

# **A comparative content analysis of the extremist magazines 'Dabiq' (IS) and 'Inspire' (AQAP)**



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**Master Thesis Crisis and Security Management**

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*I [al-Zawahiri] say to you [al-Zarqawi]: that we are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.'*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Zawahiri, A. (2005). Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi. Retrieved September 1, from [http://fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/letter\\_in\\_english.pdf](http://fas.org/irp/news/2005/10/letter_in_english.pdf)

## **Abstract**

In recent years, jihadist organisations have increasingly utilized the internet to spread their extremist narratives in order to win the hearts and minds of their followers and to scare their enemies. AQAP and IS are very aware of the power of online propaganda. For this reason, both organisations publish professional-looking online magazines that echo their worldview and draw idealistic pictures of the organisations. In this thesis, the differences and similarities between the magazines of IS (Dabiq) and AQAP (Inspire) are researched in order to create a better understanding of the relationship between world's most powerful jihadist organisations. The study focuses in particular on four different themes: women, targeting non-combatants, violence against coreligionists and descriptions of each other. In order to derive conclusions from the fourteen editions of Inspire and the eleven editions of Dabiq, content analysis is used as a methodological tool. The findings show that although Inspire and Dabiq differ significantly on several points, the magazines have a lot of common ground. The differences between the two magazines are often rooted in IS's higher degree of violence, megalomania and extremism regarding the methods for achieving a certain goal, rather than in conflicting opinions regarding the goal as such.

*Keywords: Dabiq, Inspire, Al-Qaeda, IS, propaganda, content analysis*

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## **Abbreviations:**

AAS: Ansar ash-Shariah

AQ: Al-Qaeda

AQAP: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

AQCG: Al-Qaeda core group

AQI: Al-Qaeda in Iraq

AQIM: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

CA: Content analysis

IS: Islamic State

ISI: Islamic State of Iraq

ISIS: State of Iraq and al-Sham

ISIL: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

JAI: Jaysh al-Islam

JN: Jabhat al-Nusra

JTJ: Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad

FSA: Free Syrian Army

## **Significant figures**

Abu Ali al Anbari, IS leader Iraq

Abu Sufyan, former deputy leader AQAP († 2013)

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, current leader IS

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, former leader AQI († 2006)

Abu Muslim al Turkmani, IS leader Syria

Abu Omar al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, former leader ISI († 2010)

Abul-Mughirah al-Qahtanim, IS leader Libya

Ayman al-Zawahiri, current leader AQ

Haji Bakr, architect of the Islamic State, († 2014)

Nasir al-Wuhayshi, former leader AQAP, († 2015)

Abu Muslim al Turkmani, IS leader Syria

Osama bin Laden, former leader AQ († 2014)

Samir Zafar Khan, former editor in chief *Inspire*, († 2011)

Zahrán Alloush, current leader Jaysh al-Islam

## 1. Introduction

In the first years of this millennium, Al-Qaeda (AQ) dominated the realm of terrorist organisations. Thereby, AQ's greatest 'success', the 9-11 attacks, led to the intervention of the US military in AQ's safe haven, Afghanistan. The intervention was the starting point of the fragmentation process of the organisation. In the years after 9-11, different events and counter terrorist measures have encouraged the decentralisation of AQ. Consequently, local AQ affiliations have become increasingly important. This is especially true for the AQ affiliation in Iraq. At the beginning of 2014, Al-Qaeda in Iraq (known as Islamic State of Iraq at that time) severed its ties with the AQ network and renamed the organisation Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which has now come to be known as Islamic State (IS). Regarding the break, Al-Qaeda spokesmen Ayman al-Zawahiri stated: *'IS, is not a branch of Al-Qaeda....and does not have an organizational relationship with it.'*<sup>2</sup> In this light, several experts consider AQ and IS as competitors.<sup>3</sup>

Surprisingly, the Charlie Hebdo attacks (2015) seems to indicate that both groups worked together, at least on a lower operational level.<sup>4</sup> This is evident as a member of AQ shot a police agent and took several hostages in a Jewish supermarket. The demand of the AQ terrorist was a free passage for the two surrounded IS terrorists, who committed the Charlie Hebdo attacks. The terrorist attacks in Paris are not isolated events. If one were to believe mass media reports, terrorism seems to be occurring everywhere. This is reinforced by the obvious presence of jihadist propaganda on the internet.

Nowadays, the internet is an important tool for jihadist organisations, as it has created the possibility to reach a worldwide audience in relative anonymity. This makes the internet a valuable medium for jihadist propaganda. With their online propaganda, jihadist organisations aim to garner financial support, justify violence, encourage terrorism, recruit new members, and wage psychological warfare.<sup>5</sup> AQ and IS are two jihadist organisations that are very aware of the power of online propaganda. Therefore, both organisations have their own online propaganda magazines, *Dabiq* (IS) and *Inspire* (AQ).

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<sup>2</sup> Byman, D. (2015). Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement. Oxford University Press (p. 168)

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, J. (2015). ISIS vs. Al Qaeda: The good news and the bad news. Retrieved August 21, 2015, <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2015/1/isis-vs-al-qaeda-the-good-news-and-the-bad-new>

<sup>4</sup> Donnelly, T. (2015) Paris attacks: An al Qaeda, Islamic State combined operation. Retrieved September 21, 2015, from <https://www.aei.org/publication/paris-attacks-al-qaeda-islamic-state-combined-operation/>

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, T. (2003). Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of "Cyberplanning" *Parameters*, 23, 112-123. (116)

## 1.1. *Inspire*

The English magazine *Inspire* is the work of the *Al-Malahim* foundation, which is the media wing of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).<sup>6</sup> The American-Pakistani Samir Zafar Khan was considered as one of the founders of the magazine and an important editor.<sup>7</sup> In 2011, Khan was killed in a US led drone attack in Yemen. The name of the magazine identifies the purpose of the magazine, which is to *Inspire* the reader with the AQ ideology.

Nowadays, AQ is a fragmented organisation divided over different regions.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, a central magazine is important in order to project some form of unity. The first edition of the magazine was launched in July 2010 and contained messages from Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama Bin Laden.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the messages of the AQ leaders, the first issue explained how to encrypt messages and included a bomb manual with the title: '*Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom*'. This renders the intention of the magazine as a terrorist manual obvious from the start.

Between the summer of 2010 (first issue) and the autumn of 2015, AQAP published fourteen editions of *Inspire* magazine. Both the number of pages and the interval of publication fluctuates. Thereby, the average number of pages of *Inspire* is 63.

## 1.2. *Dabiq*

Like AQAP, IS has its own online publication called *Dabiq*. The media wing of IS, known as Al Hayat Media Center, edits the magazine. In contrast to *Inspire*, *Dabiq* is not limited to English readers. The magazine is translated into several languages, such as French, German, Russian, and Arabic. The first edition was published on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2014. Although the magazine is much younger than *Inspire*, there had already been twelve published issues by November 2015. Normally, a new issue of the magazine is released every two months. The average number of pages is 61, which is slightly less than the average number of pages of *Inspire*. However, *Dabiq* is published more frequently than *Inspire*.

The title of the IS magazine connotes a deeper meaning than *Inspire*. *Dabiq* is a small city with approximately 3.000 inhabitants in northern Syria near the Turkish border. According to Hadith 6924, the Muslims and Rome will clash in an apocalyptic battle in *Dabiq*: '*The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land atal-A'maq or in Dabiq*.'

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<sup>6</sup> Hegghammer, T. (2010). Un-inspired. Retrieved August 1, 2015, from <http://www.jihadica.com/un-inspired/>

<sup>7</sup> Odaki, O. (2014). AQAP publishes biography of American jihadist Samir Khan. Retrieved September 20, 2015, from [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/11/aqap\\_releases\\_biogra\\_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/11/aqap_releases_biogra_1.php)

<sup>8</sup> Humud, C., Arieff, A., Blanchard, L., Blanchard, C., Sharp, J., & Katzman, K. (2014). Al Qaeda-Affiliated Groups: Middle East and Africa. *Congressional Research Service*. (p.3)

<sup>9</sup> *Inspire* issue 1

*An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them)...'*<sup>10</sup> To emphasise the battle of the apocalypse, all issues of *Inspire* begin on page one with the following statement of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: '*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*'. Hence, Celso has described *Dabiq* as '*IS's Apocalyptic 21st century jihadist manifesto*.'<sup>11</sup>

### **1.3. Research question**

The previous introduction of the two online propaganda magazines illustrate two self-contained magazines. As a matter of fact, AQ and IS are both Salafi movements, which means that the organisations should have the same common ideological principles. These overlapping principles could be the base for a deadly future alliance between the world's most dangerous terrorist organisations. However, reflected on different media and experts, the current relationship between AQ and IS is poor. With the poor relationship between the two dangerous extremist organisations in mind, combined with the apparent operational cooperation between AQ and IS during the Paris attacks, and the growing amount and influence of online jihadist propaganda, raises the question as to how different *Inspire* and *Dabiq* really are. Therefore, the main question of this thesis is:

What is the nature of and what are the differences in the extremist content of the online propaganda magazines *Inspire* and *Dabiq*?

The main question is divided into four different sub-questions. Each of these sub-questions compares a different aspect of the two magazines. The sub-questions are:

1. To what extent do the two magazines differ in their views of female figures and the role of women in particular?
2. To what extent do the two magazines differ in their views on targeting non-combatants?
3. How do the editors of the magazines describe each other in their magazine?
4. To what extent do the two magazines differ in their views on violence against coreligionists?

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<sup>10</sup> Hadith 6924

<sup>11</sup> Celso, A. (2014). *Dabiq: IS's Apocalyptic 21st Century Jihadist Manifesto*. *Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, (2) 1-4.

#### 1.4. The method

In order to answer the previous questions, this research project employs a content analysis (CA). Krippendorff has defined CA as ‘*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context.*’<sup>12</sup> A CA has been chosen, as this methodological tool makes it possible to systematically analyse raw text data (both magazines) by establishing ‘*categories or themes based on interpretation and valid inferences.*’<sup>13</sup> Thereby, the valid inferences relate to the messenger, the message itself, or the receiver in form of an audience.<sup>14</sup>

#### 1.5. Relevance

Nowadays, IS and AQ are popular research subjects. Consequently, this study is not the first to focus on *Dabiq* and *Inspire*. Yet despite previous studies, there are still various aspects that remain untouched. However, why study and compare *Dabiq* and *Inspire* at all?

First, both *Dabiq* and *Inspire* are a rich source of information regarding the organisations behind the magazines. For this reason, studying the magazines could establish a better understanding of the jihadist ideologies, goals, motivations, and modus operandi of these groups. The relevance of a better understanding of jihadist thoughts needs no further explanation after the recent attacks in Paris (2015), Toulouse (2015), Sousse (2015), Ottawa (2014), Sidney (2014), and Brussels (2014) and the threat posed by terrorist and lone-wolf jihadists in many countries.

Secondly, the goal of this research project is to establish a better understanding of the similarities or differences between *Dabiq* and *Inspire*. This is relevant because differences could be an indicator for future conflicts between the two organisations, while similarities could be an indicator for future cooperation. Particularly in the wake of Charlie Hebdo shootings (2015), it is relevant to have a proper understanding of the nature of the relationship between these two groups.

Finally, studying the content of jihadist propaganda could contribute to the empirical knowledge of online propaganda in general. This knowledge is relevant, as jihadist organisations increasingly garner support through online propaganda. The results of this research project could thus potentially be used for designing counter-propaganda measures.

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<sup>12</sup> Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis: An introduction to its methodology*, London: Sage.

<sup>13</sup> Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009). *Qualitative analysis of content Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

<sup>14</sup> Lal Das, K. D. (2008). *Content analysis: A method of Social Science Research*. In Bhaskaran, V. (Eds.), *Research Methods for Social Work* (pp. 174-193). New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

## 1.6. Structure

This study begins with a theoretical foundation in which an introduction is given to AQ and IS. Thereafter, Salafi extremism, which is the ideological background of both AQAP and IS, is explained through an illustration of the different movements of Salafism. Furthermore, the state of the art in this field is presented, in relation to the similarities and differences between *Dabiq* and *Inspire*. The third chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of this research project; here CA is explained. The fourth chapter contains the analysis of this study and interprets the results. Thereafter, the method and results are discussed in chapter five. In the final chapter, the research questions are answered in the form of a conclusion.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework begins with a description of the origin, structure, and narratives of both AQ and IS. Following this, attention is given to the ideology of extremist Salafi Islam. A general understanding of the different movements of extremist Islam contributes to the understanding of the motives and background of the organisations. At the end of this chapter, the state of the art, regarding current research on the differences and similarities between *Inspire* and *Dabiq*, is presented.

### 2.1. The origins of AQ

In the 1980s, different Afghan extremist organisations united and established a well-structured network of extremist fighters to fight the Soviet occupiers. The network was a threat for the larger and generally better developed Soviet opponent.<sup>15</sup> To persevere the fight against the Soviet army, financial support and new recruits were needed. In order to obtain capital and recruits, two prominent leaders of the network, Abdullah Yusuf Azam and Osama Bin Laden, created a fund-raising network named *Maktab al Khidamat*, also known as the ‘service office’, in 1984.<sup>16</sup> Several scholars argue that *Maktab al Khidamat* was the forerunner of AQ.<sup>17</sup>

In the final days of 1988, it became clear that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan would be over soon. Although Abdullah Yusuf Azam did not support the idea, Bin Laden and

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<sup>15</sup> Bayma, D. (2015). Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different goals, different targets. Retrieved July 17, 2015, from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman>

<sup>16</sup> Rollins, J. (2011). Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy, *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved July 17, 2015, from <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Katzman, K. (2005). Al Qaeda: Profile and Threat Assessment, *CRS Report for Congress*. Retrieved October 17, 2015, from <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a477777.pdf> 2 (p.5)

other jihad leaders decided to take *Maktab al Khidamat* to a higher level in the form of a global jihad. In this case, Bin Laden wanted to establish a worldwide network of elite jihad fighters that could intervene in places where Muslims were threatened.<sup>18</sup> As such, the network should serve as an umbrella organisation that reunites, guides, and advises small jihad groups worldwide in their fight against non-Islamic regimes.<sup>19</sup> Between late 1988 and the beginning of 1989, AQ emerged out of the anti-Soviet jihad network in Afghanistan. Their name is rooted in the Arabic word ‘Qaeda’, meaning ‘foundation’ or ‘base of operation’.<sup>20</sup> In the first period, the goals of AQ were to overthrow non-Islamic regimes in Arabic countries, to purify Islam, drive out non-Muslims out of Muslim countries, and establish a worldwide pan-Islamic caliphate through a network of Islamist organisations.<sup>21 22</sup>

After the Soviet withdrawal, Bin Laden returned to his home country Saudi Arabian. At this time, a dispute arose between Bin Laden and the Saudi royal family about accepting American military help.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, Bin Laden left Saudi Arabian and went to Sudan to establish a training camp for jihad fighters. In this camp, fighters were prepared for conflict zones in the Balkans, Chechnya, Kashmir, and the Philippines.<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of the 1990s, Bin Laden and his deputy al-Zawahiri realised that they had to expel the driving power behind many regimes in Arabic countries: the United States (US). From that time on, the US became the primary adversary of AQ.

Between 1996 and 2001, the core of the AQ organisation, including Bin Laden, was based and protected in Afghanistan. For this reason, the US intervened in Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks of 9-11. The intervention in Afghanistan was the launch of the US led ‘war on terror’. Yet despite the war on terror, AQ was still able to commit different attacks on the West. For instance, the AQ attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005).

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<sup>18</sup> Bayma, D. (2015). Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different goals, different targets. Retrieved July 17, 2015, from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2015/04/29-terrorism-in-africa-byman>

<sup>19</sup> Zimmerman, K. (2013). The al Qaeda Network A New Framework for Defining the Enemy. Retrieved September 5, 2015, from [http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf\\_upload/analysis/Zimmerman\\_the\\_al\\_Qaeda\\_Network\\_September\\_2013.pdf](http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/analysis/Zimmerman_the_al_Qaeda_Network_September_2013.pdf) (p.18)

<sup>20</sup> Burke, J. (2004) Think again: Al Qaeda, *Foreign policy*. Retrieved July 17, 2015, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/27/think-again-al-qaeda-4/>

<sup>21</sup> Haynes, J. (2005). Al Qaeda: Ideology and action. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 177-191. (p.185)

<sup>22</sup> Nafziger, G., & Walton, M. (2003). *Islam at War: A History*. Westport: Praeger. (p. 246)

<sup>23</sup> Rollins, J. (2011). Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy, *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved June 2015, from <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070.pdf> (p.7)

<sup>24</sup> Rollins, J. (2011). (p.7)

On May 2nd, 2011, Bin Laden, the figurehead of AQ, was killed by American Special Forces in his house in Pakistan. However, the death of this leading AQ figure did not mean the end of AQ. In fact, the killing of Bin Laden was rather a symbolic victory for the US and did not have significant repercussions for the AQ network. The real change in the network had taken place years before the actual death of Bin Laden.

**2.1.1. The structure of AQ.** The structure of the AQ network has changed over the years.<sup>25</sup> In the 1990s, AQ was a centralised hierarchical network driven by the Al-Qaeda core group (AQCG) from Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> Bin Laden was the CEO of the network and had direct command and control over subordinates and local divisions.

In the years after the US led invasion of Afghanistan, AQ transformed from a centralised network to a decentralised network with local leadership.<sup>27</sup> As such, the AQ network became a social network structure that consists of social ties and groupings according to regional AQ affiliations.<sup>28</sup> In 2004, Burke described AQ as a '*venture capital firm-providing funding, contacts, and expert advice to many different militant groups and individuals from all over the Islamic world.*'<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the local AQ group Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) became a new role model for other affiliations in 2009.<sup>30</sup> According to this new model, local groups determined their own objectives and their own ties with other (non)-AQ groups in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, the groups still operated under the umbrella of the AQCG in Pakistan; however, the AQCG increasingly lost influence. According to Zimmerman, the structure of the AQ network developed into the interface of a franchise structure, according to which the local groups used the AQ brand.<sup>31</sup>

Sageman has developed his conception of the AQ structure further. He has argued that the AQ network must be understood as a *leaderless jihad*.<sup>32</sup> However, not all experts agree with this concept and AQ as an ideology rather than an organisation. As Bergen and Hoffman

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<sup>25</sup> Zimmerman, K. (2013). The al Qaeda Network A New Framework for Defining the Enemy. Retrieved September 5, 2015, from [http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf\\_upload/analysis/Zimmerman\\_the\\_al\\_Qaeda\\_Network\\_September\\_2013.pdf](http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/analysis/Zimmerman_the_al_Qaeda_Network_September_2013.pdf) (p.5)

<sup>26</sup> Rollins, J. (2011). Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy, *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved June 2015, from <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Zimmerman, K. (2013). (p.1)

<sup>28</sup> Zimmerman, K. (2013). p.9

<sup>29</sup> Burke, J. (2004) Think again: Al Qaeda, *Foreign policy*. Retrieved July 17, 2015, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/27think-again-al-qaeda-4/>

<sup>30</sup> Zimmerman, K. (2013). (p.1)

<sup>31</sup> Zimmerman, K. (2013). (p.5)

<sup>32</sup> Sageman, M. (2008). *Leaderless jihad: Terror networks in the twenty-first century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

(2012) have stated: *'although in recent years Al Qaeda has adopted more ideological and inspirational characteristics, it still exists as a group, and possesses, first and foremost, operational characteristics of a guerrilla and terrorist organization.'*<sup>33</sup>

In conclusion, the current AQ network transformed during the years from a centralised hierarchal network with significant leaders to a decentralised social network with autonomous local groups with their own ties and goals, though these still operate under the AQ umbrella and are universally recognised as AQ.

**2.1.2. The narrative of AQ.** The AQ narrative illustrates the organisation's worldview. Among others, Quiggin argues that the AQ ideology implies that Muslims are under attack in some form or another.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, AQ and its followers are the only ones who actively resist the oppression of Muslims. Thus, in this war between Muslims and the oppressor, one is either with or against AQ.

Quiggin's description of AQ's ideology overlaps with the AQ narrative given by Schmid, who contends that AQ has a single narrative that stipulates that *'the West (Zionist Christian Crusaders) is at war with Islam and AQ is the defender of the Islam.'*<sup>35</sup> Therefore, AQ seeks to *Inspire* Muslims of their faith to join the global jihad against the West. The narrative consists of three main pillars. The first pillar is grievance: the West is responsible for the decline of the Muslim world and the discrimination of Muslims worldwide. The second pillar is a society in the form of a caliphate ruled by Sharia. The third pillar is the violent jihad: every true Muslim is obliged to join the jihad against the West that should result in a ban of all Western influences in Muslim countries.

## **2.2. From Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad to IS**

The seeds for IS were sown in Jordan. In 2000, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, an alcoholic outlaw at the time, decided to change his life dramatically and converted under the influence of radical preaches to an extremist form of Islam.<sup>36</sup> Following this, al-Zarqawi founded the extremist group *Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* (JTI) to fight the Jordanian government. However, JTI's fight against the Jordanian government was a failure. Consequently, al-

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<sup>33</sup> Bergen, P., & Hofmann, B. (2010). Assessing the Terrorist Threat. 2015, *A Report of the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group*. Retrieved August 18, from [http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/NSPG Final Threat Assessment.pdf](http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/NSPG_Final_Threat_Assessment.pdf) (p.5)

<sup>34</sup> Quiggin, T. (2009). Understanding al-Qaeda's Ideology for Counter-Narrative Work. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 3(2), 18-24.

<sup>35</sup> Schmid, A. P. (2014). Al-Qaeda's "Single Narrative" and Attempts to Develop CounterNarratives: The State of Knowledge, ICCT Research Paper. Retrieved September 17, 2015, from <http://www.icct.nl/download/file/Schmid-Al-Qaeda's-Single-Narrative-and-Attempts-to-Develop-Counter-Narratives-January-2014.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Rabasa, A., & Chalk, P. (2002). *Beyond Al-Qaeda Part 1, The Global Jihadist Movement*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. p. 135

Zarqawi went to a training camp in Afghanistan. When the US intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, al-Zarqawi and JTJ flew to Iraq and united other Salafi fighters in a network to fight against the American occupation.

JTJ distinguished itself from the average jihad organisation in Iraq in 2004. The group was more violent, targeted civilians on a large scale, frequently used suicide bombers rather than following the rules of regular guerrilla warfare, and utilised the internet to spread their extremist ideology. In October 2004, JTJ became an affiliation of AQ.<sup>37</sup> As a result, the name of the group changed to Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Although JTJ became an AQ affiliation, al-Zarqawi never directly operated under AQCG and was only affiliated with AQ in order to utilise the AQ network for financial and recruitment purposes.<sup>38</sup>

Not long after the official establishment of AQI, tensions between the AQCG and AQI surfaced. In 2005, al-Zawahiri, the second man in command of the AQCG, stated in an intercepted message that the AQCG supported the objectives of AQI, however, the core group disagrees with their extremely violent approach, which includes brutal murders and targeting Shia Muslims, churches, mosques, and citizens in Iraq because it damaged the reputation of AQ.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, AQCG stressed that the heart and minds of the Muslim community, which are necessary to achieve the organisation's wider objectives, cannot be won when using such violent methods.

In January 2006, AQI established a network of tribes and jihad groups in Iraq and called the network the Mujahideen Shura Council. In June of that year, al-Zarqawi was killed by a US led airstrike.<sup>40</sup> Abu Omar al-Baghdadi assumed leadership, continued al-Zarqawi policies and changed the name AQI in the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in October 2006. Although the name of AQI transformed to ISI, the organisation remains a AQ affiliation.

The ISI project failed. In 2008, ISI was dying and a mere shadow of the feared AQI organisation at the time of al-Zarqawi. Furthermore, Iraq became a relatively stable country in 2009, which resulted in the start of the withdrawal of US troops out of the region. On April 18<sup>th</sup> 2010, ISI endured a significant setback when their top leadership, including Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, was killed by a combined attack of Iraqi and US troops. In June 2010, 80% of all recruiters, leaders, and financiers of ISI were killed.<sup>41</sup> This raises the question how ISI

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<sup>37</sup> Hashim, A. S. (2014). The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate. *Middle East Policy*, 21(4), 69-83. (p. 69)

<sup>38</sup> Cheterian, V. (2015). ISIS and the Killing Fields of the Middle East. *Survival*, 57(5). 105-118. (p. 110)

<sup>39</sup> Al-Zawahiri, A. (2005). Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi. Retrieved September 1, from <http://fas.org/>

<sup>40</sup> Burns, J. F. (2006, June 8). U.S. Strike Hits Insurgent at Safehouse. *New York Times*. Retrieved August 14, 2015, from [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/08/world/middleeast/08cnd-iraq.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/08/world/middleeast/08cnd-iraq.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

<sup>41</sup> Hashim, A. H. (2014). The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate. *Middle East Policy*, 21(4), 69-83. (p.96)

transformed in a few years from a defeated rebellion AQ affiliation to the world's most feared jihadist organisation.

The new powerful leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who is still the current leader of IS today, contributed significantly to the resurrection of ISI. Al-Baghdadi reorganised the organisation, gave key roles to former experienced Baathist (Saddam Hussein's ex party) officers, learned from earlier mistakes made by the former leaders of ISI, and established new ties with other Salafi groups in Iraq.<sup>42</sup>

Furthermore, the outbreak of the Syrian civil war (2011) created opportunities for ISI to flourish. In 2011, Al-Baghdadi sent a group of scouts to pave the road for a ISI intervention in Syria. This group collaborated with Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), which was a well organised AQ affiliation that was to show great success on the battlefield against the army of the president of Syria Bashar al-Assad in 2012. Al-Baghdadi became aware of the success of JN and wanted to benefit from it.

In the spring of 2013, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi stated in an audio message that JN and ISI have merged into one group named Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS).<sup>43</sup> However, this statement was directly denied by the leaders of JN. In the summer of 2013, the AQCG interfered in the conflict between the leadership of JN and ISI. Ayman al-Zawahiri (deputy leader of AQCG during that time) wrote a letter that stated that both AQ affiliations have to restore their relationship, the merge would be cancelled, ISI have to focus on Iraq, and JN should concentrate on Syria.<sup>44</sup> However, Al-Baghdadi in turn denied this direct order of AQCG from Pakistan.

In February 2014, the struggles between the AQGC and ISIS led to a severing of their affiliation.<sup>45</sup> After the break, ISIS continued their successful campaign in Iraq and Syria that resulted in the establishment of the caliphate on June 29th, 2014. From this moment on, ISIS changed their name to the Islamic State (IS), which illustrates that IS's ambition extends beyond the conquest of Iraq and Syria.

**2.2.1. The structure of IS.** Similar to AQ, the structure of IS has changed over the years. As mentioned in the previous section, IS grew from a local Yemeni terrorist group in 2000 to an Iraqi AQ affiliate group in 2004, and eventually to an independent jihadist movement with a self-declared caliphate in 2014. Obviously, IS is much more than a terrorist

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<sup>42</sup> Hashim, A. H. (2014). (p. 73)

<sup>43</sup> Joscelyn, T. (2013). Islamic State of Iraq leader defies Zawahiri in alleged audio message, *Longwarjournal*. Retrieved October 12, 2015, from [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/06/islamic\\_state\\_of\\_ira\\_3.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/06/islamic_state_of_ira_3.php)

<sup>44</sup> <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/710588/translation-of-ayman-al-zawahiris-letter.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Hashim, A. H. (2014). The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate. *Middle East Policy*, 21(4), 69-83. (p.73 )

organisation today. This section illustrates this by explaining the current structure (2014-2015) of IS.

Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khelifawi, also known as Haji Bakr, a former intelligence officer of Saddam Hussein's regime, is considered to be the architect of IS.<sup>46</sup> On 18th April, 2015, *Der Spiegel* released the IS master plan of Haji Bakr, based on 31 handwritten tables, papers, lists, and schedules that were found in Haji Bakr's house in northern Syria.<sup>47</sup> The documents reveal a blueprint of the IS command structure, the government body, a detailed view of the IS intelligence organisation, and a precisely planned campaign to take over Syria. Furthermore, the blueprint includes the structure, institutions, and functions on the local, *wilayat* (district), and 'national' levels.

The master plan reveals that al-Baghdadi is the figurehead of the organisation's pyramid. The IS chief is supported by two deputies, Abu Muslim al Turkmani, who manages the IS organisation in Iraq, and Abu Ali al Anbari, who manages the IS branch in Syria.<sup>48</sup> The different councils of IS (for instance, the Sharia Council and the Military Council) fall directly under al-Baghdadi and his deputies. The councils are responsible for advising the leadership and overseeing operations that fall within the scope of the respective councils. The vertical military line of command begins with the top leadership, the councils, the *wilayat* commanders, and local commanders.<sup>49</sup> This structure allows IS to fight on different fronts at the same time. In addition to the military structure, IS has created a governance framework that is divided into two departments.<sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> The first department is the administration department and includes all religious institutions, education, law enforcement, recruitment offices, courts, and tribal relations. The second department is the department of Muslim services and includes humanitarian aid, sanitation, infrastructure, healthcare, food supply, water, and electricity issues.

In order to maintain and expand the IS structure, finance is essential for IS. The most import source of income for IS is oil. In addition to oil, IS earns money with taxes, tolls, the

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<sup>46</sup> Orton, K. (2015). Saddam's Former Loyalists Are Leading ISIS — as True Believers. Retrieved September 5, 2015, from <http://counterjihadreport.com/tag/haji-bakr/>

<sup>47</sup> Reuter, C. (2015). The Terror Strategist: Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State, *Der Spiegel*, Retrieved August 1, 2015, from <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-files-show-structure-of-islamist-terror-group-a-1029274.html>

<sup>48</sup> Barrett, R. (2014). *The Islamic State*. New York: The Soufan Group. (p.28)

<sup>49</sup> Barrett, R. (2014). (p.29-34)

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS\\_Governance.pdf](http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS_Governance.pdf) 14

<sup>51</sup> Barrett, R. (2014). (p.41)

sale of stolen goods, kidnapping and protection money.<sup>52</sup> Most of the earned money is spent on maintaining the army.

In conclusion, when the structure of IS is viewed holistically, it is obvious that IS is neither a terrorist organisation nor an exclusively religious group. By assessing the master plan of IS, it can be argued that the structure of IS is mainly based on military tactics and state building measures rather than religious principles.

**2.2.2. The narrative of IS.** The following description of the IS narrative is based on an article of Schmid in which he provides and counters twelve IS claims based on propaganda material.<sup>53</sup> IS propagate the notion that the organisation members follow a pure form of Islam. This historically embedded, unadulterated extremist form of Islam can only be established by sword. As such, the sword is equivalent to violence and implies that true Islam can only flourish when the followers of all other religions are either converted to Islam or killed. therefore, IS has argued that *fitna* (rebellion) is a necessity as it separates the hypocrites from the true believers. Furthermore, the use of violence against *Kuffar* (unbelievers) is legitimised because Muslims worldwide are persecuted and the use of violence is the only way to stop this discrimination of Muslims. The participation in violent jihad is a prerequisite for a Muslim to enter paradise. When a Muslim is not willing to join the jihad, this individual is automatically condemned as a *Kuffar*. The Jihad must be continued until only the *Iman* (believers) remain. Following this rationale, the jihad is not limited to the Arab world but has universal implications.

IS considers itself the unifying organisation of Muslims, the bringer of dignity to true Muslims, and provider of legitimate religious authority for the Muslim community. These factors give them the right to establish their caliphate, which is described as the only true land for Muslims. Consequently, all Muslims are obliged to take part in *hijrah* (emigrate) to the caliphate and join the brotherhood of the IS, or support the ideas of IS from their homeland. IS empathise in particular that Muslims with special skills in legal, administrative, military, or health related professions are required to join IS in order to establish a strong, organised state. If Muslims join IS, they are promised great rewards in the afterlife for their sacrifice.

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<sup>52</sup> Barrett, R. (2014). (45-50)

<sup>53</sup> Schmid, A. P. (2015). Challenging the Narrative of the “Islamic State”, *ICCT Research Paper*. Retrieved November 1, 2015, from <http://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ICCT-Schmid-Challenging-the-Narrative-of-the-Islamic-State-June2015.pdf>

Finally, IS argues that the organisation has a dedicated and steadily increasing group of followers the world over that are willing to commit to attacks in the West.

### 2.3. The ideology of Islamist extremism

One cannot understand *Inspire* or *Dabiq* if one does not have a basic understanding of the ideologies which these magazines promote. Considering the importance of ideology, this chapter provides a general overview regarding the ideologies propagated by AQ and IS. Neither IS nor AQ invented their own ideologies. Almost all their claims have roots in at least one of the different movements of extremist Salafi Islam. The most influential movements for IS and AQ are Salafism, Wahhabism, Jihad-Salafism, Tafirism and Qutbism. In order to gain a better understanding of the ideological foundations of IS and AQ, a limited overview of the different movements is given. It is also important to note that experts do not always reach consensus about the exact definitions of the movements, as their explanations are partially based on subjective interpretations and there are different levels of extremism within the movements. Furthermore, the movements overlap with one other.

**2.3.1. Salafism.** The Salafist movement is the oldest, most prevalent, and overarching movement in extremist Salafi Islam. Salafism is based on the teachings of Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), and Muhammad al-Shawkani (1759-1834).<sup>54</sup> Contrary to other experts, Moussalli views Salafism as a ‘*very diversified and complicated ideologically and religiously motivated trend*’<sup>55</sup> instead of a movement. Salafism is not a mono unified movement; therefore a single description does not exist.<sup>56</sup> However, all forms of Salafism include the general idea that the Quran and the Hadiths (sacred texts about the sayings of Mohammed) are the exclusive authority in Islam.<sup>57</sup> The most important element of Salafism is the retaining of the historically pure form of Islam.

Moreover, Salafists abhor all kinds of government forms except that is entirely based on Sharia law because secular governance systems ignore God’s sovereignty.<sup>58</sup> In addition,

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<sup>54</sup> Bonnefoy, L. (2013). Saudi Arabia and the expansion of Salafism, Noref Policy Brief. Retrieved September 1, 2015, from [http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow\\_site/storage/original/application/51ecc6aed984f0b32dce709cd02cab49.pdf](http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/51ecc6aed984f0b32dce709cd02cab49.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Moussalli, A. (2009). Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who Is The Enemy? Retrieved October 19, 2015, from <http://www.conflictsforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Monograph-WahhabismSalafismIslamism1.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Blanchard, C. (2007). The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya, *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved August 16, 2015, from <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf> (p. 3)

<sup>57</sup> Dallal, A. (2000). Appropriating the Past: Twentieth-Century Reconstruction of Pre-Modern Islamic Thought, *Islamic Law and Society*, 7(1), 325-358. (p.347)

<sup>58</sup> Kadhim, A. (2013). *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa: A handbook* (1.st ed.). New York: Routledge. (p. 91)

Salafists criticise the Shia's for following a *bid'ah*, which literally means innovation, because, according to their views, there is no basis for *bid'ah* in the Quran or Hadiths.<sup>59</sup>

**2.3.2. Qutbism.** The term Qutbism is named after Sayyid Qutb, the intellectual godfather of modern Islamism and the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s in Egypt. Importantly, Qutbism is not exclusively based on the thoughts of Sayyid Qutb.<sup>60</sup> The movement is based on the teachings of Maududi, al-Banna, and Qutb, with direct elements from the Wahabbi, Salafi, and Deobandi movements.<sup>61</sup> The core element of the movement is the justification of terrorism against non-Muslims in the name of God. Therefore, Eikmeier has described Qutbism as Islamic-Fascism.<sup>62</sup>

According to Qutb, Allah sent down Sharia from heaven to govern the people on earth.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, Sharia is not limited to a form of governance, but also serves as a basis for citizenship, nationhood, and family ties.<sup>64</sup> Following this, it is deemed that a caliphate is the only way Sharia can properly be expressed.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the lack of Sharia results in *Jahiliyyah* (the state of ignorance of the guidance from God). According to Qutb, the entire world is in a state of *Jahiliyyah*, which justifies an offensive jihad.

**2.3.3. Wahhabism.** The Wahhabist movement is '*a puritanical form of Sunni Islam and is practiced in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.*'<sup>66</sup> Wahhabism falls within the overarching Salafist movement. Hence, all Wahhabis are Salafists, but not all Salafists are Wahhabis. The term 'Wahhabi' relates to the Arabian scholar Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab, who lived in the Arabian peninsula from 1703 to 1791. Wahhab was frustrated with the different, modern, and corrupt visions of Islam in the 18th century. As a result, Abd al Wahhab established the Wahhabi movement as an orthodox, fundamentalist, and unadulterated version of Islam.<sup>67</sup>

Since the establishment of the current Saudi kingdom in 1932, a close bond ties the Wahhabi community and the Saudi royal family, as Wahhabi followers were involved in the foundation of the Saudi kingdom.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, the Wahhabi ideology became the

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<sup>59</sup> Iannone, A. (2001). *Dictionary of world philosophy*. New York: Routledge. (p. 72)

<sup>60</sup> Eikmeier, D. (2007). *Qutbism: An Ideology of Islamic-Fascism*. Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center. (p. 85)

<sup>61</sup> Eikmeier, D. (2007). (p. 87)

<sup>62</sup> Eikmeier, D. (2007). (p. 86)

<sup>63</sup> Eikmeier, D. (2007). (p. 82)

<sup>64</sup> Halverson, J., & Goodall, H. (2011). *Master narratives of Islamist extremism*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. (p. 46)

<sup>65</sup> Kadhim, A. (2013). *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa: A handbook* (1.st ed.). New York: Routledge. (p. 92)

<sup>66</sup> Blanchard, C. (2007). The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya, *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved August 16, 2015, from <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf> (p. 2)

<sup>67</sup> Blanchard, C. (2007). (p. 2)

<sup>68</sup> Doumato, E. A. (2003). Manning the Barricades: Islam According to Saudi Arabia's School Texts. *Middle East Journal*, 57(2), 230-247.

principle for the legal system, education, and social laws of the kingdom.<sup>69</sup> Nowadays, a part of the Saudi's judicial and social system is still based on Wahhabi ideas.

**2.3.4. Jihadi-Salafism.** Jihadi-Salafism is the youngest movement of the five and is equivalent to violent rebellion. The exact onset of the movement is unknown, however, it has increased significantly in the last years.<sup>70</sup> The term Jihadi-Salafism was frequently used by the extremist Islamist community in London in the first years of the 1990s. Hegghammer has argued that it is hard to find a clear definition of the term Jihadi-Salafism in academic literature.<sup>71</sup> However, almost all scholars agree that Jihadi-Salafism groups are more violent, offensive, and more extremist than regular jihadist groups. The focus of the movement is rather on the Wahhabist and Salafist than on the more pragmatic Qutbist movement.<sup>72</sup> Another characteristic of Jihadi-Salafist groups is an extreme negative attitude towards the West.

AQ and IS consider themselves as a the Jihadi-Salafist movement openly. For instance, al-Baghdadi stated, '*to all Sunnis, and to the young men of Jihadi-Salafism (al-Salafiyya al-Jihadiyya) in particular, across the entire world....*'.<sup>73</sup> Currently, Jihadi-Salafism consists of a worldwide network of scholars, websites, and social media platforms.<sup>74</sup>

**2.3.5. Takfirism.** '*Whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense (in the Hereafter) is Hell, the rein to abide; and God has utterly condemned him, excluded him from His mercy, and prepared for him a tremendous punishment*'[4:93].<sup>75</sup>

Although the Koran clearly prohibit the killing of fellow Muslims, the *takfiri* movement focuses on violence against coreligionists. The word *takfir* is a verb and means to accuse another Muslim to be an infidel.<sup>76</sup> The *takfiri* movement is an offshoot of the Salafist movement and based on the belief that every non-practicing Muslim is an infidel (unbeliever), and therefore a legitimate target.<sup>77 78</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Blanchard, C. (2007). (p. 2)

<sup>70</sup> Hegghammer, T. (2009). Jihadi Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Theology and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism. In Meijer, R. (Ed), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, pages 244–266. , New York: Columbia University Press. (p. 249)

<sup>71</sup> Hegghammer, T. (2009). (p. 252)

<sup>72</sup> Kepel, G., & Rothschild, J. (2005). *The roots of radical Islam*. London: Saqi. (p. 15)

<sup>73</sup> Bunzel, C. (2015). *From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State*. New York: Brookings. (p. 7)

<sup>74</sup> Bunzel, C. (2015). (p. 7)

<sup>75</sup> Koran verse 4:93

<sup>76</sup> Moghadam, A., & Fishman, B. (2011). *Fault lines in global Jihad: Organizational, strategic and ideological fissures*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. (p. 27)

<sup>77</sup> Rao, A. R. (2014). 'Takfiri' a Messianic Ideology: 'Counter Measures' for Radical Insurgents in Waziristan. *TIGAH: A Journal of Peace and Development*, 3(4), 1-146. (p.2)

<sup>78</sup> Rao, A. R. (2014). (p.2)

The movement was established by Shukri Mustafa in Egypt in the 1960s.<sup>79</sup> Mustafa was the founder and former leader of the extremist Muslim group *Jama'at al-Muslimeen*, a splinter group of the Muslim brotherhood. When the group members went to trial in Egypt for *takfirism* they became publicly known as *al Takfir w'al Hijra*.<sup>80</sup> However, the group never chose that name itself.

Most experts consider *takfirism* as the most extreme and violent movement within Salafism.<sup>81</sup> In addition to experts, some jihadists themselves consider *takfirism* as pure evil. To illustrate, Mustafa Kamel, who was a radical preacher in the United Kingdom and currently serving a life sentence in prison for terrorism, stated the following regarding *takfirism*: 'Nothing but a bunch of extremists...[they] create nothing and destroy everything. It is not right to be as harsh as they are. These people want to be judges and executioners.'<sup>82</sup>

In *takfirism*, coreligionists can be divided in four categories, according to Hafez.<sup>83</sup> The first category is the tyrants (*tawaghit*), which include Muslim regimes that do not use the Sharia as a starting point to govern. Furthermore, tyrants prevent true believers from establishing an Islamic state. The second group includes the apostates, who are considered traitors to Islam because they work for foreign powers or tyrant regimes. Heretics and polytheists are the third group of coreligionists. This group includes all Muslims who are not strictly monotheistic, for instance, the Shiites and Yezidies. The last category is the true believers. This group, which exclusively includes Sunni Muslims, follows the true path of Islam and distances itself from the first three categories.

The majority of extremists agree that it is *halal* (permissible according to the Sharia) to kill the first category of coreligionists, which includes the tyrants.<sup>84</sup> Concerning the killing of coreligionists in the second (apostates) and third (heretics and polytheists) categories, extremists have not reached a consensus. The most radical scholars argue that it is *halal* to make *takfir* on a group level regarding the second and third categories, while the more 'moderate' extremist scholars argue that it is not *halal* to kill fellow Muslims from categories

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<sup>79</sup> Gleis, J. L. (2005). National Security Implications of Al-Takfir Wal-Hijra , *Al Nakhlan, The Fletcher School Online Journal for Issues Related to Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization*, 1-6. (p. 2)

<sup>80</sup> Hegghammer, T. (2009). (p. 247)

<sup>81</sup> Gleis, J. L. (2005). National Security Implications of Al-Takfir Wal-Hijra , *Al Nakhlan, The Fletcher School Online Journal for Issues Related to Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization*, 1-6. (p. 1)

<sup>82</sup> Webb, S. (2013). The Weekly Recap: Russia and the Syrian militant spillover. Retrieved October 1, 2015, from <http://defencereport.com/defrep-analysis-russia-and-the-syrian-militant-spillover/>

<sup>83</sup> Hafez, M. M. (2011). *Takfir* and violence against Muslims. In Moghadam, A., & Fishman, B. (Eds). *Fault lines in global Jihad: Organizational, strategic and ideological fissures* (25-46). Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. (p. 27)

<sup>84</sup> Hafez, M. M. (2011). (28-40)

two and three, or that it is only permissible exclusively on an individual level under strict conditions.

Although the *takfiri* movement as such was established in the 1960s, the phenomenon of radical Muslims who kill moderate Muslims has existed for much longer. A group known for their extreme view regarding the killing of coreligionists is the *Khawarij*, an early Islamic sect established in the seventh century that took the Koran extremely literally.<sup>85</sup> In addition to a ban on entertainment and the assumption that every Muslims can be a ruler based on piety, the sect is known for their extreme view on *takfir*. The *Kwawarij* condemn Muslims as infidels based on having a committed sin.<sup>86</sup> The *Kwawarij* argue that all infidels must be killed.

The following chapter offers the foundation of the theoretical framework of this study. Here the known differences and similarities regarding *Dabiq* and *Inspire* are discussed.

#### 2.4. State of the art

Nowadays, AQ and IS related items frequently dominate the news headlines. Along similar lines, scholars in the field of terrorism, conflict, and security studies are paying increasing attention to both AQ and IS. Since the beginning of this research project, a dozen superficial newspaper orientated articles have discussed *Dabiq* and *Inspire*.<sup>87 88 89</sup> Moreover, a study by Vallee and another by Fink & Sugg concerning certain differences and similarities between *Dabiq* and *Inspire* have been published during the writing process of this research project.<sup>90 91</sup> Both studies have their focus areas and limitations, which means that many subjects in the magazines are untouched or treated poorly. Vallee, for instance, focuses on particular subjects in the magazines, such as ‘call to action’ and ‘outlook on the Arabic

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<sup>85</sup> Abdullah, M. et al. (2015). Kharijite , *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved October 1, 2015, from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Kharijite>

<sup>86</sup> Doniger, W., & Webster, I. (1999). *Merriam-Webster's encyclopedia of world religions*; Wendy Doniger, consulting editor. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster. (p. 525)

<sup>87</sup> Waugh, R. (2015). What IS Isis? 5 things we learned from terror group's glossy magazine, *Dabiq*, *Metro*. Retrieved November 23, 2015, from <http://metro.co.uk/2015/11/23/what-is-isis-5-things-we-learned-from-terror-groups-glossy-magazine-dabiq-5520531/>

<sup>88</sup> Withnall, A. (2015). Bomb shown by Isis in *Dabiq* magazine ‘would be capable of bringing down a plane’, expert says, *The Independent*. Retrieved November 18, 2015 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/bomb-pictured-by-isis-in-dabiq-magazine-would-be-capable-of-bringing-down-a-plane-expert-says-a6739581.html>

<sup>89</sup> Joscelyn, T. (2010). AQAP releases a ‘special issue’ of *Inspire* magazine, *The Long War Journal*. Retrieved November 23, 2010, from [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/11/aqap\\_releases\\_a\\_spec.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/11/aqap_releases_a_spec.php)

<sup>90</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). Digital Jihad: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State - *Dabiq* vs. *Inspire*. *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*. Retrieved October 1, 2015, from <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1440/Digital-Jihad-Al-Qaeda-and-the-Islamic-State-Dabiq-Inspire> by

<sup>91</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015). A Tale of Two Jihads: Comparing the al-Qaeda and ISIS Narratives, *IPI Global Observatory*. Retrieved October 1, 2015, from <http://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/02/jihad-al-qaeda-isis-counternarrative/>

spring’, while Fink & Sugg zoom in on the narratives in both magazines. In this section, the state of the art regarding academic explorations of *Dabiq* and *Inspire* are expounded.

#### 2.4.1. Inspire

The first issue of *Inspire* was released in January 2010. The *Inspire* magazine is an important instrument for the fragmented AQ organisation to demonstrate that the AQ network is a united entity, to distribute the grand strategy, and to communicate with (potential) members. For this reason, the core elements of the magazine are recruitment and the distribution of the AQ ideology.<sup>92</sup>

A significant aspect of recruitment focuses on lone wolf terrorism in the West. In this case, the magazine encourages Western Muslims to commit attacks in their home countries. Therefore, the most important call to action in *Inspire* is to perform jihad at home (in the West) rather than join the mujahidin in faraway conflict zones.<sup>93</sup> In this light, almost every issue of *Inspire* pays attention to this home grown terrorism. In order to support home grown terrorism, *Inspire* provides detailed instructions of how to make a bomb or the most efficient way to shoot with a gun. The priority AQ gives to local terrorism is evident in the documentation of ‘successful’ attacks on Western interests and the glorification of martyrdoms.<sup>94</sup> Besides the violent approach to hurt the perceived enemy, AQ calls for economic sanctions through boycotting Western products.<sup>95</sup> Fink & Sugg have stated that ‘*the narrative found in Inspire is one primarily focused on violent, punitive, and retaliatory actions against the West and lacks consideration toward any specifics of Islamic governance.*’<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the (offensive) violent jihad is considered necessary to stop the perceived threat against Muslims.<sup>97</sup>

Vallee studied the outlook of both magazines regarding the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring was a key event in the Middle East.<sup>98</sup> Some experts have argued that the Spring has turned into the ‘Arab winter’ and become a breeding ground for future problems.<sup>99</sup> In this light, Vallee concludes that *Inspire* is mainly optimistic about the outcomes of the Arab Spring.<sup>100</sup> The editors of the magazine argues that the Arab Spring toppled different

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<sup>92</sup> Seib, P. M., & Janbek, D. M. (2011). *Global terrorism and new media: The post-Al Qaeda generation*. London: Routledge.

<sup>93</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 14)

<sup>94</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>95</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 14)

<sup>96</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>97</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>98</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 14)

<sup>99</sup> Prashad, V. (2012). *Arab spring, Libyan winter*. Oakland, CA: AK Press Pub.

<sup>100</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 14)

tyrannical regimes with historical ties to the West and created opportunities for jihadist organisations to unite for the jihad against the West.

In addition, Vallee states that the authors of *Inspire* seek to create a personal feeling in their magazine. The interactivity between the readers and the authors in the section ‘*Inspire* responses’ particularly contributes to this personal tone.<sup>101</sup> As such, almost all articles in *Inspire* begin with the name of the author, which in many cases is a prominent AQ leader. The last element of the study of Vallee concerns the way both organisations frame each other in their respective magazines. In the case of *Inspire*, IS is not mentioned at all.

#### **2.4.2. Dabiq**

In the summer of 2014, the first issue of the digital magazine *Dabiq* was released. Considering the publication of the first issue, there seems to be no compelling reason to argue that the magazine is a poor copy of *Inspire*. Instead of imitating its AQAP counterpart, IS has created a unique magazine with its own identity, structure, and a certain degree of professionalism regarding the layout, which has not been used in the same way by any jihadist organisation before.

In contrast to their AQAP counterpart, *Dabiq* is not predominantly focused on lone wolf terrorism. Although *Dabiq* pays attention to lone wolves, *Dabiq* focuses on a broader scale of subjects. The unknown writers of *Dabiq* give considerable attention to governance, social services, healthcare, and dignity of Sunni Muslims in the caliphate. Therefore, the authors seek to motivate the reader to join the caliphate with stories about the infrastructure, social services, lifestyle, and quality of life in the caliphate.<sup>102</sup> Frequently, the magazine addresses the call to *hijrah* (*migration*) to the Islamic State in order to contribute to the state building process. According to the authors, true (healthy) Muslims, and in particular doctors, teachers, engineers, and other professionals, are obliged to conform to *hijrah*.<sup>103</sup> Hence, the most important call for action in *Dabiq* is *hijrah*.<sup>104</sup>

Another core theme in *Dabiq* is violence against everything and everybody that is un-Islamic (not following an Islamist version of Islam) in order to purify the world.<sup>105</sup> This has resulted in the killing of Shia Muslims, destruction of cultural sites, and artefacts, including (historical) art and tombs. Besides purifying the world, IS is constantly fighting with rivals and expanding their caliphate. Following this, it can be stated that IS pursues an offensive

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<sup>101</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 21)

<sup>102</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 23)

<sup>103</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>104</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 12)

<sup>105</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

jihadist trajectory.<sup>106</sup> In contrast to *Inspire*, this offensive jihad focuses on the near enemy. This near enemy mainly encompasses regimes that stand in the way of the caliphate.<sup>107</sup>

Similar to *Inspire*, *Dabiq* mentions the Arab Spring several times. However, pieces concerning the Arab spring are rather negative. The ideology of the Arab Spring is described as an evil poison that has side lined the true thought of the *Ummah*. Furthermore, the Arab Spring is considered to have hampered the campaign against the real enemies, according to the writers of *Dabiq*.<sup>108</sup>

Throughout the last issues of *Dabiq*, AQ is mentioned numerous times. Here the writers of *Dabiq* criticise the AQ leadership for conducting the jihad with a lack of rigour, with particular reference to their neutral attitude towards Shia Muslims.<sup>109</sup> As a final remark, Fink & Sugg argue that the IS ideology as described in *Dabiq* is based on medieval rituals, thoughts, and punishments.<sup>110</sup>

### 2.4.3. Similarities

Besides these differences, *Dabiq* and *Inspire* reveal overlapping themes and concepts. This connection is not surprising, as both organisations have a background in Salafist Islam. The first similarity is the obligation for a true Muslim to take part in jihad.<sup>111</sup> Both magazines argue that ignoring jihad is a serious form of hypocrisy. Second, according to Sugg & Fink, both magazines portray the West and in particular the US as a threat to Muslims. Third, both magazines propagate the *Dar al-Harb* (house of war) versus *Dar al-Islam* (house of Islam) doctrine.<sup>112</sup> This doctrine has divided the world into two camps. The *Dar al-Islam* camp includes all nations that embrace Islamic law, while the other camp (the rest of the world) is in a state of war (*Dar al-Harb*). *Dar al-Harb* vs. *Dar al-Islam* implies that the Islamic world is at war with the non-Islamic world. Therefore, *Dar al-Islam* could never live in peace and harmony with *Dar al-Harb*. Another similarity is that both *Inspire* and *Dabiq* encourages their readers to participate in terrorism against the West.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 10)

<sup>107</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 9)

<sup>108</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 25)

<sup>109</sup> Vallee, C. (2015). (p. 33)

<sup>110</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>111</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>112</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

<sup>113</sup> Sugg, B., & Fink, N. C. (2015).

### 3. Qualitative content analysis

The focal point of this research project is the role of communication in order to compare the online magazine *Dabiq* with that of *Inspire*. Numerous scientific based methods exist for text analysis. In this research project, qualitative content analysis (CA) is employed because this methodological instrument aims to understand the meaning of written communication based on meanings, intentions, consequences and context.<sup>114 115</sup>

In an earlier phase of the research process, there was some doubt whether to use CA or discourse analysis. However, CA is chosen instead of discourse analysis because CA focuses on the message itself rather than the language behind the sentences, which is the case with discourse analysis. Moreover, CA is more objective than discourse analysis because the researcher's interpretation of certain meanings plays a less significant role.

As such, CA is rather a collection of techniques for systematic text analysis than a single method.<sup>116</sup> In light of this, Cavanagh perceives CA as a flexible method for analysing texts.<sup>117</sup> However, the 'flexible' character of CA leads to various debates in the academic literature about the different elements, definition and most conducive approaches to CA.<sup>118</sup> This section elaborates some of the more crucial debates and offers a sketch of how CA is applied in this research project.

#### 3.1. Definition

Since the 1950s, CA has been employed and developed by scholars in different fields of studies as a methodological instrument to analyse texts. As a consequence of this, numerous definitions and approaches have been developed which focus either on CA in general or CA in relation to a particular field of study, e.g. medical science. In this research project, the following two definitions are applied due to their close fit with the research design. In 1980, Krippendorff defined CA as '*a research method used for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, a representation of facts, new insights, and a practical guide to action.*'<sup>119</sup> Zhang & Wildemuth further emphasise the process involved in conducting a CA by arguing that it is '*a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and*

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<sup>114</sup> Cavanagh S. (1997) Content analysis: concepts, methods and applications. *Nurse Researcher*, 4 (3), 5–16.

<sup>115</sup> Downe-Wamboldt, B. (1992) Content analysis: method, applications and issues. *Health Care for Women International*, 13 (2), 313– 321.

<sup>116</sup> Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), Art. 20.

<sup>117</sup> Cavanagh S. (1997).

<sup>118</sup> Elo, S., Kaariainen, M., Kanste, O., Polkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngas, H. (2014). Qualitative Content Analysis: A Focus on Trustworthiness. *SAGE Open*. (p. 106)

<sup>119</sup> Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. London: Sage.

interpretation.<sup>120</sup> Although the previous definition of CA does not sound particularly complex, several scholars, e.g. Neundorf and Glaer, stress that the contention that CA is a simple method is a myth.<sup>121 122</sup> The scholars argue that '*content analysis is as easy or as difficult as the researcher determines it to be.*'<sup>123</sup>

CA can be used to study a wide variety of texts ranging from novels to political memoirs.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, scholars from different academic disciplines use CA as a method to conduct research. Currently, CA is no longer limited to text-based data. Different versions and approaches of CA are being developed for analysing various media, such as videos and websites.

### 3.2. Quantitative vs. Qualitative

For many years, there has been a major debate in academia whether CA qualifies as a quantitative method or a qualitative method.<sup>125</sup> Basically, there are three groups of scholars with different views in the debate. The first group of scholars, which includes Neundorf and Berelson, emphasise that CA is a quantitative research method. In this vein, Berelson describes CA as an '*objective, systematic quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.*'<sup>126 127</sup>

The second group of scholars, which includes Silverman and Newbold et al. stress the qualitative character of CA and dismiss CA as a quantitative research method.<sup>128 129</sup> As an explanation for this assertion, Newbold assesses that a quantitative CA '*has not been able to capture the context within which a media text becomes meaningful.*'<sup>130</sup>

A third group of scholars, encompassing Smith<sup>131</sup>, and Shoemaker & Reese,<sup>132</sup> argue that CA is both a quantitative and a qualitative method because '*qualitative analysis deals*

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<sup>120</sup> Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009). *Qualitative analysis of content Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. (p. 1)

<sup>121</sup> Neundorf, K. (2002). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. London: Sage Publications

<sup>122</sup> Glaser, B.G. (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

<sup>123</sup> Neundorf, K. (2002).

<sup>124</sup> Macnamara, J. (2005). Media content analysis: Its uses; benefits and best practice methodology. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 6(1), 1-34. (p.1)

<sup>125</sup> Berg, B. (2007). An introduction to content analysis. In *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (6th ed., p. 238-265). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (p. 243)

<sup>126</sup> Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press. (p. 18)

<sup>127</sup> Neundorf, K. (2002).

<sup>128</sup> Silverman, D. (1993). "Beginning Research". *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>129</sup> Newbold, C., Boyd-Barrett, O., & Van Den Bulck, H. (2002). *The media book*. London: Arnold

<sup>130</sup> Newbold, C., Boyd-Barrett, O., & Van Den Bulck, H. (2002). (p.84)

<sup>131</sup> Smith, H.W. (1975). *Strategies of Social Research: The Methodological Imagination*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hal

<sup>132</sup> Shoemaker, P. & Reese, S. (1996). *Mediating the message: theories of influences on mass media content*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

with the forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with the duration and frequency of form.<sup>133</sup> In this research project, CA is exclusively used as a qualitative method. However, this was not the original plan.

### 3.3. Changing methods

The original research plan was to conduct quantitative CA with the help of the computer program MAXQDA instead of qualitative CA. The MAXQDA software is intended to help coding and analysing the magazines. However, after analysing a number of issues, the results were often meaningless. For this reason, the choice was made to drop the computer program and focus on qualitative CA. Unfortunately, the quantitative computer analysis wasted a great deal of time.

### 3.4. Inductive vs. deductive

CA can be considered either inductive or deductive. To begin with the former, the researcher creates categories or themes directly derived from the raw data, based on the interpretation and categorisation of the researcher. Following this, the researcher analyses the data through the themes or categories they establish. In the case of deductive research, the categories or themes of previous studies are employed.<sup>134</sup> For the purpose of this study, an inductive research method is applied. Thus, the data is analysed using a self-made code frame.

### 3.5. The data

This research project exclusively focuses on written documents, which include 11 editions of *Dabiq* (from July 2014 to September 2015) and 13 editions of *Inspire* (from January 2010 to October 2015). The magazines are considered open-source data, as the data is available and accessible to everyone on the internet. However, some issues were easier to find than others. Most magazines have been found on the websites; [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) (a deep web search engine) and [www.jihadwatch.org](http://www.jihadwatch.org).

Moreover, this study is classified as primary research using open-source data. Primary research is defined as all '*research that produces data that are only obtainable directly from an original source.*'<sup>135</sup> The original sources in this study are the magazines of AQAP and IS.

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<sup>133</sup> Smith, H.W. (1975). (p.218)

<sup>134</sup> Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009). Qualitative analysis of content Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. (p.2)

<sup>135</sup> Currie, D., 2005, Developing and Applying Study Skills. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development. (p. 89)

### 3.6. Manifest content and latent content

Manifest content and latent content are two different kinds of content that can be analysed through CA. A manifest content relates to those elements that are physically present and countable.<sup>136</sup> In other words, one can directly observe this content through seeing, hearing or reading. This is not the case with latent content, which includes ‘*interpretive reading of the symbolic and underlying physical data.*’<sup>137</sup> Manifest content emphasises the underlining meaning of content, which is not directly observable. This is illustrated by the explanation of the title of the IS magazine *Dabiq*. When a manifest analysis is executed regarding *Dabiq*, it can be stated that the name *Dabiq* relates to a small city in Syria, which was captured by IS. If the same CA is repeated following the method of a latent analysis, the meaning of *Dabiq* is much more nuanced than merely a small village in Syria. In this case, it can be said that IS believes that *Dabiq* relates to the apocalyptic battle between Muslims and their enemies.

### 3.7. Reliability and validity

Reliability is achieved when a study is replicated and the same results are achieved. Three types of reliability regarding CA exist.<sup>138</sup> The first type is stability, which requires that the results of content classification do not change over time. In other words, the coder must code the content consistently throughout. The second type is reproducibility, which refers to the degree of overlap regarding the results of the analysis if the same text is categorised by another researcher. The last type is accuracy, which refers to the degree to which the classification of a text refers to the standard norm. In order to increase the degree of reliability, citations of the original data could be used. In this way, the reader could deduce how a researcher’s categories are established directly from the text sources.<sup>139</sup>

Validity refers to the credibility of a research study. In light of this, the given definitions of these concepts should correspond with the definition of the categories that are measured in this study.<sup>140</sup> In other words, it is necessary to assess whether a category measures what it aims to measure.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Berg, B. (2007). (p. 243)

<sup>137</sup> Berg, B. (2007). (p. 269)

<sup>138</sup> Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. London: Sage. (p. 130)

<sup>139</sup> Berg, B. (2007). (p. 242)

<sup>140</sup> Weber, R.P. (1990). *Basic Content Analysis*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA. (p.121)

<sup>141</sup> Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

### 3.8. The different steps of qualitative content analysis

*'The key feature of all content analysis is that the many words of the text are classified into much smaller content categories.'*<sup>142</sup> There are several scholars who provide different approaches to dividing a text into content categories. As such, the scholars differ in their explanations of the steps to be taken. In this section, the different steps of the qualitative CA are given, based on the articles of Zhang & Wildemuth and Elo & Kyngäs.<sup>143 144</sup>

1. *Prepare the data:* all magazines are gathered and downloaded from the internet.

2. *Define the unit of analysis:* a unit of analysis is the subject (what or who) that is being studied. Neundorf describes the unit of analysis as *'the element on which data is analysed and which findings are report.'*<sup>145</sup> In the case of qualitative CA, individual themes are often used as units of analysis.<sup>146</sup> Therefore, themes are particularly appropriate for analysing the expression of an idea.<sup>147</sup> Examples of units of analysis are ideology, persons, organisation, narratives and social relations. The units of analysis in this research project are the following themes: women, *Inspire*'s and *Dabiq*'s description of each other, targeting non-combatants, and violence against coreligionists. The themes were chosen on the basis of presence in the magazine, importance given by the editors, the lack of research regarding the theme and social impact.

3. *Develop categories and a coding scheme:* establishing the categories and coding scheme is an important aspect of CA, as both elements constitute the framework of the analysis. As mentioned previously, this research project applies inductive research. Consequently, both the coding scheme and the categories are derived from the data used in this study. In order to establish the code scheme and the categories, the data must be organised. According to Elo and Kyngäs, the process of organising the data involves: open coding, creating categories and abstraction.<sup>148</sup> Regarding the first step, the authors describe open coding as making notes while reading the text in order to describe and understand a particular aspect of the content. The notes help to establish sub-categories, which constitutes the second step. *'The purpose of creating categories is to provide a means of describing the phenomenon, to increase*

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<sup>142</sup> Weber R.P. (1990). (p. 109)

<sup>143</sup> Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009).

<sup>144</sup> Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *J Adv Nurs Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62 (1), 107-115.

<sup>145</sup> Neundorf, K. (2002). (p.13)

<sup>146</sup> Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009). (p.3)

<sup>147</sup> Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. (1990). *In-Depth Interviewing: Researching People*. Hong Kong: Longman Cheshire.

<sup>148</sup> Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). 109

*understanding and to generate knowledge.*<sup>149</sup> Therefore, the process of creating categories is based on the interpretation of the researcher.<sup>150</sup> The third step is abstraction, which is explained as ‘*formulating a general description of the research topic through generating categories.*’<sup>151</sup> In other words, ‘*subcategories with similar events and incidents are grouped together as categories and categories are grouped as main categories.*’<sup>152</sup> Thereby, the sub-category describes the different content of the categories.

To illustrate the three steps, an example will be given related to this research project. While reading the issues, the category ‘women’ was chosen to become a theme (main category). Therefore, all related text to women in both magazines have been cited and copied to an excel document. The next step involved the establishment of sub-categories based on the gathered citations from the issues. The sub-category summarises the content of the cited text in a couple of words. Thereafter, generic categories are derived of the sub-categories based on similarity and overlap. In the case of women in *Dabiq*, the following three generic categories are established: sex slaves, the ideal women, and criticising the West. All generic categories combined provided the different content in a text regarding a main category. The previous is illustrated in figure 1. See appendix I for a complete reflection of all four themes.

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<sup>149</sup> Cavanagh S. (1997) Content analysis: concepts, methods and applications. *Nurse Researcher* 4, 5–16.

<sup>150</sup> Dey I. (1993) *Qualitative Data Analysis. A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*. Routledge, London.

<sup>151</sup> Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). (p.109-111)

<sup>152</sup> Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). (p.111)

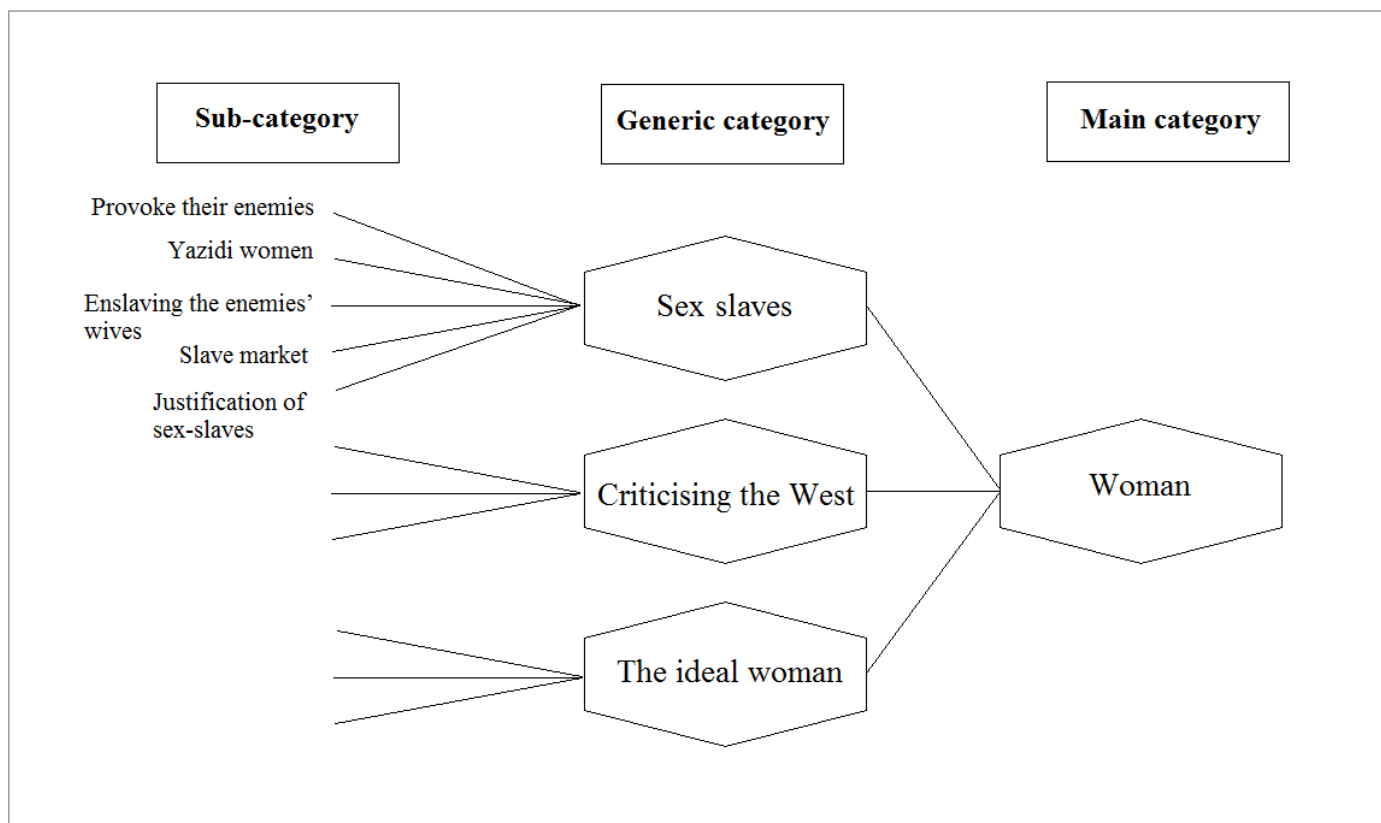


Figure 1. Model based on figure 2 in the article of Elo and Kyngäs.<sup>153</sup>

4. *Code all text*: code all text from the different magazines that relates to one of the categories.

5. *Draw a conclusion from the results*.

6. *Report the findings*: qualitative research does not provide any digits or statistical information. Thus, the results must consist of a balance of descriptions and interpretation of the researcher.<sup>154</sup>

#### 4. Results

The results of the CA regarding *Dabiq* and *Inspire* are given according to the identified themes. Every theme starts with the individual results of the analysis of both *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. Thereafter, similarities and differences between the two magazines are illustrated regarding that particular theme. As mentioned forwarded, the themes are women, descriptions of each other, targeting non-combatants, and violence against coreligionists. Important to realise, this study discusses the statements and explanations extracted from these

<sup>153</sup> Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). (p.111)

magazines and stresses that these citations do not reflect the beliefs and practices of Muslims in general.

#### **4.1. Women in *Inspire***

The subject of women in *Inspire* divided in three different categories. All the categories together represented how AQAP uses, perceives and describes women in their magazine. The different categories are criticising the West, the ideal women, and the female figure as a motivation for men to join the jihad.

**4.1.1. Criticising the West.** In the article entitled '*The West should ban the Niqab covering its real face*', AQAP argues that it is a Muslim woman's own choice whether she wears a niqab or not.<sup>155</sup> A niqab is a veil worn by women that covers the face except the eyes. According to AQAP:

*'The niqab is not mandatory on Muslim women according to many scholars.... Muslim women wear the niqab because they want to wear it and because they choose to. Our sisters need to dispel the Western myth that Muslim women need to be emancipated because they are being forced into wearing a garment they do not want to wear.'*<sup>156</sup>

In the same article, the author known as Yahya Ibrahim stresses that wearing a niqab is a human right. This right is deprived by Western governments as part of '*a legislative war being fought out in parliaments.*'<sup>157</sup> Ibrahim argues that the ban of wearing the niqab in several Western countries is an illustration of the intolerance of Western society towards Muslims. Furthermore, the writer emphasises that jokes about the niqab made by cartoonists under the pretext of freedom of expression are an insult to many Muslim woman.<sup>158</sup>

In the rubric '*Inspire responses*', questions posed by the readers are answered by the editors. In the eighth issue, AQAP pays attention to the niqab issue again. Similar to the article in issue one, the same point of view is repeated in issue eight. The former seems to illustrate that AQAP wants to show the world that they treat women well by offering them the choice to wear a niqab or not. As such, AQAP argues that they are not the one limiting women in their free choice, in contrast to the hypocritical West.

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<sup>155</sup> Inspire 1:24

<sup>156</sup> Inspire 1:24

<sup>157</sup> Inspire 1:24

<sup>158</sup> Inspire 1:24

Following this rationale, the editors of *Inspire* describe Western woman as the victim of Western culture, which is oriented towards sex.<sup>159</sup> AQAP uses the image of Western women based on their own interpretation to criticise Western culture, which the writers of *Inspire* describe as follows:

*'Thug culture - which is applauded in Western media - has a major effect on the way its followers think. ...the better part of their music is filled with criminal slogans of murder, gang allegiances, references to women as sexual objects, and the advocacy of the superiority of scantily clad women.'*<sup>160</sup>

According to the writers, the West sees woman primarily as a sexual object. In this light, AQAP explained the high rape rates in the US army. The writer subsequently wonders; *'How could a man with a speck of manhood let his wife, daughter or sister join the US Army while the sex predators in uniform are the bosses?'*<sup>161</sup> In the same issue, the writer criticises the US of hypocrisy when it comes to women's rights:

*'There, the American sordid soldiers violated honors of Muslim women, as they did in Afghānistān and more. The whole world heard and witnessed the rape cases. This is the same country that shouts, Women's rights! Women's right!'*<sup>162</sup>

In the previous statement, AQAP emphasises that its members do not violate the rights of women. Instead, the instances of rape by US military personnel are used to illustrate Americans do undermining women's rights.

**4.1.2. The ideal woman.** In issue twelve of *Inspire*, an article is written about the wife of a mujahedeen. In this article, which is apparently written by a woman, the writer points out how a good wife should behave.<sup>163</sup> The article begins with advice for Muslim women to not believe the anti-Islamist propaganda of the West and corrupt Islamic scholars. Instead of following the anti-Islam propaganda, the writer encourages women to gain knowledge of the Koran through self-study. The article further stresses that a Muslim women is obliged to teach her children about Islam and prepare them for jihad. The significance of this task is emphasised in issue eight:

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<sup>159</sup> *Inspire* 8:6

<sup>160</sup> *Inspire* 8:6

<sup>161</sup> *Inspire* 12:12

<sup>162</sup> *Inspire* 12:33

<sup>163</sup> *Inspire* 12: 48-49

*‘O mother of the upcoming generation, it is your obligation and responsibility to teach and enlighten your children. “The woman is the essence of our Ummah, and any short coming from her is a true defeat”. It is you my sister who is the essence of this blessed Ummah.’*<sup>164</sup>

Furthermore, in the article titled *‘Woman of the glorious Ummah’* in the same issue, AQAP describes the expectations of a good Muslim woman. According to the editors, decent Muslim women always aim to support the *ummah*. This is illustrated in the following citation:

*‘Every leader began as a follower and took the initiative to stand on his own feet. So my sister don’t just attend a lecture, be the speaker. Don’t wait for the author to write, be the author. Don’t just be a part of the ummah, help improve it.’*<sup>165</sup>

The previous citation demonstrates that AQAP expects a pro-active attitude of Muslim women. The following controversial example explicitly reveals how a mother should offer everything in favour of the *ummah*, according to *Inspire*:

*‘Sister, why don’t you become the example of Umm Suraaqah? She sent her son for Jihad in Afghanistan, and when he was martyred, the mujahideen said, “how do we inform her about her son’s death...” So Sheikh Azzam called her and gave her the glad tidings of her son’s Shahada and he told her words of comfort and patience, but she didn’t need those words at all.... So she replied to the sheikh, “Alhamdulillah for Suraaqah’s martyrdom. In a week, Inshallah, I will send you his brother to replace him.’*<sup>166</sup>

**4.1.3. The female figure as a motivation for men to join the jihad.** In an article titled *‘My wish If only I was a mujahid’* in issue eight, a woman named Taiel Haya encourages men to become mujahedeen. Through the format of a poem, the writer glorifies the being of a mujahedeen:

*‘Upon my shoulder I would carry a rocket launcher and in my hand there would be a Kalashnikov, A bomb would adorn my chest and the band of laa ilaaha illa Allah would be*

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<sup>164</sup> Inspire 8:33

<sup>165</sup> Inspire 8:32

<sup>166</sup> Inspire 10:33

*across my forehead... Shouting Allahu Akbar I would attack His enemies, Each of them I would eliminate, one by one.*<sup>167</sup>

The aim of the poem is to draw an idealistic, heroic, attractive image of being a mujahedeen in order to encourage Western Muslims to become one. The poem ends as follow: *'But, Alas! This cannot be! For a lion-hearted Mujahid warrior I am not, In fact... I am a fragile woman.*<sup>168</sup> This sentence stresses that men have to take the opportunity to become a mujahedeen because many women wish to be a mujahedeen, however, they are not privileged to become one. Therefore, the female figure is used to motivate men to become mujahedeen. This motivation is particularly important in relation to their husbands: *'O sister, you have to wake up the hearts of the men, and arouse the determination of the heroes..... You have to push your loved ones to the battlefield...*<sup>169</sup>

Furthermore, more than once, hate speeches use the death of Muslim women by Western military attacks as proof that the West seeks to destroy Islam. In this case, AQAP aims to arouse anger by the reader, which should result in a violent jihad against the West. This is demonstrated in a citation from the first issue:

*'We see Cruise missiles and cluster bombs, and we have just seen in Yemen the death of 23 children and 17 women. We cannot stand idly in the face of such aggression, and we will fight back and incite others to do the same.'*<sup>170</sup>

Moreover, in an article titled *'Roshonara & Taimour: followers of borderless loyalty'* in issue four, the author praises the British national Roshonara Choudhry, who tried to kill the British parliament member Stephen Timms in 2010:

*'A woman has shown to the ummah's men the path of jihad! A woman my brothers! Shame on all the men for sitting on their hands while one of our women has taken up the individual jihad! She felt the need to do it simply because our men gave all too many excuses to refrain from it.'*<sup>171</sup>

As such, the author argues that a woman did what men are supposed to do, which is wage jihad against the West. Furthermore, the writer of the article states: *'To the men of the*

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<sup>167</sup> Inspire 8:30

<sup>168</sup> Inspire 8:30

<sup>169</sup> Inspire 8:32

<sup>170</sup> Inspire 1:56

<sup>171</sup> Inspire 4:24

*ummah: Take the example of this woman and you will find success in the afterlife.*<sup>172</sup> In this case, a woman is being used to challenge and motivate men to commit an attacked.

In conclusion, the editors of *Inspire* aim to illustrate that AQAP does not suppress the rights of women, while the West violent the rights of women. AQAP further draws a picture of how a decent Muslim woman should behave and uses women to motivate men for action.

#### **4.2. Women in *Dabiq***

Similar to the previous analysis of *Inspire*, the results of *Dabiq* are provided in three different categories, which include all relevant women related matters in the magazines. As such, the categories are sex slaves, the ideal women and criticising the West.

**4.2.1. Sex slaves.** When *Dabiq* pays attention to the subject of women, the discussion is often on women as slaves. In various issues of *Dabiq*, the term ‘sex slave’ is frequently used even when the subject of the article has nothing to do with women. For instance, the editors of *Dabiq* use the term to threaten and insult their enemies:

*‘I’ve ordered him to wage war against them over such,.. to burn them alive with fire, to kill them in a severe manner using all means, to enslave their women and children, and to not accept from any one of them anything but Islam.’<sup>173</sup>*

Furthermore, in an article about Boko Haram, IS supports one of its affiliates in Africa. Here, IS praises the enslavement of hundreds of Christian girls:

*‘They did not fear the blame of any critics when they captured and enslaved hundreds of Christian girls, even as the crusader media machine put the brunt of its strength into focusing the world’s attention on the issue.’<sup>174</sup>*

In addition to mentioning the term sex slaves, the editors of *Dabiq* published two explicit and in-depth articles regarding this subject. The first article is titled ‘*The revival of slavery before the hour*’ in the fourth issue. Here, a group of ‘Islamic scholars’ argue that it is justified to enslave Yazidi women and sell them to IS soldiers. The anonymous writer describes Yazidi as the children of Satan himself: ‘*Their creed is so deviant from the truth that even cross-worshipping Christians for ages considered them devil worshippers and Satanists.*<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, the editor states that the enslaving of the Yazidi is endorsed in the Koran,

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<sup>172</sup> *Inspire* 4:24

<sup>173</sup> *Dabiq* 7:7

<sup>174</sup> *Dabiq* 4:14

<sup>175</sup> *Dabiq* 4:14

Hadith and Sharia. Therefore, the editor argues that refusing slavery of Yazidi is a denial of Islamic law:

*‘One should remember that enslaving the families of the kuffār and taking their women as concubines is a firmly established aspect of the Sharī’ah that if one were to deny or mock, he would be denying or mocking the verses of the Qur’ān and the narrations of the Prophet.’<sup>176</sup>*

In addition to religious duty, IS stresses that slavery has several benefits for society, such as the decrease in adultery and prostitution. Therefore, IS argues that sex slavery prevents IS fighters from sinning. Moreover, it is difficult for IS fighters to build a family because of the continuous fighting. However, men are subjected to temptations, which lead to sins. To avoid sinning, the editors of the magazine argue that slavery is a good alternative to marriage: *‘Men who cannot afford marriage to free women find themselves surrounded by temptation.’<sup>177</sup>* Above all, IS has claimed that turning Yazidi women into sex slaves is morally acceptable because *‘You are the best people for people. You bring them with chains around their necks, until they enter Islam.’<sup>178</sup>* The previous citation considers slavery as not only beneficial for IS soldiers, but also as an opening of the door to Islam for the Yazidi women and girls. As a result, *‘Many of the shirk women and children have willingly accepted Islam and now race to practice it with evident sincerity after their exit from the darkness of shirk.’<sup>179</sup>* The first article about slavery ends with linking slavery to the ‘final hour’ (the end of the world). IS argues that slavery is a sign for the establishment of a new Islamic era by citing the Hadith: *‘One of the signs of the Hour was that the slave girl gives birth to her master.’<sup>180</sup>*

In the second article about sex slaves titled *‘Slave-girls or prostitutes?’* the writer, who seems to be a jihadi bride named Umm Sumayyah Al-Muhajirah, advocates the religiously permissible act of raping slaves. In the article, Al-Muhajirah argues that sex with slaves is much more appropriate than prostitution. In similar lines with the previous article about slaves, the writer argues that it is Allah’s will to enslave the enemy.<sup>181</sup> Thereby, the writer glorifies *saby* (the taking of slaves as spoils of victory in war):

*‘Saby (taking slaves through war) is a great prophetic Sunnah containing many divine wisdoms and religious benefits, regardless of whether or not the people are aware of this.’*

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<sup>176</sup> *Dabiq* 4:19

<sup>177</sup> *Dabiq* 4:19

<sup>178</sup> *Dabiq* 4:15

<sup>179</sup> *Dabiq* 4:15

<sup>180</sup> *Dabiq* 4:15

<sup>181</sup> *Dabiq* 10:46

*The Sīrah is a witness to our Prophet's (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) raiding of the kuffār. He would kill their men and enslave their children and women.*<sup>182</sup>

Moreover, the writer argues that *saby* provides *kuffur* women and girls an opportunity to convert to Islam and therefore they should be glad to be enslaved: *'Indeed, from the slave-girls are those that after saby turned into hard-working, diligent seekers of knowledge after she found in Islam what she couldn't find in kufr.'*<sup>183</sup> As such, Al-Muhajirah refutes a common criticism that *saby* is just for pleasure: *'So whoever thinks that the ultimate aim of saby is pleasure, then he is a mistaken ignoramus.'*<sup>184</sup> Nonetheless, Al-Muhajirah condemns the West for its hypocrisy regarding the slave subject:

*'Are slave girls who we took by Allah's command better, or prostitutes- an evil you do not denounce- who are grabbed by quasi men in the lands of kufr when you live? A prostitute in you lands comes and goes, openly committing sin. She lives by selling her honor, within the sight and hearing of the deviant scholars from whom we don't hear even a faint sound. As for the slave- girl that was taken by the swords of men following the cheerful warrior, then her enslavement is in opposition to human rights and copulation with her is rape?!'*<sup>185</sup>

The article ends with a personal provocation of US president Obama by sketching a future scenario in which first lady Michelle Obama is offered for sale on a slave market: *'Who knows, maybe Michelle Obama's price won't even exceed a third of a dīnār, and a third of a dīnār is too much for her!'*<sup>186</sup>

It can be doubted whether IS members really believe their own poorly supported religious-based reasoning for justifying their rape ideology. IS often seeks to provoke its enemies with gruel executions or the destruction of historic sites. This could also be the case with their attitude towards sex slaves. Another reason for having sex slaves could be the fulfilling their own lusts, however the editors of Dabiq reject this as mentioned in the previous section.

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<sup>182</sup> Dabiq 9:44

<sup>183</sup> Dabiq 10:48

<sup>184</sup> Dabiq 4:48

<sup>185</sup> Dabiq 9:49

<sup>186</sup> Dabiq 9:49

**4.2.2. Criticising the West.** In addition to sex slaves, the editors of *Dabiq* use the subject of women in order to criticise the West. In such instances, the writers illustrate how the West kills innocent Muslim women on purpose. This is illustrated by the following example:

*‘They have killed nine Muslim women three days ago by striking a bus transporting them from Shāmto Iraq. Will you leave the disbeliever to sleep safely at home while the Muslim women and children shiver with fear of the roars of the crusader airplanes above their heads day and night?’<sup>187</sup>*

In several cases, IS includes highly graphic pictures of dead, blood-stained girls in the hands of their crying mothers to strengthen their statements. The editors aim to arouse anger by their readers by demonstrating that the West, and in particular the US, are the real barbarians:

*‘The US had killed women, children, and the elderly, during its direct occupation of Iraq prior to its withdrawal. There are countless accounts of American soldiers executing families and raping women under the sanctity of the US military and Blackwater. Muslim families were killed under the broad definition of “collateral damage,” which the US grants itself alone the right to apply. Therefore, if a mujāhid kills a single man with a knife, it is the barbaric killing of the “innocent.” However, if Americans kill thousands of Muslim families all over the world by pressing missile fire.’<sup>188</sup>*

### **4.2.3. The ideal woman**

The last category ‘ideal of woman’ includes rules of behaviour and a call for action aimed at Muslim women. The category is based on the rubric ‘*from our sisters*’, which has returned frequently since the seventh edition of *Dabiq*. In this rubric, which is apparently written by a woman named *Sumayyah Al-Muhajirah*, IS seeks to reach a female audience.

The first article of the rubric is an purported interview with Umm Basir Al-Muhujirra, who was the wife of Amedy Coulibaly. An alleged interview with her was published in *Dabiq*. Here Al-Muhujirra states that her *hijrah* went well and that ‘*living in a land where the law of Allah (‘azza wa jall) is implemented is something great. I feel at ease now that I have carried out his obligation.*’<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, Al-Muhujirra emphasises how a good Muslim

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<sup>187</sup> *Dabiq* 4:48

<sup>188</sup> *Dabiq* 3:2

<sup>189</sup> *Dabiq* 7:50

wife should act: *'My sisters, be bases of support and safety for your husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons. Be advisors to them. They should find comfort and peace with you. Do not make things difficult for them. Facilitate all matters for them.'*<sup>190</sup> Thereby, a Muslim women should be patient at all times, according to Al-Muhujirraj.<sup>191</sup>

In addition, Muslim women must study the Koran and Hadiths: *'You know that acquiring knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim and every Muslimah, and Allah has blessed the Islamic State, which has not been stingy towards its women in providing institutions and courses on the entirety of the Sharī'ah sciences.'*<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, women also achieve an import role by educating their children: *'As for you, O mother of lion cubs... And what will make you know what the mother of lion cubs is? She is the teacher of generations.'*<sup>193</sup>

Muslim women who not live in the caliphate, are obligated to perform *hijrah*. The article titled *'the twin halves of the muhajirin'*, which appears to have been written by a woman, focuses on the *hijrah* of woman. The writer explains *hijrah* as: *'to leave dārul-kufr for dārul-Islām [Al-Mughnī]. Sa'd Ibn 'Atīq (rahimahullāh) said, It is migrating from the places of shirk and sin to the land of Islam and obedience.'*<sup>194</sup> The aim of the article is to urge women to perform *hijrah* to the Islamic State. To encourage this, the writer illustrates the performance of *hijrah* as a fulfilling experience. In the following citation, the writer describes her arrival in the caliphate:

*'Our hearts were cooled after having seen the idols fluttering in the skies of dārul-kufr for so long! The first checkpoint we saw, the first image of the State's soldiers far from the Internet and TV screens – those dusty and ragged in their flesh and blood – we saw them here with our eyes while tears from our eyes poured forth generously and our tongues pronounced the takbīr silently. How much good have you forbidden yourself, O you who have sat back and remained behind jihād!'*<sup>195</sup>

Moreover, in the following example, the writer argues that it is better for an unborn child to die in its mother's womb during *hijrah* than going to a Western school in the West. Again, the writer stress the importance of *hijrah* for a Muslim woman:

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<sup>190</sup> *Dabiq* 7:51

<sup>191</sup> *Dabiq* 11:43

<sup>192</sup> *Dabiq* 11:43

<sup>193</sup> *Dabiq* 11:44

<sup>194</sup> *Dabiq* 8:32

<sup>195</sup> *Dabiq* 8:36

*'Another sister performed hijrah with her husband while she was pregnant. She travelled by car and passed through three countries until she reached the land of the Islamic State and then gave birth to her child who, by Allah's decree, died during birth due to pregnancy complications apparently caused by the difficulty of the trip. ...Yes, he died and was buried in the Islamic State upon the fitrah [the Islamic concept of human nature]<sup>196</sup> and this is better for him than to die through the curriculum of the tawāghīt's schools. How valuable is the hijrah and how valueless is every sacrifice on its path.'*<sup>197</sup>

In summary, IS justifies the use *kuffar* women as sex slaves, stresses several obligations and tasks for Muslim women, and criticises the West by emphasising the suffering of Muslim women caused by the West.

**4.2.4. Differences and similarities.** The most obvious difference between *Dabiq* and *Inspire* regarding women is the subject of sex slaves. Whereas IS justifies the enslavement of women and girls, AQAP does not mention sex slave even once. In contrast, AQAP discusses the sex-orientated culture of the West in *Inspire*. Another striking difference is that IS emphasises the obligation for women to perform *hijrah*, while AQAP does not provide a clear call in this regard. In contrast to *Dabiq*, the editors of *Inspire* use the figure of woman to motivate men for action. The last difference relates to the freedom of choice of women. AQAP aims to explain to their readers that in contrast to what Western media claims, Muslim women have the freedom of choice, at least regarding the niqab issue. *Dabiq* does not touch upon the theme of free choice at all.

Yet besides the differences between the two magazines, they share several commonalities. First, both magazines criticise the West for targeting women. Second, the two pictures of a decent Muslim woman, as separately illustrated in *Dabiq* and *Inspire*, demonstrate a significant overlap. The editors of both magazines have stated that a woman must be patient at all times, is obliged to gain knowledge of Islam, must motivate her husband for jihad, perform a crucial role in educating the future generation for jihad, and above all, must avoid being an obstacle to her husband in his path to Allah. Third, both magazines focus on the female reader with female-oriented articles apparently written by female writers.

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<sup>196</sup> Mohamed, Y. (1996). *Fitrah: The Islamic concept of human nature*. London: Ta-Ha.

<sup>197</sup> *Dabiq* 8:35

### 4.3. Targeting non-combatants (*Inspire*)

A frequently occurring subject in *Inspire* is the targeting of civilians. As such, the texts relating to this object can be divided into two distinct categories. The first category involves criticising the West for targeting civilians under the banner of the ‘war on terror’. The second category, pays attention to the question of whether or not it is *halal* to kill civilians in jihad. AQAP exhibits a complex understanding regarding the targeting of citizens. In order to clarify their view for their readers, the editors of *Inspire* have devoted various articles on this subject.

**4.3.1. Criticising the West for killing Muslim civilians.** According to the writers of *Inspire*, the world vision, as constructed by corrupt Western media and governments, is poisoned. In this Western world vision, AQ is described as a barbarian terrorist organisation that kills Western civilians on purpose and aims to dominate the West. In contrast to what the media state, not AQAP but Western governments are the ones that targeting civilians in order to destroy Islam and aims to dominate the world:

*‘Why did they kill him? They killed him because he was a Muslim, his father was a Muslim, a preacher who called to the Islam they fight. The father, an American citizen, was also killed in an extra-judicial assassination without any trial.’<sup>198</sup>*

This is just one of many examples given in *Inspire* in which the West, and in particular the US, is blamed for civilian casualties. Unsurprisingly, AQAP present itself as victims of the brutal aggression of the West. The following example emphasises the perspective of victimisation:

*‘I think America and Barrack Obama in particular have now shown their true colours for all to see. Even American citizens are now targets for the CIA and for the drone strikes. . . This is a wake-up call for Muslims in America. Today American Muslims are being killed in Yemen, tomorrow they are gonna be killed in New York and Los Angeles... Get ready for the holocaust!’<sup>199</sup>*

The main criticism of AQAP regarding the targeting of citizens by Western armies is the use of drones: *‘They [US drones] bombard ‘suspected’ targets in villages, towns and cities... This includes women and children. Just because an American ‘feels’ this person poses*

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<sup>198</sup> *Inspire* 11:17

<sup>199</sup> *Inspire* 10:9

*danger. Whenever they have this feeling they order for a Hell Fire missile to be launched.*<sup>200</sup> Frequently, the writers of *Inspire* repeat themselves by arguing that the use of drones violates international law and is unethical. In order to empower their claims, AQAP uses several quotes against target killing of well-known Western people, who question the legitimacy of drones, to empower their view. For instance:

*‘Mustafa Qadri (Amnesty International): ‘We’re really concerned about the US drone program. ... This is a secret program. In fact, in our case we’ve found at least in some cases they’ve clearly killed civilians, and some of these cases might be war crimes.’*<sup>201</sup>

**4.3.2. Killing civilians.** There are several prominent articles in *Inspire* that are devoted to the question of whether or not it is *halal* to target non-combatants. In these articles the editors give contrary statements and different explanations for targeting citizens. On the one hand, AQAP states that it is acceptable to target citizens in certain contexts: *‘In such countries [the U.S., Britain, Australia, France, Holland..] we may strike at the public at large.’*<sup>202</sup> On the other hand, AQAP states that it is not allowed to target citizens in the case of women and children: *‘Scholars agree that women and children should not be intentionally targeted,’*<sup>203</sup> or *‘Do not kill an old man or a child or a woman...’*<sup>204</sup>

Along similar lines, the editors of *Inspire* argue that the intentional killing of women and children distinguishes them from Christian terrorists, such as Anders Breivik: *‘The moral code of war between the two groups is vast. We do not deliberately target women and children whereas they feel free to target them in the name of Christianity.’*<sup>205</sup> However, the factual evidence points in a different direction. There are several examples in which AQ exclusively targets civilians. For instance, the attacks on public transport in both London and Madrid. In addition, the editors of *Inspire* often encourage lone wolves to commit attacks in the West with daily objects. For example, in issue two AQAP published an article titled *‘the ultimate mowing machine.’*<sup>206</sup> Here AQAP stimulates individuals to drive into a crowded street with a pick-up truck with steel butcher blades attached to the front. This example

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<sup>200</sup> Inspire 10:11

<sup>201</sup> Inspire 12:59

<sup>202</sup> Inspire 2:54

<sup>203</sup> Inspire 8:42

<sup>204</sup> Inspire 8:42

<sup>205</sup> Inspire 9:41

<sup>206</sup> Inspire 54:2

clearly points to the deliberate targeting of citizens. Moreover, AQAP describes the best way to bomb a civil airplane in issue thirteen.<sup>207</sup>

Considering the previous points, it can be convincingly argued that AQAP is intentionally targeting citizens. However, AQAP does not agree with this conclusion. Although the editors of *Inspire* admit that the organisation indeed has targeted civilians, AQAP stresses that this targeting of civilians was either unintentional or *halal* (permissible under Islamic law) due to special circumstances. Basically, the editors offer six poorly substantiated reasons throughout different issues why it is *halal* for them to target civilians under particular circumstances.

First, the editors of *Inspire* offer the argument that ‘*As long as they target our non-combatants, we will target theirs.*’<sup>208</sup> Second, the editors illustrate that AQ jurists distinguish believers and disbelievers.<sup>209</sup> Thereby, the jurists subdivide disbelievers as *muqatilah*, the group that fights Muslims, and *ghayr muqatilah*, the group that does not fight Muslims. In the case of the unbeliever who does not fight Muslims (the non-combatants), the jurists argue that it is religiously legal to kill them if they hold citizenship of a country that is in war with AQ:

*‘They are in a state of war with us because of their participation in elections that choose governments that wage war against Muslims. They are in a state of war with us because their governments kill our brothers in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq.’*<sup>210</sup>

Third, the editors of *Inspire* explain (supported by quotes from contemporary scholars) that it is permissible to kill civilians when they are among the enemy:

*‘If combatants and non-combatants are mixed together and integrated, it is allowed for the Muslims to attack them even if women, children, the elderly, farmers, merchants and slaves get killed but this should only be done with the intention of fighting the combatants.’*<sup>211</sup>

Fourth, following similar lines as the previous exemption, it is acceptable to kill civilians, if the enemy uses them for protection:

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<sup>207</sup> Inspire 13:104

<sup>208</sup> Inspire 2:54

<sup>209</sup> Inspire 4:20

<sup>210</sup> Inspire 4:21

<sup>211</sup> Inspire 8:41

*'If they (the enemy) shield themselves in war by women and children and others who should not be killed, it is allowed to target them with the intention of killing the combatants. This is because the Prophet used the mangonel [a catapult] even though there were women and children among.'*<sup>212</sup>

Fifth, AQAP often use the sayings of scholars (e.g. from the Hanbali school) to provide the reader with religious 'proof' that justifies the killing of non-combatants. This is illustrated with an example in issue eight. In this article the author contends that it is religiously justified to kill non-combatants, as in the time of the prophet there was an approved form of fighting called *bayat* (no to be confused with bay'ah).<sup>213</sup> According to this form, the enemy was attacked in their tents and houses at night. Consequently, men, women and children were killed because it was hard to distinguish among them in the dark. Related to this:

*'The Messenger of Allah was asked about the ruling concerning the women and children who get targeted in bayat. The Messenger of Allah said in an authentic narration: "They belong to them." Which means that the ruling of the women and children is the same as that for the combatant men whom it is allowed to kill. The Messenger of Allah permitted his companions to engage in this form of fighting even though, at occasions, entire families would be killed.'*<sup>214</sup>

Furthermore, the editors of *Inspire* argue that different scholars provide religious evidence that approve the killing of non-combatants:

*'In short, if there is no `ahd or covenant between the Muslims and a non-Muslim nation, then the Muslim can kill as many disbelievers as he wishes in the non-Muslim land. The shar`iah evidence for this has been established by numerous scholars such as Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Nasirar-Rasheed, Shaykh Abu `Abdillahal-Muhajir and others.'*<sup>215</sup>

However, this 'evidence' is not concretely specified and documented in *Inspire*. The last argument of the editors of *Inspire* that justifies the killing of non-combatants includes 'logical' reasoning:

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<sup>212</sup> Inspire 8:43

<sup>213</sup> Inspire 8:42

<sup>214</sup> Inspire 8:42

<sup>215</sup> Inspire 9:17

*'In as much as it is recognized by both law and logic that the victim has the right to retaliate against his attackers, thus you should expect of us nothing less than more Jihad, resistance, and retribution. Is it logical that America attacks us for more than 50 years and we let it live in security and peace?!'*<sup>216</sup>

Regarding the disbelievers who have nothing to do with the conflict and do not have the nationality of a country that is in war with AQ, the editors of *Inspire* state:

*'One should also avoid harming civilians who are citizens of countries that have no relation with the conflict, even if they are non-Muslim. This must be done in order to maintain the reputation of the Resistance in the different spheres of public opinion.'*

To conclude, on the one hand, AQAP criticises the West and particularly the US for intentionally targeting innocent civilians. On the other hand, the authors offer extensive reasoning for why AQAP is not intentionally targeting civilians. In the cases where civilians are targeted, there is a religious foundation, according to the editors of *Inspire*. Thus, it seems that the editors of *Inspire* make great efforts to prove to their reader that AQAP is a *halal* and righteous organisation rather than a barbaric killing machine.

#### **4.4. Targeting non-combatants (*Dabiq*)**

IS became worldwide known in 2014 because of its video-recorded brutal killings of civilians. However, the subject of targeting citizens is not a dominant theme in *Dabiq*. Main reason for this is that the editors of the magazine have a clear opinion of killing citizens, which does not need much explanation. When the editors pay attention to the subject of targeting civilians, it is either to criticise other regimes or to argue that it is justifiable to kill citizens.

**4.4.1. Criticising other regimes for killing Muslim civilians.** The editors of *Dabiq* criticise the West and the Assad regime for targeting civilians on a large scale. Thereby, bloody pictures of dead civilians are placed beside texts to emphasise the statements of the editors in an effort to raise anger among its readers. In issue two, the editors accuse the US of hypocrisy: *'If a mujāhid kills a single man with a knife, it is the barbaric killing of the innocent. However, if Americans kill thousands of Muslim families all over the world by pressing missile fire buttons, it is merely collateral damage.'*<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> *Inspire* 13:12

<sup>217</sup> *Dabiq* 2:3

**4.4.2. Killing civilians.** IS has a clear view regarding the killing of citizens. This view is explained in the prominent article *'The extinction of the grey zone'* in issue seven. In this article, the editors argue that the world is divided into two camps. The first camp, 'the camp of Islam' includes IS and its followers. The second camp includes anyone who disagrees with the first camp. The article stresses that there is no 'in between camp' or 'grey zone' anymore: *'Bush spoke the truth when he said, Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. Meaning, either you are with the crusade or you are with Islam.'*<sup>218</sup> It does not make any difference whether a person is a Muslim, a child, an elder person, or a woman; if a person is against the ideas of the Islamic State, this person is the enemy of IS and must be killed or converted by force. Therefore, neutrality is not an option:

*'Now, a stance of "neutrality" or "independence" would doom him, as it entailed major sin, which would cause him to commit greater sins until he could commit kufr for the sake of his sinful interests, as the scholars stated, "The reward for sin is another sin," and "Sins are the gateway to kufr.'*<sup>219</sup>

In an article from issue four, IS emphasises once more that they do not make any distinction between citizens or soldiers. In addition to approving the killing of civilians, the editors make a direct call for the killing of citizens in the magazine:

*'If you can kill a disbelieving American or European – especially the spiteful and filthy French – or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbeliever from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military, for they have the same ruling.'*<sup>220</sup>

**4.4.3. Differences and Similarities.** The most significant difference between the two magazines regarding the targeting of citizens is the high degree of attention *Inspire* gives to the subject, in comparison with the little amount of attention *Dabiq* devotes to the killing of civilians. The main reason for this is that IS has a very explicit opinion regarding the killing of civilians, while AQAP has a complicated, sometimes even contradictory, approach to the subject. Moreover, the attitudes of both AQAP and IS towards intentional civilian killing is different. The core principle expressed by the editors of *Inspire* is that AQAP is against the

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<sup>218</sup> *Dabiq* 7:54

<sup>219</sup> *Dabiq* 7:55

<sup>220</sup> *Inspire* 4:9

intentionally killing of civilians, however the editors offer many exceptions to this core principle. In actual practice, AQAP is intentionally targeting non-combatants. However, AQAP states that non-combatants, both Muslims and non-Muslims that have nothing to do with the conflict and who do not originate from a country that is involved in the conflict should not be targeted on purpose. In the case of *Dabiq*, the editors not only support the idea of targeting anyone who disagrees with their ideas, the editors actively encourage the killing of anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, who disagree them. At the same time, *Dabiq* and *Inspire* both use the purposeful targeting of Muslim civilians to criticise their enemies.

#### **4.5. Descriptions of each other (*Inspire*)**

Not surprisingly, there are no direct references to IS in the first eleven issues of *Inspire* because IS as such did not exist during this time period under that name. Throughout the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> issue of *Inspire*, IS (or ISIS or ISIL) is barely mentioned. This is remarkable considering that IS is a direct rival of AQAP in various respects. Although *Inspire* hardly pays attention to *Dabiq*, the magazine does not entirely ignore its greatest competitor. In the article titled ‘*Why did I choose AQ?*’ of issue 12, the editor glorifies the jihad in general. As such, two paragraphs of the article are devoted to the discussion of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI):

*‘Listen to the Amir of the ‘Islamic State of Iraq’, Sheikh Abū ‘Omar Al-Qurashi Al-Baghdādi - may Allāh accept him, as he addressed his soldiers, a speech which terrorizes the enemies of Allāh. He said: “Erupt the volcano of anger. Burn the ground under the feet of the Jews and their supporters, ... Grill their flesh by car bombs, cut off their limbs by mines and take off their hearts by inflicting panic with snipers.” How much we would love to hear these speeches from hundreds and thousands of this Ummah’s leaders?’*<sup>221</sup>

This particular citation regarding ISI is remarkable. To explain, the article was published in issue twelve. This edition of *Inspire* was released in March 2014. In February that very year, AQ broke with ISI (known as ISIS at the time) after a period of tension between the Al-Qaeda core group (AQCG) and its Iraqi affiliate. This implies that the relation between AQ and ISIS was poor otherwise there would have been no break up. Noticeably, the editor of the article glorifies ISI and its former leader Abu Omar al-Baghdadi (not to be confused with the current IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi), while AQ was in conflict with ISI. Moreover, the

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<sup>221</sup> Inspire 11:32

words of the notorious AQI leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (killed in 2006) are praised in the same article:

*Sheikh Abū Mus'ab al-Zarqāwi – may Allāh accept him - said: "The time has passed for the Ummah to accept to suckle humiliation and shame. The time has passed for its promising dawn to be occupied by the hands of the hypocrites of our compatriots. ...." Do you like to hear these words directed to the enemies; Americans and the apostates?'*<sup>222</sup>

The praising of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Inspire is also remarkable considering that the relation between the AQCG and al-Zarqawi was poor. This is evidenced by passages from intercepted messages from the AQCG to al-Zarqawi by the US intelligence service, which illustrate that the AQCG disagreed with the extremely violent approach of al-Zarqawi in 2005.<sup>223</sup> Therefore, al-Zarqawi contributed to the tensions between AQAP and IS, which eventually resulted in a break between the two organisations. Considering this, it is strange then that AQAP would glorifies the sayings of al-Zarqawi.

Surprisingly, the previous reference to al-Zarqawi is not the only time the editors of Inspire are positive towards the former AQI leader. In the first issue of Inspire, released in January 2010, al-Zarqawi's sayings are framed as 'words of wisdom'.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, in issue two, al-Zarqawi's deeds are glorified: '*However, their [the Americans'] dreams were shattered by the real men of the ummah such as Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi.*'<sup>225</sup> In the same article the writer states the following towards those who are imprisoned in Guantanamo: '*The path of the legal system is a long one and it will not get you out of here any time soon, but the knife of Abu Mus'ab al- Zarqawi would.*'<sup>226</sup> In issue six al-Zarqawi is portrayed as a mujahidin leader and glorified in the same breath as AQ figures such as Abu Layth al-Libi: '*Living in the States never made me think twice about the path I was undertaking although many of the mujahidin leaders were killed such as Abu Layth al-Libi, Abu Khabbab al-Masri, Mullah Dadullah, Abu Mus'ab az-Zarqawi and others.*'<sup>227</sup>

In issue thirteen of *Inspire*, an article titled '*deliverance from fitnah*' AQAP discusses the current struggles on the battlefield of jihad between jihad groups: '*The current fitna and calamities surrounding the battlefields of Jihad is no secret to every saadiq (truthful person).*

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<sup>222</sup> Inspire 12:33

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Zawahiris-Letter-to-Zarqawi-Translation.pdf>

<sup>224</sup> Inspire 1:9

<sup>225</sup> Inspire 2:15

<sup>226</sup> Inspire 2:15

<sup>227</sup> Inspire 6:47

Thus, we hope and pray for them to abstain from it.<sup>228</sup> Although the editor does not mention IS directly, it can be said that the expression ‘*fitna on the battlefield*’ relates to the current rivalry and struggle between AQ affiliations and IS. This is strengthened by the fact that the editor gives eight points of advice to safeguard against *fitna*. The advice focuses on avoiding tensions between different jihadi groups. For instance:

*‘Guarding the tongue: Do not drag yourself into fitna, be it by words or actions. Guard your tongue. The prophet said:(whoever believes in Allah and the day of judgement, may he speak a word of good and benefit or silence himself). Indeed Allah hates excessive inquisitiveness and questioning.’*<sup>229</sup> And: *‘Be merciful: To have Mercy towards the Muslims and this Ummah. And supplicating to Allah to unite their ranks and lift their afflictions.’*<sup>230</sup>

The only times *Inspire* pays attention to IS is in an article in the 12<sup>th</sup> issue, an apparently vague reference in the 13<sup>th</sup> issue, and some references to al-Zarqawi and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. It appears that AQAP wanted to hide the conflict between IS and AQCG for their readers. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that *Inspire* does not express themselves negatively towards IS.

Another fact that supports this assumption is the striking absence of IS in various articles. For instance, the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of *Inspire* examines the Paris attacks in February 2015. However, in the detailed description of the Charlie Hebdo attack, the hostage holding of fifteen people in the Jewish kosher supermarket by IS follower Amedy Coulibaly is completely ignored. This is odd considering that Amedy Coulibaly demanded a free passage for the Charlie Hebdo shooters, who were surrounded by police in a printing house. The lack of references to this incident appears to indicate that AQAP wants to retain all credit for the attack for itself. In order to prevent IS from benefiting from the Charlie Hebdo shootings, AQAP cut IS out of the picture in their analysis of the Paris attacks in *Inspire* .

Considering the previous, it can be argued that AQAP ignore IS in *Inspire* because it considers them to be a competitor and therefore the editors are afraid that AQ followers may join the ranks of IS.

#### **4.6. Descriptions of each other (*Dabiq*)**

In contrast to *Inspire*, the description of AQ and its affiliations is a core theme in *Dabiq*. During the various issues, the editors paid attention to the AQCG, Osama Bin Laden,

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<sup>228</sup> Inspire 13:56

<sup>229</sup> Inspire13:56

<sup>230</sup> Inspire 13:56

and other AQ related groups. Thereby, the view of IS regarding AQ is obvious from the first time AQ is mentioned, which is in the second issue of *Dabiq*:

*'In contrast, despite what the Islamic State faces of economic, military, political, and media war, and despite all the different parties unified against it – from the new al-Qā'idah leadership in Khurāsān, to the safawis in Tehran, and all the way to the crusaders in Washington – it advances from victory to victory.'*<sup>231</sup>

Here the editor states that AQ is unified with Iran and the US in order to destroy IS. As such, AQ is portrayed as an enemy in the same breath as Iran and the US. Obviously, it is highly improbable that the US is collaborating with AQ or vice versa to annihilate IS. In issue eleven, the editors of *Dabiq* accuse AQ's allies of cooperating with the West:

*'The Turkish sponsors of al-Qā'idah's allies stand in the same trench as the NATO crusader.... Al-Qā'idah's allies seek the patronage of the British crusader David Cameron....The crusader Royal Air Force of Britain - A symbol of hope for the allies of al-Qā'idah.'*<sup>232</sup>

With the previous citation in mind, it appears to be that IS seek to demonstrate to their readers that although the whole world is against them, IS is still successful.

The main theme of the controversial sixth issue of *Dabiq* is the condemnation of the past and current policy of AQ and AQ related groups. In this light, two extensive articles are devoted to criticise AQ. The first article titled '*Al-qā'idah di Adh-dhawāhirī, Al-Harārī, e An-nadhārī absent Yemenī wisdom*' focuses on Yemen. In this article, IS blames AQAP for its neutrality and its reticent attitude towards the targeting of Houthis in Yemen. The following citation illustrates the previous statement (note that, the Arabic word *Rāfidah* relates to the verb 'to reject'):

*'The meaning is that if these Rāfidah [APAQ leader Shaykh Hārith an-Nadhār] had found muwahhidīn to fight them [Houthis] whereby the muwahhidīn initiate the fighting and do not adhere to the policy in "General Guidelines for Jihādī Action," their [Houthis] evil would not have become exacerbated. He did not deny the prior existence of "Dhawāhirī-style" fighting treating the Houthis as a Muslim faction that is to be fought with the least amount of*

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<sup>231</sup> *Dabiq* 2:26

<sup>232</sup> *Dabiq* 11:7-8

*force required to repel its aggression, meaning purely defensive fighting containing no harshness or severity ...*<sup>233</sup>

Furthermore, the writer of the article argues that the statements of AQAP in favour of IS are not sincere:

*'It should be noted that the statements of al-Qā'idah in Yemen "in support" of the Islamic State were only made due to many objections from the soldiers and leaders (not including the top-level leadership) concerning the "neutrality" of al-Qā'idah in Yemen and its Dhawāhirīness.*<sup>234</sup>

AQ is criticised again over the situation in Yemen in the 10<sup>th</sup> issue of *Dabiq*. In this case, the writers blame AQ for being weak: *'The City of Al-Mukalla in Yemen, where al-Qā'idah made no effort to implement the Sharī'ah after taking over.*<sup>235</sup> In addition of AQ's soft attitude towards Houthis, AQ is accused of hypocrisy. As a reaction of AQ's critics of the IS attack on a Houthi temple, the editors of IS stated:

*'When one contrasts this blessed operation with al-Qā'idah's attack on a Houthi rally in Tahrir Square in Sanaa last fall, the blatant hypocrisy becomes evident: Is it permissible for Al-Qa'idah – according to Dhawāhiri's feeble guidelines – to bomb a Houthi rally in a public square, but forbidden for the Islamic State to bomb a Houthi gathering in a Houthi temple?'*<sup>236</sup>

The second article of the sixth issue that critiques AQ is the cover story *'Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony From Within'*. This 16-page long article, which is the longest article published in any of its issues, is devoted to the AQCG in Waziristan (a mountainous tribal area in Pakistan). The article is apparently written by Abu Jarir al-Shamali, a former AQ commander, who currently serves in the IS army. Here al-Shamali does not draw a favourable picture of AQ and its allies. The article starts with a description of the pre 9-11 era in Waziristan: *'Before September 11th, we used to consider Tandhīm [a secret organization for action]*<sup>237</sup> *al-Qā'idah to be a jihādī organization.*<sup>238</sup> After the introduction of the pre 9-11 period, al-Shamali takes the reader forward in time. Al-Shamali describes his disappointment

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<sup>233</sup> *Dabiq* 6:22

<sup>234</sup> *Dabiq* 6:23

<sup>235</sup> *Dabiq* 10:67

<sup>236</sup> *Dabiq* 8:19

<sup>237</sup> Explained in *Inspire* issue 6:15

<sup>238</sup> *Dabiq* 6:40

when he returned to Waziristan in 2010 after being imprisoned for eight years in Iran: *'I had thought the mujahidin were the decision makers there and that the shar'ī laws were implemented by them there. But alas and sadly, the dominant law was the tribal laws.'*<sup>239</sup> The writer provides nine critical points to the reader of the shortcomings of the rule in the Waziristan region at the time of his return. Most points relate to the lack of Sharia law implementation.

The absence of a proper internet connection in Waziristan and the negative attitude of the AQ leadership towards IS prevented al-Shamali from gaining knowledge of what happened in Syria and Iraq: *'They [AQ leadership] would not show anyone anything about the State. It was as if it was non existent.'*<sup>240</sup> From that moment there was a decent internet connection, the editor gained knowledge of IS, which he describes as *'a gift from Allah that was an alternative to the chaos afflicting the arena at the time.'*<sup>241</sup> Consequently, *'we disassociated ourselves from Tandhīm al-Qā'idah and from the shar'ī lapses of adh-Dhawāhirī, and gave bay'ah to the Islamic State and its amīr, Amīrul-Mu'minīn Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī.'*<sup>242</sup> During the time the writer gave bay'ah (an oath of allegiance) to IS, the army of IS was growing dramatically. The writer argues that for this reason AQ sees IS as a threat and therefore aims to besmirch the name of IS:

*'They fabricated lies against us and described us in the harshest of ways: takfīrī, Khawārij, killers of Muslims, Wahhābī... and they would warn the people that we were murderers and that we'd slaughter them.'*<sup>243</sup>

Besides damaging the reputation of IS, the AQ leadership seeks to stop bay'ah of AQ members to IS. Relating to this, the writer states: *'Tandhīm al-Qā'idah attempted to implore them to stand in the face of the brothers with bay'ah to the Islamic State, but the Tandhīm returned without success.'*<sup>244</sup>

In issue 8-9-10 and 11 of *Dabiq*, the article *'The allies of Al-Qa'id in Sham'* continues with a follow-up in every new issue. In these articles, AQ related groups in Sham are slandered (Sham is an area which includes Syria, a part of Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon,

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<sup>239</sup> *Dabiq* 6:40

<sup>240</sup> *Dabiq* 6:50

<sup>241</sup> *Dabiq* 6:40

<sup>242</sup> *Dabiq* 6:53

<sup>243</sup> *Dabiq* 6:53

<sup>244</sup> *Dabiq* 6:53

Cyprus and Palestine). First, the soft and un-Islamic attitude of the allies of AQ in Sham are criticised:

*'According to the allies of al-Qā'idah in Syria, there is no difference between Muslim, Christian (Assyrian/Syriac), and Nusrayrī, Rāfidī, Durzī, and Ismā'īlī; Syria is a country for all of them! According to the allies of al-Qā'idah in Syria, the Syrian National Coalition, the Syrian Interim Government, and the regimes of Turkey, ĀlSaud, and Qatar are all their Muslim brothers!'*<sup>245</sup>

Second, the editors of *Dabiq* express their abhorrence of Zahran Alloush, the rebel leader of Jaysh al-Islam (army of Islam, JAI) in Syria. JAI is a coalition of different Salafist rebel groups in Syria, which is openly supported by AQ:

*'He [Zahran Alloush] believes in freedom of religion and religious coexistence, a cornerstone of secularist nationalism. And he compromises religious fundamentals, meets with Jewish leaders part of the crusade against Islam, and raises banners of secularist jāhiliyyah for the sake of obtaining aid. And yet, Alloush has been one of the top allies of "al-Qā'idah" in Syria.'*<sup>246</sup>

Third, the AQ affiliation Jabhat an-Nusrah is criticised. The editors of *Dabiq* accuse Jabhat an-Nusrah (JN) of colluding with the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which is a defined enemy of IS:

*'This is in addition to other events I myself witnessed. When for example, some of the leadership of "Jabhat an-Nusrah" supported the Free Syrian Army with weapons and helped them in fighting against the Islamic State in some regions.'*<sup>247</sup>

The previous citations illustrate once more that IS does not limit their confrontations in Syria to the Syrian Armed Forces, FSA, Shia Muslims and Kurds, but also combats and openly provokes mainstream Salafist groups such as JN and JAI. This may indicate that IS is so confident of its power that the group is able to engage in combat with several enemies in Syria.

Fourth, issue eleven includes an interview with Abul-Mughirah al-Qahtani, IS' commander-in-chief in Libya. The interviewer asks al-Qahtani about the situation with Ansar

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<sup>245</sup> *Dabiq* 8:11

<sup>246</sup> *Dabiq* 10:7

<sup>247</sup> *Dabiq* 10:71

ash-Shariah (AAS), which maintains strong ties with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Al-Qahtani answers that many of the group members in Libya have pledged bay'ah to IS because of: *'the groups [AQIM] abandonment of the lost obligation of the era and its preference of division to unity, most clear in its lack of a bay'ah to the Khalīfah and in its unity with "revolutionary" movements linked to the apostate regime of Tarābulus in some regions as well as its acceptance in other regions of suspicious aid from filthy hands.'*<sup>248</sup>

The previous citation aims to slander AQ in order to encourage AQ members to pledge bay'ah to IS.

Yet besides all the criticism regarding AQ, the editors of *Dabiq* are reasonably positive towards the founder and former AQ leader Osama Bin Laden.

*'Umar al-Baghdādī and Abū Hamzah al-Muhājir, for no one fought the sahwāt of Iraq except the Islamic State under the leadership of these two men. And these two men and the state that they established were praised by Shaykh Usāmah Ibn Lādin (rahimahullāh) as well as the rest of the former al-Qā'idah leadership.'*<sup>249</sup>

The editors thus appear to argue that Bin Laden was in favour of an Islamic State. However, several sources indicate that Bin Laden was not keen on the ideas and methods of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi and al-Bagdadi.<sup>250</sup>

In addition, an article in the 10<sup>th</sup> issue of *Dabiq* states that the new AQ approach designed by Dari adh-Dhawāhirī (al-Zawahiri) after the death of Bin Laden conflicts with the policies of the former leader. As a result, AQ became a less powerful and potent organisation:

*'Now just as the Tālibān do not pose a threat towards the safety and security of the crusader homeland, al-Qā'idah no longer poses a threat. This became the case after Dhawāhirī [al-Zawahiri] adopted new policies opposing the policies of them ujāhid Shaykh Usāmah Ibn Lādin.'*<sup>251</sup>

Furthermore, the editors of *Dabiq* glorify the 9-11 attacks in the ninth issue of *Dabiq* and additionally place two major pictures of the burning Twin Towers next to the text.<sup>252</sup>

On the one hand, it makes sense that a Salafist terrorist group such as IS would be keen on

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<sup>248</sup> *Dabiq* 6:11

<sup>249</sup> *Dabiq* 2:25

<sup>250</sup> Groll, E., & Francis, D. (2015). Osama bin Laden Would Not Have Taken Ramadi, *Foreignpolicy*. Retrieved October 17, 2015, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/20/osama-bin-laden-would-not-have-taken-ramadi/>

<sup>251</sup> *Dabiq* 10:67

<sup>252</sup> *Dabiq* 9:15-19

highlighting the 9-11 attacks and therefore pays attention to this event in its magazine. On the other hand, it is kind of a contradiction that IS glorifies the greatest success of their rival, which the editors insult and criticise the majority of the time. The glorifying of both 9-11 and Bin Laden could be a conscious strategy of IS to argue that AQ was a successful Islamic organisation in the past, however, since the death Bin Laden, the organisation faces decline. Therefore, jihadists should join IS instead of the disintegrating AQ organisation.

In conclusion, the editors of *Dabiq* frequently criticise AQ and its affiliations throughout the different issues of the magazine in order to draw unattractive picture of the organization. The only time *Dabiq* is positive about AQ is when the editors refer to Bin Laden and the 9-11 attacks.

**4.6.1. Differences and similarities.** There are major differences in the way AQAP and IS describes each other in their magazines. The most significant differences is that the editors of *Dabiq* often criticise AQAP, while the editors of *Inspire* do not criticise IS at all. IS describes AQAP and its affiliates as hypocrites, un-Islamic, weak, and consequently criticises the organisation for being neutral towards the true enemies of Islam. Furthermore, AQ its allies are condemn of cooperating with Iran, FSA, Christians and the West in order to destroy IS. The only times IS is positive towards AQ is when the editors paid tribute to Osama Bin Laden and the 9-11 attacks. In contrast to IS, AQ barely mentions IS (or one of its predecessors ISIL, ISI, ISIS) in *Inspire*. The times IS is mentioned in *Inspire*, the editors either call for calmness on the battlefields of jihad between AQ and IS or report positive about IS and its former leaders, which is remarkable considering the past events. Nowhere in all the *Inspire* issues could be found a critical sound regarding IS. This could empower the assumption that AQAP sees IS as a serious competitor in the fight for new recruits, the loyalty of jihadi organisations, power and media attention. Consequently, AQ ignores IS to avoid further tensions.

#### **4.7. Violence against coreligionists (*Inspire*)**

The Koran states clearly that Muslims are forbidden to violate or kill coreligionists.<sup>253</sup> However, according to extremists, if a Muslim accuses another Muslim of apostasy, tyranny or polytheism, this person is no longer a Muslim and therefore it is *halal* to kill him. This act of a Muslim declaring other Muslims to be infidels is known as *takfir*.<sup>254</sup> Extended information of *takfiri* and relate concepts, e.g., the *Khawarij*, could be found in the theoretical

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<sup>253</sup> Koran verse 4:93

<sup>254</sup> Hafez, M. M. (2011). *Takfir* and violence against Muslims. In Moghadam, A., & Fishman, B. (Eds). *Fault lines in global Jihad: Organizational, strategic and ideological fissures* (25-46). Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

chapter (see page 15). The highly controversial theme of violence against coreligionists is often debated by many extremist and non-extremist scholars. This section focuses on how AQAP deals with the subject of violence against fellow Muslims in their magazines.

**4.7.1. Rejecting takfiri and Khawarij ideology.** In the second issue of *Inspire*, released in October 2010, AQAP pays attention to the subject of Khawarij, which the editors describe as ‘*a manifestation of extremist belief and actions.*’<sup>255</sup> According to the editors of *Inspire*, the Khawarij accuse Muslims of kuffur, ‘*based on acts that are considered to be major sins and not acts of disbelief.*’<sup>256</sup> AQAP warns against the Khawarij movement by arguing that the movement primary focuses on killing Muslims rather than the true unbelievers. In the same issue, the editors point out that takfir and the Khawarij are no longer relevant issues these days:

*‘Yes, there still remains strains of takfir today that are similar to those of the khawarij of yesterday but the problem of extremism is a problem that is most pronounced during times of the strength of the ummah rather than moments of weakness.’*<sup>257</sup>

AQAP stress that not *takfir* but *irja* is the contemporary problem of today’s world: ‘*In times like ours, it is the problem of the other extreme, irja, that we need to actively tackle.*’<sup>258</sup> In *Inspire*, *irja* is described as: ‘*no act that a Muslim might commit would take him out of the folds of Islam.*’<sup>259</sup> Obviously, AQAP is not in favour of *irja*’s soft attitude regarding sinners. The point the editors want to make in *Inspire* is that AQAP aims at neither *irja* nor *Khawarij* but takes a middle-ground position between both ideas: ‘*What we need is the middle path; the path of the Messenger of Allah!; the path that follows the Qur’an and Sunnah.*’<sup>260</sup> In issue four of *Inspire*, the editors warn against the concepts of *Khawarij* and *takfir*:

*‘One has to be careful to not take someone outside the fold of Islam (i.e. takfir) on major sins such as drinking alcohol, committing adultery, stealing and such unless if it’s a ruler who clearly permits these sins under his rule (i.e., istihlal). The Khawarij had an extreme creed*

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<sup>255</sup> *Inspire* 2:36

<sup>256</sup> *Inspire* 2:36

<sup>257</sup> *Inspire* 2:36

<sup>258</sup> *Inspire* 2:36

<sup>259</sup> *Inspire* 2:36

<sup>260</sup> *Inspire* 2:36

*that included all sinners into the category of apostasy. Praise be to Allah, the mujahidin of today are nothing like this.*<sup>261</sup>

The previous citation makes clear again that AQAP is neither keen on *Khawarij* ideology nor aims to declare *takfir* against those who commit a major sin. Among similar lines, the editors discuss the subject of *takfiri* in the fifth issue. Thereby, AQAP argues that their enemies label them as *takfiri* to slander the organisation: *‘Our ideology is not takfiri; the non-Muslims as well as their puppet governments made that up to make the people condemn us. We are openly against extremism in takfir.*<sup>262</sup>

The recurring section ‘*Inspire* responses’ in issue five includes a remarkable reader question regarding the killing of Muslims:

*‘Most Muslims condemn the actions that you [AQAP] commit, Alhamdulillah. I understand your takfiri ideology but what gives you the right to judge the rest, even Muslims? It seems to me that you enjoy the power of playing God and determining who is good and evil. Nowhere in the Koran does it give authority to man to judge and determine the life of a man.*<sup>263</sup>

Surprisingly, the reader describes the AQAP ideology as *takfiri*, while AQAP is doing their very best to convince the readers of *Inspire* that the organization does not embrace *takfiri* ideas, as illustrated earlier in this section. Furthermore, the reader questions the religious justification of AQAP’s policy and reproaches the organisation for playing God. Considering that *Inspire* is a propaganda magazine, it can be stated that the critical sound of the question is worth mentioning. As a reaction to the allegation, AQAP answered:

*‘In brief, takfir is forbidden to make on a Muslim unless if he commits an act that nullifies his Islam....Additionally classical Islamic scholars have agreed that there are acts that if a Muslim were to commit, he would have left the religion. These are known as “nawâqid al-Islâm” or “The Nullifications of Islam.” ...In brief, if the individual has apostatized publicly, and his apostasy is clear, then this person’s blood and wealth is not protected from the Muslims due to the hadith narrated by al-Bukhari, Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him.*<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> *Inspire* 4:14

<sup>262</sup> *Inspire* 5:11

<sup>263</sup> *Inspire* 5:9

<sup>264</sup> *Inspire* 5:10

To conclude, as a core principle, AQAP is against *takfir*. However, the editors explain that there are several conditions that allow declaring *takfir* against a coreligionist. In this case, *takfir* is subject to strict rules and focuses on an individual rather than a group.

**4.7.2. Conflicting messages.** In issue two, an interview is conducted with Shayka Abu Sufyan, the Vice Amir of AQAP before he was killed in 2013. In this interview, the editors ask the following question of Abu Sufyan: *'In your speeches and writings you frequently speak about the danger of the Shi'a. Some may wonder why this emphasis on the Shi'a when our principle battle is with America?'*<sup>265</sup> The way the editors address the question illustrates that the USA is the primary enemy of AQAP. Regarding this question, Sufyan answered: *'Allah has made it clear to us in the Qur'an that our worst enemies are the Jews and the polytheists. The Shi'a are polytheists and therefore, are amongst the worst enemies of Islam.'*<sup>266</sup> At the end of his answer, Sufyan makes a remarkable comment by saying: *'May Allah have mercy on Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi since he knew the reality of the Shi'a very well and he drew his sword upon them.'*<sup>267</sup> This statement is remarkable because Sufyan praises the highly controversial policy of the former AQI leader al-Zarqawi, which included the violent killing of Shia on a large scale rather than a focus on the Western enemy. Al-Zarqawi's killing policy led to serious tensions between AQCG and AQI.

Considering the tension al-Zarqawi created, combined with the trend of the first five issues of *Inspire* in which AQAP strongly denied being a *takfir*-oriented organisation, it is surprising that the editors published Sufyan's *takfir*-based sayings, which stress the targeting of the Shia. In this light, it is important to realise that AQAP is not keen on Shia Muslims. However, the group does not aim to kill non-combatant Shia Muslims on a large scale, as Al-Zarqawi did. AQAP's reserved attitude regarding the killing of Shia Muslims does not hold for Shia militias, such as the Houthis.

**4.7.3. Houthis.** The authors of *Inspire* often pay attention to the Houthis, which are a (Shia) Zaydi group from northern Yemen. The Houthis were established as a reaction to the growing influence of Salafi movements in the country in the 1990s.<sup>268</sup> Considering the overall poor relationship between Shia- and Sunni-orientated movements, it was not surprising that the Houthis in Yemen clashed with AQAP. In *Inspire*, AQAP give three main reasons why the Houthis are a legitimate target.

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<sup>265</sup> *Inspire* 2:44

<sup>266</sup> *Inspire* 2:44

<sup>267</sup> *Inspire* 2:44

<sup>268</sup> Petouris, T. (2015). What is the Houthi Movement? Retrieved November 17, 2015, from <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/backgrounder/what-houthi-movement>

First, AQAP argues that the Houthis have seceded from true Islam and aim to expel the Sunnis in Yemen. Hence, Sunni Islam needs to be protected from the Houthis rebels. Based on this idea, the article titled ‘*Operation for defending Ahl Al-Sunnah (Sunni Islam)*’ was written in issue four. In the same way, AQAP warns against the growing influence of the Houthis in issue five: ‘*They [Houthis] have expanded inside the territories of ahl as-sunnah, and as a result their actions have led to the humiliation of some [Muslims]*.’<sup>269</sup>

Second, AQAP proclaims that the Houthis disgrace the honour of the Prophet by leaving *Ahl Al-Sunnah*, and therefore are a legitimate target:

*‘Ahl as-Sunnah should know that the Houthi Ra"dhah are a legitimate target for us... We also call the ones who have been misled: leave the Houthi Ra"dhah before it is too late because we have for you men who will not rest until they purify the land from their impurity and crimes against ahl as-sunnah and until there is no more dissent and all religion belongs to Allah.*’<sup>270</sup>

Third, the editors condemn the Houthis for their cooperation with the US in order to fight AQAP in Yemen: ‘*As for targeting the Shi’a Râfidha in Sa’ada, it is because they involved themselves in the adoption of the American project which consists of tracking and going after al-Qaeda.*’<sup>271</sup> The assumed collaboration between the US and the Houthis in the previous citation is doubtful, because different experts argue that Iran plays a key role in financing, training and arming the Houthis militias.<sup>272</sup> Considering the poor relationship between the US and Iran, it is unlikely that a militia apparently supported by Iran would have an American-orientated agenda. Moreover, there is no evidence that points to Houthi collaboration with the US.

Obviously, AQAP is targeting the Houthis in Yemen. The targeting of Houthis collides with earlier statements by AQAP in *Inspire* that their ideology is not *takfiri*. To explain, the editors describe *takfir* as ‘*labeling fellow Muslims as unbelievers.*’<sup>273</sup> Factually, this is what AQAP is doing towards the Houthis in Yemen. However, AQAP does not agree with this reasoning. Adil al-Abbab, who was one of AQAP’s leading Sharia jurists before he was killed, explained in an interview that Houthis are not true Muslims and therefore undo the allegations of *takfir*:

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<sup>269</sup> Inspire 5:26

<sup>270</sup> Inspire 4:6

<sup>271</sup> Inspire 5:26

<sup>272</sup> Terrill, W. (2014). Iranian Involvement in Yemen. *Orbis*, 58(3), 429-440.

<sup>273</sup> Inspire 2:36

*'Because they [the Houthis] did not full the requirements of being a Muslim. So if they only say: "there is no one worthy of worship but Allah" but they did not establish salah and zakah, they should be fought. So whoever follows Islam but legalizes interest (riba) should be fought according to the verses: [2: 278-279].'*<sup>274</sup>

#### **4.8. Violence against coreligionists (*Dabiq*)**

This section will focus on IS's opinion and motivation of targeting fellow Muslims. The results of *Dabiq* regarding the theme 'violence against coreligionists' are provided in three different categories, which are *takfiri*, criticising AQ, and rejecting *Khawarij* ideology.

**4.8.1. Takfiri.** The opinion of the editors of *Dabiq* regarding the killing of Muslims was obvious from the start of the online magazine. In the first issue, the editor underscores the sayings and acts of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in favour of targeting coreligionists:

*'He [al-Zarqawi] tried to force every apostate group present in Iraq into an all- out war with Ahlus-Sunnah. So he targeted the Iraqi apostate forces (army, police, and intelligence), the Rafidah (Shia markets, temples, and militias), and the Kurdish secularists (Barzani and Talabani partisans). In his speech...he threatened war on any Sunni tribe, party, or assembly that would support the crusaders.'*<sup>275</sup>

The citation not only encourages the killing of Shia Muslims, but also supports the killing of Sunni Muslims tribes that support the West, the Iraqi police force and the Kurds. However, at the end of the article the editor emphasises that IS '*never targeted Sunni public places and gatherings – contrary to the claims of the crusader and apostate media.*'<sup>276</sup> After the first issue, the editors of *Dabiq* continue to focus on *takfir*. When discussing the subject of *takfir* in *Dabiq*, IS does not distance themselves from the concept. On the contrary, the editors make a direct call for *takfir*: *'I praise to you Allah, other than whom there is no god. And I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. We affirm what he came with, pronounce takfir upon those who refuse this affirmation, and wage jihād against them.'*<sup>277</sup> Yet IS warns in *Dabiq* that *takfir* is subject to rules and religious prescriptions. Thereby, Allah, by means of the Sharia, is the only one who can declare someone of *takfiri*. In an article titled '*Advice for the soldiers of the Islamic State*', IS stresses the impotency of *takfir* and aims to clarify the process involved for their soldiers:

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<sup>274</sup> Inspire 2:4

<sup>275</sup> *Dabiq* 1:36

<sup>276</sup> *Dabiq* 1:36

<sup>277</sup> *Dabiq* 7:17

*‘So listen to my advice concerning an important issue, the issue of takfīr. The Messenger said, “Whoever says concerning a believer that which is not true, Allah will cause him to reside in the mud of corruption until he takes back what he said.” Therefore, know my dear brother that the label and ruling of kufr is a right that belongs to Allah (ta’ālā) and which you are not allowed to apply to anyone except those who deserve it according to the Shari’ah. And know that takfīr has both conditions and preventative factors...So beware of suspicion, and ensure that you’re well-in-formed regarding the issues.*<sup>278</sup>

IS sometimes gives contradictory messages in *Dabiq* regarding *takfir* against Sunnis. In issue six, the editors state: *‘the Islamic State does not make takfīr of the Sunnī masses in Iraq and Shām.*<sup>279</sup> However, this saying conflicts with earlier statements made in the first issue of *Dabiq*: *‘He [al-Zarqawi] threatened war on any Sunni tribe, party, or assembly that would support the crusaders.*<sup>280</sup> The latter citation indicates that IS indeed targets Sunni Muslims. Moreover, IS’s condition of exclusively attacking Sunni groups that support the West is obviously untrue because IS fights Sunni groups, for instance the AQ affiliation JN, which is certainly not supporting the West.

*Dabiq* discuss the Houthis several times. In issue five, the editors call for action in order to attack the Houthis: *‘And O soldiers of Yemen... be harsh against the Houthi Rāfidah, for they are kuffār murtaddīn. Fight them and overcome them. Be certain that their turn is coming and it will be in your favor, for the Rāfidah are a forsaken nation.*<sup>281</sup> According to IS, the Americans are the supporting actor behind the Houthi movement: *‘He (Obama) supports the Shiite allies of Iran in Afghanistan. He strikes the mujāhidīn – the true enemies of the Shia in Yemen – and thus emboldens the Houthi agents of Iran.*<sup>282</sup>

**4.8.2. Rejecting Khawarij ideology.** Although IS does not reject *takfiri* ideology in *Dabiq*, the editors decry the *Khawarij* movement, which is known for their extreme *takfiri* doctrine. IS’s grudge against the *Khawarij* becomes clear in issue six of *Dabiq*. In this issue, the editors wrote an article about the dismantling of a *Khawarij* cell in the ranks of IS: *‘This fact is underscored by the discovery of a cell of Khawārij hiding within the land of the Islamic State as they sought to recruit others to their misguidance.*<sup>283</sup> Obviously, IS does not want to be linked to the *Khawarij* movement. However, the editors of *Dabiq* argues that

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<sup>278</sup> *Dabiq* 6:6

<sup>279</sup> *Dabiq* 6:31

<sup>280</sup> *Dabiq* 1:36

<sup>281</sup> *Dabiq* 5:27

<sup>282</sup> *Dabiq* 3:38

<sup>283</sup> *Dabiq* 6:31

their enemies label IS as *Khawarij* in order to disgrace the organisation: ‘*They disputed the Islamic State, declared it to be innovators, and alleged that its soldiers and commanders were Khawārij who went out against the Muslim masses with the sword.*’<sup>284</sup> IS also wrote ‘*These Sahwah factions of apostasy kill the people of Islam (the muhājirīn and ansār of the Islamic State whom they label Khawārij).*’<sup>285</sup>

**4.8.3. Criticising AQ.** In issues 1-5 of *Dabiq*, the editors barely criticise the AQ organisations regarding the subject of *takfir*. In contrast, in issues 6-11, AQ and its allies are often criticised for not making *takfir* on those who fulfil the criteria for declaring *tafiri*. For instance, IS dismisses the soft attitude of AQ regarding the Pakistani army in Waziristan: ‘*The declaration of this Pakistani soldier’s riddah and his subsequent execution are both matters that these jihād claimants would deem extremely problematic given their deviant and feeble stance towards the Pakistani army, which is precisely what has led them [AQCG] to soften their “jihād” against the Pakistani tāghūt, allowing him to just walk in and capture entire areas of Waziristan.*’<sup>286</sup>

Along similar lines, IS argues in *Dabiq* that AQAP’s lack of *takfir* in Yemen has resulted in the rise of the Houthis:

‘*A similar scenario occurred in Yemen when the local branch of al-Qā’idah, deeming it incorrect to make takfir of the Rāfidī Houthis on an individual level. The result? Yemen’s largest city was blitzed by the Houthis and captured in one fell swoop, placing the lives of countless Muslims under the authority of a people whose religion it is to slander.*’<sup>287</sup>

The editors of *Dabiq* stress that IS’s expansion into Yemen is necessary to clean up the mess AQAP created:

‘*With the expansion into Yemen, the Islamic State can resolve the mistakes in creed and methodology propagated by those who suddenly realized the Rāfidah were enemies of Islam, after years of criticizing Shaykh Abū Mus’ab az-Zarqāwī and his companions for making takfir of the Rāfidah.*’<sup>288</sup>

Although the editors do not directly mention AQAP in the previous citation, it is likely, considering the context, that ‘*those*’ in the citation refers to AQAP.

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<sup>284</sup> *Dabiq* 10:52

<sup>285</sup> *Dabiq* 8:11

<sup>286</sup> *Dabiq* 7:33

<sup>287</sup> *Dabiq* 7:33

<sup>288</sup> *Dabiq* 5:28

Before December 2014, IS criticised AQAP for not making *takfir* on the Houthis in Yemen. Considering the various media reports of fights between the Houthis and AQAP in 2014, IS cannot deny that AQAP was indeed fighting the Houthis. In issue six, which was released in December 2014, IS admits that AQAP had started an offence against the Houthis. Nonetheless, the editors still criticise AQAP by saying: ‘*And when an-Nadhārī* [senior leader of AQAP] *came out and made takfir of the Houthis, the main factor that pushed him to do so was political.*’<sup>289</sup>

Another point of critics includes the AQ statements that accuse IS of killing Muslims. For instance: ‘*They [AQ] fabricated lies against us and described us in the harshest of ways: takfirī, Khawārij, killers of Muslims, Wahhābī...and they would warn the people that we were murderers and that we’d slaughter them.*’<sup>290</sup> According to the editors of *Dabiq*, the AQ leadership makes such allegations towards IS because AQ realises that their organisation is losing influence to IS, and therefore propagates lies in order to slander their competitor and polish their own image.<sup>291</sup>

**4.8.4. Similarities and differences.** To begin with the similarities, the editors of both *Inspire* and *Dabiq* stress the importance of *takfir* and explain that there are regulations bounded to the concept. Thereby, AQAP and IS agree that Allah is the only one who is privileged to condemn a Muslim to *takfir*. In this case, the Koran and the derived Sharia are representing the word of Allah. Thus, AQAP and IS assess a Muslim of *takfir* based on the Sharia and Koran.

Both IS and AQAP distance themselves clearly from the concept of *Khawarij*, which is known for an extreme view of *takfir*. Thereby, the editors of *Dabiq* and *Inspire* pay attention to the fact that their enemies accuse them of respectively being *Khawarij* and *takfiri* in order to damage the image of the organisations. Finally, both organisations emphasize that making *takfir* against the Houthis in Yemen is necessary, because the Houthis are considered apostates and a threat for true Muslims. Moreover, IS and AQAP are certain that the USA supports the Houthis in order to overrule the Sunni community in Yemen.

Besides the similarities, there are several major differences between *Inspire* and *Dabiq* regarding violence against fellow Muslims. In contrast to AQAP, IS is openly in favour of the *takfiri* ideology and taking the Koran and Sharia more literally regarding *takfir* than AQAP.

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<sup>289</sup> *Dabiq* 6:23

<sup>290</sup> *Dabiq* 6:53

<sup>291</sup> *Dabiq* 6:53

Consequently, IS considers a significant number of coreligionists as apostates, tyrants and polytheists, and therefore the primary enemies of Islam. This is in contrary to AQ, which predominantly emphasize that the West, and in particular the US, is the main threat for Muslims. For this reason, AQAP pays less attention to violence against coreligionists than IS. This cautious AQ policy is criticised in *Dabiq*. Although AQAP targets the Houthis, the editors of *Dabiq* accuse AQAP of being soft regarding the true enemies of Islam, such as the Houthis and the Pakistani authorities.

To conclude, AQAP put much effort into their magazines to convince their readers that AQAP is not a *takfir*-oriented organisation. Despite this rejection of *takfir*, AQAP calls for violence against the Houthis in *Inspire*. In contrast to AQAP, IS does not deny being a *takfiri* organisation. On the contrary, IS calls for violence against Shia Muslims. Although IS states in *Dabiq* that the organisation does not target Sunni groups, with the exception of those who support the West, there are various examples of IS indeed targeting anti-Western Sunni groups, for instance JN.

#### 4.9. Table

All results regarding the four themes are represented in the table below.

Main theme	Sub-themes	Dabiq	Inspire
<b>Women</b>	Justification of sex slaves	X	
	Discusses the Western sexually oriented culture		X
	Should prepare her children for jihad	X	X
	Should avoid being an obstacle for men	X	X
	Western aggression towards Muslim women	X	X
	Educate the future generation	X	X
	The obligation for women to perform <i>hijrah</i>	X	
	Articles written by women	X	X
	The female figure motivation for men to join the jihad		X
	Articles focused on female audiences	X	X
	Should be patient at all times	X	X
	Women who glorify <i>hijrah</i>	X	
	Freedom of choice regarding niqab		X
	Are obliged to gain knowledge of Islam	X	X
	Must motivate her husband for jihad	X	X
<b>Targeting non-combatants</b>	Major theme in the magazine		X
	Claims to be against the intentional targeting of civilians in general		X
	Encourages the targeting of civilians	X	
	Criticises their enemies for targeting Muslim civilians	X	X

	Claims to be against the killing of civilians who have nothing to do with the conflict		X
	Encourages and glorifies terrorist attacks on civilian targets	X	X
<b>Descriptions of each other</b>			
	Hardly mentions the other		X
	Frames Osama Bin Laden positively	X	X
	Frames the 9-11 events positively	X	X
	Often criticises the other	X	
	Praises Abu Musab al-Zarqawi	X	X
	Praises Abu Omar al-Baghdadia	X	X
<b>Violence against coreligionists</b>			
	<i>Takfir</i> is subject to rules and procedures	X	X
	Stresses the impotence of knowledge regarding <i>takfir</i>	X	X
	Allah only can condemn someone for <i>takfir</i>	X	X
	Openly denies being a <i>takfiri</i> organisation		X
	Contradictory policy regarding the targeting of Shia Muslims		X
	Distance from the <i>Khawarij</i> movement	X	X
	Primary focus on fight against coreligionists	X	
	Targeting Sunni groups that support the West	X	
	Their enemies accuse them of being <i>Khawarij</i> in order to slander the organisation	X	
	Their enemies accuse them of being <i>takfiri</i> in order to slander the organisation		X
	Encourages violence against Houthis	X	X
	Argues that the USA supports the Houthis	X	X
	Criticises their opponent regarding <i>takfir</i>	X	

## 5. Discussion

The discussion section consists of two parts. The first part will discuss the method used in this thesis and the second part will take a critical look at the results. Both sections discuss the pros and cons of the choices made. Furthermore, recommendations for future studies are given in this chapter.

### 5.1. The method

CA is a frequently used and relatively long-existing qualitative research method to analyse raw text. Although there have been many elements added since the establishment of CA in the 1950s, the core principle of CA remains the same. The fact that CA is still being used after a long time does not mean that the method is undisputed. On the contrary, different

scholars have criticised the method. This section will elaborate three major criticisms regarding CA and explain what possible consequences the criticisms have for this research.

First, CA is too flexible.<sup>292</sup> Consequently, there is no single right way to conduct a CA. The lack of guidelines results in a wide range of approaches toward carrying out a CA. Therefore, the quality of CA depend on the *skills, insights, analytic abilities* and *style* of the researcher.<sup>293</sup>

Second, CA is a purely descriptive method and focuses on the ‘what’ question rather than the ‘why’ question.<sup>294</sup> For this reason, CA is not a convenient method to explain why certain social events happen or to reveal causal relationships. Although this research does not focus on causal relationships or aim to provide explanations for why certain events happen, such elements are essential for understanding the magazines in a broader context. Examples of these kind of questions related to the thesis are: why does AQ put so much effort into denying being *takfiri*? Is there a relationship between the events in Syria and the content in *Dabiq*? Why does AQ hardly mention IS in *Inspire*, while they criticise IS in their audio messages?<sup>295</sup> All these kinds of questions cannot be answer with a CA. In order to provide a bigger picture regarding the magazines, further research could elaborate on these kinds of questions.

Third, critics of CA argue that the researcher’s interpretation has too much influence on the research method.<sup>296</sup> In this light, both the establishment of (sub)categories and the determination of whether or not a certain text unit falls within a category are based on the researcher’s interpretation of the text. Therefore, the high influence of the researcher’s interpretation could endanger the reliability of the research.

## 5.2. Results

There are several points of discussion related to the results. To begin, the primary aim of this thesis is to provide differences and similarities between *Dabiq* and *Inspire*. Therefore, the underlying intent is to compare the organisations behind the magazines, AQAP and IS,

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<sup>292</sup> Elo, S., & H. Kynga` s (2008). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Volume 62, Issue 1, pages 107–115 (p.113)

<sup>293</sup> Hoskins C., N., & Mariano C. (2004) *Research in Nursing and Health: Understanding and Using Quantitative and Qualitative Methods*. 2nd edn., Springer Publishing Company, New York

<sup>294</sup> Rukwaru, M. (2015). *Social Research Methods: A Complete Guide*. Nairobi: Signal press limited (p.155)155

<sup>295</sup> MEMRI. (2015). Al-Qaeda Leader Al-Zawahiri Rejects ISIS Caliphate, Predicts Imminent 'Islamic Spring' Retrieved November 1, 2015, from <http://www.memrijtm.org/al-qaeda-leader-al-zawahiri-rejects-isis-caliphate-predicts-imminent-islamic-spring.html>

<sup>296</sup> Elo, S., & H. Kynga` s (2008).

based on their propaganda magazines. However, one should be careful about copying the analysed differences between *Dabiq* and *Inspire* one-to-one in certain situations to point out the differences between IS and AQAP.

To explain, *Dabiq* and *Inspire* are propaganda magazines, which means that the content of the magazine are established by the editors of the magazines to send a controlled message to their readers. For instance, when looking at *Dabiq*, there are different articles that describe the professional healthcare system in the caliphate. Obviously, IS aims to show their readers that the caliphate is a safe and sound place to live, in order to convince the reader to perform *hijrah*. However, the reality of the caliphate is bombs and beheadings rather than clean hospitals and safety. Nonetheless, this bias is not an enormous obstacle for this thesis. To illustrate, it is not relevant for the analysis whether or not the message in the magazine corresponds to the real-world situation, because this research is interested in the messages as such.

In addition, another problem is that the editors of the magazines claim certain elements, from which results are derived, that cannot be verified. For instance, there is an apparent interview with Umm Basir al-Muhujirra, who was the wife of Amedy Coulibaly. Al-Muhujirra glorifies her *hijrah* and living in the caliphate. Therefore, this interview contributed to the research result that women are used to motivate other women for *hijrah*. As a matter of fact, it could be questioned whether the writer of the article actually is al-Muhujirra, rather than one of the regular editors who aims to provide a good story in order to motivate women to travel to the caliphate. The same applies for *Inspire*; for instance, it can be doubted that the readers' questions in the recurring rubric '*Inspire* response' are written by readers instead of one of the regular editors who comes up with some questions attached to a certain topic.

Another obstacle for this thesis includes different explanations of the same concept. For instance, various Western scholars consider AQ as a *takfir*-oriented organisation based on their interpretation of *takfir*.<sup>297</sup> Nevertheless, the editors of *Inspire* firmly deny being *takfiri*. The same goes for the concept of *Khawarij*. In this case, several experts have stated that IS has several *Khawarij* characteristics. Notwithstanding, IS repudiates the *Khawarij* movement in *Dabiq* based on their explanation of the concept.

The lack of agreement on the explanation of concepts is not limited to the editors of the magazines and Western scholars, but also exists between AQAP and IS. For instance,

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<sup>297</sup> Bunker R., J. & M. Begert (2002). Operational Combat Analysis of the Al Qaeda Network. *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*. Volume 11, Issue 2-3, p.316-339

both *hijrah* and the caliphate are concepts that occur in *Dabiq* and *Inspire*. Nonetheless, the concept has different directions. For instance, when IS talks about the caliphate, the organisation refers to the territory of the Islamic State. Although AQ is in favour of a pan-Islamic caliphate, the organisation's members do not recognize the Islamic State as the caliphate. Similarly, for *hijrah*, IS means emigration to the caliphate, while AQAP explains *hijrah* as immigration to an Muslim country. The different meanings given to concepts could cause bias in the results because concepts with the same name are compared, while the concepts do not include the same explanation.

Lastly, the comparison between *Inspire* and *Dabiq* made in this thesis is limited in a way that the research is exclusively focused on four themes. In order to achieve greater knowledge of the magazines, future studies could compare other subjects, for instance, homosexuals, the role of children, particular narratives, recruitment strategies, the framing of certain events, and portrayed allies in both magazines. Another possibility for future study is to repeat the current analysis of the four themes in the coming issues of *Dabiq* and *Inspire* to observe whether or not the content has changed.

## **6. Summery and conclusion**

This thesis focused on the nature and differences in the extremist discourses of the online propaganda magazines *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. The interest in this difference arose from their apparent partnership during the Paris attacks, the roots of both organizations, the consequences in the case of collaboration and the different messages of rivalry between IS and AQAP. The results of this study can help to understand how the organisations behind the magazines, AQAP and IS, differ from each other. In this light, overlapping elements could be an indicator of (prospective) cooperation and differences may indicate (further) rivalry between the world's two most dangerous jihadist organisations.

In order to analyse the nature and differences of the magazine, a CA was conducted. Thereby, four different themes were carefully selected during the reading phase and chosen on the basis of presence in the magazine, importance given by the editors, social impact, and the lack of research regarding the theme. Subsequently, the categories were created during the analysis phase and arose from overlapping features. The four themes are: women, targeting non-combatants, descriptions of each other and violence against coreligionists. Several central ideas or narratives of AQAP and IS are embedded in all four researched themes.

In the case of *Inspire*, the most significant idea related to the four themes is that the West, and in particular the USA, is the root of all evil in the world and therefore must be fought. Related to the theme of women, AQAP critiques the Western sex-oriented culture and criticises the US army for their high rape rates. In addition to portraying women as sex objects, AQAP condemns the West of violating the free choice of women to wear a niqab. The hatred toward the West is also related to the theme ‘targeting non-combatants’. In this case, AQAP criticises the West for targeting Muslim civilians. Paradoxically, AQAP justifies their own killing of Western non-combatants by reasoning that Western citizens are responsible for their elected government, which kills innocent Muslims, and therefore have become a legitimate target. AQAP even criticises the West in regard to other jihadi organisations such as IS. According to AQAP, the West aims to create internal struggles between jihadi groups in order to divided the Muslim world and create chaos in the Middle East. Therefore, AQAP emphasises focusing on the Western enemy rather than internal jihadi struggles on the battlefield. On the topic of violence against coreligionists, AQAP argues that the West falsely condemns the AQ organisation as *takfiri* in order to slander the organisation. Furthermore, the editors of *Inspire* stress that the West is the driving power behind various Shia militias, e.g., the Houthis, which fight AQAP.

The most significant message that could be identified in *Dabiq* based on the four themes is that a person is either with IS or an enemy of IS, which is equal to un-Islamic and therefore means the person must be punished or killed. Based on this doctrine, non-Muslim women are enslaved and civilians become legitimate targets if they do not support IS. Among similar lines, coreligionists are killed and AQ and its affiliations are criticised for not having the same extreme agenda as IS.

Besides the different core doctrines, the magazines have their own styles of formulating their opinions, which illustrate the nature of the magazines. The different styles of reasoning become noticeable in the way both organisations substantiate and justify the killing of non-combatants. Obviously, at the end of the day both AQAP and IS kill civilians; however, the way of arguing is significantly different. AQAP stresses a couple of times in *Inspire* that the organisation does not intentionally kill civilians. Nonetheless, the editors comprehensively describe various exceptions of situations in which it is allowed to kill civilians. Therefore, it can be argued that, despite AQAP’s gainsay, the organization indeed targets civilians on purpose. In comparison with AQAP, IS’s explanation for targeting civilians is much shorter and more extreme. The editors of *Dabiq* elaborate the extension of

the grey zone, which means that a person either supports IS's agenda or becomes a legitimate target. In other words, there is no middle-ground position.

The other difference towards the doctrine of killing civilians is that AQAP, in contrast to IS, does not target civilians who have nothing to do with the conflict and do not have citizenship in a country that is in war with AQ. In the case of IS, everyone is involved in the conflict. Previous points considered, although both organisations target civilians, the degree of violence and the scope of killing and cruelty is much higher in the case of IS than in the case of AQAP.

The higher degree of IS's violence in comparison with AQAP is not limited to the theme of targeting civilians. Whereas the editors of *Inspire* glorify and encourage special forces-structured terrorist attacks on Western targets, IS mainly focuses on a comprehensive apocalyptic war with genocidal characteristics against coreligionists (tyrants, polytheists and apostates) rather than relatively small, focused attacks on the West. Noticeably, IS is also at war with the West, and AQ also frames the Shia Houthis as their enemy. However, the West is not IS's main concern and the Houthis are not AQAP's primary enemy. It is important to realise that the previous statement regarding IS is based on the issues of *Dabiq* that were published before the Paris shootings in November 2015. Considering the fast developments regarding IS, it is possible that the editors of *Dabiq* will increasingly focus on the fight against the West rather than their enemies in the region in the coming issues of the magazine.

The enemy list of IS remains much longer than the number of enemies of AQAP. Furthermore, IS provokes their enemies much more in their magazine than AQAP does. For instance, the editors argue that First Lady Michelle Obama is worth no more than a couple of dirham on the slave market and threaten to rape the daughters of Iraqi soldiers when defeating them.

The final major difference between *Inspire* and *Dabiq* is the attention the editors give to IS and AQAP, respectively, in their online magazine. In the last five issues of *Dabiq*, IS often comprehensively criticises and insults AQ and its followers, while AQAP barely speaks about IS. When the editors of *Inspire* pay attention to IS, they either glorify former IS leaders such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi or call for avoiding struggle between jihadi groups on the battlefield. Regarding the former IS leaders, it is remarkable that AQAP glorifies al-Zarqawi, considering the fact that the ex AQI leader was responsible for the tension between AQI and AQCG, which eventually led to the break of both organisations. In contrast to AQAP, IS often criticises AQAP. According to the editors of *Dabiq*, AQCG aims to besmirch IS with

lies, e.g., by framing IS in an audio message as ‘the killers of Muslims.’<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, IS criticises AQAP for not making *takfir* of the real enemies of Allah: the tyrants, polytheists and apostates. The times when AQAP fights the Houthis, it is political rather than ideological, according to the editors of *Dabiq*. Moreover, IS blames certain AQ affiliations for supporting the West in order to defeat IS.

Considering all the differences in the four themes, it looks like AQAP and IS are two totally different organisations. However, this is not the case, because besides the differences, there are many overlapping elements in the four themes between *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. Regarding the theme of targeting civilians, both magazines glorify and encourage attacks on Western citizens. This appears, for instance, in the glorification of the fourteenth anniversary of 9-11 in both *Dabiq* and *Inspire*. Although IS and AQAP justify their own killings of civilians, the editors of the magazines often criticise the West for killing Muslim civilians on purpose. In this case, the editors of *Dabiq* and *Inspire* highlight the killed Muslim girls and women, who are portrayed as symbols of innocence in the magazines. The editors use women and girls who were accidentally killed by the West to raise anger among their readers in order to stimulate them to jihad.

The subject of Muslim women is not limited to their roles as victims of Western aggression in *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. The authors pay attention in a similar way to subject related to women, such as how to be a good Muslim wife. Thereby, the ideal woman, as described by IS, is similar to the perfect woman of AQAP. In this light, the most important tasks for a woman are to prepare the future generation for jihad and support her husband in his path to Allah. The final similarity regarding the theme of women is that both magazines proclaim to have female editors, who write about subject pertaining to women. This ‘writing space’ for women is surprising concerning the oppression of women in Salafi ideology.

There are also several similarities regarding the theme ‘violence against coreligionists’. In this case, both organisations stress the importance of killing Houthis in Yemen. Another overlapping element within this theme is the clear rejection of *Khawarij* ideology. The editors of the magazines criticise their enemies and condemn them as *Khawarij*-oriented movements in order to harm the organization’s reputation.

In the theme ‘descriptions of each other’, some overlapping results were analysed. IS and AQAP both glorify the 9-11 attacks in their magazines. Another overlapping element within the theme ‘descriptions of each other’ is the glorification of the two former leaders of

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<sup>298</sup> *Dabiq* 6:53

both organizations, Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, in *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. In the case of *Dabiq*, it is contradictory that the editors glorify Bin Laden because the editors often criticise and his life work, i.e., AQ. In the case of AQAP, it is strange that the editors are positive about Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was accountable for the break between AQI and AQCG.

In the introduction chapter, the suspicion arose, based on the Charlie Hebdo attack, that AQ and IS work together. However, there seems to be no compelling reason to argue that there was any cooperation between AQ and IS at the top. The fact that both organizations pay utmost attention to the Charlie Hebdo shooting in their magazines but completely ignore the other organisation involved strengthens the assumption that AQAP and IS competed with each other in order to achieve the most media attention and credit for the attack. Furthermore, the relationship between AQAP and IS was poor at the time of Charlie Hebdo shooting.

Judging from the magazines and media messages of the organisations, the relationship between AQAP and IS worsened during the writing process of this thesis. Both in and outside *Dabiq*, IS insults and criticises AQ and its allies. The recent declaration of war by the current AQ frontman Ayman al-Zawahiri<sup>299</sup> against IS, the direct fights with the Syrian AQ affiliation JN, and the current tensions in Libya between AQ affiliations and IS are indicators that cooperation is definitely not the case and will not be the case in the near future.

To conclude, although *Inspire* and *Dabiq* are significantly different on a number of points, the magazines have a great deal of common ground. The differences between the two magazines are often rooted in IS's higher degree of violence, megalomania and extremism regarding the methods for achieving a certain goal, rather than in conflicting opinions regarding the goal as such. Therefore, it can be argued that *Inspire* is a more moderate jihadist magazine than *Dabiq*. However, this does not mean that *Inspire* is less dangerous, considering its focus on terrorist attacks on the West.

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<sup>299</sup> Geek, J. (2015). Al Qaeda Leader Al-Zawahiri Declares War on ISIS 'Caliph' Al-Baghdadi. Retrieved November 17, 2015, from <http://abcnews.go.com/International/al-qaeda-leader-al-zawahiri-declares-war-isis/story?id=33656684>

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## Appendix

The tables below show the categorisation of the four main themes of the study based on either *Dabiq* or *Inspire*.

### Theme I: women

#### *Dabiq*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Yazidi women	Sex slaves	Women
Enslaving the enemies' wives		
Slave market		
Provoke their enemies		
Justification of sex slaves		
The West kills Muslim women on purpose	Criticising the West.	
Muslim women living in fear		
Hypocrites		
Preparing children for jihad	The ideal woman	
Serve her husband		
Be patient		
Perform <i>hijrah</i>		

#### *Inspire*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Niqab issue	Criticising the West	
Western aggression towards Muslim women		
Women as sexual objects		

Women in the West fear for their dignity		Women
Sexual assaults by the US army		
Examples of good behaviour	The ideal woman	
Serve the mujahidin		
Sisters of Islam		
Wives and mothers	The woman figure as a motivation for men to join the jihad	
Stimulate men for jihad		
Women who commit an attack		
Women who glorify jihad		

## Theme II: targeting non-combatants

### *Dabiq*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
The West kills Muslim civilians	Criticising other regimes for killing Muslim civilians	Targeting non-combatants
Criticising the Assad regime for killing civilians		
Hypocrisy of the West		
Glorify terrorist attacks (Charlie Hebdo 2015, Tunis 2015, etc.)	Killing civilians	
Call for attacks on civilians targets		
No distinction between military and civilians		
Beheading civilian hostages		
The extinction of the grey zone		

### *Inspire*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Disgust with drones		

The West kills Muslim civilians	Criticising the West for killing Muslim civilians	Targeting non-combatants
Israel targets Palestinian citizens		
Disgust with Christian terrorists (Breivik)		
Denies targeting civilians intentionally	Killing civilians	
Argues for exclusively targeting civilians of countries that are at war with AQ		
Explanations of situations in which it is <i>halal</i> to kill civilians		
Calls for terrorist attacks		
Glorifies past terror attacks (London 2004, Madrid 2005)		
Justification for killing Western civilians		

### Theme III: descriptions of each other

*Dabiq*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Osama Bin Laden	Positive	Descriptions of each other
The 9-11 attacks		
	Neutral	
Criticises AQ and its leaders	Negative	
Accuses AQ leaders of slandering IS		
AQ is un-Islamic		
AQ does not apply Sharia		
The allies of AQ cooperate with the West		
Disgust JN		
Criticises AQIM in Libya		
AQ failed in Waziristan		

Criticises AQAP's policy in Yemen		
AQ collaborates with the enemies of Islam		

*Inspire*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Abu Omar al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi	Positive	Descriptions of each other
Abu Musab al-Zarqawi		
Tension between jihadists on the battlefield of jihad	Neutral	
Ignore IS		
	Negative	

**Theme IV: violence against coreligionists**

*Dabiq*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Calls for targeting Shia Muslim	<i>Takfir</i>	Violence against coreligionists
Pro- <i>takfir</i>		
Explains the rules regarding <i>takfir</i>		
Sunni militias	Criticising AQ	
AQAP fails in the war against the Houthis		
AQ is weak towards Shia Muslims		
Soft attitude towards the Pakistani government	Rejecting <i>Khawarij</i> ideology	
Deny being <i>Khawarij</i> -oriented		
Dismantling a <i>Khawarij</i> cell in the ranks of IS		

Disgust with the <i>Khawarij</i> movement		
Their enemies accuse IS of being <i>Khawarij</i>		

*Inspire*

Sub-category	Generic category	Main category
Criticises the <i>Khawarij</i> movement	Rejecting <i>takfir</i> and <i>Khawarij</i> ideology	Violence against coreligionists
Their enemies condemn AQAP of being <i>takfiri</i>		
Distance themselves from <i>takfiri</i> ideology		
Focus on the fight against Shia Muslims	Conflicting messages	
<i>Takfir</i> is bounded by rules		
Focuses on the fight against the West		
Strongly denies being <i>takfir</i> -oriented		
Operation for defending <i>Ahl Al-Sunnah</i>	Houthis	
Portrays the Houthis as a true enemy of Islam		
Criticises the West for supporting the Houthis		
Criticises Iran for supporting the Houthis		

## Appendix II. Inspire 1-14 (chapter titles)

	<b>Issue:1</b>	<b>Title: May our souls be sacrificed for you</b>	<b>Date: summer 2000</b>	<b>Pages:74</b>
1		Letter from the editor		
2		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
3		(AQAP Statements) The operations of Umar al-Faruq Al-Nigiri, in response to the American Aggression in Yemen		
4		(AQAP Statements) The Chaste of Burayfah in the prison of tyrants		
5		Questions we all should be asking		
6		The way we save the earth		
7		Message to the people of Yemen		
8		News flash		
9		Interview with Shaky Abu Basir		
10		The West should ban the niqab covering its real face		
11		The dust will never settle down campaign		
12		May our souls be sacrificed for you		
13		O Martyr, You have illuminated!		
14		Make a bomb in the kitchen of your mom		
15		How to use Asrar Al-mujahdeen: sending & receiving encrypted messages		
16		What to expect in jihad		
17		The jihadi times		
18		Don't be sad, our brothers in the movement of al-Shabab al-Mujahdeen		
19		Shaykh Anwar's message to the American people and Muslims in the west		
20		The fight over the mountains		

	<b>Issue 2</b>	<b>Title: Photos from the operations of Abyan</b>	<b>Date: fall 2010</b>	<b>Pages: 74</b>
1		Letter from the editor		
2		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
3		News flash		
4		Questions we all should be asking		
5		Inspire feedback		
6		Until we taste what Hamza Bin Abd Al-Muttalib tasted		
7		My life in Jihad		
8		The Jihad experience		
9		Interview with Shayk Abu Basir		
10		Obama's ploy and the peak of Islam		
11		What to expect in Jihad		
12		Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, may Allah preserve him		
13		The operations of Abyan in images		
14		The new Mardin declaration: An attempt at justifying the new world order		
15		Interview with Shaykh abu Sufyan, The vice amir of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula		
16		I am proud to be a traitor to America		
17		The ultimate mowing machine		
18		Tips for our brothers in the united Snakes of America		
19		Asrar Al-Mujahideen Terrorist 2.0 extras		
20		Do you think		
21		A call to Islam		
22		The prize awaiting the Sahid		

23	O hesitant one, it's an obligation
24	A call to Islam
25	Legitimate demands, Barack's Dilemma
26	Letter from the editor

	<b>Issue 3</b>	<b>Title: \$4, 200</b>	<b>Date: fall 2010</b>	<b>Pages: 23</b>
1	Letter from the editor			
2	Operation Hemorrhage			
3	Question we all should asking			
4	The objective of Operation Hemorrhage			
5	Tawaghit Exposed			
6	Technical details			
7	\$ 4, 200			
8	Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe			

	<b>Issue 4</b>	<b>Title: The ruling on dispossessing the disbelievers wealth in Dar Al-Harb</b>	<b>Date: winter 2010</b>	<b>Pages: 67</b>
1	Letter from the editor			
2	the news flash			
3	Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe			
4	Inspire reactions			
5	Inspire responses			
6	On Yemen's assistance and its people			
7	Training with the ak			
8	An interview with Shaykh Abu Hurairah			
9	The jihadi experiences			
10	The revolution guidance, advice & clarity			
11	The short & long-term plans after protest			
12	The clown of the tawaghit			
13	The overlooked backdrop			
14	The oppressor's end			
15	The way forward			
16	The Egyptian			
17	Al-Saud: lodging a criminal			
18	My life in Fallujah			
19	Why did I choose Al Qaeda?			
20	What to expect of jihad, jihad times			

	<b>Issue 5</b>	<b>Title: The tsunami of change</b>	<b>Date: Spring 2011</b>	<b>Pages: 70</b>
1	Letter from the editor			
2	The martyrdom of shaykh Usama			
3	Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe			
4	News flash			
5	Inspire reactions			
6	Inspire responses			
7	The jihadi experiences			

8	Abu Ali Al-Harithi: The veteran lion
9	Ammar Al-Wa'ili: A firm will
10	Fawaz Al-Ma'ribi: Know this man
11	Ali Saleh: An influence to our hearts
12	Abu Hashim: Peace for the contented
13	Why did I choose Al Qaeda?
14	Training with AK
15	Making acetone peroxide
16	Sadness, contentment & aspiration
17	An address to the revolutionaries
18	It is either jihad or disgrace. So chose
19	A question on Takfir

	<b>Issue 6</b>	<b>Title: Sadness, contentment &amp; aspiration</b>	<b>Date: Summer 2011</b>	<b>Pages:61</b>
1		Letter from the editor		
2		The martyrdom of shaykh Usama		
3		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
4		News flash		
5		Inspire reactions		
6		Inspire responses		
7		The jihadi experiences		
8		Abu Ali Al-Harithi: The veteran lion		
9		Ammar Al-Wa'ili: A firm will		
10		Fawaz Al-Ma'ribi: Know this man		
11		Ali Saleh: An influence to our hearts		
12		Abu Hashim: Peace for the contented		
13		Why did I choose Al Qaeda?		
14		Training with AK		
15		Making acetone peroxide		
16		Sadness, contentment & aspiration		
17		An address to the revolutionaries		
18		It is either jihad or disgrace. So chose		
19		A question on Takfir		

	<b>Issue 7</b>	<b>Title: The Greatest Special Operation of all time</b>	<b>Date: Fall 2011</b>	<b>Pages: 36</b>
1		Letter from the editor		
2		Iran and the Conspiracy Theories		
3		Don't let America become great in your eyes		
4		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
5		The Media conflict		
6		The Greatest Special Operation of all Times		
7		A decade in pictures, from 9/11 till today		

	<b>Issue 8</b>	<b>Title: Targeting, Dar al-harb populations</b>	<b>Date: Fall 2011</b>	<b>Pages: 63</b>
1		Letter from the editor		
2		Opinion: A repeat of the Hama debacle? Muhannad		
3		The corner: Blended duality: Muslim and American?		
4		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
5		News flash		
6		Inspire responses		
7		Questions we should be asking		
8		Jihadsphere		
9		The martyrdom of the Commander Abu Ayman		
10		Muwahid: Pious, Hospitable & Stout hearted		
11		Aaidh al-Shabwani: The Great Anṣârî		
12		The jihadi experiences		
13		Lust & Fear, An insight into the Pakistani Army & its role in the Crusades		
14		Training with the hand gun		
15		Remote control detonation		
16		Targeting the populations of countries that are at war with the Muslims		
17		Why did I choose Al Qaeda		
18		Take from their guidance for here is no refuge from jihad		
19		Freedom, from blind following		
20		The unique trait of al-mu'minîn		

	<b>Issue 9</b>	<b>Title: Winning on the ground</b>	<b>Date: Winter 2012</b>	<b>Pages: 62</b>
1		Letter from the editor		
2		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
3		Inspire continues to inspire		
4		Opinion: Build bridges with the right wing		
5		The corner: Where are the people of al-Sham?		
6		Questions we should be asking		
7		My story with Al Awlaki		
8		Samir Khan: The face of Joy		
9		The killed father, the killed son		
10		This is how we win and this is how you lose		
11		The jihadi experiences		
12		Stinking Rottenyahu!		
13		The Convoy of Martyrs. Rise up and board with us		
14		It is of your freedom to ignite a firebomb		
15		Qualities of urban assassin		
16		Do the mujahedeen and the Christian terrorist have similar goals?		
17		Why did I choose Al Qaeda?		
18		The ruling of burning the forests in the land of the kuffar enemies		
19		Cowardliness will always be cowardliness even if you consider it to be using wisdom		
20		Spilling out the beans		
21		Imbeciles who justify sitting		
22		Winning on the ground		
23		Unremorseful Mujahid		

	<b>Issue 10</b>	<b>Title: We are all Usama</b>	<b>Date: Spring 2013</b>	<b>Pages:60</b>
1		Letter from the Editor		
2		AQAP Statements		
3		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
4		News Flash		
5		Inspire Reactions		
6		Inspire Responses		
7		The Corner: The Untold Story		
8		Questions we should be asking		
9		Defending the Prophet		
10		The Dust will never Settle Down		
11		France, the Imbecile Invader		
12		Jihadisphere		
13		Brother 'Askar, Abu Yazeed Al-Qatary		
14		The Jihadi Experiences: The Strategy of Deterring with Terrorism		
15		The American Army & War Ethics		
16		From the US Prisons		
17		My Wish: If Only I Was A Mujahid		
18		Women of the Glorious Ummah		
19		Why did I choose Al-Qaeda?		
20		What is Al-Qaeda?		
21		O Who Sits Behind		
22		We are all Usama		
23		To the Knights of Lone Jihad		
24		America will never profit from the assassination of Imam Anwar Awlaki		
25		Torching Parked Vehicles		
26		Causing Road Accidents		
27		You Ask, We Answer		
28		The Battalion of Terror		

	<b>Issue 11</b>	<b>Title: Who &amp; Why</b>	<b>Date: Spring 2013</b>	<b>Pages: 38</b>
1		Letter from the Editor		
2		AQAP Statements		
3		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
4		News Flash		
5		Inspire Reactions		
6		Letter to the American Nation		
7		Words of Wisdom		
8		Dear American Muslim		
9		Allah will restrain the evil might of those who disbelieve		
10		Inspired by Inspire		
11		The Inevitable		
12		The Dear Price & The Constant Turmoil		
13		Why did I choose Al-Qaeda?		
14		Who and Why?		
15		AQ Tweets		
16		America's Bitter Harvest		

17	Mujahid's Wish
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	<b>Issue 12</b>	<b>Title: Shattered. A story about change</b>	<b>Date: Spring 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 72</b>
1		Letter from the Editor		
2		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
3		Mujahid's Notes		
4		Inspire Reactions		
5		Echoes Behind Enemy Lines		
6		Imān Defeats Arrogance		
7		Rumbling Blaze Under Calm Ash		
8		The Arson Jihad		
9		Sincere Advice from a Muhajir		
10		Q&A with Sheikh Anwar Al-'Awlaki		
11		AQAP Statement		
12		Palestine: Betrayal Of Human Conscience		
13		The Crusade And The Swap Of Stances		
14		In Hot Pursuit of Mirage		
15		City Wolves		
16		Why Did I Choose Al-Qāeda?		
17		Conditions of the Word of Tawheed		
18		24/7 Terrorism		
19		The Good, the Lamb and the Ugly		
20		The Jihādi Experiences: Preparation		
21		The Barrier Between		
22		An Interview with Obama		
23		Mujahidah, Wife of a Mujahid		
24		Shattered: A Story About Change		
25		The End of Safari		
26		Car Bombs Inside America		
27		Car Bombs: Field Data		

	<b>Issue 13</b>	<b>Title: N(euro)urotm(pond) \$i\$</b>	<b>Date: Winter 2014</b>	<b>Pages:112</b>
1		Editor's Letter		
2		Official Statement		
3		Inspire Reactions		
4		A message for the American people regarding the killing of the hostage Luke Somers		
5		Al-Malahem's Q&A Session		
6		Hear the world, a collection of quotes from friend and foe		
7		Letter to the America people		
8		Mujahid's Notes		
9		Exclusive interview with the AQ-chef		
10		The glad things of victory		
11		Brainwave		
12		Strike the sea with your stick		
13		Words of Wisdom		
14		Independence & Courage		
15		Between yesterday & tomorrow		

16	New Year: Realities & Aspirations
17	Talk to Inspire
18	I Am Confused
19	The Word of Tawheed
20	Jihadi Profile
21	Sincere Advice from a Muhajir
22	Jihadisphere
23	The battle of marathon. Message to 99% of the American people
24	Q&A with Sheikh Anwar Al-'Awlaki
25	The story of Abu Rawi as-Sway'ari
26	My Little Son
27	Cover Story "Cutting the nerves & Isolating the Head"
28	The hidden bomb

	<b>Issue: 14</b>	<b>Title: Assassination Operations</b>	<b>Date: Summer 2015</b>	<b>Pages: 88</b>
1	Editor's Letter			
2	Statement regarding the blessed Paris operation			
3	Inspire Reactions			
4	Hear the World			
5	Mujahid's Notes			
6	Words of Wisdom			
7	A Simple Equation			
8	Timeline			
9	The Corner			
10	The blacks in America			
11	Let your hearts be prepared to freedom of our action			
12	Conditions of the word of taweed			
13	Charlie Hebdo military analysis			
14	If your return , we shall return			
15	The unknown Shahid			
16	Remembering Boston			
17	Jihad profiles: Suleiman Al Halaby			
18	A mountain, but of ice			
19	But the never lost heart			
20	Deliverance from trials			
21	OSJ			

### Dabiq 1-11

	<b>Issue 1</b>	<b>Title: The return of khilafah</b>	<b>Date: July 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 50</b>
1	Dabiq magazine			
2	Khilafah declared			
3	Islamic state reports			
4	The Concept of Imamah (Leadership)			
5	Part 2: Reported Interpreting Imamah To Mean Political Imamah			
6	Part 3: The Concept Of Imamah Is From The Millah Of Ibrahim			
7	Part 4: The Commands Of Allah To Ibrahim			

8	Part 5: The Islamic State Is a True Imamah
9	The Islamic State in the Words of the Enemy
10	From Hijrah to Khilafah
11	Regime targets Ar-Raqqah (IS news)
12	Al-'Adhim & Hawija liberated (IS news)
13	Murtaddin repent in the thousands

	<b>Issue 2</b>	<b>Title: The Flood</b>	<b>Date: July 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 44</b>
1	Foreword			
2	Part 1: It's Either the Islamic State or the Flood			
3	Part 2: The Da'wah of Nuh			
4	Part 3: Contemplating the Verses			
5	Part 4: The Flood Is a Refutation of the Pacifists			
6	Part 5: The Widespread Ignorance amongst the People			
7	The Fight Against The PKK			
8	On The Destruction Of Shirk In Wilāyat Nīnawā			
9	Hijrah and Jihad			
10	Allah's Messenger			
11	Part 1: The Flood of the Mubāhalah			
12	Part 2: A Discussion on Mubāhalah			
13	Part 3: The Proper Creed of the Mujāhidīn			
14	Part 4: The Situation After the Mubāhalah			
15	Part 5: Understanding The Hikmah in Allah's Actions			
16	Part 6: Contemplation of the Mubāhalah Results			
17	Part 7: The Flood of Doubts and Desires			
18	in the Words of the Enemy			
19	Dabiq news			

	<b>Issue 3</b>	<b>Title: A Call to Hijrah</b>	<b>Date: September 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 52</b>
1	Foreword			
2	Part 1: The Islamic State before al-Malhamah			
3	Part 2: Those Who Break Off from Their Tribes			
4	Part 3: Sham is the Land of Malahim			
5	Part 4: Hijrah to ShAm is from the Millah of IbrAhIm			
6	The Punishing of Shu'aytāt for Treachery			
7	The Liberation of Dābiq			
8	Da'wah and Hisbah in the Islamic State			
9	Military Conquests In Nīnawā and ar-Raqqah			
10	Hijrah and Forgiveness			
11	Introduction: Hijrah From Hypocrisy to Sincerity			
12	Part 2: The Fear of Hypocrisy			
13	Part 3: Inspirational Words from a Shahid			
14	Part 4: Modern Day Slavery			
15	Part 5: There Is No Life without Jihād and There Is No Jihād without Hijrah			
16	Part 6: Bad Company Destroys the Heart			
17	Part 7: Advice for Those Embarking upon Hijrah			
18	In the Words of the Enemy			

19	Foley's Blood Is on Obama's Hands
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	<b>Issue 4</b>	<b>Title: The Failed Crusade</b>	<b>Date: October 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 56</b>
1		Foreword		
2		Experts from "indeed your lord is ever watchful"		
3		My provision was placed form me in the shade of my spear		
4		The revival of slavery before the hour		
5		The birth of two new Wilāyat		
6		Ansar al-Iskam pledges allegiance to the Islamic State		
7		Military operations		
8		A window into the Islamic State		
9		Reflection on the final crusade		
10		The prophecies regarding the Roman crusaders		
11		The Islamic state founders on signs of the hour		
12		Shaykh 'Adnānī's words on the crusade		
13		The crusade serving Iran and Russia		
14		Ineffective proxy wars and airstrikes		
15		History Repeated		
16		The fading grayzone		
17		Rush to support your state o Muslim		
18		In the words of the enemy		
19		A message from Sotloff to his mother days before his execution		

	<b>Issue 5</b>	<b>Title: Remaining and Expanding</b>	<b>Date: November 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 40</b>
1		Foreword		
2		Yahya: Lessons from Shahid		
3		The fight for Wil Wilayat al-anbar		
4		Unifying the Ranks		
5		The fight for 'Ayn al-islam'		
6		The currency of the Khilafah		
7		Remaining and expanding		
8		The Arabian Peninsula		
9		Yemen		
10		Sinai		
11		Libya		
12		Algeria		
13		The Islamic State is here to stay		
14		In the words of the enemy		
15		If I were the US president today...		

	<b>Issue 6</b>	<b>Title: Al Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within</b>	<b>Date: December 2014</b>	<b>Pages: 63</b>
1		Foreword		
2		Advice for the soldiers of the Islamic State		
3		The Qa'idah of Adh-dhawariti, al-Harari, and An-Nadhari and the absent Yemeni wisdom		
4		Abu hamzah al-Muhajir training camp		

5	Action in the new wilayat
6	Dismantling a Khariji cell
7	The liberation of Biji
8	The capture of a crusader pilot
9	Misleading scholars and bewitching media
10	Al Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within
11	In the words of the enemy
12	Meltdown

	<b>Issue 7</b>	<b>Title: From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Grayzone</b>	<b>Date: February 2015</b>	<b>Pages: 83</b>
1		Foreword		
2		The burning of the murtadd pilot		
3		Advice for the leaders of the Islamic State		
4		An explicit ultimatum from the salaf to the apostates		
5		Islam is the religion of the sword not pacifism		
6		Responding to the doubts		
7		Interview with a spy working for the Israeli Mossad		
8		Revenge for the Muslimat persecuted by the Coptic crusaders of Egypt		
9		Wilayat khurasan and the bay'at from Qawqaz		
10		Dozens of "Nusrah" and "Ahrar" fighters repent and join the Islamic state		
11		Major operations in Libya and Sinai		
12		Clamping down on sexual deviance		
13		The Salvation from fitnah is khilafah and jihad		
14		Among the believers are men: Abu Qudamah Al-Misri		
15		A brief interview with Umm Basir Al-Muhajirah		
16		In the words of the enemy		
17		The extinction of the grayzone		
18		The good example of Abu Basir Al-ifriqi		
19		Interview with Abu'umar al-baljiki		
20		The anger factory		
21		The Hour Will Not Be Established until Seventy Thousand From the Children of Ishāq Attack Constantinople		

	<b>Issue 8</b>	<b>Title: Shari'ah Alone Will Rule Africa</b>	<b>Date: March 2015</b>	<b>Pages: 68</b>
1		Foreword		
2		The allies of Al-Qaidah in sham		
3		Abu Bakur as-siddiq's monumental stance		
4		The Bay'ah from West Africa		
5		Soldiers of terror		
6		The Lions of tomorrow		
7		Erasing the Legacy of a ruined Nation		
8		The Libyan arena		
9		The announcement of two new wilayat in Iraq		
10		Abandon the land of the shrink and come to the land of Islam		

11	Among the believers are men: Shaykh Abu Talhah
12	The twin halves of the Muhajirin
13	A message to the people of Kurdistan
14	Irja' the most dangerous Bid'ah
15	The Salaf and Their Severe Warning against Irja'
16	The Origin and Meaning of Irja'
17	The Salafi's Definition of Irja'
18	Submission Is Inconsequential According to the Murji'ah
19	The "Virtue" of Ignorance According to the Murji'ah
20	Hypocrisy Is Nonexistent According to the Murji'ah
21	The Irja' of the Jihād Claimants
22	In the words of enemy
23	Interview with Abu Muqatil
24	Stories from the land of the living
25	Paradigm shift
26	American airstrikes

	<b>Issue 9</b>	<b>Title: They Plot and Allah Plots</b>	<b>Date: May 2015</b>	<b>Pages: 79</b>
1		Foreword		
2		For the sake of Allah. Fisabilillah. Fur Allahs sake		
3		The Allies of al-Qā'idah in Shām: Part II		
4		The Virtues of Ribāt For the Cause of Allah		
5		Conspiracy theory Shrink		
6		From the pages of history: the flags of Jahiliyyah		
7		Healthcare in the Khilafah		
8		Harvesting the Sahwah		
9		The capture of the 4th regiment base		
10		Advising East and West		
11		The Yarmūk Camp		
12		Perfecting One's. Islam, Iman, Hijrah, and Jihad		
13		Among the believers are men: Hudhayfah Al-Battawi		
14		Slave-girls or prostitutes?		
15		And Allah is the Best of Plotters		
16		An Address from the Khalīfah On the Last Plot of the Apostates		
17		An Analysis of the Doomed Plot		
18		In the words of the enemy		
19		Interview with the amir of the Yarmuk camp region		
20		The perfect storm		

	<b>Issue 10</b>	<b>Title: The Law of Allah or the Laws of Men</b>	<b>Date: July 2015</b>	<b>Pages:79</b>
1		Foreword		
2		The Allies of Al-Qa'idah in Sham part 3		
3		Tawhid and our duty to our parents		
4		A Fatwā for Khurāsān		
5		From the pages of history: The expeditions, battles and victories of Ramadan		
6		American Kurdistan		
7		The Qawqazi caravan gains pace		

8	Wala and Bara
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