one's children and grandchildren don't fall into kufr, they are under the constant threat of fermentation, sodomy, drugs, and alcohol. If they don't fall into sin, they will forget the language of the Qur'ān – Arabic – which they were surrounded by in Shām, Iraq, Libya, and elsewhere, making the return to the religion and its teachings more difficult.

There are several narrations in the Sunnah on the prohibition of going back to one's homeland after hijrah, a case similar to that of abandoning Dārul-Islām for dārul-kufr.

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Ibn Ma'ūd ﷻ said, "The taken, given, and contractor of rībā – if they know the deal is rībā – as well as the giver and receiver of ransom for booty, the abandonment of zakāh, and the revert to being a Bedouin after hijrah are all cursed upon the tongue of Muhammad ﷺ until Resurrection Day" [Reported by an-Nasa'i from Ibn Ma'ūd].

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The mukājīl can stay three days in Makkah after completing his [Ubruk or Hajj] rites" [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from al-Ma' al-Hadramī].

Alī Ibn Abī Talīb ﷻ said, "Indeed, the major sins are seven." The people were rising, so he repeated his statement three times and then said, "Who you not ask me about them?" They said, "O Amirul-Mu'minin, what are they?" He replied, "Shirk, murder, defaming the chaste woman, taking the wealth of the orphan, taking rībā, fleeing from battle, and going back to the desert as a Bedouin after hijrah" [Reported by an-Tahāwī in his tafseer].

Al-Qadī 'Iyāz said, "The Ummah has jūf' on the prohibition of the mukājīl abandoning his hijrah and returning to his homeland and that the mukājīl going back to being a Bedouin is a major sin" [Sharh Sahih Muslim – an-Nawawī].

Ibn Hajar said while commenting on the hadith of al-Ma' al-Hadramī quoted above, "From the fiqh of this hadith is that residence in Makkah was haram for those who performed hijrah from it before the Conquest of Makkah. But it was permissible for one who intended it for Hajj or 'Umrah to remain there for not more than three days after completing his rites" [Fath al-Bār].

It is important to note that in the hadith of Ibn Ma'ūd ﷻ,

quoted above as well as in the discussion between Salamah Ibn al-Akhnaf ﷻ and al-Hajjaj on becoming a Bedouin after hijrah [Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim], in addition to other ahādīth and ahkām, returning to the desert as a Bedouin is referred to with the word root of "al-kufr." Ibn al-Akhnaf commented, "They [the Bedouin] used to consider the person who after his hijrah returns to his homeland without excuse like a murtadd" [An-Nihāyah]. This is probably because such a person – in some regards – forsakes aspects of Islam including hearing, obeying, jam'ah, jihad, mas'ud, etc.

And according to some scholars, moving to dārul-kufr from Dārul-Islām is apostasy, whereas others confirm that it renders apostasy.

Ibn Hazm said, "If he moves there [the lands of the crusaders and pagans] for the sake of what he might acquire from dunyā but loses there [like a dīnār] – despite being able to join the body of the Muslimin and reach their land – then his deed is not far from kufr and we find no excuse for him" [Al-Muhallā].

Al-Hasan Ibn Hany (died 169AH) said, "If a man moves to dārul-kufr without apostasizing from Islam, he is a murtadd for abandoning Dārul-Islām" [Mukhtasar Khilāf al-Ulamā' – an-Tahāwī].

Going back to dārul-kufr is certainly a major sin that can reach the level of apostasy if it entails, for example, voluntarily moving to a land where the person will be forced into kufr, as the excuse of coercion is not valid when the individual brings this condition upon himself. Similarly is the case if he agrees to stipulations of kufr – such as cooperating with the kuffar against the Muslimin – so as to be permitted entry into dārul-kufr. This is kufr even if he does not go through with his promise. [Have you not considered those who practice hypocrisy, saying to their brothers who have disbelieved among the People of the Book, "If you are expelled, we will surely leave with you, and we will not obey, in regard to you, anyone – ever; and if you are fought, we will surely aid you." But Allah testifies that they are liars. If they are expelled, they will not leave with them, and if they are fought, they will not aid them. And [even] if they should aid them, they will surely turn their backs; then [hereafter] they will not be asked] [Al-Fatḥ: 11-12]. And there are many other acts of kufr that one can potentially fall into when traveling to dārul-kufr.

May Allah facilitate for the Muslimin hijrah to the Khilāfah despite the plots of the crusaders and the apostates.

DABIQ, 23

- **Figure 11 (Fragment F12): The Dajjal – The ‘Mahdi’ of the Rāfidah** (*Dabiq* 11, Dhul-Qa'dah 1436 / Sept 2015, pp. 16–17)

The ‘Mahdi’ of the Rāfidah
THE DAJJAL

As the Hour approaches, it becomes important to reflect upon the fabricated accounts of future events, as they will undoubtedly play a role in actions taken up by various deviant sects. Of these accounts is that of the “Mahdi” of the Rāfidah who wages war against Islam and the Muslims, contrary to the just and rightly guided Mahdi of the future described in the Sunnah. The closer the Hour approaches, the more the Rāfidah fall in line with the Jews in preparation for the appearance of this awaited evil leader. Upon reading the Rāfidah account of the “Mahdi,” it becomes clear that he is none other than the Dajjal.

According to the Rāfidah, the “Mahdi” is the so-called son of al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari named “Muḥammad.” Al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari died almost 1200 years ago. They claim Muḥammad the “Mahdi” was born around the time of his father’s death. The scholar of Ahl-us-Sunnah doubts that al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari ever had any surviving sons, yet the Rāfidah claim he had a son who was hidden by his father as his relatives and who ultimately went into hiding near Simsrāṭ and would reappear before the Hour after living in hiding more than a thousand years, or so they claim. Here, we will quote some of the narrations about their “Mahdi” from their “more authoritative” books.

The Rāfidah an-Nuʿaimi reports in his book “Al-Ghaybāt,” “When the Imam [the ‘Mahdi’] calls you, he will supplicate Allah through His Hebrew name.”

¹ Indelicately translated through a strong Jewish bias, as they are accused for being the greatest enemies of the Prophet. They hope the most important of their narrations, that in an attempt to be like the Bible that had, just as the Jews will do the right about their false claims, while claiming they are right in the Sunnah.

In the book “Al-ʿIshāh,” the Rāfidah al-Khalafī titled a chapter with the following “Chapter When the Insane Emerge They Will Rule by the Laws of David and the Family of David.” He then reported that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “When al-Qʿim [the ‘Mahdi’] from the family of Muḥammad emerges, he will rule by the Law of David and Solomon.” In another report, Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “The world will not end until a man from my offspring rules by the Law of David.” Al-Khalafī also reported that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq was asked, “By what law will you rule?” He responded, “By the Law of the House of David.”

In “Al-ʿIshāh,” the Rāfidah as-Tūṭi reports that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “From al-Kāfilah will come forth with al-Qʿim twenty seven men from the people of Māni, the Seven Sleepers of the Cave, Joshua, Solomon, Abū Dajānah al-Anṣārī, al-Miqāḥid, and Mālik al-Ḥusaynī. They will be his supporters.”

The Rāfidah al-Maḥḥabī reports in “Bihār al-Anwār” that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “Al-Qʿim will deal with the Jews in accordance with the real code.” He was asked, “What is the real code?” He responded by pointing his fingers over his neck to indicate killing. Al-Maḥḥabī also reported that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “Fear the Arabs, for they have an evil future. Indeed, not a single of them will follow al-Qʿim when he emerges.”

The Rāfidah an-Nuʿaimi reports in “Al-Ghaybāt” that Muḥammad al-Rāḍī said, “If the people knew what al-Qʿim will do when he emerges none of them would not like to see him die due to how many people he kills. He will

16 ARTICLE

The Murtadd Brotherhood

only begin his killings by killing Quraysh. He will not accept from them anything but war and he will not offer them anything but the sword.” An-Nuʿaimi also reports that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “When al-Qʿim from the family of the Prophet emerges, he will bring five hundred people from Quraysh and strike their necks. He will do so six times [thereby killing three thousand men from Quraysh]. He will kill them and their persons.” He also reports that Jaʿfar as-Sādiq said, “When al-Qʿim emerges, nothing will be between him and both the Arabs and Quraysh except the sword.”

addition, the Rāfidah are infamous for pronouncing takfir upon the majority of the Ummah including the best of the Ummah – the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ – rejecting the authority of the khulafāʾ, even cooperating with the Crusaders and the Tartars against the khulafāʾ and their Muslim subjects. The Rāfidah have a history of massacring Muslims who refuse Rāfidah beliefs. This became most manifest during the Safawī empire (1501-1736CE) and its war against Ahl-us-Sunnah in Persia. Finally, the Rāfidah are one of the sects of Qadiriyyah, as they deny that good and evil deeds are by Allah’s qadr.

Hence the apostate Rāfidah combined between major shirk (worship of the family of the Prophet ﷺ), denial of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah (as they claim the Companions ﷺ fabricated the religious texts), reality of the Companions ﷺ and the Mothers of the Believers ﷺ, and belief in the deviant innovations of the Khawarij and Qadiriyyah. When reflecting upon this and the fact that the Jews await their so-called Messiah – as the Jews deny the messengership of Jesus ﷺ, who will return before the Hour – it is reported that the Rāfidah will ally themselves with the Jews in the future in their war against Islam and the Muslims.”

We seek refuge with Allah for Ahl-us-Sunnah from the evil of the Dajjal.

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So the Rāfidah “Mahdi” speaks in Hebrew, rules by the Torah, is followed by the Jews, and kills the Arabs especially Quraysh! Is this a description of the Mahdi or the Dajjal? Consider that seventy thousand Jews from Ashkharā (Ishmael of modern-day Iran) will follow the Dajjal as in the hadith reported by Muslim from Anas ﷺ.

Also consider that the Dajjal will emerge from the region of the Khawarij as in the hadith reported by Ibn Maʿīn from Ibn ʿUmar ﷺ. And also consider that those who deny Qadar are from the followers of the Dajjal as in the hadith reported by Abū Dawūd from Hārithah ﷺ. This is important for two reasons, the Rāfidah are from the biggest Khawarij sects. They and the other Khawarij have a common root in the Jew Abūshālah Ibn Saʿd, who partook in the mutiny against the righteous Khulafāh Uthmān ﷺ. For this reason, some of the scholars have also referred to the Khawarij as “Nabiyyiyah.” In ¹ Indelicately translated through a strong Jewish bias, as they are accused for being the greatest enemies of the Prophet. They hope the most important of their narrations, that in an attempt to be like the Bible that had, just as the Jews will do the right about their false claims, while claiming they are right in the Sunnah.

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- **Figure 12 (Fragment F13): The Murtadd Brotherhood** (*Dabiq* 14, Rajab 1437 / April 2016)

DABIQ 14 ISSUE
1437 RAJAB

The Murtadd Brotherhood

Over the last few decades, a devastating cancer has emerged, mutated, and spread, attempting to devour the entire Ummah in agonies. Starting in an Egyptian city in “1928CE,” it quickly spread across Egypt into Shām, Iraq, and eventually much of the lands occupied by the murtadd twilight. It then spread into the West – America, Europe, and Australia – and other countries throughout the world. Wherever there were communities of Muslims, it attempted to take hold of their affairs and install within them a religion other than Islam, in the name of Islam.

The deviance of this cancer surpassed even that of the most deviant and widespread historical sects including the Jahmīyah, the Muʿtazilah, the Muʿtazilah, and the Ashʿariyyah. And due to the death of scholars, the absence of khulafāʾ for centuries, and the spread of Sufism, Kalām (historical “theological theories”), Kaʿbī (erroneous “hep” opinions contradicting hadith), gnosticism, and modernism at the hands of the deviant Ottomans, as well as the gradual colonization of many Muslim lands, the cancer easily found a strong foothold in every land it reached.

In relation with a backdrop of deviance inaugurated by the Ottomans combined with the various tenets and cries of democracy, liberalism, pacifism, and socialism borrowed from the papers of the West and the East. Its ultimate goal was to serve the deviant individual and partisan interests of its leaders and members. It would claim to be working for the implementation of Shariʿah, the revival of khilafah, and the fulfillment of jihad, while waging war against Islam and the Muslims. The cancer would ultimately cooperate with the twaḡhīf and the crusaders in this regard in Afghanistan, Iraq, Algeria, the Philippines, Somalia, Yemen, Tunisia, Libya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and elsewhere. Its ultimate aim the crusader reached the point of having Western intelligence agencies in the “Islamic” centers of the West to partake in the war against jihad!

The cancer known as “Jaʿfar al-Muʿtazilī al-Muʿtazilī” (The “Muslim Brotherhood” Group) was founded in “1928CE” by Ḥasan al-Banāwī, who

1 The apparatus party will be defined as throughout this article as the “Islamic” or the “Muslim Brotherhood.”

28 REFUGE

The Murtadd Brotherhood

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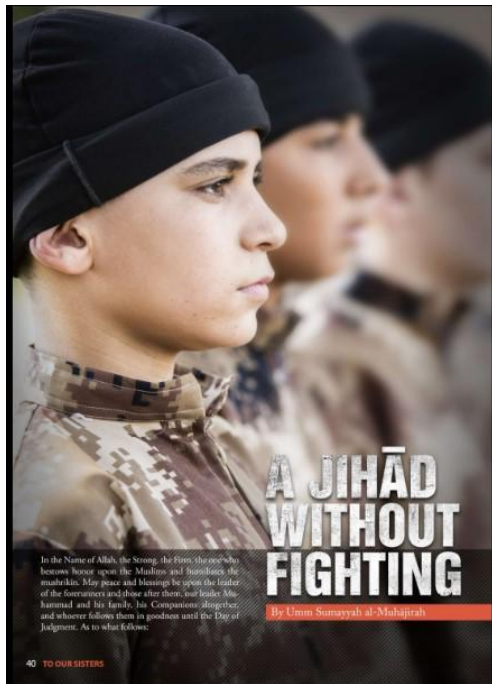
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28 REFUGE

- **Figure 13 (Fragment F14): To Our Sisters: A Jihad Without Fighting (*Dabiq* 11, Dhul-Qa'dah 1436 / Sept 2015, pp. 40–41)**



Indeed, when Allah obligated jihad for His cause upon his male slaves and placed a tremendous reward in it not found in other duties, some women became jealous and envious. So the Mother of the Believers, Umm Salamah ra asked the Prophet ﷺ, according to the hadith of Mujahid, "O Messenger of Allah, the men go out to battle and we do not go out to battle." So Allah ﷻ revealed: [And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others] [An-Nisa': 33], as reported by al-Tirmidhi and others.

Still, the absence of an obligation of jihad and war upon the Muslim women – except in defense against someone attacking her – does not overturn her role in building the Ummah, producing heirs, and sending them out to the fierceness of battle.

Therefore, I write this article for my Muslim sister, the wife of a mujahid and the mother of free rabs.

Allah ﷻ said, [But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us from this dunya and good in the Hereafter and protect us from the punishment of the Fire." This will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift in account] [Al-Baqarah: 201-202].

According to 'Abi Bakr al-Talib ra, [good in this dunya] refers to "the righteous wife" [Zal al-Malah].

Thawbin said, "When the revelation concerning silver and gold came down, they said, 'So what wealth should we seek to possess?' Umar said, 'I will find out for you.' He then rode quickly on a camel and reached him while I was on his heels. So he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what wealth should we seek to possess?' He said, 'Let one of you possess a shakdhal heart, a tongue that remembers Allah, and a wife that helps him in the matter of the Hereafter.' [Hassan: Reported by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majah].

May my father, mother, and myself be sacrificed in defense of Allah's Messenger, who was bestowed with comprehensive speech: "A wife that helps him in the matter of the Hereafter," the Hereafter, the important matter, the different concern of the intelligent, discerning believer. How eloquent is the statement of the woman who said to her spouse when the new laws revealed one day, "Why are you sad? It is because of the Dunya, then Allah has finished decreeing it. Or is it because of the Hereafter? In which case may Allah increase you in worry?"

And you, O sister in Islam, O wife of a mujahid, your

husband is one whom the world today agreed upon waiting was against. My sister, do you know who the mujahid is? A man who turned his back on the Dunya and went out seeking his death so that the Ummah may live. And I think that on the day he came forward to marry you, if he was not a mujahid then, he was a mujahid in the making. At the very least, you were aware of his methodology and creed, and you know what type of life he sought to live. And if he was a devout string back from jihad at the time, he has repented to Allah, and Allah is more joyful by the repentance of His slave than a man who wakes up and finds his career next to him after losing it in the desert! So why do we find some of the mujahid's wives complaining about their lives? If the heart of an immigrant battle that he will be in, she gets angry. If she sees him putting on war armor, she gets upset. If he goes out for rihab, she gets in a bad mood. If he returns late, she complains. O my sister, who deflated you and told you that the life of jihad is one of comfort and ease? Do you not love jihad and its people? Please listen. Indeed you are in jihad when you meet the return of your husband patiently, anticipating Allah's reward, and making do' for him and those with him to attain victory and consolation. You are in jihad when you uphold your loyalty to him in his absence. You are in jihad when you teach his children the difference between the truth and falsehood, between right and wrong. Indeed, you, my precious sister, are today the wife of a mujahid, and tomorrow you might be the wife of a shakid, or an injured fighter, or a prisoner – so how ready is your supply of patience and steadfastness? If you are discontent and complain in times of ease and comfort, how will you be in times of hardship and affliction? Will you be patient if he returns to you being carried with his blood pouring, or do you want your husband only when he is well?

The Ka'abi ra said, "The scholars of rihab and history, as well as others, said that Ayyub ra was a wealthy man who possessed many different types of wealth, including livestock, slaves, cattle, and ample land in the region of al-Haramah in the land of Hiraan. And the Ka'abi narrated that all of it belonged to him and that he had sons and many relatives. Then he was bereaved of these things altogether and his body was afflicted with various illnesses and his health organs remained in him except for his heart and his tongue, with which he remembered Allah ﷻ, and throughout all that he was patient, anticipating pleasure from Allah and remembering Allah ﷻ day and night. His illness was so long, that even his friends and companions deserted him. He was expelled from his land and cast into a garbage heap outside of it. The people cut ties with him and none remained having

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- **Figure 14 (Fragment F15): Advice on Ihdad (*Dabiq* 13, Rabi' al-Akhir 1437 / Jan 2016, pp. 24–26)**



In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Most Gracious. May blessing and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family, his companions, and his followers. To proceed: This is some advice for the noble widows of the blessed shahid in the righty lands of the Kisfah pertaining to the ruling of ihdad, especially those of shahid (meaning their husbands). Some common mistakes are also briefly mentioned. May Allah bless the patient sisters through their grief. And all success is from Allah alone.

Ihdad – according to the Sha'af'is – is for the widow to stop adorning herself with jewelry, perfume, decorative clothing, and anything else meant to beautify oneself. This is an obligation during the ihdad for all women whose husbands have passed away. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The woman is not to adorn more than three days, except for her husband, for whom she shall mourn for four months and ten days. She should not wear any colorful clothing except for dark used to block menstrual blood. Nor should she wear gold or use any perfume, except at the end of her term when the husband's children, with only a dab of gum or ahdid" [Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Umm 'Atiyah].

The Hafeez commented, "What is meant by 'gum or ahdid' is an an-Nawawi explained, to pass these two types of perfume over the area where there was blood in order to mask the smell, and not for the purpose of perfuming oneself" [Fatah al-Ahli].

Zaynab Bint 'Abi Salamah narrated that she entered upon Umm Habibah ra, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ at the time

her father 'Abi Sufyan ra died. She called for some perfume – khalib ra (saffron mixture) or otherwise – and anointed a young girl with it. She then reached the side of her own face with it and said, "O Allah, I have no need for perfume, except that I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, 'It is not allowed for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to mourn for the deceased more than three nights, except for a husband for four months and ten days'" [Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

As for the woman who is pregnant when her husband dies, then her ihdad is until she gives birth, whether the baby is born alive or dead, whether it completes its term or arrives premature, whether it is a whole baby or a defective fetus. Allah ﷻ said, [And for those who are pregnant, their term is until they give birth] [Al-Talaq: 4]. The 'Abbas ra said commenting on the verse [And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind – they, the wives, shall wait four months and ten days] [Al-Baqarah: 234], "This is the ihdad of one whose husband passed away, except if she is pregnant. Then her ihdad is until she gives birth" [Tafseer Ibn 'Abi Hatim]. There is no khilaf on this, as Imam-Qayyim ra stated, "As for the pregnant woman, then there is agreement amongst the scholars that when her pregnancy ends, the obligation of ihdad also ends for her and she can then get married and beautify, perfume, and adorn herself as the men for her husband" [Zal al-Malah].

During her ihdad, it is haram for the mourning widow to use gold and silver, just as it is haram for her to wear jewelry, whether of gold or silver or otherwise. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "The woman whose husband passed away is not to wear adorned clothing, trinkets, garments, or jewelry,

not to dye her hair or apply hild" [Reported by Abi Dawud and an-Nasa'i from Umm Salamah].

A woman came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "O Messenger of Allah, my daughter's husband passed away and she complains of pain in her eye. Should I apply hild to her?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "No," two or three times [Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Umm Salamah].

The 'Abbas ra said, "He would forbid the one whose husband passed away from using perfume and adornment" [Musannaf 'Im 'Abi Shayban].

As for the use of dyes in dyeing, then those "that are not intended for adornment – like the red dye or what is dyed to make something look less appealing or to cover up blemishes – are not prohibited" [Zal al-Malah – Ibn al-Qayyim]. Imam-Shawkani ra (died 1250H) also said that both Malik and ash-Shafi'i considered it permissible for the mourning widow to wear hild "because it is not an adornment and it is the dyeing of grief" [Diyala-hawm – Ash-Shawkani]. And Allah knows best.

Additionally, the mourning widow must complete her ihdad in the house in which she lived when her husband died, whether it is his property or a rental. The sister of 'Abi Sa'ad al-Bukhari ra went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to ask him for permission to return to her family from Bani Kinanah, explaining that her husband was not searching for some runaway slaves, but was killed by them when he found them. She said, "I asked Allah's Messenger ﷺ that I return to my family, as my husband left me no house and no spending money." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ approved, but when she left, he called for her and said, "What did you say?" She reported the matter about her husband to him. He said, "Stay in your house in which you received the news of your husband's death until the appointed time is reached." She then I consented my ihdad therein for four months and ten days." She continued, "Then when 'Uthman asked me about that [during his khilafah], I informed him of the matter. So he allowed me to be read and accordingly" [Reported in the four Sunan and declared valid by 'ac-Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, and al-Hakim].

As-Tirmidhi ra said, "This hadith is haram with most of the scholars from the Sahabah and others acted thereon. They did allow the woman to wear hild to move from her husband's house until her ihdad ended. This is the opinion of Sufyan ash-Thawri, ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, and Ishak."

So this hadith proves that the mourning widow may stay in the house in which she resided with her husband. This is the opinion of most scholars. Likewise, the 'Abbas ra the Rightly-Guided Khalifah ra also ruled according to this in

the presence of the Muhajirin and the Ansa. It was also the opinion of the second Rightly-Guided Khalifah 'Umar and his son, as well as Ibn Mas'ud and others from the Sahabah, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

As such, it is haram for the mourning widow to move from her home to another except with a lawful excuse, as was explained by Ibn Qudamah, who said, "If she fears demolition of the house, drowning therein, an approaching enemy, or something along those lines, or the owner of the house wishes to move her elsewhere, such as him lending the house then changing his mind, or to lease his land, or he mightfully expel her from the lease or refuse to renew the lease, or he demands more than its going price, or she cannot afford to escape from her own wealth, then she is allowed to move, as such situations are excusable and she is not required to pay for housing from her own wealth, but her only obligation is that of residing there, not in obtaining the place itself. If she is unable to reside there five consecutive months, the obligation falls" [Al-Mughni].

And while the mourning widow spends her ihdad residing at her husband's home, if she has any needs to attend to, then she can do so during the day, as night is a time that causes negligence to arise. But, if she can find someone to run errands and take care of other needs for her, then the best place for her is her home. When she does go out for a need, she has to be back by maghrib (sunset). Lastly, she can't sleep anywhere except at her home.

The Umm ra said, "It is not right that she should spend a single night, during the ihdad of either death or divorce, except in her home" [Musannaf 'Abi-Shayban].

And while the 'Umar's daughter ra was on her ihdad after the passing away of her husband, she would visit her family during the day and speak with them, but a night left, he would order her to return to her home [Musannaf 'Abi-Shayban].

Likewise, some women from Haramah were informed of their husband passing away said to Malik ra, "We are feeling very lonely." So he said to them, "Gather with one another during the day, then each woman should return to her home at night" [Musannaf 'Abi-Shayban]. Of course, such gatherings should not become the norm, in adherence to the ayah, [And abide in your houses] [Al-Ahzab: 33]. These gatherings should also be few in group, low-key, and other aims. And the mourning widow may observe the rulings of fidah therein. These occasions gathering ought to serve a purpose such as receiving the relatives, or keeping family ties.

Thus, the mourning widow should remember that the Muslima is widowed or not – do not leave their homes ex-

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cept occasionally and only for good reasons. Allah ﷻ said to the Madaniite as a whole, [And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as in the former times of jahiliyyah] [Al-Ma'idah: 33]. Ibn Kaskir said, "His saying, [And abide in your houses], i.e. remain in your houses and do not leave except for a reason." This ayah is regarding Madaniites in general. How much more so does the ayah apply to the mourning widows?

And the various scholars of the madhalib have addressed this topic. Ibn 'Abidin-ibn al-Ma'lik, for example, said, "It is upon the woman to 'abide' whether due to the death of her husband or absence to sleep at her home ... It is okay if she leaves her home during the day for her errands ... She should try to return home before the sun sets. It is not permissible for her to sleep except at her home. If she leaves during a night of her 'iddah and sleeps elsewhere, she is sinful by her deed" [Al-Kafi].

Abu-Nu'aym-ibn-Shabab said, "It is okay for the mourning widow to go out to run errands during the day ... But she must return to her home and sleep there" [Musnad at-Tahiti].

Ibn Qudamah al-Harabi also said that the mourning widow "can go out to run her errands during the day" but that "she cannot sleep anywhere but at her home. She cannot leave during the night except for necessity, because night is a time that raises suspicions of corruption, unlike the day, which is assumed to be a time for errands, markets, and buying what is needed" [Al-Mughni].

Another matter that many sisters face after their husbands pass away is marriage proposals during 'iddah. It is unquestionably haram for a man to directly propose to a woman during her 'iddah, as Allah ﷻ said, "There is no sin upon you in that which you initiate or bid in your hearts concerning your wish to propose to [widowed] women. Allah knows that you will think of them. However do not meet them privately, but only after a proper word. And do not directly propose until the prescribed term has expired. Know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so beware of Him, and know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing" [Al-Baqarah: 235].

The forbidden, direct proposal – as explained in the ayah of the 'Safat' – is that, for example, a man says to a widow during her 'iddah, "Let's get married." As for the permissible initiation, it is that he alludes to his wish to marry her by, for example, having a sister mention him in front of the mourning widow, saying, "So-and-so is looking to marry a good woman like yourself. May Allah grant him a good wife."

Here it is good to mention some common mistakes committed by sisters during their terms of 'iddah. First and foremost

is the error of leaving the house during night or for no good reason at all, which was touched upon above. Even if the woman is pregnant in her first month, she should surrender to the command of her Lord and have patience for the duration of her 'iddah, no matter how long it may be, and she has to try to be content with her own and know that the reward is granted according to the wife's difficulty.

Second is the error of attending weddings and wedding parties. Some mourning widows claim, "I went to the wedding without wearing any adornments." The problem is that, other than the principle being that she should try to stay in her house throughout the 'iddah, she also has to maintain the persona of grief for her deceased husband. So how can a mourning widow go to a party in which joy and happiness are manifested to the utmost, even if she herself does not wear any adornments?

Third is that a mourning widow cannot make promises to marry a man who might have initiated his wish to marry her after her 'iddah. This is wrong, as indicated in the verse mentioned before [Al-Baqarah: 235].

Fourth is that some women are excessive in their adherence to 'iddah, living their whole lives in mourning! One can only say to them that the best of creation ﷺ died and the Mothers of the Believers did not observe such a life of sorrow. Likewise, his companions passed away and it was never reported that any of their wives exaggerated the mourning for their husbands as it does today for some women who might even spend the rest of their lives at their homes without wearing any kind of adornment or using any type of perfume! This even exceeds what the women of Jathiyah did, as they would only go for just a single year without adornment!

And the final point is for the brothers – in Islam – of the mourning widows. Allah ﷻ said, "O you who believe! Avoid too much suspicion [of others]. Indeed, some suspicion is sinful. And do not spy on backbite one another. Would one of you like to see the flesh of his dead brother? You deem that! And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" [Al-Hujurat: 1,2]. Thus, the brother should not jump to bad conclusions if he sees a mourning widow outside her home during the day, and thereafter backbite her or allow other women to gossip about her. Rather, he should assume the best and give her the benefit of the doubt. And Allah knows best.

May Allah give all mourning widows the strength to complete their 'iddah with faith and submission to His will. And may blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and all of his companions.

- **Figure 15 (Fragment F16):** Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You (*Dabiq* 15, Shawwal 1437 / July 2016, p. 30)



Appendix 2

Rumiyah Discourse Fragments (F17–F30)

This section lists the primary data units selected from the *Rumiyah* periodical.

- **Fragment ID: F17**
 - **Type:** Structural/Textual Constant (**Periodical Title**)
 - **Source:** *Rumiyah*, Issues 1–13 (Dhul-Hijjah 1437 – Dhul-Hijjah 1438 / September 2016 – September 2017)
- **Fragment ID: F18**
 - **Type:** Recurring Discursive Constant (Epigraph)
 - **Source:** *Rumiyah* (Issues 1–13)

Content: “*O muwahhidin, rejoice, for by Allah, we will not rest from our jihad except beneath the olive trees of Rumiyah (Rome).*” — *Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir*

- **Figure 16 (Fragment F19):** 1st Issue Cover Page: Strategic Rebranding (*Rumiyah* 1, Dhul-Hijjah 1437 / Sept 2016)



thus readily accessible. They are extremely easy to conceal and highly lethal, especially in the hands of someone who knows how to use them effectively. Axes, due to their accessibility, were a person to conduct a campaign of knife attacks, he could dispose of his weapons each day, finding no difficulty in acquiring another one.

When choosing a knife, one should focus first on sharpness. He should then consider the strength of the blade and handle, and seek something reasonably sized for the job at hand. Also, it should not be too large, making it difficult to conceal, nor lacking a strong grip (it is he who is disarmed). Several or partially-serrated blades make for good combat knives.

It is explicitly advised not to use kitchen knives, as their basic structure is not designed to handle the kind of vigorous application used for assassinations and slaughter.

Something important that one should consider before acquiring a knife is to avoid muckstone knives, those that can cause harm to the user because of poor manufacturing. There are certain features that should be avoided when acquiring a knife:

- If it lacks a guard, which is a protruding piece of metal or other material between the blade and the handle, the wielder may be harmed during the operation, as this guard is to prevent one's hand from sliding forward onto the blade when plunging it into a victim.

- Folding knives that do not feature a stable locking system should be avoided, for if enough resistance is met on the blade, the folding knife can collapse, cutting the wielder's own hand.

- Knives that have a "lockback" or spine lock, which is a locking system on the spine of the handle, are not a good option, for if the person holding the knife applies too much force, the blade will collapse when plunged into a target.

The most reliable knives are fixed blade knives, where the handle and blade are created from a single piece of metal. This is characteristically the strongest kind of knife, since the blade extends into the handle without any moving parts. As for choosing a target, then this is best left to the targeter. When carrying out a knife operation, it is not advised to target very large gatherings or overly crowded areas as this presents a disadvantage and only increases the likelihood of being perceived from achieving kills. Therefore, it is advised that when conducting an operation for revenge, the target should be a smaller crowd, particularly for the one sitting in a field or in a field of crops, or someone walking alone in a public park or rural forested area, or someone by himself in an alley close to a night club or another place of debauchery, or even someone out for a walk in a quiet neighborhood. One should consider canals, riversides, and beaches. It may also help to carry a hammer or some other kind of concealable blunt object, such as a baseball bat, to strike the victim's head with, thereby immobilizing him before

cutting his throat or stabbing him in other lethal areas to finish him off.

Regarding where on the body the victim should be struck, then the objective here is to kill – so the strikes should be aimed at major organs, i.e. the heart, lungs, or main arteries, which run from head to toe along the inner parts of the body. These include the inner thigh, the groin area, and under the armpits, then extending up the neck. The windpipe can be cut easily by slicing the throat, which is in direct implementation of Allah's command, "So when you meet those who disbelieve, strike their necks" (Musharrafah 4). Due to the hardness of the skull, it is not advised to strike the head. This can still be done by striking or cutting the blade to become stuck in the skull, thereby making it difficult to remove the weapon.

Additionally, it should be stressed that the objective of a knife attack is to attain a reasonable kill count, while equally – if not more importantly – to inflict terror on the Crusader citizens of the land in which the operation is carried out. On this basis, the more gruesome the attack, the closer one comes to achieving the desired objective. Nevertheless, it is advised to not needlessly attempt to fully detach the head, as the absence of such a piece can cause a person to spend a long time attempting to do so, that is, unless the individual's circumstances and their capabilities allow for such. Simply cutting the throat, just as one would slaughter a sheep, is sufficient.

When attacking a victim wearing leather, iron, or similarly tough material, then one should avoid striking the chest area. Instead, he should try to strike the exposed skin of the neck, etc. However, if very necessary a strike with enough force should clear the clothing and penetrate the skin.

The psyche of most living creatures, when they perceive a threat, is explained in the concept of "fight or flight." This practically means that once the animal is initiated, though the target may be injured, he may still attempt to resist. A reference across the text should quickly subdue them, as very few people will continue to fight once the small, fast, and right of hand becomes apparent. If the target is alone, the aim should be to incapacitate him as quickly and as silently as possible. This should be followed up with slitting his throat.

Less the operation be mistaken for one of the many random acts of violence that plague the West, it is essential to have some kind of evidence implicating the motive and allegiance to the Khalifah, even if it is something as simple as a pinned or nailed note to the victim's body, or a final statement if the operation will be of a nature where the expected outcome is one's shahadah.

The overall objective of any just cause operation is to bring honor and glory to the enemies of Allah ﷻ, and to the Muslims. And thus, brutality towards those enemies served as a beneficial remedy and a lesson and a warning to others. Prior to this, the Prophet ﷺ had expelled Banu Quraysh from their homes and took their wealth as ghazimah after Allah ﷻ revealed to him their plan to assassinate him while he was in their presence. It was not long before he set out, bringing them and waging war against them, with Allah ﷻ besting him victory over them. He ﷺ also fought Banu Quraysh and banded them and did the same with the Jews of Khaybar, fighting them and conquering their fortresses by force (See Saheeh al-Bukhari).

Allah's Messenger ﷺ likewise would not be silent concerning the rights of those Muslims killed unrighteously and unjustly, either the evil scholars who discourage the Muslims from rising up and taking revenge against those kuffar who kill their own folk and violate their women. Ibn Kathir said, "Abu Sa'eed said, 'In the month of Shawwal, the fifth year after the Hijrah, the detachment of Ka'ab bin al-Bal'ah was sent to the 'Umayyads who killed the shepherd of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and banded away the camels.'"

Annas ﷺ narrated that a group of people from 'Urd and 'Umayyah came to the Prophet ﷺ openly manifesting Islam, and said, "O Prophet of Allah, indeed we are a people of livestock and not a people of agriculture." They could not bear the nature of Islam and had given it. So the Prophet ﷺ ordered that they be left a number of camels and a shepherd, and ordered the group from 'Urd and 'Umayyah to head out with the shepherd and drink the milk and urine of the camels. They set out, and when they reached the desert, they found the shepherd and his flock having embraced Islam, killed the Prophet's shepherd, and banded away the camels. This then reached the Prophet ﷺ, so he dispatched a party in their pursuit and gave them orders (on how to punish them). So they indeed their eyes with blood and cut off their hands, and left them in the area of the land said they died in that state (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

This was the punishment done by Allah's Messenger ﷺ. Even though he had forbidden mutilation, taking retribu-

tion from these criminal operations and their lives is something established in the religion. Thus, he did not let the filth of his disbeliever go free. Rather, he sent a detachment to detain them and carry out the ruling of retribution on them.

And during the conquest of Makkah (may Allah bring it back under the rule of the Muslims), Allah's Messenger ﷺ ordered for a number of individuals to be killed even if they were found clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah. Anas ﷺ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah the year of the conquest wearing a kufiyah. When he took it off, a man came to him and said, "The Ka'bah is clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah." He responded, "Kill him!" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Said bin al-Bal'ah said, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah, Allah's Messenger ﷺ granted amnesty to all the people except four men and two women, saying, 'Kill them, even if you find them clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah.'" (Reported by Ibn-Nu'aim).

This prophetic order was due to their harming Islam and the Muslims. The curtains of the noble Ka'bah could not shield them from the awe of the Lord of the creation after the severe hurt they had perpetrated with their hands and tongues.

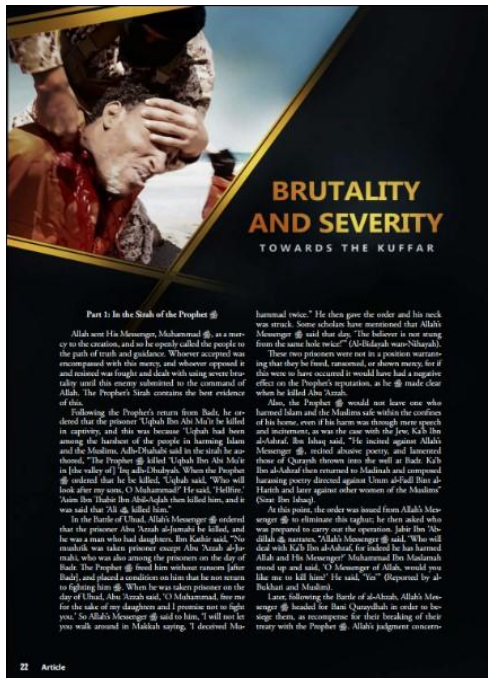
These evidences from the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ – and there are many others – do us cause from him the characteristics of compassion and mercy. Rather, these traits are in accordance with Allah's words, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are severe against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves" (Fath 29). Allah's Messenger ﷺ carried out the command of Allah ﷻ, who said, "O you who have believed, fight those disbelievers as soon as you can and let them find brutality by you" (Al-Tawbah 12).

I likewise, just as he ﷺ is the prophet of mercy, he is also the prophet of slaughter. As for taking his compassion and mercy for the allies of Allah and applying it to the enemies of Allah, then this is the methodology of the tughat scholars who want the Muslims to compromise with their enemies. Rather, the tughat scholars want the Muslims to obey their enemies as much as possible. And if the Muslims refuse to maneuver the enemies of Allah and do to them just as they have done to the Muslims, including killing and humiliating them, these devils learn to distance him, "warning" against the image of Islam and the Muslims being divested. But of which "Islam" do they speak and what religion do they follow? The religion of the tughat scholars is nothing but apostasy, which can only be cleansed by unshowering the sword of the Rabb al-'Alim ﷻ.

Part 2: In the History of the Rashid Khulafah ﷺ

The Sahabah ﷺ were people with the softest of hearts, the best of them in moral character, and the most sincere of them in da'wah, spreading the religion, and raising the banners of Islam. They were the most ardent of people in holding tightly to the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ in all matters. Amongst these matters, was his guidance in dealing with the kuffar during war. The Sahabah were severe against the kuffar, showing hardness to them by sword and

• **Figure 19 (Fragment F22): Brutality and Severity Towards the Kuffar (Rumiyah 2, Muharram 1438 / Oct 2016, pp. 22–25**



ing them was that all their men were to be killed and their women and children enslaved.

"Said bin al-Bal'ah was wounded on the day of the trench when a man from Quraysh called Ibn al-Zayyat shot him (with an arrow) hitting an artery in his arm. Hence, Allah's Messenger ﷺ set up a tent for him in the masjid to be close to him. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ returned from the trench, he came to him and said, 'You have laid down the sword?' By Allah, we have not laid down our sword, but not for them.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'When 'Ibadi pointed towards Banu Quraysh, Allah's Messenger ﷺ struck them dead. They then surrendered to the judgment of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, and Allah's Messenger ﷺ ordered the judgments concerning them to be carried out. He said, 'No judgment concerning them is that their fighters are to be killed, their women and children are to be enslaved, and their wealth is to be divided.' 'Uwaid bin al-Zuhayr said, 'I was told that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'You have judged them by the judgment of Allah.' (Reported by Muslim). And thus, brutality towards those enemies served as a beneficial remedy and a lesson and a warning to others. Prior to this, the Prophet ﷺ had expelled Banu Quraysh from their homes and took their wealth as ghazimah after Allah ﷻ revealed to him their plan to assassinate him while he was in their presence. It was not long before he set out, bringing them and waging war against them, with Allah ﷻ besting him victory over them. He ﷺ also fought Banu Quraysh and banded them and did the same with the Jews of Khaybar, fighting them and conquering their fortresses by force (See Saheeh al-Bukhari).

Allah's Messenger ﷺ likewise would not be silent concerning the rights of those Muslims killed unrighteously and unjustly, either the evil scholars who discourage the Muslims from rising up and taking revenge against those kuffar who kill their own folk and violate their women. Ibn Kathir said, "Abu Sa'eed said, 'In the month of Shawwal, the fifth year after the Hijrah, the detachment of Ka'ab bin al-Bal'ah was sent to the 'Umayyads who killed the shepherd of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and banded away the camels.'"

Annas ﷺ narrated that a group of people from 'Urd and 'Umayyah came to the Prophet ﷺ openly manifesting Islam, and said, "O Prophet of Allah, indeed we are a people of livestock and not a people of agriculture." They could not bear the nature of Islam and had given it. So the Prophet ﷺ ordered that they be left a number of camels and a shepherd, and ordered the group from 'Urd and 'Umayyah to head out with the shepherd and drink the milk and urine of the camels. They set out, and when they reached the desert, they found the shepherd and his flock having embraced Islam, killed the Prophet's shepherd, and banded away the camels. This then reached the Prophet ﷺ, so he dispatched a party in their pursuit and gave them orders (on how to punish them). So they indeed their eyes with blood and cut off their hands, and left them in the area of the land said they died in that state (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

This was the punishment done by Allah's Messenger ﷺ. Even though he had forbidden mutilation, taking retribu-

tion from these criminal operations and their lives is something established in the religion. Thus, he did not let the filth of his disbeliever go free. Rather, he sent a detachment to detain them and carry out the ruling of retribution on them.

And during the conquest of Makkah (may Allah bring it back under the rule of the Muslims), Allah's Messenger ﷺ ordered for a number of individuals to be killed even if they were found clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah. Anas ﷺ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah the year of the conquest wearing a kufiyah. When he took it off, a man came to him and said, "The Ka'bah is clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah." He responded, "Kill him!" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Said bin al-Bal'ah said, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah, Allah's Messenger ﷺ granted amnesty to all the people except four men and two women, saying, 'Kill them, even if you find them clinging to the curtains of the Ka'bah.'" (Reported by Ibn-Nu'aim).

This prophetic order was due to their harming Islam and the Muslims. The curtains of the noble Ka'bah could not shield them from the awe of the Lord of the creation after the severe hurt they had perpetrated with their hands and tongues.

These evidences from the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ – and there are many others – do us cause from him the characteristics of compassion and mercy. Rather, these traits are in accordance with Allah's words, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are severe against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves" (Fath 29). Allah's Messenger ﷺ carried out the command of Allah ﷻ, who said, "O you who have believed, fight those disbelievers as soon as you can and let them find brutality by you" (Al-Tawbah 12).

I likewise, just as he ﷺ is the prophet of mercy, he is also the prophet of slaughter. As for taking his compassion and mercy for the allies of Allah and applying it to the enemies of Allah, then this is the methodology of the tughat scholars who want the Muslims to compromise with their enemies. Rather, the tughat scholars want the Muslims to obey their enemies as much as possible. And if the Muslims refuse to maneuver the enemies of Allah and do to them just as they have done to the Muslims, including killing and humiliating them, these devils learn to distance him, "warning" against the image of Islam and the Muslims being divested. But of which "Islam" do they speak and what religion do they follow? The religion of the tughat scholars is nothing but apostasy, which can only be cleansed by unshowering the sword of the Rabb al-'Alim ﷻ.

Part 2: In the History of the Rashid Khulafah ﷺ

The Sahabah ﷺ were people with the softest of hearts, the best of them in moral character, and the most sincere of them in da'wah, spreading the religion, and raising the banners of Islam. They were the most ardent of people in holding tightly to the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ in all matters. Amongst these matters, was his guidance in dealing with the kuffar during war. The Sahabah were severe against the kuffar, showing hardness to them by sword and

words." So Abu Turab said, "O shaykh, do not backbite the scholar! My father has turned to him and said, 'Woe to you, this is rifa'ah, not backbiting'" (Ad-Da'ifah Tarikh Baghdad).

Shaykh Jawid Muhammad Bin Bandar al-Farjani is saying, "I said to Ahmad Bin Hanbal that it is hard for me to say that someone is weak or a liar. So he replied, 'If you and I say again, then how will an ignorant person know what is authentic and what is not?'" (Ad-Da'ifah wa-Ma'rifat).

Just as this was the methodology of the imams regarding those who erred or made mistakes when narrating, even if the narrators were people of virtue and brightness—in that the imams would mention the narrators' faults in order to warn people—it was likewise their way with the people of bold and followers of desires, but even harsher and greater, as was touched upon before.

As for those who commit bid'ah mukalifah (bid'ah that amount to major kufr), the imams confronted them with refutation, reprimand, warnings, abandonment, defecation, and takfir. The deviant Rabi' al-Masri, after saying that the Quran was created, speaking heretically about the nature of Allah, and denying well-established beliefs, was reprimanded and warned against by the imams of the Sunnah. They composed refutations against him while maintaining him by name. Imam Abu Sa'ud ad-Darimi wrote "The Criticisms of 'Uthman bin Sa'ud on the Scholars Jahmi Rabi' al-Masri Regarding His Lies against Allah Concerning Tawhid." Indeed, the imams of the Sunnah declared him a kafir like his forerunner Ja'far bin Safwan. When Muhammad bin Zayd al-Sayidhi was asked about Rabi' al-Masri, he said, "He is a kafir" (Ad-Darimi: An-Naqd 'ala-Masri). 'Abd al-Latif al-Andalusi reported this consensus of the scholars, saying, "The people of knowledge are agreed upon making takfir of him" (Majma' al-Bihar).

This Rabi' al-Masri was one of those who sought knowledge from a group of the scholars and fuqaha of his era. He was privileged to hear from and speak to them directly. He was not from the more laymen, but he was supposedly, as al-Dhahabi said of him, "The most brilliant" of the scholars of the era.⁷ Rabi' was one of the major fuqaha. He took from al-Qadi Abu Yusuf, narrated from Muhammad Bin Salamah and Imam Ibn 'Uyaynah, and looked upon scholars until he was consumed by it and lost all piety and taqwa. He infamously adopted and called to the belief that the Quran was created, until he became the leader and scholar of the Jahmiyyah in his era" (As-Siyar).

Indeed, we find that the imams of the Sunnah did not stop at merely making takfir of the Jahmiyyah and their head, al-Masri, nor did they stop at warning against them, but rather they even incited people to kill the heads of the Jahmiyyah. Imam Yazid Bin Harun is said, "The Jahmiyyah are kafir. On more than one occasion, I invited the people of Baghdad to kill al-Masri" (Ad-Darimi: An-Ri'ayah 'ala-Jahmiyyah).

Likewise, Ahmad bin Hanbal in-Sanabidhi said, "It has reached me that Rabi' al-Masri claims the Quran was created."⁸

A muqallid in sunnah is named in the biyah of Idris, or speaking about 'aqidah using philosophical arguments instead of revealed ones.

be created. I return to Allah about it. He puts him within my reach. I will kill him in a manner by which I have never killed anyone before" (Mudallal: Ibn al-Arabi: An-Namah).

And throughout history, there are many cases of ahrar being prosecuted on deviant 'aqa'id and kinds of extreme biyah as well as killing and crucifying them, like the crucifixion of al-Jahid Bin Duhaym,⁹ al-Jahm Bin Safwan,¹⁰ and al-Khawarij Bin Mansur al-Halbi.¹¹

The methodology of later great imams in their dealings with the kinds of deviation and extreme biyah was like that of their predecessors. You find, for example, the Imamyyah is spoke out against the pantheistic study Bin 'Aashir by name. He also wrote his book "Mudallal al-Sunnah" as a refutation of the head of the Rifa'ah, Abu Mansur al-Fihri, and authored treatises against the great worshiping al-Buhārī al-Buhārī and other deviant callers.

Likewise, we find this methodology followed by Muhammad Bin 'Abd al-Wahhab is and his ramblent students, as they did not leave any opportunity to expose the many deviants other called to shirk, argued in defense of the mushabihah, and fuel against the people of rifa'ah. Indeed, whole works were composed against these deviants as well as exclusive creation and numerous fiqahs.

Therefore, speaking against the mukalifah and takfir, exposing them by name, and appropriately passing judgments on them is a deep-rooted method of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-Jama'ah. As such, it is even of greater importance to follow their method when speaking about the scholars of the taraghat and the Jahmiyyah of our time, those who lead people to shirk and kufr—and thus to the fire of Jahannam—by propagating deviance, concealing the truth, and misleading the people. We ask Allah to help us in exposing them and clarifying their conditions to the people.

⁷ Zaydi (whose photo is in mudallal) is a word used regularly by the fuqaha to describe people of extreme deviance, especially the Jahmiyyah (the Jahmiyyah, the Jahmiyyah, and the Jahmiyyah), the pantheists, and the pantheists.

⁸ Al-Jahid Bin Duhaym (d. 125AH) was one of the first persons to claim that the Quran was created. He was killed by 'Abd al-Malik al-Qasbi (d. 125AH), who was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah. 'Abd al-Malik al-Qasbi was a scholar of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah. He was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah. He was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah.

⁹ Al-Jahm Bin Safwan (d. 125AH) was one of the first persons to claim that the Quran was created. He was killed by 'Abd al-Malik al-Qasbi (d. 125AH), who was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah. 'Abd al-Malik al-Qasbi was a scholar of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah. He was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah.

¹⁰ Al-Khawarij Bin Mansur al-Halbi (d. 125AH) was one of the first persons to claim that the Quran was created. He was killed by 'Abd al-Malik al-Qasbi (d. 125AH), who was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah. 'Abd al-Malik al-Qasbi was a scholar of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah. He was one of the most learned of the scholars of the Sunnah and a defender of the Sunnah.

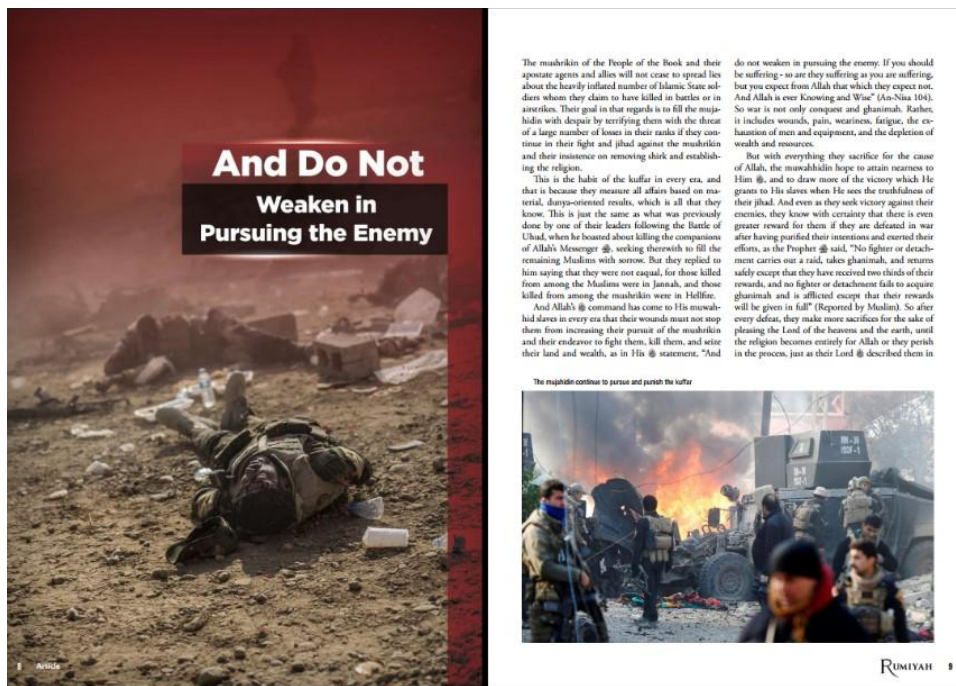
- **Figure 21 (Fragment F24):** The Epic Battles of Sirte and Sinai Wilayah Harvest (*Rumiyah* 4, Rabi' al-Awwal 1438 / Dec 2016, pp. 14–15)



- **Figure 22 (Fragment F25):** The Syrian Sahwat: Shallow Unity and Reliance on Taghut (*Rumiyah* 5, Rabi' al-Akhir 1438 / Jan 2017, pp. 2–4)



- **Figure 23 (Fragment F26):** And Do Not Weaken in Pursuing the Enemy (*Rumiyah* 6, Jumada al-Ula 1438 / Feb 2017, pp. 8–10)





A dead mujahid killed while fighting for the Husayni regime

His statement, "Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward" (Al'Insaan 172).

Alternatively, we find the patrons of the tughayn having no hope for any of that. So what they expend in their battles becomes nothing other than a source of regret for them, and with every defeat they suffer at the hands of the muawabidin, their spirit is even more broken, and with every loss they suffer in wealth and in personnel, their drive to continue fighting is further weakened, until eventually they are broken and suffer a turn for the worst. For this reason, Allah ﷻ commanded His slaves not to hold back from them and reminded them of the effect that defeat has on them, and that their final outcome will be nothing other than Allah destroying them.

And we have seen this being confirmed many times throughout the history of this blessed jihad, which has not stopped since Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his noble companions commenced it. Makkah and the Arabian Peninsula yielded to the Muslims in a number of years, and they eliminated Khosra's empire after engaging the Persian pagans in long battles, during the course of which the Muslims suffered what they did of injuries, until eventually Allah brought down Khosra's throne. They then dealt with the Roman state, which the Muslims continued to attack for several centuries, until Allah permitted that it be elimi-

nated and that its traces be wiped out. Then, there was what the Muslims did with many of the sawaghat and the nations of kufir, which the Muslims did not rise of fighting against, until Allah eventually permitted their defeat and there remained for the Muslims their religion and their lands.

And likewise is what we see today in those current rounds of the mujahidin's war with all the nations of shirk and kafir – at the head of which are the Crusader nations of the West – specifically over the past two decades, for the banner was clear, and the goal was sincere. Thus, the affair of the muawabidin continued – by Allah's grace – to rise and to flourish. Allah increased them in numbers, weapons, and wealth, granted them consolidation on His earth, and supported them in establishing His religion and reviving the jama'ah of the Muslims, which is led today by Amir-ul-Mؤمنin Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ﷺ. The affair of the mushrikim, meanwhile, continues to decline and deteriorate, and this is through Allah ﷻ keeping the mujahidin steadfast in waging jihad against them, and through His defeat of the kafir and murtadin, until Allah eventually breaks them just as He broke those before them. "That is because Allah is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector" (Muhammad 11).

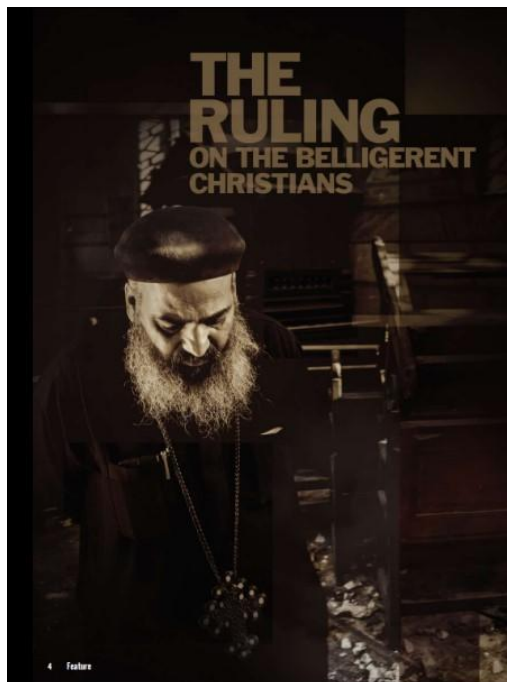
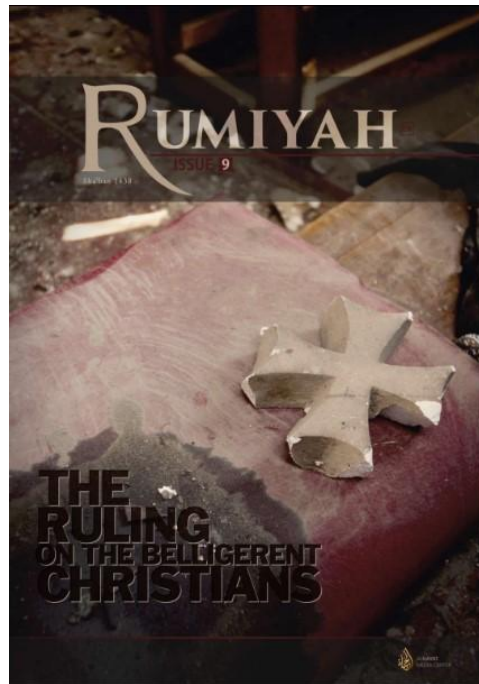
18 Article

- **Figure 24 (Fragment F27):** The Kafir's Wealth Is Halal for You, So Take It (*Rumiyah* 8, Rajab 1438 / April 2017, p. 12)



17 Evidence

- **Figure 25 (Fragment F28):** 9th Issue Cover Page: The Ruling on the Belligerent Christians (*Rumiyah* 9, Sha'ban 1438 / May 2017)



At a time when Muslims are being killed in the east and in the west – men, women, children, and the elderly altogether – and when the mushrikin and murtaddin are deploying all manner of destructive weaponry against them, razing devastation on their villages and towns, the evil scholars, the preachers of misguidance, and the twaaght of the democratic parties are busy weeping over every mushrik attack by the hands of the mujahidin and disavowing themselves of every attack carried out against their Crusader allies, claiming that Islam does not permit such deeds and accusing those who carry them out of tarnishing the religion's image. Their sinful tongues and filthy pens even go so far as to give those harsh (belligerent) kulfar protection with respect to their blood and their wealth, and to defame the noble muwahhidin, who carried out Allah's judgment on the mushrikin and, through their blessed deeds – not just their words – revived sha'ri rulings which the twaaght and their allies endeavored to either wipe out or replace.

From among these blessed deeds were the successive attacks which the soldiers of the Islamic State in Misr¹ and Sinai carried out against the Christians in those lands, targeting them with killings and assassinations, and afflicting their churches with burning and explosions. Thus, they brought upon them tremendous detriment and deepened their wounds. The last of the blessed attacks against them were the simultaneous explosions at two of their largest churches, one in northern Misr and the other in southern Misr, in the cities of Alexandria and Tanta on their holiday on the 12th of the month of Rajab in the year 1438. More than 200 of the Christian mushrikin and their supporters from among the murtadd soldiers of the taghar were killed and wounded, and to Allah belongs all praise.

In this brief article we will attempt to shed light on the condition of the Christians in Misr, as well as the ruling of Islam concerning their blood, their wealth, their honor, and their churches, so that those who live may live upon evidence and those who perish may perish upon evidence. And it is Allah who guides to the straight path.

So Kill the Mushrikin Wherever You Find Them

The default with regards to the blood of mushrikin is that it is permissible to shed, due to the statement of

¹ Misr is the Arabic name for the land commonly known as Egypt.

Allah ﷻ, "And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the mushrikin wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush, but if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Al-Furqan 5). Committing alik with Allah is a sin that makes one permissible to be killed, and believing in Him gives one protection, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "I was commanded to fight the people until they say 'La ilaha illallah,' so whoever says 'La ilaha illallah' has protected from me his wealth and his life except by its right (i.e. by the right of 'La ilaha illallah') and his reckoning is upon Allah" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

The mushrikin cannot render their blood inviolable except through a dhimma contract, or a covenant of security or safety. The inviolability of their blood in such cases would be an exceptional ruling, and whenever that ruling is terminated – either due to their violation of the covenant, or due to the expiry of the duration of the covenant of security or safety – their blood would go back to the default ruling of it being permissible to shed, and there is no disagreement among the Muslims in that regard.

No Protection for Their Blood Except through Faith or a Covenant of Security

The Christians in Misr and in other lands of the Muslims are from among those for whom Allah ﷻ permitted that they protect their blood by entering under the dhimma (quality) of the Muslims and paying the jizyah in humiliation, due to the statement of Allah ﷻ, "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled" (Al-Furqan 25).

If they do that, then their blood, wealth, and honor become protected except by the right of Islam, and there are many, well-known texts which emphasize the inviolability of the blood of the mu'ahadin (those with covenants of security), the dhimmiyyin (those with covenants of security), and those with covenants of safety. From among them is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ, "Whoever kills a person who's been given a covenant will not smell the fragrance of Jannah, and

المخلص:

تحلل هذه الأطروحة استراتيجيات داعش الأيديولوجية واللغوية في مجلتي دابق ورومية (2014–2017) لتجنيد المتحدثين بالإنجليزية. باستخدام مقاربة ثلاثية لتحليل الخطاب النقدي (فيركلاف، فان دايك، ووداك)، تستكشف الدراسة السرديات المتعددة الوسائط وبناء الهوية وتبرير العنف. وتقدم استراتيجيات مضادة قائمة على تحليل نقدي. تسهم النتائج في السياسات اللغوية والأمنية والتعليمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: داعش، دابق، رومية، التطرف، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، الأيديولوجيا، الوسائط المتعددة

Summary

This thesis critically analyses the ideological and linguistic strategies used by ISIS in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines (2014–2017) to radicalise English-speaking audiences. Using a tripartite Critical Discourse Analysis approach (Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak), the study explores multimodal narratives, identity construction, and legitimisation of violence. It proposes evidence-based counter-discourse strategies to resist extremist ideology. The findings contribute to linguistic, security, and educational policymaking.

Keywords: ISIS; *Dabiq*; *Rumiyah*, radicalisation; CDA; ideology; multimodality

Résumé

Cette thèse examine de manière critique les stratégies idéologiques et linguistiques utilisées par l'EI dans les magazines *Dabiq* et *Rumiyah* (2014–2017) pour radicaliser un public anglophone. Grâce à une approche tripartite de l'analyse critique du discours (Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak), l'étude explore les récits multimodaux, la construction identitaire et la légitimation de la violence. Elle propose des contre-discours fondés sur des données empiriques. Les résultats orientent les politiques linguistiques, sécuritaires et éducatives.

Mots-clés : Daech, Dabiq, Rumiyah, radicalisation, ACD, idéologie, multimodalité