Nationalist Jāhiliyyah and the Flag of the Two Crusaders, or:

ISIS, Soveriegnty and the 'Owl of Minerva'

This article argues that by understanding ISIS state-building processes we are able to understand how ISIS has developed while also developing a united citizenship body built from people in Iraq and Syria and those making *hijra*. The fragmentation of Iraq and Syria resulted in conditions that would prove conducive to the group's expansion and identifying these conditions is imperative to understanding Sunni extremism in the Middle East. The article argues that ISIS builds citizenship in two ways: first, by developing *asabiyya* – group feeling – amongst Sunni and second, by securitizing the Shi'a threat. Identifying and engaging with the concepts of sovereignty and citizenship helps to develop much stronger policy responses.

"The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only within the falling of the dusk."[1]

Introduction

On 24th September 2014, at the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly, US President Barak Obama declared ISIS a terrorist organization, yet to define the group solely in these terms is misleading. Since its emergence in early June 2014, debates have raged over how to refer to the group. Initially referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Al Sham, this quickly turned to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIS, Islamic State, 'so-called' Islamic State, several variations on a theme and now Da'ish. Despite many referring to the group as Da'ish, this article uses ISIS, predominantly to ensure coherence with the name used in their publications. Ultimately, such debates are important in seeking to understand the group, along with designing successful 'counter-narrative' campaigns to ultimately defeat the group. To create a policy that can defeat ISIS, it is essential to engage with questions about how to conceptualise it – along with how the group positions itself – to formulate a suitable response.

In the years following the emergence of ISIS, the group has flagrantly rejected the norms of the international community, which have been the bedrock of international politics since the end of the Second World War and violently resisted political organisation across the Middle East. With the following words, the Middle East was redrawn and a caliphate was declared

> Without the condition of the caliphate being realized, all power is simply worldly kingship, domination and governance, accompanied by destruction, corruption, injustice, coercion and fear, and the degradation and decline of humans to the level of animals. This is the truth of the succession to God, for which God has created us.[2]

Since then, the group's actions across the world have captured global headlines, which has largely taken focus away from their attempts to organise political life in Iraq and Syria. One such way to address this problem is to consider ISIS efforts at

harnessing the popular support that the group is able to draw upon – no matter how unpopular such an admission is – and explore the state-building project.[3]

Debate as to how best to tackle the threat posed by ISIS – at home and in the Middle East – has dominated policy discussions in Western states. As Major General Michael Nagata of the US army acknowledged, it is impossible to defeat the group without understanding it. While the canon of literature exploring the ISIS is ever growing, this predominantly focuses upon the ideology of the group while telling the story of how it emerged. Very little attention has been paid to the context within which ISIS operates, which supports Nagata's claim that, "we do not understand the movement, and until we do, we are not going to defeat it".[4] Engaging with the conditions that ISIS operates and exists within is of paramount importance to understanding how it has been able to declare a caliphate, and to encourage thousands of people to travel to join the state.

This article argues that the group has not been adequately located within the broader dynamics of the Middle East, notably with regard to sub and supra state affairs across Iraq and Syria. This lack of grounding within regional dynamics has been combined with a lack of conceptualisation as to to how to understand the group, which appears to fuse terrorist tactics with broader insurgency methods, while establishing political organisation across a territory the size of the United Kingdom. This article suggests that it is essential to locate ISIS within the political and security dynamics across the region, which can help explain its emergence and how it gained support from local populations on the ground. It then suggests that by utilising the concept of sovereignty we are better equipped to understand and engage with political organisation within ISIS territory and and ultimately, gain a greater understanding of the group.

In doing this, the article makes two substantial claims: first, it offers a stronger conceptual understanding of the rise of ISIS and how it has been able to cultivate support from across the region through the rejection of the previous system; second, it suggests that to populate the caliphate, the group has sought to develop a sense of *asabiyya* – or group feeling – amongst Sunni Muslims while also securitizing the Shi'a threat. It does this by drawing upon material contained within *Dabiq,* ISIS's English language magazine, to identify processes of securitization and the construction of *asabiyya* or "kinship". It is worth stressing that ISIS publishes propaganda material in a number of different languages, including Arabic, Turkish, French and Russian, however, this article focuses only on English literature with the prominence of UK and US citizens travelling to join the group. In late 2015, figures from The Soufan Group suggested that 760 people had travelled from the UK to join ISIS and a further 250 had travelled from the US.[5] While a number of people have focussed on the ISIS literature offering a quantitative analysis of *Dabiq*, this article uses the literature as a means to understand the state building project and ultimately, to engage with the essence of the group and its appeal.

Of course, to rely upon *Dabiq* as a means of engaging with conditions in the caliphate is problematic, as the magazine undeniably acts as a propaganda tool

rather than accurately depicting events on the ground. Subjectivity and reliability problems aside, it does, however, provide useful scope with regard to understanding the narratives used to incite people to make *hijra*. It also provides opportunities to understand the ideological vision and locate state-building efforts within group's aims and objectives.

Rejecting Jāhiliyyah & The Emergence of ISIS

In understanding the roots of ISIS, one must trace the link between ISIS and Al Qa'ida in Iraq, (AQI) the Al Qa'ida franchise under the leadership of the Jordanian Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. AQI, a forerunner of ISIS,[6] shared a number of members who were united at the American prison, Camp Bucca[7] by the group's leader, Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. Al Baghdadi was born in Iraq and by 2003, was a cleric in the city of Samarra, which had long been characterised by sectarian differences, along with much of southern Iraq.[8] On 30th June 2014 Al Baghdadi would declare himself Caliph Ibrahim, the theological leader of the caliphate and the figurehead of the state and in doing so, would begin the process of building a state. The ISIS narrative was explicit in its desire to provide an alternative form of political organisation and its behaviour on the international stage would support this quest.

In one of the first ISIS videos to gain traction in the Western press, Bastian Vasquez, a Norwegian-Chilean man stood on the border of Iraq and Syria and stated:

> Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim. As you can see right now, I'm on the border of Iraq and al Sham. Right now I'm inside of As sham. As you can see this is the so-called border of Sykes-Picot. Alhamdulillah, we don't recognise it and we will never recognise it. Inshallah this is not the first border that we will break and Inshallah, we shall break all the borders, but we shall start with this, Inshallah. […] Alhamdullilah there is nobody now except the soldiers of *dar al Islam*. So alhamdulillah Inshallah we cross the border. Bismillah. […] As you can see, this is under our feet right now. […] As Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi used to say 'He is the breaker of barriers'. Inshallah we will break the barrier of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, all the county[sic] Inshallah. Until we reach Quds. This is the first of many barriers we shall break Inshallah.[9]

The video stressed the group's desire to overthrow the legacy of the Sykes-Picot agreement[10] and the yoke of colonialism, often held to be responsible for most of the region's ills.[11] It also reflected the power of the group's narrative, encouraging a Norwegian-Chilean – along with individuals from over 100 different states - to make *hijra* (migrate) to join ISIS.

Following Vasquez's video and the declaration of the caliphate, ISIS would expand its propaganda campaign, predominantly through publishing literature in the magazine *Dabiq* by the Al Hayat media centre, named after the Syrian city at which the fight between *dar al Islam* and the armies of Rome would bring about the end of days.[12] The first issue of the magazine called on all Sunni Muslims to "Raise your head high for today, by Allah's grace you have a state and Khalifan, which will return you dignity, might, rights and leadership".[13] By issue 15 of *Dabiq*, three phases of the magazine can be identified. The early issues contained a call to *hijra* and focused

upon the West and attacks, middle issues would focus more upon life in the caliphate and the state-building efforts, while later issues would place the emphasis firmly upon the global jihadist emergency and attacks on the West.[14]

With this declaration, *Dabiq* began the process of populating the state, calling on Muslims to travel to join the group: "Rush of Muslim to *your state*. Yes it is your State! Rush, because Syria is not for Syrians and Iraq is not for the Iraqis (...) The State is a state for all Muslims".[15] Across *Dabiq*, authors are keen to stress the trans-national nature of ISIS's citizenry, united by a shared Sunni, Muslim identity and membership of the *umma*. In many cases, this Sunni aspect is implicit, given that for ISIS, the Shi'a are considered to be *Rawafid* (plural) and *Rafidi* (singular), meaning rejectionist, although when describing the Iraqi army, the term *safavid* is used, in reference to the growing Iranian influence on Iraqi politics.

Such language is key in appealing to Sunni Muslims both in Syria and Iraq but also across the world, by playing on fears of external manipulation – evoking memories of the Sykes-Picot agreement – and long-standing concerns of Iranian (or Persian) expansionist agendas. In *The ISIS Papers*, obtained by The Guardian, this sentiment is documented "The traitorous governments have tried to mislead the Sunni peoples in every Arab land, as corrupt programmes were introduced for them and there spread among them the love of vice, bonds, bribery, usury and abandoning worship and forgetting the rulings of jihad".[16]

The magazine later stressed that "ISIS no longer exists in small cells that can be neutralized by missiles or small groups of commandos. It is now a real and unrecognized state actor".[17] By their own admission, the group considers itself a state, albeit, couched in theological terms. Of course, by acknowledging their lack of recognition from the international community – through which states gain sovereignty – ISIS is framing itself as exceptional and as an alternative to the political system of the day.

Facilitating Conditions

To understand the emergence of ISIS it is important to consider the conditions from which they emerged and how they were able to draw support from people across Iraq and Syria. The legacy of colonialism and the ensuing establishment of a system of political organisation driven by nationalist sentiment but underpinned by sectarian identities would create states that were inherently exclusionary. In recent years, the marginalisation of Sunni Muslims within both states, economically and politically, coupled with an increase in Shi'a-led violence would lead to conditions where individuals were forced to turn to the group to ensure their survival.[18] This resulted in a number of people becoming part of the community under ISIS control yet not necessarily agreeing with their ideological vision, or indeed, their violent tactics.

The fragmentation of Iraq in 2003 would prove integral to the formation of ISIS, turning long-standing power relations and grievances within them on their heads,

leading to the creation of a Shi'a government in Baghdad.[19] The de-ba'athification process implemented by Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2[20] in 2003 would eviscerate the infrastructure of the Iraqi state in an attempt to prevent a resurgence of Ba'athism around a new leader. It would also result in around 300,000 people made unemployed[21] who struggled to find work and to protect their families. As a result, Sunnis would be caught in between coalition forces, the Shi'a government in Baghdad, Shi'a militias such as Badr Brigades, JAM and Al Qa'ida in Iraq. Facing increased violence from these actors and the state's reticence to protect them, Sunni tribes were forced to turn elsewhere to ensure that their basic needs were met.

In addition, the government in Baghdad would marginalize Sunni tribal leaders and, despite an earlier agreement, fail to bring the leaders of the Awakening movement into state infrastructure,[22] fuelling grievances. This mistake, coupled with the increasing violence against religious communities would deepen sectarian divisions across the state, along with the perception that events were manipulated by external forces, notably Iran.[23] Across Anbar Province, the security situation would deteriorate but the Al Maliki government would be either unwilling or unable to improve it, once more adding to the grievances amongst Sunni tribes.

During the rule of Nouri al-Maliki politics took on an increasingly sectarian nature, creating grievances that would add to the distrust towards the government in Baghdad. As an International Crisis Group report documents

> Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has implemented a divide-and-conquer strategy that has neutered any credible Sunni Arab leadership. The authorities also have taken steps that reinforce perceptions of a sectarian agenda. Prominent officials – predominantly Sunni – have been cast aside pursuant to the Justice and Accountability Law on the basis of alleged senior-level affiliation to the former Baath party. Federal security forces have disproportionately deployed in Baghdad's Sunni neighbourhoods as well as Sunni-populated governorates (Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninew, Kirkuk and Diyala). Al-Iraqiya, the political movement to which Sunni Arabs most readily related, slowly came apart due to internal rivalries even as Maliki resorted to both legal and extra-judicial means to consolidate power.[24]

The following years would continue to reproduce the power relations and structural factors that would see the replication and deepening of Sunni grievances across the state. Ultimately, this would create the conditions that would help ISIS to thrive and draw support from local populations.

In contrast to the fragmentation of Iraq, many were surprised to see large scale protests breaking out in Syria and few expected them to be so prolonged, leading to the emergence of a seemingly intractable civil war. The young ruler, Bashar Al Assad, was seen by many to be reform minded,[25] yet his response to the protestors, with unrelenting force and the framing of the conflict along sectarian lines, would deepen divisions between regime and society. The descent into civil war following the violent repression of the pro-democracy protests in early 2011 provided a number of violent Islamist groups with the space to operate. The brutality of the Assad regime's response, resulting in a conflict that has seen over 400,000 dead and 11 million

people displaced, 4 million externally and 7 million internally, forced many to take up arms to protect themselves and their families, or to turn to violent groups who would provide protection[26]. It is from these conditions that ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra – amongst others – were able to thrive and draw support from local communities. The Assad regime was quick to frame the uprisings along sectarian lines and, in doing so, drew support from the Shi'a across Syria while depicting the opposition as extremists.[27]

The geopolitical importance of Syria has meant that a range of external actors have become involved in the conflict, both directly and via proxies. In an effort to support their Shi'a ally Bashar al Assad, Hizballah, the Lebanese Party of God, has become increasingly active in Syria, altering the balance of power in the conflict. The struggle against the Assad regime, Hizballah and other militias operating across Syria has posed an existential challenge to Sunni communities across the state and similar problems occurred in Iraq following the US withdrawal from the state. The involvement of actors with an explicitly sectarian dimension has fed into the divisions that have divided communities within and across states. It is clear that there are a number of similarities between the conditions in Iraq and Syria, with increasingly marginalised communities in both states having to turn away from the state to ensure that their basic needs were met. ISIS has been able to capitalise on political fragmentation across Syria and Iraq, drawing support from individuals who faced existential threats on a regular basis by providing them with protection and support both against the state and against the militias.[28]

The seizure of Ramadi and Mosul would focus attention on the group and, as conflict across the region intensified, it became increasingly internationalised through (social) media outlets documenting the brutality that was predominantly occurring along sectarian lines. Following the rising prominence of ISIS, a number of groups across the region declared allegiance to Al Baghdadi, establishing *vilayats* (provinces) across the Middle East and Africa, further internationalising the conflict. At the time of writing, groups in Egypt, Tunisia, Somalia, across the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Algeria and Nigeria have declared allegiance.[29]

Underpinning regional politics and the penetration of both Iraq and Syria – along with a number of others – is the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which while often framed in terms of sectarian difference is ultimately about geopolitical control over the region.[30] To this end, since 1979 and the revolution in Iran, the two states have become embroiled in an increasingly fractious rivalry, providing support to sectarian kin across the region. Given the range of pressures exerted on the people of Iraq and Syria, ISIS was able to capitalise on disenfranchisement, grievance and existential concerns to quickly bolster their ranks. Questions about the extent to which this constitutes support will be addressed at a later point. The fragmentation of political geography across the region would provide increased opportunities for Riyadh and Tehran to support proxy actors across the Middle East, often along sectarian lines, in an attempt to weaken the other, with the people of the region paying the heaviest price.[31]

Amidst this fragmentation, ISIS has sought to establish a new form of political organisation, drawing support from marginalised and discriminated populations across the region. Within both states, latent structural factors have increasingly manifested in violence as political organisation began to fragment. Identifying such structural factors helps to understand how the group was able to gain traction amongst local populations. Grievances and increasingly manifesting structural factors provide fertile ground for ISIS to cultivate support, which would be furthered with the external penetration of Syria and Iraq.

Conceptualising the State

Since the declaration of the caliphate on 30th June 2014, it has become apparent that the group is trying to organise political life and to populate its territory. Despite being commonly referred to as Islamic State and proclaiming the establishment of a caliphate, very few scholars have engaged with questions of political organisation and statehood with regard to the group.[32] By questioning the extent to which ISIS has established a sovereign state, we are able to gain a better understanding of the group, along with how leaders have been able to regulate political activity and reconcile tensions within its citizenry.

Conventional understandings of sovereignty are derived from the canon of Western philosophy and fuse external principles of non-intervention with domestic understandings of political organisation. Grounded in the work of Grotius, Weber and more recently, the likes of Stephen Krasner and James Caporaso, it is clear that a number of shared characteristics can be identified across these approaches, including clearly defined borders, a citizen body and hierarchies of authority.[33] Despite this apparent agreement, there are serious problems with engaging with social, economic and political life within the concept of a state as a fixed unit of sovereign space.[34] Indeed, regimes in the Middle East face pressures from sub and supra state identities and ideologies, along with tribal dynamics and the economic and social forces that emerged in late 2010 and characterised the Arab Uprisings. When such identities are instrumentalised and used politically, this can have serious ramifications for authority of neighbouring states and the existence of such forces can undermine the notion of territoriality within neatly defined territorial areas.

Article 2 of the UN Charter articulates the sovereign equality of all of its members,[35] with those members referred to as states, in a circular move. To argue such a position makes a number of assumptions with regard to the nature and equality of sovereign states. By being a member state of the United Nations it is then assumed that said state is sovereign, regardless of the machinations of domestic sovereignty yet there are forms of political organisation that lack external recognition seem to tick all of the other criteria for being considered a state.

For Krasner, conventional understandings of sovereignty are comprised of three elements: international legal, Westphalian and domestic,[36] operating simultaneously and underpinning this is the principle of non-interference, derived from the 1648 Peace of Westphalia.[37] It is this idea of domestic sovereignty that is of interest for

our inquiry. In contrast to Krasner, Caporaso focuses more on the domestic level and provides a conceptual engagement with notions of domestic sovereignty, suggesting that it is comprised of the interaction of 3 areas: authority, territoriality and citizenship, underpinned by the principle of autonomy. Indeed, for Caporaso, it is perhaps easier to recognise the whole, rather than the constituent parts,[38] yet these parts are important in the sense that "none both logically entails and exhausts the meanings of the others".[39]

The ISIS state-building effort seeks to do similar things, developing an entity that is far greater than the sum of its parts. Identifying component parts of the ISIS state building project facilitate greater awareness of strategies and techniques. Indeed, by focussing upon the interaction of these themes, we can identify and engage with challenges that emerge and impact upon the group. In a report for the think tank Quilliam, Charlie Winter notes that over half of the material in *Dabiq* is focussed upon depicting life in the caliphate, with a "preponderate focus upon the 'caliphate' utopia".[40] Given the prominence of life in the caliphate within *Dabiq*, we must also understand the nature of political organisation as a means of regulating life, under Caliph Ibrahim. Within discussions of sovereignty, the idea of autonomy is driven by the principle of non-interference. Clearly, when applied to the case of ISIS, there are a number of problems, both external and internal, which erode ideas of autonomy. Tensions stemming from problems of territoriality and authority mean that autonomy is challenged externally and internally, with a range of actors resisting the rule of the group.[41] By identifying the component parts and tensions between them, we are able to engage with ISIS in a different way.

Authority

Authority is a concept that can exist in multiple forms, often in conjunction with one another yet also in tension. For many, authority can be understood in terms of force, or power; for Max Weber, sovereignty is understood in terms of a monopoly on the legitimate use of force,[42] yet this is an oversimplification. While force often relates to authority, there are power relations within a relationship between the individual exercising force and the one on whom force is being exercised. As such, hierarchy plays an integral role in shaping understandings of authority, driven by mutual recognition and acceptance of such a hierarchy. Within Western states, this hierarchy corresponds neatly with the territorial borders of the state and a hierarchical structure ends with the ruler at the zenith of the structure.

The application of this concept to ISIS – and indeed the non-Western world generally – appears somewhat problematic, given that this concept is couched in Western philosophy. Moreover, given that the group established a caliphate, it appears that ultimate authority must rest with God. It is clear that a distinction must be made between authority from God and the authority that is found within the hierarchy of ISIS's political structures. Within this, there is a very explicit hierarchical structure, beginning with Al Baghdadi and under him, a bureaucratic organisational structure. Within this structure are a number of ministries, including finance, transport, security, foreign fighters and media. Supporting Al Baghdadi is a cabinet of advisors,

who help to ensure that policies conform to ISIS's ideological view.[43] Occupying a number of these prominent positions are a number of former Ba'athist officers, whose military experience has proved invaluable.[44]

Given the importance of tribal dynamics across Iraq and Syria, ISIS has had to secure the support of key leaders in order to both populate the caliphate and to maintain stability. Such efforts are documented in the first issue of *Dabiq*, which articulate ISIS's "extensive history of building relations with the tribes".[45] The head of tribal affairs met with elders and dignitaries of the tribes Albu Khamis, Banu Sa'id, Al-'Awn, Al Khafsah and Al-Ghanim. Dabiq also documents how ISIS has acted in respect of tribal norms and customs while detailing how they had returned rights and property to rightful owners, provided security and stability, and reduced crime.[46] Pledges of allegiance also included agreements about shared financial revenues along with promoting loyal tribal leaders, allowing them to control a small territory. By pledging *bayaa* (the oath of allegiance) to ISIS, tribes gain from aid and non-coercion by pledging loyalty. Moreover, tribal differences have also been exacerbated. From this, one can see how religious authority has been fused with tribal authority in the context of a new form of political organization.

From this period of consolidation, it is clear that the group has expansionist aspirations

> the Islamic State will remain. It will remain because it was built upon the corpses of martyrs. It will remain because the success granted by Allah in this Jihad is more obvious than the sun is the center of the sky. (...) It will remain because it is the supplication of the oppressed, the scream of the prisoners and the hope of the orphans. The Islamic State is here to stay even all the Christians, Jews and apostates despite such. And it will continue to spread to all corners of the Earth.[47]

The fusion of religious and tribal authority within the context of political organization serves as a means of deriving support from a wide range of people across different contexts. Of course, it also subsumes structures that may have also emerged in opposition to ISIS.

Territoriality

Territoriality is primarily concerned with the organisation of political space within clearly defined territorial borders, or, in Caporaso's words, when "the legal reach of public authority is coterminous with certain spatial boundaries".[48] Ultimately, it is the exercising of politics across the territory. Caporaso notes that territoriality may be challenged when alternative sources of authority confront the authority that is seeking to exercise control within territorial borders. In securing the support of tribal leaders, ISIS was able to establish governance structures and a constitution to ensure stability and security across the caliphate. Documents obtained by The Guardian, revealed the ISIS plan to regulate activity[49] and in a chapter on administration, the document detailed steps to be taken:

> 1. Preparing special sharia sessions in the camps in coordination with the al-Buhuth

and al-Eftaa [fatwa – legal opinion] committee.

2. Preparing educational programmes to teach the Arabic language and recitation of the Qur'an in coordination with the Diwan al-Ta'aleem [department of education] for every province.

3. Preparing military programmes teaching the types of weapons and military tactics with the supervision of the military commander in every province.

4. Studying expenditures and allowances for every camp whose study and analysis are to be completed by the military leader or wali [governor] of every area according to the needs connected with every wilaya [province] and submitting the study to the wali.

5. Overseeing the selection of the educational and training staff in the camp.

6. Putting in place detailed planning and programmes on the course of the battle.

7. Tracking the supervision of the camp according to the defined programmes.

8. Assessing the camp session and raising a report to the officials concerning the readiness of the session after the camp.[50]

Such analysis can tell us about the governance strategies and theological roots of the project and ultimately reveal a great deal about ISIS. At the heart of governance structures, which after all, is what territoriality is comprised of, are conventional institutions of state that have been shaped by the group's theological influences.

Theological roots, discussed in greater detail below, are responsible for shaping governance strategies.[51] Through its Sharia courts, ISIS can conduct a great deal of governance activity, ranging from the provision of public goods and services to creating laws, enforced by the Islamic Police.[52] In late 2014, MEMRI obtained the ISIS penal code, which set out the *hudud* (Quranic punishments) for a range of offences. The more serious offences including blasphemy, sodomy, spying for 'unbelievers', adultery, apostasy, and murder are punishable by death. Lesser offences carry a range of punishments: theft results in the loss of a hand, drinking alcohol and slandering are both punished by 80 lashes and for terrorizing people, the punishment is exile.[53] ISIS leaders in Nineveh province in Iraq created a 'contract of the city', which set out 16 points for residents. These 16 points included the implementation of a Salafist inspired Sharia law, encouragement to respect all Muslims, except for those allied to oppressors, to perform prayers with the group, preventing women travelling outside, banning political and armed groups and the banning of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. Underpinning all of this were the religious views of the Wahhabi inspired Salafism, which is vehemently anti Shi'a, which remains a common theme across Dabiq but also in structural grievances amongst Sunni communities.[54]

Of course, a serious challenge facing ISIS stems from the conflict that is resulting in a seemingly perennial redrawing of borders. In engaging in conflict with a range of actors on a number of different fronts, gains and losses mean that borders are in a state of flux and from this, it is difficult to exercise political control over areas that are contested. Moreover, given that in certain areas, authority is also contested, territorial control is increasingly problematic. Yet in those areas that control is exercised, one can learn a great deal about the group in examining the type of governance structures that are in place.[55]

In an article written in issue 8 by John Cantlie, the development of ISIS institutions is outlined

> I am certainly no expert on such matters and my views are those of a layman, but generally one doesn't expect a mere "organization" to lay siege to cities or have their own police force. You certainly don't expect a mere "organization" to have tanks and artillery pieces, an army of soldiers tens of thousands strong, and their own spy drones. And one certainly doesn't expect a mere "organization" to have a mint with plans to produce their own currency, primary schools for the young, and a functioning court system. These, surely, are all hallmarks of (whisper it if you dare) a country.[56]

Cantlie is correct to stress that this project bears the hallmarks of a country, yet we should not be surprised, given that *Dabiq* explicitly documents the group's efforts to build "a complete society for Muslims."[57]

Citizenship

At the heart of any kind of project of political organisation is a requirement to have something to organise and, in order to lay claim to governance, those within the territory must comply. Within a state building project, citizens are an integral part. Of course, this citizen body is comprised of people who support the ideological vision of the group, people who turn to the group for protection yet do not support their ideological vision, and people who are coerced into being citizens. This distinction is discussed in more detail below, but the acknowledgement of a range of different loyalties demonstrates the need for ISIS leaders to develop loyalty to the community through a range of different strategies.

With the declaration of a caliphate, ISIS quickly sought to establish state institutions, a bureaucracy to collect taxes and health care, to be imposed upon a citizenry within its territory. Given the context within which ISIS was operating, the need for a larger – and more skilled – population was imperative. In November 2014 it was reported that ISIS had advertised for an 'ideologically suitable' oil refinery manager, albeit at a salary much lower than the market rate.[58] In some instances, ISIS advertised particular jobs and in the first issue of *Dabiq* there was an open call for "doctors, engineers, scholars and specialists".[59] In most cases the group relies on calls to make *hijra,* yet to do this, one must feel compelled to travel and ultimately, safe to do so. Indeed, for many, travelling to join ISIS would involve breaking the law and joining a proscribed terrorist group. To this end, the narratives within *Dabiq* were essential in creating the pull factors that would entice people to travel.

Within the first issue of *Dabiq*, ISIS is very clear in its attempt to appeal to all Sunni Muslims. The magazine portrays the territory as "a state where the Arab and the non-Arab, the white man and the black man, the easterner and the westerner are all brothers".[60] Of course, such claims of unity extend only in so far as it applies to Sunni Muslims and, anyone who seeks to leave or defect is killed. The passports of the

home nations of those travelling to join ISIS are routinely burnt on arrival. ISIS then employs a number of strategies to protect its citizens, predominantly through ensuring that basic needs are met, a charge previously levied at governments in Baghdad and Damascus. Moreover, ensuring that citizens are protected is of paramount importance, given that the group draws a great deal of its legitimacy from creating a stable environment. To this end, police and judicial structures are developed, implemented and documented.

Across *Dabiq*, discussions of the *umma* feature regularly, hardly surprising as ISIS is seeking to position itself at the vanguard of it – regardless of what other Muslims may think of the group - albeit an *umma* defined in exclusionary terms. As such, it seeks to develop a notion of cohesion amongst Sunni Muslims, achieved by utilizing two narratives, discussed in more detail below. Moreover, given the nature of political organization under the leadership of Al Baghdadi, there is also a struggle to maintain the support of citizens, reflecting the organic nature of ISIS.[61] The group also seeks to convert locals to its ideological viewpoint. From this, two main narratives emerge that seek to bolster the ranks of ISIS while maintaining support from those within the territory controlled by the group, both natives of Iraq and Syria and those who have made *hijra*, a great number of whom are unable to read Arabic.

To this end, the authors of *Dabiq* have sought to create an appealing narrative and an image of strength. Before the 9/11 attacks, Osama Bin Laden told the story that when an individual is faced with two horses, (s)he will automatically choose the strong horse.[62] For Bin Laden, this strong horse was Al Qa'ida, yet the same idea applies to ISIS whose proclamation of a caliphate was seen as a declaration of strength. This message of strength can be found across *Dabiq* from the presentation and construction of the magazine to the content of the articles. This image is also seen in the group's videos, where the audience is reminded of images from Guantanamo Bay, albeit with the inversion of power relations. Building on this narrative is an attempt to increase the cohesion between supporters while also proliferating the group's appeal globally. In addition, the group has explicitly attempted to "remove the grey zone" between an understanding of issues within binary terms, to frame the conflict with ISIS in Manichean terms. Yet the removal of this grey zone also can be understood in terms of a sectarian struggle, between Sunni and Shi'a, and between Arabs and Iranians. Framing this conflict in binary terms also serves as a means of recruitment for the caliphate and to solidify support from Sunni Muslims across the region.

Narratives play an integral part in shaping the ISIS vision and facilitating greater cohesion within its community. Winter unpacks the media strategy of ISIS, suggesting that the brand is comprised of 6 narratives: brutality, mercy, victimhood, war, belonging and utopianism.[63] Of particular interest to this article are two concepts – *asabiyya* and securitization – that straddle these 6 narratives. *Asabiyya* is integral with regard to creating the notion of belonging while securitization feeds into narratives of war and victimhood. Of particular interest is the securitization of Shi'a Muslims – the near enemy – given the conditions in both Syria and Iraq and

manipulation of Sunni Muslims by Shi'a actors.[64] Engaging the construction of these narratives the securitization process helps to understand how ISIS is able to speak to its citizens, while also appealing to Muslims across the world. It is the interaction of these themes that will increase support and morale amongst those under ISIS control while also leading to individuals making *hijra*.

Religious *Asabiyya*

An integral aspect of the ISIS message is an attempt to construct a community of Sunni Muslims, referred to as *asabiyya,* or kinship within the context of political organisation. The concept was first articulated by Ibn Khaldoun in *The Muqaddimah,* where he set out to understand the dynamics of tribal societies and political organisation. For Khaldun, a collective will only be successful by developing close ties, which "strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and group is more important".[65] Khaldun suggests that if such an argument can be applied to the homestead then it can be applied *writ large* across a state. From this, it is important to cultivate *asabiyya* in an attempt to create a shared identity within a newly constructed entity. Such a strategy is reminiscent of Benedict Anderson's idea of 'imagined communities',[66] although for Khaldun it is constructed on a much more personal level. It is important to note that while Khaldun's concept of *asabiyya* is related to tribal dynamics, it can also be applied to religious cohesion. Indeed, if one reads Khaldun's work, it is clear that it is grounded in Islamic thought.

For Khaldun, group feeling emerges from blood ties and, in quoting the prophet, Khaldun stresses the need to "learn as much of your pedigree as is necessary to establish your ties of blood relationship".[67] Of course, it is also important to consider ideas of authority within the context of *asabiyya.* Authority, in Khaldun's work, stems from superiority, which "emerges from group feeling. Only by God's help in establishing this religion do individual desires come together in agreement to press their claims, and hearts become united".[68] This idea would feature prominently in Al Baghdadi's belief that he is operating with God's help and in the establishment of a community of Muslims under his support, claims and hearts appear to have become united.[69]

Efforts to construct *asabiyya* feature prominently across *Dabiq,* with the authors seeking to stress the collective nature of Sunni Muslims and the *umma,* achieved in part by developing links with tribes across Iraq and Syria and drawing support from the grievances amongst Sunnis in these communities. Articles in *Dabiq* also seek to stress the quality of life in the caliphate, once more aiming to improve morale and portray a positive image to Sunni Muslims. The concept of *asabiyya* is integral within the state building project, both underpinning governance strategies and as part of a strategy to build ties with Muslims across the world.

In the first issue of *Dabiq,* the magazine stressed that

> the time has come for the *Ummah* of Muhammad (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to
> wake up from its sleep, remove the garments of dishonor, and shake off the dust of

humiliation and disgrace, for the era of lamenting and moaning has gone, and the dawn of honor has emerged anew.[70]

The second issue goes a step further by detailing the availability of welfare "There are homes here for you and your families. You can be a major contributor towards the liberation of Makkah, Madīnah, and al-Quds. Would you not like to reach Judgment Day with these grand deeds in your scales".[71] In doing so, the group seeks to stress not only the responsibility of Muslims to make *hijra* but also the capability of ISIS to provide for those who do so. This level of support also involves the provision of guidance to the "noble widows of the blessed shuhada",[72] those women whose husbands are martyred.

Supporting this are references to the provision of welfare to those in need, including the provision of support to orphans, particularly through the distribution of *ghanimah* (finances gained through war). Across the issues, the magazine stresses the hard line taken against crime in the caliphate, with photographic evidence of punishments for theft, drug smuggling, hashish and cigarettes. Efforts to cultivate *asabiyya* are at the heart of both the state building project and broader efforts to create a community amongst those residing within its territory, regardless of ideological vision.

Securitization

The second aspect of the ISIS narrative is the attempt to securitize particular groups. In a shift from the ideology of Al Qa'ida, ISIS stresses the need to focus on the near enemy, the Shi'a, rather than the far enemy, the US, although across later issues of *Dabiq,* there is a shift in focus to attacks on foreign soil. By stressing the threat posed by Shi'a Muslims, ISIS is able to frame itself at the vanguard of the fight against *bidah* and also to draw support from Sunni Muslims in the Middle East and from further afield. Such a process has involved securitizing the Shi'a threat to audiences within the territory that ISIS controls but also internationally.

To understand the way in which the process of securitization works, one must revisit the work of Ole Waever and Barry Buzan, whose attempts to broaden the security agenda at the end of the Cold War provided scope to include a range of other issues within security calculations.[73] Moreover, building on the work of J.L. Austen, they developed the idea of securitization, the notion that a threat can be framed in a particular way for a particular audience. For Thierry Balzacq, the idea of securitization is the articulation of security which *itself* creates a new social order, bracketing normal politics.[74] In this process, actors respond to the perception of threats by framing the issue as an existential threat to a particular audience. As Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde argue, "in security discourse, an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus by labelling it as *security* an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means".[75]

Of course, not all securitization efforts are successful, suggesting that the threat was not seen in existential terms or that extra-ordinary measures required by the securitizer were not necessary. For Paul Roe, this is not a necessary condition for

success; instead, the audience may accept the frame but reject the implications of an act of securitization.[76] Within the process of securitization there is typically a clear – and direct – causal link between the securitizing actor and the audience, which typically is between a regime and an audience located within the state. This process then occurs across three stages: the first, the *designation of the threat*, the second, the *facilitating conditions,* and the third, the *audience.* There are of course, a number of problems with this process. As Matt McDonald correctly argues, there is a paucity of literature on what factors feed into the wider context and the facilitating conditions.[77] While context is conventionally held to be found within states, the nature of identity politics coupled with the role of religion in the Middle East means that both the audience and the context can transcend state borders.

Securitization is predominantly grounded in a Western philosophical tradition, which again raises a number of serious problems. When studying the process of securitization it is typically restricted to the realm of high politics, driven by the state at the expense of actors on the periphery, leaving others in the 'analytical shadows'.[78] It also possesses a linear structure, typically confined to one state, where a regime securitizes a particular threat to an audience within the state. In this case, leading ISIS ideologues attempted to securitize the Shi'a threat to Sunni Muslims within the territory controlled by the group and to Sunni Muslims across the world. Such a strategy had two main aims: first, to cultivate loyalty from those within the territory and second, to encourage people to travel to Syria and Iraq to fight against the Shi'a threat.

Framing Shi'a Muslims as a threat is not unique to ISIS, rather, this position draws upon Wahhabist thought. As Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab wrote, "One's Islam cannot be sound, even if they adhered to the oneness of God and worshipped none but God, without enmity to the polytheists and showing to them hate and hostility." Such a position requires Muslims to take direct action against polytheists and this requirement is part of *tawhid* as preached by Ibn Taymiyyah, the ideological visionary behind the Wahhabist movement. Taymiyyah, writing in the 15th century, sought to excommunicate Shi'a and Sufi Muslims as a consequence of their religious practice and belief, including (but not limited) to the veneration of Imams.[79] It is then clear that securitization narratives build on history and theology, stressing the negative impact of external actors. "Aspects of *kufr* crept into Muslim lands by way of Sufi and Rafidi infiltration. Grave-worship became widespread and the authority of Allah was challenged by Turkish, Persian, and even Arab kings".[80] As Taymiyyah suggested, "The origin of all sedition and calamity is Shia and their allies, and many of the swords unleashed against Islam come from them."[81] Taymiyyah's work plays a fundamental role within the ideological vision of ISIS, helping the group appeal to more fundamentalist Sunni Muslims but also guiding their political strategy. Given that the securitization narrative speaks to Sunnis both in the region and externally, the conditions affecting the audience will help the securitization narrative find traction.

The facilitating conditions and context are found in the fragmentation of political organization across the Middle East, along with discrimination against Sunnis.

Indeed, when Sunnis across Iraq and Syria have been marginalized and subjected to violence from the state and militias, the securitization narrative will find a receptive audience, particularly when external actors support the state and militias. The other term that is prominent in the securitization narrative is *Safawi,* which is framed as a political cult of the "Twelver Rafidah", and places great credence on Persian language and culture.[82] As issue 13 notes,

> Initiated by a sly Jew, they are an apostate sect drowning in worship of the dead, cursing the best companions and wives of the Prophet g, spreading doubt on the very basis of the religion (the Qur'ān and the Sunnah), defaming the very honor of the Prophet, and preferring their "twelve" imāms to the prophets and even to Allah![83]

With the penetration of Iraq by Iran in the aftermath of the US-led invasion,[84] there was a marked increase in anti-Iranian sentiment which was also fused with the anti-Shi'a sentiment at the heart of ISIS's message. Such sentiments also feature in other media statements, one of which called on supporters not to "give up one span of land that you have liberated, and do not let the Rawafid step upon it except over your body parts".[85]

The securitization moves also facilitates the process of dehumanization, an integral part of the move to violence. Part of this process noted "the permissibility of excessiveness against the *rafidha*," and the process was replete with abusive and denigrating language directed at Shia. [86] This rhetoric has also manifested in action. ISIS established the Rafidah Hunters – anti-Shi'a assassins who attack Shi'a Iraqis who are joining 'Safavid' army units.[87]

It is clear to see how the securitization process gained traction. The designation of the threat in *Dabiq* and in speeches from prominent members of ISIS gains momentum when taken together with the facilitating conditions, which have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Sunnis across Iraq and Syria since 2003, along with the exclusion from political, social and economic life. Having experienced such conditions, the securitization narrative resonates amongst people in the region but also amongst those across the world who are concerned by how their sectarian kin are affected. The securitization process plays an integral part in attempting to unite a divided community in opposition to another, which is particularly important as it is couched in the theological view of Ibn Taymiyyah.

Audiences and Support

Such securitization processes require an audience in order to find traction and to be successful. While ISIS has been able to capitalise on long-standing grievances and marginalisation, it would be remiss to suggest that there is cohesion amongst the support it has gained. Rather, those residing within ISIS controlled territory have little in common other than residing in this area. Much like support for groups that employ violence as a tactic, as Brandon Boylan suggests, it is important to make a distinction "behavioural (active and passive) and induced (enticed and coerced)

continuums of support".[88] Such a distinction must be applied to those living within ISIS controlled territory but also to those who travel to join the group.

To do this it is possible to separate those living in the area into four main groups. At the centre of the group are the key ideologues, led by Al Baghdadi, along with four councils: the Sharia, Shura, Military and Security. The structure employed at the core is replicated across the various *vilayats*. Supporting this are the more zealous followers of the ideology, individuals who occupy key governance positions. These are predominantly individuals who were members of AQI and spent time in Camp Bucca.[89]

The next ring is comprised of a growing number of foreign fighters who travelled to join ISIS and to fulfil a range of different roles. At the end of 2015, there were an estimated 27,000 foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria, from 86 states.[90] Of course, the reasons for people travelling to join ISIS are multifarious, stemming from structural violence and discrimination in the homeland and a crisis of modernity to concerns for sectarian kin.[91] Conflict that engulfed the region took on an increasingly brutal nature and as such, the violence conducted against sectarian kin would be a strong motivating factor. Others struggled to situate themselves within Western political contexts, where the struggle to find meaning and certainty in a crisis of modernity made the strength of the ISIS message more appealing.[92] While there were a range of groups for 'foreign fighters' to join, the fundamentalist vision at the heart of ISIS was appealing to most.

Of course, not all that joined the group with the intention of fighting, rather, a number chose to travel to provide other kinds of support to the group. Behavioral supporters can be broken down into active and passive supporters, emerging from the extent of their involvement within the group's activities. Obvious distinctions must be drawn between those who travel to fight and those who travel to provide medical assistance in ISIS-ran hospitals. Passive supporters can be found across Iraq and Syria, predominantly located within the borders of ISIS controlled territories yet not openly sharing the ideological vision of the group. The last distinction must be made with regard to those supporters who were induced to follow ISIS, between individuals who were enticed, for gain or reward and those who were coerced to act under duress.

Those living within ISIS controlled territory may differ in their vision and intentions but they share in their experiences of governance and life under ISIS. The need for ISIS to speak to this community, both active and passive, is an integral part of the state building project and the combination of *asabiyya* and securitization is a prominent part of the process of building the state. Understanding this process helps us to understand a range of factors typically missed by analysis of ISIS, particularly these dynamics on the ground and how ISIS has engaged with local populations. Moreover, by considering *asabiyya* and securitization strategies, we can better shape responses to the group in the region along with counter narrative campaigns in the West.

The Owl of Minerva and the 'Westphalian Straitjacket'

Underpinning much of the analysis of the Middle East in terms of discussions of both sovereignty and securitization are Western philosophical assumptions, which are increasingly problematic. To better understand the emergence of ISIS it is imperative to reflect not only on the empirical evidence that has been used – and misused – but also on a number of the concepts that are taken for granted with very little critical engagement. As Hegel argues, the owl of Minerva stresses the need for such reflection and we would be wise to remember that here.

With regard to empirical issues, desires to engage with the emergence of ISIS have led many to focus on the group, without paying particular attention to the conditions that have given rise to it. While in depth analysis of the ideology and structure of ISIS is essential, it is of equal importance to locate the emergence of the group within the recent history of the Middle East and the Syrian and Iraqi political contexts. Understanding the grievances faced by Sunni communities within both states can help to identify why ISIS has been able to draw support from Sunni tribes across the two states and internationally. Others have considered these structural factors and the impact upon societal security but are yet to apply them to the emergence of ISIS.[93] Additionally, such grounding also facilitates greater analysis of why securitization narratives have proved so successful.

Discussion of conceptual issues requires much greater reflection. At the heart of much of the writing on Middle Eastern International Relations is the notion that the state is the main unit of analysis, yet in recent years, with the fragmentation of a number of states, this has become increasingly problematic.[94] Moreover, with regimes facing pressures from sub and supra state identities, the notion that we should view the Middle Eastern state as a homogenous 'black box' is infelicitous. Such Realist assumptions have also crept into other forms of analysis. For Claire Wilkinson, the Westphalian understandings of sovereignty are driven by such problems, and as such, "conveniently overlooked at best, and at worst reinterpreted or 'edited out'" [95] the problems. Wilkinson also argues that the 'Westphalian straitjacket' means that "security dynamics are edited and Westernized through the application of the theoretical framework"[96] and in doing so, ignores the nature of political organisation in the non-Western world, where identities and securitized identities have the capacity to transcend state borders. Given this, the securitization process is rarely the simple, linear structure that many hold it to be. Furthermore, by focussing on the state, the securitization project takes a serious risk by conflating identity with state identity and, in doing so, essentialising identities. Moving the securitization process away from the state is of paramount importance, while also focussing on other identities and sources of legitimacy, which may play a prominent role as facilitating conditions and in the state-building process.

Conclusions

This article began by quoting a famous passage from Hegel, which stresses the need for reflective analysis. Such a reflection is integral when engaging with ISIS, yet has

largely been lacking. This article has reflected on the emergence of the group by considering the state-building project and the application of concepts of sovereignty. It has also provided scope to consider how ISIS has created a narrative that builds support from Sunni Muslims both in the Middle East and internationally. Although there are numerous problems with referring to ISIS as a state, by virtue of the definition of domestic sovereignty, it is difficult to argue that it does not possess a number of the conditions defined by Caporaso as comprising a state. Such a position appears difficult to hold, given the morally repugnant actions of the group, yet in accepting this conclusion, it can lead to different forms of engagement, or perhaps lack thereof.

While there are a number of serious issues that arise when engaging with the question of ISIS sovereignty, it is possible that a number of these stem from problematic notions of sovereignty. Indeed, by applying Western constructions of sovereignty to ISIS and the Middle East more broadly – addressed below – such an application helps to tease out aspects of the group that have thus far remained under explored. Moreover, in recognising the need to populate the new territory, it is possible to identify aspects of the ISIS brand that seek to achieve this outcome. Across the development of the state and, ultimately, an integral part of the process is the notion of consolidation.

Of course, if ISIS continues to lose territory across Iraq and Syria, then the idea of a caliphate may become moot and the number of people travelling to join the group may diminish, yet root causes behind the emergence of Sunni extremism will remain. In the meantime, by applying the concepts of sovereignty and securitization to ISIS we are able to tease out important information about the group, yet at a more theoretical level, such an application also reveals a number of problems with the application of theory in the non-Western world. It also gets caught in the Westphalian straitjacked as a consequence of projecting Western understandings of sovereignty onto the region. Despite this, by rejecting the overly simplistic view of ISIS as a terrorist organisation – much like Hizballah and Hamas - it is possible to build a stronger policy response to the group.

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[1] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (New York: Cambridge University Press, [1821] 1991), 23.

[2] Dabiq 1, *The Return of Khalifah.* (05.07.14). The declaration of the caliphate was considered haram (forbidden) by most mainstream Islamic theologian and legal scholars.

[3] While the group has declared itself a caliphate, it is undeniable that there are numerous strong parallels between the project to organise political, social and economic life within a caliphate and within a state. Given this, this article seeks to avoid theological debates and considers that the group is engaged in a state building project. The project is ultimately engaged in efforts at establishing governance structures and a social contract.

[4] Eric Schmitt, *In Battle to Defang ISIS, U.S. Targets Its Psychology*, (New York Times, 28.12.14) Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/29/us/politics/in-battle-to-defang-isis-us-targets-its-psychology-.html.

[5] The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq* (2015) Available from: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf

[6] Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (London: William Collins, 2015).

[7] Martin Chulov, Isis: the inside story. (*The Guardian,* 11.12.14). Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/11/-sp-isis-the-inside-story accessed 11.12.14.

[8] Simon Mabon and Stephen Royle, *The Origins of ISIS: The Collapse of Nations and Revolution in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016)

[9] Bastian Vasquez,. *The End of Sykes Picot,* (28.06.14) Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i357G1HuFcI

[10] It is important to stress that the Sykes-Picot agreement was never implemented. As Sir Mark Sykes argued: imperialism, annexation, military triumph, prestige, White man's burdens, have been expunged from the popular political vocabulary, consequently Protectorates, spheres of interest or influence, annexations, bases, etc. have to be consigned to the Diplomatic lumber-room". In Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*. (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[11] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*. (Columbia University Press 2005.).

[12] For an in depth discussion of the ideological dimension of ISIS's apocalyptic messages, one should turn to William McCant's excellent tome, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State.* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015).

[13] Dabiq 1 *The Return of Khalifah* (2014)

[14] Overview of Daesh's Online Recruitment Propaganda Machine, https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/countering-isis/dabiq-report-12-17-15.pdf

[15] *Dabiq*, Issue 1, p.4.

[16] *The ISIS papers: a masterplan for consolidating power* (The Guardian, 07.12.15) Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/07/islamic-state-document-masterplan-for-power

[17] Ibid., p17

[18] Mabon and Royle, Op. Cit.

[19] See: Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

[20] *Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2,* (2003) Available from: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030823_CPAORD_2_Dissolution_of_Entities_with_Annex_A.pdf

[21] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p282.

[22] Austin Long, 'The Anbar Awakening', *Survival* 50:2 (2008) 67-94.

[23] The Awakening movement was a collection of Sunni tribes that was brought together – and funded – by the US in an attempt to empower Sunnis within Iraq to fight against Al Qa'ida.

[24] International Crisis Group, *Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State* (14.08.13) Available from: https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/make-or-break-iraq-s-sunnis-and-state

[25] Charles Krauthammer, *Syria's 'reformer',* (The Washington Post, 31.03.11) Available from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/syrias-reformer/2011/03/31/AFy4JFCC_story.html?utm_term=.6109bfe3c5d8

[26] John Hudson, *U.N. Envoy Revises Syria Death Toll to 499,000* (Foreign Policy, 22.04.16) Available from: http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/22/u-n-envoy-revises-syria-death-toll-to-400000/

[27] Of course, this is only part of the story and Assad also sought to maintain close ties with wealthy Sunni elites who would benefit from the continuation of the Assad regime.

[28] See: Mabon and Royle, Op. Cit.

[29] Daniel Byman, *ISIS Goes Global* (Foreign Affairs, 2016) Available from: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/isis-goes-global

[30] See: Simon Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013)

[31] Ibid.

[32] While there is a burgeoning literature exploring ISIS, a great deal of this focuses upon its emergence, its ideology, its apocalyptic vision, or its tactics.

[33] See: Stephen Krasner, Compromising Westphalia, *International Security,* Vol.20, No.3 (1995-1996) pp115-151. And James Caporaso, Changes in the Westphalian Order: Territory, Public Authority, and Sovereignty, *International Studies Review,* Vol.2, No.2. More critical approaches tend to focus upon domestic politics, notably the work of Carl Schmitt, Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, suggest that sovereignty should be conceptualised in a different form, arguing that the conventional approach fails to adequately engage with questions about the organisation of society. These approaches are all driven by questions of power and organisation, manifesting in understandings of biopolitics, the means through which human life is controlled by the governance power of the state. There are compelling reasons to use such approaches yet more conventional approaches allow us to identify particular characteristics that will facilitate this analysis.

[34] John Agnew, 'The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory', *Review of International Political Economy*, (1994) 1(1), p77.

[35] *Charter of the United Nations,* Available from: http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml

[36] Stephen Krasner, 'Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States', *International Security,* Vol.29, No.2, p87.

[37] Comprised of two peace treaties, at Munster and Osnabruck where the principle of non-interference as the bedrock of international relations was established.

[38] Caporaso, Op. Cit., p6

[39] Ibid., p11.

[40] Charlie Winter, *Documenting the Digital Caliphate* (Quilliam, 2015) Available from: https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FINAL-documenting-the-virtual-caliphate.pdf p6

[41] Externally, a range of actors are engaged in direct conflict with the group, while internally, a number of groups have challenged ISIS rule.

[42] Weber, Op. Cit.

[43] Gianluca Mezzofiore, *Isis leadership: Who's who in 'fluid' Islamic State structure of power* (I.B. Times, 02.07.15) Available from: http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-leadership-whos-who-fluid-islamic-state-structure-power-1509014

[44] Richardson Institute, *The Nature of Affiliation: Daesh in Africa and the Middle East,* (2016) p2

[45] Dabiq 1, Op. Cit., p12.

[46] Ibid, p13.

[47] Dabiq 5, *Remaining and Expanding* (21.11.14) pp32-3

[48] Caporaso, Op. Cit., p10

[49] *The ISIS papers* Op. Cit.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Madawi Al Rasheed, *The Shared History of Saudi Arabia and ISIS* (Hurst, 28.11.15) Available from: http://www.hurstpublishers.com/the-shared-history-of-saudi-arabia-and-isis/

[52] William McCants and Hassan Hassan, *Is ISIS good at governing?* (Brookings, 18.04.16) Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/04/18/experts-weigh-in-part-7-is-isis-good-at-governing/

[53] MEMRI, *Islamic State (ISIS) Publishes Penal Code, Says It Will Be Vigilantly Enforced* (17.12.14) Available from: http://www.memrijttm.org/memri-jttm-islamic-state-isis-publishes-penal-code-says-it-will-be-vigilantly-enforced.html

[54] Adam Taylor, *The Rules in ISIS' new state: Amputations for stealing and women to stay indoors* (The Washington Post, 12.06.14) Available from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/06/12/the-rules-in-isis-new-state-amputations-for-stealing-and-women-to-stay-indoors/

[55] It is here where the more critical approaches such as biopolitics provide additional insight, in particular, the work of Giorgio Agamben, op. cit.

[56] Dabiq 8, *Shari'ah Alone Will Rule Africa* p65

[57] Ibid.

[58] Dominic Glover, *Isis Job Advert: Islamic State Seeks 'Ideologically Suitable' Oil Refinery Manager for £140k Role,* (International Business Times, 03.11.14) Available from: http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-job-advert-islamic-state-seeks-ideologically-suitable-oil-refinery-manager-140k-role-1472839

[59] Dabiq 1, Op. Cit., p11.

[60] Ibid., p4.

[61] Brandan Colas, 'What Does Dabiq Do? ISIS Hermeneutics and Organizational Fractures within Dabiq Magazine' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* (2016)

[62] Simon Mabon, 'ISIS, Sectarianism, Geopolitics and Strong/Weak Horses' *E-International Relations,* (2015) Available from: http://www.e-ir.info/2015/04/10/isis-sectarianism-geopolitics-and-strongweak-horses/

[63] Winter, Op Cit.

[64] Of course, other groups are securitized across *Dabiq,* notably actors in 'the West'.

[65] Ibn Khaldun,. *The Muqaddimah, Book 1, An Introduction to History,* translated by Franz Rosenthal. (Pantheon Books Inc: New York, 1958)

[66] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2010)

[67] Khaldun, Op. Cit., pp98-99.

[68] Ibid.

[69] While ISIS has rejected the idea of *asabiyya,* claiming that its focus upon tribes is un-Islamic, Khaldun's work is underpinned by Islamic values, with ultimate authority resting with God.

[70] Dabiq 1, Op. Cit., p9.

[71] Dabiq 2, *The Flood,* (27.07.14) p3.

[72] Dabiq 13, *The Rafidah from Ibn Saba' to the Dajjal* (19.01.16) p24.

[73] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998)

[74] Thierry Balzacq, 'The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context', *European Journal of International Relations* 11:2 (2005), p171.

[75] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p26.

[76] Paul Roe, 'Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UK's Decision to Invade Iraq', *Security Dialogue* 39:6 (2008), p621.

[77] Matt McDonald, 'Securitization and the Construction of Security', *European Journal of International Relations* 14:4 (2008) pp570-1.

[78] Claire Wilkinson, 'The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?' *Security Dialogue* 38:1 (2007) p15

[79] Hassan Hassan, *The Sectarianism of the Islamic State: Ideological Roots and Political Context* (Carnegie Endowment, 2016) Available from: http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/13/sectarianism-of-islamic-state-ideological-roots-and-political-context/j1iy

[80] Dabiq 3, *A Call to Hijrah* (10.09.14) p12.

[81] Ibrahim al-Fares, Twitter post, June 14, 2015, 11:42 a.m., https://twitter.com/ibrahim_alfares/status/610155392820064256. In Hassan Hassan Carnegie

[82] Dabiq 13, Op. Cit.p10.

[83] Ibid., p45.

[84] Mabon and Royle, Op. Cit.

[85] Channel 4 *'March to Baghdad': Isis spokesman urges Iraq advance* (12.06.14) Available from: http://www.channel4.com/news/iraq-isis-isil-baghdad-samarra-advances-fighters-kirkuk-kurds

[86] Hassan, Op. Cit.

[87] Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York, Raegan, 2016)

[88] Brandon M. Boylan, Sponsoring Violence: A Typology of Constituent Support for Terrorist Organisations. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 38(8), (2015) 652-670.

[89] Chulov, Op. Cit.

[90] Soufan Project, Op. Cit.

[91] Mabon, 2015, Op. Cit.

[92] Ibid.

[93] See in particular, Fanar Haddad,. Sectarian Relations in Arab Iraq: Contextualising the Civil War of 2006-2007. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40:2 (2013), pp.115-138., Tripp, Op. Cit.

[94] See the work of: Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), F. Gregory Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian* Gulf, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) Op. Cit., Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) Raymond Hinnebusch, and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, (eds.) *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (London: Lynne Reiner Publishers 2002), and Gerd Nonneman, (ed.) *Analyzing Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationship with Europe* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005) amongst others.

[95] Wilkinson, Op. Cit., p21

[96] Ibid, p22.