THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DETACHMENT AND HYPERREALITY

Analysing ISIL's propaganda
Analyzing ISIL`s propaganda

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Acknowledgment

My sincere gratefulness to Sweden; the nation of mercy and “my haven”

And thanks to: Jonathan Schalk, Gustaf Cars, Wenche Gros, Göran Palm and Eva Lundberg.
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Abstract

The emergence of “the Islamic state of Iraq and the Levant” was surprising not only because of its rapid expansion geographically across Syria and Iraq, but also because of its global influence. That is represented in its magnetic power through gravitating large numbers of Muslim youth, from almost all around the world. Interestingly, ISIL is having the global influence that has never been witnessed in any radical group we have come to know before. And the increased affiliation is not only confined to the bodily entrance and the migration of Islamic youth to ISIL’s landscape, but also through pledging other groups the allegiance to ISIL globally, such as the most recent Boko Haram affiliation and others in the Arab world. Thus, ISIL as a glocal “group” is exerting an international activity that functions within the processes of globalization and not the opposite. The media production and prevalence of ISIL is unprecedented and is qualified to represent the initial stages of a real state media. The group has media offices assigned to each of its states with periodical visual reports, besides a newspaper called Dabiq, a prospective TV channel, alongside the heavy use of social media (Facebook, twitter) which is essential for the group’s pervasiveness. According to the Washington D.C.-based Brookings Institute ISIL has more than 46,000 hyperactive twitter accounts that work to promote the Islamic state and publish its news, videos, and infographics (Lewis, 2015). Moreover, the great attention given to ISIL’s propaganda globally from both western and eastern media channels, is increasing its informational influence and offering it a free critical publicity.

The research of this phenomenon will be based on three critical theories, and they are directly interrelated to the studied case, starting with 1- propaganda and the role of the psychological warfare accompanying the physical exertion of power. 2- Terrorism, as a controversial social phenomenon and its implication on the social life and modernity. Besides, 3- globalization, the role of media and means of the flow of information globally with the domination of few western media conglomerates on the global media markets, and the types of any possible counter flow.

The methodologies that are going to be used to analyze “the Islamic state’s” media products are basically semiotics, and critical discourse analysis CDA.

Thus, the study would provide us with a synopsis, a better and deeper understanding of the “Islamic state’s” media (movies). And how has this propaganda machinery exploited modern technologies
to bear highly persuasive messages, with preeminent impact on the prospect propahandees` perception, attitudes and reflexes alike?

The movies were produced to operate monolithically with three different but correlating mechanisms. First, by clinging a set of religious, perceptible and psychological codes with direct indices. Second, by depending on the synergy of these codes functioning interdependently altogether. And the third mechanism is by following a specific strategy or schema for all the movies, by applying few specific mechanics to found a typical structure of all the propagandizational films. However, ISIL`s audio-visual products reflect an apparent professionalism with high-profile vile innovation. The most distinguished aspect of these movies is their technological/digital modelling, what makes them simulate video games in order to be more attractive and appealing to young men. Thus, addressing young generations with their selfsame standards, manners, tendencies, and lingo.
Chapter 1

1. Background

The Islamic state of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

The emergence of “the Islamic state” in its current formulation, was a result of consequent events occurred in the Middle East and most specifically in Iraq and Syria. In its early stages it took the form of a group called “Al-tawhid wa Al jihad” (the monotheism and jihad) with the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2004. Later on, the organization pledged the allegiance to the former Al-Qaida leader Osama bin laden, thus becoming the branch of al-Qaida in the Euphrates and one of the strongest jihadi organizations meantime. Afterward, and after al-Zarqawi was killed in 2006 by the American forces in Iraq, months later “the Islamic state of Iraq” was founded and led by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi (Hamid Dawud Mohamed Khalil al Zawi). Who was killed also by the American forces in 2010 (Al-hayat, 2014), since then the leadership moved to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Husseini al-Qurashi, who is known to be called as the caliph or Amir Al-mu`minin (the prince of believers) among his supporters. The organization fought against the American forces in Iraq and the Sunni tribal forces of “Al-Sahwa”, till 2011 and after the withdrawal of the American military from Iraq, the organization`s activities expanded to encompass explosions in Baghdad and several Iraqi cities besides raids on prisons such as Abu-Gharib. On the other hand, the unrest in Syria to the west of Iraq was highly elevated, and prefaced the ground for the expansion of “the Islamic state of Iraq” aftermath. The ignited conflict in Syria resulted a scenery of multitude struggling factions, of whether Shia pro Assad militias or Sunni anti Assad militias. In 2013, al-Baghdadi declared in an audio recording that the Syrian armed group “Jabhat al-Nusra” is an extension to his organization, and that they both consolidated under one title "al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham" (the Islamic state of Iraq and the Levant). But, Al-Nusra declined the consolidation and pledged the allegiance to al-Qaida led by Ayman al-Zawahiri. However, ISIL which is currently detached from al-Qaida expanded to Syria and fought against most adversaries such as; the free Syrian army (opposition armed factions), the Syrian Kurds’ militias, jabhat al-nusra, and the regime forces alike. Subsequently, ISIL dominated the cities of Deir ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqah, implemented mass executions and beheadings, and after the wide expansion in both Syria and Iraq the manifesto of establishing “the state of the Islamic caliphate” was declared
in 29 June 2014 (Aljazeera.net). The name of the state became “the Islamic state” only and the borders between Syria and Iraq were demolished. Besides, calling all Muslims worldwide to join “the state of caliphate” (Alhayat, 2014) (See appendix 2).

The most preeminent characteristics of ISIL aside to its brutality, is the dependence on and the heavy usage of psychological warfare with high quality production of audio-visual publicity materials. Besides, the remarkable exploitation of new media and modern technologies. In a way challenging the power, influence and domination of the global media giants. And that is over the aspects of production and influence. Therefore, and from that perspective i find it highly critical and important to study and scrutinize ISIL’s media, that fundamental propaganda machinery which works relentlessly to publicize the phenomenon (not a group). How is the Islamic state’s discourse is uniquely constructed in the sense of having such a global influence, and take a fancy to Islamic youth, most remarkably in the west? Moreover, how is that highly produced audio-visual production (psychological warfare) challenging in its influence the world’s hegemonic media conglomerates whether in the west or in the Arab/Islamic world per se?
2. Methodologies and materials

2.1. Methods

2.1.1. Semiotic analysis

The first methodology based on Berger`s literature 2005.

Semiology is the science of studying signs and their meanings, and is usually called semiotics. The process of investigating and detecting the latent or hidden meanings of media texts, that is through studying the signs and how they are systemically functioning and relating to each other in a given context. So, semiotic analysis is an efficient qualitative method of analyzing any text that could be deconstructed as signs, such as; images, objects, sounds, gestures, etc. Some semioticians suggest that everything could be analyzed semiotically, and it is the queen of the interpretive sciences, since it has been applied with significant outcomes to theater, film, zoology…etc. this bears in mind Pierce`s speech as he stated “this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs”. Thus in such methodology, we are concerned in how meanings are made and consolidated, and how is that totally linked to the interrelation of signs and to the socially constructed reality (Berger, 2005, p.4).

The origins of this approach goes back to two men, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles pierce. Saussure considered the sign as a combination or a mixture of concept and a sound-image, so the sign consists of two parts; the signifier or the form which the sign incarnate (sound-image) and the signified that represent the meaning or (the concept). Moreover, the relationship between them is arbitrary and changeable (Berger, 2005, pp.4-9).

There exists few elements around the sign, and their comprehension is essential for the implementation and applicability of the semiotic as an analyzing tool and a process. The synchronic and the diachronic study, at the level of synchronic study we investigate the set of signs within the text and the relationship among its elements by revealing the latent patterns of oppositions (the paradigmatic structure). While at the diachronic study, we focus on the process of which the text evolves, hence by scrutinizing a chain and a sequence of events that formulate the narrative (the syntagmatic structure) (Berger, 2005, pp.18-19-24).
Another important distinction should be comprehended amongst connotation and denotation. In denotation which is the first order of significance, we look at “what-goes-without-saying” i.e. the literal manifest meaning of what we see or witness of elements and phenomena. While with connotation the second order of significance, we focus on what the signs (or any communicational form) represent i.e. the symbolic, historic, and emotional aspects attached to the word (sign) and what does it mean culturally. Thus connotation is figurative and suggests meanings (realm of myths), while denotation is literal and descriptive (realm of existence) (Berger, 2005, pp.16-17).

Parts of the critiques to semiotic analysis is the latter’s focus on meanings and cognition, the relationship of elements and the production of meanings. Rather than paying attention to the quality of the text (visual) per se or to art and aesthetics, the concern is for the text and what is it about to say. Another critique to semiotics is the lack of work in television, because the larger concern was given to films. However, still, semiotics is an efficient tool in analyzing and providing meanings with considerable values (Berger, 2005, pp.34-35).

2.1.2. Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

"The second methodology based on David Hesmondhalgh literature besides Teun A. van Dijk’s approach to CDA.

The term discourse has a variety of usage. In linguistics, discourse is seen as a social interrelation of actions and interactions. While, the second perspective which is related to the work of the French theorist Michael Foucault (constructionism), focuses on the discourse as “a social construction of reality a form of knowledge” (Fairclough, 1995, p.18 cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p.122). Thus, the focus on the language as it is used in real life and in a direct relation to social and cultural aspects.

Our social interaction is made up of the negotiated interrelation of our social structures, processes, and resources; what represent our specific way of understanding the world around us. Humans` identities are constituted of the mixture of meanings, stories, images, representation, and metaphors; those are incarnated in our discourses, or if we can say the institutionalized use of language. Thus, critical discourse analysis would be an unprecedented methodology for examining the language of media texts in se and its latent or hidden meanings. So revealing the unconscious hidden sociocultural processes through examining symbols, values, and meanings, besides
inquiring about the social phenomenon or problem represented in the texts (Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p.p120-121).

With critical discourse analysis we focus on two structures, the microstructure and the macrostructure. The microstructure according to Van Dijk is the language use, verbal interaction and communication that belong to the micro-level of social order, while the macrostructure is the relations of inequality, dominance, power and social order that relate to the macro level. By which the social acts of individuals become constituent parts of social processes and group actions like the production of racism (1998). CDA is based on moving through three levels of analyzing; the textual, contextual, and the social levels. At the first level (the textual) the focus is on the language use and the represented theoretical terms such as hyperbole, pronounce, syntax (sentence structure), adjectives, active sentences, rhetorical repetition…etc. (Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p131). With the second level, the context (discursive practice) the focus as mentioned by van Dijk is “on the structure that is mentally represented of those properties of social situation that are relevant for the production of the discourse” (1998). I.e. the properties of social situation that are critical to the creation of the discourse, and thus focusing on the messages that are mentally represented in our discourse. Finally, moving to the last level (social practice), the scrutiny in here is to see whether the dominant views, socio-political and cultural discursive orders were challenged or reproduced within the researched material? And if there is a propensity toward social change? As stated by van Dijk: “the formation, description and explanation of theory in discourse analysis is socio-politically suited” (1998).

Much of the criticism to CDA analysis is about the increased subjectivity, negativity, and ambiguity. By which the practitioner who uses this method is motivated by personal whim with vague political attitudes. The methodology (linguistic framework) appears uncontroversial but in practice has some flaws. Moreover, CDA advocates claim to seek social change, and a better world but, they hardly ever meet this objective (Breeze, 2011, pp.498-502-516-520). However, with CDA or any other analytical method, the researcher deals with the reality represented the way it is, and if there emerged a negativity within the studied case, then the researcher will analyze that reality and seek the transformation to positive outcomes. To a beneficial social change. I think no researcher would initial a research with pre-assumption or an orientation to be negative, the researcher spot the problem and try to elicit a solution, or at least unfold and decipher that problem
to make it comprehendible and debatable. Nonetheless, critical discourse analysis is an efficient methodology, and provides promising results.

2.2. Materials
By analyzing ISIL’s warfare propaganda, I will focus mainly on the “states’” movies, through analyzing all the textual aspects (visual-audible-discursive) of those films. And by the usage of the formerly described methodologies, semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis. ISIL’s propaganda machinery issued and still releasing noticeable audio-visual products (film), I selected 9 films for their notoriety and because they reflect an apparent technological advancement and creativity, in terms of filmmaking and propagating. Moreover, such products reflect the “states’” intellectual and technological abilities, they reflect “ISIL’s modernity”!

The movies as next:

Basically there are three major media production unites that create the heavy audio-visual materials for ISIL, they are as next:

1- Although the disbelievers dislike it / ولو كره الكافرون
2- Breaking the borders / كسر الحدود
3- Clank of the swords / صليل الصوارم
4- From inside Mosul / من داخل موصل (John Cantlie)
5- Healing the believers’ chests / شفاء صدور المؤمنين (Jordanian pilot’s execution)
6- On the prophecy approach / على منهج النبوة
7- The flames of war / لهيب الحرب
8- The resolve of the defiant / عزم الأباة
9- {kill/mutilate/abuse} them from behind / فشرد بهم من خلفهم

1- Mu’assassat Al-Furqan, produced the films: [ Healing the believers’ chests - On the prophecy approach - Although the disbelievers dislike it - Clank of the swords ]
2- Al-I`itisam production unit, produced: [Breaking the borders - The resolve of the defiant - {kill/mutilate/abuse} them from behind ]
3- Al-Hayat media center, produced: [The flames of war - From inside Mosul ]
WARNING

THE LAST SECTION OF THE APPENDICES (SHOCK VALUE) INCLUDES GRAPHICS THAT MIGHT BE DISTURBING TO SOME VIEWERS.

2.3. Notes

Note-1: to avoid the prosaic repetition of the production units’ titles within the texts (in reference to the films), I queued them as shown before in the page number (8).

Note-2: there are no hyperlinks provided for the films; they are mostly restricted from the web due to their contents’ violation to the terms of publishing.

Note-3: there are three types of translation within the study:

a- The translation of the holy verses imported from the English version of the holy Quran on the web (http://quran.com/) (http://quran.al-islam.org/), and will be referred to in the text as [Quran.com] or [Quran.org].

b- There exists English texts which were imported from the movies themselves (the way they were displayed), and will be referred to in the text as [Source].

c- There exists few texts that were not translated by the source, neither a formal translation for them was found from any institution/authority. Therefore, they were translated by the author, and would be referred to in the text as [Author].
Chapter 3

3. Theories

3.1. Propaganda
Simply and foremost, propaganda known as the process of persuasion or implanting the communicators` ideas in the minds of the receivers. As a phenomenon it is as old as the existence of wars in the life and nature of mankind, though propaganda as a psychological warfare is mostly efficient when it is following or accompanying a physical war. Thus propaganda has always been viewed as an evil and destructive type of communication, which manipulate the individuals` minds and thoughts. By providing the public with incorrect or partially true information, with the intent of serving the propagandists` desires and objectives. And as elaborated by Taylor`s speech (2003) that propaganda is “a disease which somehow afflicts our individual and collective capacity to make up our own minds about what is happening in the world around us. It obscures our windows on the world by providing layers of distorting condensation.” (p.1). This process of cognitive bias or which could be called the war of disinformation or the war of publicity, is used to be based on its sentimental effect and emotional foundation. Since the individual`s sensitivity and emotional aggravation are inherent to be high during war times. However, the policies or bases of modern propaganda shifted in a way of employing logic and making sense more than just depending on the sentimental influence. Thus the tendency increased toward selectively and partially disseminating the truth rather than completely falsifying the information, hence prioritizing and preferring “omission rather than commission” (Taylor, 2003, P.2-3).

Though, propaganda to be persuasive, it has to include part of the truth, but not the truth in totality. Hereafter, enforcing people of what to think rather than how to think. In that sense, modern propaganda is heavily dependent on the sense making and logical correlation, especially with the current state of information explosion accompanied with the technological advancement and the evolution of mass media. Thus the information absorption is multiplied through multilateral sources and the receiver became much more capable to consume data from different alternative channels. Therefore propaganda is becoming an increased shrewd manipulator of minds, of course in correlation with physical power and coercion in order to be effective and persuasive. Moreover some scholars argue that propaganda could be much more effective when it conforms the recipients` current predetermined world views and needs. This again, recalls Taylor`s elaboration
on the speech of the French sociologist Jacques Ellul (cited in Taylor, 2003, P.11) as he stated: “the advent of the technological society was a major factor in the emergence of modern propaganda because that type of society conditioned people to a need for propaganda.”

Hence, propaganda has always fell in the stigma of being vicious and inherited to war. Although, each human being practices a type of propaganda during the processes of communication with other humans. Individuals when they communicate they are basically pursuing to convince one another. Hence all individuals might be propagandists in some points and may fell victims to propaganda on daily bases. Furthermore, actions per se could act as publicity messages that formulate part of the persuasive processes with strong proficient influence on the human psychology and behavior. And the most prominent example of such extremely powerful actions (messages) is the American bombardment of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Taylor, 2003, P.8).

Thus, propaganda or the psychological warfare is the intended processes of persuasion to urge people to think, perceive, and behave in a desired way i.e. the employment of the techniques of persuasion with the use of specific planned, methodical, conscious decisions designed to serve the intended goals of those behind the persuasive process.

In that sense, words could be mightier and much stronger than bullets and bombs. As Albert Camus stated: “over the expanses of five continents throughout the coming years an endless struggle is going to be pursued between violence and friendly persuasion...henceforth the only honorable course will be to stake everything on a formidable gamble – that words are more powerful than munitions.” (Cited in Taylor, 2003, P.16).

3.2. Terrorism
The etymology of the word terrorism is derived originally from two words; the Latin terrere which means “frighten”, and the French suffix “isme” which refers to “to practice”. So the term terrorism means “practicing and causing frightening or trembling”, and it is about 2,100 years back to ancient Rome. There are several different definitions of terrorism from scholars, institution, and governments. But, still there is no single, concrete definition of terrorism, since the language is changeable due to different temporal and spatial aspects. Moreover the term per se is applied differently for multilateral political objectives which could be different from one another. For example tyrant governments may use the term terrorism in reference to rebellions or revolutionary
actions that may seek changes in the current political regime. In that sense governments try to
delegitimize and dehumanize their opponents, through projecting them to publics as evil, inhuman
vicious creatures (Anon., p.1). While in other stages and times, and by different actors the term
terror might refer inevitably to revolution and patriotism. And the closest example of this notion
is the French revolution, where the term “terror” regarded as an act of justice, and as described by
Maximilien Robespierre (1794, cited in Anon.) a noted figure of the French revolution, who stated:
“terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible.” (P. 2).

Thus the definition of terrorism is problematic and might seem flexible, and up to different
interpretations due to different contexts and circumstances. For example, the acts of Hamas the
jihadi organization against Israel are viewed as patriotic and heroic acts of resistance against the
colonizer, in the eyes of the majority of Gaza and maybe the Palestinian populace alongside Arabs.
While these acts are viewed as terroristic and inhuman practices in the eyes of the Israeli occupier.

Nonetheless, the definition of terrorism nowadays might seem clearer and largely recognized by
most world’s states. As universally accepted, terrorism is socially constructed with the use of
violence to create panic, intentionally aimed at civilians and noncombatants targets, for political,
religious, and ideological reasons. And to gain the ultimate publicity for the cause of the terrorists.
Hence the terrorists’ acts are both Mala prohibita acts and Mala in se acts, by which crimes are
made illegally by legislations, and those acts are immoral in themselves.

Another prominent definition is as articulated by Walter Laqueur: “Terrorism is the use or the
threat of the use of violence, a method of combat, or a strategy to achieve certain targets… it aims
to induce a state of fear in the victim, that is ruthless and does not conform with humanitarian
rules…publicity is an essential factor in the terrorist strategy.” (1987, cited in Anon., P.4).

Terrorism went through three basic stages; the classical, modern and postmodern. In the classical
terrorism, the casualties and damages are low and the direct warfare is addressed for the sake of
specific political objectives.

The modern terrorism witnesses elevated destruction and the casualties are much higher than in
the classical terrorism, with the usage of traditional weapons and causing mass killing and fear. At
last but not least, the postmodern terrorism shifted all the precedent styles, by changing the rules
of the warfare, with the possibility of using the weapons of mass destruction. Such as: chemical,
biological, radiological and nuclear weapons (CBRN), by targeting the antagonist’s symbols and trying to eliminate the source of the conflict (Anon., p.11).

Hereafter, terrorism has witnessed four different waves throughout history. The first wave was in the early 20th century, the second one is the colonial wave which was confined to national geographical boundaries. The third wave was the contemporary one, which was clearly transnational and crossed the borders to spread internationally. Finally, the fourth wave which represented a culture of terror, in this stage religion is the base and main justification for mass killing. Depending on vicious tactics, with the use of modern technologies and communications to punish apostate, Satanic and infidel states. In that sense, the conflict becomes bellum omnium contra omnes (war of all against all), hence none would be exempted, and all are going to be punished infidels and believers alike (Anon., P.12).

The triggers of terrorism might relate to one single cause or to a mix of multitude causes, most are socio-economic and culturally related reasons. First and most pervasive cause of terrorism is religion/religious fundamentalism which represent an overrated ideological enthusiasm and dedication. Another prevalent cause could be oppression that is exerted by governments against opponents, or relative deprivation by which poverty could be strongly linked to terrorism. Racism might be a critical reason for dehumanizing and humiliating, yet murdering the adversaries. Other different causes could be; historical grievances, global economic hegemony, financial gain, narcissism (as a terrorist characteristic), lack of channels of expression, sensation-seeking, and mortality salience (anxiety over one’s death) (Anon., pp.15-16-17-18).

3.3. Globalization
The debate over globalization and the postmodern transnational relations among world’s cultures has been extensively debated, considering the possible consequences of such relations facilitated by the modern means of communications. And if that could lead to the destruction of local cultures and identities throughout the process of copying the western ways on the rest of the world. Since the major intellectual and media production, ownership and distribution is centralized in the west, and the flow of information is confined to center-periphery forms, with no counter flow from the rest to the west. Hence, such hegemonic relations would lead to a more homogenization. On the other hand, some take a different perspective arguing that; the current forms of communications allow all the world’s populations to communicate easily and freely, and the flow of information is
multidimensional, what would lead to a cultural convergence, innovation and increased heterogeneousness. Thus the debate about globalization and cosmopolitanism incarnate a dilemma whether it is leading to hybridization or diversification, and whether cosmopolitanism would lead to less conflicts and unrest, or vice versa.

However, the intensification of relations among global and local, and the expansion of world’s cultures are clear characteristics of the globalized world. But, the implication of such relations and expansion may not necessarily lead to homogenization, it may lead to an increased diversification in a form of reflexive reactions, as argued by Huntington (1996, cited in Khatib, 2003) the global and local interaction resulting in cultural heterogenization, ‘not only in the sense that cultures are diverse but also that they may clash’ (p.389). Insofar, the global threatens the local, the nation and nationalism, altering the individual’s identities in the so called cosmopolitanism. Hereafter, new type of nationalism or affiliations might emerge and in the same processes of globalization, not in an opposition to it. An example of this global affiliation is the Islamic fundamentalism as a global movement (or citizenship) different to cosmopolitanism, trying to shape global reality rather than negating it. As stated by Beyer (1994, cited in Khatib, 2003) that fundamentalism is “a way of asserting particular (group) identity, which in turn is a prime method of competing for power and influence in the global system” (p.391). Thus, such movement of fundamentalism although is experienced locally, but still is a global movement with a global influence that is seen as a threat to cosmopolitanism, by which a localized group challenges/threatens the world’s fluid identities.

Islamic fundamentalism as a term is somehow problematic, since it was disagreed to be chosen in articulating terrorism and terrorist organizations. However, the term is used to describe fundamentalism in a political sense, a political one that seeks founding the state of believers and use religion as a standard base to achieve political goals. Consequently, emerging as a reaction to America’s power globally and its hegemonic interests, as propagated by Hall (1992, p.313, cited in khatib, 2003) Islamic fundamentalist identity is the result of the tension between “ethnicity” and “global homogenization” (p.391). Or as stated by Ehteshami (1997, cited in khatib, 2003): “the emotional, spiritual and political response of Muslims to an acute and continuing social, economic and political crisis that has gripped the Middle East.” (p.392)
This emergent global force/movement is using and depending essentially on the internet as an identity tool, which is principally used by radicals to constitute and define themselves, represent and influence their existence and grow their intersecting affiliation glocally.

Hereafter, the usage of the formerly described theories is critical in analyzing the emergence of ISIL and its widely noticed influence. Thus, the wide comprehension of propaganda, terrorism and globalization with their consistent interrelation to each other, and in their applicability to ISIL, will be essential to the understanding of this controversial phenomenon. Which is not similar to any precedent fundamental Islamist group.
Chapter 4

4. Analysis
The investigation and analysis of ISIL’s movies would be conducted on two major levels with concrete scrutiny. First, I will closely study the most preeminent themes covering the movies of both audio/visual and written texts with their interrelation to each other. Second, to the overall meaning. Thus, and after a close observation of the studied media products, it was clear that ISIL’s audio visual propagandization depended on specific plotting and coding system ranging through three main mechanisms with different levels. The core functioning mechanism is a set of three different coding aspects; religious, logical, and psychological. Each of these aspects is found to be functioning separately and simultaneously interrelating to each other in a coherent and sensible interdependence commonly known in such narrative’s plot. However, in this research the focus at the first place is going to be on each coding aspect individually then I will provide a description of their correlation to the context and the overall meaning in total. Worthwhile mentioning that the ultimate goal of all mechanisms/codes is seeking persuasion, affiliation and intimidation, and each is interpellating a specific target audience.

4.1. Religious codes
At this aspect I am distinguishing the usage and applicability of multitude religious codes, represented in the selectivity of specific discourses, provisions, laws and verdicts as a legislative framework for ISIL. And that is by quoting from the Holy Quran, Hadith (prophet Muhammad’s legacy), the Islamic jurists’ legacy and the modern clerics explanations as well. In a way that apparently legalize and justifies ISIL’s multitude policies, and actions. Evoke persuasion, faithfulness to monotheism (Islam), collaboration and allegiance, or even elevating the morale of Ummah (Sunnis). Furthermore, the depiction of some religious acts such as prayers and reading the holy book (Quran), could be considered as religious codes. Since the acts themselves represent the theological virtues, so they evoke the religious affiliation and become in such a critical embedment to the whole intended message, by seeking persuasion through theology and theological commandments.
4.1.1. Provoking jihad

![Figure 1](image-url)

The religious codes of ISIL’s audio-visual products varies in a way that covers multiple aspects, on both theological and ontological dimensions. Initially, the urging to jihad and recruitment of jihadists is apparent within the most of ISIL’s media content. However, to uphold this cause the authors rhetorically employ religious codes to provide a push and persuasion to the plot. In the movie of “the resolve of the defiant” the narrator quotes Hadith at the minute mark 14:03 in Arabic with English translation, saying: Anas Ibn Malik narrated that, the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “a single endeavor (of fighting) in Allah’s cause in the forenoon or in the afternoon is better than the world and whatever is in it” [source]. Hence, it’s clear the selectivity of this Hadith in particular, since the fighting is topicalized within the sentence making it in a cause effect structure. Thus, “a single endeavor (of fighting)” which is a metaphor of “jihad”, “in Allah’s cause” another metaphor referring to Islam (uplifting the truth), “is better than the world and everything is in it”, this phrase is the effect or consequence of the topicalized causation by which the jihadists neglect the temporal ontological instinctive temptations to be compensated with the eternal happiness and relief (heaven) in a type of a reciprocal trade nexus. The message
henceforth is for (Muslims) to trade their mortal bodies in defending Allah`s cause (Islam) and their compensation is the eternal happiness.

Another vivid employment of religious texts that stimulate Jihad is apparent in the noted release of “on the prophecy approach”, where such texts used frequently. For Instance, at the minute mark 05:44 a jihadist preaching and provoking mujahideen in a provocative discourse (as stated in an Arabic subtitle), and end his speech by saying out loud in Arabic:

"عليك بذر الحب لا قطف الجنى و الله للساعين خير معين...قوموا إلا جنة عرضها السماوات و الأرض أعدت للمتقين"

This statement is somehow a textual or discursive hybridity by which the jihadist preacher merged a quoted phrase from the Hadith and a verse from the poetry of the Islamic cleric Ali al-Qarni (القرني 2003/القرن 1424ه) and its possible translation as next; for the first part of the statement (the cleric quoted verse) “you have to sow the grain not to reap the harvest, and god to the couriers is the best helper”. While the second part is the Hadith quote (partially) “[arise to a paradise, that is as wide as the heavens and earth]”, which was prepared for the pious” [Author] (مسلم ح من 145 ص 1510، 206-261 هـ) (Hadith 145, p.1510, 206-261 Hijri). the syntax of these verses incarnate an apparent rhetorical hybridity to result in the ultimate persuasive impact, by which the first phrase (poetry) is an imperative sentence imposing exerting effort as mentioned “sow the grain” which is (seek jihad) as the greatest pursuit and do not seek reward “reap the harvest”. And the answer to the first clause comes at the second phrase in a form of comment, thus “the couriers” a metaphor of the jihadists are in the hands of the almighty “the god” their greatest compensator. And the greatest reward for the “couriers” emerges in the second part of the hybridized statement (the quoted phrase of the Hadith) in a context that complete the thematic line of the whole statement in both verbal rhetoric impact and the truthfully promised compensation. Thus, this sentence also has an active imperative structure by asking “the grain sowers” to “arise” to their infinite reward (vast heavens), that was prepared for “the pious” (as elaborated by the speaking jihadist) metaphor of the “jihadists”, “couriers”, and “grain sowers” who are devoutly religious and guardians of the truth (god`s message).

In addition to the hybridized statement comes the audio-visual texts to consolidate the meaning/effect in a coherent whole, by which the jihadist preacher rise the tone of his voice speaking to the heeding jihadists in an anonymous landmarks location. However, with extravagant
signs of ISIL`s black flags and rifles (most notably Kalashnikovs). The jihadists arise collectively while wearing Shemagh scarves and uplift their Kalashnikovs aside to a provocative soundtrack (Arabic) in a scene meant to simulate the prowess of the jihad vanguard (see appendix 2). In a hyperbole signification to devoutly religious knights, thus connoting to the criticality of the sacred pursuit (jihad). So, here are the pious jihadists proceeding to heavens, follow their example and defend ISIL, the defender of god`s cause (Islam).

evoking the sacred pursuit and uplifting the god`s word in ISIL`s propagandists` strategies is not confined to the employment of the religious verses or merely depicting jihadists holding their refiles, but also advanced as noticed in filming a high profile live encounters of the jihadists with “god`s enemies” (infidels). In the same movie of “on the prophecy approach” at the minute mark 07:18 to 08:25, a jihadist documenter filmed the encounter of a fearless jihadists in Samarra city of Iraq, firing while on top of a pick-up truck proceeding toward enemies from “a long shot” depiction to offer displaying as much possible of the location`s emerging elements (deserted messy landscape). Aside to a teasing soundtrack playing, once the jihadist vehicle approaches to the enemy`s site a red square pointer appear around the jihadist with textual description "اقدام المجاهد" “the jihadist`s fearlessness” then verses from Al-Quran plays loudly, with another red pointer around the adversaries with in focus (small screen) depicting them fleeing with description written "هروب المرتدين" “apostates` escape”. Thus, creating a scene of an intensive melodrama consolidating the patriotic action with musical chanting and quoting from the holy book.

The fearless jihadist who traded his life (body) to god (eternity) attack a group of fearful infidels. Thus, connoting that the jihadist doesn`t fear mortality, he seeks mortality to be elevated to eternal life (paradise); so the courier assault hefty enemies, the jihadist is fearless … the jihadist is truthful. Henceforth, it is apparent the employment of character motivation to trigger and stimulate the narrative with a witty interplay between the signifier and the signified, the jihadist is the superior (he is the truthful), the apostate infidel is fearful coward (he is mendacious). Aside all that comes the citation from Al-Quran {aal-Imran/the family of ’ Imraan (Surah), verse (111)} at the time of a direct conflict

```
{\text{ضروكم إلا أذى وإن يقاتلوكم يولوكم الأدبار ثم لا ينصرون}}
```

“They shall by no means harm you but with a slight evil; and if they fight with you they shall turn (their) backs to you, then shall they not be helped.” [Quran.org].The verse as most of Al-Quran
has a **rhetorical syntax**, in an **ingroup-outgroup** designator by emphasizing on the two different poles “you” and “they”. Their harm to you is confined to “a slight evil” and that evil as described in Arabic/Islamic explanation is the polytheist’s lies and truth distortion. Thus, no severe physical damage… the phrase “They shall turn (their) backs to you” is a **metaphor** of their “cowardice”, and the phrase “shall they not be helped” is a **metaphor** of their “defeat” since they failed god and they are not guarded by his mercy. The verse is all about metaphors and hyperbole (deliberate exaggeration) of “you” **positive self-presentation** and “they” **negative other-presentation**, you are “victorious” and they are the “defeated”. Thus, presenting an authentic scene of jihadist’s power with superiority over the infidels alongside a sacred proof from the holy Quran. Hereafter, ISIL is authentic, ISIL is the superior.

It’s clear the selectivity of ISILs’ propagandists of specific religious codes (verses, hadith) out of their contexts, and matching them to high profile scenic footages, to emphasize on the criticality of jihad and the trade between the slaves (mankind) and the creator (god). In which the believers mortify their bodies to defend Islam and its authentic guard (ISIL), in return their compensation from god is the heavenly eternity. All Muslims (Sunnis) worldwide are obliged to perform their theological duty; seeking jihad through and with ISIL, the authentic representative of monotheism, to defend the truth (Islam) and to salvage the oppressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>truthful</th>
<th>victorious</th>
<th>fearless</th>
<th>eternal happiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>jihadists</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidels</td>
<td>mendacious</td>
<td>defeated</td>
<td>cowards</td>
<td>miserable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2. Elevating morale

Propagating Morale raising is ranging through many aspects, and it is triggered via the employment of the religious texts, or the usage of images or even music/soundtracks. The applicability of music and images to uplift the morale would be discussed later, nevertheless the morale raising would be scrutinized here through the applicability of the religious legacy. In the old release of “clank of the swords” the senior jihadist Abi-Abdullah Almuhajer cited from the holy Quran {Al-Hajj/the pilgrimage (Surah), verse (40)} while he was speaking to Muslims (Sunnis) in Iraq as he said in the minute mark 35: 06: 

ولينصرن الله من ينصره. إن الله لقوي عزيز. "

“And Allah will surely support those who support Him (his cause). Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.” [Quran.com]. The Shemagh-masked jihadist is speaking in a closed location that features ISIL’s flag, the jihadist and a refile next to him while looking away of the camera (apparently to an interviewer). This signifies the confidentiality of the jihadist, since he’s masked it was meant to conceal his personality (anonymous) and as referred to him in textual description on the screen "أبي عبد الله المهاجر" "Abi-Abdullah” and in Arabic that is an epithet (title/nickname) and not the character’s name. Thus the jihadist is presumably in a specific jihading military position (military status), as he is wearing military costume and a refile aside, and therefore his
speech would be reliable and influential. Propagating to jihadists as cited in an **affirmative phrase** “Allah will surely” (definitely) master “those who support him” and in this context god’s supporters is a **metaphor** of the “jihadists”. The jihadists who “support him (his cause)” Allah’s cause which is a **metaphor** of “Islam”, so the jihadists are “victors” since they are defending Allah’s cause (Islam), and they will gain the lord’s approbation. Thus, the “superiority” and the “victor” of the jihadists is **topicalized** in that verse with the support of “the exalted in might” in reference to the source of power (Allah, the almighty). Henceforth, the jihadist message to other jihadists; no fear for you (jihadists), you are the superior victorious over infidels (whatever their power is), since you are Muslims and defending Islam (Allah’s cause). You are protected by the power of the almighty.

It is clear, the emphasis on the infinite support of god to the pious jihadists and citing that from the holy verses alongside propagating through a high rank jihadist with distinctive tone of voice, what would lead to a message with greater influence. To prove the superiority of the jihadists, affirm their affiliation and uplift their prowess. Since the propagandists demonstrating to them that they are the victorious as long as they support their god’s cause (Islam), and the infidels will by no means defeat them, and that is fated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>A.2</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>jihadists</strong></td>
<td>God’s support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enemies</strong></td>
<td>God’s relinquish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.3. Sacred pledging

Seeking affiliation and pledging to ISIL is critical to the group; first, to uplift its claimed theological authenticity (to Sunnis). Second, to increase the group’s sphere of influence geopolitically. Therefore, evoking pledges from other radical Islamist factions regionally and globally given a critical importance in ISIL’s media, and that is frequently spotted within its audio-visual production. From the prominent film of “although the disbelievers dislike it”, at the minute mark 11:44, a distinct visual illustration shows the Arabian Peninsula map badged with ISIL’s flag alongside Sinai. Simultaneously, frequent factions leaders’ voices (presumably) narrate a quoted Hadith, and the voices change subsequently alongside the visual prevail of ISIL’s affiliation from different factions in the Arabic world. Covering Yemen, Libya, Algeria, besides the state authority center in Iraq and the Levant. Thus, demonstrating loyalties to ISIL all over the Arab world from its eastern to its western extents. The narrated Hadith is cited from one of the Prophet Mohammed’s companions called Ubada ibn as-Samit, and was as stated in Arabic and subtitled in English: “we declare from the lands of Al-haramayn the bay’ah (pledge of allegiance) to the khalifah Ibrahim ‘Awwad Ibn Ibrahim al-Qurashi al-Husayni “pledging to selflessly hear and obey, in times of hardship and ease, and in times of delight and dislike. We pledge not to dispute the matter of those
in authority, except if we see obvious “kufur” (blasphemy) concerning which we have proof from Allah” [source]. Interestingly, ISIL’s propagandists hybridized or probably intertextualized the Hadith through omitting the first phrase that was stated in its original version which says: “we (the prophet’s companions) have pledged the prophet of Allah peace be upon him……”

[Author]. (البخاري. ح6507 ، كما وردت في كتاب محمود آل محمود قوموا، ص174، 2008). And substituted it with a phrase referring to the caliph al-Baghdadi as stated: “we declare from the lands of Al-haramayn the bay’ah (pledge of allegiance) to the khalifah Ibrahim ‘Awwad Ibn Ibrahim al-Qurashi al-Husayni.”

Utilizing such Hadith of the companions, and substituting the characters of its subjects has further semantics. The Hadith convey the speech of which the companions of the prophet Muhammad used to pledge him with. Thus, the propagandists applied a textual retrospective using the same words of the companions to offer an awe to the current pledges to al-Baghdadi. Propagating the sense of criticality to the current era’s caliphate, and the obligation of all Muslims toward it. Notably, the lexicalization of the pledges’ hybridized statement doesn’t necessarily site the caliph (al-Baghdadi) in the prophets status or even resembling it, because it would be utterly inadmissible to Sunnis. Otherwise, it is intended to supply a reference to the criticality of the emerging caliphate and its relation to the theological Islamic caliphate’s legacy. According to the cited Hadith, Muslims are obliged not to disobey their rulers unless they “see obvious kufur (blasphemy)”, and seeing obvious blasphemy in this context is a metaphor of “witnessing” or “examining” evident blasphemy that contradicts Allah’s law, and not merely judging over interpretations. The sacred pledging and obedience to the khalifah (caliph) is topicalized in that statement, and the only possibility to contradict it, is witnessing explicit kufur (blasphemy). Thereafter, at minute mark 12:20 an image of al-Baghdadi emerges and a record of his voice declares the expansion of the state in more locations (as mentioned before), and his acceptance to the bay’ah (pledges) (see appendix 2). Noteworthy mentioning, the pledges of Islamist factions to ISIL, was a matter of fact, since their physical real emergence and allegiance to ISIL in Libya, Yemen and Sinai (Egypt) alongside Nigeria’s Boko haram pledge to ISIL was covered by world media. Thus, the visual infographics, the quoted Hadith, the caliph speech (al-Baghdadi), besides the global media coverage about the pledges (as an evidence). All together applied with ISIL’s propagandists, to convey a message with all the possible ingredients of persuasion. Thereafter, the propagandists are dispatching glocalecty to all radical Islamist (Sunni) factions a message to
unhesitatingly join and pledge the caliphate as a sacred duty. Let alone, they utilized religious code and the caliph`s recorded voice, besides witnessing the authentic emergence and allegiance of other factions to ISIL, in reality.

**Clues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factions` duties</th>
<th>Pledging</th>
<th>Obedience</th>
<th>Unification</th>
<th>Scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**4.1.4. Jihadists` piety**

**A. Invocation**

Pleading to god is an explicit incarnated act in many of ISIL`s movies, by which the jihadists are depicted praying altogether or individually reading the holy Quran. Hence, presenting an image of the devotedly religious jihadists with their piousness as the truthful lifters of the monotheism`s ensign. In the film of “the resolve of the defiant” at the minute mark 16:27, two jihadists were filmed, based on the wall, reading from Al-Quran. Aside to the narrator`s speech (in Arabic) with English subtitle saying: “they drink from the book of their lord to strive and be blissful” [Source]. Thereafter, at the minute mark 16:40 a bunch of jihadists depicted bowing to the ground (part of
Muslim prayer’s basic techniques) with a sober soundtrack, while the narrator speaks about the believer’s obedience as he said: “they refuse to submit except to their creator” [Source]. At the first depiction there filmed multiple jihadists based on the wall with two jihadists in mid shot focus (closer to the cam) putting their jihad equipment (refiles, bag) aside, and reading together from a single version of the holy book, with their military costumes. That connotes; jihadists are taking a break from fighting since they are in their complete military suits (they are just within the ignited battle ground), nevertheless the pious jihadists do not waste a chance to worship and supplicate to their lord, and here they are pleading the almighty even in their times of rest. Alongside the visual depiction, comes the narrator’s speech in reference to the depicted jihadists as stated: they “drink” from the holy book (Al-Quran), herein the speaker substituted “read” with “drink” in a metaphor to their fixated reading and heeding to the holy words. Thus the jihadists are devout slaves (in Islam, humans “believers” are slaves to their creator), and in a semantic line comes the believers reward as stated “be blissful” ecstatic for their lord’s approbation. Hence, the jihadists do not merely read the Quran, it is essential to their souls, just as essential as drinking water to the body.

The second depiction features a group of military costumed jihadists (they are jihading) praying in an open landscape, aside to a sober soundtrack that consolidate the whole concept (See appendix 2). Thus the jihadists are not only fulfilling their sacred duty of conquering and defending the lord’s cause, but they entreat and worship god despite they are preoccupied with fighting. Insofar, comes the narrator’s speech again stating: “they refuse to submit” a lexicalization refers to the jihadists prowess and hardness and the improbability of their subordination, “except to their creator” as saying but to their “god”. Hence, ISIL’s jihadists are obedient and faithful to their lord, in spite of their solidity and harshness toward adversaries.

The applicability of the audio-visual and textual aspects herein were meant to reflect the concept and the atmosphere of ISIL’s jihadists devoutly piousness, and their faithfulness toward the religion and the entitled sacred duties. The propagandists apparently are trying to convey a message to Muslim (Sunnis) audience about ISIL men’s reverence as a reference to their faithfulness to the creed of monotheism. These codes aren’t religious in the sense of quoting/importing form the holy Quran, Hadith, or the Islamic legislative legacy. Rather the codes are religious herein for the employment of specific theological acts/duties such as, reading the holy book, and praying collectively, in direct reference to religious affiliation and faithfulness. Therefore, these depictions are regarded as explicit religious codes, and the intended message
connotes: ‘ISIL’s jihadists are authentic believers, since they seek to defend their religion and simultaneously never miss their religious duties in praying or reading Al-Quran, ISIL’s jihadists are truthful monotheists.’

**B. Vice prevention**

Another angle meant to show ISIL’s jihadists’ piety is through the depiction of their refusal to the immorality. And this concept may cover a large scope of sinful acts, but in ISIL’s movies merely some of them were depicted to give a reference, a sense of piety and invocation to the groups’ members. From the release of “the resolve of the defiant” at the minute mark 10:15 till the minute mark 11:25, the jihadists were videotaped consequently destroying/ burning cannabis, smashing alcohol bottles, and burning cigarette boxes (See appendix 2). ISIL’s fighters entered a room in a building in Kobane, they burned a pile of drugs with written description in both AR/EN “burning and destroying drugs”. Thereafter, the jihadists were depicted in a close up shot (to show details) grabbing alcohol bottles (most apparently the Raki) and crash them on a picture of Abdullah Ocalan (founders of the militant group PKK). Thereafter the jihadists trampled both Ocalan’s picture and alcohol, besides the jihadist’s speech at the minute mark 10:35 “Ocalan is beneath our feet” [Source]. The set bears two symbols; the first is Ocalan as an **icon** (a leading Kurdish figure) that is depicted (his picture) and described as “beneath” the jihadists feet, is a **metaphor** of
“defeated” by ISIL`s members, in a clear **signification** to the weakness of PKK or YPG (the Kurdistan workers` party) which is one of ISIL`s adversary in Kobane. Thus, the **connoted message**; we (ISIL`s jihadists) are the victors and the PKK is defeated, here (in your sphere of influence) in Kobane, at one of your locations, the godfather (Ocalan) is humiliated. Attached to this message the depiction of drugs burning (few seconds earlier) and the intraday depiction of Raki bottles being trampled upon Ocalan`s picture. Merging those two **signs** offers an interrelation of two references with further meanings, first as mentioned earlier Ocalan is beneath the jihadists feet, hence the PKK is failed and ISIL is the superior. Then filming the taboos (drugs and alcohol) in one of the worker party`s locations and simultaneously being burned and destroyed. Thus, ISIL`s meant connotation is that, the atheist Kurdistan workers` party (PKK) is defeated and it`s an infidel immoral party, since its members live on immorality and sins (drugs). Furthermore, the mostly concentrated meaning, is that the jihadists are pious, they are devoutly religious, despite they are tightly engaged in fighting the infidels, but they can`t witness the immorality and neglect it. Thus, the producers` targeted audience of these messages is most specifically (Sunnis) Muslims, to show them that ISIL`s members are authentic faithful Muslims, they are the true believers and the lifters of the monotheism ensign. Although, they are endangering their lives to defend and fight for Islam, but they are pious, truthful believers to god and to his commands, they fight, they prevent vice and immorality (drugs/alcohol/tobacco).

**Clues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jihadists</th>
<th>Piousness</th>
<th>Virtue</th>
<th>Morality</th>
<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th>Superiority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemies</td>
<td>Damnation</td>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>Immorality</td>
<td>Lukewarmness</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.5. Inevitability of adversarial

Indicating to the definite adversary with the enemies is a critical aspect in ISIL`s media, and in many cases it is topicalized. However, the enemies according to ISIL have different titles (definitions) and categorizations; the “apostate” term indicates to either Sunnis went of the route, or “Shia”, the “polytheists” in reference to Christians and “Shia” {Shia regarded as polytheists because they glorify their imams and sanctify their icon Husayn ibn Ali (the prophet Muhammad`s grandson) similarly to the extent of sanctifying Allah the almighty, so it`s regarded polytheism}, lastly “infidels” in direct reference to all adversaries (the umbrella term) including Jews, Christians, Shia and probably apostate Sunnis.

From the film of “clank of the swords” at the minute mark 33:06 a jihadist titled "أبو أحمد الأنصاري (رحمه الله)” "Abu Ahmad al-Ansari (god’s mercy upon him)", the jihadist is already dead during or before the time of the movie release because in Arabic once it’s written “god’s mercy upon him” is a reference to the Muslim is being dead. However, Abu Ahmad was preaching and talking about his own experience while he was filmed in a mid-shot (meant to show a broad identification of him) (See appendix 2), and it was written “captive in crusaders detention for five years”. When he
defame, and libel them. And “insulted” here refers to the Shia’s contempt over the “companions” and to “Sunnis”, so the message becomes: ‘Sunnis couldn’t relate or live with Shia, or even accept the Rafidas’ existence in their lands, since they are polytheists who contempt the prophet’s companions’. Hence, the holy quotation attached to the photos of Shia rituals who dominated the land of Sunnis (Baghdad) gives the message of the definite adversary with Shia, and so it’s not possible to admit their existence. Thus, ISIL’s propagandists conveyed a message bearing two testimonies of the total adversary with Shia (Rafida), that is through the religious quote and the real depiction of Latmya (Shia mourning alongside beating chests). Thereafter, ISIL’s propagandists defined all the possible antagonists of the Islamic state including any party or religion that could oppose it, hence meaning Christians, Jews, apostate Sunnis, and all infidels aside that the Shia. And there is an apparent concentration on the adversary with Shia, since they are a danger to Islam inwardly (openly they may claim the oneness of god but latently they show acts of polytheism and Islam is the total recognition of god’s oneness “monotheism”), let alone Shia (Rafida) has diffused and dominated major Sunni cities such as, Baghdad (consequences of the aftermath of the American invasion to Iraq in 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believers</td>
<td>We</td>
<td>ISIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proselytes</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>Apostate Sunnis (Muslims)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejecters</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>Shia (Muslims)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytheists/Shirk</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>Shia – Christians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidels</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>Apostate Sunnis - Shia - Christians - Jews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.6. Legitimizing polytheist manifestations` annihilation

Figure 7

It is plain in IS`s movies the emphasis on the tangible pulverization of all means of polytheism, and that is through live depiction of the destruction process of all Rafida (Shia) temples; including mosques (Husseiniyahs), shrines and all sacred places of Shirk (polytheism). from the film of “on the prophecy approach” at the minute mark 13:06 till 15:47, the movie displays a series of frequent destructions to shrines and temples with specific focus on icons of Ali ibn Abi Talib {the prophet Muhammad`s cousin and a caliph (he is sacred for both Sunnis and Shia, but Shia divines him to the extent of resemblance with Allah`s attributes “herein considered polytheism”} which refers to Shia blasphemous acts (divining and incarnating religious figures). Thereafter, the temples were filmed being exploded (See appendix 2), in a persistent act on cleansing the infidelity`s physical embodiment. Then at the minute mark 13:44 the propagandists attached a visual (textual) quote from the Islamic jurist Ibn Qayyim as stated in Arabic:

لا يجوز الإبقاء على مواضع الشرك و الطواعيت بعد القدرة على هدمها وإبطالها يوما واحدا فإنها شعائر الكفر والشرك وهي أعظم المنكرات فلا يجوز الإقرار عليها مع القدرة البتة.

“It can`t be allowed to retain, even for a single day, the spots of Shirk (polytheism) and Tyrants. After having the ability to destroy and abolish them. It`s the rites of blasphemy and Shirk
(polytheism), and it’s the greatest sins. It can’t be acknowledged after having the ability (to destroy them) at all” [Author].

The jurist’s speech includes both a **declarative** and an **imperative** statements, by which “the rites of Shirk” is **topicalized** (the point of concern). The spots of “Shirk” (polytheism) **rhetorically repeated** and linked to both “sins” and “blasphemy” in a **semantic** to their religious prohibition. However, “tyrants” in this context is a **metaphor** of “Shia”, and “the spots of shirk” is indicating to Shias` temples (shrines and Husseiniyahs) in a **thematic line** to the formerly depicted recurrent filming of temples` blasting. Thus, saying: Shia are polytheists and their temples are spots of blasphemy, and they couldn’t be retained “after having the ability” as quoted from the Imam, and “ability” here as **comment form**, is a condition to perform the act of cleansing Shirk (polytheism). Therefore, ISIL`s propagandists are connoting that; ISIL has the ability and henceforth, Shia spots of polytheism are its rightful targets and they would be legitimately pulverized. The propagandists used both, live videotaping of cleansing and the religious code, to emphasize on portraying ISIL as the truthful guardian and representative of monotheism. Thus, attracting Muslims (Sunnis)

**Clues**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Conditions of blasphemous Temples` destruction</th>
<th>Being spotted</th>
<th>The ability</th>
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**A.6**
4.1.7. Legitimizing scenic punishments

Gruesome scenes of decapitations and sadistic punishments to infidel captives, is one of the most prevalent aspects/techniques included in ISIL’s audio-visual production. The depiction of such horrible scenes is given a critical importance in both, the movie production process itself, and in the intended message of the physical humiliation and the gore. This, in such a psychological warfare, has an important and a different psychological impact on every single target audience. However, this would be discussed concretely later in the upcoming analysis. The scrutiny hereafter is to clarify the applicability and selectivity of specific religious codes to legitimize such harshness.

from the most recent distinctive ISIL’s release of “healing the believers’ chests”, it was centralized in the 22:34 minute movie the burning alive of the Jordanian captive pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh. All the events of the movie (motifs) from the intro till the moment of the punishment, were a series of harbingers to what would Muath’s fate be. The end of the pathologic footage of Muath being burned alive was propped with a legislative quote from the noted Islamic jurist Ibn Taymiyya. At the minute mark 18:55 a visual (textual) quote was embedded while the pilot’s charred burning face was depicted in the background, simultaneously the narrator read the text as said:

"فأما إذا كان في التمثيل الشائع دعاء لهم إلى الإيمان أو زجر لهم عن العدوان فإنه هنا من إقامة الحدود والجهاد المشروع."
“If by the common/public exemplary mutilation/punishment, there is a call for them (the disbelievers) to believe or a deterrence for them from hostility, then it’s here (a matter of) applying the prescribed punishments and legitimate jihad” [Author].

the jurist’s statement is a passive sentence by which the action is preceded to the subject (punishment preceded the subject) and the action in other sense is topicalized (being centered), as the best tool to deal with infidels. Noteworthy, the “exemplary mutilation/punishment” in this context (burning alive the captive pilot) is used to deter the adversaries (American led coalition) hostility, but at the same time this rule could be applied with ISIL in seeking spreading/conquering its cause as stated “a call for them to believe”. Thus the “exemplary mutilation/punishment” has two roles, either defense or attack, and that is righteous. Since it was legislated by the widely noted Islamic jurist Ibn Taymiyya as mentioned “legitimate jihad”. Furthermore, “public” in that context and as applied by ISIL is a metaphor of “propaganda/propagandizing”, so saying it’s not only legislated to perform the exemplary punishment over the “disbelievers”, but also to publicize and broadcast it. ISIL with its harshness earned two benefits of this legislation in particular, firstly to justify its gruesome coercive bodily punishments, secondly to demonstrate such scenic torture. Noteworthy mentioning, ISIL’s legislators and propagandists adapted Ibn Taymiyya’s speech and neglected the prophet Mohammed’s speech (who is supposed to be the master of lawgiving in Islam) by which he prohibits using fire neither to punish nor to kill. As stated:

لا يذب بالنار إلا رب النار.” (البخاري, ال سقلاني 1986).

“None to torture with fire, but the god of fire” [Author]. Thus, it’s clear the path and the selectivity of specific radical approaches by ISIL. Thereafter, ISIL’s propagandists are enrolled in preparing, performing, editing and publicizing the scenic acts of punishments. Thus, ISIL’s propagandists aim of conveying such scenic audio-visual messages is different to each target audience. But, apparently it’s majorly addressed toward enemies to terrorize and elevate bearing horror, so to weaken them. However, this is to be discussed in later chapters.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Scenic punishments` roles</strong></td>
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<td>Defense {to deter enemies` hostility}</td>
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<td><strong>Scenic punishments` aspects</strong></td>
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4.1.8. Inevitability of the Caliphate

Within IS`s audio-visual products, there are multiple codes that emphasize on the truthfulness of the caliphate and its emergence. The glorious state of Muslims that is going to prevail. This is noticeable in the movie of “the breaking of the borders” at the minute mark 10:45, and after talking about the emergence of ISIL. a senior jihadist was filmed in a “mid shot” depiction while talking to the camera and wearing a military vest with his released beard and long hair, besides raising his hand while pointing up with his index finger, in an open landscape. In a mise-en-scène that denotes; the militant is a credible jihadist pointing his index finger of his right hand up (signifies bearing the witness of no god but Allah {monotheist}) , who is talking about the truth of ISIL from ISIL sphere of influence (physically), wearing a militant vest (he is jihading) from the battle ground....from the truthfully prevailing caliphate. Aside that comes the senior jihadist’s (senior: because if he wasn’t so, he wouldn’t have had the time and space in ISIL`s movie to inform and instruct) speech as he said (in Arabic) and cited from the holy Quran{ As-saf/the rank (Surah) verse (8) - Yusuf/joseph (Surah), verse (21)}:

أقول لكل من يتكلم في هذه الدولة، كنتي و خسنت، الله فتح و الله متم نوره و لو كره الكافرون، و الله غالب على أمره لكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون."

Figure 9
“I say to all whom doubt this state, you lied and failed, Allah is conquer, 'Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it' 'and Allah is predominant over his affair, but most of the people do not know’” [Quran.com] [Author]. This as an instructive statement propped by a sacred proof in a comment form at the second and third clauses, with a masterful lexicalization within the sentence structure. Initializing the sentence with a subjective personal pronoun “I say” reflects somehow a confidence aside the speaker who is in an informative position. To “all” and all here, is addressed to any party falsifies the truth of the caliphate, and most specifically to other Sunni Muslims; because the polytheist Shia or infidels are already adversaries to ISIL. They are infidels because they refuse the approach of monotheism, ISIL is their definite enemy; therefore they may doubt and falsify it, but the concern is about other discontent skeptical Sunnis. So the message here is to all including other Sunnis who doubt the state, and if you “doubt this state” as the jihadist said, then you “lied and failed” is a metaphor of that you are “misled” and “fooled”. Then the jihadist props his speech by saying “Allah is conquer” conquer here is a metaphor of “triumph” or “prevail”, aside that as described earlier the jihadist is speaking in an open landscape in his military vest apparently from the battleground. Thus connotes; the senior jihadist is “conquering” and “prevailing” physically with ISIL… henceforth “Allah is conquer” (the truth is conquer) and ISIL is “conquering”, thus ISIL is the safeguard of Allah’s cause. After that comes the two holy verses to prove the jihadist’s speech forming a hybridized sentence, however the two sentences were elicited from two different Surah (chapters) of Al-Quran out of their contexts. The first verse is an active sentence with affirm to an action to be happened, “will perfect” is a metaphor of “reveal” or “spread vividly” and “light” is a metaphor of the “truth” and truth as well is a metaphor of many concepts, but in this context it is a metaphor of “Islam”. Thus the interpretation becomes: god will reveal the “truth” (Islam) regardless the disbelievers’ “aversion”, then comes the next verse saying “Allah is the predominant over his affair”, predominant here is a metaphor of “mastering” his affair and if we relate it to the precedent phrase “his affair” becomes prevailing the “light” which is the truth (Islam). Thus, god will reveal the truth (Islam) through ISIL and that is inevitable “but most people don’t know”. The message is metaphorically hyperbolic in an apparent rhetorical structure, which makes it clear through the senior jihadist’s physical evidence in the process of jihading “conquering”, aside the meanings of his speech as saying: ‘to all those who doubt the truth of the caliphate’s emergence (infidels and other discontent
Sunnis) you are misled and fooled. ISIL is the safeguard of Allah`s cause (truth/islam) and god will perfect prevailing ISIL (the truth guardian) despite the ignorants` discontent.’

Worthwhile mentioning that within the movie “the breaking of the borders” the propagandists offer a live evidence of destroying the borders between Syria and Iraq, and that is through showing the free-custom movement of people among both countries without passports. “Within the frontiers of the Islamic state, Muslims move freely”, then comes the speaking jihadists to confirm the spread and inevitability of the caliphate (ISIL) through factual visual evidence and sacred proofs from the holy verses. Thus, the propagandists are intensively propagating the inevitability of the Islamic state`s emergence whether you like it or not.

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<td>Ignorant</td>
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4.1.9. Global expansion

ISIL as a radical power with its glocal intersecting affiliation, is not merely confined to the aim of establishing the caliphate state regionally (Arab world), but to extend its political and theological influence globally. That is clear through the film of “although the disbelievers dislike it”, and could be spontaneously comprehended by any viewer; it doesn’t require an expert to decipher. However, at the minute mark 00:09 an audio-visual illustration (infographic) demonstrates ISIL’s expansionist ambitions, through which IS’s flag instill the Syrian-Iraqi borderline in a dim blue colored map. Then, a sparkling light emerges and spread all over the world, covering the Arabic region, Iberian Peninsula, Rome, Andalus/Andalusia (Spain), southeast Asia (China, Japan...), then wiping the Americas (See appendix 2). So wiping the whole world with ISIL’s light from the east/المشرق to the west/المغرب as titled by IS’s propagandists. All states as in the infographic were titled with Arabic large font alongside an English smaller one, but noticeably some of the titles were in a direct reference to the Islamic legacy; such as naming Andalus/الأندلس (Andalucía) rather than Spain, Faris/فارس (Persia) rather than Iran and Khorasan/خراسان to central Asia states (like Afghanistan). Thereafter emphasizing on the Islamic historical identity in a retrospective of elements that would draw back again the world’s map. Alongside the illustration, a vocal reading...
from the holy Quran a verse quoted from {At-Tawbah/the repentance (surah), verse (32)} were embedded, as stated: "يريدون أن يطفئوا نور الله بأفواهم ويلابسوا الله إلا أن يتم نوره ولو كره الكفارون."

“They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it” [Quran.com]. The verse is rhetorical with hyperbole employment of metaphors. Hereafter, “extinguish” is a metaphor of “conceal” and the light is a metaphor of “the truth/Islam”. So, unfolding the relation between infidels and the truth, in Arabic “Kafer”/”infidel” is the one who conceal, and in the stated verse “with their mouth” is a semantic to “their lies” or their distortion of the truth. Thus the meaning become: they (the disbelievers) want to conceal and distort the truth/Islam (Allah’s cause) with their lies. This meaning is coherently embedded to ISIL’s propagandists illustration, by which the light that spread the world is the truth/Allah’s cause (Islam); thus, ISIL is the guard and the spreader of the truth/Islam. And “Allah refuses but to perfect his light” in that context (ISIL’s illustration), is a semantic of that, the almighty will champion ISIL, the guard of Allah’s light (the truth/Islam). And ISIL will conquer and wipe the world, regardless the disbelievers’ aversion.

ISIL’s propagandists message within that audio-visual infographic is clearly demonstrating IS’s ambitions, not only by completely establishing the state regionally, but the further strategy and aim to expand globally. Furthermore, the applicability of the holy verses, and the selectivity of specific jargon, as titling the states in names that evokes a retrospective to the Islamic legacy; such as, writing “Andalus” rather than “Spain”. All that is to emphasize on the Islamic/Arabic identity in relation to the Islamic beloved legacy, thus to attain the greatest possible impact of the message (influence-persuade). So, connoting: ISIL is heralding a world order and IS will prevail, whether with your acceptance or with your contempt.

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At this level, ISIL and its propagandists are resourcefully exploiting specific religious provisions, in order to present a legislative framework, built up of coherent sacred laws, by which the “Muslims” should have a belief of and commit to. It’s explicitly vivid the insistence on drawing sharp borderlines and differentiating between “we” (ISIL) and “them” (disbelievers) in a definite polarization with all the opponents.

In a radiant “we” portrayal, ISIL is using religious scripts to maximize its righteousness, its cause and every single aspect of its characteristics. Thus, in its pursuit to evoke Muslims support and motivate them to seek jihad through it, ISIL is propagating “selectively” theological codes that are overt and undoubtable; to affirm the sacred obligation to join its ranks. Simultaneously, publicizing that “we” are superior, truthful and “we” are the victorious. that is true, since we are defending Allah’s cause, god will unequivocally support us. And so on, this extravagant favorable portraying will distinctly uplift the advocates’ morale and confidence. Alongside, perpetuating the obligation of other jihadists` factions to pledge and merge with ISIL. Moreover, the Islamic state is imaging its members as the elite vanguard of jihad; ISIL`s jihadists are moral and honorable, they are pious and honest with their faith. Furthermore, IS`s propagandists are trying frequently and affirmatively to disseminate the fact of the caliphate`s inevitable emergence, origination and prevailing globally. That is a de facto, and the state`s dawn is sacredly fated.

In the sullen “them” portrayal, it is distinct the concentration on the fated antagonism with the opponents, alongside the concrete definition of the infidels separately and collectively. Thus, the apostate Sunni Muslims who confront ISIL are proselytes. The Shia who are titled as Rafidah (rejecters) are polytheists and deemed as the greatest threat to the monotheism doctrine inwardly (they claim being monotheists but they practice acts of polytheism). Therefore, ISIL assigned a great concentration on the adversary with Shia Muslims. Alongside the adversary with Christian polytheist crusaders, Jews, and certainly all nonbelievers. Simultaneously, after the specific categorization of each opponent, ISIL assembles them wholly under the umbrella term of infidelity. Thus, all enemies are infidels, and there is by no mean a way to coexist or transact with them. Moreover, ISIL`s propagandists intensified imaging the opponents as immoral, mendacious, damned and misled, aside to their oppression and hostility. Thus, fighting and slaughtering them is righteous and was propped by religious scripts (elicited selectively). Moreover, it`s legitimized
to scenically punish them with common exemplary techniques and publicize it; for the sake of either preemption or attack. Henceforth, their temples, shrines and all their symbols should be annihilated. So, the state’s propaganda depicts enemies with the very characteristics of maliciousness, falsity and damnation. Therefore, infidels are pure evil, they and their very existence should be totally pulverized.

4.2. Perceptible codes
At this aspect I am trying to discover the codes/messages that ISIL is trying to merge within its plotting line, and make them coherently reasonable/logical to the reality represented in its media production, and its ideology in total. Thus, providing codes that are meant to evoke the viewers’ mental arbitration in order to give their own judgments regarding the cases presented, in accordance to the discourses, actions and the real depictions of specific symbols. Through these codes ISIL’s propagandists are trying to convey an understandable cause-effect correlation between the discourses, actions and reflexes. And this could be through applying public figures’ speech as testimonies to IS’s actions and policies. For instance, US president speech about the rivalry with the Islamic state is a testimony of his state’s hostility against ISIL, and so the Islamic states’ hostility as a reaction would be logical and legitimate. Moreover, the propagandists used undoubtable evidences to support their cause and evoke thinking. Hence, testimonies might extend to include captives’ confessions as a proof for their falsehood and convictions. Another aspects of perceptible codes would include dialogues of either ISIL’s advocates or it’s adversaries, by which the discourses represent an ideological critique, realism, monologues, or conversationalism. Therefore, the eventually mentioned would be perceived logical in relevance to the reality presented in ISIL’s movies and to its ideological and political approaches.
4.2.1. Antagonism
Antagonism is a widely concentrated topic within ISIL`s media, and it`s covered up through many aspects, ranging over different levels and conceptions from hostility and blasphemy to weakness and failure…etc. all characteristics of antagonism would be explained hereafter;

A. Definite adversary

The applicability of high profile figure`s speech is vast within IS`s films. In the preeminent movie release “the flames of war” the former US president George W.Bush was depicted while speaking presumably in a conference. He was talking about the US type of relation with terrorism as he stated at the minute mark 00:53: “either you are with us or with the terrorists” [Source]. Simultaneously, a description was written at the top left angle of the screen “Bush spoke the truth, although he is a liar” [Source].

In his speech, bush was drawing an obvious borderlines to the relation between the United States and its ultimate enemy (terrorism). Simultaneously, conveying to the whole world and defining the undoubted importance of alliance either with the US or against it. So in clear semantic structure Bush propagated that for the ambivalent parties (due to dealing with terrorists), there are only two choices and no third one, you are either with America or you are against it. henceforth, ISIL`s propagandists shrewdly applied Bush`s speech to use his most words to its audience in a
form of monologue. So, ISIL was propagating through Bush’s words to the world (including Sunnis) you are either with the Islamic state or you are against it (with America/with Bush). Alongside his statement comes ISIL’s propagandists text “Bush spoke the truth, although he is a liar.” Bush is a public figure, representing a supreme state and his speech is definitely formal and responsible (crucial), so despite Bush is a “liar” but he spoke the “truth”, truth here is a metaphor of the “inevitable antagonism.” Bush has defined the alliance and rivalry with (mujahidin), and through his speech ISIL defined them as well. Let alone he was depicted with a dark background with dim paled colored face which has a negative connotation to Bush personally and the antagonists in general.

Therefore, IS’s propagandists are clearly propagating the definite “truth” of “antagonism”, saying to its viewers with a formal evidence from Bush’s statement, “you are either with Islam (ISIS) or you are against it”; and if you are against ISIS, then you are an inevitable antagonist (target).

B. Antagonists’ alliance

The adversarial conglomerate against the Islamic state was frequently repeated, to emphasize on the rivals antagonism and war against “Islam” (ISIL). Within the movie release of “healing the believers’ chests” the Jordanian king Abdullah was depicted as he was talking presumably in an
international conferences. The king was calling for a global coherence against ISIL as he stated at the minute mark 01:33: “finally, I hope there will be a global call to action to support the countries like my own, at the forefront” [Source]. The speech of the king is vivid and comprehensible, and doesn`t need expertise to decipher it. ISIL`s propagandists used the high profile speech as an invulnerable testimony to the antagonism against the Islamic state. In that statement the king asked for “a global call” to support the countries at the “forefront” of the fight, the global call here is of course addressed to all worlds` states, but still it seeks more likely to urge the western nations and most specifically the United States. Since it is at the top of fighting terrorism`s pyramid. Thus, the global call is topological and so a semantic to the worlds` states adversary with ISIL, simultaneously ISIL is pointing out to the conglomerate coalition`s subversion, and its inevitable adversary with all its members and vice versa.

Another evidence of the adversaries’ alliance was clear through the Jordanian pilot’s (Muath) confessions, while he was a captive to ISIL. The pilot offered details about the anti IS coalition, covering the strategic planning and operational processes as he stated at the minute mark 07:37: “regarding the participating states in the attacks against the Islamic state, either in Iraq or in Syria; from the Arabic states I specify: Jordan, united Arab emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and morocco” [Author] (See appendix 1). Simultaneously, while the captive was speaking an infographic emerges on the screen, showing flags and description, at the top level there centered the United States with other western states` flags around, as next: Canada, France, United States of America, Britain, and Australia. America was centered with a blue circle around and a description beneath it “the crusader coalition” then comes the captive`s description about the participants with visual graphics, showing the enrolled Arabic states in accordance to Muath`s speech (See appendix 2). Thus, ISIL is conveying a perceivable message of the aligned coalition and its founding members, they are altogether founded a rival entity that is titled “the crusader” coalition; since it is western-centric with the leadership of America and against Islam and its guardian (ISIL), so it’s a “crusader” coalition. Thus, the use of Muath`s testimony is presumed to be perceived as an evidence, since the pilot was participating with the coalition operation and had a wide knowledge and experience regarding the whole process. Alongside that comes the visual graphics to simplify the coalition interrelation and relate the participating Arab/”Muslim” states to the same “crusader coalition”, and as direct antagonists to “the Islamic state”.

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Thus, ISIL`s propagandists provided two testimonies about the adversaries alliance and alignment against ISIL; first, was the high profile statement of the Jordanian king Abdullah as an evidence of the adversaries political cooperation, and second the captive pilot`s “descriptions” as an evidence to the coalition operational cooperation. So, ISIL is conveying a message most likely to Sunnis (Muslims), clarifying and describing the evil conglomerate against Islam and its authentic representative (ISIL), and that coalition is made up of Arabic/Muslim apostate governments which support the United States and stand at its most position. Thereafter, the antagonists including Arab/Muslim states viciously unified against Islam and the truthful monotheists (ISIL). They converged and consolidated against Allah`s cause (Islam/ISIL).

C. Antagonism with Assad regime (Alawites)

The aspect of adversary with the Alawite Syrian regime (Assad) was frequently depicted, with critical focus, to emphasize on the definite rivalry with Assad. And the reason of that is obviously to falsify many claims propagated by the Syrian political opposition, which described the Islamic state as an innovation of Assad regime to divert the compass of the conflict from a truthful public revolution against totalitarianism, to a conflict between the legitimate government and terrorists groups. Thus, Assad will gain global political support alongside the support of the world`s public opinion. Hence, ISIL is trying to falsify the claims of its conspiring with the Alawite reign. In the
movie release of al-Γ`itīsam production unit called "فشرد بهم من خلفهم". The title’s initial word is polysemous and could probably have different interpretation in Arabic, but here and through the general concept of the movie it might be translated as “kill/mutilate or abuse them from behind” thus to disperse their coherence. However, at the minute mark 10:00 of the movie, a salient footage of jihadists encounter and combat with enemies was depicted, thereafter the real footage depicts gruesome images of dead bodies of which the jihadists have killed. Then, the jihadists approached toward the bodies and inspected/picked up their remains. Few seconds after at the minute mark 10:39 a jihadist display to the camera a military identification card which is obviously a Syrian (Assad) militants’ IDs that includes the details of the soldier, the Syrian flag with titles such as: the Syrian Arab republic, general command of the armed forces and the military records management. Simultaneously, the jihadist says “those are the Nusayris, praises to you god” [Author] (See appendix 1). (“Nusayris” is a second designation that refers to “Alawites” which is one of the Shia branches). Insofar, ISIL propagandists provided two vivid evidences of conflicting and rivalry with Assad regime and his forces; first, the real footage of attack which is explicitly filmed by a jihadist media/filmmaking specialist, then the footage propped by the sequent depiction of the operation until the moment of picking up the ID from a dead body. Thus, presenting a show in a thematic line from the initial of the assault till the depiction of the ID, in a way that makes both the real footage and the depiction of the identification perceptible facts to the audience. Alongside that, comes the jihadist’s speech as said, “those are the Nusayris” in reference to Alawites and Assad military forces. Henceforth, ISIL propagandists conveyed undoubtedly a vivid message of the bloody adversary with Assad regime, and that is propped with real combat footage. Alongside the speech of the jihadist by which he references the dead bodies to “Alawites” (Assad forces), so those audiences who are not familiar with the Syrian military IDs would grasp the message. Finally, the connoted message of ISIL propagandists and which was drawn by the enemies’ blood is that; ‘the Islamic state is in an inevitable animosity with the Assad Nusayri regime, and we would by no means conspire with our rivals’. The message is apparently addressed to skeptical Sunnis, who doubt ISIL’s attitude toward the Syrian regime, and its truthfulness in defending Muslims (Sunnis). So, the Islamic state provided bloody footages to seek persuasion and to emphasize on adversary with Nusayris/Alawites (Assad regime).
D. Antagonists’ blasphemy

Immorality and infidelity of the rivals is another vivid aspect embedded frequently into ISIL’s audio-visual production, for the sake of demonizing the rivals and trying to evoke the Muslims (Sunnis) contempt toward them. One of the indications to the blasphemous adversaries is In the movie release of “the resolve of the defiant”, at the minute mark 00:30 the narrator starts describing the Kurdistan workers’ party or the so-called the peoples protection unit (acronym, PKK or YPG), as he stated: “it was founded by the communist, Nusayri Abdullah Ocalan” and the party is founded upon three principles 1- “atheism and denial of Allah’s lordship and godhood”, 2- “socialism with regards to wealth and promiscuity with regards to chastity”, 3- “a call to Kurdish nationalism as a basis for the establishment of a state” [Source].

The narrator’s description made up of a clear and specific syntax with particular lexicalization to emphasize and focus on the Kurdistan party’s blasphemy. The godfather and the founder of the party was described as “communist” in reference to “atheism” and “Nusayri” in a semantic to “Alawite/Shia” thus indicating to “polytheism” and “blasphemy”. Thereafter, the party’s principles topitized with three concepts “atheism”, “socialism”, and “nationalism” which obviously refers herein to “blasphemy”. Socialism and nationalism regarded as heathens and a direct contrary to Islamic collective nationalism, let alone siting “promiscuity” in reference to
“socialism” to connect immorality with such a political attitude. Promiscuity refers to frequent sexual relations with different individuals in an indiscriminate or random choices. Thus, when described and especially within social ideal and compared to decent social behavior and moral manners, herein promiscuity is regarded as a moral judgment of immoral sexual behavior contrary to the legitimate bounding relationships (marriages). Henceforth, ISIL propagandists connected promiscuity “immorality” to “socialism” and so referring to “blasphemy” in a rhetorical repetition and emphasis on infidelity, in an ideological critique that demonize and disrespect the antagonists and simultaneously provoke thinking and mental trial for the Sunni (Muslim) audience. Thus presenting facts and evoking judgement and persuasion through thinking and sense making.

Hereafter, IS`s propagandists message to the audience and most specifically to Muslims; the Kurdistan workers’ party is an infidel immoral faction that is made up of vice and blemish, so it’s a representation of heathens and infidelity, and that is a direct contrary to Allah’s cause and the Islamic doctrine. Noteworthy, mentioning that, this type of narration and ideological critique of demonizing the rivals is applied to all ISIL`s antagonists.

E. Antagonists` hostility

Figure 15
Another aspect demonizes ISIL’s rivals is their hostility, malevolence and brutality. One can’t close an eye to ISIL’s overrated brutality and savageness, but within the context of IS’s propaganda, the groups hostility is justified by the cause-effect relation of the enemies initial assault and oppression over Muslims and the “Islamic state”. However, this aspect as the formers is frequently depicted to clarify the monstrous reality of the adversaries. In the movie of “although the disbelievers dislike it”, at the minute mark 06:24, the Syrian regime’s warplanes were depicted in an amateur footage, launching explosive shells in the sky. The bombs where depicted while dropping on buildings, apparently civilians’ housings, then they broadly exploded the buildings. Simultaneously, a textual description emerged on the screen as stated: “Nusayri airstrikes against the Muslims of sham” [Source]. Alongside that, comes out loud the “Takbeers” (calling; god is the greatest) of the documenter. Thereafter, emerges bloody images of innocent civilians’ casualties (including children) over the sidewalk and outdoor locations with devastation around (See appendix 2). The presented footage is true, and the normal observers of the Syrian conflict could detect this footage’s credibility. Since the only and most pervasive air force attacks against the civilians were committed by the regime, let alone all Syrian opposition factions aside to ISIL, they all have no aerial power over Syria. Thus, we can’t specify if it was depicted by any of the Syrian opposition faction’s fighter, or by the Islamic state’s jihadists. But, we can specify the truthfulness of the footage. Nevertheless, it’s witty and resourceful the exploitation of the Syrians sufferings by ISIL to disseminate to the audience the barbarity of the adversaries (including the Syrian regime). However, the viewed gruesome footage as an audio-visual-textual message is an obvious realism, since the promoted scenes represent the reality or part of the reality in Syria. And this realism was exploited by ISIL as an undoubted evidence of the rivals’ hostility, and the conveyed message would be explicitly a perceptible code of which the audience (most specifically Arabs aside other observers of the conflict) would absorb and comprehend. Hence, ISIL’s propagandists conveyed an indicative evidence to posture its antagonists as the initiators of hostility and gory bestiality, so the viewers would perceive ISIL’s brutal actions as common and reasonable reflexes. Thus, the propagandists are connoting: ‘ISIL’s enemies are the brutal and the initial implementers of aggression, insofar ISIL is merely reacting and defending Muslims` lives. Noteworthy mentioning that, demonizing and the exploitation of the depicted enemies’ hostility is repeatedly applied within ISIL’s media and addressed to encompass all its antagonists (all ISIL’s opponents are atrocious and oppressors).
The emphasis on the rivals` disability and weakness could be a critical concept to any psychological warfare, and ISIL didn`t miss the importance of this aspect within its propagandization. Although the pervasively frequent depiction of IS` s prowess and might could be a simple indication to the rivals weakness and disability, nevertheless the Islamic state`s propagandists concentrated on depicting the antagonists` failure to discourage enemies and encourage advocates. From the release of “the flames of war” at the minute mark 04:41, one of the captured regime soldiers was speaking about the brigade fail and Assad betrayal while he and his colleagues were digging their own graves (See appendix 2), and he said: “the Islamic state captured us while we were fleeing from the 17th division base. We were serving under Bashar (the Syrian regime president), Bashar abandoned us, Bashar is nowhere in sight…Bashar is despicable. A despicable man, and a son of a despicable man” [Source].

Moreover, and from another perspective in the movie “kill/abuse them from behind”, at the minute mark 08:00, the footage shows a live depiction of encounters between IS` s jihadists and their enemies, then a long shot with zoom in that films a dozen of enemies` soldiers fleeing the battle ground in an obvious act of surrendering alongside a textual description on the display “flee of the Nusayri army” [Author].
At the first provided sample, the captive was improbably expressing himself and his colleagues’ attitudes and feelings to the camera (the audience). Although the captive’s speech was improvisational, but still, two concepts were topicalized. First, the soldiers “fleeing” and second, Bashar (the president) “despicability” and his father (the former president). Fleeing is a semantic of the regime forces’ “weakness”, and the president’s (Bashar) “despicability” is indicating to the whole regime, alongside its attachment to “abandon” and “nothingness” which present a semantic to the regime’s “disability” and “betrayal” to its militants. First, the regime’s abandon is an indication to the latter’s betrayal to its forces and its inability to at least provide a logistic support. Second, “Bashar (the regime) is nowhere in sight” as mentioned is a semantic to the regime’s “nothingness” which indicates to its lack of control and sphere of influence (weakness). Thus, the captive soldier in a type of conversationalism provided by his speech and through his own words an evidence of his leaders disability and weakness (fail).

At the second provided depiction of the soldiers’ flee from the battle ground, the documenter used a zoom in camera technique although the zoom changes the apparent depth of the field represented, but still it could display the subject closer to the viewer and more in details. And the aim herein, was to emphasize on the enemies withdrawal and cowardice in which they were helplessly retreating. The documentation on the display was captured in an apparent open landscape that represent a real battleground by which the viewer would perceive as a real encounter. Simultaneously, emerges the textual description “flee of the Nusayri army” to inform the viewers about the antagonists’ identity, which is the Syrian Assad regime {as mentioned earlier, Nusayri is a second designation of Alawites and in direct reference to Assad regime}. Thus, ISIL is presenting another real evidence of the enemies’ inability and withdrawal.

Hereafter, ISIL’s propagandists provided two evidences of the adversaries’ failure, first the conversationalism of the captive as a proof of the enemy’s political and military incapable leadership. Second, the realism of the documented display of live encounters and the rivals’ retreat as an evidence of weakness/retrogression. The representation of the enemies failure within ISIL’s movies is apparent, frequent, and applied to all antagonists and could be logically perceived. So, conveying to the viewers the message: although the adversaries are gun-toting and in great alliance against the Islamic state, but they are inwardly weak and reeling, and they are failure.
4.2.2. Apostate treachery/falsehood

The Islamic state presents itself as the sole representative of Islam and should be the sole righteous ruler of Arab/Muslim world. Therefore, any other influential or predominant entity is pseudo, false and infiltrator, whether it was theological, martial or political. This cause is widely narrated in IS` media through the citation of the apostates` testiness per se, by which their speech incarnates a de facto of their infiltration. In the film of “healing the believers’ chests” a speech of the Jordanian king was quoted while he was in an interview. He was titled on the display as “Taghut (juggernaut) of Jordan Abdullah the second” while stating at the minute mark 00:20 “chief of staff and my brother stepped forward and said to all the pilots: listen, for strikes against ISIS, we are only
looking for volunteers, so anybody wants to volunteer, please step forward. ‘Every single pilot raised his hand to step forward’” [Source].

The king’s speech is a declarative statement by which he was obviously informing about his regime’s policy against IS and his forces’ reaction to it. The aim of this statement is apparently to clarify the Jordanian regime’s attitude against ISIL, but what was topicalized aside to the antagonism is the “infiltration” and “betrayal” (due to the context in the movie). As the king cited from his brother, they were only looking for “volunteer” pilots, and the comment for their demand was the response of all pilots by which “they raised their hands to step forward”. Hence, “step forward” is a metaphor of “invasion” and/or “assault”, thus a semantic to the Jordanian regime and its forces’ “infiltration”. Since they are Muslims and attacking unfairly the Islamic state. Henceforth, IS’s conveying through and by the Jordanian King’s speech per se, a testimony of him and his forces as apostate infiltrators. And that is by probing realism, IS herein is not disseminating lies/rumors, they are conveying real words that represent real incidents by a high profile character.

From the same movie, the captive pilot Muath al-kasasbeh addressed a message to Jordanians, by which he was inquiring the credibility of the current Jordanian regime’s attitude. As he stated at the minute mark 11:48 “a message I address to the Jordanian people, be informed that our government is an infiltrator Zionist government. If it was true that we want to defend Islam, why don’t we send our crafts against Nusayri forces? Troops of Bashar al Assad that kill millions of Muslims and the Jews who are closer to us! So we defend al Aqsa mosque, and Muslim properties in Palestine” [Author] (See appendix 1).

The captive’s speech included declarative, exclamatory and interrogative statements, so to evoke the audiences’ logic and thinking in a form of debating. Apparently, the speech of the captive was indoctrinated by IS’ propagandists to convey a message that covers up aspects of reality in the political interest and benefits of IS. What was topicalized in the captive’s speech is the Jordanian regime’s “infiltration”, and the proofs to his (ISIL) judgment is the latent answers to the interrogations. Thus, saying to the Jordanian government “if you are not an infiltrator”, why haven’t you fought Assad regime who slaughtered Syrian people? Or our neighbors, the Jews who occupy Palestine and kill the Muslims therein?

The Arab/Muslim audience will cognitively perceive and make sense of the presented interrogations. They are critical questions and bear critical answers that represent tangible real
experiences, by which Arabs are living and most specifically Syrians. Syrian people suffered from the government’s brutality and no single Arab/Muslim state used its coercive martial power to defend them. So, why the Jordanian government has promptly joined the crusader coalition to fight against ISIL, who defends Syrians and other Muslims? Otherwise, the Jordanian regime is an apostate infiltrator that defend the crusaders/Zionists interests. Therefore, IS’s propagandists conveyed through the captive a debatable conversationalism regarding a vivid realism (apostate infiltration), alongside the Jordanian king’s speech as an undoubted testimony of his treachery. To provoke debating, reasoning and logical thinking with the audience (most probably Arabs), thus to evoke them to derive the answers on their own and reach a self-conviction. So, providing a reasonable push to the whole process of persuasion.

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<td>Arab/Muslim governments</td>
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4.2.3. Historical narrative

In the most recent release of ISIL’s film production “although the disbelievers’ dislike it” there emerged an aspect that represents the so called educational propagandization. Where the narrator talks about the emergence of the Islamic state through providing historical facts with a detailed chronological order, which would inform the viewer instructionally about the evolution of the state throughout multiple consequential incidents. From the minute mark 00:57 till 04:10 the narrator provides a detailed description about the evolutionary upgrowth of the Islamic state aside to different subsequent footages with graphical illustrations (See appendix 2), assigning subsequent dates to each depiction due to both Gregorian and Hijri calendars. At the minute mark 01:24 the narrator speaks about the formation of jihadi factions after the US invasion to Iraq and its pseudo victory, as he stated “some of the jihadi battalions and faction were formed, including jama`at at-Tawhid Wal-Jihad which was established by Shaykh Abu Mus`ab az-Zarqwi (Ramadan.1424/Oct.2003) Shaykh Abu Mus`ab then gave bay`ah to Shaykh Usama Ibn Ladin, to announce the establishment of the Tandhim {organization} Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad ar-Rafidayn (Rmadan.1425/Oct.2004). Then the two Shaykhs Abu Umar al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (may Allah have mercy upon them) were killed in a crusader raid, then Ahlul-Halli wal-
Aqd {scholars} gathered and appointed the Mujahid Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Husayni al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi (may Allah preserve him) as Amirul-Muminin {the prince of believers/caliph}…” [Source]. then the narrator continues describing about the years after, till the incidence of the Syrian political unrest and the Sunni people tribulation from the regime’s brutality therein. thereafter he speaks about the interference of the Islamic state’s soldiers to protect the Syrians therein. Afterward he talks about the consolidation and ascendance of ISIL in Syria, as he stated at the minute mark 03:35 “so Ahlul-Halli wal-Aqd {scholars} from the Islamic state of Iraq agreed upon the necessity of openly emerging in the Shami (Syrian) battlefield. Thus the new name was announced the Islamic state in Iraq and sham (the Levant) (Jumada al-Ula.1434/Apr.2013)” [Source].

Here I presented few sentences of the whole narrative within the depicted footage, to convey IS’s style of narration. It’s clear the accuracy of presenting the historical facts embedded with thorough description attached to specific dates. Thus propagating to the viewers an elaborated historical narrative about the problematic state, in a plot supposed to presumably incarnate realism. The propagandees may have big knowledge regarding the historical evolution of ISIL, others may have scarce information regarding the state’s emergence, and the rest might not have the least cognition regarding ISIL’s upgrowth and its essence per se. However, the propagandists aim of addressing historical narrative with detailed description of consequential incidence, subsequent characterization, aside to accurate dating and documented images. If this was not to wholly persuade the viewers about the real emergence of ISIL, it will at least evoke the receiver’s reasoning of the point that, ISIL hasn’t come out of nothingness coincidentally and is a mere organization. ISIL is a “state” that emerged historically due to subsequent indices, events, endeavors, planning and reflexives in an apparent chronological order. Thus, the propagandee would have a reasonable cognition related to ISIL’s (the state) emergence and reality, and would be able to arbitrate his/her mind, once subjected to other information regarding IS’s dawn from any other sources (and they are plenty).
4.2.4. Martial might

The current ISIL`s propaganda is mostly battleship that represents an intensive psychological warfare to smoothly benefit the accompanied coercive power. Therefore, the focus on IS`c military capabilities is concentrated, and for that sake the propagandists provided multiple directories to shed the light on this critical aspect. The directories divided into two different forms; first the high profile testimonies, and second the real evidences. In the release of “the clank of the swords” at the minute mark 34:10 the propagandists quoted and displayed the speech of the Iraqi minister of transportation Baker Solag, while he was talking about IS`c military capabilities and their invasions, in an interview, as he stated: “it’s not easy, try to assemble TNT to blast in the gory Thursday! Look at the exploded sites…take a long view, you will feel the existence of capacity and capability and the existence of a state behind it (the explosions)! A state inwardly, I don’t mean an outer state. There is a state within the state that runs these operations (concerted explosions)” [Author] (See appendix 1). Another public figure provided a testimonial regarding ISIL`c capability, and that was the speech of the strategic communication adviser in the free Syria foreign mission Mr. Oubai shahbandar. His speech was quoted from an interview on Fox news (See appendix 2), as he stated at the minute mark 04:30 from the movie “the resolve of the defiant”: 
“ISIS is very smart; they adapt, they move quickly and they know how to use a symmetric warfare” [Source].

Henceforth, IS`s propagandists are citing the adversaries speech about the state`s capacities, rather than propagating from IS`s themselves about IS`s power. So, conveying undoubted facts that would have greater impact since they were declared through and by the enemies` own words.

The two quoted testimonials were topcialized about a “state” and “might”. At the speech of the Iraqi minister, he mentioned the term “state” repeatedly five times by which he was exclaiming about the power behind that organized explosions, then comes the answer in his last phrase in a form of comment as he stated “there is a state within the state that runs these operation” and within the context of the speech and the movie displaying it, IS`s propagandists are providing a semantic to ISIL`s military capabilities. Hence, the minister speech as cited, and in his exclamation, he was indicatively referring to IS and its martial capability. Simultaneously, IS used his speech as a proof to talk through him about its capacity. Whereas, in the speech of the Syrian opposition adviser, he referred to ISIL clashing skills as qualifications to run “a symmetric warfare”, and when we talk about symmetric warfare we are indicating to a state military capacities of strategically planning, commanding, organizing and operating warfare/battles. Thus, the adviser`s speech in the thematic line resembles IS`s military might to a classical state`s one, and not the contradiction, as saying ISIL is not a group of radical militias with poor capabilities that merely operates in guerilla. Alongside that comes multiple displays within IS`s media that shows their martial might in real evidences. For instance, in the movie “the resolve of the defiant” at the minute mark 06:25 a jihadi was filmed shooting down an enemy helicopter by an advanced rocket launcher, and the footage displays the process from the initial launch of the rocket till the explosion of the helicopter in a real incident (See appendix 2). Another remarkable footage was displayed in the movie “kill/abuse them from behind” at the minute mark 01:53, where a drone was filming vast geographical distances (probably from Raqqa) in a high resolution show, aside to a textual description that says “from a lens of a marching drone from the Islamic state's military” [Author]. Thus, IS`s propagandists presenting perceivable evidences of realism which explicitly indicates and describes the Islamic states` martial capacities, that are hefty and advanced. Alongside theses vivid visual facts comes the testimonies of the public figures about ISIL`s might from the adversaries` media outlets. Hence IS`s propaganda machinery is probing to the viewers an undoubted
testimonial and evidences about the Islamic state’s might, by which the audience will absorb, think, perceive and comprehend in a reasonable equation.

4.2.5. Monitor

Monitoring media outlets and their coverage regarding crucial cases, such as feuds, conflicts and wartimes, is an important policy applied by most governments. To stay up to date regarding the concerning issues, keep in control the flow of information, and clarify or at least falsify the disadvantageous news. This strategy was partially applied by ISIL and was noticed within its latest propaganda movies. Through displaying footages of frequent media channels covering news broadcasting, shows, analysis and interviews talking about ISIL as a phenomenon, and its actions, battles, armament, skills, weakness…etc.

In the movie of “healing the believers` chests”, albeit it was mostly about the Jordanian pilot execution, but many other signs were included with purposeful indices for further assertions. At the minute mark 03:09 the displayed footage features a frequency of recorded media coverage from multiple news TV channels, that were addressing the captivity of the Jordanian pilot by the Islamic state in the Syrian city of Raqqa. The depicted media outlets (in ISIL’s movie) shows
numerous news channels including regional (Arabic) and international ones as well (most specifically western), aside to a numerical gauge of each channel counting continuously and asymmetrically (21, 43, 109…). Noticeably, some of the viewed channels are distinct and noted, such as, BBC, al-Arabiya, Russia today (RT)…etc.

Moreover, from the recent release of “the resolve of the defiant” which was centralized about the battle over the Syrian city of Kobane and the ignited conflict of multiple parties therein. At the minute mark 01:39 the documentation, once again, displays the world media coverage regarding the conflict over Kobane and ISIL`s heavy martial engagement. Over again, the recorded frequency of the depicted channels was numerically gauged, with a number assigned to each channel in a form of asymmetrical ascending counting. Again, remarkably, many of the depicted channels are privileged, such as Aljazeera, CNN, Fox news, RT…etc.

Henceforth, the presented footages of world media coverage by ISIL`s propagandists, have intentionally further indices and meanings. Firstly, the asymmetrical ascending numbering (counting) of the depicted TV channels is a symbolic sign indicatively referring to the quantitative “scope” / “range” of the rivals’ media outlets that was scrutinized by ISIL. Simultaneously, the multiplicity of the news channels is also a symbolic sign to the “scope” and pervasiveness of the scrutiny as well. Secondly and most importantly, such depiction of the world media coverage per se is an indexical sign to “monitoring” and “observing” which indicatively refers to “capability” and “specialization”. Thus, connoting; ISIL has the capacity and the ability to broadly and precisely view the world media coverage in an apparent up-to-date timing. Thus, ISIL has a special media department or unit with highly skilled specialists and technological abilities, which resemble ISIL in its functioning to a common governmental systematic processing. Hence ISIL is capable, ISIL is watching and monitoring the updates pervasively on timely bases.

Some may argue that, from a different perspective, ISIL`s depiction of the rival`s media coverage (against it) is a signification from ISIL`s propagandists to the Islamic state`s impact globally. In other words, ISIL is showing the viewers through such footages its power and impact, and if not so, it wouldn`t have been headlined over the world`s most noted media outlets. That is true and that was discussed earlier, by which ISIL depicted some media coverages discussing and analyzing the Islamic state`s might and martial capabilities. However, herein with the recently discussed depictions, ISIL`s propagandists are trying to convey signs that refer to IS`s capability of
monitoring and watching. By which the normal viewers would probably arbitrary perceive the connoted meanings, even without being expertly able to decipher the purposefully embedded signs. Thus, IS’s propagandists provided real visual and technological evidences that would connote to its ability of observing and watching the antagonists.

4.2.6. Unification

Aside to the highlighted notion/admiration of stretching and expansion in ISIL’s media, comes the aspect of prevailing and unification, by which the Islamic state conquer and destroy the borders between its geographical sphere of influence; to emphasize on the oneness and coherence of the state. In the film of “the breaking of the borders” IS’s propagandists present an interview between a jihadi reporter and public commuters passing by car the Syrian-Iraqi borders, of which the Islamic state has devastated and controlled (See appendix 2). The displayed documentation provided the next dialogue as stated at the minute mark 08:54: the jihadi interviewer asks the commuter “where are you going now?” the commuter answers “to Iraq”. The jihadist asks again “where is your passport?” the commuter replies “no passport, it is one Islamic state. Praises to god.” The reporter asks again “before, could you have passed through, in the same way?” The commuter answers “no”. Then the reporter inquires again “then, how was it? Tell us!” the traveler
replies “this street was full of control from the collapsed military, they used to humiliate us, and ask about identifications.” Finally the jihadi interviewer replies “and thanks god, now no one bothers you” [Author] (See appendix 1).

This dialogue is part of the movie that is totally talking about the destruction of the borders between Syria and Iraq, and prior to this dialogue there displayed a footage of truck (sand crane) that was moving sand in an indication to the destruction of the borders. However, the interview presents a **dialogic conversationalism** by which the reporter initializes a normal discussion with a random traveler. The traveler responses are most probably improvised or at least simply pre-prepared, that is clear through the way of him interacting and his lingo. The audio-visual depiction as a text is a vivid representation of **realism**, due to the fact, the Syrian-Iraqi borders are indeed under the Islamic state`s dominance. The discussion was **topicalized** about the concept of free movement and the nullification of the passports and borders within the Islamic state’s sphere of influence. The commuter description of the current “no passport” status under the rule of “the one Islamic state” is a **semantic** to IS`s prevail and unifying, whereas his speech about the provocative “control” of the collapsed military is a **semantic** to the antagonists` “divisive”. Henceforth, ISIL`s propagandists are urging a mental trial to the audience, by which the interviewer compares between the unification of the Islamic state and the division of the fallen powers. No more identifications needed for Muslims while moving within the land of Islam, the apostate divisive borders has fallen and the disunion is collapsing as well. It is a perceivable equation that Arab/Muslim audience could have a cognition of. So, ISIL`s propagandists are propagating a **real evidence** of the Arab/Muslim division`s nullification, alongside a **dialogic** discussion with a normal Muslim citizen passing the Syrian-Iraqi borders without being checked for identification. Thus, provoking the viewers` thinking and sense making about the truth of unison among Arabs under IS`s predominance. ISIL is prevail. ISIL is unity.
4.2.7. Leadership

Through its movies, ISIL is trying to publicize and reflect specific indicative characteristics of adherence, amnesty and leadership, by which the Islamic state embrace the astray jihadi factions and other misled entities. In processes and operations that simulate a classic state policies.

From the release of “the clank of the swords” there exists a footage by which jihadi canvassers of the Islamic state visit locations of Iraqi tribes that affiliate or actively relate to al-Sahawat jihadi faction (which is founded by Iraqi Sunni government figures aside to the US support). The documentation depicts two anonymous representatives of IS (wearing balaclavas), visiting an anonymous household (the males` faces are blurred), where the jihadists hand informative publications with CDs to canvass the locals. Promptly, at the minute mark 41:12 a textual description emerges on the display stating “disseminating publications that call Al-Sahawat members to repent” [Author], alongside the narrator speech as he stated at the minute mark 41:56: "the Islamic state opens its doors to every repentant checks his hands with it, and pardons every neutral retires fighting and causing harm to the state, and whom let go between it and the enemies of god, the Rafidah (Shia) and their associates. Henceforth, the state waives all its rights, whatever they are! To whoever was misled and fought against it (Al-Sahwat/Sunnis), but only through a
sole condition by which the repentant casts his voice (repents) to the closest representative of the state in his area. So, for the state to stop its harshness against him, and we don’t have any condition other than this.” [Author] (See appendix 1).

The declared manifesto is topicalized about the Islamic state’s “amnesty” and “embracement” to the fooled jihadists (Al-Sahawat/Sunni), who “repent”. Repenting here is indicatively referring to either joining IS as stated “checking hands with” or letting go of jihad as stated “every neutral retires fighting”. And the sole condition for seeking IS’s forgiveness is implemented in two stages by first, abandoning physical action (jihad) against it, and second, notifying the state about the one’s “repent”. Thus, the Islamic state is giving a chance to apostate jihadists (Sunnis) to repent, through an act of wisdom and adherence from IS to other Muslims (Sunnis). therefore, ISIL`s propagandists applied a simple conversationalism with the usage of an understandable lingo, to address a message of persuasion to both, the apostate Sunni factions (Al-Sahawat) and to other Muslim (Sunni) audiences to propagate to them real symbols of ISIL’s truthful endeavors of adherence to misled Muslims, and the operational tactics that incarnate a classical states’ processing. Thus saying: ISIL is not a mere organization, ISIL is a “state” of leadership and sage through embracing and amnestying astray and misled Muslim factions/members (Sunnis).
The aspect of promoting common life under ISIL was not broadly publicized in comparison to the jihadi/martial/animosity dimensions. ISIL is in prompt and multitude ignited war fields along vast distances in Syria and Iraq, and this makes it reasonable to cast and heavily centralize the propaganda over warfare and military priorities. Thus, to seek elevating jihadi recruitment within its ranks, simultaneously to intimidate and weaken the enemies` purposefulness. Nevertheless, the Islamic state propagandists didn`t miss the importance of shedding the light on normal living and the “lively state” aspect through their propagandization. This was propagated via a movie release called “from inside Mosul” which starred by the British captive war correspondent “John Cantlie”.

The movie is a gaudy version compared to IS`s high profile production. It was founded upon a simple narration by which the “journalist” gives his own testimonies regarding normal life under ISIL; followed by evidences of him being physically embodied roaming over the city, visiting specific locations to show the individuals` normal life, and the “efficient” civil services provided by the “state”. Within the movie Cantlie provides full-scale descriptions about the aspects he is covering, aside to falsifying the “rumors” against ISIL. At the minute mark 01:37 Cantlie was filmed driving a car in the streets of Mosul (Iraqi city and one of the heartlands of ISIL “currently”) while he was unfolding lies and disseminating facts, he was describing as he stated: “one unnamed
Mosul official (pro US-government) said that ‘Mosul is living through extremely hard and horrible times’ it was quoted on the Saudi owned TV channel al-Arabiya. But, really, this is misleading. What I can see is thousands of people, thousands of Iraqis going about their daily business” [Source].

Thereafter, the journalist was depicted while roaming over the Souq (Islamic/Arabic shopping markets), where shops were open and people moving around naturally. Simultaneously, Cantlie was propagating while describing these Souqs as he stated at the minute mark 02:36: “you can buy anything, from books, to perfumes, to bags. And everywhere you look, everywhere you come here in this old-old Souqs, one of the oldest in Mosul, you struck by just how normal and crazy and busy everything is. This is not a city living in fear as the western media would have you believe, this is just a normal city going about its daily business” [Source].

This style of narration and conversationalism was applied to the whole movie, by presenting the lies and promptly unfolding them in an apparent tawdry plotting. The proofs against the lies were based on Cantlie’s speech (testimony) and his followed embodied tangible experiences in the city (facts/visual evidences). At the first presented sample, Cantlie was criticizing the speech of an Iraqi official about the horrible life under IS, and as he mentioned this speech was quoted on the “Saudi” owned TV channel “al-Arabiya”. This quotation per se is a semantic to “falsity” and “fact distortion” (from ISIL’s perspective) because, and as thoroughly described before Arab/Muslim governments are apostate, falsehood entities that merged and in alliance with the “crusader coalition”, in that sense their media outlets are a vivid representation of “mendacity” and therefore they will only broadcast lies. Thus, al-Arabiya quotation regarding hard living under ISIL is a mere untruthfulness and astray, and it was promptly debunked by the journalist as he stated “this is misleading….thousands of Iraqis, going about their daily business”.

However, IS’s propagandists were not fully-sufficient with Cantlie’s testimony alone, therefor he was physically filmed while roaming in the city and most specifically the Souq the lifeblood of any city. So to confirm the persuasive message with visual real evidence as an inevitable fact, alongside Cantlie’s own statement which was topicalized about “normality” and “liveliness” in Mosul. The movie is gaudy due to the overrated hyperbole description that is not totally identical to the displayed footage and the viewer could detect that disconnection as a point of weakness and pretending. In his speech while he was in the Souq he claimed that the one would “struck by how
normal and crazy and busy everything is”. When he stated that the vivid tone of his voice was intentional, to reflect a sense of vitality presumably as an arbitrary reflexive to the liveliness of the Souq. Alongside that, the displayed footage that depicts the Souq doesn’t really reflect the recently described raucous crowding and hyper-vitality (crazy and vital everything is). What led to irrelevant connection between the displayed images and the journalist’s speech. Furthermore, the movie showed a limited evidences of normal public life and civil services that is used to be noticed in normal states` functioning. For example, Cantlie was depicted talking about police and security affairs after he came out of a police car, another depiction filmed him while visiting a hospital (children psychiatric clinics). Nevertheless, other vital aspects of common stat`s liveliness were absent, such as: educational institutions, public transportations…etc. Therefore, the presented proofs of Cantlie`s conversationalism (testimonies) aside to the presented realism (embodied evidences from the city) were not sufficient to promote the vitality and flourishing of life under ISIL predominance, as much as they were meant to falsify the overrated negative media coverage about the impossibility and terribly hard conditions of living under ISIL’s reign. Thus, ISIL propagandists wanted to perceivably debunk and falsify the rivals` rumors and the exaggerated fact distortion (lies). Hence, the viewer may not see life under ISIL as totally normal compared to classic stable states, but he won’t see it impossible as well.

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<th>Clues</th>
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<th>Capable</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Sage</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Unity</th>
<th>Viability</th>
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**Brief**

At this level of evoking mental trial and reasoning, ISIL`s propagandists are reflecting once again an apparent polarized projection, through presenting an intensified positive self-presentation (ISIL) and negative other-presentation (crusaders).

- In the negative other-presentation, the aspect of antagonism was largely covered by giving a thorough definitions to the enemies and drawing clear lines of their characteristics. Therefore, the propagandists appointed the state`s adversaries accurately by defining their coming together
oppressive coalition (enemies entity), and by giving a separate concrete prescriptions of the apostate Arab/Muslim governments and Shia/Alawites as part of the crusaders` coalition and a threat to the Islamic state inwardly. Moreover, the enemies’ falsity was concretely debunked by which the propagandists insisted on unfolding the rivals` infidelity by providing details and descriptions about their blasphemous and immoral ideologies. Henceforth, to substantiate its reflexive hostility as a reason for the rivals` initial savageness and brutality against Muslims, ISIL documented inevitable visual facts, that proof the antagonists` inhumanity and harshness, through relentlessly shedding the bloods of Sunni Muslims. Moreover, IS`’s propaganda does project the enemies` weakness by manifesting the rivals` abandon of their captive soldiers, the soldiers` cowardice and fleeing from the ignited battlefields. Aside to the inability of the hostile conglomerate to defeat ISIL.

In the positive-self presentation, ISIL`’s propagandists are trying to propagate the most characteristics that would distinguish a classical state, by displaying the Islamic state as an Islamic state and not a mere rogue organization. Thus, ISIL is pedagogically conveying a historical narrative including detailed facts regarding its emergence and evolution, alongside depictions and evidences about the state`’s operational processing and functioning. By which ISIL is expanding and unifying its geographical parts (the nullification of borders between Syria and Iraq), besides propagating acts of wisdom and leadership through amnestying the apostate Sunnis and giving them the chance to repent and integrate. Moreover, the propagandists distinctly focused on manifesting ISIL`’s military capabilities through documenting the jihadists` advanced weaponry, and the public figures` testimonies as an undoubted proofs to the Islamic state`’s might. Last but not least, the propagandists shrewdly reflect the states` technological skills and specialization as if there is a media monitoring unit that observes and watches the most updated on goings pervasively, in a resemblance to the common states` media processing. And that was clear through ISIL`’s depiction of the world`’s media coverage about ISIL per se. Finally and slightly, propagandists has flashily shed the light on the normal life under ISIL`’s predominance, as a vital liveliness, where the “Muslim civilians” are being provided by public services, covering healthcare, public security, livelihood…etc. thus presenting the Islamic state as a de facto Islamic “state”.
4.3. Psychological affect/mechanisms
At this level, I am trying to discover the psychological techniques and mechanisms that are used by ISIL, to induce sensuousness, affect, behavioral and cognitive change. Through disseminating sentimental values that prop ISIL’s religious and perceptible messages (propaganda), by creating impressions, feelings and attitudes to elevate affiliation and/or fear amongst its protagonists and/or antagonists. When we talk about media, cognition and behavior, we cannot exclude affect; it is a sensational bloc that directly influence the brain in an undoubted interrelation. And as stated by Henri Bergson: “there is no perception without affection” (1908, p.60). Many theorists argue that, in postmodern world humans are witnessing an increased numbness and waning of affect, while others propagate that postmodern world is an age of surfeit affect. An age of hyper and plethoric affect. Audio-visual production has increasingly developed and changed due to the rapid shifts of the technological inventions and to the current light-speed means of communications. In return, the outcome is a remarkable ultra-realistic images with excessed affect. ISIL’s warfare propaganda is principally dependent on film production and a unique image innovation that has never been witnessed before from any extremist group. It is noticed within its movies the pursuit of intensified integration, agitation and intimidation in a rigid division and polarization with rivals. Therefore I will study these aspects focusing on both the jihadi and enemy’s projections with the related values of prowess, affiliation, awe and humiliation. Aside to the overall imaging of ISIL, through “branding” the group; creating a unique impression, creating an “aura”. And that is majorly through disseminating shock values, to instill specific images/impressions in the propagandees’ subconscious and directly influence the related attitudes and behaviors (regarding ISIL).
4.3.1. Projection & Alienation

In times of war, every concerned party seeking to elevate heroism, will try to develop psychological mechanisms of a hero projection, by which the projected star becomes a symbol of identification (Laswell, cited in Ellul, 1973, p.163). This mechanism is not only covered up in ISIL’s movies, rather it was largely focused and given a great importance, for its criticality, in posing the propagandee into an unprecedented uncontrolled psychological situation, by which he mostly will submit to the affective force of “reality” presented on the screen. Yet, with ISIL’s movies it’s not merely about projecting one hero but, through exploiting properly numerous hero jihadists in IS’s propaganda. And all of them were characterized by identical aspects of prowess, sacrifice and martyrdom; they who seek eternal happiness are fearless lion-hearted men, and they become the ultimate symbols of identification with jihad (martyrdom). In the recent release of “on the prophecy approach”, at the minute mark 19:14 a jihadist wearing Shemagh-balaclava was calling the foreign Muslims (jihadists) to join in pursuing jihad and committing to their “state”. He was titled on the display as Abu A`youb al-Maghriby “god’s mercy upon him” (he is already dead). However, the jihadist was filmed while preparing a vehicle-bomb, and his martyrdom operation was depicted in a recurrent display from three different cameras. At the first display, the jihadist
vehicle was filmed from a wide shot-semi low camera angle, aside to a second screen with zoom in to bring the object (the vehicle-bomb) closer to the viewer, while it was proceeding to the target. The second display showed the same event but from a different camera with a semi-mid shot, while the third display was depicted from a high camera angle showing clearer details. The three recurrent displays filmed the event simultaneously from three different cameras and angles; from the initial moment of the car proceeding, till the impact with the targeted building. And the last display offered a slow motion at the moment of the vehicle-bomb impact and its resulted explosion. The three displays of the same event were numbered as written on the screen (camera 1, camera 2, camera, 3), with a textual description at the beginning of the whole scene saying: “the hero targeted a barrack of the Safawy {safavids, referring to Shia} military in al-Ramadi city.” The scene was accompanied by a sound track (chanting) alongside sounds of rifles’ shooting and loud voices of Takbeers at the moment of impact. Thus, ISIL`s propagandists provided a live documentation of a jihadi martyrdom operation with professional visual techniques and filmmaking skills. The sacrifice of the hero jihadi held two benefits first, by blasting the enemy’s building and second, by presenting a factual publicity material.
Other remarkable depictions of jihadi projection are overt in the movie of “the resolve of the defiant”, at the minute mark 07:03 a footage of one of the state’s detachments was filmed while pounding a holed up enemy site. The encounter was filmed from multiple camera angles/shots where the “hero” jihadists were shooting, then proceeding by their military vehicles till they reach the enemy’s site and shrewdly sneaks in. The show is professional and was propped by proper visual effects of slow motions on the jihadist movements to shed the focus on their martial abilities and characteristics. Alongside that, comes the arbitrary sounds of rifles shooting with a jihadi chanting soundtrack (very stimulant one), which part of its lyrics says: “we have determined, we have determined to reach the perches (supreme heights), and we have moved on (seeking that)... the heaven of eternity we have sought, so cram all the soldiers” [Author] (See appendix 1). The last motif of the scene, filmed a vanguard of jihadists walking behind a moving tank toward their target. The footage was captured in an eye level camera angle, which was carried on apparently by one of the jihadists. The capture is totally identical to first-person perspective of warfare digital video games, where the viewer (player) sees exactly through the eyes of the digital character and the only seen part of that character is its weapon (rifle), aside to the reality (environment) presented. Here, in that display, ISIL’s propagandists provided a symmetrical perspective, and what was seen through the eyes of the jihadist character (eye level/first-person perspective), was his brothers (jihadists) around him while walking cautiously sticking to the tank. Thereafter, the jihadists change their positions away of the tank and start shooting, and the jihadist photographer (main character) hold up his Kalashnikov, reload it and start aiming and shooting alongside his friends. In an identical environment and a mechanism similar to that if we were playing a video game (mostly warfare such as, call of duty), where we move and discover the presented virtual reality through the vision of the character (first person).
Hence, in its publicity movies, ISIL is applying a remarkable technological techniques to produce ultra-realistic images, that doesn’t merely represent reality but furnishes it, crystalizes it and gives it an overrated taste to suit or at least attract the taste of the imagery insatiable modern generations.

In the first described martyrdom mission, the viewer accompanied the jihadist from the moment he was speaking till the moment of his death, in an unrivaled simulation of bravery. Prior to his fated martyrdom the young jihadist had his speech, calling his foreign brothers (jihadists) to join and seek jihad. He was smiling, the young jihadist was cheerful, and he was pleasantly seeking his death; his end is not the end, that ontological atomization is not more than a passage of transition for the jihadist to eternity and the eternal satisfaction (heaven). Therefore he is relieved and pleased, he is guarded by the almighty`s mercy. Therefore, the jihadist`s sacred mission of heroism was given a great importance with a concrete documentation to emphasize on the ultimate value of prowess, al-Istishhad (martyrdom); and that is principally harmonious with the great sentiments of relief, delight and contentment. In the second footage of the jihadists` detachment that was assaulting on one of the enemy`s sites, the fighters were filmed in multiple positions sneaking, running, stalking, conquering, jumping and shooting…etc. that depiction was meant to demonstrate the jihadists martial skills and their definite professionalism; they are not merely acquired with the power of faith but, with their capabilities and skills as well. The jihadist is a
fearless daredevil who attack fearlessly, he has determined to annihilate the enemies as chanted in the soundtrack “we have determined...so cram all the soldiers.” Thus, the jihadist is lion-hearted, battlefield is his playground, carnage is his game; bloodshed is the only saturator of his thirst. This rhetoric sounds extreme and maybe pathological, but not less extreme than the ultra-realistic “reality” presented in these movies, with its solid emphasis on the symbols of martyrdom (ultimate heroism). And such scenes were professionally and harmoniously embedded with audio-visual effects, which will absolutely hit the propagandee with an embodied force of an extravagant **effectual impetus**.

Jihadi projection as an idol of heroism was distinctly demonstrated, ISIL`s propagandists recurrently propagated IS`sjihadist as the stereotype of the Islamic ultimate soldier. The “state” is presenting to its propagandees (sympathizers, protagonists, skeptics), a ready-made imagery of the idol hero. By breaking down the contradicting facts and judgments regarding the perfect jihadist {the most powerful, faithful and honest}; since there are multiple jihadist factions others than ISIL and in most cases fighting against it. Thus, ISIL is emphasizing on the positive values of the state`s jihadist, by frequently focusing on the symbols of heroism, devotion and faithfulness; till that jihadist becomes the ultimate **stereotype** of patriotism. Stereotype is a psychological phenomenon evoked by symbols that are related to socio-political milieu; and it is as stated by Stoetzel (1943, cited in Ellul, 1973): “**a genuine category ... a manner of thinking, of behaving, of interpreting**—but founded solely on affective reactions.” (p.163). Therefore, the propagandee will absorb that **stereotype** and acquire it as a value of judgment. Thus, and through repeatedly publicizing these images, slogans, chants (specific words), and acts; they will become the symbols which stimulate the stereotype (IS`sjihadist`s hero) and evoke the value judgment. Even the antagonists may perceive and realize the prowess of IS`sfighters although they are an out-group but, because this prowess is professionally and repeatedly incarnated and propagated in a matter of facts (unprecedented real images of encounters). Henceforth, and by the constant absorption of ISIL`s sparkling images of heroism, protagonist audience will be fancied with the stereotype, it will become the definite symbol of **identification** with jihad (martyrdom/prowess). The propagated jihadist will become the cult, which the jihadi advocate will have an increased inclination and admiration to (See appendix 2); that protagonist propagandee is most specifically the discontent...
young Muslims who have an increased feelings of suppression, hopelessness, frustration and disappointment. That propagandee will project himself through the hero presented in ISIL’s movies. His aspirations, thoughts and actions will be projected and identified with the hero jihadist; he will start to see and perceive himself in and through that character. Since that character might be accomplishing his selfsame aspirations that he is unable to achieve in reality (for instance, in defeating Assad forces). This will lead the propagandee to live a situation of an “artificial satisfaction”, he will start to be virtually evoked to participating in that collective psychology (crowd psychology) of belonging and adapting (Ellul, 1973, p.163). In that sense the propagandee (protagonist) would be not only persuaded but submitted to the propaganda impulses, he is controlled, he thinks, judges and reacts through and by it. In a manner of merging with the “collective personality” rather than him himself. He will become totally naked to propagandization forces (psychological affect); this is definitely a state of alienation, and as stated by Jacques Ellul: “to be alienated means to be someone other (alienus) than oneself; it also can mean to belong to someone else. In a more profound sense, it means to be deprived of one’s self, to be subjected to, or even identified with someone else.” (1973, p.163).

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<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>C.1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Psychics</td>
<td>Virtual mimesis</td>
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4.3.2. Shock value

Shock is inherited to media and its mechanisms of affect and influence. It represents an energetic jolt that hits the body and alters its interaction; perhaps the most applied definition of shock to media studies is a medical one as described: “a sudden debilitating effect produced by over-stimulation of nerves.” Moreover, shock was thoroughly defined as “a momentary stimulation of a nerve. Also a stimulation of nerves with resulting contraction of muscles and feeling of concussion.; spec. = electric shock.” (Slocombe, 2015). In that case the body would be absorbing plethoric information. In its propaganda, ISIL’s movies are not merely diffusing shocks to influence and attain persuasion through providing a psychological impetus to the protagonists, rather the depictions of brutal punishments were given a great importance and centralization within IS’s movies to induce the antagonists fear and languish. Any viewer of ISIL’s movies would be certainly stricken by the numerous images of human shreds and bloody scenes, and that wouldn’t be unexpected to be included in any warfare propaganda. Moreover, it’s expected to witness a frequent gruesome images of brutality from a radical group but, still, the unforeseen is to watch high profile footages of gore that reflect an apparent technological capabilities and professional filmmaking handcraft. However, ISIL’s deliberate real scenes of atrocities are highly and viciously
inhuman, but they mirror a noticed vile innovation in a manner of adding artistic taste to decapitations and blood shedding, to present ultrarealistic images of brutality.

These specialized scenes of atrocities are plunged with psychic effects that were meant to provoke shocks, to induce fear and intimidation, and to cause the consequently presumed cognitive reactions. In some footages The shocks were found up on two levels, first, by disseminating verbal messages of warning (captive scapegoat) and threatening (the executioners) so evoking a pre-shock state of emotional/mental preparedness. Second, by displaying the immediate sheer images of executions and aggravating an oscillated shock-wave.

In the recent film of “although the disbelievers dislike it”, at the minute mark 08:32 the jihadi John addresses a message to the west prior to a mass simultaneous decapitation of Nusayri (Shia) captive soldiers. Few seconds prior to the synchronized mass beheading, John speaks loudly (his voice is clear and tuneful): “to Obama, the dog of Rome. ‘Today we are slaughtering the soldiers of Bashar, and tomorrow we`ll be slaughtering your soldiers; and with Allah`s permission we will break the final and last crusade’ … and like your puppet David Cameron said ‘it will begin to slaughter your people on your streets.’” [Source]. Directly after his speech (threatening message), recurrent provocative slow motion images were displayed, showing the executioners playing with their
knives, some of their faces and the scapegoats` faces (captive) as well. Thereafter, the footage fade in total black with sound effect of strong heart palpitations for few seconds, then fade out to the real gruesome beheading imagery. Thus, IS`s propagandists presented a capture filled with extravagant stimulants that wouldn`t leave any viewer without being hit in an embodied jolt (psychic shock). While, in the notorious release of “healing the believers` chests”, the Jordanian captive pilot (Muath) addressed a message to the families of the Jordanian pilots (ISIL`s antagonists), asking them to prevent their sons from fighting the Islamic state. As he stated at the minute mark 12:23: “regarding the families of the pilots-`prevent and stop sending your sons, and give them an order not to participate in such missions; striking Islamic targets… so that doesn`t happen to them what have happened to me. And to avoid mourning on your sons, likewise my family, wife and relatives have mourned.” [Author] (See appendix 1). After his speech the movie displays recurrent images of Muslims’ casualties, thereafter the pilot emerges walking in a pulverized site, presumably where he had bombarded and killed innocents (as showed by ISIL) in a noticed thematic line (flashes of dead IS`s advocates in the same place where he was walking); until he emerges being kept in the cage. Then and prior to the execution, images of ISIL`s vanguard were shown with slow motions and focus on the executioner {prince of one of the blocks that was bombarded by the crusader`s coalition}, while he was holding the torch aside to a sound effect of rapid heart palpitations. Then after burning the torch, the jihadi executioner lit the fueled ground and the depiction continues till the fire reach the cage and burn the pilot alive with cacophonous sounds of him screaming. The pilot was captured while burning from two different camera angles low/high, and from three different camera shots mid, close, and close up; alongside a provocative sound track, which parts of its lyrics say: “soon, soon you`ll see the horrible…a terrible conflict that you`ll witness – inside your homes (homeland) will be the battles …for your destruction my sword was honed” [Author] (See appendix 1). Again, and as described earlier, ISIL punishments` footages are highly focused and given a critical importance. Through crystallizing and furnishing their savageness with artistic taste and merging the reality with chanting soundtracks, stimulating sound effects and professional editorial, to present an ultra-realistic imagery of brutality; with consequential over-stimulation and overrated shock values (psychic effects). The Jordanian pilot was burned alive in a melodrama scenery, a footage that is similar to what we used to see in feature films but, here it was sheerly real in which the spectacle`s star (Muath) paid his life. Burned and charred.
The carnage scenes of punishments in ISIL`s movies were filmed, edited and embedded cautiously and intentionally for their definite impact. At the first glance, one may argue that ISIL is propagating these gruesome scenes, to convey its ability to fight and take revenge from the hostiles; this is true but incomplete. Usually artists express their passion through art in an aesthetical and creative manner- ISIL`s propagandists here, are doing the same, they are crystallizing animosity, polishing their passion to bloodbath and inhumanity. Although this is a pathological sadistic taste representing an apparent morbid innovation but, it is exactly incarnating ISIL`s passion and reflecting its intended message. Which is that, the state`s jihadists don`t kill their enemies merely for the purpose of taking revenge and deterrence, they slaughter the adversaries playfully for the sake of rejoice and release. Bloodshed is their passion and pleasure. The viewer of these scenes might not try to describe this orientation in ISIL`s fighters, but most probably he/she will perceive that abnormal characteristic of ISIL`s jihadists. Most viewers who may watch such scenes would be definitely left with shock and feelings of disgust, fear and detachment (from the reality represented in the scenes); so they will not only wish to not be in a physical embodied contact with ISIL`s jihadists, they will even try to avoid watching these depictions (See appendix 2). These values were intended and meant to be diffused by ISIL`s professional propagandists, they intended to instill that stereotype of ISIL in the viewers` subconscious and to foster the accompanied values.
of fear, languish and estrangement from that stereotype (ISIL), so to weaken the antagonists and foil their determination. Once the enemy is defeated psychologically, he will be easily defeated physically, he might even surrender prior to the physical coercive defeat. As epitomized by Dada (cited in Gilloch 2002, p.189) “to outrage the public', to make art 'the Centre of a scandal', to generate a 'shock effect'.”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IS`s fighters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Viewers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rejoice</td>
<td>Contentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock preparedness</td>
<td>Shock wave</td>
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**C.2**
4.3.3. Aura or possessed remnants

The term “aura” is antique and was used in multiple ways. It is mystical, controversial, and has no certain definition. However, it was mostly discussed in terms and relations to Walter Benjamin’s elaboration, who has intensively described “aura” in its links to socio-economic and historical aspects. Simply and foremost, it meant “The distinctive atmosphere or quality that seems to surround and be generated by a person, thing, or place” (OED, 2015). In that sense the aura is basically about the interrelation among material and observation, alongside metaphysical and immaterial senses; and as described by Walter Benjamin (cited in Forrest, 2007) Looking at substance “carries the implicit expectation that our look will be returned.” “Where this expectation is met […], there is an experience of the aura to the fullest extent” (p.53). Here, the individual or the substance becomes a medium for generating impressionable influences, for example a holy temple would be auratic for its unique existence in place and time (historical testimony), so having authority; and any replica of that temple wouldn’t produce a replica aura (Benjamin, 2002, p.105). However, when it’s applied to media theories, aura mostly related to art and aesthetics the inanimate, nonliving objects, and connected to authenticity. Inasmuch, in modernity and the age of technological mass reproduction, the “aura” according to Benjamin (2002) is degrading because
the creation of art is not for the sake of uniqueness any more, but for the mass reproduction (photography/film) (p.106). Thus the conceptualization alter from “unique presence” to “mass presence”.

Here I presented a description of the “aura” to discuss how it could be sensed in the digital age, and in relation to our topic of the Islamic state’s propaganda; since the latter is heavily depending on technology and the internet (social media) as a medium or an identity tool to spread its political cause.

ISIL as an unprecedented radical movement (not a group), working persistently on its informational expansion aside to the physical exertion; and that is through following a sole audio-visual production line in its propaganda. And that distinguishes it from all other current radical groups operating over Syria and Iraq, even those outside the Mesopotamian region (globally). Noticeably, there are three main production units working consistently to present airtight films, that harmoniously simulate one thematic line and in accordance to the state’s creed. From the unified sole intro of all movies till the end of them, there is a consolidated imprint that represent one identity, and that is remarkably evident and connotative. Everything seems firm, from the selectivity of jihadi chanting (soundtracks), plots, dialogues, footages, character motivations (polishing/projection) to audio-visual editorial. Even the titles of the movies were given a great importance in their selectivity to appropriate each movie theme, and they bore connotations to the content of the movies. Within the films there is an undoubted persistence on symbols, such as, the state’s flag which was comprehensively a fluttering sign in every movie; let alone the selectivity of appealing Arabic fonts.

ISIL’s movies are vicious based mostly on gory scenes of shredded bodies and bloodbaths, so they by no mean could represent aesthetics and art, but from a technical and professional perspective; the movies are creative and represent a high profile vile innovation. Many viewers wouldn’t like to watch or complete watching any of ISIL’s movies, simultaneously none could ignore their professionalism and their shocking value. Most of us heard about al-Qaida, Taliban and book haram… most of us knew or heard about their radicalization and fanaticism, at the same time most of us haven’t had about them, the same impression we are currently having about ISIL. And that is undoubtedly because of ISIL’s propaganda machinery. IS is shrewdly using the most influential medium (media), and cinematography to induce those feelings and instill them in the world’s
populace subconscious. None of the world’s preceded radical groups have had the same impact and notoriety, thus ISIL is branding itself and inducing an “aura” of itself. An “ersatz aura” of awe and frightfulness. Most probably, it could be called an “artificial aura” or an “ersatz aura”, of which we absorbed digitally and through unique imagery. The aura implies a relation between the object and the spectator, and it has been overt its dissolution in the technological mass culture; nevertheless, “This does not imply, however, that aura has seeped out of all of experience tout court.” (Leslie, 2005, p.149). Thus, It could be an “aura” of the medium (ISIL’s movies), and the aura might extend to encompass the creator or the source; since the imagery (medium) is coherently interrelating and directly representing the source/producer (ISIL). Thus, the aura resurfaces in its decay as an artificial product “which is being ‘humanized’” (Buck-Morss, 1989, pp.184-185). Inasmuch, Graeme Gilloch commentary on Benjamin’s aura (description), could exemplifies this notion. He presented the term “artificial aura”, in terms of modernity, contemporary technological world and mass reproduction; thus there could survive a mutated version of aura. Inasmuch, there could be witnessed a ‘true post-auratic’ form, by which the character’s gesture moves “paralleled the moving principle of cinema.” (Leslie, 2005, p.149)

Thus, in the case of ISIL’s cinematography if we were not to talk about aura or an auratic-effect, we would at least define the possessed feelings of such imagery as an impressionable remnants (traces). Since we are unable to define “aura” in its post-modern world form, we can’t affirm its total demolish, probably it could be attaining a new form in men’s cognition, since our perception habits are altering. Therefore the meaning and the form of aura could be altered as well.

Gilloch (2002) stated that “Aura involves the concentration and projection of the power of tradition through the object, not the work of art's subjection to the withering forces of history.” (p.183). In that sense, talking about ISIL’s cinematography and its political-religious representation, could be at the heart of this notion. Thus, if we were to talk about IS’s imagery as the “object” (digital imagery), which is persistently projecting and concentrating on the group’s power, a power that is traditionally rooted with a vivid ideological retrospective (although reformed radically to appropriate ISIL’s approach and shape). Let alone, “the Islamic state” is an emerging force and not a withering one; could its cinematography be the “object” (medium), for a transient ersatz-aura which is representing a radical political phenomenon. Hence, it could be elaborating on an auratic- replaceability, by which a digital object (imagery) triggering a fleeting
Clues

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Modern aura</th>
<th>Mutate</th>
<th>Parallel</th>
<th>Artificial</th>
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<tr>
<td>ISIL</td>
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Brief

As discussed earlier human cognition is basically dependent on both perception and affection. Therefore in the technological age of imagery, the man’s patterns of perception has altered and his affectional responses might be altered as well, or maybe intensified. In its propaganda, ISIL consolidated its movies with facts, provisions and an intense affection. That affection is fundamentally used to cause a psychological impetus in the viewers’ subconscious, in order to influence the cognitive process of judgment, persuasion and behavior. As discussed earlier, ISIL presented perceptible and religious codes within its propagandization policy, aside to the psychic push to attain the greatest possible influence. Thus the polarization between “us” (ISIL) and “them” (enemies) was clearly emphasized in different manners, and here by applying psychological effect, ISIL is intensifying that polarization. Through influencing and brainwashing the protagonists’ propagandees, simultaneously intimidating, detaching and estranging the antagonists’ propagandees. In that sense, ISIL is influencing all viewers differently, by seeking the integration of the prospect followers, and the total disintegration of the adversaries. The propagandists insistently merchandised the “character’s cult”, the perfect jihadist who seeks his
death defending his god`s cause and the salvation of the oppressed people. The star who would fancy the Muslim (misled) youngsters, to be followed and imitated. Simultaneously, that lion-hearted ruthless fighter would scare the antagonists, his bloody amusement and rejoice of the carnage, was meant to intimidate the viewers (antagonists), and evoke their perception/attitudes; to disintegrate and estrange. Thus, provoke the antagonists` conscious to avoid ISIL by all means, physically (to attack or try to), even to avoid watching its imagery (overly horrible/overly scary).

Hence, ISIL`s mainly branding itself, to provide an imprint or an unprecedented benchmark of its ruthlessness and mercilessness. Of which no radical group has ever had before. A benchmark of ascendancy, heroism and intimidation; thus inducing impressionable judgments pervasively in the world`s minds. Creating an aura of uniqueness and authority, an aura of awe and intimidation. An aura of ISIL.
5. Findings
The studied movies are some of ISIL`s continuous propagandizational audio-visual production. Most of IS`s products are genuine movies that are dramatic, though non-fictional; the plots are mostly plain based on cause-effect relation with chronological narrations but not necessarily in a clear chronological order. The narratives are mainly similar and mostly, they present a state of dis-equilibrium by which the adversaries cause the disruption (wars/unrest), then comes series of climaxes {as described by Todorov: dramatic high point of conflict and tension followed by release (DVD, 2006).} represented in ISIL`s battles and its vanguards remarkable encounters to counterbalance that disruption. Thereafter, presenting IS` s conquer and the enemies defeat with indication to the admired but not achieved ‘new revised state of equilibrium’, by which ISIL will totally prevail. However, although the plots are simple, still they bear unrestricted narratives presenting plentiful information regarding the cases and realities presented in each movie. Notwithstanding, the plots are tightly built on specific structure following mechanisms that could achieve an ultimate unequivocal persuasive message. The structure is operating on three levels, first by clinging a set of three different types of codes; religious, perceptible and psychological (1st mechanism). Second, by depending on the process of interrelation between those codes interchangeably (2nd mechanism). Third, by following a fixated strategy (schema), with which specific internal processes (mechanics) are operating the codes` functioning altogether and the movies in Toto (3rd mechanism) [to be clarified subsequently].
• **1\textsuperscript{st} mechanism:**

The 1\textsuperscript{st} mechanism of operation is the basic foundation of codes with specific direct functions as illustrated next:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>religiuos codes provide</th>
<th>absolute provisions</th>
<th>to legitimize action</th>
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<tr>
<td>perceptible codes evoke</td>
<td>reasoning and arbitration</td>
<td>to logically call for action</td>
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<tr>
<td>psychological effects</td>
<td>psychic stimulation/psychic jolt</td>
<td>affectional push to take the action</td>
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• **2\textsuperscript{nd} mechanism:**

-At the second level of operating (2\textsuperscript{nd} mechanism), the codes are functioning interdependently and in a slick correlation, although each set of codes might fulfill the aim and partially evoke persuasion. For instance, when it comes to antagonism, at the religious codes, ISIL presented definite religious (according to ISIL`s context and the reality represented) texts, that clarify the relation with “non-believers” as unequivocally impossible. As elaborated by the jihadist after he quoted from the holy book (selectively) and elaborated: “we and the infidels are adversary, inevitably”. Or as quoted from Imam Malik that it´s impossible to coexist with Shia who defame and insult the prophet’s companions. Simultaneously, at the perceptible codes, ISIL presented poofs and real evidence of the “non-believers” adversary against it and against Muslims; through depicting the former US President George W. Bush while saying that “you are either with us or with the terrorists”. Or through depicting the Jordanian king while speaking in a conference about his government forefront position in the crusader`s coalition against the “Islamic state”. Alongside that, comes the evidences of the adversaries` brutality through depicting their airstrikes against the innocent Muslims, causing acute destruction besides casualties and bloodshed. Moreover, ISIL perceptibly unfold the rival`s blasphemy through providing an ideological critique regarding their
political entities, an evidence to this debunking was the description about the Kurdistan workers` party PKK. As clarified, the party was founded on the principles of atheism, socialism, promiscuity, and heathen nationalism (Kurdish). Thus, providing a proof from the infidels about their infidelity, hostility and animosity against “Muslims” (ISIL). And so on, through that portraying, the codes are monolithically functioning in smooth interrelation and cooperation, by which the propagandee provided with an absolute religious text of adversary alongside real evidences (proofs) to that adversary.

Another example is about the dawn of the caliphate, it`s fated emergence and prevail. As portrayed at the religious codes, a senior jihadist was speaking from the “caliphate`s” geographical sphere of influence, as he stated while quoting from the holy book “Allah will perfect his light although the disbelievers dislike it”. Another sacred text (code) was employed by IS and referred to its prevail (expansion), was the quote again from the holy Quran at the intro of the movie “although the disbelievers dislike it”. The verse says as quoted “Allah refuses except to perfect his light although the disbelievers dislike it.” The light in both verses is a metaphor of truth and as thoroughly described earlier, ISIL by exploiting these verses is referring to itself through them. Allah will perfect the truth (Islam), and ISIL is the truthful representative of Islam (the truth) then Allah will perfect ISIL. At the same time in the perceptible codes, ISIL propagandists provided multiple proofs and evidences about the state`s emergence, foundation, evolution and expansion. Through presenting a historic narration about the “caliphate`s” emergence as a cause to subsequent incidents and circumstances, thus IS has a synchronized incontrovertible roots, and is not a coincidence; hence, probing realism. Insofar, aside to the importance of this realistic elaboration, comes the images of expansion and unification in a footage from the film “breaking the borders” by which the jihadists were displayed destroying the divisive borders between Syria and Iraq, and facilitating the free movement of the state`s sons without identifications. Let alone, depicting IS`s martial capabilities to defend and conquer, alongside administrating the caliphate`s civilians` affairs as reported by John Cantlie.

And so on, we can see the interchangeable interrelatedness among the codes, beside the psychic push aroused by the psychological effects. In this manner the propagandee would be submerged and plunged with codes, ranging from undoubted religious texts, to real evidence and proofs, alongside affectional jolts. So the propagandee (protagonist/prospect protagonist) would absorb
sacred provisions that he already believes in (but not necessarily to be practiced as indoctrinated by ISIL), with factual proofs and evidences of reality to think and arbitrate his mind in order to logically form an attitude (as planned by ISIS and for its sake). Within that, diffused the psychic affect to evoke the practice, since affection is inherently efficient and part of the perceptual and cognitive process. Henceforth, when the viewer (protagonist) is projected to IS` s emergence with holy provisions and real evidences of its conquer, prevail and capabilities. He who has suffered betrayal, tribulation, suppression, poverty and humiliation, will start in an infantile pattern to project himself through the caliphate, the feelings of affiliation to the caliphate will uplift. Since that state is achieving his desires, in having shelter, protection, dignity, victory and pride; he will not only be persuaded. The propagandee will totally submit to this powerful propagandization. The impressionable feeling of awe will possess the propagandee (advocate/prospect), and his attitude of belonging to that state will artificially plunge him with that awe; with feelings of belonging to awe, to power.

Accordingly the 2\textsuperscript{nd} mechanism of operation is the interlocking coorelation between the codes as illustrated next:

\begin{center}
\textit{Table 2}
\end{center}
• **3rd mechanism:**

-In the third level of operating (3rd mechanism), herein emerges the internal policy/strategy that govern the films and the codes functioning altogether, by following a set of specific mechanics in order to instill and coercively persuade (a coercive mechanism to persuasion, but the propagandee will not be directly enforced to be persuaded, rather the mechanism will ease functioning the task of persuasion latently).

**1-Plain dogma:** simply by concentrating on few points to drive the cause, and that is clear as studied earlier. The utmost focus given to “antagonism” and the “caliphate righteousness”. As studied thoroughly earlier, at the perceptible codes, seven aspects (including apostate treachery) covered animosity; by disclosing the rivals’ ‘brutality, alliance, blasphemy, adversary and failure.’ At the same time, the ‘hostility, annihilation, and the scenic punishment’ of the enemies were covered in the religious codes as well. While when it comes to promoting the caliphate’s **truthfulness**, 6 aspects covered that point at the perceptible codes, by projecting ISIL’s ‘historical emergence, martial might, the ability to control (monitor), unification, leadership and liveliness’. Simultaneously, the inevitability of the caliphate and its expansion were covered up in the religious codes. Inasmuch, it’s clear the centralization of few specific points regarding animosity or truthfulness, alongside the concentration on the jihadists’ characteristics, their prowess, devotion and the criticality of jihad. Thus, the propagandee will automatically have few points to focus on without being distracted.

**2-Manichaeism:** is a dualistic approach (religious roots) by which a thing is divided “conceptually into two opposed or contrasted aspects, or the state of being so divided” (OED, 2015). This approach is firmly followed and applied by ISIL, in which everything is dualistically divided in a vivid polarization. And so, emphasizing on “us” or “them”, “black or white”, “right” or “wrong”. Henceforth, I will provide the concepts of polarization as propagated by ISIL, either directly or indicatively (connotatively), in the next table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISIL (we)</th>
<th>Others (they)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God’s support</td>
<td>God’s relinquish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eternal happiness</td>
<td>Eternal misery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piousness</td>
<td>Damnation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtue</td>
<td>Sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>Immorality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers</td>
<td>Infidels (proselytes-rejecters-polytheists-atheists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td>Mendacious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Misgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity</td>
<td>Dishonor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardians</td>
<td>Offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>Defeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prowess</td>
<td>Cowardice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superiority</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable</td>
<td>Helpless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand</td>
<td>Shrink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>Retract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viable</td>
<td>Withered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightened</td>
<td>Ignorant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>Thoughtless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fated</td>
<td>Misled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True</td>
<td>Lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td>Conceal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forthright</td>
<td>Insincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrator</td>
<td>Disintegrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Estrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherent</td>
<td>Infiltrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherish</td>
<td>Loathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delight</td>
<td>Aversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td>Lukewarmness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>Pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-Archetypal recall: archetypal means a “very typical example of a certain person or thing”, or as defined “having all the important qualities that make somebody/something a typical example of a particular kind of person or thing” (OED, 2015). This mechanic was cautiously applied by ISIL to emphasize on the state’s identity and its existence as an extension to the early prideful caliphate, (early Islamic empire/ascendancy) which followed the prophet Muhammad’s legacy. Thus, ISIL
is trying to present itself as an extensional replica of that historic triumphant reign, in an apparent retrospective; by recalling characteristics of that legacy in an archetypal manner. (The early Islamic caliphate is favorable and beloved by most Muslims, it reflects feelings of honor and dignity). These qualities/characteristics represented in many aspects, for example the usage of specific jargon while preaching and describing an incident, or by using solely the Hijri calendar while dating the events. Alongside using specific illuminated manuscripts with oriental ornament for some titles and graphics. Moreover by depicting particular acts that sound and seem a replica of the historic pride, such as, the factions pledging Amir al-Mu`mineen (the caliph), in a symmetrical manner to the formal acts applied in the historic early caliphate.

An example of the jargon is apparent in the movie of “although the disbelievers dislike it” at the intro, there emerges a visual illustration which shows the admired global expansion of “the Islamic state”. Part of the depicted regions/countries were, Syria, Italy, Spain, Iran, Afghanistan Saudi Arabia and Sudan. However, these countries were titled differently as written, “Sham” rather than Syria, “Rome” rather than Italy, “Andalus” rather than Spain, “Faris” rather than Iran…etc. Thus, the propagandists applied recalling semantics (the states` title) in a historic retrospective to the jargon used earlier with the old caliphate, to emphasize on the modern caliphate`s identity as a quintessential replica of the original historical one. And that legacy is favorable by most Muslims, so exploiting it to draw their attention, attraction and persuasion, will be critical.

4-striking titles and mottos: the titles basically have a critical function within the movies, first by drawing the audience`s attention for their distinctiveness and semantics. Some of them are quoted verses from the holy book such as, “although the disbelievers dislike it”. And most of them semantically refer to the case/topic that the movie is about to tell, for example the movie titled “the breaking of the borders” was topicalized about the destruction of the borders between Syria and Iraq (unification). While the movie titled “healing the believers` chests” was topicalized about the burning alive of the Jordanian pilot Mua`th al-Kasasbeh. Second, the titles were most frequently displayed between some footages and others; apparently functioned as recurrent thematic elements within the movies, they were used as motifs. In order to excite/thrill the viewer and prevent his/her distaste and reluctance from watching. Thus, titles recurrently functions to thrill the viewer and bind him/her to the display. Alongside the titles come the mottos and slogans to liven this process and motivate it, such as, in the movie titled “the flames of war” the embedded slogan was “fighting
has just begun”. And so on, submerging the mottos in the process of thrilling the viewer, and assuring, he is sticking to the display.

Figure 31

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5-lavish imagery/digital molding: herein, this mechanic is noticeable in ISIL`s films, all movies are depicted in high definition (HD) cameras, to assure the clearest resolution possible; in order to display the scenes in details and make them appealing. Adding to that, remarkably, the professionalism in capturing shots from unique and distinct angles to create an environment replicating video games and feature films, and maybe much interesting than them. Simultaneously, depicting teasing scenes of encounters and explosions with sophisticated visual effects, to arouse and raise the viewer’s interest. Let alone, the digital illustrations and graphics while propagating data, statistics, and/or graphically describing an incident. Thus, ISIL`s propagandists are depending on the exploitation of unique and professional imagery, similar to what we used to see, solely from Hollywood. However, ISIL in that sense is presenting Hollywoodish cinematography, in its own production line; and in its specific taste. That`s why, its imagery is unique; it`s symmetrical to the elite innovation but with a completely different taste. With ISIL`s lavishness and from its perspective. Thus, branding its creation and to seek an increased attention.
6-chants: there is no single movie of ISIL`s production was not embedded with chanting; and the usage of chants is paramount just as the rest of the mechanics. The chants are highly provocative, thrilling and zealous; they were composed in Arabic with rhymes and rhythms that reflect a beneficial emotional and poetic sense. They were used in substitution with soundtracks, they embedded most thrilling scenes of either encounters or while projecting the jihadists, and they indeed arouse the viewer`s sentiments with intense stimulation. Thus, there appear no soundtracks in the films rather there embedded an extravagant chanting, alongside sound effects; in a critical influential function, accompanying and in accordance to imagery.

7-repetetion: the last mechanic is essential to the process of operating the whole mechanism (3rd). And that is by repeating the applicability of all mechanics accurately and adaptably, through exploiting the same strategy in ISIL`s audio-visual production line, to emphasize on the cause and the ultimate object of persuasion. Consequently, repeating the usage of plain dogma, Manichaeism, archetypal recall, striking titles, lavish imagery and chanting in all of IS`s movies. So, following a specific schema, to be the Islamic state`s model of filmmaking for propagandization.

Table 3

Plain dogma - Manichaeism-Archetypal recall- Titles - Lavish imagery- Chants

Plain dogma - Manichaeism-Archetypal recall- Titles - Lavish imagery- Chants

Repeat
6. Conclusion/ Dialectic

The movies are highly sophisticated and reflect high profile creation, apparently through exploiting imagery, sound and motion effects with advanced usage of technology. With such creation, ISIL is presenting thrilling films that resemble video games; to attract youngsters, through communicating them with their selfsame lingo and manner. Video games are an art form which presents a distinct feature of interaction, where the player has his/her own inputs to the reality presented on the screen. So, he/she controls that environment with his/her choices but, still as managed by the creators of that reality. Video games have different forms/genres, and one of the most prevalent and exciting genres among young men is the violent action games aside to warfare games. As elaborated by Janet H. Murray (1997) on ‘the aesthetics of the medium’, video games with their interaction, offer a sense of immersion and gratification. With which the players, for instance, could slaughter their opponents, rip their hearts and behead them…etc. in that sense and through interacting with that artificial reality, the players attain aside to excitement, a feeling of joy and satisfaction. Because they take part in solving the disruptions and defeating the enemies, and so, the games artificially transform their situation and transform them to what they admire to be in reality. The players become what they want in that reality, by slaughtering the opponent, the player feels strong, and might have a sense of success after accomplishing a mission ... etc. Therefore, ISIL with its films and by resembling video games, is seeking shrewdly not only to persuade the viewers but to engage them. The movies are not as interactive as video games, because the viewer is still unable to control the reality presented in them. Nonetheless, the movies resemble the thematic demos that displayed in video games, and still the characters are achieving what might the young audience love to do or be in reality. The heroes of ISIL`s movies are defeating all the possible enemies that the young viewers (Sunni Muslims) might hate in real life (crusaders, dictator regimes, brutal Shia…etc.). Subsequently, the young men (protagonists) would possess feelings of gratification, satisfaction and imitation to the heroes who are factually satisfying their desires. Thus, ISIL is creating an immersive environment to ease the propagandees` persuasion and interaction, or fear and estrangement. Simultaneously, the emphasis on depicting violent scenes of beheading and carnage is critically purposeful and it has much stronger effect than depicting violence in video games; because here in ISIL`s movies these images are ultra-real (polished). And this was resourcefully applied by ISIL for two objectives; first, to desensitize the
viewers to violence and bloodshed, and make such acts/depictions normal to be witnessed or practiced in reality (recruiting new jihadists, and that is clear when ISIL depicts children projected to beheadings and mutilations). Second, to intimidate the antagonists, elevate their panic and overrate their anxiety to ISIL. Insofar, George Gerbner and nancy signorielli defined and referred to terror and threat in media as they elaborated “most research studies have defined media violence as the depiction of overt physical action that hurts or kills or threatens to do so” by which consequently might “intimidate people; provoke resistance, aggression, or repression; and cultivate a sense of relative strength and vulnerability as they portray the social ‘pecking order’” (1988, p.7).

Therefore, in its propagandization, ISIL is not merely depending on a classical strategy by propagating emotional and demagogic discourse. IS’s psychological warfare is based on presenting facts, arbitration and thinking, aside to holy provisions and affectional aggravation. Moreover, through that propaganda the “Islamic state” is promoting and portraying itself; by creating its unique reality, crystallizing and furnishing it, and making it the admired and the pursued. In such portrayal, the “state” is creating a hyperreal environment, an edited and polished simulacra, which might be more real than ISIL’s reality per se. consequently evoking hyperreal feelings and overrated impressions. That portrayal, recalls Jean Baudrillard elaboration on postmodernism and imagery; by which he proposed that, the United States is a mimesis to Disneyland, while Disneyland has become the utmost reality (1981, pp.12-13-14).

Thus, no wonder youngsters either in the east or the west, will be attracted or charmed of that powerful machinery of publicity; let alone those young men who are already living tribulation and have suffered suppression of their totalitarian tyrants or persecution in their own societies (and the propaganda is not only confined to those cases). So, “the Islamic state” in its formulation, ascendancy, and capabilities is presenting such a powerful propaganda that could equate and maybe efficiently surpass the propagandization of traditional well established states. Currently the only point of weakness or the obstacle that faces ISIL’s propagandists, is having their own unlocked formal channels of dissemination and publishing on the web (internet). Nowadays, plenty of ISIL’s members and its advocates have accounts on the social media, and they could actively function (according to the social media terms and policies); but still they are unable to publish ISIL’s movie releases (due to the contents’ violation of terms). Because they will be in no time
restricted and deleted. And so on, by attaining those open channels, IS`s propaganda will come out with much greater impact.

Hence, ISIL as a phenomenon/movement is functioning glocally to negate the subdued tendencies among Muslim youths, who may not find the appropriate channels to express themselves, their concerns and ended up in a dead-end. By exploiting those tendencies the “Islamic state” is pulling the youngsters and offering them channels of expression. After transforming their subdued tendencies, those young men will end up expressing themselves and their attitudes, but in ISIL`s manner. Their tendencies will be expressed severely and harshly, after they were deeply transformed and radicalized. Inasmuch, ISIL is functioning (influencing) globally, by depending on and using the globalized means of communication, and that is not a contradicting to globalization.

Although, ISIL is a radical movement and contradiction to cosmopolitanism; simultaneously, in its operation, it is modernized, and depending on the globalized means and processes of communication to present itself. Maybe it is a de facto product of globalization and one of its radical outcomes; apparently in subsequence to the increased electronic colonialism and western centric homogenization. Insofar, the “Islamic state” is a radical form of counter flow, to counterbalance the western ascendancy and its overrated Americanization. And with its intersecting affiliation glocally, with what we may perceive as terrorism, ISIL perceives it as “patriotism”, “heroism” and a herald of new “nationalism”.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Here are the texts which weren’t included within the study in their original language (Arabic), and they were included after being translated to English by the author.

4.2. Perceptible codes

- Antagonism -1-
  - Antagonism with Assad regime (Alawites)

At the minute mark 10:39 the jihadist speaks:

"هؤلاء النصيرية، اللهم لك الحمد" (فشرد بهم من خلفهم).

- Antagonists’ alliance

At the minute mark 07:37 the Jordanian captive pilot Muath al-kasasbeh speaks:

"أما ما يتعلق بالدول المشاركة في الضربات الموجهة ضد الدولة الإسلامية، سواء في العراق أو في سوريا، فمن الدول العربية أخص: فهناك الأردن، وهنالك الإمارات، وهنالك السعودية، وقطر وعمان ولهجتين و المغرب" (شفاء الصدور).

- Apostate treachery/falsehood -2-

At the minute mark 11:48 the Jordanian captive pilot Muath al-kasasbeh speaks:

" رسالة أوجهها إلى الشعب الأردني، إنكم أنتم حكومتنا حكومة مملكة صهيونية. فلو كان صحيح أننا نريد الدفاع عن الإسلام، فلماذا لا نبعث طائراتنا إلى القوات النصيرية؟ قوات بشار الأسد التي تقتل الملايين من المسلمين، ويهود، وهم أقرب منا ونافع عن الأقصى وعن ممتلكات المسلمين في بلاد فلسطين؟!" (شفاء الصدور).

- Martial might -4-

At the minute mark 34:10 the Iraqi minister of transportation Baker Solag speaks:
ولا مو سهلة، تعال و اجمع مجموعة TNT لتفجر بالخميس الدامي. شوف الأماكن التي فجرت، حد نظرة بعيدة. رح تحس أن هناك قدرة و إمكانية وأن هناك دولة وراها - دولة في الداخل! أنا لا أقصد دولة في الخارج. هناك دولة في داخل الدولة تدير هذه العمليات.

- **Martial might** -6-

At the minute mark 08:54 a dialogue between a jihadi reporter and an Iraqi commuter:


- **Leadership** -7-

At the minute mark 41:12 a textual description:

"توزيع المنشورات التي تدعو عناصر الصحوات للتوبة" (صليل الصوارم).

At the minute mark 41:56 the narrator declaring a manifesto (here is the complete statement):

"يا أهلنا أهل السنة، إن الدولة الإسلامية ما وجدت إلا للدفاع عنكم، وحفظ حقوقكم و الوقوف في وجه آعدائكم. وإن الدولة الإسلامية هي أملكم الوحيد الصادق بعد الله عز و جل، للخروج من النفق المظلم الذي أدخلكم فيه زعماؤكم و ممثلوك بتخلفهم مع الرافضة. وإن الدولة الإسلامية لتتفهم الضغوطات الشديدة التي تعرضت لها العشائر لضمر مشروع الدولة، ولتعلم العشائر التي دخلت في حرب مع الدولة; أن الدولة لم تكن يوما مختارة قتال أحد من العشائر إنما فرض ذلك عليها فرضا. و بناء عليه، فإن الدولة تفتح أبوابها لكل تائب أو عائد يضع يده عليها و يكف يده عنها و يخلي بينها وبين الراقة و أعرائهم، إنها تتنازل عن حقوقها حماها كانت، لكل من زالت قدمه و شارك في قتالها و لكن بشرط: أن يوصل صوته بأي وسيلة لأقرب ممثل للدولة في منطقة، حتى تؤمده الدولة و تكف باسها عنه وليس لنا أي شرط غير هذا. فإن الدولة عائدة قريبًا بذن الله إلى جميع المناطق التي انحازت منها" (صليل الصوارم).
4.3. Psychological affect/mechanisms

- **Projection & alienation -1-**

At the minute mark 08:10 some of the chanting lyrics say:

"قد عزمنا قد عزمنا للمعالي و مضينا جنة الخلد ابتغينا فاحشدوا كل الجنود" (عزم الأباة).

- **Shock value -2-**

At the minute mark 12:23 the Jordanian captive (Muath al kasasbeh) addressing a message:

"أما بالنسبة لأهالي الطيارين، فكلوا عن إرسال أبناءكم وأموالهم بعدم الذهاب إلى مثل هذه الطلعات في صرب أهداف إسلامية.
حتى لا يصير لأبناءكم مثل ما صار إلي أنا، وتثيروا على أبناءكم كما تثيروا أهلي و زوجتي و أقاربي" (شفاء الصدور).

At the minute mark 19:11 some of the chanting lyrics say:

"قربياً قريباً ترون العجيب، صراً رحب وسوف ترى بعقر ديارك تكون المعارك، لأجل دمارك حسامي اثير" (شفاء الصدور).
Appendix 2

Here you can find images that relate directly to the studied aspects, and because the reader may not be able to see or even find the studied movies. Therefore, here you can have a thorough look…

WARNING

THE LAST SECTION (SHOCK VALUE) INCLUDES GRAPHICS THAT MIGHT BE DISTURBING TO SOME VIEWERS

Background
ISIL's family tree (structure)
4.1. Religious codes

- Provoking jihad -4.1.1-

- Sacred pledging -4.1.3-
- Jihadists’ piety -4.1.4-
  - A. Invocation

- B. Vice prevention
- Inevitability of adversarial -4.1.5-
- Legitimizing polytheist manifestations’ annihilation -4.1.6-
- Global expansion -4.1.9-
4.2. Perceptible codes

- Antagonism -4.2.1-
  A. Alliance
B. Antagonists’ hostility
C. Antagonists’ failure
D. Historical narrative -3-

**Ramadan 1425 Oct. 2004**

Tandhim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad ar-Rafidayn

**To announce the establishment of Tandhim Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad ar-Rafidayn.**

Then Ahlul-Halli wal-'Aqd gathered and appointed
E. Martial might -4-
F. Unification -6-
4.3. Psychological affect/mechanisms

Projection & alienation -4.3.1-
Shock value -4.3.2-

symbolized by the rafidah of Iraq,
والله لنثارن لأعراض أمهات المؤمنين ولو بعد حين