



Islamic State: framing colonialism in anti-Western discourse

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BA-THESIS HISTORY 2015/2016

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01-04-2016

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Acknowledgements

My thanks go first and foremost to Dr. David Onnekink, my thesis mentor, for his comments and feedback during the entire process of researching and writing my thesis, and for giving me the freedom of choosing my subject. Without his comments, support, and encouragement, my thesis would not have been what it is now. Next, I want to thank my peer reviewers: Raul Mers, Jeroen Troost, and especially Tirreg Verburg, who has read and commented on my draft versions several times. Their feedback proved very useful. I would also like to thank my fellow History student and friend, Floyd van Zoelen, for giving me the inspiration needed to specify the theme and subject of this thesis, and for giving me several tips on literature. I would like to thank my girlfriend, Anne van Leeuwen, and Jed Eix for proofreading the last version. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents and Anne for their support and encouragement during the process.

Notes to reader

Definition of Islamic State

Islamic State (IS) is the chosen term to refer to the self-proclaimed Islamic State, in Arabic *ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah* (الإسلامية الدولة). The organisation was known before as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), or in Arabic *Dawlat al-'Irāq al-'Islāmiyyah* (دولة العراق الإسلامية), from October 2006 until April 2013, and as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Syria/al-Sham (ISIL/ISIS), or in Arabic *ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī 'l-'Irāq wa-sh-Shām* (الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام), from April 2013 until June 2014. Some Western countries choose to call the organisation Daesh, which is an acronym of the Arabic name. I have chosen to use Islamic State because it is the term the organisation uses. This is significant because framing plays an important role in this research.

Denominating the geographical area

I have chosen to focus primarily on the areas of current Iraq and Syria, also in the sections on colonialism. These are the countries where the Islamic State is most powerful. A

possible broader choice could have been the Levant and Mesopotamia, or even the entire Middle-East, but this would make me digress from the essential point. The arguments made about the borders of Iraq and Syria in regard to IS discourse and the colonial past are probably also applicable to other borders in areas where IS aspires to operate. For this research the choice lies on the two countries where IS is most powerful: Iraq and Syria.

Explaining the time gap

This research focusses on two periods: the imperial period in the early 20th century, and the contemporary period of the 21st century. This is quite a large time gap, but this is necessary considering the scope of this research. To make the argument, the context of the early 20th century has to be analysed. Between these periods a lot happened in Iraq and Syria; however, this time period is not of vital importance for this research. Moreover, it is impossible to properly cover such a large time frame given the brevity of this research.

Abstract

The colonial past in Iraq and Syria has left a legacy, of which nation-state borders and nationalism have had the most impact. The ideology of IS is largely centred on restoring the Caliphate, using the concept of Ummah. This clashes with the colonial legacy, and has led to an *anti-Western discourse* in which *colonialism* is a returning element, especially the borders and nationalism aspects. This research analyses the role of colonialism in the anti-western discourse of IS through the scope of *framing* and *performances*. Framing has effect on the mobilisation of violent collective action, and is thus a relevant perspective to research IS. IS especially frames the Sykes-Picot Agreement in their discourse, as in their eyes this agreement has led to the current borders. Moreover, IS clearly frames anti-nationalism in their discourse. The research concludes with remarks and suggestions for future research.

Introduction

‘The Khalifah said, “And this blessed march will not stop until we drive the last nail in the coffin of the Sykes-Picot conspiracy”.’ – Dabiq 5, p. 33.

Sykes-Picot. A relatively unknown term in Western countries, until the Islamic State (IS) started to use it in their propaganda. With the ‘Sykes-Picot conspiracy’ in the above quote, they refer to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, a secret agreement between France and Great-Britain in 1916 to designate their spheres of influence in a part of the soon-to-fall Ottoman Empire—a classic example of colonial powers trying to get a ‘piece of the cake’. The territory negotiated consists of the current states of Iraq and Syria, the countries in which IS is most powerful. IS uses this colonial past in their propaganda.

The main question that arises, then, is: *How is Islamic State framing the colonial past of France and Great-Britain in current Iraq and Syria in the early 20th century into the anti-Western discourse they propagate?* This question can be cut into several smaller questions: How has the Sykes-Picot Agreement contributed to the formation of the current nation-states of Iraq and Syria? How does the ideology that IS follows relate to the colonial past? How does IS frames themselves against others? How does IS use the colonial past in their framing of these others? Answering these questions will be the main objective of this research.

On June 29, 2014, IS (until then Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS) released a video statement in which they declared a Caliphate: ‘The Islamic State [...] resolved to announce the establishment of the Islamic khilāfah, the appointment of a khalifah for the Muslims.’¹ And thus, they named Abu-Baker al-Baghdadi as their caliph and removed the territorial denomination from their name:

‘Thus, he is the imam and khalifah for the Muslims everywhere. Accordingly, the “Iraq and Shām” in the name of the Islamic State is henceforth removed from all official deliberations and communications, and the official name is the Islamic State from the date of this declaration.’²

By doing this, they defied the officially recognized borders of Iraq and Syria—one could even say *all* official borders. Since their proclamation, IS has tried to expand and claim territories in several countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The proclamation of Islamic State is a result of a history of very complex, protracted conflicts in both Iraq and Syria. In Iraq, the results of the Gulf

¹ See appendix 1 on page 43.

² Ibid.

Wars and their aftermath have led to a power vacuum from which ISIS could emerge (then known as Islamic State of Iraq, or ISI) in 2006.³ In Syria a civil war arose in 2011 as part of the Arab Spring and gave ISI the opportunity to gain power and become ISIS.⁴ The ongoing conflict in Syria is a complex mix of different actors, of which IS is only one. All actors have their own motives and beliefs. For the outside world, however, IS seems to be the biggest threat, as it also operates as a global terrorist organisations. IS has claimed several terrorist attacks in Western countries, for example in France and most recently in Belgium.⁵ Since it is impossible to fully explain the complexity of the conflict in this research, the focus here is on IS. They clearly seems to hold anti-Western sentiments. The questions that will be answered encompass both ideological and political aspects of IS, and, as will be shown, this inherently also means partly a religious aspect.

This research stands at the crossroads of several disciplines. Firstly, the analytical framework that will be used comes from conflict studies. In this field, the role of framing in researches is becoming more and more common, especially in regard to mobilising.⁶ As IS gains a lot of support, the way they use framing to gain support is relevant. Secondly, literature on colonialism in the Middle-East is important to mention, as the role of colonialism in framing is being analysed.⁷ Thirdly, Islamic ideology and IS ideology more specific, is also an important field to take into account. How does this ideology relate to colonialism?⁸ This research will attempt to

³ ISI split from Al-Qaeda in Iraq. It is widely believed that the way the US handled situations during and after the war in Iraq has contributed to the situation from which ISI was able to grow in power. This is for example described M. Weiss and H. Hassan, *ISIS. Inside the Army of Terror* (New York 2015) 1-47; and in: Cockburn, P., *The Rise of Islamic State. ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution* (New York 2015) 1-10.

⁴ On the declaration of ISIS, see: The Middle East Media Research Institute, 'ISI Confirms That Jabhat Al-Nusra Is Its Extension In Syria, Declares 'Islamic State Of Iraq And Al-Sham' As New Name Of Merged Group' (April 8 2013), <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/7119.htm> (accessed 28-3-2016). This, again, is also described in Weiss and Hassan, *ISIS*; and Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State*.

⁵ For the statement of IS claiming the Paris attacks, see: S. Sharma, 'Islamic State claims responsibility for Paris attacks' (14-11-2015),

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/11/14/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-for-paris-attacks/> (accessed 28-3-2016). For the statement of IS claiming the Brussels attacks, see: J. Rankin and J. Henley, 'Islamic State claims attacks at Brussels airport and metro station' (22-3-2016), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/22/brussels-airport-explosions-heard> (accessed 28-3-2016).

⁶ For a comprehensive review on the role of framing as analytic utility, see: R.D. Benford and D.A. Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology* vol. 26 (2000) 611-639. For the role of framing processes in regard to ideology and terrorism, see: D.A. Snow and S.C. Byrd, 'Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements', *Mobilization: An International Quarterly Review* vol. 12 (2007) 119-136.

⁷ This can for example be read in handbooks on imperialism, like: J. Burbank and F. Cooper, *Empires in World History* (Princeton 2010). For the role of colonialism in the Islamic world, see Nasr, S.V.R. . 'European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States', in: Esposito, J.L. (ed.), *The Oxford History of Islam* (1999), accessed via: *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780195107999/islam-9780195107999-chapter-13> (accessed 18-2-2016).

⁸ For the relation between Islam and Islamic extremist groups, see for example: R. Bonney, *Jihad. From Qur'an to Bin Laden* (2004). For the ideology of Islamic State specifically, see for example: C. Bunzel, 'From

bring together these three different fields and link them to IS. IS is an ongoing problem and is thus very topical. This can be seen in the amount of publications on the subject. Most publications so far have analysed the background and rise of the organisation.⁹ While there are some articles on the colonial past in relation to IS, the subject has not been analysed in relation to analytical frameworks like framing.¹⁰ The theoretical framework will help to zoom in on a very specific part of IS, namely their discourse. The goal of this research is to bring together several disciplines to suggest a new perspective to research through, which might lead to future research to build on this suggested perspective, or other perspectives inspired by this research.

In December 2014, Major General Michael K Nagata, commander of the American Special Operations forces in the Middle East, said: 'We have not defeated the idea [of IS]. We do not even understand the idea.'¹¹ As said, the ongoing conflict is complex. Therefore, this research only touches upon a very small part of the conflict. Nevertheless, this research contributes to understanding the 'idea' of IS in several ways. Firstly, as IS openly defies the official borders, researching where these borders have originated from and how this relates to why IS defies them can be useful in understanding their incentives. Moreover, it is important to understand where the anti-Western discourse of IS comes from because the discourse they have created might also be used in the recruitment and mobilisation of new members. This might be the case, for example, for what the Dutch call 'Syriëgangers': people from Western countries that travel to IS territory to join their cause.¹² Framing has an important role in the process of mobilisation, because it influences one's stance towards certain subjects and can hereby contribute to one's choice to join an insurgency. Therefore, in understanding how the colonial past is used by IS in their discourse and mobilisation tactics, one might be able to add some significant notions to work towards eventual demobilization or prevention of recruitment. Lastly, framing, as will be explained in chapter 1, has a very important role in creating a discourse, especially in propaganda. It is thus important to analyse the way IS is framing to understand their discourse and beliefs.

Paper Sate to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State', *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World Analysis Paper* no.19 (2015)

⁹ Examples of this kind of studies are: Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State*; Weiss and Hassan, *ISIS*; and J. Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (New York 2015).

¹⁰ Some articles have appeared online that explain the role of Sykes-Picot, for example: R. Falk, 'A New World Order? ISIS and the Sykes-Picot Backlash' (26-12-2015), <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/12/26/a-new-world-order-isis-and-the-sykes-picot-backlash/> (accessed 27-3-2016).

¹¹ E. Schmitt, 'In Battle to Defang ISIS, U.S. Targets Its Psychology' (28-12-2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/29/us/politics/in-battle-to-defang-isis-us-targets-its-psychology-.html> (accessed 25-3-2016).

¹² R. Bergema and S. Koudijs, 'Nederlandse jihadisten in Syrië en Irak: een analyse', *Internationale Spectator* vol.10 (2015), accessed via: http://www.internationalespectator.nl/pub/2015/10/nederlandse_jihadisten_in_syrie_en_irak/

This research draws upon several primary sources for empirical evidence. These sources are all released by IS themselves, as they give the most direct representation of how they frame. The primary sources consist of both audio-visual and textual sources, but this will be further elaborated upon in chapter 4. The textual sources were analysed by searching for several key-words that are relevant for the subject.¹³ It is important to notice that all sources used are available online, as it was impossible for this research to do actual fieldwork. Moreover, as IS often publishes its material in several languages to make it accessible to a very broad public, the English versions of their publications are used in this research.

This research makes a few claims in relation to the main question. Firstly, that the colonial past has played a role in anti-Western thought of the extremist Islamic organisations IS. Secondly, that IS uses this in their anti-Western discourse. Lastly, that a 'discourse' is 'framed' (partly through 'performances'). These claims will be further explained in the coming chapters. This research divided into five parts. In the first chapter, the theoretical analytic framework will be explained, which includes *discourse* and *framing*. In the second chapter, the colonial past in the Middle-East will be examined. In the third chapter, the general ideology of IS and how this relates to anti-Western thought will be explained. In the fourth chapter, the way IS frames themselves against others and the way they frame the colonial past in their discourse will be analysed using the primary sources. The last chapter concludes by answering the research question, reflecting upon the research, and suggesting future research topics.

¹³ The key-words used are: 'crusader', 'jew', 'disbelie' (refers to both disbelief and disbelievers), sykes, border, and nationalism. These key-words accord with each part of the analytical chapter.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Analytic Framework

In order to make a critical analysis and answer the research question, a framework is set out from which the analysis can be made. The analytical framework this research uses consists of three elements which are all interconnected: *Discourse*, *Framing*, and *Performances*. These elements are mainly derived from a conflict studies analysis perspective. The elements will each be defined and evaluated to explain why they are relevant for this research and how they relate to the problem.

Discourse

The first element of the theoretical framework is discourse. In its most basic definition, a *discourse* means written or spoken communication or debate.¹⁴ For academics, however, it means much more. Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is one of the most influential writers on discourse, and from his writings discourse analysis has been derived. According to Foucault, a discourse consists of *discursive formations*, which means that several communications form a discourse. In the social sciences and humanities, discourse comprises a way of thinking and expressing yourself. The words someone chooses influence the discourse.¹⁵ Discourse is also related to having *power*.¹⁶ Having dominance over discourse, for example a government enforcing censorship, can have great influence on the outcome of events.

A useful definition of discourse for this research comes from Hodgson, and has also been used by Jackson and Dexter in an article on organised political violence. Hodgson's definition is: 'A socially and historically specific system of assumptions, values and beliefs which materially affects social conduct and social structure.'¹⁷ Jackson and Dexter also extend the meaning of discourse for their framework: 'discourses are broader than language, being constituted not just in texts, but also in definite institutional and organizational practices; they are *discursive practices*.'¹⁸ This means that not only words, but also actions can determine a discourse.

¹⁴ See the definitions of the Oxford & Cambridge dictionaries for this definition, found at: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/discourse> (accessed 19-2-2016) and <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/discourse> (accessed 19-2-2016).

¹⁵ Goldberg explains the discourse of Foucault shortly in: M. Goldberg, 'Discourse', from: <https://faculty.washington.edu/mlg/courses/definitions/discourse.html> (accessed 19-2-2016).

¹⁶ In M.V. Bhatia, 'Fighting words: naming terrorists, bandits, rebels and other violent actors', *Third World Quarterly* vol.26 (2005), for example, states: 'The actual ability to name, and to have that name accepted by audiences, holds great power.' (p.9).

¹⁷ D.E. Hodgson, *Discourse, discipline and the subject: A Foucauldian analysis of the UK financial services industry* (2000) 59. In: Jackson, and Dexter, 'The Social Construction of Organised Political Violence: An Analytical Framework', 10.

¹⁸ Jackson and Dexter, 'The Social Construction of Organised Political Violence: An Analytical Framework', 10.

To conclude, a definition of *anti-Western discourse* is formulated. The definition of Hodgson can be used in relation to anti-Western thought. The definition of anti-Western discourse can then be formulated as: ‘A set of assumptions, values and beliefs that are centred on an opposing stance towards Western countries and hereby affects social conduct and social structure in regard to the West.’¹⁹ As will be shown, discourse relates to processes of *framing*.

Framing

The second element in the analytical framework is *framing*. Framing is often used in conflict studies to explain how and why collective violent action can happen.²⁰ A useful definition is: ‘The framing perspective on collective action and social movements views movements not merely as carriers of existing ideas and meanings, but as signifying agents actively engaged in producing and maintaining meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders.’²¹ In other words, framing is creating a *self* and an *other*, an *in-group* and an *out-group*. This process of othering goes through the creation of a discourse. Bhatia argues that naming something, and thus creating a certain discourse, determines what can and cannot be said about it. Once someone is framed as an enemy, for example by naming someone a terrorist, they cannot be spoken of as an ally. Yet, it is important to consider and furthermore stress that multiple discourses and frames often contest each other: ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’.²²

Benford and Snow have distinguished three core framing elements: *diagnostic*, *prognostic* and *motivational*. Diagnostic framing is essentially pointing fingers to answer the questions ‘what went wrong?’ and ‘who is to blame?’. Prognostic framing answers the question ‘what is to be done about it?’, and thus seeks a solution. Motivational framing focusses on how people are motivated to join in collective action.²³ Snow and Byrd have already related these three core framing tasks to ideology and Islamic terrorist movements.²⁴ They build upon the division of Benford and Snow and use case studies to give empirical evidence. In relation to the case of IS, framing—creating the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ through words—means creating a division between ‘the West’ and ‘the East’

¹⁹ This, then, relates to the concept of Occidentalism: the way in which ‘the West’ is seen in the eyes of ‘the East’. See, for example: I. Buruma and A. Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (2005).

²⁰ It is important to note that everybody is constantly framing unconsciously, for example by comparing oneself to another. People think in frames of, for example, dark skin and light skin, believing (in a religion) or not believing, etc. For this case, however, framing applies to the conscious framing in relation to collective actions and social movements.

²¹ Snow and Byrd, ‘Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements’, 123.

²² For the origins of this quote, see: Answers.com, ‘Who said one man's terrorist is another man's revolutionary?’,

http://www.answers.com/Q/Who_said_one_man's_terrorist_is_another_man's_revolutionary (accessed 1-3-2016).

²³ Benford and Snow, ‘Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment’, 615-618.

²⁴ Snow and Byrd, ‘Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements’.

or 'the Muslim world'.²⁵ The way the relation between the West and the East is constructed (or framed) and perceived has been an issue debated for decades, and is still relevant to this day. The three core elements of framing described above will be used in the analysis of this research.

Performances

The last element of the analytical framework for this research is what Fuist calls *ideological performances*. In Fuist's words, ideological performances are 'how a performer's beliefs, values, and allegiances are displayed for an audience via her behaviour, language, use of props, and aesthetics.'²⁶ These performances can be both by words and by actions. Fuist distinguishes between *public* and *private* performances and between *conscious* and *unconscious* performances, creating a matrix (see figure 1).²⁷ For this research, especially

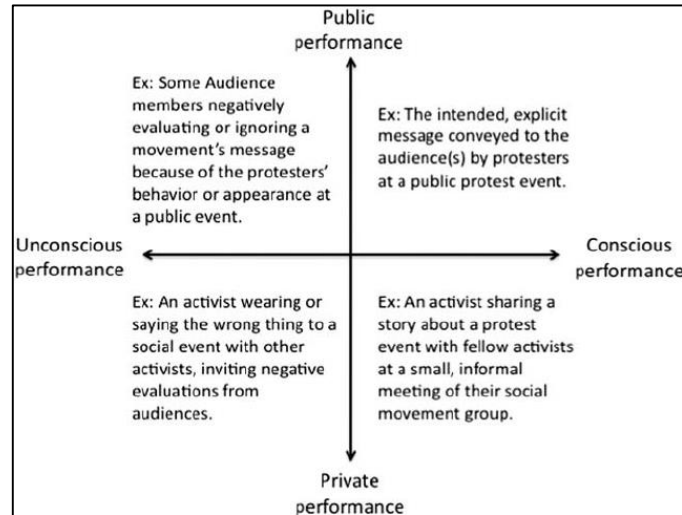


FIGURE 1: IDEOLOGICAL PERFORMANCES

public conscious ideological performances are important as this relates to framing and discourse. As can be seen in the figure, public conscious performances are 'the intended, explicit message'. How someone performs publicly and what is shown in for example a propaganda video can tell a lot about the discourse chosen and the way it is framed.

As said, discourse encompasses both words and actions (discursive practices), and ideological performances go through both actions and words too. Moreover, in using a certain discourse during a performance, the performer also frames. For example, in using an anti-Western discourse in a public speech, the performer is framing the West as the enemy, or the 'other'. In this research, primary sources will mainly be examined through framing, but where applicable also through the perspective of ideological performances.

²⁵ These are processes also described in Orientalism and Occidentalism, and in the Clash of Civilization thesis. For Orientalism, see: E. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Cultural Critique* vol.1 (1985) 89-107. For Occidentalism, see: Buruma and Margalit, *Occidentalism*. For the Clash of Civilization thesis, see: S.P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs* vol.72 (1993) 22-49.

²⁶ T.N. Fuist, 'The Dramatization of Beliefs, Values, and Allegiances: Ideological Performances Among Social Movement Groups and Religious Organizations', *Social Movements Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest* vol.13 (2014) 428.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 431.

Chapter 2: Colonialism in Iraq and Syria

Now that the analytical framework has been set out, the context of the colonial past in Iraq and Syria is analysed in this chapter. Colonialism has had great influence on the formation of the modern world.²⁸ The legacies of colonialism as well as post-colonialism have shaped contemporary borders and relations between nation-states. Even though western imperialism in the Middle-East was not as long, extensive and intensive as in other parts of the world, here too it has contributed to the relations with and between current Middle-Eastern nation-states. The effects of colonialism will be shown in this chapter. This chapter will also answer why the focus lies on the 'territorial' part of colonialism.

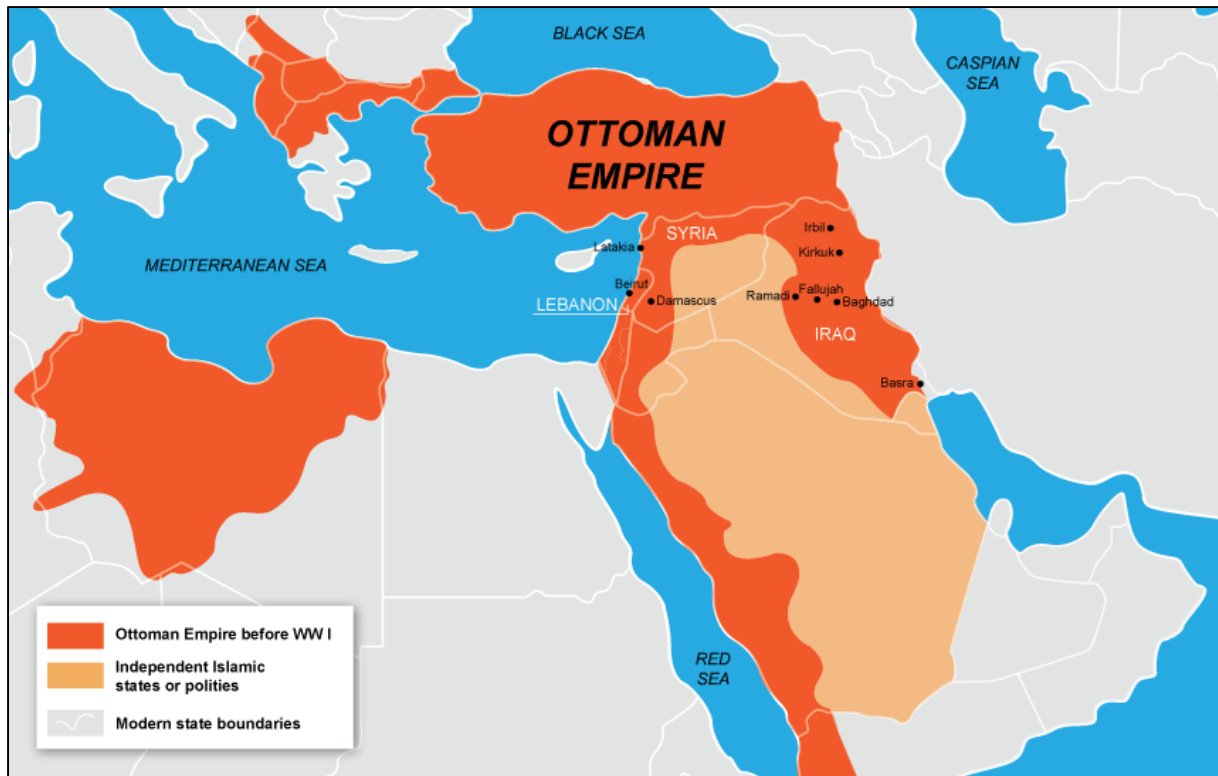
The goal of this chapter is to explain the territorial context from which the current situation has emerged. Therefore, it will focus primarily on the colonial history of the current states of Iraq and Syria, as the majority of IS territory and influence is in these countries. First, a short history of colonialism in Iraq and Syria will be provided. Second, the formation of the current states and borders will be examined. Last, the problems that come from these borders will be explained.

Imperial rule in current Iraq and Syria

The Middle-East, and more specifically Iraq and Syria, has been the subject of large empires throughout history. These were, in chronological order: The Roman Empire (27 BCE – 395 AD), the Byzantine Empire (330 - 1453), The Mongol Empire (1206 – 1368), and the last large empire ruling over the region: the Ottoman Empire (1299 - 1923).²⁹ Large parts of Syria and Iraq, as well as parts of Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Palestine were under Ottoman Rule until the First World War (WW I). Map 1 shows the situation before WW I. As is shown, the borders of the Ottoman Empire did not coincide with the current borders in the Middle East.

²⁸ There is a difference between the terms *colonialism* and *imperialism*. According to the website 'Differencebetween', 'Colonialism is where one nation assumes control over the other and Imperialism refers to political or economic control, either formally or informally.' (From: Differencebetween, 'Difference Between Colonialism and Imperialism', <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-colonialism-and-imperialism/> (accessed 25-2-2016)). For this research, however, the exact difference is not very important. What matters is that with both terms the influence and expansionism of the West on other parts of the world can be explained. Therefore, the term colonialism is used throughout this research to simplify this.

²⁹ The territories under control of these empire of course differed throughout time, and did not coincide with the current borders of Iraq and Syria. The point is that the general area has been subject to Imperialism for a long time. Also, between the Byzantine Empire and the Mongol Empire, the First Arab Caliphate (the Rashidun Caliphate, 632 – 661) had the region under its control.



MAP 1: THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE BEFORE WW I

The Ottoman rule ended with WW I. The Ottomans, having an alliance with Germany, were pulled into the war. Losing the war marked the definitive end of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was already in decline before the start of the war, and the rise of nationalism within the empire made some ethnic groups like Arabs and Kurds desire independent nation-states. With the end of the war the victorious European powers France and Great-Britain tried to get a piece of the Middle-Eastern cake by using these nationalistic sentiments.³⁰ The more intensive meddling of European powers in the Middle-Eastern affairs changed the structure of the area and would eventually lead to the formation of the current borders and nation-states.

Forming borders: the Sykes-Picot Agreement and European influence

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, France and Great-Britain saw chances to gain influence in the area that the Ottoman Empire would lose. This was attempted by a secret agreement between the two countries in 1916, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement.³¹ While this was before the end of WW I, and thus before the real fall of the Ottoman Empire, it laid the foundation for the splitting of the former Ottoman territory. In the official text of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, it is stated how the territories would be divided between Great-Britain and France:

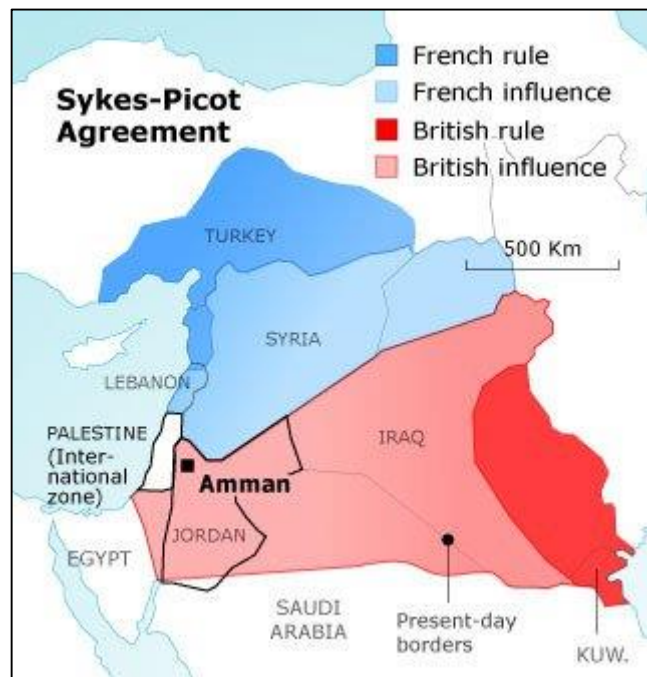
³⁰ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 381-385.

³¹ For more information on the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see J. Barr, *A Line in the Sand* (2011). The agreement is named after its two main negotiators, Mark Sykes for Great-Britain and Francois Georges-Picot for France.

'That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab states or a confederation of Arab states (a) and (b) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

*That in the blue area France, and in the red area Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.'*³²

A version of the map mentioned in the quote can be seen on Map 2. Area A and B mentioned in the quote are the light blue and light red areas. The blue and red are the same as mentioned in the quote.³³ As can be seen on map 2, the areas agreed upon in the Sykes-Picot Agreement do not fully coincide with the current borders between Iraq and Syria. However, the southern border of the current Syrian nation-state was completely established with this agreement except for the most Eastern part, where Iraq got an extra piece of land which encompasses the city of Mosul.



MAP 2: THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT

While the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement did not fully coincide with the ultimate division of the area, it is an example of colonial powers trying to gain influence in the area. Moreover, as will be shown in later chapters, Sykes-Picot is of great importance for IS. The eventual division of lands was formally introduced during peace negotiations after WW I and were mostly agreed upon in the Treaty of Sevres. As previously stated, the ultimate division differed slightly from the Sykes-Picot Agreement, but was largely based upon it. What did stay the same was the influence of the British and French in the region. They received a mandate from the newly formed League

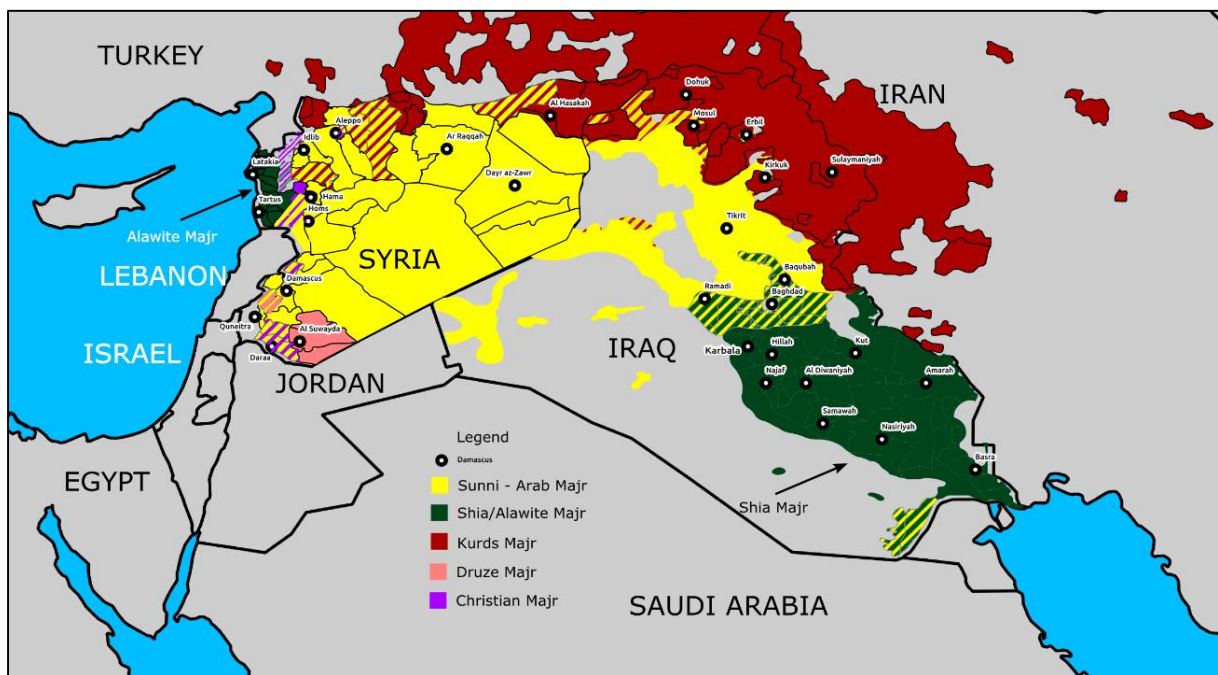
³² See Appendix 2A (page 49-51) for the full text of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

³³ See Appendix 2B (page 51) for a copy of the official map used for the agreement. The map used here (map 2) was more clear and useful for the analysis and was thus preferred over the official one.

of Nations, which meant that the newly formed states were recognized as independent but still under heavy influence of the European powers.³⁴

Problematic borders and nationalism

While the area of current Syria and Iraq was relatively stable during the Ottoman period, this changed after the division of lands after WW I. Burbank and Cooper state that ‘the map of mandates was another imperial carve-up, corresponding neither to Ottoman provinces nor to putative ethnocultural divisions [...]’.³⁵ On map 3, the different ethnicities and religions in the area are shown. These indeed do not correspond with the drawn borders. The newly formed states thus had to adjust to the new borders, becoming problematic at times.³⁶ Another issue that arose with the new states and the influence of France and Great-Britain was the emergence of nationalism. By creating a sense of nationalism, countries were not separated only by borders but also by sentiment. Instead of being united as Muslims, they were now ‘Iraqi’s’ and ‘Syrians’.



MAP 3: ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

To summarize this chapter, a quote from the Oxford History of Islam is applicable: ‘The idea of a Muslim territorial state, much like the idea of nationalism, is thus an import from the West. The inclusion of the concept of the territorial state into Muslim politics and the actual boundaries of Muslim states are both products of colonialism.’³⁷ Whether this is completely right

³⁴ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 384.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ For a short explanation on this, see Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 383-385.

³⁷ Nasr, ‘European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States’ (from online source).

or not, IS agrees with this statement, as will be shown later on. Now that the context of the colonial past has been explained, the next chapter will focus on the ideology of IS itself.

Chapter 3: Islamic State's ideology and how it is anti-Western

There are a lot of factors that contribute to the phenomenon of Islamic State: ideological, economic, religious, financial, and military. It is impossible to elaborate upon every aspect, but for this research it is important to explain the ideology of IS. This is difficult enough because the ideology of IS has a diverse and long history which can be traced back to the teachings of Muhammed himself. Therefore, it is also impossible to tap into every aspect of the origins of the IS ideology in a research project of this size. The focus of this chapter, then, lies on the aspects of the IS ideology that matter for the analysis in the next chapter. The previous chapter focussed on the colonial past in current Iraq and Syria. The most important factors that have had an influence on the modern day reality in the area are the territorial borders and nationalism. As will be shown, the ideology IS follows also addresses these factors. Ideology on its own does not explain the rise and success of IS,³⁸ but it *does* give the context from where the anti-Western discourse of IS comes from. The rise and success of IS are in this case not of vital importance and will thus not be specifically explained.

The goal of this chapter is to give a background of the IS ideology and how this relates to colonialism and anti-Western discourse. First, a compressed outline of the general ideology and its background is given. After this the relationship between the ideology and anti-Western thought is elaborated on. The focus lies especially on the parts of the ideology that regard the subject of this research.

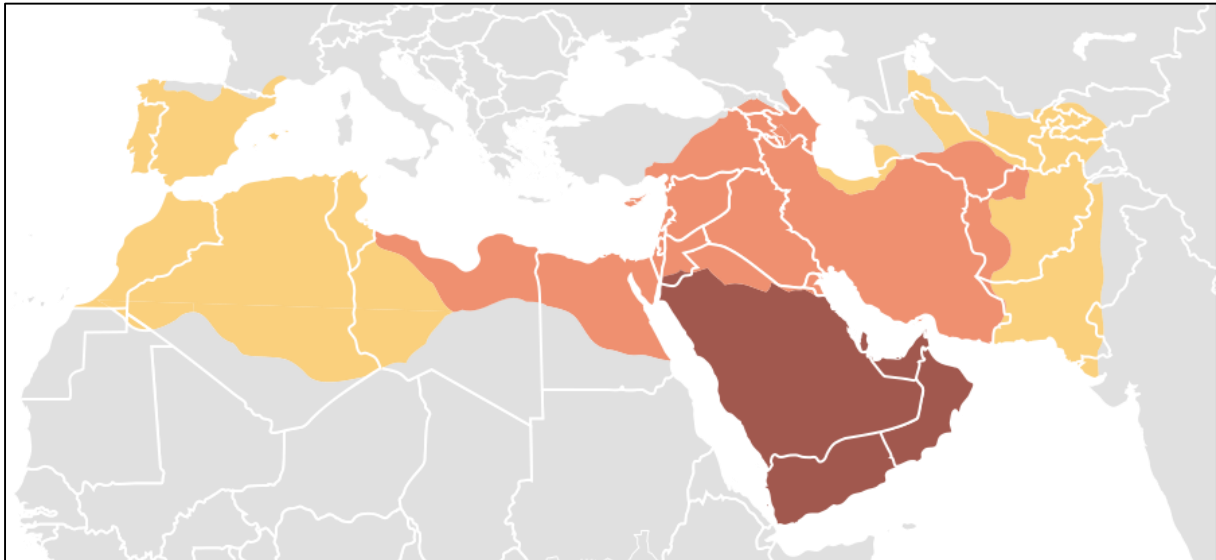
General ideology: Jihadist-Salafism

First, it is important to note that the ideology of Muslim extremist organisations inherently has religious roots. While many moderate Muslims condemn organisations like IS, and might even call them un-Islamic, many of the ideas often have their origins in Muslim thinkers.³⁹ (SOURCE) This is also the case for IS: al-Baghdadi, their caliph, reportedly has a PhD in Islamic Studies from the University of Baghdad. The problem of extremist ideologies lie within the interpretation of Islam and justification of certain actions via these interpretations. The general ideology on which IS has based its ideas and values is called Jihadist-Salafism. This is a Sunni Muslim ideology with a very literalist interpretation of Qur'an verses and Muhammed hadith. According to Bunzel, two streams of thought have influenced the Jihadist-Salafist school. The first one is that of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has its origins in Egypt and was founded there in 1928. The most important

³⁸ B. Haykel, 'ISIS: A Primer' (03-06-2015), <https://paw.princeton.edu/article/isis-primer> (accessed 19-2-2016).

³⁹ G. Wood, 'What ISIS Really Wants', *The Atlantic* (03-2015) 7.

idea of Muslim Brotherhood that Jihadist-Salafism upholds is the restoration of 'the Caliphate'.⁴⁰ This refers to the Caliphate that was founded after the death of Muhammed (see map 4).⁴¹ IS also aspires to restore the old Caliphate. They are thus denying the territorial borders that were defined after the fall of the Ottoman Empire (see chapter 2). The restoration of the Caliphate means actively conquering new territory, and thus is offensive Jihad.⁴²



MAP 4: THE CALIPHATE 622-750

The second stream of thought is Salafism, a more theological movement of Sunni Islam. This stream has its origins in the 14th century. The most important idea of Salafism is the purification of faith. This means that their version of Islam is the only true Islam.⁴³ This is also true for IS: they propagate their version of Islam and are against all other versions, whether this is Shi'a or a more moderate Sunni version of Islam faith. IS follows a very extreme version of Jihadist-Salafism. As Bunzel strikingly formulates: 'If Jihadism were to be placed on a political spectrum, al-Qaeda would be its left and the Islamic State its right.'⁴⁴ The statement has merit, seeing as the leader of al-Qaeda, al-Zawahiri, distanced himself and his organisation from IS when the Islamic State was proclaimed.⁴⁵ IS, then, also has very extreme ideas about the purification of faith. This also means that fellow Muslims can be branded apostate and subsequently be excommunicated. They then become a target for IS. The practice of excommunicating fellow Muslims is called *takfir*.

⁴⁰ Bunzel, 'From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State', 7-8.

⁴¹ On map 4, the different colors represent the conquered territory of the Caliphate between 622 and 750. The darker the color, the earlier the territory was conquered.

⁴² Defensive Jihad is the protecting of existing Muslim communities, offensive Jihad is actively expanding the Muslim realm.

⁴³ Bunzel, 'From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State', 8-9.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁵ There are multiple sources describing this conflict between Al-Qaeda and Islamic State, for example: Weiss and Hassan, *ISIS*, 182-187.

This has led to the death of many Muslims, Shia and Sunni alike. Other religious communities, like the Yezidi, are also systematically targeted by IS.⁴⁶

'Ummah' and anti-Western

As was explained in chapter 2, the main legacies of the colonial period are the territorial borders of the current nation states and the emergence of nationalism in Muslim nations. The main reason why IS is anti-Western relates to this. It also comes from the Jihadist-Salafism ideology. As Bernard Haykel, a leading scholar in Near Eastern Studies, says, IS 'condemn in categorical terms the modern world order because its values and principles are not rooted in Islam, but rather in the infidel West.'⁴⁷ One important aspect of IS ideology that clashes with Western values is *ummah*. 'The concept of the ummah calls Muslims not only to unite across national boundaries but to place Islam above all other political allegiances in their everyday lives.'⁴⁸ This coincides with the idea of restoring the Caliphate.

According to Jabareen, IS 'rejects the modern nation state and the states created during the colonial period and instead calls for a return of the Caliphate of the Islamic ummah, which transcends nationalism and race.'⁴⁹ Invoking ummah is also useful for IS in terms of recruitment: they urge Muslims from all over the world to go beyond their nation and race to join IS in their fight for the Caliphate. From this perspective, the enemies are the ones who formed nation-states and introduced nationalism. The importance of ummah is also mentioned frequently in the declaration of the Caliphate by IS.⁵⁰ Moreover, by declaring the Caliphate, IS denounced all other borders but the Caliphate's: 'The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations, becomes null by the expansion of the khilāfah's authority and arrival of its troops to their areas.'⁵¹

A last point that is important to mention before turning to the empirical evidence is the eschatological aspect of IS ideology. According to a certain prophecy, the apocalypse will come

⁴⁶ This becomes clear, for example, in the UN report 'Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July – 10 September 2014'. The results of this report are shortly analysed in a news article: D. Obeidallah, 'ISIS's Gruesome Muslim Death Toll', 10-07-2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/10/07/isis-s-gruesome-muslim-death-toll.html> (Accessed 29-3-2016).

⁴⁷ B. Haykel, 'ISIS: A Primer' (03-06-2015), <https://paw.princeton.edu/article/isis-primer> (accessed 19-2-2016).

⁴⁸ Nasr, 'European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States' (from online source).

⁴⁹ Y. Jabareen, 'The emerging Islamic State: Terror, territoriality, and the agenda of social transformation', *Elsevier Geoforum* vol. 58 (2015) 52.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Appendix 1 on page 43: 'We fight for an **ummah** to which Allah has given honor, esteem, and leadership, promising it with empowerment and strength on the earth. Come O Muslims to your honor, to your victory. By Allah, if you disbelieve in democracy, secularism, nationalism, as well as all the other garbage and ideas from the west, and rush to your religion and creed, then by Allah, you will own the earth, and the east and west will submit to you. This is the promise of Allah to you. This is the promise of Allah to you.' (Emphasis added).

⁵¹ See appendix 1 on page 43.

after the Muslim army defeats Rome at the village of *Dabiq*, located in the northwest of Syria.⁵² IS strongly believes in this prophecy and thus *Dabiq* is of great importance to them. While this chapter has explained certain elements of the ideology of IS, it does not fully consider each element. Nevertheless, it suffices in clarifying how the ideology relates to the colonial past. It also partly answers the question of why IS is anti-Western. In the next chapter, the framing of IS and how colonialism is used in this framing will be analysed.

⁵² Wood, 'What ISIS really wants', 15.

Chapter 4: Colonialism in the anti-Western discourse of IS

Now that the analytical framework, the historical context of colonialism in Iraq and Syria, and the ideological context of IS have been elaborated upon, the focus turns to the actual analysis of the anti-Western discourse of IS. There are many sources available to analyse this discourse. Two types of sources are used in the analysis: audio-visual and textual. IS has a range of publications that clearly represent in their discourse. For the audio-visual sources, these publications consist of video-statements and propaganda videos. These are distributed through the Al-Hayat Media Center of IS, and appear on the internet on websites like LiveLeak. Moreover, there is a VICE documentary on IS filmed from within their ranks. IS members are seen speaking freely, making the documentary controversial: to some it looks like propaganda, and thus unintentionally support to IS.⁵³ However, that is exactly why it is useful for this research. As for the textual sources, IS publishes its own online magazine called *Dabiq*, which is also distributed by the Al-Hayat Media Centre. The magazine is widely available via online archives that are publicly accessible. Between July 2014 and January 2016, thirteen issues have been released. These thirteen issues make up the majority of the textual sources used.

The magazine *Dabiq* is named after the village of *Dabiq* which, as explained in chapter 3, holds great importance for IS.⁵⁴ The issues of *Dabiq* are published in several languages, primarily in English, but also in French, German, Russian and Arabic. Consequently, it is available to a very large audience in Europe. According to H.K. Gambhir, who wrote a background article on *Dabiq*, the magazines 'reveal how ISIS frames and justifies its activities to particular audiences.'⁵⁵ By releasing the issues in several Western languages it has a global reach, and the framing and justifying can serve as a means to gather more support or even recruit foreigners to travel to IS area and join their ranks.⁵⁶ Framing is an important aspect of the magazine, and this element is analysed in this chapter. In the first chapter, a division was made between *diagnostic*, *prognostic*, and *motivational* framing. These three forms of framing will be used to analyse the sources in this chapter. Moreover, the role of ideological performances in the framing of IS will also be used in the analysis. This will be primarily *public conscious performances* (see figure 1 in chapter 1). The source material analysed in this chapter is meant for a larger audience and is thus public. Moreover, most sources are published by IS themselves, with a conscious message.

⁵³ The Atlantic, 'Is Vice's Documentary on ISIS Illegal?' (1-10-2014), <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/is-vice-documentary-on-isis-illegal/380991/> (accessed 17-3-2016).

⁵⁴ This is also explained in: G. Fraser, 'To Islamic State, Dabiq is important – but it's not the end of the world' (10-10-2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2014/oct/10/islamic-state-dabiq-important-not-end-of-the-world> (accessed 25-3-2016).

⁵⁵ H.K. Gambhir, 'Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State', *Institute for the Study of War Backgrounder* (15-08-2014) 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

The goal of this chapter is to give empirical evidence of the anti-Western discourse of IS and the role of colonialism in this anti-Western discourse and to analyse it through the framework that was sketched in chapter 1. In the first part the framing IS discourse, specifically how this discourse is anti-Western, will be elaborated. In the second part, the framing of colonialism within this anti-Western discourse will be further analysed.

'The enemy' in IS discourse: framing 'them' versus 'us'

IS uses framing in their propaganda to create an 'us' versus 'the rest' mentality. A quote from the first *Dabiq* is a clear example of this way of framing, as the world is divided in two camps:

*'The camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy—the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the jews.'*⁵⁷

By dividing the world in two camps, IS, ironically enough, uses almost the exact same rhetoric former president of the US, George W. Bush., used when declaring the war on terror. His famous words were 'you are either with us or against us'.⁵⁸ IS seemingly agrees with this, albeit from the opposite perspective. The above quote has several interesting elements in its 'othering' that will be separately elaborated upon: crusaders, Jews and disbelievers.

Crusaders

One of the main ways in which IS frames Western countries, specifically European countries, is by using the word 'Crusader', as can also be seen in the above quote. The Arabic terms for the Crusades have only been used in the Arabic world since the late 19th century. According to Hillenbrand, the term is a European loanword, but nowadays has its own emotive force for Muslims.⁵⁹ In the case of IS, it is used to refer to contemporary Europe in a negative way. Moreover, the Crusades can also be linked to colonialism from this perspective: 'Colonialism is seen as a strategy to exploit the Muslim world in vengeance for the failure of the Crusades.'⁶⁰ This can be

⁵⁷ Quote of Amirul-Mu'minin (Caliph, Prince of the believers, other title for their leader) in: *Dabiq* 1 (05-07-2014) 10.

⁵⁸ CNN, 'You are either with us or against us' (06-11-2001), <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/> (accessed 30-03-2016).

⁵⁹ The Arabic terms for the Crusades are *al-hurub al salibiyya* (the 'Cross wars) or *harb al-salib* (the war of the 'Cross'). See: C. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York 2000), Chapter 9: Epilogue. The Heritage of the Crusades, 591-592.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 604.

seen in a quote from issue 8 of *Dabiq*, where it is stated that the banners of nationalism ‘represent the kufri and shirkī ideologies brought to the Muslim world by the two crusaders: Sykes and Picot.’⁶¹ Here, the two representatives of France and Great-Britain that negotiated on the Sykes-Picot Agreement—which can be called an act of colonialism—are called crusaders. Moreover, this is a clear example of diagnostic framing: Sykes and Picot, two Europeans, are blamed for bringing the ‘kufri’ (refers to disbelief) and ‘shirki’ (refers to polytheism or idolatry) ideologies to the Muslim world.

However, crusader is a commonly used term in the discourse of IS, and is not just linked to colonialism. In all issues of *Dabiq*, the term crusader is constantly used in the rhetoric of IS to define Europeans or Westerners (preferring the term crusader over these), framing them as the enemy. Every issue starts with a quote from the founder of IS, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, on the contents page: ‘The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify—by Allah’s permission—until it burns the crusader armies in *Dabiq*.’⁶² This, again, refers to the final battle before the apocalypse between the Christians—called the crusader armies here—and the Muslims, which would be the army of IS. Moreover, the fourth issue of *Dabiq* has a 12-page feature called ‘Reflections on the Final Crusade’, where this Judgement Day is extensively explained and reflected upon.⁶³ Again, the term crusader is used throughout this feature.

There are numerous other examples in *Dabiq* where the term crusader is used. An example from another source can be found in the statement IS released after the Paris attacks in November 2015, where the word crusaders is used multiple times to refer to Europeans, the enemies, and the victims of the attack.⁶⁴ When the word crusader is used this often it can also be seen as a form of motivational framing. By constantly referring to Europeans as crusaders, they create a negative discourse. Saying crusader instead of European can help in creating anti-European sentiments. This rhetoric is a possible tool in motivating people to join IS. Moreover, by inciting anti-European sentiments through the use of the word crusader, it can also be seen as an anachronistic form of diagnostic framing: blaming contemporary people (Europeans) for past events (the Crusades).

Jews

Another way of IS ‘othering’ that returns multiple times in its discourse is their framing of the Jewish people. In the quote of the first *Dabiq* (see page 22), it is stated that the Jews are the

⁶¹ *Dabiq* 8 (30-3-2015) 4.

⁶² The quote can be found on page 2 of all *Dabiq* issues released so far. Al-Zarqawi was the one who first used the term Islamic State, when he founded the ISI (Islamic State of Iraq) in 2006. This is the reason why ‘the spark’ has been lit in Iraq.

⁶³ *Dabiq* 4 (11-10-2014) 32-44.

⁶⁴ S. Sharma, ‘Islamic State claims responsibility for Paris attacks’ (14-11-2015), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/11/14/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-for-paris-attacks/> (accessed 28-3-2016).

'mobilizers' for the 'other' camp.⁶⁵ What is notable here is that the Jews are explicitly mentioned as being in the 'enemy camp', opposing IS, while other religions are not mentioned. They use the term crusader, but not 'Christians' in their division of camps.

In other examples, however, Jews and Christians are mentioned together, as IS sees them as allies.⁶⁶ Moreover, Jews and Crusaders are also mentioned together in some cases.⁶⁷ This shows how IS sees Jews as natural allies of the West. This is, for example, visible in a quote from the ninth *Dabiq*: 'The Jewish state itself was established for the Jews primarily by the British crusaders. And it was through Jewish-Crusader relationships and the self-degradation of the Arab apostates that the Jews gained mastery over the Arab tawāghīt.'⁶⁸ In other words, they blame the British ('crusaders') for the emergence of Israel (the Jewish state), which is another an example of diagnostic framing.

Since IS sees the Jews as allies of the West, this could also explain why they see the Jews as a mobilising force. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example, the US has been supporting Israel. Now, Israel is fighting IS as allies of the Western forces. The involvement of Israel (the Jewish State) in the fights against IS is accentuated in the 11th issue of *Dabiq*: 'The Jewish state is openly involved in the war against Wilāyat Saynā' in addition to being covertly involved alongside the crusaders in most of the campaigns against the Islamic State wilāyāt.'⁶⁹ 'Wilāyat Saynā' refers to the IS branch in the Sinai region in Egypt, a region where Israel is actively fighting against IS. IS thus also holds anti-Semitic sentiments, by explicitly naming the Jews as their enemy. Moreover, they connect this to their anti-Western discourse.

Disbelievers/infidels

Lastly, IS makes use of the names 'disbelievers' or 'infidels' in framing the other. As explained in chapter 3, IS believes their interpretation of Islam is the only true one. Following any other belief makes one a disbeliever. This also means anyone siding against IS is automatically considered a disbeliever: 'Those who tread behind Bush in his crusade against the Muslims have disbelieved in Allah.'⁷⁰ Even if one is a Sunni Muslim, siding against IS equals being a disbeliever. *Takfir* is an important aspect of this way of framing. Moreover, it is a clear example of diagnostic framing: siding against IS means you are also to blame. Also once again present in this example is the 'with us or against us' mentality.

⁶⁵ Dabiq 1 (05-07-2014) 10.

⁶⁶ Repeatedly found in quoted Hadith, one example is: Dabiq 9 (21-05-2015) 18.

⁶⁷ For example in : Dabiq 5 (21-11-2014) 3.

⁶⁸ Dabiq 9 (21-05-2015) 18.

⁶⁹ Dabiq 11 (09-08-2015) 48.

⁷⁰ Dabiq 4 (11-10-2014) 44.

An example where the role of disbelievers in IS discourse is clearly visible regards the fighting between Kurds and IS:

*'Our war with Kurds is a religious war. It is not a nationalistic war—we seek the refuge of Allah. We do not fight Kurds because they are Kurds. Rather we fight the disbelievers amongst them, the allies of the crusaders and jews in their war against the Muslims.'*⁷¹

IS thus claims to fight the Kurds they deem to be disbelievers. Again, the link between Jews and crusaders is made here. This is an example of diagnostic framing: the Kurds that are fighting IS are framed as allies of the West, and thus as disbelievers.

The main usage of the terms disbeliever and infidel, however, is in regard to the West. In *Dabiq* 4 in an article consisting of excerpts from the official IS spokesperson, supporters of IS are urged to kill disbelievers: 'The best thing you can do is to strive to your best and kill any disbeliever, whether he be French, American, or from any of their allies.'⁷² The urging to kill disbelievers is prognostic framing: it poses a solution to the 'problem' of disbelievers. Moreover, in this case, it specifically regards Western countries (France, US or any of their allies). Another example of framing the West can be found in the quote from the first *Dabiq* (see page 22). As can be seen in the quote from the first *Dabiq*, America and Russia are framed as leaders of the camp of disbelievers: 'all being led by America and Russia'.⁷³ This is an example of diagnostic framing: America and Russia are framed as the leaders of IS's enemies: the disbelievers. They are thus to blame for possible past and present grievances.

Finally, one of the most striking examples of using infidels in regard to Europeans can be seen in the VICE documentary on IS released on December 26, 2014, called *The Islamic State*. In one of the scenes, a father and his son (about 9 years old) who migrated to IS territory from Belgium are interviewed. The father wants his son to answer certain questions to show how dedicated he and his son are to the cause of IS. Hereby, he also shows how indoctrinated kids can be by anti-Western discourse. First, the kid says he does not want to go back to Belgium because there are 'infidels', or disbelievers, over there. Then, his father asks him why they fight these 'infidels'. The kid answers: 'Because they kill Muslims.' 'All the infidels?', his father asks, and the kid responds: 'The infidels of Europe, all the infidels.'⁷⁴ Besides this being an example of diagnostic framing, this is also an example of an ideological performance, specifically a conscious public

⁷¹ *Dabiq* 4 (11-10-2014) 9; and *Dabiq* 5 (21-11-2014) p.12. Both are the same quote from the official spokesperson of IS.

⁷² One of many examples from the article is: *Dabiq* 4 (11-10-2014) 9.

⁷³ *Dabiq* 1 (05-07-2014) 10.

⁷⁴ VICE News, 'The Islamic State' (26-12-2014), <https://news.vice.com/video/the-islamic-state-full-length> (accessed 19-02-2016).

performance. As the father asks questions and his son answers, they are consciously displaying their beliefs and values for the camera. While the framing of disbelievers can refer to anyone who is not supporting IS, they use it most frequently in regard to the West. It can thus be said this part of their othering discourse also links to anti-Western discourse.

Colonialism in anti-Western discourse

As explained above, there are multiple aspects that can regard to anti-Western discourse of IS. What has not yet been analysed, however, is how the colonial past plays a role in this anti-Western discourse. While colonialism might be linked to the crusades (see page?), the way in which IS frames colonialism within their discourse is more important for this research. The second chapter established that the role of colonialism in Iraq and Syria (and also the larger region) was primarily territorial. It shaped the Middle-East and established the borders for the current nation-states. Moreover, it introduced nationalism into the Muslim world. The focus of this part lies on these two elements: state borders, especially in regard to Sykes-Picot and nationalism.

Sykes-Picot and state borders

IS sees the Sykes-Picot Agreement as having a great influence on the shaping of the borders of Iraq and Syria. As they believe greatly in the concept of Ummah (see chapter 3), they thus see these borders as wrong and blame the West and their colonial past for it. Sykes-Picot returns frequently in both the *Dabiq* magazines as well as in the audio-visual material. The first important mention of the Sykes-Picot Agreement can be found in the first volume of *Dabiq*. In a report on a tribe meeting spoke the welcoming words, it is written that the 'Head of Tribal Affairs' of IS spoke about 'the demolition of the Sykes-Picot borders thus opening the way between Iraq and Sham'.⁷⁵ In issue five of *Dabiq*, al-Baghdadi—or as IS calls him: the Khalīfah—is quoted (this is the same quote as in the introduction), saying: 'and this blessed march will not stop until we drive the last nail in the coffin of the Sykes-Picot conspiracy.'⁷⁶ This shows the resolution of IS to completely unite the region under their banner, creating one state and hereby neglecting modern borders. Moreover, it is an example of prognostic framing: the destruction of 'Sykes-Picot' borders will solve the problem.

In a report in the fourth volume of *Dabiq*, the destruction of the Sykes-Picot is again mentioned:

⁷⁵ *Dabiq* 1 (05-07-2014) 7.

⁷⁶ *Dabiq* 5 (21-11-2014) 33.

*'After demolishing the Syrian/Iraqi border set up by the crusaders to divide and disunite the Muslims, and carve up their lands in order to consolidate their control of the region, the mujahidin of the Khilāfah delivered yet another blow to nationalism and the Sykes-Picot-inspired borders that define it.'*⁷⁷

The goal of the division of the lands as described in the *Dabiq* corresponds with colonial behaviour: establishing control by divide and rule. The rhetoric of 'modern-day' borders defined by crusaders is again used in *Dabiq* 6, this time referring to Afghanistan.⁷⁸ Again, this is an example of prognostic framing.

In the audio-visual sources, Sykes-Picot also plays an important role. Moreover, the concept of performances is relevant here. The first example is from an IS propaganda video called 'Flames of War'. About 38 minutes in, the Iraqi-Syrian border comes into play. The IS narrator explains in English: 'The flames of war then quickly and veraciously made their way to the colonialist political borders of Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State was granted a landmark victory in the war against kufr with the flames of war burning the borders of Sykes-Picot.'⁷⁹ Here, the role of colonialism in the forming of the borders of Iraq and Syria is explicitly named. Moreover, the last part of the quote is an example of prognostic framing: a victory against the borders of Sykes-Picot is claimed. In the image below (image 1), this 'victory' can be seen: a bulldozer is literally destroying a border.

⁷⁷ *Dabiq* 4 (11-10-2014) 18.

⁷⁸ *Dabiq* 6 (29-12-2014) 24.

⁷⁹ Al-Hayat, 'The Flames of War' (20-09-2014), accessed via: http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=5c2_1411222393 (accessed 15-03-2016).



IMAGE 1: STILL FROM THE IS PROPAGANDA VIDEO 'FLAMES OF WAR' AT 38:59 MIN.

The image goes with the following words from the narrator: 'The black pages of history that testified to the tyrannical and murderous rise of the secular state were now coming to a close.'⁸⁰ The destroying of the border thus seems to be a solution to the 'problem of secular states' for IS. The bulldozing of the border is also a public conscious ideological performance: by explicitly showing this in the propaganda video, the beliefs and values of IS are also shown.

Another example of the destroying of the 'Sykes-Picot border' can be found in the VICE documentary, called 'the Islamic State'. At about 36 minutes into the documentary, the same bulldozer as shown in the Flames of War propaganda video (see image 1) can be seen destroying the border (see image 2). The VICE narrator says that they are 'literally dissolving borders'. Also, according to the narrator, the Sykes-Picot Agreement is 'key to the anger and rage of IS'.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Al-Hayat, 'The Flames of War' (20-09-2014), accessed via: http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=5c2_1411222393 (accessed 15-03-2016).

⁸¹ VICE News, 'The Islamic State' (26-12-2014), <https://news.vice.com/video/the-islamic-state-full-length> (accessed 19-02-2016).



IMAGE 2: STILL FROM THE VICE DOCUMENTARY 'THE ISLAMIC STATE' AT 37:13 MIN.

An IS member says 'we don't believe in the Sykes-Picot Agreement', and then, as can be seen on image 2, he says 'We've broken Sykes-Picot'.⁸² This is another example of a public conscious performance, as they do not believe in the borders of Iraq and Syria and even demolish them. Moreover, it again is a case of prognostic framing, as the borders are literally destroyed as a solution.

The last example from the audio-visual sources comes from the IS propaganda video 'The End of Sykes-Picot'. To begin with, the title of this propaganda video already says a lot: ending Sykes-Picot by destroying the border between Iraq and Syria. The video follows an IS media figure walking around the border area. He says about the Sykes-Picot border: 'We don't recognise it and we will never recognise it.'⁸³ Then, he walks towards a sign of the border security that says 'Commandos Battalion Border', which is laying on the ground. As he steps on it, he says: 'as you can see, here is a sign [...] and as you can see, it is under our feet right now.'⁸⁴ This moment is shown on image 3. This is a very good example of a public conscious ideological performance: by stepping on the border sign, the man essentially says 'these borders mean nothing to me'. His beliefs and values thus come forward clearly in this action. A few moments later, the IS spokesman stands by a map of the Iraqi-Syrian border, saying: 'this is Iraq, this is Sham, but now it is all one

⁸² VICE News, 'The Islamic State' (26-12-2014), <https://news.vice.com/video/the-islamic-state-full-length> (accessed 19-02-2016).

⁸³ Al-Hayat, 'The End of Sykes-Picot' (29-06-2014), accessed via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzDJgv6sNYI> (accessed 20-02-2016).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

country [...] on Ummah, now there is no border.’⁸⁵ This too is an example of prognostic framing as the borders are framed as being destroyed.



IMAGE 3: STILL FROM THE IS PROPAGANDA VIDEO ‘THE END OF SYKES-PICOT’ AT 1:35 MIN.

Lastly, the ninth issue of *Dabiq* includes an article on the Arab Spring: ‘The historical origin of the “Arab Spring” banners—rather most of the flags raised by the various apostate Arab regimes—is a flag designed by the British crusader Mark Sykes.’⁸⁶ Here, the banners of the Arab Spring are framed as coming from Sykes. The article continues with a short history of the Sykes-Picot Agreement according to IS, which serves the purpose of educating the people who were a part of Arab Spring revolutions. They claim that the flags were only a tool of Western countries to create nationalistic sentiments and consequently divide Muslims. Moreover, the creation of Israel—in their word, the Jewish state—is also attributed to Sykes and Picot.⁸⁷ Here, IS uses diagnostic framing: Sykes and Picot are being framed as being responsible for the creation of nation-states in the Muslim world. Also, it relates directly to nationalism.

Nationalism

Nationalism is the other legacy of colonialism in the Muslim world (see chapter 2), and IS finds this problematic as well. By declaring the Caliphate, IS denounces nationalism. This is also why

⁸⁵ Al-Hayat, ‘The End of Sykes-Picot’ (29-06-2014), accessed via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzDJgv6sNYI> (accessed 20-02-2016).

⁸⁶ *Dabiq* 9 (21-05-2015) 20.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

they invoke the concept of Ummah frequently. In the declaration of the Caliphate, it is already made clear that nationalism is a Western idea and should not be supported:

*'By Allah, if you disbelieve in democracy, secularism, nationalism, as well as all the other garbage and ideas from the west, and rush to your religion and creed, then by Allah, you will own the earth, and the east and west will submit to you.'*⁸⁸

This is both diagnostic framing, as nationalism (and democracy and secularism) are framed as ideas from the West, as well as motivational framing, as the promise of 'owning the earth' is made for the ones who denounce these ideas and support IS.

A very extensive quote on nationalism can be found in *Dabiq* 8. It regards '*muwahhid mujāhid*', which means 'Salafist warrior', and refers to the IS fighters. Their attitude towards nationalism is described:

*'Nationalism, patriotism, tribalism, and revolutionism were never the driving forces inside the heart of the muwahhid mujāhid. For him to lose his tongue would be more beloved to him than to voluntarily utter slogans of nationalist Jāhiliyyah. Rather, the banners of nationalism are beneath his dusty feet, as they oppose Tawhīd and the Shari'ah and represent the kufri and shirkī ideologies brought to the Muslim world by the two crusaders: Sykes and Picot.'*⁸⁹

Sykes and Picot are diagnostically framed here as being the ones who brought nationalism into the Muslim world. Moreover, the hate of IS fighters towards nationalism is made clear here: one would rather lose his tongue than support nationalism. The writing then continues:

*'Amongst the greatest deeds the muwahhid performs is his rejection of nationalism. Rather, his Islam is not correct until he disbelieves in nationalism, as nationalism declares people equal regardless of their religion, it does not discriminate between them accordingly, it limits the religion to a nationalist border, and it prohibits its expansion beyond. For these reasons, nationalism was innovated by the West, as through it, they elevated their dhimmī brethren, empowered apostasy in the Muslims' lands, divided and conquered the Muslim peoples, and defended the crusaders' lands from offensive jihād.'*⁹⁰

⁸⁸ See appendix 1 on page 43.

⁸⁹ *Dabiq* 8 (30-03-2015) 4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

In the quote the importance of denouncing nationalism is stressed. If one does not reject nationalism, they do not follow the right way of Islam. Moreover, nationalism is diagnostically framed as limiting a religion to the national borders. The West is framed as having brought the concept of nationalism to the Muslim world for these reasons. By bringing nationalism to the Muslim world, the West was able to 'divide and conquer' Muslim lands. This supposed 'divide and conquer' tactic of crusaders (Europeans or Westerners) is mentioned in *Dabiq* 9: "The crusaders rely upon the strategy of "divide and conquer". They break up Muslims' lands through nationalism, partisanship, and other forms of jāhiliyyah."⁹¹ Both of these examples are diagnostically framed: nationalism is framed as being a tool of the West to divide the Muslim world.

Lastly, in *Dabiq* 10, an example of prognostic and motivational framing can be found regarding nationalism:

"The call to defend the Islamic State—the only state ruling by Allah's Shari'ah today—continues to be answered by sincere Muslims and mujāhidīn around the world prepared to sacrifice their lives and everything dear to them to raise high the word of Allah and trample democracy and nationalism."⁹²

The solution here is simply eradicating nationalism (and democracy). Furthermore, Islamic State is framed as the only 'ruling by Allah's Sharia'. The quote can also be interpreted as being motivational: by using the words 'sincere Muslims', it might appeal to Muslims to agree with anti-nationalism. While nationalism is thus mostly being diagnostically framed, it can also be used in prognostic or motivational context.

⁹¹ *Dabiq* 9 (21-05-2015) 22.

⁹² *Dabiq* 10 (13-07-2014) 4.

Conclusion

The colonial past in Iraq and Syria has left a legacy, of which nation-state borders and nationalism are the most significant. The ideology of IS is largely centred on restoring the Caliphate through the concept of Ummah. This clashes with the colonial legacy, and has led to an anti-Western discourse in which colonialism is a returning element. How is Islamic State framing the colonial past of France and Great-Britain in current Iraq and Syria in the early 20th century into the anti-Western discourse they propagate? The answer is by principally framing the Sykes-Picot Agreement as being responsible for the current borders of Iraq and Syria. This, however, has several aspects and implications. While Sykes-Picot certainly has had a role in the formation of the borders, the way in which IS frames it in their discourse is interesting. Moreover, by framing Sykes-Picot, IS also blames the West as being responsible for the borders, and also for the other main legacy of the colonial period: nationalism. IS frames 'them' versus 'us' in a lot of ways, for example by using the word 'crusader' or by using an anti-Semitic rhetoric. Colonialism is also an important subject in this 'othering'. The process of framing a discourse has been analysed through the scope of framing (making the distinction between diagnostic, prognostic and motivational), and through ideological performances (public, conscious performances). The framing of colonialism in anti-Western discourse by IS is done mainly by blaming the West for the colonial legacy. Diagnostic framing thus seems to be most commonly used. In some examples, however, prognostic and motivational framing can also be seen. Moreover, while distinctions are possible, different kinds of framing often intertwine with each other. Both diagnostic and prognostic framing can attribute to the motivation of certain people, by creating hate for something and offering a solution for it. Ideological performances can consequently be connected to framing. In the examples given, the performances were especially prognostic as they showed actions that were solutions to the diagnosed problems.

What does this all mean, and why is it important? In my opinion, looking at framing is important because it may give us some insight as to how IS thinks and what their beliefs are. Whether everything they say is true or not does not matter. What matters is these are the words and actions of IS, that they frame it in this particular way. Whether what they say can be considered to be true or false does not matter, but what they say and why they say it is what is truly interesting. Trying to understand the way IS thinks can attribute to understanding the idea and the movement which I believe is needed to effectively handle the movement. This research has its limits. While the subject is very specific, there is still a lot more that can be written. The empirical evidence can be analysed more intensive as well as more extensive. Moreover, while colonialism most certainly plays a role in IS discourse, it is only a small part of their discourse. In my opinion, there is a lot more to research about IS discourse, but there is also a lot more to research about the role of colonialism. In this research, the role of colonialism was specifically

linked to framing and discourse, but it could also have other impacts. In this research, an original stance was taken by combining several academic fields. While this is sometimes advantageous, focussing on a single field might yield a more in-depth analyses.

There are some possibilities for further research. This research could be extended, for example, by using statistics: how often does IS truly use colonialism in their discourse? Also, field work might give some insight on the impact the discourse of IS in their propaganda has on different people. Moreover, the source material can be analysed further, especially the *Dabiq* magazines. Every issue has a specific theme. How this relates to the content and the time in which it is published might be interesting to look at. Another subject that might be interesting to research further is the role of Kurds in IS discourse. They are mentioned quite often in the magazines. In this research, however, they are only mentioned once in regard to 'disbelievers'. IS's stance towards the Kurds might be worth analysing, for example by looking at the *Dabiq* magazines. A final remark is that the goal of this research was to bring certain fields together and open up new possibilities for research. The research is by no means holistic, but I hope it did succeed in looking at the problem in a new way, and hereby inspiring future research.

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Figures & Maps

Figure 1: 'Ideological Performances matrix', obtained via: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Todd_Fuist/publication/264532685/figure/fig1/AS:295834664095756@1447543888695/Figure-1-Unconsciousconsciousness-and-publicprivate-ideological-performances.png.

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Map 4: 'The Caliphate 622-750', obtained via:
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Declaration of Caliphate 'Islamic State'

Obtained from : SITE Intelligence Group, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/isis-spokesman-declares-caliphate-rebrands-group-as-islamic-state.html>

The following is an English translation of the full transcript of a speech of IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani that was released on 29 June, 2014. The 34 minute speech, called "This Is The Promise of Allah", was posted on Twitter. Later, translated versions were published by the IS al-Hayat Media Center. The SITE Intelligence Group posted the English translation on their website:

This Is the Promise of Allah

Praise be to Allah, the Mighty and Strong. And may peace and blessings be upon the one sent with the sword as a mercy to all creation. As for what follows:

Allah (the Exalted) said: {Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that – then those are the defiantly disobedient} [An-Nūr:55].

Succession, establishment, and safety – a promise from Allah reserved for the Muslims, but with a condition. {They worship me [Allah] and do not associate anything with me} [An-Nūr: 55]. Having faith in Allah, keeping far from the gateways to shirk (polytheism) and its various shades, along with submitting to Allah's command in everything big and small, and giving Him the level of obedience that makes your lusts, inclinations, and desires to be in compliance with what the Prophet (peace be upon him) came with – only after this condition is met will the promise be fulfilled. For by fulfilling this condition comes the ability to build, reform, remove oppression, spread justice, and bring about safety and tranquility. Only by meeting this condition, will there be the succession, which Allah informed the angels about.

Without this condition being met, authority becomes nothing more than kingship, dominance and rule, accompanied with destruction, corruption, oppression, subjugation, fear, and the decadence of the human being and his descent to the level of animals. That is the reality of succession, which Allah created us for. It is not simply kingship, subjugation, dominance, and rule. Rather, succession is to utilize all that for the purpose of compelling the people to do what the Sharia (Allah's law) requires of them concerning their interests in the hereafter and worldly life, which can only be achieved by carrying out the command of Allah, establishing His religion, and referring to His law for judgment.

This succession, along with the aforementioned reality, is the purpose for which Allah sent His messengers and revealed His scriptures, and for which the swords of jihad were unsheathed.

Indeed, Allah (the Exalted) honored the ummah (nation) of Muhammad and blessed them. He made them the best ummah of all peoples.

{You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah} [Āl 'Imrān: 110].

And He promised to grant the ummah succession to authority.

{Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them} [An-Nūr: 55].

He also made leadership of the world and mastership of the earth for the ummah, as long as it fulfilled the condition: {They worship me [Allah] and do not associate anything with me} [An-Nūr: 55].

Allah (the Exalted) also gave honor to the ummah.

{And to Allah belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know} [Al-Munāfiqūn: 8].

Yes, honor is for this ummah. It is from the honor of Allah (the Exalted) – honor that mixes with the faith residing in the believer’s heart. Thus, if faith becomes firm in the heart, honor becomes firm along with it. It is honor that does not hunch, soften, or become disgraced regardless of how great the anguish and tribulation become. It is honor befitting the best ummah – the ummah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) – an ummah that does not accept submission to anyone or anything other than Allah. It does not accept transgression nor oppression.

{And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they defend themselves} [Ash-Shūrā: 39].

This is an honorable and noble ummah, which does not sleep and ignore grievance. It does not accept degradation.

{So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers} [Āl ‘Imrān:139].

It is a mighty and powerful ummah. How can it not be such, when Allah supports it and grants it victory? {That is because Allah is the protector of those who have believed and because the disbelievers have no protector} [Muhammad: 11].

This is the ummah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) which, whenever it is truthful with Allah, He brings about His promise for them.

Allah (the Exalted) sent His Prophet (peace be upon him), while the Arabs were in the depths of ignorance and blinding darkness. They were the most naked, the hungriest, and the most backwards of peoples, sinking in depths of lowness. No one cared about them or gave them any regard. They submitted in humiliation to Khosrau and Caesar, yielding to the conqueror.

Allah (the Exalted) said, {Although they were before in clear error} [Al-Jumu’ah: 2].

Allah (the Exalted) also said, {And remember when you were few and oppressed in the land, fearing that people might abduct you} [Al-Anfāl: 26].

Qatādah (may Allah have mercy upon him) said in explanation of this verse, “These clans of Arabs were the most disgraced, the hungriest, the most ignorant, and the most naked. They were people

who were eaten but did not eat. Whoever lived from them lived miserably. And whoever died from them fell into hellfire.” His words end here, may Allah have mercy upon him.

A group of the Sahābah (companions of the Prophet – peace be upon him) entered upon Khosrau Yazdajard on the day of the battle of al-Qādisiyyah to call him to Islam. He said to them, “I don’t know any nation on the earth that was more miserable, fewer in number, and more divided than you. We would entrust the people of the villages in the outskirts to hold you back. Persia did not wage war against you, nor did you ever hope to stand and face it.” So they were silenced. Then al-Mughīrah Ibn Shu’bah (may Allah be pleased with him) responded to him, saying, “As for what you’ve mentioned of our poor condition, then there was no condition poorer than ours. As for our hunger, then it was unlike any hunger. We used to eat scarabs, beetles, scorpions, and snakes. We considered such as food. As for our homes, then they were nothing but the surface of the earth. We did not use to wear anything except what we made from the fur of our camels and sheep. Our religion was to kill each other and oppress each other. One of us would bury his daughter alive, hating the thought that she would eat from his food.”

This was the condition of the Arabs before Islam. They were in dispute and broken up; they were dispersed and had infighting, striking each other’s necks, suffering hunger, lack of unity, and capture. Then, when Allah blessed them with Islam and they believed, Allah unified them, united their ranks, honored them after their humiliation, enriched them after their poverty, and brought their hearts together, all through Islam. Thus, by the grace of Allah, they became brothers.

Allah (the Exalted) said, {And He brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together} [Al-Anfāl: 63].

So the animosity and hatred they had for each other vanished from their hearts. They were united by faith, and piety became their measuring scale. They did not differentiate between an Arab and a non-Arab, nor between an easterner and a westerner, nor between a white person and a black person, nor between a poor person and a rich person. They abandoned nationalism and the calls of jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance), raised the flag of lā ilāha ill Allāh (there is no god but Allah) and carried out jihad in the path of Allah with truthfulness and sincerity. So Allah raised them through this religion and honored them by having them carry its message. He bestowed His grace on them, and made them the kings and masters of the world.

Our dear ummah – the best of peoples – Allah (the Exalted) decrees numerous victories for this ummah to occur in a single year, which He does not grant others in many years or even centuries. This ummah succeeded in ending two of the largest empires known to history in just 25 years, and then spent the treasures of those empires on jihad in the path of Allah. They put out the fire of the Magians (fireworshippers) forever, and they forced the noses of the cross-worshippers onto the ground with the most miserable of weapons and weakest of numbers. Ibn Abī Shaybah reported in “al-Musannaf” that Husayn reported that Abū Wā’il said that when Sa’d Ibn Abī Waqqas had arrived and rested at al-Qādisiyyah with the people, he said, “I’m not sure if we were more than 7 or 8 thousand or so. The mushrikīn (polytheists) were about 60 thousand or so. They had elephants with them. When they arrived, they said to us, ‘Go back [to your land], because we don’t see with you any numbers, strength, or arms. So go back.’ We answered them saying, ‘We will not go back.’ Then they started mocking our arrows saying, ‘Dūk, dūk,’ [a Persian word] comparing our arrows to spindles.”

Yes, my ummah, those barefoot, naked, shepherds who did not know good from evil, nor truth from falsehood, filled the earth with justice after it had been filled with oppression and tyranny, and ruled the world for centuries. This was neither through any means of strength that they possessed or numbers that they commanded, nor through their wisdom but rather, through their faith in Allah (the Exalted) and their adherence to the guidance of His Messenger (peace be upon him). O ummah of Muhammad (peace be upon him), you continue to be the best ummah and continue to have honor. Leadership will return to you. The God of this ummah yesterday is the same God of the ummah today, and the One who gave it victory yesterday is the One who will give it victory today.

The time has come for those generations that were drowning in oceans of disgrace, being nursed on the milk of humiliation, and being ruled by the vilest of all people, after their long slumber in the darkness of neglect – the time has come for them to rise. The time has come for the ummah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) to wake up from its sleep, remove the garments of dishonor, and shake off the dust of humiliation and disgrace, for the era of lamenting and moaning has gone, and the dawn of honor has emerged anew. The sun of jihad has risen. The glad tidings of good are shining. Triumph looms on the horizon. The signs of victory have appeared.

Here the flag of the Islamic State, the flag of tawhīd (monotheism), rises and flutters. Its shade covers land from Aleppo to Diyala. Beneath it, the walls of the tawāghīt (rulers claiming the rights of Allah) have been demolished, their flags have fallen, and their borders have been destroyed. Their soldiers are either killed, imprisoned, or defeated. The Muslims are honored. The kuffār (infidels) are disgraced. Ahlus-Sunnah (the Sunnis) are masters and are esteemed. The people of bid'ah (heresy) are humiliated. The hudūd (Sharia penalties) are implemented – the hudūd of Allah – all of them. The frontlines are defended.

Crosses and graves are demolished. Prisoners are released by the edge of the sword. The people in the lands of the State move about for their livelihood and journeys, feeling safe regarding their lives and wealth. Wulāt (plural of wālī or “governors”) and judges have been appointed. Jizyah (a tax imposed on kuffār) has been enforced. Fay' (money taken from the kuffār without battle) and zakat (obligatory alms) have been collected. Courts have been established to resolve disputes and complaints. Evil has been removed. Lessons and classes have been held in the masājid (plural of masjid) and, by the grace of Allah, the religion has become completely for Allah. There only remained one matter, a wājib kifā'ī (collective obligation) that the ummah sins by abandoning. It is a forgotten obligation. The ummah has not tasted honor since they lost it. It is a dream that lives in the depths of every Muslim believer. It is a hope that flutters in the heart of every mujāhid muwahhid (monotheist). It is the khilāfah (caliphate). It is the khilāfah – the abandoned obligation of the era.

Allah (the Exalted) said, {And mention when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a khalifah”} [Al-Baqarah: 30].

Imam al-Qurtubī said in his tafsīr (Quranic exegesis), “This verse is a fundamental basis for the appointment of a leader and khalīfah (caliph) who is listened to and obeyed so that the ummah is united by him and his orders are carried out. There is no dispute over this matter between the ummah nor between the scholars, except for what has been reported from al-Asamm [the meaning of his name is “the deaf man”], for his deafness prevented him from hearing the Sharia.” That ends his words, may Allah have mercy upon him.

Therefore, the *shūrā* (consultation) council of the Islamic State studied this matter after the Islamic State – by Allah’s grace – gained the essentials necessary for *khilāfah*, which the Muslims are sinful for if they do not try to establish. In light of the fact that the Islamic State has no *shar’ī* (legal) constraint or excuse that can justify delaying or neglecting the establishment of the *khilāfah* such that it would not be sinful, the Islamic State – represented by *ahlul-halli-wal-‘aqd* (its people of authority), consisting of its senior figures, leaders, and the *shūrā* council – resolved to announce the establishment of the Islamic *khilāfah*, the appointment of a *khalīfah* for the Muslims, and the pledge of allegiance to the *shaykh* (sheikh), the *mujāhid*, the scholar who practices what he preaches, the worshipper, the leader, the warrior, the reviver, descendent from the family of the Prophet, the slave of Allah, *Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Awwād Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Muhammad al-Badrī al-Hāshimī al-Husaynī al-Qurashī* by lineage, *as-Sāmurrā’ī* by birth and upbringing, *al-Baghdādī* by residence and scholarship. And he has accepted the *bay’ah* (pledge of allegiance). Thus, he is the imam and *khalīfah* for the Muslims everywhere. Accordingly, the “Iraq and Shām” in the name of the Islamic State is henceforth removed from all official deliberations and communications, and the official name is the Islamic State from the date of this declaration.

We clarify to the Muslims that with this declaration of *khilāfah*, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the *khalīfah* *Ibrāhīm* and support him (may Allah preserve him). The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations, becomes null by the expansion of the *khilāfah*’s authority and arrival of its troops to their areas. Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, as reported by *‘Abdūs Ibn Mālīk al-‘Attār*, “It is not permissible for anyone who believes in Allah to sleep without considering as his leader whoever conquers them by the sword until he becomes *khalīfah* and is called *Amīrul-Mu’minīn* (the leader of the believers), whether this leader is righteous or sinful.”

The *khalīfah* *Ibrāhīm* (may Allah preserve him) has fulfilled all the conditions for *khilāfah* mentioned by the scholars. He was given *bay’ah* in Iraq by the people of authority in the Islamic State as the successor to *Abū ‘Umar al-Baghdādī* (may Allah have mercy upon him). His authority has expanded over wide areas in Iraq and Shām. The land now submits to his order and authority from Aleppo to Diyala. So fear Allah, O slaves of Allah. Listen to your *khalīfah* and obey him. Support your state, which grows everyday – by Allah’s grace – with honor and loftiness, while its enemy increases in retreat and defeat.

So rush O Muslims and gather around your *khalīfah*, so that you may return as you once were for ages, kings of the earth and knights of war. Come so that you may be honored and esteemed, living as masters with dignity. Know that we fight over a religion that Allah promised to support. We fight for an *ummah* to which Allah has given honor, esteem, and leadership, promising it with empowerment and strength on the earth. Come O Muslims to your honor, to your victory. By Allah, if you disbelieve in democracy, secularism, nationalism, as well as all the other garbage and ideas from the west, and rush to your religion and creed, then by Allah, you will own the earth, and the east and west will submit to you. This is the promise of Allah to you. This is the promise of Allah to you.

{So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are believers} [Āl ‘Imrān: 139].

This is the promise of Allah to you.

{If Allah should aid you, no one can overcome you} [Āl ‘Imrān: 160].

This is the promise of Allah to you.

{So do not weaken and call for peace while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds} [Muhammad: 35].

This is the promise of Allah to you.

{Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them} [An-Nūr: 55].

So come to the promise of your Lord.

{Indeed, Allah does not fail in His promise} [Āl 'Imrān: 9]

And a message to all the platoons and groups on the face of the earth, consisting of mujahidin and people working to support the religion of Allah and raising the Islamic banners – a message to the heads and leaders of these groups – we say:

Fear Allah with regards to yourselves. Fear Allah with regards to your jihad. Fear Allah with regards to your ummah.

{O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims, and hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.} [Āl 'Imrān: 102-103].

We – by Allah – do not find any shar'ī (legal) excuse for you justifying your holding back from supporting this state. Take a stance on account of which Allah (the Exalted) will be pleased with you. The veil has been lifted and the truth has become clear. Indeed, it is the State. It is the state for the Muslims – the oppressed of them, the orphans, the widows, and the impoverished. If you support it, then you do so for your own good.

Indeed, it is the State. Indeed, it is the khilāfah. It is time for you to end this abhorrent partisanship, dispersion, and division, for this condition is not from the religion of Allah at all. And if you forsake the State or wage war against it, you will not harm it. You will only harm yourselves.

It is the State – the state for the Muslims. Sufficient for you should be what al-Bukhārī (may Allah have mercy upon him) reported from Mu'āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him). He said that he heard Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) say, "This matter is for Quraysh. No one opposes them regarding it except that Allah throws him down on his face, as long as they establish the religion."

As for you, O soldiers of the platoons and organizations, know that after this consolidation and the establishment of the khilāfah, the legality of your groups and organizations has become invalid. It is not permissible for a single person of you who believes in Allah to sleep without having walā' (loyalty) to the khalīfah. If your leaders whisper to you claiming it is not a khilāfah, then remember how long they whispered to you claiming that it was not a state but rather a fictional, cardboard entity, until its certain news reached you. It is a state. Its news will continue to reach you showing that it is a khilāfah, even if after time.

And know that nothing has delayed victory and delays it now more than these organizations, because they are the cause of division and disagreements that ruin strength. Division is not from Islam at all. {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects – you are not [associated] with them in anything. Their affair is only [left] to Allah; then He will inform them about what they used to do} [Al-An’ām: 159].

{[Adhere to the religion], turning in repentance to Him, and fear Him and establish prayer and do not be of those who associate others with Allah, [or] of those who have divided their religion and become sects, every faction rejoicing in what it has.} [Ar-Rūm: 31-32]

Know that your leaders will not find any arguments to keep you away from the jamā’ah (the body of Muslims united behind a Muslim leader), the khilāfah, and this great good, except for two false and weak excuses. The first excuse is the same matter they have accused it with before, that it is a state of khawārij (a sect that excommunicated Muslims for sins that do not warrant excommunication) and other accusations whose falseness has become apparent in the cities that are ruled by the State. Second, your leaders will assure both you and themselves saying, “This is just a gust of wind which will be extinguished, or a temporary whirlwind that will not last, and that the nations of kufr (disbelief) won’t allow it to remain, and they will gather against it so that it disappears quickly and soon. Those of its soldiers who survive will end up in mountaintops, caverns, deserts, and clandestine prisons. Thereafter we will have to return to the jihad of the elite. We cannot handle jihad of the elite far away from hotels, conferences, offices, lights, and cameras. We want to lead the ummah in the jihad of the ummah...”

So let those leaders be ruined. And let that “ummah” they want to unite be ruined – an “ummah” of secularists, democrats, and nationalists... an “ummah” of murji’ah (a sect that excludes deeds from faith), ikhwān (the “Muslim Brotherhood” party), and surūriyyah (a sect influenced by the ikhwān claiming to be Salafī).

{Satan promises them and arouses desire in them. But Satan does not promise them except delusion} [An-Nisā’: 120].

The State will remain, by Allah’s permission. Ask the parties in Iraq and their leaders. How much did they reassure themselves by claiming that the state would vanish. They were greater than your parties in power and greater in accumulation of wealth.

{Have they not traveled through the earth and observed how was the end of those before them? They were greater than them in power} [Ar-Rūm: 9]

As for you, O soldiers of the Islamic State, then congratulations to you. Congratulations on this clear victory, congratulations on this great triumph. Today the kāfirīn (infidels) are infuriated in such a manner after which there will be no similar infuriation. Many of them almost die from anger and sorrow. Today the believers rejoice with victory from Allah, feeling great happiness. Today the hypocrites are degraded. Today the rāfidah (shia), sahwāt (awakening councils), and murtaddīn (apostates) are humiliated. Today the tawāghīt in the east and west are frightened. Today the nations of kufr in the west are terrified. Today the flags of Shaytān (Satan) and his party have fallen. Today the flag of tawhīd rises with its people. Today the Muslims are honored. Today the Muslims are honored. Now the khilāfah has returned, humbling the necks of the enemy. Now the khilāfah has returned in spite of its opponents. Now the khilāfah has returned; we ask Allah (the Exalted) to make it to be upon the methodology of prophethood. Now hope is being

actualized. Now the dream has become a reality. Congratulations to you. You spoke and were truthful. You promised and kept to your word.

O soldiers of the Islamic State, it is from the great blessings of Allah upon you that He allowed you to reach this day and witness this victory, which did not arrive except by the grace of Allah (the Exalted) and then by the blood and corpses of thousands of your brothers who preceded you from the best of mankind. We consider them such and Allah is their judge, and we do not presume to know better than Him. They are those who carried this banner and under it sacrificed everything. They offered everything generously, even their souls, to pass on this great banner to you. Indeed, they did so. May Allah have mercy upon them and reward them with every good on behalf of Islam. So protect this great trust. Raise this banner with strength. Water it with your blood. Raise it upon your corpses. Die under it, until you pass it on – if Allah wills – to ‘Īsā (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary), peace be upon him.

O soldiers of the Islamic State, Allah (the Exalted) ordered us with jihad and promised us with victory but He did not make us responsible for victory. Indeed, Allah (the Exalted) blessed you today with this victory, thus we announced the khilāfah in compliance with the order of Allah (the Exalted). We announced it because – by Allah’s grace – we have its essentials. By Allah’s permission, we are capable of establishing the khilāfah. So we carry out the order of Allah (the Exalted) and we are justified – if Allah wills – and we do not care thereafter what happens, even if we only remain for one day or one hour, and to Allah belongs the matter before and after. If Allah (the Exalted) causes the khilāfah to remain and gain strength, then such is by His grace and bounty alone, for victory is only from Him. And if it vanishes and weakens, then know that such is from ourselves and because of our deeds.

We will defend it – if Allah wills – as long as it exists and as long as one of us remains, and [if it vanishes]

we will bring it back – if Allah wills – upon the methodology of prophethood.

Whoever has the loftiest height as his own ambition,

Then everything he faces will be beloved. [Poetry]

O soldiers of the Islamic State, you will be facing malāhim (fierce battles) that cause the children’s hair to become grey. You will be facing fitan (tribulations) and hardships of many different colors. You will be facing tests and quakes. No one will survive them except he whom Allah grants mercy. No one will be firm during these fitan except one whom Allah keeps firm. The worst of these fitan is that of the dunyā (worldly life). So be wary of competing over it. Be wary. Remember the greatest responsibility that is now on your backs. You are now the defenders of the land of Islam and its guards. You will not be able to preserve this trust and defend this land, except by fearing Allah secretly and publically, then by sacrificing, being patient, and offering blood.

I am amazed by those who possess the stature of men and the sharpness of arrows,
Yet their command is not made nor executed.

I am amazed by those who find the path to lofty heights,

Yet do not traverse the path, wearing it down until no mounds are left.

And I have not found a fault in people like that of those

Who are capable of completing their effort, but instead abort it. [Poetry]

Also know that one of the biggest factors that brought about this victory that Allah (the Exalted) has blessed you with is your support of each other, the absence of disagreement, your listening to and obedience of your leaders, and your patience with them. So keep this factor in mind and

preserve it. Unite with each other and do not disagree with each other. Accept each other and do not argue with each other. Be very wary of breaking the ranks. For you to be snatched by birds would be better for you than to break the ranks or take part in doing so. And if anyone wants to break the ranks, split his head with bullets and empty its insides, whoever he may be.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “And whoever pledges allegiance to a leader giving his hand in oath with the sincerity of his heart, then he must obey him when he can. If someone else comes and tries to dispute with the leader [over leadership] then strike the neck of the latter.” This was reported by Muslim.

On the authority of Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) and Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever obeys me has obeyed Allah, and whoever disobeys me has disobeyed Allah. Whoever obeys the leader has obeyed me, and whoever disobeys the leader has disobeyed me. Indeed the leader is a shield. Behind him fighting is carried out, and by him [the people] are defended. So if he orders the people to fear Allah and he is just, then he is rewarded. And if he orders with anything else, then he will be held accountable for that.” This was reported by al-Bukhārī.

O soldiers of the Islamic State, there is one more matter that I wish to call your attention to. They will look for something to criticize and will attempt to raise misconceptions. So if they ask you, “How can you announce the khilāfah when the ummah has not rallied behind you? For your authority is not accepted by the groups, factions, detachments, brigades, corps, banners, sects, parties, assemblies, councils, institutions, coordination teams, leagues, coalitions, armies, fronts, movements, and organizations.” Then say to them,

{But they will not cease to differ except whom your Lord has given mercy} [Hūd: 118-119].

They have never united on a single issue, nor will they ever unite on any issue except for those whom Allah has mercy upon. Furthermore, the Islamic State will bring together those who want unity.

If they tell you, “You have stepped over them and acted on your own judgment. Why did you not consult the other groups, pardon them, and tolerate them?” Then say to them, “The issue is too urgent.”

{And I hastened to You, my Lord, that You be pleased} [Tāhā: 84].

And say to them, “Whom would we consult? They never recognized the Islamic State to begin with, although America, Britain and France acknowledge its existence. Whom would we consult? Should we consult those who have abandoned us? Those who have betrayed us? Those who have disowned us and incited against us? Those who have become hostile towards us? Those who wage war against us? Whom would we consult, and whom did we step over?”

Indeed the difference between me and my brothers and cousins is very big.

They do not come to my aid, but if they called me for help I would come to their rescue. [Poetry]

And if they tell you, “We do not accept your authority”. Then say to them, “We had the ability to establish the khilāfah, by the grace of Allah, so it became an obligation for us to do so. Therefore, we hastened in adherence to the command of Allah (the Exalted):

{It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter,

that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair} [Al-Ahzāb: 36].

And say to them, “We spilled rivers of our blood to water the seeds of the khilāfah, laid its foundation with our skulls, and built its tower over our corpses. We were patient for years in the face of being killed, imprisoned, having our bones broken and our limbs severed. We drank all sorts of bitterness, dreaming of this day. Would we delay it for even a moment after having reached it?”

And say to them,

We took it forcibly at the point of a blade.

We brought it back conquered and compelled.

We established it in defiance of many.

And the people’s necks were violently struck,

With bombings, explosions, and destruction,

And soldiers that do not see hardship as being difficult,

And lions that are thirsty in battle,

Having greedily drunk the blood of kufr.

Our khilāfah has indeed returned with certainty

And likewise our state, becoming a firm structure.

And the breasts of the believers have been healed,

While the hearts of kufr have been filled with terror. [Poetry]

In conclusion, we congratulate the Muslims on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan. We ask Allah (the Exalted) to make it a month of victory, honor, and consolidation for the Muslims, and make its days and its nights a curse for the rāfidah, the sahwāt, and the murtaddīn.

{And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know.} [Yūsuf: 21]

Appendix 2: The Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916

Appendix 2A: The Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916 Official Text

Obtained from: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp

It is accordingly understood between the French and British governments:

That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab states or a confederation of Arab states (a) and (b) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

That in the blue area France, and in the red area Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

That in the brown area there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other allies, and the representatives of the Shereef of Mecca.

That Great Britain be accorded (1) the ports of Haifa and Acre, (2) guarantee of a given supply of water from the Tigris and Euphrates in area (a) for area (b). His Majesty's government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time enter into negotiations for the cession of Cyprus to any third power without the previous consent of the French government.

That Alexandretta shall be a free port as regards the trade of the British empire, and that there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards British shipping and British goods; that there shall be freedom of transit for British goods through Alexandretta and by railway through the blue area, or (b) area, or area (a); and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against British goods on any railway or against British goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That Haifa shall be a free port as regards the trade of France, her dominions and protectorates, and there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards French shipping and French goods. There shall be freedom of transit for French goods through Haifa and by the British railway through the brown area, whether those goods are intended for or originate in the blue area, area (a), or area (b), and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against French goods on any railway, or against French goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That in area (a) the Baghdad railway shall not be extended southwards beyond Mosul, and in area (b) northwards beyond Samarra, until a railway connecting Baghdad and Aleppo via the Euphrates valley has been completed, and then only with the concurrence of the two governments.

That Great Britain has the right to build, administer, and be sole owner of a railway connecting Haifa with area (b), and shall have a perpetual right to transport troops along such a line at all times. It is to be understood by both governments that this railway is to facilitate the connection of Baghdad with Haifa by rail, and it is further understood that, if the engineering difficulties and expense entailed by keeping this connecting line in the brown area only make the project unfeasible, that the French government shall be prepared to consider that the line in question may also traverse the Polgon Baniyas Keis Marib Salkhad tell Otsda Mesmie before reaching area (b).

For a period of twenty years the existing Turkish customs tariff shall remain in force throughout the whole of the blue and red areas, as well as in areas (a) and (b), and no increase in the rates of

duty or conversions from ad valorem to specific rates shall be made except by agreement between the two powers.

There shall be no interior customs barriers between any of the above mentioned areas. The customs duties leviable on goods destined for the interior shall be collected at the port of entry and handed over to the administration of the area of destination.

It shall be agreed that the French government will at no time enter into any negotiations for the cession of their rights and will not cede such rights in the blue area to any third power, except the Arab state or confederation of Arab states, without the previous agreement of his majesty's government, who, on their part, will give a similar undertaking to the French government regarding the red area.

The British and French government, as the protectors of the Arab state, shall agree that they will not themselves acquire and will not consent to a third power acquiring territorial possessions in the Arabian peninsula, nor consent to a third power installing a naval base either on the east coast, or on the islands, of the red sea. This, however, shall not prevent such adjustment of the Aden frontier as may be necessary in consequence of recent Turkish aggression.

The negotiations with the Arabs as to the boundaries of the Arab states shall be continued through the same channel as heretofore on behalf of the two powers.

It is agreed that measures to control the importation of arms into the Arab territories will be considered by the two governments.

I have further the honor to state that, in order to make the agreement complete, his majesty's government are proposing to the Russian government to exchange notes analogous to those exchanged by the latter and your excellency's government on the 26th April last. Copies of these notes will be communicated to your excellency as soon as exchanged. I would also venture to remind your excellency that the conclusion of the present agreement raises, for practical consideration, the question of claims of Italy to a share in any partition or rearrangement of turkey in Asia, as formulated in article 9 of the agreement of the 26th April, 1915, between Italy and the allies.

His Majesty's government further consider that the Japanese government should be informed of the arrangements now concluded.

Appendix 2A: The Sykes Picot Agreement 1916 Map

Obtained from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/MPK1-426_Sykes_Picot_Agreement_Map_signed_8_May_1916.jpg

