# THE PRINCIPLES OF ISIS'S IDEOLOGY: AN ACADEMIC DEBATE

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**Abstract:**

Since the terrorist attack on 9/11 in the United States, the world sees a superfluity of contributions to the academic debate on the shifting character of terrorism. Huntington argued the new actors in international conflicts are no longer nation-states but civilization. He defines this concept as the highest cultural grouping of people (…) defined both by common objective elements (language, history, religion, customs, institutions) and by the subjective self-identification of people. ISIS is the latest version of terrorism has all of the characteristics of a state without international recognition and legitimacy. From 15 May 2010 to October 26, 2019, ISIS had been led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who spent five years in American captivity in the Bucca prison in Iraq. On 5 July 2014, he declared himself as the first caliph of a newly created Islamic Caliphate, known as the Islamic State. Within a short period, ISIS captured a large part of Iraq and Syria and then Baghdadi proclaimed himself with the acronym "Caliph Ibrahim." Current research intends to evaluate the ideology of ISIS and tries to find out the factors that influenced Muslim youths around the world to join the group. The study has applied a qualitative research methodology by collecting data from content review; this includes books, scholarly articles, newspapers, and periodicals. For the reason that statistics would probably not be the answer to understanding beliefs and ideologies, qualitative data would better serve the purpose of this paper. The information will be largely dependent on an examination of scholarly sources that have provided analysis on jihadism in Islam as well as the political situation in Iraq and Syria that had led to the rapid rise of ISIS. The paper concludes by arguing that the extremist ideology of ISIS is a synthesis of counter-terror policy implications and the group's ideology was rejected by Muslim scholars around the world.

**Keywords:** ISIS, Ideology, Salafism, Wahhabism, Terrorism

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## 1. Introduction

ISIS[ii] first came into existence during the aftermath of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. In its early days, it was one of the many Sunni extremist groups fighting U.S. forces and attacking Iraqi Shiite civilians. It called itself AQI (Al-Qaeda in Iraq) and it was led by Abu Musab Zarqawi, who had pledged his allegiance to Bin Laden. After the U.S. killed Zarqawi in 2006, AQI was nearly eradicated. (Anjarini, November 1, 2013) However, the group managed to restore itself in U.S.-run prisons in Iraq, with Abu Bakr Baghdadi, ISIS' self-proclaimed "caliph," establishing himself as the leader of the group.[iii] (Cronin, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015) After Syria descended into civil war and chaos in 2011, ISIS took advantage of the opportunity and crossed the border, seized territories, and rebranded itself as the group. (Anjarini, November 1, 2013) ISIS grew even stronger in Iraq as sectarian strife intensified and the central government in Baghdad weakened. (Cronin, 2015) On 29 June 2014, (Al Jazeera, 30 June 2014) following rapid territorial gains, which included the capture of Mosul on 10 June ISIS, declared the revival of the Caliphate,[iv] naming it the Islamic State and Abu Bakr as Caliph Ibrahim.[v] After doing so, it began marketing itself on a global scale with recruits from all over the world traveling to Syria to fight with ISIS. The popular uprising against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and the later Syrian civil war gave ISIS new ground for further expansion. The group effectively recruited new fighters as many young Syrians were angered and frustrated by what they felt was prejudiced treatment by President Bashar al-Assad and his regime. Baghdadi and his force never pursued a policy of bringing all Muslims under one rule. ISIS strives to enforce an extremist Wahhabi and Salafi-inspired interpretation of sharia and Islamic law. This specific definition of Islam and its tenets is central to their rhetoric when recruiting from other countries. All of the Muslim leaders opposed ISIS's extremist ideology and recognized its activities are not Islamic. So what the basics of ISIS's ideology? Why they claim themselves as "Islamic State?" why they prefer extremism to expand their authority? To provide answers to these questions, the paper tries to address Ideological debate: goals, actors and impact on the region as well as in world politics. The central question of the current research is what is the ideology of ISIS?

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[ii] ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (Greater Syria), ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), IS (Islamic State) or DAISH (Al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham). The group was established in 2004 in Iraq as a division of Al Qaeda and was rebranded as ISIS. The founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi ruled the Iraqi branch of Al Qaeda for many years. His methods were more brutal than those of Al Qaeda and often resulted in conflict with its central leadership. He was killed in an American airstrike in 2006, leaving a legacy of well-equipped Jihadi fighters with military expertise on the battleground.

[iii] Caliphs among Muslims are seen as political successors to the Prophet Muhammad. After Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 the first caliphate, a political-religious state comprising the Muslim community and people under its dominion, was created. Baghdadi, taking same the title, tried to communicate that he was extending the same message, and line of succession, that began at the time of Prophet.

[iv] The last Caliphate, run by the Ottoman Empire, was dissolved by the Turkish Government in 1924.

[v] In his first address as Caliph on 4 July, Abu Bakr argued that as soon as Muslims controlled territory that was administered according to Islamic law (sharia), they had an obligation to declare a Caliphate.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Ideology

Drake argued ideologies are "*the beliefs, values, principles, and objectives-however ill-defined or tenuous-by which a group defines its distinctive political identity and aims.*" (Drake, 1998: 54-55) More to the point, ideologies are "*links between thoughts, beliefs and myths on the one hand, and action on the other hand.*" (Moghadam, 2008: 14) Modern ideologies fulfill four fundamental functions: they raise awareness, diagnose the situation, form an identity, and formulate a remedy. (Ibid) All of them can be applied to the ideology of ISIS. The ideology of ISIS can be described as Salafi-Jihad (Ibid) or jihadist Salafism, the combination of "*respect for the sacred texts in their most literal form (with) an absolute commitment to jihad.*" (Kepel, 2002: 220) In its spirit, Salafi-Jihad contends that the Muslim world is suffering from a plot by the West, therefore, it advocates the return to the practices and beliefs of the first three-generation of Muslims, the Salaf al-Salih (pious ancestors), by means of violent jihad. (Moghadam, 2008-2009) The dogma can be summed up as taking "*a fundamentalist approach to Islam, emulating the Prophet Muhammad and his earliest followers-al-salaf al-salih, the 'pious forefathers'... They reject religious innovation, or bid'ah, and support the implementation of sharia (Islamic law).*" (The Economist, 27 June 2015) The movement is often classified into three groups: the first and largest group is the purists (or quietists), who do not involve in politics; the second largest group is the activists, who get involved in politics; the smallest group is the jihadists, who form a small minority. (Ibid) The terms "*Salafist jihadist*" and "*Jihadist-Salafism*" were coined by scholar Gilles Kepel in 2002 to describe "*a hybrid Islamist ideology*" developed by international Islamist volunteers in the Afghan anti-Soviet jihad who had become isolated from their social and national class origins. (Kepel, 2002: 219-22) In the 1990s, extremist Jihadists of the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya were active in the attacks on police, government officials and tourists in Egypt, and the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria was a main group in the Algerian Civil War. (Ibid) While Salafism had next to no presence in Europe in the 1980s, by the mid-2000s, Salafist jihadists had acquired "*a burgeoning presence in Europe, having attempted more than 30 terrorist attacks among EU countries since 2001.*" (Livesey, January 25, 2005) Even though many see the influence and activities of Salafi jihadists as in decay after 2000 (Sageman, April 30, 2013; Mearsheimer, January-February 2014), others see the movement as growing in the wake of the Arab Spring and breakdown of state control in Libya and Syria. (Jones, 2014: ix-xiii) The Salafi movement is often described as being synonymous with Wahhabism, but Salafists consider the term "Wahhabi" derogatory.[vi] At other times, Salafism has been defined as a hybrid of Wahhabism and other movements of post-1960s. (Lacroix, 2008) *Wahhabism* is named after an eighteenth-century preacher and scholar, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). (Ahmed) He started a revivalist movement in the remote, sparsely populated region of Najd (Commins, 2006: 7), advocating a purging of practices such as the popular

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[vi] For example, the Ahl-i Hadith which "have been active since the nineteenth century on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan ... though designated as Wahhabis by their adversaries ... prefer to call themselves 'Salafis.'" (Volk, 1994: 118-9)

"*cult of saints*," and shrine and tomb visitation, widespread amid Muslims, but which he deliberated idolatry (shirk), impurities and innovations in Islam (bid'ah). (Global Security, April 27, 2005) Finally, he formed a pact with Muhammad bin Saud, a local leader, offering political compliance and promising that protection and propagation of the Wahhabi movement mean "*power and glory*" and rule of "*lands and men*." (Lacey, 2009: 10-11) The movement is centered on the principle of Tawhid (Glasse, 2001: 469-472), or the "*uniqueness*" and "*unity*" of God. The movement also draws from the teachings of medieval theologian Ibn Taymiyyah and early jurist Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Wahhabism has been accused of being "*a source of global terrorism*," (Haider, July 22, 2013) inspiring the ideology of ISIS (Cockburn, 2014: P-6), and for causing disunity in Muslim communities by labeling Muslims who disagreed with the Wahhabi definition of monotheism as apostates (Commins, 2006: VI) (takfir), thus paving the way for their execution for apostasy. (Blanchard, January 24, 2008) It has also been criticized for the destruction of historic mazaars, mausoleums, and other Muslim and non-Muslim buildings and artifacts. (Thaler, 2004: 103, note 60) The "*boundaries*" of what makeup Wahhabism has been called "*difficult to pinpoint*," (Ibrahim, August 11, 2002) but in contemporary usage, the terms Wahhabi and Salafi are frequently used interchangeably, and considered to be movements with diverse roots that have merged since the 1960s. (Dillon, September 2009: 3-4) But Wahhabism has also been called "*a particular orientation within Salafism*," (Global Security) or an ultra-conservative, Saudi brand of Salafism. (Esposito, July 13, 2011: 54)

## 2.2 Terrorism

Terrorism comes from the French word terrorisme, and originally referred specifically to state terrorism as practiced by the French government during 1793-1794 Reignof Terror. Although "terrorism" firstly referred to actions committed by a government, presently it usually mentions to the killing of innocent people for political purposes in such a way as to create a spectacle. In November 2004, a Secretary-General of the United Nations report termed terrorism as any act "*intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.*" Terrorist action is "*the use of violence by an organization other than a national government.*" However, as some argued, ISIS has all the structure and trappings of a nation-state except the international recognition and the group even defines itself as a state. On the other hand, some argue that terrorism can also be "*a tactic that states use*" on some occasions.

## 3. Literature Review

Dermer (2014) argued that, ISIS has exploited the disillusionment prevailing in Sunni-dominant areas, especially in Anbar and Mosul, to intensify anti-Maliki sentiments after the failure of the Iraqi government to ensure a smooth transition for the former Sons of Iraq to be integrated into the Iraqi army and police has left them feeling marginalized once again. Gulmohamad (2014) claims the cause of the resurgence of ISIS is the role of Assad's regime as a patron sponsoring and furthering their interests in Iraq. In spite of

being anti-Assad, some has claimed that ISIS is cooperating with al-Assad in secret oil deals; there is a consensus in this camp involving the SNC (The Syrian National Council) and the Arab Gulf States that the Syrian regime is facilitating ISIS activities because of their control over oil fields and their discernible importance in impeding moderate rebel movements in Syria.

According to Warrick (2014) the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 and the Syrian Civil War also gave ISIS the momentum to launch its offensive in both countries by giving it safe havens and the ambition to train and recruit jihadists in the region by taking advantage of the political vacuum and chaos provided by these two concurrent events; these two events have been postulated by some as the reasons for the rise of ISIS to power. Patrick Cockburn (2015) presents a more realistic story of the rise of ISIS in his latest work, The Rise of the Islamic State. Rather than being an unanticipated event, it is seen to be a rational progression of events back grounded by the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He accomplishes the rise of ISIS with modest triumph, focusing predominantly on Iraq and Nouri al-Maliki's role in failing to avert and eventually contributing to the group's advance. He traces ISIS's initial stage to the rise of AQI under Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the mid-'00s, throughout a period noticeable by Maliki's increasing grip on power and the country's swift descent into chaos. McCants (2015) details how IS revived pointing to three key features; (a) More trustworthy leadership-the new Emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and former Colonel in Saddam Hussein's army, Hajji Bakr, (b) Events in Syria played into ISIS hands giving it a powerful base and allowing the break with AQ, (c) IS's proclamation in 2014 of the re-establishment of the caliphate, this inspired many Muslims around the world to fight under the ISIS, leading to an likely 20,000 foreign fighters under the black banner. Cole Bunzel (2015) argued that ISIS' ideology should be understood on two levels. The first level is the school of Islamic political thought which belongs to Jihadi-Salafism. The IS, like al-Qaeda, recognizes with a movement in Islamic political thought familiar as Jihadi-Salafism for short. The second level is the IS's hardline orientation within this school, which is to a large degree what divides it from al-Qaeda in our day. John L Esposito (2015) claims ISIS offers a new and unique militant Salafi ideology/religious rationale to justify, recruit, legitimate and motivate many of its fighters to achieve its goals. Baghdadi had mythologized and reinvented his idiosyncratic brand of Islam to legitimate, recruit and mobilize fighters for his military ideological movement. He had blended politics and religion into a more broad religious ideology, with its slogans, symbols and discourse and promoted it through social media and to a degree that neither AQ nor any other Islamist movement has done in present times. Baghdadi's Islam is religiously and organizationally monolithic, authoritarian and exclusivist: *"One leader, One authority, One mosque: submit to it, or be killed."*

## 3.1 The Ideological Debate of ISIS

The ideology of ISIS, which controls territory primarily in Iraq and Syria, has been described as being based on Salafism, Salafi Jihadism. (Bunzel, March 2015) The group's leaders explicitly adhere to this movement. For instance, in a 2007 audio talk, then-IS leader Abu Umar al-Baghdadi appealed *"to all Sunnis, and to the young men of Jihadi-*

*Salafism (al-Salafiyya al-Jihadiyya) in particular, across the entire world."* (Ibid: 7) Later his deputy defined the IS's combatants as part of *"the current of Jihadi-Salafism."* (Ibid) On July 21, 2012, leader of the IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi stated, *"My dear (Muslim) community: As we did not lie against God when we announced the Islamic State, so we do not lie against God when we say that it will persist…It will persist upon its creed ('aqida) and its path (manhaj), and it has not, nor will it ever, substitute or abandon these."* (Ibid) The group's ideology defined also on Islamism (BBC News, 2 December 2015) and Wahhabism. (Crooke, October 27, 2014) Important doctrines of ISIS include its belief that it represents the restoration of the caliphate of early Islam, and that all Muslims are required to pledge allegiance to it; (Speckhard, August 29, 2014) that a *"defiled"* Islam must be purged of apostasy, often with bloody sectarian killings. (Crooke, August 30, 2014) The final Day of Judgment by God is near and will follow the defeat of the army of "Rome" by ISIS; (Wood, 15 February 2015) that a strict adherence to following the precepts *"established by the Prophet Muhammad and his earliest followers"* is necessary, surpassing even that of other Salafi groups. (Ibid) The Guardian defines the ISIS's ideology as *"generally viewed as identical to al-Qaida's or the Saudi version of Salafism-adherence to fundamental Islamic tenets."* (Hassan, 25 January 2015) USA Today writes that "The Islamic State is a group of Sunni militants" that *"believes in the strict enforcement of Sharia law."* (Lee, August 30, 2014) According to some observers, ISIS arose from the belief of the Muslim Brotherhood, the first post-Ottoman Islamist group dating back to the late 1920s in Egypt. (Hussain, June 30, 2014)

In a conversation with a Western journalist (Thomas L. Friedman), a deputy crown prince of Saudi Arabia (Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud), described ISIS's message to Saudi and other Arab Muslims as: *"The West is trying to enforce its agenda on you-and the Saudi government is helping them-and Iran is trying to colonize the Arab world. So, we-ISIS-are defending Islam."* (Friedman, November 25, 2015) ISIS follows the hard-line philosophy of al-Qaeda and many other modern-day jihadist groups and adheres to worldwide jihadist ethics. (National Security) However, other sources trace the group's roots to Wahhabism. The New York Times wrote: *"For their guiding principles, the leaders of the Islamic State...are open and clear about their almost exclusive commitment to the Wahhabi movement of Sunni Islam. The group circulates images of Wahhabi religious textbooks from Saudi Arabia in the schools it controls. Videos from the group's territory have shown Wahhabi texts plastered on the sides of an official missionary van."* (Kirkpatrick, 24 September 2014)

By rejecting all innovations in the religion, which ISIS believes corrupts its original spirit; the group aims to return to the early days of Islam. It condemns later caliphates and the Ottoman Empire for deviating from what it calls pure Islam (Fernholz, July 01, 2014), and seeks to revive the original Wahhabi project of the re-establishment of the caliphate ruled by strict Salafist doctrine. Following the Salafi-Wahhabi tradition, ISIS condemns the followers of secular law as disbelievers, putting the current Saudi government in that category. (Al-Ibrahim, March 06, 2015) According to The Economist, dissidents in the ISIS capital of Al-Raqqah report that *"all 12 of the judges who now run its court system...are Saudis."* *"Saudi Wahhabi practices also followed by the group include the establishment of religious police to root out "vice" and enforce attendance at salat prayers, the widespread use of capital punishment, and the destruction or re-purposing of any non-Sunni*

*religious buildings*." (The Economist, 20 September 2014) Bernard Haykel has defined al-Baghdadi's religious belief as "*a kind of untamed Wahhabism*." (Kirkpatrick, 2014) Alastair Crooke narrates ISIS as implementing Wahhabi "*puritanism*," but rejecting the "*Saudi Kingdom any legitimacy as founders of a State, as the head of the Mosque, or as interpreter of the Qur'an. All these attributes ISIS takes for itself*." (Crooke, 2014)

Dr. Arya A. Amirie said, "*ISIS is strongly influenced by the teachings of 18th century Saudi scholar and radical spokesman, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab*". The Wahhabi movement and ISIS both follow an extremist interpretation of Islam and aim to "*purify*" Islam of all its flaws by executing the "*infidels*" and "*nonbelievers*." (Amirie, October 28, 2015) ISIS's ideology of implementing an Islamic state finds its roots in the caliphate. Indeed, their violence against people that are not from the same civilization or even the same religious group within Islam can be understood by their objective to re-implement an Islamic state composed by all the Sunnis on earth. Their goal is the creation of an Islamic Sunnite state and the repression of the other religions to extend their domination and territories. (Alexandre, 11 November 2015) Cole Bunzel summarizes the doctrines of ISIS thus: "*All Muslims must be associated exclusively with fellow "true" Muslims and disassociate with anyone not fitting the definition of "true" Muslims (ISIS considers as "true" Muslim only those who adhere to its Jihadi-Salafism interpretation of Islam). Failure to rule in accordance with God's law constitutes unbelief. Fighting the Islamic State is tantamount to apostasy. All Shia Muslims are apostates deserving of death.*" (Bunzel, March 2015)

Since June 2014 ISIS has executed more than 10,000 men, women and children in Iraq and Syria. (Joshi, 24 September 2015) ISIS has been noted for what some have called "*appalling*" (Wright, June 16, 2014) or "*horrifying*" brutality (McCoy, August 12, 2014), its release of videos and photographs of beheadings, shootings, and caged prisoners being burnt alive or submerged gradually until drowned. (Greg & Veljkovic, August 13, 2015) Among other effects, the group's mass killings and publicizing of them led to a split between it and Al Qaeda. (Wright, June 16, 2014) According to some analysts, ISIS's violence is "*not some whimsical, crazed fanaticism, but a very deliberate, considered strategy*." (Crooke, 2014) They often quote a 2004 work published online entitled *Management of Savagery* (Idarat at Tawahoush), (Naji, 23 May 2006) which is described by several journalists and analysts as influential to ISIS (McCoy, August 12, 2014; Crooke, 2014; Hassan, 8 February 2015), and intended to provide a strategy to create a new Islamic caliphate. (Wright, 2014) Management of Savagery asserts that "*one who previously engaged in jihad knows that it is nothing but violence, crudeness, terrorism, deterrence and massacring*." (Negus, April 1, 2015) While "*savage chaos*" is unpleasant it has to be remembered that even "*the most abominable of the levels of savagery*" is better "*than stability under the order of unbelief*," i.e. any regime other than ISIS. (McCoy, August 12, 2014; Atran & Hamid, 16 November 2015) One observer has described ISIS's publicizing of its mass executions and killing of civilians as part of "*a conscious plan designed to instill among believers a sense of meaning that is sacred and sublime, while scaring the hell out of fence-sitters and enemies*." (Atran & Hamid, 16 November 2015) Another defines its motive as to "*break*" psychologically those under its rule "*so as to ensure their absolute allegiance through fear and intimidation*," while generating "*outright hate and vengeance*" by its rivals. (Reardon, 6 July

2015) ISIS has sought to justify sexual violence claiming that Islam permits sex with non-Muslim "*slaves*," including girls, as well as beating and selling them. (Dabiq, 2014)

A question-and-answer document, issued by what appears to be ISIS's Research and Fatwa Department, states: *"It is permissible to buy, sell, or give as a gift female captives and slaves, for they are merely property, which can be disposed of….It is permissible to have intercourse with the female slave who hasn't reached puberty if she is fit for intercourse; however, if she is not fit for intercourse, then it is enough to enjoy her without intercourse… It is permissible to beat the female slave as a (form of) darb ta'deeb (disciplinary beating."* (Memri, December 4, 2014) In October 2014, in its magazine Dabiq, ISIS admitted that it provided caught Yezidi women and girls to fighters as "*spoils of war*." Survivors who succeeded to escape from ISIS say the women held in its prison in Mosul face two fortunes: Those who convert to Islam are sold as wives to fighters for prices as low as $25, and ranging up to $150. Those who do not convert face daily rape and slow death. (Sypher, April 14, 2017) ISIS publishes material directed at women although women are not allowed to take up arms, media groups encourage them to play supportive roles within ISIS, such as providing first aid, cooking, nursing and sewing skills, to become "*good wives of jihad*". (Saul, 31 October 2014)

A document entitled *Women in the Islamic State: Manifesto and Case Study*, released 23 January 2015 by the media wing of ISIS's all-female Al-Khanssaa Brigade, (issued in Arabic and not translated by ISIS but by an anti-Islamist Quilliam Foundation (Winter, 5 February 2015) emphasized the paramount importance of marriage and motherhood (as early as nine-years-old) for women. Women should live a life of "*sedentariness*," fulfilling their "*divine duty of motherhood*" at home: "*Yes, we say 'stay in your houses,' .....*" (Winter, 5 February 2015; Jamal, 8 March 2015) Under "*exceptional circumstances*," women may leave home-doctors, teachers, women studying Islam are exempt from confinement, as are women if they are needed to fight jihad and ordered to do so by religious authority when there are not sufficient men around to defend the country from enemy attack. (Ibid) In education, the document writer envisages a system where girls complete their formal schooling by age 15. Women are incited to study, provided the content is not "*worldly*" learning, but spiritual, for example, Shari'ah, (Islamic law). "*Women are not presented with a true picture of man,*" and men have become emasculated. (Winter, 5 February 2015) Parity for women is criticized for the reason that "*Women gain nothing from the idea of their equality with men apart from thorns ...Under 'equality' they have to work and rest on the same days as men even though they have 'monthly complications' and pregnancies and so on, in spite of the nature of her life and responsibilities to their husband, sons and religion.*" (Jamal, 8 March 2015)

Sunni critics such as Adnan al-Aroor and Abu Basir al-Tartusi say that ISIS and related terrorist groups have stepped outside the mainstream of Islam-serving an imperial anti-Islamic agenda, they are not Sunnis but modern-day Khawarij-Muslims. (Paraszczuk, February 7, 2014; the Economist, September 6, 2014) Graeme Wood has noted the importance of the "*governing precepts that were embedded in Islam by the Prophet Muhammad and his earliest followers,*" from which ISIS asserts it "*cannot waver*." "*Virtually every major decision and law promulgated by the Islamic State adheres to what it calls, in its press and pronouncements, and on its billboards, license plates, stationery, and coins, "the Prophetic methodology,*" which means following the prophecy and example of Muhammad, in punctilious*

*detail."* (Wood, 15 February 2015) While other jihadis are Salafist in doctrine, ISIS has been more exacting in following early practices by *"embrac(ing) slavery and crucifixion without apology,"* as well as a jizya tax on Christians. (Ibid) An American Muslim scholar based in Berkeley, Calif., Sheikh Hamza Yusuf has pleaded with Muslims not to be swindled by the *"stupid young boys"* of the IS. Millions have observed excerpts from his homily titled "The Crisis of ISIS," in which he wept as he asked God not to accuse other Muslims *"for what these fools amongst us do."* (Yusuf, September 19, 2014) Sheikh Yasir Qadhi, Tennessee based Muslim scholar, runs a popular Islamic educational institute, said, *"None of our senior scholars of any school-any school-has justified these deeds. The terrorist attacks of recent years had violated Islamic teaching because they "cause more harm than good," bringing more bombs, more drones and more chaos to Muslim communities. Who has benefited? Please use the intelligence that Allah gave you. These radical groups have harmed the image of Islam infinitely more than all of the foreign policy of Western lands combined."* (Laurie, May 8, 2016) 126 Muslim theologians and intellectuals addressed the head of the IS in an open letter, articulately condemning the movement of practices that have nothing to do with Islam, even rebuffing the fanatics' right to call themselves jihadists. The ultimate majority of the necessities detailed in the letter-20 out of 24-have to do with acts prohibited in contemporary Islam. They deal with many aspects of noble human life: prohibiting such acts as killing of the innocent, prisoners and emissaries (journalists included), denying women and children their rights, the re-introduction of slavery, torture, disfiguring the dead and destroying graves, harming or mistreating believers of other religions of the Scripture, starting armed insurrection, declaring caliphate *"without consensus from all Muslims,"* as well as issuing fatwas (legal judgments, clarifications of the Islamic law) without proper religious knowledge and mastery of the Arabic language, *"oversimplify(ing) Sharia matters"* and even *"ignoring the reality of contemporary times."* (Letter to Baghdadi)

Muslim intellectuals from all over the world met in Morocco and issued the Marrakesh Declaration, which criticizes Muslim persecution of religious minorities. (Marrakesh Declaration, 25-27 January 2016) The OIC (The Organization of Islamic Cooperation), which represents 57 Muslim countries, recently endorsed the declaration. (OIC Istanbul Summit 2016) Countless Islamic groups around the globe have also vehemently rejected ISIS. French Imams are criticizing the radical group from their pulpits. (Rajia, 10 September 2014) Britain's largest Mosque has declared them *"Un-Islamic."* (Sharkov, 2014) Sunni and Shia clerics in Iraq have distributed a fatwa to nearly 50,000 mosques announcing that ISIS is *"not in any way linked to (the Muslim) faith"* and warning that failing to stand up against the group is undoubtedly a sin. Even Egypt's Grand Mufti has lambasted the group, and Dar al-Ifta, one of the most influential Muslim schools in the world, has launched a global campaign to strike the word *"Islamic"* from ISIS's title, seeking to rebrand it as *"al-Qaeda Separatists in Iraq and Syria,"* or QSIS, saying the organization has *"tarnished image of Islam across the globe."* (Al-Arabiya, 8 September 2014) No Muslim-majority country in the world supports ISIS; new research has shown as Indonesia reels from the group's latest terror attack. (Dearden, 15 January 2016) The majority of Muslim scholars and world leaders condemn this philosophy as hateful and

divisive. They reject their actions, and strongly disagree with their views, criticizing them as un-Islamic. It is forbidden in Islam to force people to convert; It is forbidden in Islam to deny women their rights; It is forbidden in Islam to kill the innocent; The re-introduction of slavery is forbidden in Islam; It is forbidden in Islam to torture people; It is forbidden in Islam to declare a caliphate without consensus from all Muslims; Loyalty to one's nation is permissible in Islam; After the death of the Prophet…Islam does not require anyone to emigrate anywhere; Jihad in Islam is a defensive war.[vii] (Operation Pakistan, September 2014)

## 4. Conclusion

The American war in Iraq illustrates the clash of civilization and helps us to understand ISIS's impact on American international relations conception. The United States developed the idea of democratization to provide peace around the world. In their ideologies, the democracies don't fight each other. However, the Islamic State is a product of the democratization of Iraq. Top Islamic scholars around the world have broadly criticized ISIS and their activities since it has nothing to do with Islam. ISIS's ideology is grounded on three dismissals of Islam and the contemporary world order. First, ISIS discards the traditional Islamic tolerance of other religions, mostly Judaism and Christianity. In the holy Qur'an, Jews and Christians are defined as "*people of the book*," which means they must enjoy a special status where they should be safe, protected, and treated well in a Muslim society. ISIS rejects this, as it demonstrated with the executing of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya. Second, ISIS rejects "*infidel ideologies*" including democracy, nationalism, modernism, and any other form of government that is not according to its faith. To ISIS, democracy is unlawful because it is a government of men run by men and not by God, while nationalism is accused for the division of Muslims. The third ideological rejection is that of "*diluted*" forms of Islam, meaning any interpretation of Islam that is its own, which explains its brutal treatment of other Muslims living in its territory. (Didi, March 4, 2015)

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[vii] For a larger catalog of theological misrepresentations of Islam and their refutation, see the Saudi government's Encyclopedia of Responding to Misconceptions, which is at the moment available only in Arabic.

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