

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF ISIS: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *DABIQ*
MAGAZINE**

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**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA
STUDIES, FACULTY OF LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND
COMMUNICATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE MASTER
OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN (COMMUNICATION SKILLS) DEGREE.**

JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Ma-aruf Al-hassan declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in publish works which have all been identified and acknowledged is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

CANDIDATE'S SIGNATURE.....

DATE



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.

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DATE:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My unquantifiable gratitude goes to God Almighty for the mercies given me throughout my graduate studies and as a budding academic. Glory be to Him the best to rely on.

I am hugely indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Andy Ofori Birinkorang for his supervision, dedication and prompt feedback on my thesis. His extra interest in my work has been particularly helpful. He aroused my sensibilities to search and re-searched beyond the banal narrative concerning ISIS.

I thank, also, my parents for their prayers and support since childhood. A big acknowledgement to Baba Anass and Baba Mallam Waani. Thank you so much. My no mean thanks and appreciation to my sisters Hajia Mata, Mama Aisha, Maw'iza, Huda and Walida. I acknowledge Maw'iza's children who have been so loving to me. I love them as well. I promise never to let them down.

I wish to extend an incalculable acknowledgement to my diamond and wife Saamiyyah. I thank you for making me a real man. Saamiyyah I can't afford to let you down. Jamila Farouk Jawula, another quintessential damsel whose hand of friendship and love is par excellence. We were all in this together. I will not renege with prayers and efforts to put you in your rightful place as a permanent friend. We are all in that together. A Godsend, Ibrahim Wuntah, great thanks and appreciation for the help you extended to me when I was in need.

To my friends Jibril Salifu, Dr. Rabi, Dr. Nazir, Adam Amisty Gargo, Muhammad Amin and Luqman, I express and extend an invaluable appreciation to you for your friendship and support. Let's continue to pat one another's back. Love you Guys. Another hand of appreciation and love to Makin, Muhammad Tahir, Abdul-Razak, Mallam Awudu, Uncle Dan, Tawfiq, Baba Hassan, Yakubu and Fahad. Muhammad Ibrahim, I appreciate the mentoring you gave to my wife. Thank you for that.

Finally, I am grateful to all my academic siblings right from the Basic School up to the Graduate School.

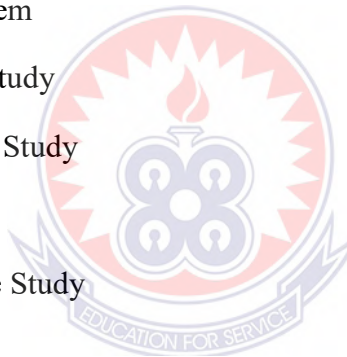
DEDICATION

To my Grandparents of Blessed Memory, Alhaji Is-haq Jack and his wife Hajara Al-hassan (Abuyamma). They gave me much, that I might have much till eternity. May Allah grant you Paradise.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the Islamic State popularly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) construct their identity in an online magazine called *Dabiq*. The study employs the qualitative approach. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample the 14th edition of the magazine. Drawing on social identity theory (SIT) and the concept of *clusivity*, I analyze ISIS's group dynamics and their use of linguistic and lexical elements to construct their identity in *Dabiq*. I further probe into the expressive value of selected *clusivity* markers ISIS use to associate with favorable audience and dissociate from unfavorable audience. This was subtly constructed with the use of indexicals. Through cyber-ethnography and anchored on SIT, *clusivity* and the globalization theory, the study reveals that ISIS construct their identity as jihadists and paladins of *Sharia* as opposed to secular democracy. The study further indicates that ISIS propagated a call aimed at persuading Muslims to migrate to Iraq and Syria as a safe haven for salvation called *Hijra* or emigration. Furthermore, the study shows that ISIS use political communications as an online strategy in constructing their identity. The study concludes that the major aim of ISIS through their identity construction in the *Dabiq* magazine is to ensure a global sharia juridical state.



CHAPTER ONE

Clusivity in Identity Construction

1.0 Introduction

The concept of *Clusivity* refers to various forms of association and dissociation which is linguistically represented in discourse. Wieczorek (2013) more recently says that, clusivity encompasses an interdisciplinary approach that draws from diverse fields- pragmatics, psychology, sociolinguistics, cognitive sciences and sociology; all of these contribute to the demystification of the concept of clusivity. Association and dissociation are sometimes realized linguistically through the linguistic construction of the “roles of actors in a speech event with respect to each other, as well as the relationship between the speaker, and in-group and out-group members in particular” (Wieczorek, 2013,p.28).

The present study adopts clusivity in the investigation of an online magazine called *Dabiq* that is owned and managed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham popular known as IS/ISIS. The Islamic state on the 14th of June 2014 declared a global Islamic caliphate which they claimed is the panacea for Muslims all over the world. The declaration attracted avalanche number of youth within the ranks of ISIS who are willing to live in a *sharia* juridical state. In fact, in line with Wieczorek’s (2013) observation cited in Baumeister and Leary (1995) she submit that what constitutes a cardinal social intent for a greater number of people’s action is the need for self-preservation. Ensuring self-preservation can be realized when a group develops an enduring meaningful relationship with others. Thus, the desire for social attachments may succeed or not succeed depending upon the social contexts (Wieczorek, 2013).

Baumeister and Leary also (1995) claim that “after primary needs such as food and shelter are satisfied, the need to belong is among the strongest of human motivation” (cited in Wiczorek, 2013). Thus, human being’s desire to belong to groups is an extension of social life which may aid their network of diverse relationships and becomes the means of seeking and maintaining belongingness and association (Wiczorek, 2013). In addition to this, William and Govan (2005) also observed that, a situation of wanting to associate may face a group-directed threat when the sense of association is not meaningful to individuals, as a result, “a surge in prosocial practices is likely to occur in order to regain the in-group status” (Wiczorek, 2013, p.8).

Contrarily, a group directed threat in the form of differences in values, morality and worldviews may result in social exclusion and detachment by highly committed group membership. The same notion was opined by Tweng and Baumeister (2005) who underscore a similar observation saying that, a group-directed threat may affect the level of self-esteem of individuals. This may compel the group to set a demarcated boundary either to belong or dissociate.

Based on the above narrative, this thesis takes up the call to examine *Dabiq*, an ideological magazine that associate with and dissociate from both Muslims and non-Muslims using clusivity, deictic and *Indexical* expressions. This thesis locates the use of clusivity and deictic expressions in the *Dabiq* magazine by the Islamic State in constructing their identity.

The concept of clusivity is used because, it will enable the researcher to explain the discursive representation of including and excluding relations using language. ISIS used language in the form of indexicals to represent, produced, and reproduced social and religious ideology in their identity work. Adetunji (2006) says that language is

sometimes used as a negotiated medium of communication to identify, delineate between “in” and “out” relations. For purposes of identification, ISIS use language as a backcloth to include favorable audience and exclude unfavorable audience during their social practice (Adetunji, 2006). Thus, the use of clusivity alongside deixis in *Dabiq* play a role in constructing ISIS that is the “self” in a positive image and “other” that is the out-group in a negative image as illegitimate.

Deixis is a discourse analytic and pragmatics’ term that concerns the relationship between the structure of language and the context in which they are used (Levinson, 1983, cited in Adetunji, 2006). Unambiguously put, deixis provides a meaning for an utterance by a speaker with the expectation that the audience interprets the utterance’s meaning from the utterer’s viewpoint. This may be textual or verbal.

The clusivity markers and the indexical expressions are identified by Islamic State’s identity work embedded in pronouns. Example: “we” “they” “them” “us” “those” are used to associate with and dissociate from both Muslims and non-Muslims based on the deictic expressions used in *Dabiq*.

In a similar vein, the Islamic State used the pronouns “Us” and “Them” indexically to represent, produced and reproduced ideology in an attempt to persuade and repudiate certain category of people. A simple example is the issue of *Hijra* (emigration), *apostasy*, and *Jihad*; references are made by ISIS to establish the merits of *Hijra* and *Jihad* from the Qur’an and sayings of the prophet Muhammad (SAW). These references come with indexical expressions. The indexical expressions used from these references and ISIS’s interpretation of them set a boundary between the adherents of *Hijra* and *Jihad* who are ‘sincere’ Muslims in dissociation from the ‘insincere’ Muslims. Example: the use of the plural pronouns “We”, “Those” “They”,

“Us” and “Them” are replete with Qur’anic verses in *Dabiq* and are used in deictic contexts and meaning.

From the textual analytic perspective which is conceived as an aspect of discourse analysis, this thesis takes up the call to investigate and examine how ISIS construct their identity in the *Dabiq* Magazine.

1.1 Media and Ideology

Media texts always reflect certain ideologies or values though audiences may not be aware of this. The above claim justifies the notion of Croteau and Hoynes (2013) when they contend that the media are the purveyors of ideology. This is because the media are platforms and sites where worldviews, belief systems and values are disseminated. A case of *Dabiq* magazine, an official mouthpiece of ISIS is no exception. *Dabiq* disseminates a system of meaning that will aid this thesis to examine how ISIS construct their identity and the strategies they employed in constructing that identity both online and offline. Drawing from the operational principle of the media and reasons provided by former leaders of jihadist groups, there is an apparent justification of the notion that the media is ideological.

Klausen (2015) says that Osama Bin Laden wrote a letter in the year 2002 telling the leader of the Taliban the crucial role the media play in reaching out to large publics. He wrote “it is obvious that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; its ratio may reach 90 percent of the total preparation for the battles”. The battle here means JIHAD which is purely an ideological prescription based on subjective values and worldviews of jihadists. In a similar vein, the former Al Qaida leader after Bin Laden Ayman al-Zawahiri equally reiterated in a letter to the now deceased leader of Al Qaida in Iraq Abu Mus’ab al Zarqawi said: “We are in a battle,

and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Ummah”. The above statement justifies how media is important for jihadists in the rallying and canvassing support. In doing this, political communication as an online strategy of jihadists and more importantly ISIS is done to reach out to large audiences or publics. Klausen (2015) observed that the insistence of Bin Laden persuading Jihadist groups and affiliates to own and maintain a media as a significant tool for cyber jihad or political communication. This was made known to his associate in a letter he wrote to Abu Mus’ab az-Zarqawi. He said “media occupies the greater portion of the battle today”.

In fact, social media freed jihadist groups from the dependency on slow media. In 2011, “many jihadist groups, media outlets and individuals moved on to maintain social media platforms and created new accounts on twitter, Facebook” (Klausen, 2015,p.4). In addition to this, the 2001 RAND Corporation report anticipated the crucial role of the internet to the viable growth of jihadist. The term “netwar” coined by Arquilla and Ronfeldt predicted and described the emerging war and conflicts in “which the protagonists are small, dispersed groups who communicate, coordinate, and conduct their campaigns in an “internetted” manner and without a precise central command” (Klausen, 2015, p.5). Thus, political communication has always been the online strategy of jihadist groups most especially ISIS. Through their interaction and activities on the cyberspace, ISIS draws attention and support for themselves. This thesis takes up the call to examine how ISIS construct their identity in *Dabiq*. The thesis defines ISIS’s identity construction as a process through which they tried to build and shape themselves and image in *Dabiq* and online spaces to attract affiliates,

sympathizers, condemn their ideological enemies and set boundaries between “**them**” and “**others**” is what can be termed as identity construction.

1.2 The Origin of ISIS

Many narratives exist about the origin of ISIS. There are various names given to this group- Islamic State (IS), or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), or ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and Levant) as called by Barak Obama, or even Daesh (acronym for Al Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa'al Slam) as referred to by Francois Hollande. Many narratives surround their evolution including their Islamic ideological inclinations.

However, according to Devji (2005), ISIS has a continuous interest in establishing a virtuous Islamic community. ISIS wants to ensure that Muslims all over the world live under a single Islamic caliphate to resist the anti-Muslim policies pursued by the western countries to prevent the growth of Islam and Muslims in those countries.

For some time now, the ludicrous statement always made by a number of people is that the US created ISIS. Perhaps, the US support for the mujahedeen during the Afghan-Soviet war created this suspicion. This could be a necessary condition but it is woefully insufficient to support the facts on the ground. As matter of fact, the emic narrative from ISIS official mouthpiece *Dabiq* contradicted this conspiracy and fallacious story that the US created ISIS.

“The spark has been lit here in Iraq and its heat will continue to intensify – by Allah’s permission until it burns the crusaders armies in Dabiq” (*Dabiq*, 2014, p.2). This statement was attributed to Abu Mus’ab az-Zarqawi a Jordanian fugitive who fled to Afghanistan and later settled in Iraq. ISIS goal is to establish a caliphate, a state ruled by a single political and religious leader according to Islamic law (Sharia), break the borders of Jordan and Lebanon and to free Palestine. The group draws its target

audience easily through new media from all over the world without much difficulty in radicalizing affiliates and sympathizers. This form of radicalization is unprecedented in its manifestation; it does not require the more traditional training like that of Al Qaeda.

In fact, the first issue of *Dabiq* in year 2014 captured az-Zarqawi as the reviver who revived the flames of jihad in Iraq that later inspired ISIS. Within the circles of ISIS this man wields an extreme admiration. In fact, the origin of ISIS could be traced to the Afghan-Russian wars. Many foreign fighters who troop to go fight against the expansion of the soviets in Afghanistan later took an inspiration and experience which later motivated the move to reinstate the jihadi- Islamic caliphate with political governance. Parties with different backgrounds fought a “common enemy, ignoring all matters that distinguished them from each other even if those matters were an obstacle in the pursuit of the Islamic caliphate”.

After the war, the Russians lost the military battle and the Muslim also lost the essence of the war because they could not satisfy their aim for establishing their global ambition under a single nation to form the caliphate. One of the major and distinguished reasons for this failure was nationalism that tainted the spiritual affair. Similarly, innovation into the religion destroyed the creed and healthy body of the Muslim. After the Afghan- Russian war, the veteran jihadist, Abu Mus’ab az-Zarqawi who survived, had an insatiable desire to revive the caliphate. As a result of this, Az-Zarqawi who fought the soviets in Afghanistan and many parts of the Middle East devised a strategy to revive the Islamic caliphate. Based on his direct experience and the lessons he learnt from the battle front, he knew that the caliphate could not be established except through a congregation that will stick to the Quran and the authentic sayings of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The aim of this group under the

leadership of az-Zarqawi was to use the absent of obligation of jihad as its fundamental means for change and implementing Allah's command. The roadmaps designed by az-Zarqawi were jihad based on hijra (migration), allegiance to the leader of the Islamic state, sam' (listening), ta'ah (obedience) and i'dad (training) leading to the protection of the borders of the Islamic state and fighting jihad. Jihad will yield the caliphate or martyrdom. During this period, the group they were forced to withdraw and live around Al-anbar a desert region in order to group, regroup and train its soldiers. The group predicted certain lands that will experience jihad awakening. These lands are: Yemen, Mali, Somalia, the Sinai Peninsula, Waziristan, Libya, Chechnya and Nigeria as well as parts of Tunis, Algeria, Indonesia and the Philippines (*Dabiq*, 2014, p.34-39).

According to the feature article in the first issue of *Dabiq*, lack of safe haven on earth for the mujahedeen, the ideal land for hijra was a place where they could operate without the threat of a powerful police state. As regards, the Jordanian fugitive, Abu Mus'ab az Zarqawi chose Afghanistan and later Kurdistan as a base to form Jama'atul tawheed (adherents of the ones of Allah). Az-Zarqawi decided to adopt an anti-anthropocentric modus operandi. He fomented chaos using attacks that focus on causing the enemy death, injury and damages. The aim of az-Zarqawi was to prevent any secular regime from achieving stable governance like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Dubai and many parts of the Middle East and the gulf. He achieved his aim using effective weapons in the arsenal of the jihadists- vehicle bombs, IED's and the suicide operation attacks. He ordered attacks on Muslims the group considered an apostate group and the police forces of the Shia sects considered infidels. The group targeted the Iraqi forces (army, police, and the intelligence community). The Shia sects call the Rafidha were targeted (Shia markets, temples, and militias and Kurdish secularists

(Barzani and Talabani partisans). The modus operandi of this group was meant to create constant instability and war in the midst of their enemies. This led to the total collapsed authority in the areas of their enemies. The collapse was followed by filling the vacuum left. This was to establish the Islamic state of Iraq under the leadership of Abu Umar al- Husayni al-Baghdadi (Chehab, 2015; Dabiq, 2014, vol.14).

Later, the leader was killed during a drone strike and the leadership was passed onto Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi until now. The events of the Syrian civil uprising incubated ISIS into Syria. ISIS joined the war to respond to the cries of the Sunni Muslims in Syria who were oppressed by Bashar Assad (*Dabiq*, 2014). ISIS has seized large amounts of land in eastern Syria and Western Iraq, some of which include Raqqa, Qaim, Haditha, Ana, Falluja, Baiji, Mosul, and Sinjar. They control territory greater than many countries and now rival Al Qaeda as the world's most powerful jihadist group (Cambanis, 2014).

1.3 Jihadists and the Virtual Community: An Overview

The gatekeeping method exercised by the conventional media has made it impossible for jihadist groups to sell their ideas. Having recognized that their messages could be censored and filtered by gatekeepers or governments they resorted to the virtual world. This is apparent with the emergence of web 1.0 and 2.0. Web 1.0 is akin to the traditional categories of passive media consumption while the web 2.0 deals with dialogical communication. The term Web 2.0 was coined in 1999 by IT consultant Darcy DiNucci and later popularized in 2004 by O'Reilly (Visser, 2010). Web 2.0 is a web application that facilitates collaboration and exchange of information. Web 2.0 can be defined as “the effects of extensive collaboration and user participation on the marketplace and corporate world” (Visser, 2010, p.14). The early attempt by jihadist groups to leverage the virtual world was the establishment of the azzam.com. The

emergence of Azzam.com, along with the Islamic Media Centre and alneda.com, during the First Chechen War (1994-1996) and other nascent peripheral conflicts, aimed to “transmit a version of events different from that offered by the mass media from the other side of the battlefield”(Thomas, 2003, p.120). This is to prevent gatekeeping which is one of the major restrictions of the conventional media. By implication, the virtual world has enabled jihadists to explain their actions to the world without the constraints of the old media.

Evidence suggests that terrorist groups, irrespective of ideology, were quick to embrace the Internet to pursue their strategic objectives. In fact, in 1998, fewer than half of the 30 groups designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the US State Department under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 maintained websites. By the end of 1999, nearly all designated organizations had established an Internet presence (Weimann, 2006).

Similarly, the transition from web 1.0 to 2.0, which has given rise to consumers becoming producers, has strengthened the activities of jihadists online. This emboldened the growth and attention jihadists attract across the globe. For instance, dissemination of the downloadable contents on file sharing portals and the SNSs such as videos, magazines and brochures emboldened the activities of jihadists.

1.4 ISIS in the Virtual Community

There are two ways of achieving political interest. Individuals or groups pursue and achieve their political interest through peaceful means like conciliation, negotiation, consultation and dialogue. The violent means which includes organized attack, hostage taking, arson, maiming and general destruction of lives and property has a unanimous condemnation in the eyes of great population of the world. In fact, any

combination of these anthropocentric acts is what is known as terrorism (Arowolo, 2013).

Although the definition of terrorism is nebulous and is mostly associated with a perceptual ambiguity in the modern sense Humphrey (2006) opines that terrorism is violence against civilians to achieve political or ideological objectives by creating fear. Generally, terrorism includes those acts which are intended to create fear (terror) and perpetuated for an ideological goal, with deliberate target on or disregard for the safety of non-combatant. It can also be defined as the use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological (Arowolo & Lawal, 2008).

From the above definitions ISIS as a jihadist group is charged with these crimes. This is because, the lack of peace in many parts of the middle east and the lone wolf attacks carried out by this group in different parts of the globe became the quintessential reason why scholars and researchers in the field of cyber security, media, international relations and terrorism and security studies theorize that ISIS is anti-anthropocentric group. The catalyst of these acts most of the time is attributed to the virtual world with the emergence of web 2.0. The emergence of web 2.0 created many jihadist platforms to construct an identity. The reason for this can be attributed to the enormity of the interaction and communication that happens online. Interpersonal interactions mould the construction and perceptions of one's offline and online identity (Pugh, 2010). This is apparent in the wake of the downloadable contents on the social networking sites and the power of video- sharing platforms that aide jihadist groups and their supporters to foster a thriving subculture which they use to communicate to the wider world.

Similarly, the researcher attempts to establish in this study the relationship between radicalization and identity, jihad and the virtual world as the result of the emergence of web 2.0. In this study, radicalization is contextualized as a variant of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. By implication, it is the adoption of strange behavioral patterns that seek to impose puritanical Islamic views, values and worldviews of the individual or organization in a secular heterogeneous society. This brings to bear the essentiality of the ideological explanations and interpretations of the online magazine, *Dabiq*. This online magazine constructs the identity of ISIS as a group on the virtual community. This is done through the lenses of social identity theory, the concept ofclusivity and the globalization theory.

Furthermore, the view that the media are the purveyors of ideology is apparently demonstrated by the communicative praxis of ISIS via online. *Dabiq* targets audiences online in order to build an ideological support base with them. This is to promote and facilitate the need for migration to the lands of Jihad (Iraq, Syria, Sirte) to do *jihad* or involve in a new form of *jihad* called “lone wolf attack”. This anti-anthropocentric act is considered an act of radicalism and extremism in a civilized and secular world where individuals hold different values and orientations. The SIT is used to explain these identities. Unfortunately, the inability of the members of this category to migrate to the lands of jihad amidst their radical identity formed increases preparation and commitment to intergroup conflict in their various host nations.

1.5 Statement of Problem

The Cold War ended with hopes and expectations about the possibilities of a new world order. It facilitated the resolution of half a dozen lingering violent conflict in Central America, Asia and Southern Africa and a renaissance of sorts in the United

Nations (Murphy & Weiss, 2012). However, these hopes and aspirations were short lived as ending the cold war failed to truncate conflicts. Instead it paved the way for more striking issues like identity, liberation, terrorism and religion to constantly trigger instability and insecurity.

In fact, international terrorism appeared to be the major challenge to global peace and security at the very beginning of the 21st century. A 1998 study by the United States Army found that more than one hundred definitions of the word terrorism exist and have been used (Jeffrey, 2003). There is little argumentation that the surge in research in the area of terrorism and violent Islamic extremism is one of the largest threats facing the globe in this 21st century. Much credit, attention and interest have been to organizations like Al Qaeda in their effort to radicalize and recruit affiliates. Al shabab in Somalia, Boko Haraam in Nigeria, Al Qaeeda in many parts of the middle East and some parts of Africa, ISIS in Iraq, Syria, Libya and in some parts of Asia and west Africa (Sageman, 2014; Devji, 2005; Borno, 2015).

Sageman (2014) has offered several explanations why individuals and groups resort to political violent conflict. Some of the reasons are: The clash between civilization that is western values and Islamic values, the assumed predisposition of specific identities and many more which this thesis captures. In fact, studies on radicalization identified Islamic fundamentalism and identity to stand as the cardinal factors and important elements in the process of radicalization (cited in Al Raffie, 2013). While Klausen (2015) did a content analysis of the tweets of the Western jihadist insurgent fighters in Iraq and Syria, this thesis takes the call to examine how ISIS construct their identity in the online magazine *Dabiq*. This study broadens the discourse on ISIS by looking at the roles of language, social psychology and globalization in ISIS's identity work.

Many studies have been conducted on Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. Al Raffie (2013) investigated the rise of Islamic extremism in the diaspora with the lens of social identity theory. The researcher's point of focus was the violent extremism by Al Qaida. She underscored this point using the concept of Islamic fundamentalism and the contrasting issues of certain fundamentalist groups who are non-violent and others violent. An Example is the major difference between the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and ISIS with regard to modus operandi.

In addition, Ahmed Chehab (2015) also did a study on ISIS. His work was on the history of ISIS and their Islamic political philosophy. Chehab in his study questioned the Islamic legitimacy of this group and their modus operandi within the framework of Islam.

Furthermore, Veilleux-Lepage (2015) conducted a study on the evolution of jihadists on the cyberspace. The researcher's main focus was on Al-Qaida. He underscored how Al-Qaida disseminates messages via electronic medium to communicate jihad messages. Moving forward in his work, Veillux-Lepage intimated in another section of his research how ISIS have dominated the Twittersphere aside their military campaign hence, creating leverage on the social media to gain soft sympathizers and tacit supporters.

Arowolo (2013) also did a study on terrorism, democracy and global security. He revisited the long standing debate that democracy is the solution to terrorism. He explored the various schools of thought on the debate. He points out that while some scholars posit that democracy offers an opportunity for conflict prevention others think that this assumption lacks empirical basis. In fact, the recent homegrown attacks

in most of democratic nations in the west confirms the vulnerability of the democratic- solution debate to terrorism.

Similarly, Sageman (2013) in his work dubbed “stagnation of terrorism” research lamented how the study of terrorism is given greater premium but tend to yield inadequate results. Aside the political interest that has stagnated the research in that area, the intelligence community lacks the methodological skills, while the academic community also lack a comprehensive and reliable data about terrorists’ plots. In the same vein, Sageman suggested the use of social psychology and social movement studies to the study of terrorism. However, this requires a detailed database to validate some of these insights for terrorism. This is what the anthropologists call “thick description”.

Thus, it is clear from the above that some works have been done as far as the study of ISIS and terrorism are concerned. While minimal works on ISIS tend to focus on the anti-anthropocentric messages, violence and the insecurity they pose to the world, there exist some gap this study will attempt to address. Therefore, this thesis takes up the call to investigate and examine how ISIS construct their identity in the *Dabiq* Magazine. This study, will critically scrutinize the key messages ISIS propagate in their official magazine, *Dabiq*. The researcher will carry out the study using cyber-ethnography to access data online. This online data collection method would methodologically accumulate and explain the detailed and comprehensive ideology propagated by ISIS. By doing this, the data would enable the researcher to shed some light on the discourse of terrorism. *Dabiq* an online magazine sells values, ideology, and worldviews. The knowledge about ISIS as a social media Eldorado group is a circular knowledge among media and cyber security scholars. However, minimal studies have been done to examine how ISIS construct their identity online and also

investigate how ISIS use rhetoric online to sell values and ideologies in order to consolidate their global caliphate agenda. In this study, the researcher attempts to address the above stated gaps by examining key messages, strategies, tactics and the strategic military exploits of ISIS as a jihadist virtual category.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The research is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine how ISIS construct their identity in the magazine *Dabiq*
2. To investigate the online strategies ISIS use to construct their identity in *Dabiq*

The main research questions (RQ) that this study is interested in exploring are

RQ1. How does ISIS construct its identity in *Dabiq*?

RQ2. What are the online strategies ISIS use to construct their identity in *Dabiq*?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study aims to interrogate how ISIS as a jihadist group category construct their identity in the online magazine, *Dabiq*. This is to broaden the discourse on ISIS in particular and issues of terrorism in general.

This interrogation will aid a discussion on how ISIS identity work play a role in shaping who they are. Although some works on ISIS have been done but they tend to concentrate on the anti-anthropocentric activities and the insecurity they posed to the world. Therefore, this work goes beyond the media narrative of ISIS.

In addition to this, the researcher has made extensive use of theories to define, describe and explain who ISIS are. However, this is not to suggest that the study is exhaustive of all the issues that will explain who IS are. Therefore, this study will

broaden the discourse on ISIS and how to unravel how ISIS construct their identity on the cyberspace. This thesis will add up to the earlier works done on identity construction of groups.

In fact, today's world is shaped by perception in that, the day-to-day experience alters or influence a person's opinions. The Sykes-picot agreement which led to the disintegration of the Arab world is now challenged by ISIS. The perception that the unity of Muslims and Arabs was undermined by the artificial creation of borders out of the Sykes-picot agreement by West is an issue left unanswered. Hence, ISIS's continuous emphasis on that is an attempt to challenge the hegemonic rule of the West. Aggressive foreign policy and military diplomacy by powerful governments in the West did not help the pursuit of global peace. Thus, this work will serve as springboard for policy framework by state actors and the international community.

In this case, part of the solution lies in the hands of countries that pursue Pygmalion policies to disengage from pursuing policies that stand in the way of global peace. This study will be relevant to international relations practitioners, academics, foreign policy makers and researchers who are into terrorism studies and politics of identity.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study is centered on examining how ISIS construct their identity in *Dabiq* via the virtual community particularly on the Social Networking Sites (SNS's). Although there are about 15 issues of the *Dabiq* magazine, the study is limited to the 14th issue or edition of the magazine. The reason is that most of the issues under investigation can be found in the 14th edition. Also, some due consideration would be given to other audio visual texts ISIS uploads online for the publics.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research is written in five chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter of the study. It includes the background of the study which looks at the rhetorical skills ISIS use to include and exclude. It also gives preamble of the origin of ISIS and jihadists in the cyberspace, Islamic fundamentalism and extremism, identity formation and other jihadist categories. This part again captures the research questions which are situated in the research objectives. The study also furnishes the scope within which the study will hinge on.

Chapter two reviews related literature and the theoretical basis that underpins and guides the work. The chapter made extensive use of theories in relation to how ISIS as a jihadist category construct their identity via the online magazine called *Dabiq*. It stressed the usefulness of theories and how online identity construction can be explained and interpreted via the lenses of rhetoric, Social identity theory and the Globalization theory.

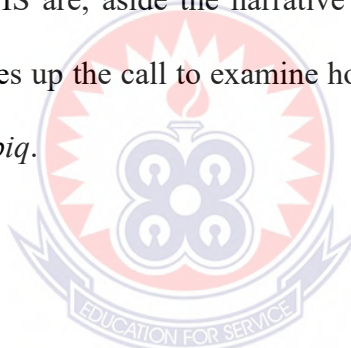
Chapter three contains the methods and procedures used for data collection and analysis. This part of the study brings to bear the research approach and design as well as how the data collected was put into analysis.

Chapter four provides the findings and analysis of the data collected. The extensive use of theories that were outlined in the third chapter gave impetus to the explanations and interpretations of the issues as they unfold.

Chapter five which is the final chapter draws conclusion and makes recommendations for the study premised on the analysis of the data in the chapter four.

1.9.1 Summary

The chapter looked at the use of language by ISIS in identity construction. ISIS use indexicals and certain *clusivity* markers to include favorable audience and exclude unfavorable audiences. This brings to the fore how language is important in the expression of ideology in media discourse. Croteau and Hoynes contend that the media is ideological. The establishment of the online magazine by ISIS for the dissemination of values and worldviews justifies the notion of the above mentioned scholars. Doing this, it was actually facilitated by the emergence of new media. However, this is not novel in the circles of jihadists. In fact, inasmuch as minimal works have been done on Islamic extremism and fundamentalism, there appears to be a gap as regards who ISIS are, aside the narrative of their anti-anthropocentric act. Therefore, this thesis takes up the call to examine how ISIS construct their identity in the online magazine, *Dabiq*.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The evolution of jihadists in cyberspace was necessitated by the political economy of the mass media. This is because they recognized that the slow media could be censored or filtered by governments, instead they turned to the Social Networking Sites (SNS's) and other online video sites. This desire of jihadist groups to propagate their message and also canvass support had a huge impact with the emergence of web 2.0. generated an interactive new media content. This type of interaction connects the user who may be a producer and a consumer at the same time or vice versa (Veillux-Lepage, 2015)

Velluixn-Lepage (2015) says that with the emergence of Web 2.0 capabilities and rudimentary online forums by implication, meant that users not only passively consumed online content but also actively contributed to its creation (Warren & Leitch, 2012; Hoeren & Vossen, 2009 cited in Veillux-Lepaage). Hence, there was increase in popularity of general interest in online forums by jihadists. In 2005 a study uncovered upwards of 4,300 active jihadist forums (Weimann, 2006). These jihadist forums are instituted in order to sensitize members of the need for political action. The political action mostly promoted by jihadists both online and offline is premised on the notion of the "unity of God". Al Raffie (2013) argues that the notion of God opposes the sovereignty of states and for the sole sovereignty of God's law as the only legitimate form of governance; in this case the Islamic *sharia*. This notion and practice by jihadists is mostly referred to as Islamic fundamentalism (IF) (Al Raffie, 2013).

The term IF is oftentimes confused with the term “extremism”. Although not used interchangeably, Koteweg, Gohel, Heisbourg, Ranstorp and De Wijk (2010) say that Islamic extremism is a variant of IF. IF is not a different brand of religious behavior rather it shares many features of the earlier American Protestant Movement. Many years ago, the American Protestant Movement rejected modernity and secularism and castigated their co-religionists as being “corrupters of the tradition and “pawns of unbelievers” (Cited in Al Raffie, 2013).

However, Al Raffie (2013) provides the distinction that existed between Christian fundamentalism and Islamic fundamentalism. The Christian fundamentalism appears mostly as a nonviolent fringe movement, active only in some select few countries and it lacks the transnational nature of IF. Arguably, one can say that the ineffectiveness of Christian fundamentalism in attracting religious aficionados and purists may be one of the consequences of how religion was divorced from the activities of the state. In other words, the separation of the church and the state in most western countries has effectively reduced religion to the private realm.

On the contrary, this proposition is considered anathema and sacrilegious by the adherents of IF. Adherents of IF believe that Islam not only remains to be defining, collectively expressed, cultural characteristics but also “contains a corpus of legal and moral regulations and thereby constitute the idea of a social order” (Al Raffie, 2013). This is exactly the same as what ISIS stands for.

2.1 An Overview of *Dabiq* Magazine

According to Chehab (2015), on July 5, 2014, ISIS media group Al-Hayat Media released in numerous different languages (including Albanian, English, French, and German) the first issue of its online magazine *Dabiq*. *Dabiq* is a town located in

northeast of Aleppo, Syria and has an apocalyptic connotation. It is mentioned in a prophetic statement describing events of the Malahim (Armageddon) where the greatest battle between Muslims and the crusaders will take place. In other words, *Dabiq* represents a story of Muslim unity against the Romans (Saltman & Winter, 2014). In *Dabiq* each issue reaffirms what ISIS stand for- key themes are: strategic exploits, ideological constructions, *jihad*, *sharia*.

Dabiq magazine discusses a broader number of topics. It discusses and justifies the incineration of the December 2014 capture of the Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh and provides alibis for the enslavement of certain category of people (Yazidi women) in Northern Iraq. It also rationalized putting to death prisoners-of-war by beheading and the taking of the religious *jizyah* tax from Christians in eastern Syria. There is a lengthy discussion on the newly instituted Islamic economic system set up by ISIS including its minted currency hinged on the intrinsic values of gold, silver, copper, and the legal explications on whether Shi'is can be considered apostates from the religion of Islam (Chehab, 2015).

According to Ahmed Chehab (2015) ISIS make use of extensive quotations from the Qur'an and *sunnah* (prophetic *hadiths*, or the actions and statements attributed to Prophet Muhammad) and often provides detailed analysis justifying the wide-range of policies and practices implemented throughout the lands under their control. The Qur'an and *sunnah* materials that are over fourteen centuries old, are reinterpreted to express and expound upon the entitlement to political leadership, with the aim to secure support from a targeted audience among Muslims by creating a grand narrative for the need to establish and maintain a Caliphate (Chehab, 2015).

Contextualizing *Dabiq* within a theory will necessitate the anodyne use of the theory called symbolic interactionism. This can be understood by separating the two concepts: symbol that is *Dabiq* (apocalyptic connotation of war) and interaction-interpersonal communication in transmitting the meaning of symbols. ISIS produce high-quality videos about Jihad which have thus far included the end of *Sykes Picot*, *The Flames of War*, *The Clanging of the Swords I-IV*, and *Upon the Prophetic Methodology*, which romanticized the daily lives of ISIS fighters.

2.2 The concept of identity Construction

The concept of identity is not only fluid but remains an elusive area of research. Its nebulous nature makes it difficult to give it a universal definition or one simple explanation. Each individual has a unique identity. Two people maybe described to possess the same identities but they may differ in practice. In practice they may enact different identities depending upon the circumstances. A simple example is the disparity between Al Qaida and ISIS and Al Qaida and the Global Muslim Brotherhood Group. These groups enact the IF identity but as a result of differences in their social milieu, ideology and modus operandi they tend to differ (Al Raffie, 2013).

This study tries to assimilate various views on social identity and to synthesize ideas from different scholars. The views of Henrri Tajfel, John Turner, Hogg, Ellemers, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Marc Sageman, and among others were synthesized in order to contextualize the discussion on identity in relation to how ISIS construct their identity in *Dabiq*.

Abelson and Lessig (1998) define identity, as “a unique piece of information associated with an entity... a collection of characteristics which are either inherent or assigned by another” (pg.3). Adam smith, Mead, Freud, and Lacan also in their

individual works opined that identity is built on two cardinal notions: an internal perception and an external social identity. This is what Mead intimated as self. That is how knowledgeable an individual knows about him/herself is what is termed a self-concept. The internal identity consists of physical, psychological, philosophical and moral aspects of self (Boyd, 2002 cited in Sackey, 2015). Therefore, identity construction is premised on how these things synchronized in an individual and how an individual makes these identities evident through communicative praxis.

The statement that identity is performed brings to bare Butler's theory of performativity which opines that "identity and subjectivity is an ongoing process of becoming, rather than an ontological state of being, whereby becoming is a sequence of acts, that retroactively constitute an identity" (Butler, 1990). In other words individuals form their identity within a particular cultural milieu, structures and practices which once stabilized in the individual will lead to an acculturation to give the individual an identity.

The performativity nature of identity is also reinforced by Goffman's dramaturgical theory. He defines it from the symbolic interactionist perspective. He intimated that life in some sense is a performance. There are audiences who at the same time become part of the performativity. In other words there are those watching and interacting with the actor and at the same time the actor is himself/herself an audience and the various members of the audience constitute actors. His work is very vital in the analysis of social action, group relations and contexts to explain the process through which identity is performed and constructed in everyday discourse.

Farquhar (2012) also gives an insight into the Goffman's dramaturgy concept by also introducing what he termed as ideal and real identity. The ideal identity construction

as intimated by Farquhar is the process where an individual being aware of the society and also mindful of the impression he/she creates in the mind of observers, tries to present himself/ herself in the best light possible. This is exactly what Goffman also refers to as front stage, where performance always happens before an audience (observers). In this instance identity is always mediated by the context in which performance takes place. The real identity also described in the natural, uncontrolled, unrehearsed and unpredicted aspect of an individual's place, including situation and audience (Farquhar 2012; Ginger, 2008).

As a result of this, where the individual performs in the absence of observers is the backstage. On the other hand, deviating from the ideal self is dramatized which in an analogous sense construct both the ideal and real identity. The purpose of this study is to find out how ISIS construct their identity in the cyberspace via *Dabiq* and to interrogate the online and offline strategies upon which they use to construct such an identity.

2.3 The Construction of Identity and the Discourse of Violent Conflict

Sageman (2014) says that the question that leads a person to turn to political violence is the biggest question academics are trying to answer. Academics are interested in answers that have empirical basis and verifiability as well. While the academia has the methodological skills to investigate causes of political violence, contrarily, the academia lacks a comprehensive and reliable data to enable them carry out an empirical verifiable study in order to answer the nagging question- what leads an individual to engage in political violence?. This situation has grossly affected and prevented creative analysis as far as the study of violent conflict is concerned (Sageman, 2014).

Jabri (1996) intimated that violent conflict may arise from the individual's association with a community whose group identity is threatened or undermined by members of out-group. The community or group may consist of an ideological organized people with an active politically network. Example: ISIS which is labelled a terrorist group is unpopular for their political violence. Aside their act of terrorism and violent conflict, ISIS is accused of being an anti-anthropocentric group which has no regard for individual values and lives.

As regards ISIS and other jihadists, terrorism and violent conflict by these groups in this present day is mostly attributable to identity differences and more specifically the construction of ethno-religious and ideological differentials. In recognition of this, one may be tempted to establish an intimate relationship between identity and violent conflict- that is a threatened identity and an attack on values may give rise to violent conflict as opined by Ellemers et al. (2002). For example the rise of homegrown terrorism and lone-wolf attackers in the west which has now assumed another dimension call "leaderless jihad" is a point this thesis sought to cover. Many of these attacks are executed without any controlled central authority. However, sometimes, members are encouraged to attack members of out-group using unorthodox means jihadist leaders and influential affiliates (Sageman, 2014 & Al Raffie, 2013).

In addition, Jabri (1996) made a further epistemological investigation into the nature of identity and its link to violent conflict. This was contextualized along a dual approach. In her analysis, she considers the ontological make-up of individuals and the sociological issues that individuals perceived to undermine or threaten their identity and that may warrant intergroup violence. This is in line with social identity and the self-categorization theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) and Ellemers' (2002) taxonomy of a group directed threat. The ontological approach is considered to be

instinctive for that matter a basic need. It is what the social psychologists call cognitive processes. These needs are innate and spontaneous and which can be translated into religious beliefs- ideological beliefs, identity search and crisis; perceive attack on one's faith or group. The above mentioned variables have their basis in a set of ontological needs which are universal among social groups (Wieczorek, 2013 & Jabri, 1996).

Sageman (2014) stated some few variables that trigger violent conflict and lone-wolf attacks most especially in the west. These are: a perceive war on one's in-group; moral outrage at some salient major injustice; resonance with personal experiences; and mobilization by an already active network. This justifies the propositions of Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) cited in Al Raffie (2013) about modernity and globalization as the causes of radicalization and violent conflict in Europe by Muslims. The empirical basis of this is the apparent facilitation of communication via the virtual world where individuals are made to understand their threatened identity and the perceived war on Islam and their co-religionists. This can be understood from the point of view of the globalization theory.

2.4 Identity Theory, Social identity theory and Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS)

Identity theory was originally formulated by Sheldon Stryker, a sociologist. The term is now used extensively to refer to related theoretical work that acknowledges links between a multifaceted notion of self and the wider social structure (Hogg, Terry, White, & Burke, 1995). Identity theory explains social behavior in line with reciprocal relations between the individual (self) and the society. This has a greater match with the symbolic interactionists (SI) view which posits that society affects social behavior through its influence on the self (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969).

However, the theories of symbolic interactionism and identity are not homogenous. There are differences in interpretation and explanation. Hogg and Terry (1995) say that Stryker the lead theorist of identity, views identities as more stable than other theorists view it. Stryker tends to place little emphasis on the notion of identity within the framework of SI mechanism of ‘taking the role of the other’. While SIT emphasizes intergroup relations, identity theory deals more with role identities.

ISIS, a jihadist group advocates the return to an idealized religious polity and operates within the framework of IF. Using the SIT framework to investigate intragroup relations and intergroup relations, ISIS’s subjective construction of the world makes them develop a wide range of stereotypical norms that favor their in-group members and disadvantage members of their out-group. ISIS, as adherents of IF believe that Islam remains a defining, collectively expressed, cultural characteristics but also “contains a corpus of legal and moral regulation and thereby constitutes the idea of a social order” (Wiktorowicz, 2007 cited in Al Raffie, 2013). ISIS does not only wish to reconstruct societies where Muslims are the majority but in following the examples of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) and the successive Caliphs in order to reconstruct all world societies based on *sharia*. In fact, this thesis recognized ISIS as an Islamist group that is into political Islam.

However, the modus operandi of ISIS has been a greater concern for the world especially Muslims around the globe. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS may differ based on their modus operandi. ISIS believe in Jihad and the violent spectrum of political Islam. The group openly extols the virtues of fighting in the cause of Allah. ISIS hold loose conception of apostasy or Islamic infidelity that is generally non-negotiable. On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood adopts secular, pacifist and modern democratic tenets in their daily politicking. Pitting the two groups

against each other, one may say that all Islamists are Islamic fundamentalists by nature but not all fundamentalists are necessarily Islamists. The postulations that can be used to position this discussion are the social identity theory (SIT) and the concept of *Clusivity*.

Identity theory can be grouped under two main categories with one focusing on the linkages between social structure and identity (structural strand) and the other focusing on the internal process of self-verification (cognitive strand) (Stets & Burke, 2000). These two identities are opposing in that, the social structure affects the structure of the self and ultimately social behavior while the cognitive strand is concerned with the internal dynamics of the self-process and its effect on social behavior. Identities are socially constructed and are maintained through naming and interaction. ISIS invokes violence to achieve their aim. Owing to this performativity of violence, the society has collectively named the group an anti- anthropocentric violent group. Here, the society has developed a collective impression about ISIS. In identity theory, theorists have been concerned more about the effects of a person's position in the social structure on the likelihood of that person activating one's identity other than another (Stets & Burke, 2000). In line with this is the idea of commitment to an identity introduced into identity theory. Commitment has two facets, the interactional commitment and affective commitment (Stryker & Serpe, 1982; cited in Stets & Burke, 1994). The interactional commitment deals with the number of people (extensive) to whom one is tied to through an identity. The more persons one is tied to by holding on an identity the greater the embeddedness of the identity in the social structure. In other words, the stronger the commitment is, the greater the identity salience. The affective commitment is the extent to which the usefulness or importance of the relationships or roles assigned a person to an identity

role in terms of both interactional (extensivity) and affective (intensivity) - the higher level of identity salience. Strong ties with others through identity leads to more salient identity (Stet & Burke, 2000).

Relating this theory to practice, this thesis observes that the Muslim Brotherhood is a secular group but ISIS is not. Perhaps, differences of identity formation and contexts may account for this. This is the more reason why the researcher sought the theoretical and conceptual intervention of SIT and *Clusivity* in order to examine how ISIS construct their identity relative and different from other fundamentalists group or jihadist group in *Dabiq*. Additionally, the thesis attempted to underscore the relationship between radicalization and identity salience within the framework of social identity theory (SIT).

The reason for the use of SIT in this thesis is because it articulates the basic socio cognitive processes of categorization and self-enhancement with subjective belief structures. This categorization and self-enhancement are mostly enacted in a radical form. In consequence of this, the researcher adopted a broader definition of political radicalization as forwarded by McCauley (2008), as “having both the functional and descriptive elements. From a functional perspective, the process is seen as the “increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict”. From a descriptive perspective, the process is defined as a change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in direction that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of intra-group”. In accordance with this view, any society that holds strong views that undermines the core values of Islam are the out group and ISIS is ready to fight those societies- whether Muslims or non-Muslims (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

In the context of Social identity theory (SIT), this theory is primarily interested in the socio-cognitive processes underpinning group dynamics and how they shape identity and image. Al Raffie (2013) conducted a study which centers on the effect of modernity and globalization on Muslims in Europe. According to Al Raffie (2013), modernity was conceived in her study to imply secularism and the values inherent in secular states. She stressed the point about the inability of some Muslims to handle the challenges of modernity in Europe where the environment is highly secularized. Al Raffie (2013) says that when studies talk about the inability of Muslims to handle modernity, they mainly refer to potential clash between worldviews predicated on differing value systems. In consequence, individuals' identity is activated when there is the feeling of exclusion from mainstream society that leads certain individuals to fall back even further on religion as a means of reaffirming what they perceive to be a 'threatened self-identity'. Here, SIT explains why ISIS has greater bank of support in the western world than in the Middle East and North Africa and the rise of lone-wolf attacks in Europe and America.

ISIS astute use of political communication to represent and produce a marketable ideology in the western world encouraged migration of western Muslims to the Middle East to join the ranks of ISIS in order to reaffirm their identity salience.

Sageman (2014) uses the network theory a variant of SIT to demonstrate the importance of kinship, personal relations, and social circles in reinforcing extremist ideology. ISIS has not only been successful in military campaigns but also exceptional when it comes to using SNSs to launch and canvass support within their in-group and other potential in-group members. A 2009 British government analysis of YouTube found 1,910 videos of Al-Awlaki, a fundamentalist cleric one of which had been viewed 164,420 times (Weimann, 2014). These videos are watched by the

in-group members in order to consolidate and reinforce their group commitment. Similarly, in 2008, his popular lecture *Constants on the Path of Jihad* was available on ummah.com, a mainstream site that received at the time approximately 48,300 visits per month from the US alone (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2011).

Thus, ISIS's social media strategy using political communication to preach classical and puritanical Islam encourages greater commitment and identity salience among their affiliates. They encouraged *Hijra*, *sharia* and *jihad* among ISIS's membership. More so, ISIS success in the creation of an Islamic community with strict application of Islamic law as a way of life strengthens their identity salience which facilitated the self-enhancement of the group. With the case of many Islamist groups like Al Qaida, Al Shabab and the Muslim Brotherhood it is the reverse.

2.5 SIT and Identity theory

Owing to their disciplinary differences, both theories are isolated from one another. However, it is essential to provide a somewhat overview of their similarities in order to contextualize the study of ISIS as a jihadist group category.

First, both theories address the structure and function of the socially constructed self as a fluid construct that negotiates the relationship between social behaviors. Second, the theories provide a reciprocal link and relationship that exist between the society and the self. Example, identity theory discusses the organization of behavior in terms of roles, while SIT explains the norms, stereotypes and prototypes (Hogg, Terry, White & 1995).

Third, both theories discuss the way identities are internalized and used to define self: SIT explains social identification, the cognitive processes of social categorization while identity theory discusses the process of labeling or naming oneself as a member

of a social category. However, it is instructive to note that, in psychology, the individual is the unit point of analysis. In fact, SIT among the recent social psychological theories is relatively distinct and it is the more reason why SIT appears more comparable to sociological theories. This is because, the theory attempts to explain group behavior in terms of concepts that articulate societal psychological processes and that recognizes the primacy of society over individual (Hogg, 1995; Terry, 1995; White, 1995).

However, a theory should be assessed for and against its self-proclaimed explanatory scope. In this instance, it would justify any attempt to critique the theory when the theory falls short of its demarcated self-proclaimed scope. Inasmuch as SIT and identity theory share similar frameworks there exist some differences from the standpoint of SIT (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

First, one essential source of difference is the fact that identity theory is essentially sociological. Therefore, it does not investigate the socio cognitive processes. However, SIT as a psychological theory explains and interrogates detailed socio cognitive processes (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). For example, identity theory focuses on the processes of labeling. This is where the “*self*” labels him/herself as belonging to a particular social category. In identity theory, people behave in ways that are congruent with their role expectations as a result of avoiding incongruity between internalized self-standards and perceptions of others. But symbolic interactionist perspective stress on ‘taking the role of the other’ and this calls for a socio-cognitive analysis. This was proposed by Burke but is largely not examined in an empirical sense by identity theorist but rather it is assumed.

Second, one major strength of SIT or self-categorization theory among social psychological theories is that, it articulates the psychological level of analysis (socio cognitive process) with the sociological level (social relations of in-group and inter-group relations) in a systematic sense (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Thus SIT is a social construct that mediates individuals and society.

Third, another most important aspect of difference between SIT and identity theory is inter-group relations and group behavior. On the contrary, identity theory concerns itself with role behavior. It focuses on role behavior and role identity and does not directly consider the impact of other social attributes on self. These attributes are mainly large-scale category memberships such as ethnicity, sex, race and nationality. For SIT large-scale category is the most significant unit of analysis as well as social identity dynamics that are central on the relationship between social relations and the large-scale membership.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Littlejohn and Foss defined a theory as “a unified, or coherent, body of propositions that provide a philosophically consistent picture of a subject (p.19). A theory being a construction and an abstraction represents views and observations postulated by theorists. As a result of this, a theory can be a lens through which individuals make observations, scrutinized facts and represent those facts by predictions and reification. In addition to this, it is always prudent for researchers to assiduously make a theory useful rather than seeking its usefulness

2.6.1 Social identity theory (SIT)

The major proposition of SIT says that a person’s sense of who they are depends largely on the groups to which they belonged. This theory was founded by the British

social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. SIT was originally developed to demystify the cognitive psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. The theory also elaborates on the cognitive and social belief aspects of racism, prejudice and discrimination.

SIT was fully formulated in collaboration with John Turner and others in the mid to late 1970's at the University of Bristol (Tajfel, 1974, 1978, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). During the early to mid-1980's, John Turner initiated the self-categorization theory (SCT) as a theoretical development and extension of SIT. Although distinct from SIT in some aspects, SIT and SCT have a close relationship to be considered part of the same theoretical and metatheoretical enterprise as SIT (Hogg, 1990 & McCarthy, 1990).

2.6.2 Social Identity theory: Assumptions and Explanations

Tajfel (1971) attempted to identify the minimal conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favor of the in-group to which they belonged and against another group. The minimal group experiment of Turner and Tajfel indicated that the mere act of individuals categorizing themselves as group members was necessary and sufficient to lead them to display in-group favoritism. John Turner who later extended an explanation of this theory initiated the self-categorization theory (SCT).

Al Raffie (2013) defines self-categorization as the cognitive process whereby individuals strengthen their social identity by emphasizing intra-group similarities and intergroup differences. In consonance with the practice of “leaderless” jihad, there is a coterminous relationship between the standards of behavior agreed by jihadists group and the self-categorization theory. This is where the individual or the victim of lone-

wolf or “leaderless” jihad is “despersonalized” based on groupthink. The individual adopts a collective identity by a group that makes him or her subservient to the group interest hence the personal, individual identity has become an extension of the collective whole.

In fact, Al Raffiee (2013) says that SIT does not necessarily hinge itself on the concomitant interaction of group members in closed settings. Rather individuals may act on behalf of the group according to the norms they internalized as a result of belonging and associating with a group. A simple illustration is the case study of suicide bombing attacks which are sanctioned by ISIS. In the lexicon of Jihadists they call it “martyrdom operation”.

According to the SIT, like the identity theory, a person has not one “personal self”. Identity is not only multilayered but also in sequence and in the process of becoming rather than an ontological state of being. In a similar analogy, several selves synchronized the widening circles of group membership. This means that different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act upon the basis of his personal, family or national “level of self” (Turner, 1987 & Butler, 1990).

Apart from the level of self, and the multiplicity of identities of the individual, social identity is the individual’s self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). In other words, it is the individual’s perception that defines the “**us**” in consonance with his or her association with any internalized group membership. This can be separated from the notion of personal identity which refers to self-knowledge that is derived from the person’s unique attribute (Hogg & Terry, 1995).

Al Raffie (2013) intimates that social identities are mirrors of the social categories, groups and networks into which individuals belong. These social categories are large-scale and broad as well. Examples of large-scale categories are religion, gender and ethnicity. These categories define an imaginary boundary which separates the members from non-members. SIT theory asserts that group membership creates in-group or self-categorization and enhancement in ways that boost the self-esteem of the in-group at the expense of the out-group. This is known as “*self-enhancement*”. After being categorized in a group membership, individuals seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their group from a comparison out-group on some valued dimension. This quest for positive distinctiveness means that people’s sense of who they are is defined in terms of “We” rather than “I” “Them” versus “Us”. Owing to the utility in boosting the self-esteem and ego of the in-group, coupled with the internalized stereotypes and values developed in such a way that they would favor the in-group. As a result of this, a contrary worldview, values, and belief systems encountered by the group means that, there will be intergroup conflict and clashes (Al Raffie, 2013).

2.6.3 Positive evaluation, self-concept, and network support for social identities

Al Raffie (2013) says that social identities are activated when they provide good references within which the individual can make a meaning of his/her surrounding. Essentially, SIT set the stage for self-introspection by furnishing individuals and groups on the basis against which self-image and self-conceptions are measured.

As regards the level of network support for social identities, interpersonal communication, context has a positive influence when it comes to intra-group dynamics. In this context, people may prefer to be part of a clique whose members share similar social categories. However, individual dissatisfaction within the clique

may necessitate an alternative call on other social identities or categories that have positive evaluative consequences.

Again, one major function of a network is to provide support for one's identity claim. Therefore, failure in that regard may lead to either jettisoning the clique or the social group. Alternatively, some theorists say that cliques are sites where group identities are subjected to negotiation based on the context (Al Raffie, 2013).

2.6.4 Social identities versus a threatened identity

One core assumption in terrorism studies is the perceptual construction of war on Islam. This has triggered an identity crisis in many Muslim youth. Ellemers et al (2002) intimate that there are differing levels of threat on self and group membership on levels of commitment.

First, a group-directed threat versus weak individual commitment; in this situation, the low level committed individual would stretch an arm length from the group and rather attribute it to the group and group values and not themselves personally. Therefore, weak and low level commitment of a group lead to a feeble collective sense of self and that particular clique member is not entirely "depersonalized" (Ellemers et al, 2002). Likewise, a situation of this nature is not part of the cohesive whole, threatened by relevant out-groups. Thus, persons in this case scenario would distance themselves by stressing the multiculturalism of the clique as evidence that the negative attributes attached to the group do not apply to them (cited in AlRaffie, 2013).

On the affective aspect or level, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) did a work on *Self and Social Identity* say that when a group's commitment is low, persons in this category will develop and maintain inferior self-esteem especially when feedback

from the environment remains negative. On the contrary, Ellemers (2002) identifies another threatened social identity in a situation when moral values of a group are desecrated. In this context, there is higher level of possibility of an individual who may identify with the group acts on its behalf in order to restore its moral consecration as a result of the collective guilt that he/she feels.

The second aspect is group-directed vs. high individual commitment. This supports the hypothetical statement that highly committed members of a group fall back further on the group when the clique faces a threat. This hypothesis suggests that more salient religious identities are likely to become more religious in a crisis situation (Ellemers et al., 2002, cited in Al Raffie, 2013).

The major determinant in SIT in terms of behavior is the condition of strong group identification. This is primarily based on perception of legitimacy and the stable status of the group. For example, weak and low status groups (religious minorities in Europe) would most likely take a collective action in order to amend the group's condition. As regards threat to group moral values, members with higher levels of commitment are more likely to be defensive and would not (less) consider the harm they may have inflicted upon other out-groups (Al Raffie, 2013; Ellemers, 2002).

In addition, one of the major argumentations put forward by SIT is that social identities may be strongly pronounced through and by overarching systems of belief and meaning like religion. However, these identities can be negotiated and renegotiated based on the social contexts in which they are pronounced. According to Pew Research Global attitudes project (July, 2006) Muslims in Europe generally identify themselves first as Muslims and then as citizens of the countries in which they are born and bred. By logical extension, perhaps this is partly attributable to the

fact that there exists a strong and committed in-group with a greater sense of self-esteem. Similarly, when a group is more tilted and uni-directed towards a particular membership of a group, the tendency for higher level of group commitment is very high. On the contrary, membership in multicultural groups in society may typically lessen the level of commitment to one's ascribed identity- such as religion (Al Raffie, 2013).

In conclusion, arguably, a group that is integrated better in terms of plurality of other group memberships within a mainstream society is most likely to be less conservative and will have balanced social identities. This is because memberships to other social groups will give the individual a repertoire of identities to enable the individual switch between social identities depending upon the relevance in a given social milieu.

For instance, Lathion (2008) did a study on Muslims in Switzerland. This was to find out if their citizenship is incompatible with their Islamic identity. The author finds that Muslim youth in Switzerland are more likely to make religious identity more pronounced at home and deemphasized it at school where the environment is less suitable to interact on a theological ground.

2.6.5 Clusivity

Clusivity is a linguistic term that deals with the various aspects of inclusion and exclusion in a given discourse. A lot of traditional notion of clusivity emphasized the term as a grammatical category, thus limiting its scope.

However, this thesis, adopted the approach of Wieczorek (2013) which treats clusivity as an approach used to “investigate occurrences of cognitively construed and linguistically engendered association and dissociation”. This thesis adopted the

concept of clusivity in order to explain how communication and language are used as conceptual representations to associate and dissociate the self and the other in a social practice. Here, an attempt is made to combine pragmatics, cognitive and social psychological approaches to discourse studies.

2.6.6 Explanation of Clusivity

Group identities set boundaries and relationships between members and non-members belonging and dissociation. This is mostly negotiated through communication whenever people engaged in a social practice both verbal and non-verbal (Wieczorek, 2013).

In this situation, members of in-group and out-group use distance and proximity in terms of ideology to associate and dissociate between the positive self-presentation and negative-other presentation. In fact, where there exist ideological struggle, political communication and the strategy of legitimization and delegitimization are used to enhance polar opposites of “us” and “them” which among others, contribute to the production and reproduction of power and ideology. As a result of this, the use of clusivity markers such as “we” “us” “they” “them” “those” are used as tools to project positive self-image and negative-other image in the struggle of legitimacy, power and ideology. This thesis textually analyzed the discourses in the *Dabiq* magazine which is replete of these markers. Typically, these markers produced and reproduced power and ideology with the aim of constructing and representing ISIS as adherents of *jihad, hijra, sharia*.

In fact, belongingness and dissociation using clusivity markers even among people of the same faith was demonstrated by ISIS. Also, ISIS used clusivity to share certain ideological and moral values with audiences they consider sympathetic to them.

Therefore, the creation of bipolar oppositions between “*ISIS-good people*” and “*bad-apostates*” Muslims was pronounced via the inherent element of discourse in which discursive representation of reality depends on positive self-image and negative-other image. In reference to ISIS, the aim of association is to create an aura of credibility, consolidation of support, belongingness and familiarity in relation to group associated with ISIS. Contrarily, dissociation is also aimed at creating the aura of disreputableness, lack of credibility and isolation in relation to out-group members (Wieczorek, 2013).

2.6.7 Two Mechanics of Clusivity-Driven Political Discourse: Legitimization and Delegitimization

The two most defining mechanics that are indispensable in the discussion of *clusivity-driven* discourse are legitimization and delegitimization. Anna Wieczorek (2013) says that numerous studies have define legitimization a process of attaining the state of legitimacy that is:

The state of being commonly accepted on the grounds of abiding by the rules, norms and values shared within a given group, be it a society, a national minority group or political party (p. 2).

Furthermore, groups and individuals legitimize when they provide a justifiable notion and explanation of their actions in order to convince people that their idea, concept and decision is essentially “good” and “right” (Wieczorek, 2013). This is the exact same ISIS has been doing since their inception as a jihadist group. The caliphate established by ISIS is a political and religious institution. Since its inception, it has suffered crises of legitimacy both in the eyes of Muslims and non-Muslims. As a result of this, legitimization of the group becomes very crucial in securing its stability

and maintaining its support base for the purposes of representing and producing power and ideology. In the notion of Wieczorek (2013), this is similar to the idea that “political systems have to be able to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate one for the society” (Kneuer, 2011, p.2).

Thus, to understand ISIS’s attempt to legitimize its caliphate, this thesis adopted Van Leewan’s taxonomy of legitimization. Three out of four are vital in this study. The three categories are: authorization, moral evaluation and rationalization. Apparently, ISIS has the tendency of quoting the Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) (*Hadith*) to justify their actions. This is because the Qur’an and the *Hadith* are the primary authoritative sources of Islamic knowledge. In addition to this, they quoted and made references to the classical jurists who are hold in high esteem in Islamic scholarship and spirituality.

The second category of moral evaluation pertains to Islamic values. Primarily, these are discursive representation of the set of moral values and ideology held by ISIS. Rationalization which is the last category, is the justification and rationale ISIS mostly provide behind the decisions they take in every occurring events. A simple example is the beheading of western nationals and burning of a Jordanian pilot.

Similarly, Chilton (2004) approaches legitimization within a broader framework. This involves cohesive practices that provides the basis for legitimacy. Here, ISIS provide justifications inciting their affiliates to kill selected Islamic clerics who speak and write against them. In this instance, coercion has become an inherent method of legitimization and in same vein in delegitimization those scholars. Succinctly put by Chilton:

Political actors... often act coercively through language in setting agendas, selecting topics in conversation, positioning the self and others in specific relationships, making assumptions about realities that hearers are obliged to at least temporarily accept in order to process the text or talk (Chilton, 2004, p.45).

The above quotation provides arguments and basis on how political actors and groups used language to communicate general ideological principles and to present positive-self presentation against negative-other presentation. Therefore, this thesis identified the strategic use of language by ISIS to legitimize their group interest and at the same time include and exclude audiences.

Contextualizing legitimization and delegitimization in the SIT tradition, two concepts come in mind- self-enhancement and stereotyping. ISIS used stereotyping to facilitate negative-other presentation of their out-group members. Words used to delegitimize are: foreigners, crusaders, enemies within, the liberals, apostates. Some of the strategies used to facilitate these are: acts of blaming, scapegoating, exclusion, character assassination of public personalities and groups, encouraging enmity and apprehension between members of in-group and out-group.

Legitimization by contrast, presents the self in the following: positive self-presentation, self-justification, self-identified (Mujahidin) as paladins of *sharia*, protectors of the vulnerable Muslims. This attempt by ISIS is to provide a viable alternative and to garner support from Muslims who are aggrieved and are yearning for solution in the Muslim World.

In sum, legitimization and delegitimization are techniques ISIS used to promote their global caliphate and jihadism agenda. The two concepts “set boundaries of demarcation between “us” being right versus “them” being wrong and “us” being accepted on moral grounds versus “them” hence being morally dissociated from the other” (Wieczorek, 2013,p.5).

Thus, *Dabiq* magazine is an ideological text which is replete with association with positive self-presentation of self and negative presentation of others using *clusivity-driven* mechanics of legitimization and delegitimization.

2.7 Theory of globalization

The theory of globalization today is an area that is hotly contested in research owing to the multi-disciplinary debate surrounding the topic. Scholars and researchers in this area have made numerous and assiduous effort in defining the term “globalization”.

Remarkably so, Stenafonovic (2008) intimates that, the efforts to define globalization most often talks about its economic dimension; that is breaking the artificial barriers that block free flow of goods, services and factors of production in the world market. Modern development of transport and communication are the variables that mediated and facilitated globalization. In this context, transportation and communication are seen as the major factors of international integration (Stefanovic, 2008). In addition to this, McMichael (2000) also added that globalization is defined as integration on the basis of the project which expands the role of markets on the global level (cited in Stefanovic, 2008).

However, there are definitions that emphasize other crucial dimensions of globalization- these are: social, geographic and psychological. Here, globalization is demystified as a social process in which geographic location to social and cultural

arrangements lose importance and at the same time people are becoming increasingly conscious that they lose importance (Waters, 1995 cited in Stefanovic, 2008). A simple example is the use of drones for security purpose. There are special drones used for spying and reconnaissance missions abroad. Drones are pilotless planes used for military attacks and sometimes used to intercept pieces of information during spying missions. This is to prevent any compelling circumstance on the part of a human being to divulge any classified information in case of any arrest or when the plain is downed. This is to replace the human being with a drone in order to save security cost and any collateral damage that may be incurred when drones are downed by enemies.

Closely related is another view by theorists of globalization; globalization is conceived as the intensification of worldwide social relations which connect distant communities so that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (Giddens, 1990). Based on these theoretical explanations, one may conclude that the theory of globalization is elusive which is harder to have a universal definition.

However, Mittelman (2006), asserted three possibilities as far as globalization theory is concerned. First, intensification of global flow of goods and services mediated and facilitated by modern transportation and communication means. Second, globalization maybe concerned as a compression of time and space in such a way that world affairs and events in one part of the world have quick and swift effects on distant locations.

Third conception is to comprehend globalization as a historical structure of material power. Thus, globalization represents historical transformation in the economy, politics and culture (Mittelman, 2006, cited in Stefnovic, 2008).

In fact, as a very propulsive area of research, some scholars of globalization have tried to systematize the quite heterogeneous understanding of globalization. Remarkably so, McGraw (2007) has classified three course analyses of the multidimensional phenomenon of globalization:

First, hyperglobalists view globalization as a legitimate and irrepressible historical process. This process creates a world order based on supranational markets and institutions. In this situation, the role of the nation-state has significantly reduced. This is because Multinational Corporations manage and control avalanche of resources and have become major drivers of economic activity on the global stage. At this juncture, it is instructive to state that the cardinal driving force and progress of globalization is technology.

The aforementioned approach proposed globalization as a deterministic character; globalization is seen as a final stage which is spontaneous and a self-enforcing process which can create the most efficient model of society (Stefanovic, 2008). Stefanovic (2008) opines that, globalization has a predictable outcome that can create a global society with all varieties of cultures but integrated within a unique social pattern. This is in line with the well-known assumption by Fukuyama the “end of history” “which implies that the modern, global capitalism with liberal democracy as the political framework, represents the last word of socio-economic evolution” (Fukuyama, 1992, cited in Stefanovic, 2008, p.265). It should also be stated that this reflection of globalization is opined by the following scholars: Thomas Levitt and Thomas Friedman

The transformationalists (Giddens, Scholte, Castells, Walerstein) take a moderate position on globalization. While the hyperglobalists emphasize globalization as a

ubiquitous and linear process, the transformationalists assessed the progressive effects of globalization. They agree with the fundamental changes globalization brings in the overall integration and acceleration of socio-economic dynamics through “compression” of space and time (Stefanovic, 2008).

However, this school of thought approaches globalization in a multifaceted form; where they take into account mechanics of globalization other than economic consideration. This was the view of Anthony Giddens, a sociologist of modernism. Anthony Giddens considers four basic dimensions of globalization- world capitalist economy, system of national state, world military order and international division of labor.

Additionally, another sociologist of modernism, Beck, “believes that the unintended effects of modernity forces are global risk and the new global threat” (Stenofavic, 2008, p.265). He added by suggesting that “in order to overcome the risk, as important dimension of reality, it is necessary to create institutions of democracy and cosmopolitan confidence. Without it, globalization represents only a façade for the game of imperialist powers” (Stenfanovic, 2008, p.265-266).

Furthermore, the founder of the theory of “world” system Wallerstein believes that, the current discourse on globalization is a “gigantic misreading” of contemporary trends and a deceptive attempt to impose the theory on the world. He contested the supposed evident deterministic character of globalization. Wallerstein opines: “It is impossible to predict which of the alternative systems will be established, because the choice is a function of numerous particular choices (Wallerstein, 1999, cited in Stefanovic, 2008, p.266). According to him, globalization is “an uncertain process of transition of the world-system into an unknown socio-economic alternative”

(Stefanovic, 2008, p.266). Here, it is apparent that the transformationalists accept and adopt much more moderate position on globalization in terms of progressivity and outcomes. This is in contradistinction with the hypergloblists. They say according to the transformationalists “the underlying influence of globalization on socio-economic trends is not questioned but its final effects are considered uncertain. In this sense, such an understanding of globalization is not deterministic” (Stefanovic, 2008, p.266).

The third group of theoreticians are the skeptics. They expressed skepticism with regard to the ubiquitous nature and process of globalization. They contend that, there is nothing unprecedented at the level of integration and openness of today’s economy. The skeptics say that, “the creation of regional blocks as the essential characteristics of the world economy offers argumentation that the world economy is less integrated than it was in the late nineteenth century” (Held & McGraw, 2007 cited in Stefanovic, 2008, p.266). within this direction of thought, Huntington (1999) offered an assessment that, the lack of sustainability of proper integration and unification of people and cultures brought about radical resistance within individual cultures which has led in the end a clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1999). In conclusion, skepticism is expressed in terms of the impact of globalization and its ubiquity, as well as its sustainability of cultural integration and exchanges.

Another classification of globalization theories are: Structural, conjunctural and socio-constructivist. Stefanovic (2008) says that the structuralists perceive globalization as a legitimate process inherent to socio-economic dynamics. The development of society is led by technology and capital accumulation. Here, determinism is applied. Conjunctural explanation of globalization looks at the tendencies with the scientific historical condition and policies which determine the character of globalization. The social-constructivist explanation examines the origin and the ideas underpinning

globalization and the ways in which the ideas of globalization have become part of the scientific and everyday discourse. This theory perceives globalization as socially and ideologically constructed. The previous explanations of globalization can fit into the main directions of contemporary theories of globalization- hyperglobalists, transformationalists or skeptics.

Defenders of globalization see it to be beneficial as it generates good opportunities for people. Example: political democratization and cultural diversity. The driver of these variables is technology. Kellner (2009) argues that the key to understanding globalization is within the framework of technology as a product of technological revolution.

Kellner (2009) asserts that the technological revolution which globalization drives on is presupposed on the global computer networks which facilitates free movement of goods, information and people across national borders. This informs how technological globalization or the internet has become a reliable conduit for social movements in their daily routine as far as cyber-jihad is concerned.

Remarkably so, the internet and the global computer networks have become the possible conduits propelling globalization. From this perspective, globalization cannot be demystified without proper assimilation of scientific and technological revolutions that serve as the motor and matrix of globalization.

2.7.1 Contradictions of globalization

The 9/11 terrorist attack has raised very fundamental issues surrounding globalization. This event disclosed the downsides of globalization- the ways that global flows of technology, goods, information, ideologies and people have destructive as well as productive effects (Kellner, 2009).

Kellner (2009) says that globalization has promoted and facilitated unification of people and ideas; and at the same time it produces enemies as it incorporates partnership and participants. After the 9/11 attack, analysts say that the attack was executed with a drone. This was a demonstration that technologies which represent the heart of globalization has remained a major conduit social groups used to undermine and attack social institutions, generates instruments of destruction as well as production. Here digital communication and transportation facilitate globalization.

Kellner (2009) suggests that, theorists of globalization must do critical globalization theory. This means that analysts must equally observe certain unintended ambiguity-positive and negative sides of globalization. In this sense, the interconnection of people as a result of techno-science has open the possibilities of destruction and violence as well as democracy, free trade, cultural and social exchange. These exchanges are mediated via interconnection and interdependence of network of people. On the other hand, other theorists observed the growth of terrorism as the expression of the dark side of globalization. A simple example is the drone attack used by the Bush, Obama and now the Trump administration against anti-western terrorist points out of the objective ambiguity of globalization. The unintended ambiguity of globalization simultaneously creates friend and foes, wealth and poverty and growing divisions between the “haves” and “have-nots” (Kellner, 2009).

Contrarily, the down turning of the global economy as the result of disempowered of the marginalized, continuous local and global ideological conflicts, repression of human rights and civil liberties, increase in fear and anxiety certainly expose and undermine the false optimism of hypergloblists who perceived globalization as a purely positive instrument of human progress and wellbeing. Critical theorists of globalization again, observed the use of powerful technologies in the form of

weaponry like drone, IED's to disclose the asymmetrical power and the subsequent emergence of terrorism and war in this century (Kellner, 2009). In the same way, as technologies of mass destruction become available for combatant nation's, perilous instabilities and anxiety have emerged and the resultant effect of policing and measures to stem the flow of movements of people and goods to both across borders and internally (Kellner, 2009). A simple example is the charge of espionage against the U.S national security contractor, Edward Snowden and the Swedish whistleblower, Julian Assange who leak secret data on how governments use technology to spy on citizens and other nations for the purposes of surveillance, policing and repression.

This brings to bare Kellner (2009), how he tries to underscore the conflictual, contradictory and open resistance of globalization either in favor or against democratic intervention and transformation. This attempt is made not to treat globalization as a monolithic juggernaut of progress or domination as argued in the discourse of globalization. The aim of advancing this proposition is to distinguish between "globalization from below" and the "globalization from above". Globalization from below refers to the wages in which social movements and the marginalized resist globalization and/ or use the institution to further any form of social justice or struggle. Example: the Arab spring. While globalization form above that is corporations and powerful governments used globalization to increase their power and influence. On the other hand, globalization from below also gives power to social groups and individuals who are in the margins with unspeakable voice to join the political struggle. Example: while the powerful governments and big corporations control the slow media, social groups also join the bandwagon of the new media- Facebook, Twitter, Paltalk, Kirk, YouTube etc. as regards social groups like the

jihadists, they use all manner of social media apps and file-sharing platforms most importantly; example; Ask.com, Justpaste.it, Tumblr, Telegram, Viper (Klausen,2015).

However, the role of these new technologies in social movement and political struggle do and do not promote democratizations, social justice and other positive attributes.

Furthermore, global events as regards terrorism and security have sparked reflections and theoretical debates that put the theory of globalization into critical analysis. To those who entertained skepticism as regards the contemporary experience of globalization, have seen the apparent picture living in a global world that is highly sophisticated, interconnected and vulnerable as far as hegemonic politics is concerned. In this situation, sentiments and crises of a particular nation may and can affect anyone or any region at any time.

In a similar vein, Kellner (2009) contends that proper theorization of globalization may conceptualize certain hidden contradictions generated by technological revolution and the restructuring of capital which has generated tension between the “haves” and “have-nots”. In the area of world economy, globalization involves the proliferation of capital, information dissemination, finance, investing and the diffusion of technology. Thus, globalization appears a contradictory amalgam that sometimes promotes democracy and sometime inhibit it.

Benjamin Barber (1996) writing on the globalization theory, also observes and describes the clash of civilizations using the example of McWorld and jihad. In this case, the forces of globalization has created a homogenization, commercialized culture that contrast the traditional cultures which are often averse to modernization and globalization. Similarly, Thomas Friedman (1998) equally makes a benign

distinction using the example of Lexus and the Olive Tree. Lexus clashes with Olive Tree, in that the former symbolizes modernization, affluence and luxury while the latter symbolizes roots, tradition, place and stable community (Kellner, 2009).

In this circumstance, a critical look at Barber's anecdotal example of Lexus and the Olive Tree will bring out hidden contradictions underlying the theory of globalization. In fact, both variables are forces that are opposed to democracy.

However, Friedman asserts that the dual victory of capitalism and democracy, while Barber brings out the hidden "contradictions and tensions between capitalism and democracy within the New world (Dis) Order as well as the anti-democratic animus of Jihad" (Kellner, 2009, p.292).

But, it is instructive to state that Friedman (1999) fails to articulate the hidden contradictions between capitalism and democracy and the ways globalization and economic reasons undermine cultures and the democracy of people. Also, he fails to underscore the reasons why many parts of the world show strong dislike for globalization and the west. As a result of this, the theory of globalization in its duality: homogenizing forces sameness and uniformity. At the same time, it is heterogeneous in character with hybridity as well as a "contradictory mixture of democratization and anti-democratization tendencies" (Kellner, 2009, p.292).

2.7.2 Relevance of the above theories to the study

Bryman (2008) sees the relationship between theory and research because it provides the basis and the backcloth for the research that is being investigated. It also provides a framework or model within which this thesis can be understood, explained and findings interpreted. Thus, theories provide a framework or model to explain and make sense of data collected.

First, the study of terrorism and media ideology is a multidisciplinary area inviting the insights of multi approaches. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, media studies and many more. The researcher use the globalization theory to explain how technology fosters and consolidates jihadist agenda. The use of political communication online is a strategic tool ISIS is using to launch a psychological warfare on their enemies. The major catalyst in this regard is global technology of the internet and the emergence of the new media that creates a network of people from distant locations by making them a single entity.

The SIT was used to explain intra-group relations and the use of subjective ideological construction for categorization against intergroup members (out-group). This theory examines the socio-cognitive impact of groups and how individuals categorized one another alongside others on the development of personal identities. This is to enable the researcher to close the gap between the individual and the environment. These theories examined the radicalization process and the reason behind individual and group violence. SIT sheds more insight on ISIS's group dynamics and how they shape their identity and image in *Dabiq*. Additionally, the SIT explains how ISIS as a group construct reality through their categorizations of intra-group similarities and intergroup differences in order to propagate their jihad message. Further explications of the SIT and self-categorization theory explained the construct of jihad and leaderless jihad. At this juncture, it is instructive to state that individuals explain how and why an individual act on behalf of the group according to the norms he/she internalized as a result of belonging to that group. This is one major element of the SIT and the self- categorization theory.

2.8 Summary

The origin of jihadists online was necessitated by the censorship they face as an outlawed group by governments and the corporate policy of the slow media. In consequence of this, jihadists resorted to online forums and chat rooms for their ideological discussion. A major one under consideration in this thesis was launch by ISIS on the 5th of July, 2014 for purposes of ideological dissemination. As a fundamentalist group, ISIS has consistently advocated the return of the Islamic caliphate and Islamic global government. This is the in realm of IF where AlRaffie did an extensive study in that area to underscore the social identity and the rise of Islamic extremism among European Muslims. Jabri and Sageman also opine reasons for intergroup political violence discussed extensively the religious factor as the most powerful tool in that regard. Additionally, Sageman intimates for further reason for example a perceive injustice and attack on a group values may call for political, violence. In order to demystify this potpourri of assumptions as regards to ISIS, this thesis employed the SIT in order to explain ISIS's group dynamics and corporate interest. To properly look at this, language was key in their attempt to construct their corporate identity. Therefore, the concept of *clusivity* was employed to see how ISIS use linguistic expression as a tool in identity construction. Additionally, the clique of affiliates from different parts of the globe were connected via the internet to build an empire of jihadist. This was facilitated by technological globalization.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter submits the research methodology of the study, including the research approach, research design, population, sample size and sampling strategy, data-collection instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis method.

3.1 Research approach: Qualitative Research Approach.

This study employed qualitative approach because Cresswell (2007) describes qualitative research as a study that begins with assumptions, worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens and the study of research problem inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. The two essential variables in this description are: assumptions and worldviews. In justification of this, the researcher adopted this approach because ISIS has a subjective belief structure that influences their behavior. In this study, the researcher used the theoretical assumptions of SIT as the lens to explain the ideological worldview of ISIS and the meaning they make of their social world.

In a similar vein, qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon (Cresswell, 2014). Therefore, the researcher qualitatively investigated how a social category (ISIS) construct their identity in *Dabiq* qualitatively. One major reason the researcher employed qualitative approach was that, qualitative research seeks to identify, explore and explain the attitudes, actions and perceptions of people within a

social setting and the meanings they make of their actions - without subjecting it to rigorous mathematical computations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

In addition to this, Deacon et al. (1999) contend that qualitative methods tend to be associated with the interpretive worldview. This concerns itself with exploring the way people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through language, sound imagery, personal style and social rituals. Remarkably so, the researcher subjected the *Dabiq* magazine into rigorous textual analysis in order to demystify how ISIS express and construct social reality and understanding through language and their social ritual of Islamic fundamentalism and jihadism as one of the major construct identified by the researcher. This expression of language and imagery is done in an ideological magazine called *Dabiq*.

Furthermore, the researcher saw the need to adopt qualitative approach because it provides an in-depth understanding of phenomenon and also recognized that an existential objective reality cannot be captured. So in lieu of this processual understanding of the meanings underlying beliefs and social ritual, the researcher embraced this approach to investigate the prototypical features of ISIS through thick description. A prototype here means a subjective representation of the defining social attributes of ISIS. These attributes are: beliefs, attitudes and behavior. The use of qualitative method will aid the researcher to make an informed analysis based on the texts of *Dabiq* magazine. Using textual analysis, the researcher made an educated guess based on the polysemic nature of the media texts. Therefore, the current study explores the elements upon which ISIS use to construct their identity in *Dabiq*. In order to come out with these elements as an objective, the researcher engaged directly in intense, prolonged contact and experience in the virtual world amidst 'live' situations that make up the everyday activities of ISIS's religious and social activism

which is called cyber jihad. The researcher attempted to capture the perception and understandings of ISIS ‘from the inside’ so as to better understand how they make sense of their social world. All these are oriented towards the understanding and pursuit of informed meaning hence the use of the qualitative study as an approach in this study.

3.2 Research Design

Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. Others have called them strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Research design can be described as a strategy, plan, and a structure of conducting a research project (Creswell, 2014).

Research design is the entire plan that is used to connect the conceptual research problems to the pertinent empirical research. In other words, the research design articulates what data is required, the methods the researcher employed to collect and analyzed data, and how all of this is going to answer research questions set by the study. Research designs, especially in the qualitative circles, include narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. In this study, the research design is case study.

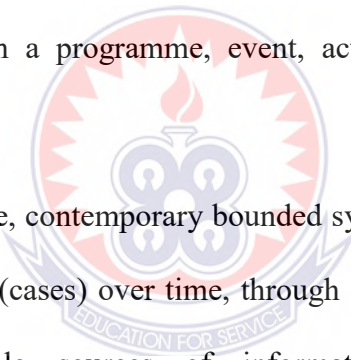
3.3 Case Study

For the purpose of this study, the case study design was employed. A case study refers to the singular, the particular, the unique (Simons, 2009). In the discourse of case study, different authors refer to case study as a method, a strategy and an approach. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used case study as a strategic plan for this inquiry. The primary reason for choosing a case study is to explore the particularity of

a simple case in this instance, the identity construction of ISIS analyzing an online magazine called *Dabiq*.

Simons (2009) broadly defines a case study as a process. This process is to conduct a systematic, critical inquiry into an issue of choice in order to generate an understanding that seeks to contribute to a cumulative public knowledge of the topic. The aim of using a case study as a strategy of this study is to gain rich, detailed understanding of the *Dabiq* magazine by examining it in detail. This is in line with the researcher's aim which was to provide an in-depth understanding and description of ISIS.

Case study is a design of enquiry in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. A case study;



explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a unique case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes (Creswell, 2014 p. 97).

A case study is one of several ways of doing qualitative research because its aim is to understand human beings in social contexts by interpreting their actions as a single group, community or a single event (Creswell, 2014). The current study seeks to investigate how ISIS construct their identity and the online strategies upon which they used to construct their identity via *Dabiq*, an online magazine. Therefore, the researcher used *Dabiq* as a case study which is to be investigated in detail. Merriam's (2009) definition will form the basis for this study: namely, a case study is an in-depth

description and analysis of a bounded system. This study seeks to demystify in detail the elements upon which ISIS used to construct their identity and to further examine the feedback posts of audiences and affiliates of ISIS. In this study, the researcher employed single case study method and procedure such as cyber ethnography.

As an empirical inquiry, a case study investigates a contemporary issue by providing a level of detail and understanding within its real life situation, especially when the boundaries between the issue and the context are not clearly defined. This is in consonance with Clifford Geertz's (1973) notion of "thick description" in ethnographic study.

In fact, one of the most prominent advocates of case study research Yin (2003) contends that the case study approach is essential where the context and events being studied is critical and where the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold. In other words, case study is more preferred in examining contemporary events or issues when the relevant behavior cannot be manipulated. In this study, the researcher interrogated how a social category (ISIS) construct their identity of global jihadism, an activity which occurs in real life situation and context. This study was conducted via the virtual world where the researcher did not have any form of control as far as ISIS and the virtual are concerned.

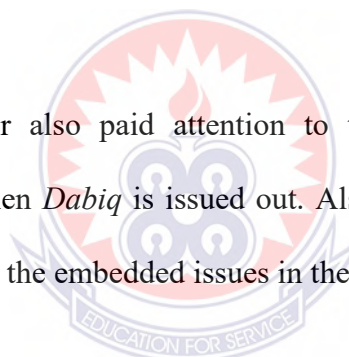
According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a case study examines a bounded system or a case over time in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. All the collected evidences are collated to arrive at the best possible responses to the research question(s). As a result, the researcher may gain a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research.

3.4 Single case study

In the case study approach, one of the most cited paladins of the approach by name Robert Stake notes that the case study “is defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used” and that the object of study is a specific, unique, bounded system” (Stake, 2008 p.443-445).

In this investigation, the researcher examines the identity construction of ISIS and the elements upon which ISIS construct its identity. The researcher adopted the single case of *Dabiq* magazine as a unique or particular case. The reason is that, the researcher’s attempt to use *Dabiq* as a specific, unique and bounded allowed an in-depth or thorough analysis of the complex and the particularistic nature of the issues embedded in *Dabiq*.

However, the researcher also paid attention to the tweets of the affiliates and sympathizers of ISIS when *Dabiq* is issued out. Also, the researcher used inter-texts as illustrations to explain the embedded issues in the *Dabiq* magazine.



3.5 Sampling Strategy

The underlying principle of gaining rich, in-depth information guides the sampling strategies of qualitative researchers. Who or what you select for your study, where and when depends on certain criteria which are determined by the purpose of your study. Therefore, the term purposive or purposeful sampling is applied (Daymon & Holloway, 2001).

LeCompte and Preissle (1997) assert that ‘criterion based’ sampling is a better term for this type of sampling because most sampling strategies, even random sampling, are highly purposive.

Schwandt (1997) say sites or cases are preferred or chosen because there may be good justification to believe that what goes on there is crucial to understanding some process or concept, or to experimenting or elucidating a theory. The researcher worked on the 14th issue magazine. So far the Islamic state has issued 15 of the *Dabiq* magazine. The rationale behind this is that most of the issues under investigation are found in the 14th edition of the *Dabiq* magazine. In addition, the 14th edition has come during the time ISIS's jihadi agenda included both the western nations and the declaration of some Muslim scholars the group consider apostates of Islam. Therefore, the notion and the construction of ISIS's identity as jihadists in this circumstance goes beyond waging a war against western nations they consider as enemies but rather ISIS's open declaration of some clerics as disbelievers and hence their blood is legal for jihad. Therefore, the researcher textually analyzed the 14TH edition because it contains the issues under interrogation.

3.6 Data Collection Method: Cyber-ethnography

Polit and Hungler (1999) define data as an “information obtained during the course of an investigation or study”. The researcher's data collection method was done online. This is called cyber ethnography. This is because the online magazine (*Dabiq*) is the major media platform ISIS use to communicate to the world.

Ethnography occupies a central position in studying cultures. It strives to create descriptions of individual or collective subjectivities for the purpose of understanding different cultures. Typically, ethnography involves observation of a group of people in their natural environment and description of one or more aspects of group life. Such descriptions are called to develop insights into group life and to understand and appreciate various forms and facets of culture

Therefore, the attempt by the researcher to adopt this data collection method is that, ISIS has been contributing content in the virtual world since their inception. Affiliates, sympathizers, and fighters are mostly found on the twittersphere engaging in social media campaign in order to sell the global jihadism agenda. Owing to this, the use of the online data collection- virtual or digital ethnography will aid the researcher to collect data online. Also, the *Dabiq* magazine is an online content magazine which is mostly shared by affiliates and audiences who follow ISIS fighters and social media aficionados of ISIS.

The use of cyber-ethnography will involve the describing and interpreting observed relationships between social practice and the system of meaning in the cyberspace. Ethnography is "a written representation of culture" (Maanen, 1988). Ethnography studies the familiar making it strange or studies the strange making it familiar. The commitment is encoded in the terms roots, Cyber (internet), ethno (people) and graphy (describing). It is basically the holistic description of the online environment's cultural membership. It is holistic because it tries to describe all (at least most) relevant aspects of the online cultural materials existence and meaning systems. In other words, 'thick' description specifically, of the contextual significance of online performance is a key attribute of cyber ethnography (Geetz, 1983; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Robinson (1999) observed that during the 1990's, the internet user populations were far less diverse than they are today. However, these technophile user population comprised largely whites, elites, and technically sophisticated. These descriptions by Robinson, depicted an economically privileged technical elite who used the media for gaming and role-playing. Interestingly, many years down the line, the internet became more representative of avalanche populations and cyber activities widen its tentacle

beyond sites centered on identity play and gaming. In response to these shifts, virtual ethnographers shifted their focus on the emergent populations and field sites to consider online identities as an extension of the offline of the self (Robinson, 1999; cited in Robinson, 2007). In consequence of this, the researcher used the online spaces to examine how ISIS construct their jihadist global agenda using the *Dabiq* magazine as the conduit.

This study considers the *Dabiq* magazine as interactional; and the cardinal linchpin of conducting this study was through participant observation using the cyber field site as the researcher's engagement via firsthand observation. This underscored the cyber-ethnographic research by Klausen in 2015. Klausen (2015) did a three-month study of how ISIS (Jihadist) group in Iraq and Syria used twitter in their operational strategy. He used social network analysis on the data collated about the twitter users in western origin who were fighters in Syria and Iraq. During his research, Klausen monitored the twitter accounts of the European-based organizations that are affiliated to these fighters in Iraq and Syria.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure: Cyber ethnography

The study seeks to examine how ISIS construct their identity in the online magazine, *Dabiq*. This involves cyber ethnography where the researcher collects data online. The social media platforms that ISIS mostly use is twitter. Twitter is a microblog where ISIS affiliates and sympathizers used to disseminate information and also a platform they use to engage in political communication as far as their global jihadi agenda is concerned. Before the researcher collects any online data, the researcher signed onto the twitter account to be followed and to also follow bloggers who will provide the necessary information to aid the investigation. The researcher identified most of the ISIS affiliates based on the social media avatars they used. Another way

the researcher identified ISIS's affiliates was to study their profile pictures and their previous tweets. The researcher also identified bloggers who gave referrals by giving out names of certain accounts that are popularly known to be ISIS affiliates, fighters and sympathizers. To properly get the issues well, the researcher was curious to find out certain personalities who are consistent in constructing the ISIS identity. This was based on their social media activism, the comments they make as well as the caliber of people who follow them.

In fact, the researcher followed ISIS affiliates who mostly share a link to their followers anytime the *Dabiq* magazine is issued. Also, it is common for these affiliates to announce to their followers the issuance of *Dabiq* few days before the magazine is posted online. Sometimes, the link provided is unauthorized and therefore the content maybe censored by Google. When that happens, the researcher is compelled to read previous tweets of other affiliates who may have a strategy of sharing it easily with their audiences. ISIS sympathizers do this by systematic 'hashtag hijacking,' manipulating Twitter to magnify ISIS's message. Hashtag hijacking involves the reposting of popular and/or trending hashtags by adding those hashtags into unrelated Tweets as a means of infiltrating conversations. This strategy allows for a message which has effectively been crafted by only a handful of ISIS propaganda agents to be disseminated by thousands of sympathizers in order to reach millions of Twitter users. In fact, in the period between 17 September and 17 October 2014, the activities of ISIS supporters resulted in 4.1 million Retweets (Barrett, 2014).

Prior to the study, the researcher ensured that he carried out an exploratory studies on the two social media platforms- Facebook and Twitter. On a daily basis, the researcher visited these platforms to monitor posts and tweets. On Facebook most of the accounts were operated by affiliates sometimes with misleading names that never

provided clue about the group. On a very good day, the researcher visits these platforms every two hours. But the researcher spends greater part of the night on these platforms. In order to track every information, the researcher ensured that links shared by affiliates are always bookmarked. This was to be able to access the online content anytime the researcher wanted to do so. However, there were equally accounts that never minced words and actions to propagate the ISIS ideology. As a result of this, the researcher got the clue to like those pages for information. These procedures were followed because they justified the notion that when studying an online group, it is only logical for the researcher to use online methods that put him or her in that environment (Lindlof & Taylor, 2012).

3.8 Method of Data Analysis: Textual and thematic analysis

Textual analysis comes out of the work of a theorist known as Roland Barthes in the 1960's. Barthes believed that any kind of popular cultural product could be 'decoded' by reading the 'sign' within the text (Bainbridge, 2008). In this study the researcher used textual analysis as a method of inquiry to inquire how a jihadist religious category constructs their identity using *Dabiq* magazine. Bainbridge (2008) believes that textual analysis is a mixture of theory and practice. In order for the researcher to establish a relationship between media, culture and society, there must be an application of a theory. Here, this study attempted to critically reflect on the social world and the actual world of ISIS using the social identity theory. This is to establish how ISIS, a social category construct their identity within the framework of SIT. In fact, clusivity markers and the indexical expressions identified in the magazine offers a better insight of how ISIS construct their identity,

As a methodology in data analysis, textual analysis is used to test and develop the theories used in the construction of who ISIS are and the elements upon which they

construct their identity. The researcher focused on *Dabiq* as a media text. The use of textual analysis in media studies serves as a toolkit for media scholars to analyze media content. The use of textual analysis aided the researcher to make an educated guess about how ISIS used *Dabiq* to convey their message of global Islamic caliphate. However, the thesis also adopts the concept of clusivity to examine how ISIS use linguistic elements to construct reality.

A similar study in identity construction of persons on social media (Facebook) by Sackey (2015) and Pugh (2010) recommended the appropriateness of using textual analysis for cyber-ethnographic studies- a study that focused on examining the cultural life of online communities. Studying their political philosophy, Chehab (2015) used the method of textual analysis to analyze the first edition up to the eighth edition of ISIS's *Dabiq* magazine. Remarkably so, textual analysis was adopted to examine how ISIS construct its identity in the magazine *Dabiq*. In order to throw more light on the latent analysis, the researcher used other texts to illustrate and explain some of the issues in the *Dabiq* magazine. This may be in the form of inter-textual analysis for the purposes of illustrations.

3.9 Procedure of Data Analysis

The researcher did a close monitoring of ISIS's affiliates, sympathizers and fighters via the cyberspace twitter to be precise. As indicated, as regards the use of inter-texts during the data analysis to make some illustrations, the researcher monitored the way the media frame ISIS and the response they give using the *Dabiq*. A simple example was the execution of western journalists who were kidnapped and hostage by ISIS after failure of their governments to pay ransom as requested by ISIS. In the light of this, there was a massive outrage by many governments most especially the US and the UK. Later, the cat was let out of the bag when one of the captives who was

ransomed wrote an article in the *Daily Telegraph* about to give a narrative which rather impugn the governments of those who were executed. This was later to make their citizens angry with their governments instead of ISIS. As a consequence of this, the researcher monitored these events and later analyzed the rebuttals ISIS give in relation to how they construct their identity.

Similarly, the researcher did a lot of close reading of the text to identify how they construct their identity alongside how their audiences and observers frame and construct them as well. The researcher did this by engaging the text in multiple readings. This was to gain an appreciable descriptive understanding of the text for further interpretation. The meanings of the texts were given due consideration and the various themes in the text. Some of the themes identified were the following: jihad (Leaderless jihad or lone-wolf attack which some academics referred to as domestic terrorism and cyber jihad), hijra or migration, adherents of shari'ah and apostasy were identified as themes that underpinned ISIS's identity. The researcher used the subject matter of each chapter to derive the themes. The discursive issues were identified for interpretation. This was done in relation with the concept of identity construction, social identity theory, the self-categorization theory and the globalization theory. As part of the analysis, the researcher raised major thematic issues that aided the explanation of how ISIS construct its identity in *Dabiq*. A greater consideration was given to the latent issues in the text. In this study, the researcher used the chapters as the unit of analysis.

In doing thematic analysis, the researcher engaged the data by reading and familiarizing with the text. The researcher immersed himself in the data by reading and taking down notes. In other words, the researcher did some repeated readings of the *Dabiq* magazine. This was to enable the researcher acquaint himself with the

depth and breadth of the content of the magazine. In addition, the researcher developed a sheet purposely for annotating the subject matter or the central ideas in the *Dabiq* magazine. The essence of this was to aid the researcher to search the meaning and the patterns that were embedded in the text. Another sheet that was critical to the researcher was an analysis sheet. Annotation again was critical here. This enabled the researcher to identify the main issues within chapter by chapter. The repeated and central ideas within each chapter were noted as the central themes of each chapter. These were later used to respond to the research questions during the findings and the analysis.

3.9.1 Ethical Issues Encountered by the Researcher

As regards ethics, there is a greater tendency on the part of digital ethnographers to ignore the privacy and sometimes give out their informants without their consent. The fact that online materials can easily be traced and located and sometimes specific names of producers attached to these semiotic material has serious implications for how digital ethnographers present their findings and analysis and to make reference to their informants. Some of the ethical issues encountered were names of informants. To disclose or not to disclose.

As a result of this, anonymizing data is of course one familiar step the researcher employed as far as digital ethnography (this study) is concerned. This is to protect the privacy of informants. A lot of times, researchers do not build credibility around usernames and avatar of their informants. While it might be argued that these are not 'real names' but the mere fact that such pseudonyms or avatars are online means of self-representation and therefore are seen to be real. Therefore, the researcher placed a greater premium on those avatars as real names which even some of the affiliates used in the battlefield. The idea that usernames are not real names is an ideological

understanding of the virtual world as 'less real' than the offline world. In the same vein, the researcher submitted that, usernames are real to the people who use them to present themselves. Audiences build credibility around those names and therefore this study took those avatars more serious names.

However, names that were mentioned in the *Dabiq* magazine by ISIS were captured by the study for the purposes of clarity and easy references. Here, the researcher made a distinction between affiliates who served as ISIS cyber soldiers and the ISIS's fighters who are only known in the virtual world with avatars on one hand. On the other hand, fighters whose pictures and names were categorically captured in *Dabiq* were not anonymized by the researcher but rather those names were captured as captured by the *Dabiq* text.

3.9.2 Summary

Chapter three submits the research methodology. The study employed qualitative approach. This method studies assumptions, worldviews of ISIS within a theoretical point of view. The design was case study. It looked at *Dabiq* as a unique and a particular case in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the issues under investigation. To do this, the researcher purposefully sampled the 14th edition of the magazine. It was selected because, it dealt extensively with issues of ideology in reference to Muslims and the western world. This will provide a good platform to look at the perception and the misperception ISIS has against their intragroup members (Muslims) and their intergroup members (western world). During data collection, the researcher use the cyber-ethnography to access data online. For the purposes of familiarity with the issues under investigation, the researcher did a close reading of the magazine on several times in order to come out with the themes. This

was done with the use of an analysis sheet. In the final analysis, textual and thematic analysis was used as a method for data analysis.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyzes volume 14 of *Dabiq* magazine, an online magazine. The analysis focuses on how ISIS construct their identity. A major tool this thesis considered was how ISIS used certain linguistic elements in constructing their identity. I analyzed the use of those linguistic elements ISIS use to associate with their audiences and dissociate from their audiences and that expresses identity construction. I searched for the most part the occurrences of clusivity markers and indexical expressions ISIS used in constructing an identity frame. The expressive value of certain pronouns are analyzed based on their indexical expressions. Pronouns also provide a clue to show inclusivity and exclusivity that helps explain the social identity theory and the self-categorization theory. ISIS employed certain lexical items in their identity construction in order to legitimize their global caliphate. At the same time establishes common values they share with Muslims worldwide. This thesis identified this identity work as an attempt to build a rallying point of unity for their global *jihad*. In the same breadth, ISIS use the same lexical items to delegitimize Muslims who do not share their ideological position. The importance of studying *Dabiq* and its language structure and context is to uncover hidden ideologies and power is grounded in this notion. As Wodak and Meyer (2016):

Discursive differences are negotiated in many texts. They are governed by differences in power that are in part encoded in and determined by discourse and genre. Therefore, texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing

discourses and ideologies contending and struggling dominance
(p.12).

To distinguish association (legitimization) and dissociation (delegitimization) between ISIS and their intra-group and out-group members, I italicized the pronouns and lexical items that signal inclusivity, and those that express exclusivity. The personal pronouns “we” and “they” have especially been analyzed in the discourse of *Dabiq* as means by which a corporate political “self” and “other” are constructed. Further analysis of “we” “them” “us” “those” are useful in uncovering the association and dissociation of individuals in discourse since, even without the use of “they”, “we” is one pronoun whose referent is often difficult to determine on the surface and one that could be subtly used to exercise in-groupness and out-groupness. This justifies the notion of Helmbrecht (2002) which indicates that the prototypical use of “we” is intended to create a reinforced group membership and social identity (p.42). I discussed the linguistic strategies ISIS use to associate with and to dissociate from certain audiences, as a segue into examining their identity construction in *Dabiq*. In line with the concept of *clusivity*, the thesis used the SIT to analyze ISIS’s identity and their group dynamics. The globalization theory was used to analyze the contradictions inherent in globalization. It also underscore how globalization provided both overt and covert catalysts in the operations of ISIS as a result of techno-science. This was facilitated with the emergence of new media technology for online communication and the use of weaponry in the form of explosive devices for their suicide-bombing operations.

RQ 1. How does ISIS construct their identity in *Dabiq*?

4.1 Jihad identity frame.

They construct their identity as adherents of jihad: a violent response to the plight of Muslims who are suffering under western governments and anti-Islamic regimes. The unwavering passion of ISIS to resort to violent-conflict and attacks is an uncompromising mantra on their lips. According to ISIS, *jihad* is a response to protect, defend and restore the pride of Islam and Muslims. The excerpts below in the *Dabiq* Magazine clearly asserted the above proposition:

For nearly two years, *Muslims* in the lands of the khilafah have watched *their beloved brothers*, sisters, and children being relentlessly bombed by crusader warplanes. The scenes of carnage, of blood and limbs scattered in the streets, have become commonplace for the believers. The yearning for revenge has taken the seed and has grown steadily in *the hearts of the grieving widows, distressed orphans, and solemn soldiers*; and the fruits are ready for harvest” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.4, vol.14).

The above quote is indicative why ISIS is engaged in a global *jihad* against western nations they called “Crusaders”. In this instance, it is clear that ISIS have taken the responsibility to revenge and restore the wounds and plight of the weak and oppressed Muslims who are incapable of fighting; hence ISIS’s responsibility to wage a global *jihad* on their behalf. In fact, this global *jihad* is both in and outside the lands of the *khilafah*/caliphate. The above quote cognate with Jabri (1996) when she intimates that individuals or groups use their ideological inclinations which she considers to be

an ontological self as opposed to the sociological issues the individual or a group perceived to undermine or threaten their identity.

However, *jihad* identified in this thesis were two forms. One, the traditional form of *jihad* where combatants of the Islamic state are dispatched by the leader of the Islamic state to the battlefield. This is to protect the lives, property and the territory of the Islamic State. This form of jihad is mostly waged within the Islamic state- Syria and Iraq. The Warplanes, drones, missile strikes by western nations are targeted by ISIS in an attempt to down the war planes or also strike back using B-52 artillery. This was identified as the defensive form of jihad the researcher identified in the Magazine. Within Syria and Iraq, ISIS has declared *jihad* against Muslims they consider apostates and deviants. Example: Nusayris, the Kurds, Shia Rafidha.

The second form of jihad identified by the researcher is the emerging jihad called “leaderless” *Jihad* or lone wolf attacks by covert ISIS Muslims who rush to defend a directed attack on Islamic values and mores. This is to revenge the death and the sufferings of their co-religionists as the result of foreign domination and military diplomacy in some parts of the middle-East. The above excerpts lend credence to this assertion:

The death of a single Muslim, no matter his role in society is more grave to the believer than the massacre of every kafir on earth (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.4, vol:14).

As a consequence of this, attacks are done in a form of revenge in order to heal the wounds of widows and the orphans. Therefore, ISIS have encouraged Muslims living under the territory of out-group members (western countries) mostly perceived enemies to strike attacks with all manner of gadgets approved by the Islamic State.

The above quote and analogy relates with Ellemers et al (2002) affective analysis in his taxonomy of a perceived attack on individuals, groups or members. Members of a group who have close ties and emotional contagion for a group may rush to show protection and support when there is any form of attack.

Dabiq writes:

One must either take the journey to dar al-Islam, joining the ranks of the mujahidin therein, or wage *jihad* by himself with the resources available to him (knives, guns, explosives, etc) to kill the crusaders and other disbelievers and apostates, including the imams...(*Dabiq*, 2015, p.17, vol:14).

The above quote justifies the behavioral response notion of Ellemers et al taxonomy of a group directed threat. The resultant effect is a reaction members of a group put up as a defense. The likelihood of individuals committed to a group to seek to respond in any way to the defense of the group is higher. The bomb attacks and the military diplomacy against Muslim population in some parts of Middle East may induce or influence intergroup conflict towards the self-preservation of the group. In fact, the excerpt above is in line with the observation of Baumeister and Leary (1995) who claim that “after primary needs such as food and shelter are satisfied, the need to belong is among the strongest of human motivation”. Thus, humans desire to belong to groups as an extension of social life which may aid a network of diverse relationships becomes the means of seeking and maintaining belongingness and association. William and Govan’s analogy makes us ask the question why the motivation by Europeans to kill fellow Europeans. The western Muslims who mostly

resort to terrorist attacks are citizens who develop resentment for their nations because they witnessed the bombing of their co-religionists.

Further explications on the *jihad* identity frame in *Dabiq* is the revenge of the death of Muslims through unorthodox armed attacks. This is done in order to defend the mores and values of Islam, a response to the plight of Muslims in western prisons, a response to the discrimination and state repression and attack on Islamic practices, a declaration of war on western nations, and a declaration of war on individuals and groups who declare war on ISIS. Therefore, ISIS has declared a relentless war on anybody who stands in the way of their global ambition of Islamic caliphate. The Islamic State says that *jihad* is an unending war between ISIS and any secular western nation where Muslims suffer harm and discriminatory practices. In the same vein, ISIS claimed that *jihad* is a worship and obedience to Allah- because they want to ensure that governance is entirely for Allah.

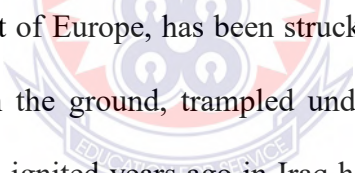
Furthermore, a different dimension worth stating as observed by the researcher that was beyond ISIS's identity of *jihad* is the question, why jihad? While democracy allows dialogue in solving conflict and disagreement, ISIS believes in violent conflict not as a means of solving problems but for the following reasons:

First, *jihad* is a means to propagate Islam. Second, the Islamic State used *jihad* to damage the economy, infrastructure and the sources of income of their perceived enemies. The aim of this is to ensure that Allah reaches East and West and the "Muslim walk undisturbed by the kafir filth beneath them" (p.5). The excerpt below is the testimony of the above assertion:

Bullets and shrapnel will slash and pierce all those whom
Allah's soldiers reach. Survivors will be scared physically and

mentally, haunted whenever their eyes are closed, whenever they blink. The sounds of the sirens will fill the air preceded by blasts from bombs planted in all the right places. The damage to their economy, their infrastructure, and their sources of income will make their lives harder than they now imagine. And it will not end there, not until the rule of Allah reaches east to west and the *Muslims* walk undisturbed by the kafir filth beneath them (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.5. vol.14).

A simple illustration of the above quotation is the Paris and the Brussels attacks by lone wolf attackers. Two attacks were carried out by Belgium nationals in defense of Muslims and Islamic values as claimed by ISIS. Commenting on these attacks, *Dabiq* writes:



Brussels, the heart of Europe, has been struck. The blood of its vitality spilled on the ground, trampled under the feet of the mujahidin, flames ignited years ago in Iraq have now scorched the battleground of Belgium, soon to spread to the rest of crusader of Europe and the West. Paris was a warning. Brussels was a reminder (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.4, vol.14).

In order for this thesis to throw more light on potential causes of lone wolf attacks and home grown terrorism, the researcher found it informative to give a narrative concerning the Paris and the Brussels attackers. *Dabiq* writes on the attackers:

Abu Sulayman was known for his bravery and generosity before and even more so after he was guided by Allah. While incarcerated, he followed the news about the atrocities against

the Muslims in Sham. Something clicked and he decided to change his life to live for his religion. After he was released from prison, he quickly joined his brother Khalid, began buying weapons searched for lodging, and made plan. It is firstly due to Allah and Ibrahim his brother that the raid in Paris took place (*Dabiq*, p.6, vol.14).

Applying the SIT in relation to the jihad identity frame in the context of this quote, Jabri (1996) intimates the reasons why individuals or groups resort to violent conflict. She asserted that individuals who associate with a group or community may resort to violence when they feel their group value is under attack. This corroborates with the testimonies given in *Dabiq* by the Brussels attackers after serving prison sentence and after having migrated to the land of the caliphate for the purposes of *jihad*.

Based on this narrative, the thesis noted two things. First, there was lack of high level commitment or social ties to Islamic values on the part of Abu Sulayman and his brother once upon a time until their incarceration. This thesis made an attempt to demystify the reason. In this situation, the researcher understood that issues of Islamic extremism and intransigence on the part of European Muslims might have been facilitated by imprisonment of some European Muslims by governments sometimes on the grounds of allegation and suspicion. Interestingly, the prison now became a “university” for Abu Sulayman to get conscientized about the atrocities committed against his co-religionists. Also, incarceration got Abu Sulayman radicalized to take a standpoint beyond his unique identity as a European to depersonalize his identity as a jihadist Muslim. The next paragraph deals with the application of SIT.

Putting theory into practice, the SIT tradition is relevant here. Al Raffie (2013) use the SIT to underscore the relationship that exist between radicalization and identity threat when individuals feel a threatened-identity. The resultant effect of the direct experience of individuals identity threat and perceived discrimination become the process of radicalization. The outcome during this process pushes the individual to reconcile national and religious identity attributes in answering the question “Who am I”? in an individual test of loyalty. This view is often used to suggest why seemingly well-integrated, non-religious individuals may become radicalized and may resort to political violence.

Second, the Paris and Brussels attacks were executed by European born citizens. This brings to bare the importance of high level group commitment and social ties individuals prefer over their nationality in the SIT tradition. Hence, many cases of home-grown terrorism in France (Nyce), Charlie Hebdo attack, Brussels, the Berlin attack, Orlando shooting in the U.S. Sadly, home-grown terrorism is a thorny issue both in America and Europe.

In addition to this, Sageman (2014) also underscored a similar point using the SIT to stress the point on the relationship that exist between group identity and radicalization. As the result of the affectual relationships individuals have for their co-religionists, there is a sense of “moral outrage” when individuals witness global happenings against fellow Muslims. This analogy reinforces the general consensus among terrorism scholars in the study of radicalization who opine that, one of the major functions of extremist organizations and militant movement is to provide confused youth a more definitive sense of self as espoused by the group’s ideology. Group identity and ideology provides for the confused youth’s lack of strong identity by reconstructing realities in which individuals can get angry and vent their frustration

and compensate for their general lack of belonging in other identities. Therefore, the increased socialization with like-minded individuals finally pushes the individual into political violence.

Similarly, a crucial point worth interrogating is the passion and the expertise mostly exhibited by ISIS during the attacks. Aside the element of radicalism and the desire for intergroup violence, consideration must be given to what this thesis calls the “epistemology of dong”- strategies and the successful execution of attacks. In this regard, two things come in mind:

First, the emergence of new media and globalization. With the advent of information and sophisticated communication gadgets, deceptive weaponry like explosive belts facilitate some of these attacks. As a result of new media technology, ISIS fighters, affiliates and sympathizers connect with relevant in-group members for vital information that can be used for both cyber *jihad* and *jihad* on the ground. Examples are: Raids using cars, suicide bombing operations, hostage or kidnapping. Besides, globalization connects distant localities where local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away.

In line with these assertions, this thesis underscored how SIT and globalization explains the identity works of ISIS with the following excerpts of *Dabiq*:

After leaving prison, full of conviction and steadfastness, he started giving da’wah in his neighborhood, calling the youth to make *hijra* to Sham. He also wrote few articles on the crusades of the era fought by the west against Muslims (*Dabiq*, p.6-7, vol.14).

An analysis of this excerpt reveals how globalization and the emergence of new media technology have become conduits of ISIS's global jihadism agenda. ISIS used the social media to propagate the need for Muslims to migrate to the lands of the caliphate; a call a lot of Muslim western nationals responded to. Putting theory into practice, this thesis applied the globalization theory and the social identity theory to explain how ISIS's affiliates and sympathizers react to a group directed threat against the values of Islam and ISIS's group distinctiveness. The fight against radical Islam in Iraq and Syria have an instantaneous effect on distant localities where Muslims are concerned of their co-religionists. This brings to bare the testimony captured in *Dabiq* that emboldened the intransigence of the Paris attackers. *Dabiq* writes "while incarcerated, he followed the news about the atrocities against the Muslims in Sham" (*Dabiq*, p.6, vol.14).

Adding to the narratives of *jihad*, one of the Brussels airport attacker who migrated to the lands of caliphate in 2013 justified the notion of social identity theory which is in line with Ellemers sixth taxonomy of a group directed threat. Abu Idris al-Baljiki says "His *hijra* began in 2013, when he heard the cry of *Muslims* in Sham" (*Dabiq*, p.7, vol.14). This attacker left the Islamic State and travelled long distance to France to execute to engage in suicide bombing attacks. Abu Idris personally prepared the explosives for the two raids- Paris and Brussels. Interestingly, both attacks were executed by Belgium citizens. Undoubtedly, a classical example of lone wolf attack.

4.2 Hijra or emigration identity frame.

The second theme identified is the Hijra or emigration identity frame. In *Dabiq*, there is a call by ISIS on all capable Muslims to migrate to the land of the caliphate. This is called *Hijra* or migration. Their proposition was based on the fact that Islam has a codified laid down laws which encapsulate social, political and economic. Therefore,

they find it anathema and an act of disbelief not to adhere strictly to the call of *hijra* by any capable Muslim. In order to justify their crusade for migration to the lands of the caliphate, ISIS quoted below some excerpts of the Qur'an:

Allah said:

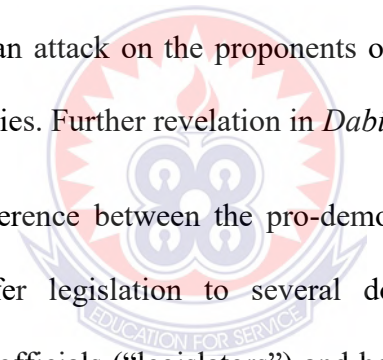
And if *we* had decreed upon them “kill yourselves” or “leave your homes” *they* would not have done it except for a few of *them*. But if they had done what they were instructed, it would have been better for *them* and a firmer position (for *them* in faith). And then **we** would have given *them* from *us* a great reward. And we would have guided *them* to a straight path (Dabiq, 2015, p.18, vol: 14).

The italicized pronouns are *clusivity* markers- *they*, *them* and *we*. This quote is used *indexically* to show that migration to the land of the caliphate is a difficult decision in the lives of a Muslim “except for a few of them”. Using deixis for a better explanation, ISIS used this quote to show the importance of *hijra* to the land of the caliphate that comes with immense reward. Those who migrate to the land of the caliphate will be firmer in their faith and will be “guided to the straight path”. But, those who refuse to migrate are not guided to the straight path. ISIS has skillfully used both *we* and *they* in the above quote to reconstruct a discourse that is understood using language and contexts. While the pronoun *we* open up for a number of referential and pragmatic options that is inclusion or exclusion distinction. The *we* above is referentially ambiguous. The pronouns *them* and *us* are referentially apparent to the Muslims who prefer to live in western governments abandoning the reward that

comes with *hijra*. This is an apparent use of deictic expressions to construct an identity and a reality.

In fact, ISIS has made serious claims with regard to the lesson that can be derived from the above verse: First, modern secular laws are acts of disbelief and therefore Muslims should not adopt those laws in matters of arbitration, suits and obedience. To abide by secular laws is an act of Islamic infidelity. Second, any form of obedience to secular laws is similar to the worship of idols. In *Dabiq*, it says speaking about the verse “Allah is teaching the Muslims that referring judgement to the *tawaghit* (godless governance) is no less severe in shirk than to worship an idol” (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.18 , vol:14).

The above assertion is an attack on the proponents of democracy and Muslims who live in non-sharia countries. Further revelation in *Dabiq* writes:



There is no difference between the pro-democracy “islamist” parties who refer legislation to several dozen or several hundred elected officials (“legislators”) and between the pagan Hindus who direct worship to countless idols” (*Dabiq*, 2015p.18-19, vol:14).

The above quote is used by ISIS as a basis for Muslims who live in secular and western countries to migrate to the land of the caliphate. Migration to the land of the caliphate is an expiation of their sins for living in a secular and godless system claimed by ISIS. *Dabiq* says:

there are *those* who are blatant in this regard and have no shame in declaring that the shari’ah is “barbaric” or is inapplicable in our times, and there are *those* who are more

discreet, including many who reside in the lands of kufr, refuse to perform *hijra*, and make all manner of excuses in order to avoid a lofty obligation (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.19, vol:14).

The above two-italicized pronouns are referentially directed at the Muslims who dissociate from them and at the same time Muslims who may associate with them but are hesitant to migrate to the land of the caliphate. Muslims who find contentment in their secular environments are always lampooned and called derogatory names by ISIS. The *hijra* propagation by ISIS may be embraced depending upon the contextual factors- social structure and comparison groups and threat individuals experience in their respective environments. Relating this to the SIT in Ellemers et al (2002) notion, they observed that highly committed members are most likely to stick together with their group in terms of identification even when there is no realistic chance of improving its status positions. In other words, Muslims who prefer secular lifestyle will not embrace the idea of migrating to the lands of the caliphate even though they may identify and maintain their Islamic identity. In a different breadth, a threat directed at a group with stronger ties and commitment to the group's value may trigger it to strive on their homogeneity while demarcating a boundary between the out-groups. This explains ISIS's strategy of *hijra* propagation that is mostly centered on the spiritual threat Muslims face in their respective secular environments.

4.3 Sharia Identity frame as the implementers of the law of apostasy

ISIS construct their identity as people who are implementers of *Sharia* and anti-apostasy or Islamic infidelity. The law of apostasy is a contentious issue in the area of Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic jurists hold divergent views in that regard. However, the leading four jurists in the Islamic tradition and the Sunnis- Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Hanbal hold strong views against apostate Muslims.

ISIS made a public pronouncement declaring certain key Islamic clerics and Muslim groups as apostates. These Islamic clerics are citizens and residents of some western countries. These scholars are: Hamza Yussuf, an American, Suhaib Webb, an American, Dr. Bilal Philips, a Canadian-Jamaican, Dr. Yasir Qadhi, and an American etc

ISIS claimed that apostasy “does not exclusively mean to go from calling oneself a Muslim to calling oneself a Jew, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or otherwise: in reality, there are only two religions. The religion of Allah, which is Islam, and then the religion of anything” (Dabiq, 2015, p.8, vol:14).

From the above quotation, it is clear that ISIS have partitioned the world into two camps-camp of the Muslims who share in their prototype Islam and the camp of those who do not adopt their prototypical features of ISIS. Here, the below excerpts throw more light on the explanation:

The person who calls himself a “Muslim” but unapologetically commits blatant kufr is not a munafiq as some mistakenly claim. Rather, he is a Murtadd. The difference between nifaq and riddah is that a munafiq conceals his kufr and openly manifests Islam, quickly apologizing if ever his cover is blown. The Murtadd on the other hand, openly commits his kufr after ascribing to Islam. Therefore, ISIS believe that the ruling on the person who commits riddah (apostasy) is that “he is killed unless he repents before he is apprehended (Dabiq, 2015, p.9, vol:14).

The above quote is directed at the scholars I mentioned above. This is an apparent justification of Wieczorek's view on Clusivity and John Turner's self-categorization theory in SIT tradition- that is exclusivity and inclusivity. Based on the above excerpt there is an attempt by ISIS to establish, manage and maintain inter and intra-group relations. Based on the differences of ideology, ISIS used exclusion to marginalize and ostracize these scholars remonstrate the ideology. In reference to SIT, ISIS used the exclusivity strategy to up-hold their in-group ideology and norms dissociate from those who are diametrically opposed to them.

As part of the charge of apostasy, Islamic group that preaches anti-jihad, supports democracy, preaches pacifism and global integration are part of list of people declared as apostates. A simple is the case of Hamza Yussuf a popular American cleric. Hamza Yusuf said "I believe in America exceptionalism which is basically the concept that the US is a superior nation and should lead the world by its example" (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.14 vol:14).

The second Imam who deserves to be killed as instructed by ISIS was Suhaib Webb. Putting it succinctly, ISIS used a stereotypical and name calling to describe this Islamic cleric. "There is the joke of al-Azhar, Suhaib Webb- also called "Imam Will"- who has spent his career making a name for a fool of himself as the all-American Imam" (*Dabiq*,2015). The stereotyping ISIS used to frame this Islamic cleric was apparent when he responded to the good wishes Mr. Obama extended to American Muslims during the month of Ramadan. Suhaib Webb tweeted "Obama makes me proud. Thank you Mr. President" (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.4 vol:14). Surprisingly, ISIS found it anathema on the part of Webb to be delighted about his President wishes. *Dabiq* rebutted:

Does this “Imam” truly feel honored through his kafir leader?
Does he not know that Allah said, inform the hypocrites that theirs is a painful torment; those who take the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers? Do they seek honor with them? For verily all honor belongs to Allah (An-Nisa: 138-139). In fact, ISIS hold a grudge against Webb because “he admires the secularists U.S constitution and does not oppose sodomite marriage, it should be easy to grasp that he is nothing but another Murtadd Imam of kafir (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.14 vol:14).

The interesting aspect of the whole apostasy charge and ISIS identity frame is basically done using strategies and name-calling that will seek to categorize “ISIS-us” versus “Clerics-them”. Categorization comes with discrimination and name calling. Some of them are: Imams of disbelief, enemies within, the liberals, apostates. Some of the strategies used to facilitate these are: acts of blaming, scapegoating, exclusion, character assassination of public personalities and groups, encouraging enmity and apprehension between intra-group members who have different ideologies.

Adding to the list of apostate Imams publicly pronounced by ISIS was a Syrian Sufi by name Muhammad al-Yakoubi. Al-Yakoubi said in an interview “No Islamic government is in a state of War with the UK; they all have diplomatic relations” (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.14 vol:14). The statement of the Syrian cleric is factually true. This is because except ISIS, no Muslim majority state is in a state of war with the US and the UK. The interesting aspect of this is Saudi Arabia; Saudi Arabia has a good working relationship with America since the establishment of Saudi as a sovereign state declared by the founder of Saudi Arabia under the supervision and protection of the US and the UK. However, ISIS found his assertion an act of disbelief because the UK

and the U.S are at war with Muslims and Islam in Iraq and Syria. Speaking against the assertion of Al-Yakoubi, ISIS debunked the notion of al-Yakoubi who portrayed a hunky-dory relationship with Muslim majority countries with Western countries especially the UK and the US.

Thus, ISIS's rebuttal that those "regimes claim to be "Islamic" even though they are wrought with laws based on kufr and support the crusaders against the Muslims" (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.14 vol:14). Meanwhile, al-Yakoubi found the position taken by ISIS as illegitimate and unislamic- he said "...any attack against UK citizens or interests would be deemed as unislamic and illegal in the sharia'ah (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.15 vol:14). Based on the above narrative, one can apparently see a typical case of legitimization and delegitimization on the part of two disagreeing parties- ISIS versus the "Imams of Kufr". This is because both sides want to claim legitimate voice as far as Islam is concerned. On the part of ISIS the accuser, their accusation is in line with SIT when Hogg et al (1995) observed that:

Groups and their members are strongly motivated to adopt behavioral strategies for achieving or maintaining in-group/out-group comparisons that favor the in-group, and thus of course the self (p. 260).

The above quote informs why ISIS, a social category employed this strategy in ensuring positive self-image. In similar case, *Dabiq* writes:

Furthermore, al-Yakoubi added that "animosity against a state cannot be declared by individuals or groups" (*Dabiq*,2015,p.15 vol:14). In a response to this statement ISIS asserted that "animosity, which basically means enmity (adawah) and hatred

(baghda) is the foundation of a Muslim's policy with all disbelievers (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.15 vol:14).

Interestingly, the charge of apostasy against al-Yakoubi became more interesting when ISIS sought to checkmate him using a verse in the Quran. *Dabiq* writes: Allah said "indeed you have a good example in Ibrahim and those with him..." (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.13 vol:14).

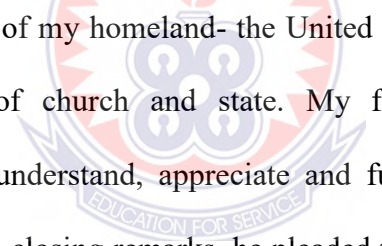
The above quote was used as a rebuttal to the statement of al-Yakoubi as a reference source of their enmity against the UK and the United States.

Another Sufi charged apostasy was Hisham kabbani. He is the founder of a Sufi order called Nashqabandi-Haqqni in America. To point out ISIS's aversion to the Sufi orders because, they classified Sufis in the category of the apostate group. According to ISIS, Hisham-Kabbani, a sufi wrote a 20-odd page "fatwa" about the meaning of jihad, which was translated into Arabic and distributed by U.S troops to civilians in Iraq in order to sway them from fighting for the cause of Allah. By this act, ISIS saw this cleric an ally of the west and therefore was charged apostasy and he needs to be killed. The nature and lists of apostasy kept increasing and it finally landed on an Australian Preacher called Tawfique Chowdhury. His charge of apostasy was a lecture he delivered dubbed Muslim scholars: West's Natural Allies in Fighting scourge of Terrorism". ISIS took offence because the lecture was meant to cast a slur and to delegitimize their global jihadism agenda. More so, "Tawfique proudly admitted that the speech was delivered to no other than a gathering of Britain top anti-terrorism chiefs and prevention of extremism experts" (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.16 vol:14).

Owing to this stance of this cleric, ISIS declared him an ally of the West and for that matter a disbeliever. In fact, the Qur'anic verse below was used to checkmate Tawfique. *Dabiq* writes:

“Allah said, believers must not take disbelievers as allies against believers, and whoever does that has nothing at all to do with Allah” (Dabiq,2015, al-Imran: 28,p.16 vol:14).

In addition to this, Dr. Yasir Qadhi another Islamic cleric was on the lists of the apostate scholars. ISIS perceived Qadhi as a spokesperson for the western society. His article “a proud patriotic, shari’ah practicing American” enraged ISIS. Yasir Qadhi emphasized his love for the U.S and his disavowal of anything and anyone who is against American ideals. He says



The constitution of my homeland- the United States- mandates the separation of church and state. My fellow American Muslims and I understand, appreciate and fully support that mandate”. In his closing remarks, he pleaded to the lawmakers “that we be allowed to live under the laws of the land (Dabiq,2015, p.16 vol:14).

Here, using the clusivity markers, the third person plural “we” used by Qadhi is about America Muslims who believe in the separation of the church from the state. Also, “we” as a clusivity marker is meant to dissociate American Muslims from the activities of ISIS and the version of Islam ISIS preach. As a consequence of this, ISIS sought to rebut Qadhi and his followers “Allah said (Is it the law of jahiliyyah they want? And who is better than Allah in judgement for a people of certainty” (Dabiq, 2015,p.16 vol:14). Using language to rebut their opponents, the use of clusivity

markers and indexical expressions by ISIS to underscore their point is decoded by the researcher. Strategically, the above quote with the clusivity marker or pronoun “*they*” talks about secular laws in general. But here, the pronoun “*they*” is used in a form of deixis directed at Yasir Qadhi and his followers.

Additionally, Waleed Basyouni declared joining ISIS to fight jihad is impermissible. Bilal Philips who was on the list of ISIS was declared an apostate because he dissuaded Muslims from joining ISIS and added that they are a deviant and extremist group. In justification of their position to kill these clerics, *Dabiq* quoted a jurist by name Ibn Taymiyyah:

If the salaf (pious predecessors) would call *those* who refused to pay zakat apostates, while they fasted and prayed and did not fight against the Muslim body, then how about one who joins the enemies of Allah and His messenger in killing Muslims?
(*Dabiq*,2015, p.17 vol:14).

As a way of creating self-enhancement of their group agenda as construed in the social identity theory, ISIS used the below excerpt as a motivation to galvanize support:

Those who, if we situate *them* firmly in the land, *they* establish the prayer, give zakah, command virtue, and forbid vice; and to Allah belongs the end of all affairs (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.17 vol:14).

ISIS use of linguistic elements present their ideological and identity frame. Deixis and clusivity are used to underscore their jihadism and sharia identity frame. In the first quote, ISIS use the pronoun “*those*” to dissociate from the clerics.

The use of deixis and clusivity reinforce their notion of apostasy identity frame and to further provide jurisprudential reasons for calling for the death of the clerics in the first quote. Thus, the clusivity marker “*those*” is a pronoun used to represent a negative and illegitimate other self- the Islamic clerics. On the other hand, the pronouns “*those*” “*them*” and “*they*” used in the second and third excerpts are used to represent a positive and legitimate self- ISIS and affiliates; ISIS here means “... those who fulfil the words of Allah”; “*they*” establish the prayer, give zakah...” The last excerpt is used as a deixis or indexical quote to underscore the first quote; that is the need for their affiliates to kill the Islamic clerics because they are enemies of Islam and Muslims. This is to propagate the idea that ISIS as a jihadist group go beyond the cardinal pillars of Islam. This is again in line with the self-categorization theory in the context of self enhancement where group membership creates favorable self-image as against unfavorable negative other image. The clusivity markers are indexically expressed to portray ISIS and its affiliates sincere Muslims while the Islamic clerics insincere Muslims. The purpose of doing this is to stereotype the Islamic clerics and give them negative-other presentation. This analogy is in line with self-enhancement strategy ISIS adopted. The indexical expressions are self-enhancement strategic communication based on ISIS’s belief structures. The use of this strategy by ISIS is most of the time not an accurate reflection of reality but an ideological construction. The purpose of this is to create stability and legitimacy.

Additionally, the whole narrative of ISIS declaring selected Muslim clerics brings to bare Abrams et al (2002) intergroup and intragroup exclusion. Owing to ideological differences, ISIS have consciously partitioned Muslims into two: apostates and Muslims. Within the SIT tradition it is called self-categorization. The self-categorization theory comes alongside with subjective belief structures groups hold in

order to discriminate against others who do not share their prototypical way of doing things. Thus, ISIS declaration of apostasy against the above mentioned scholars.

In fact, in the final analysis, the use of indexical expressions and the aboveclusivity markers italicized were used for the purposes of association with and dissociation from outgroup members regardless of religion. In this situation, association comes alongside portrayal of positive image while dissociation set boundaries and demarcation against generalized negative-others who are classified as apostates and anti-jihad. This brings us to another side of the narrative of apostasy- this time around against the Muslim Brother Party in Egypt.

As indicated in chapter 2, the thesis intimated the difference between the two fundamentalist groups – ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood Party of Egypt. Whiles one subscribes to the secular democratic values in order to further the cause of Islam, on the other hand, ISIS believe in the application of the pristine version of Islam with no form of secular views. As a result of this, ISIS’s advocacy and death threats on people creates apostasy identity frame and implementers of Sharia. Therefore, ISIS repudiates any group or individual who accept any system other than the fundamental version of Islam. Thus, ISIS bore a grudge against the Muslim Brotherhood Party for accepting and practising liberal democracy. ISIS charged the Muslim Brotherhood Group apostasy. *Dabiq* writes about the Brotherhood: they are...

Hodgepodge of deviance bequeathed by the Ottomans combined with the various tenets and rites of democracy, liberalism, pacifism and socialism borrowed from the pagans of the west and the east (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.28 vol: 14).

Another charge levelled against the brotherhood was their promotion of interfaith dialogue. ISIS raised an objection to interfaith dialogue because it defeats the fundamental teachings of loving and hating for the sake of Allah. ISIS say that:

Allah said you will not find a people who believe in Allah and the last day having affection for *those* who oppose Allah and His messenger, even if *they* were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred (*Dabiq*,2015,p.31 vol:14).

Therefore, lack of application of these verses as understood by ISIS called for the repudiation of the Muslim brotherhood group from the fold of Islam. In a similar vein, as part of the charges levelled against the Brotherhood was the party's adoption of democratic elections. As opined by al-Banna "...Muslims representative gather under the parliament dome, it is possible to end all evils through the power of law and the authority of the system" (p.33). In trying to rebut the above assertion by al-Banna, *Dabiq* says:

Rather than calling to the obligation of jihad against those parties who forcefully resist adherence to a clear-cut obligation of the shar'iah, such as the prohibition of alcohol and the collection of zakah, the Ikhwan call Muslims to commit apostasy by choosing individuals to represent them in parliaments as legislators besides Allah (*Dabiq*,2015,p.33, vol:14).

ISIS enmity towards the Muslim Brotherhood and their charge of apostasy is in line with the categorization theory and SIT. SIT opines that ideological opposition groups lack accentuation to co-exist. This is because of the differences that exist as regards

attitudes, beliefs, values, style of speech and other properties that are believed to set a boundary of demarcation between ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood Group. Thus, ISIS's attempt to justify their identity frame on apostasy, sharia and jihad. While ISIS expected the Muslim Brotherhood to embrace their version of identity, the Muslim Brotherhood believed in the contrary. Therefore, ISIS found it anathema and strange when the fourth "General Guide" of the brotherhood said "*We* support all the complete and comprehensive meanings and dimensions of democracy. *We* are not against party pluralism" (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.34 vol:14).

Farid Abdil-Khaliq another brotherhood ideologue said "Islam does not oppose the establishment of political parties and does not oppose democracy. Rather the core of democracy is from the heart of Islam" (p.34). A simple example to justify the above notion of the enmity was when a member of the executive office of the Brotherhood said "*we* respect any regime that comes through electoral ballot boxes even if it does not raise Islamic slogans" (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.34 vol: 14). Adding to this, the Brotherhood said "*we* believe that Islamic rule must permit for political party pluralism..." (p.35). A member of parliament from the Brotherhood said

We believe in the transition of power... even if it is for non-islamists, as long as it is the decision of the people. *We* believe that supreme power emanates from the people (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.35 vol:14).

The above clusivity marker "we" demonstrate the group-think the Brotherhood hold which is diametrically opposed to the core values of ISIS.-jihad, sharia, emigration or hijra.

While ISIS used language to represent and produce an ideological position usingclusivity, the same way the Muslim Brotherhood usedclusivity markers or pronouns to produce and represent their ideological position as a group in favor of democracy and secular values as well. This is apparent with the above italicized pronoun or theclusivity markers “*we*”. But it is instructive to say that ISIS’s verdict against the Brotherhood was informed by the concern some section of Muslims raised after Morsi was toppled by the military. While a lot of Muslims hold a favorable view about the Brotherhood as an Islamic party, ISIS differed with resentment and vilification against the group. The aim is to let those concerned Muslims aware that the group is not an Islamic group. ISIS did that by going back to history to profile the group and its ideology. This was a form of framing to let people know that they are fundamentally different from them. ISIS framed the Muslim Brotherhood group in this light because, their ideological orientation is misconstrued as a fundamental and jihadist group. The Muslim Brotherhood Group repudiates all forms of violence. They are pacifist in nature. The third General Guide said “*we* will not harm anyone nor do *we* strive to harm anyone. Even if the matter reached the point of placing *us* in prisons, *we* will not fight them” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.37 vol:14).

It should be clear now to the Muslims in the West, the East, and those living the lands usurped by the apostates, the Jews, and the Christians, why the brotherhood is a party of extreme apostasy and why it is thus obligatory upon the Muslims to declare the stance of takfir, bara’ah, animosity, and enmity towards this group and its members as well as its various fronts, branches, factions, “Islamic” centers, and masajid of dirar (harm). It is also obligatory upon every member of the party to

abandon it and renounce its kufr tenets (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.43 vol: 14).

The above quotes are diametrically opposed to ISIS's modus operandi- enmity against their ideological enemies is an article of faith they propagate and practice. Jihad is an uncompromising ritual. More recently around 2014, the United States declined negotiation to release Muslims prisoners in their custody in exchange for their kidnapped nationals as proposed by ISIS. Unfortunately, both parties were intransigent in their positions which never yielded results. In the final analysis, the kidnapped U.S and the UK citizens were beheaded by ISIS as a response to the plight of Muslims in their prisons and the bombings that took place in Syria and Iraq. In line with SIT, the concept of depersonalization explains the underlying process of ISIS's group dynamics. ISIS negotiation with the US seeking the release of some Muslim prisoners construct the group as a cohesive, altruistic, ethnocentric with great emotional contagion for their fellow Muslims. Thus, forming a common ground with their audiences as a group who are more concerned and willing to protect the lives of every Muslim regardless of geographical location.

To conclude this section of apostasy, one major identity portrayed in *Dabiq* is the determination and declaration of who is a disbeliever. This is called *Takfir*. However, the Muslim Brotherhood Group opposed this brand of Islam ISIS is propagating. They said: "Muslim Brotherhood does not busy itself with *takfir* of anyone... we, the brotherhood always say we are callers not judges" (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.40 vol:14). They added "for this reason we never think for a moment of coercing anyone into another or religion (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.40 vol:14).

This thesis identified ISIS's strict adherence to fundamental Islam in the area of sharia, Tawhid (believe in the unity of Allah), jihad and apostasy which in sharp contrast with Muslim Brotherhood Group. While both ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood Group appear to be fundamental in nature, they adopt different modus operandi. This thesis pits ISIS's ideological position against the Muslim Brotherhood Group in order to understand the enmity ISIS have towards the Muslim Brotherhood Group.

To further their reach in trying to expose Suhaib Webb, ISIS branded him "a clown in most sense of the word, he has surprisingly gathered a following and is seen by many as crusader supporter as an important tool for taming Muslim youth in the West" (p.14). In fact, the resentment ISIS have towards Hamza Yusuf was partly because of the advisory role he played in the Bushes' administration after the September, 11 attacks. Thus ISIS found him not trustworthy to defend and protect Islam and Muslims under US anti-terrorism surveillance.

A point worth stating is the declaration by ISIS calling on their affiliates to kill the "Imams of Kufr"- the scholars who oppose them. Those scholars are branded apostates. In implementing the law on apostasy on them, they have to be killed. Hence, ISIS's identity frame as implementers of sharia or law on apostasy. According to ISIS, "the sharia was no longer applied in its completeness". Therefore, with the advent of the land of caliphate, ISIS sought to purge Muslims from disbelief and to ensure that the *Sharia* is applied to the latter. The excerpts below in *Dabiq* lend credence to this assertion:

After the fall of the khilafah hundreds of years ago, the Sharia was no longer applied in its completeness. Aspects of kufr crept

into Muslim lands by way of Sufi and Rafidi infiltration. Grave-worshipping became widespread and the authority of Allah was challenged by Turkish, Persian, and even Arab kings (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.9, vol:14).

To create an identity frame as paladins and implementers of the Islamic law on apostasy, ISIS sought to challenge what they consider a deviation in Islam.

To justify and put forward a self-enhancement image of themselves in this regard, ISIS continuously use certainclusivity markers to create a positive self-image as implementers of sharia. ISIS noted in *Dabiq*, “the penalty for apostasy was thus left unapplied in many cases, until the revival of the khilafah by the grace of Allah, then through the efforts of the Islamic State” (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.12, vol:14). In order to make an indexical statement referring to themselves with the identity frame as in ISIS- a group implementing sharia and apostasy laws. *Dabiq* intimates: “those who called for a full return to Islamic rule and a pure creed were labelled “Khawarij” and fought by so-called “Muslim” leaders”. The pronoun those above refers to ISIS to reinforce their identity frame as implementers of sharia and law of apostasy.

ISIS charged the Islamic clerics apostasy and declared them disbelievers because they are inclined to secular values. This is an anathema to the fundamental Islam. In their justification of this charge against the scholars, *Dabiq* writes:

...*their* negligence towards their obligations and their exposure to western kufr, their identity was altered, *their* children learned the values and beliefs of *their* new homeland. The kufr of liberalism and democracy was instilled and a new breed of

“Scholars” was born, becoming a major part of the West’s very own Imams of Kufr (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.13. vol.14).

In addition, *Dabiq* says: “These venomous Imams have maintained *their* disunity over Islam while uniting upon western interests” (p.13). Also these declared apostates by ISIS (Muslim clerics) are accused of:

Reinterpreting anything the scholars that even they recognize said about the concepts of tawhid, jihad, wala, and bara to make them compatible with western ideologies. Though *their* kufr was apparent to those who recognized it years ago, *they* became even more ardent and blatant defenders of the crusaders after the khilafah was reestablished, uniting with *their* cross-bearing allies in the global war against the Islamic state , the only true bastion of shari’ah rule on earth (*Dabiq*, 2015,p.13,vol:14).

The above narrative can be contextualize in the SIT tradition and the concept of clusivity. This brings to bare legitimacy and illegitimacy, self-enhancement and stereotyping. ISIS used stereotyping to facilitate negative-other presentation of their intra-group members who are ideologically different from them. Words used to delegitimize are: Imams of disbelief, enemies within, the liberals, apostates. Some of the strategies used to facilitate these are: acts of blaming, scapegoating, exclusion, character assassination of public personalities and groups, encouraging enmity and apprehension between intra-group members who have different ideologies. This is in line with Hogg et al., (1995) when they observed that “groups and their members are strongly motivated to adopt behavioral strategies for achieving or maintaining in-

group/out-group comparisons that favor the in-group, and thus of course the self” (p.260). In fact, ISIS is creating this frame in order to surreptitiously and subtly exercise in-groupness and out-groupness. This justifies the notion succinctly put by Chilton:

Political actors... often act coercively through language in setting agendas, selecting topics in conversation, positioning the self and others in specific relationships, making assumptions about realities that hearers are obliged to at least temporarily accept in order to process the text or talk” (Chilton, 2004, p.45).

While the Islamic clerics are anti-Islamic fundamentalism and jihad, they discourage their followers in such matters. The identity frame of ISIS as regards sharia and Jihad are contrary to what those clerics preach. Hence the enmity. ISIS opposition against the clerics and secularism is an ideological construction that has its basis in the categorization theory where groups do classification for identification and group identity. Hence, ISIS’s sharia implementers’ identity frame.

In order to persuade Muslims *Dabiq* says:

One must take his eyes off *those* who sit back from waging *jihad* for the cause of Allah which means for the establishment of Allah’s rule on earth, and look to *those* who fulfill the words of Allah (Dabiq,2015,p.17,vol:14).

Using association to legitimize their identity frame as implementers of *sharia* and *jihadists*, the pronoun “*those*” are used indexically. A critical observation of the structure of the above quote is that, the first pronoun was used to call on affiliates and

any Muslim to dissociate from those scholars ISIS classified as disbelievers. The context of using the second pronoun “*those*” was invoked with the expectation that the pronoun represent ISIS in that context- “those who fulfill the words of Allah” as opposed “those who sit back from waging jihad” in this context the apostate Islamic clerics and any capable Muslims who do not subscribe to the prototypicality of ISIS. This is an attempt to create out-groupness and therefore, the clerics deserve to be fought and killed. Similarly, the above quote indexically put “those who fulfill the words of Allah” refers to ISIS and their affiliates who are paladins of *sharia*. In line with the SIT, Tajfel and Turner (1971) emphasize that the mere act of individuals categorizing themselves as group members is necessary and sufficient to lead them to display in-group favoritism. Therefore, the above quote indicates a demarcated boundary set by ISIS against their ideological enemies. This categorization strengthens the group identity of ISIS as *jihadists* and people of *sharia* and thereby sharpens intergroup differences.

4.4 Martyrdom identity frame.

To put it succinctly, ISIS are celebrants and lovers of martyrdom. This particular identity is linked to the identity they constructed as adherents of hijra/ migration to the land of the caliphate in order to fight *jihad* and attain martyrdom. ISIS build their ideology on three fundamental concepts- Tawhid (complete and absolute obedience to Allah in worship and legislation of which apostasy is subsumed), Sharia and jihad in the cause of Allah. Through jihad, ISIS fighters crave to fight and die in the battlefield. Aside the battlefield, ISIS covert operatives and lone-wolf attackers seek martyrdom in their individual operation. For purposes of clarity, the previous topic on Jihad and ISIS’s operations in many parts of the world is an indication of how ISIS’s fighters and covert operatives blown themselves with explosives with the intention of

attaining martyrdom. In fact, *Dabiq* has dedicated some portion in the magazine to tell the virtues of their martyrs. A simple example was the case of a Bengali Muslim Youth who had his religious awakening after listening to the lectures of Shaykh Anwar al-Awlaki, an Islamic cleric who preaches Jihad. Abu Jandal was a college civil engineering student. . According to *Dabiq*;

He used to recite the Qur'an daily and contemplate on the meanings of the verses" (p.50). He pledged allegiance to the Islamic state when it was declared in Sham. Abu Jandal abandoned his college education because the college campus was un-Islamic. Therefore, he started making plans to migrate to the Islamic state. As a result of this, Abu Jandal feigned travel to an engineering conference in the middle-East as a cover for his Hijra (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.50 vol: 14).

However, *Dabiq* was not shy to disclose how Abu Jandal engaged in forgery in order to migrate to the lands of the caliphate. According to *Dabiq* he could not secure a reference letter from his college which he could use as a patsy to travel to the Middle East for an engineering conference. This is because he had abandoned his education. *Dabiq* discloses that:

Abu Jandal was able to forge a reference letter from his college and nobody could notice the obvious signs of forgery in both the stamp and the signature in the reference letter" (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.50 vol:14).

He finally landed himself in Syria as an Islamic state fighter. According to *Dabiq*, Abu Jandal "upon entering the blessed land of Sham his heart was full of joy, and he

became the youngest brother among the Bengali muhajirin”. In his desire to attain the position of a martyr *Dabiq* writes:

“As soon as he joined the training camp, he informed the trainer that he wanted to carry out an istishhadi operation and added his name to the list”. (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.50 vol: 14). In this instance, it is clear that, Abu Jandal’s aim was to fight and die by any means possible. One of the means was to carry out a suicide bombing attack which in the parlance of jihadist is called istishhadi operation/martyrdom operation. Surprisingly, brooding over this incidence makes one rationalize with the way prototype behavior is formed within the circles of ISIS. In line with SIT, beliefs, attitudes and behavior are constructed based on the social information individuals are given which has an enduring interactive contexts. This analogy of SIT confirms how influential Anwar Awlaki was in given social information about jihad and martyrdom which later got Abu Jandal into the land of jihad.

The identity of martyrdom was constructed by Abu Jandal when *Dabiq* disclosed at the time of Ramadan that:

His heart was attached to shahadah. He told the brothers with him of his desire for shahadah and prayed that Allah would accept him in the month of Ramadan. He then left for the battle in Ayn Isa as an inghimasi. During the course of the operation, he was shot by a 23mm autocannon. The medical team evacuated him from the battlefield and attempted to give him first aid, but he died due to excessive bleeding. The doctor on duty informed the brothers with him that before his last breath he pronounced the shahadah (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.51 vol:14).

The martyrdom identity frame in *Dabiq* via the characterization of the referent in the above quote is in line with SIT. Social identity does not only describe how individuals behave but also how the group identity makes a prescription for the individual. This is done in order to be evaluated properly based on the group normativeness or prototype. This is the reason why martyrdom operation is very common among members of ISIS.

RQ.2 what are the online strategies ISIS use to construct their identity in *Dabiq*?

4.5 Political communications using text and Visual text

ISIS uses political communication as online strategy. This is done using both word text and visual texts. Political communication (PC) has been a technique ISIS used to drive home their global caliphate agenda. ISIS use both word text and visual text for political communications. Political communication is used to influence the political environment. This thesis defines Political Communication as any form of communication undertaken by a social category or political actor for the purpose of achieving a specific objective (McNair, 2011).

In fact, the case of ISIS and their random violence directed at non-combatants may be viewed as a form of political communication. This is because, it is intended to communicate a message to political actors. It is aimed to intimidate their out-group audience. Klausen (2015) says that “victims are chosen not because they are the enemy but because of their symbolic importance. Alex Schmid quotes a Chinese proverb: “Kill one- frighten ten thousand”. In doing this, ISIS featured visual images of strategic exploits during suicide bombing missions. ISIS captures the beheading and slaughtering of their hostages in *Dabiq* in a form of political communication. These images are further produced into videos to be circulated via the internet onto

file-sharing portals. The most popular ones are, YouTube, justpaste.it. A simple example was the burning of a Jordanian pilot, the gruesome execution of a British and an American photo journalists. These executions are politically communicated in order to send shocks and outrage among members of out-group who are perceived enemies. Lone-wolf attacks are done using different forms of gadgets. Images of attacks done in western environments are given much premium in order to communicate how weak the western intelligence is. One major purpose of PC is to persuade the target audience. Two audiences identified are: first, in-group members of ISIS. This is to communicate to them how ISIS is powerful in order to consolidate support and enhance upon their image as well. Aside this, ISIS devised a unique way of using religion and culture to instigate Western Muslims either to migrate to the land of the caliphate or engage in lone-wolf attack. For purposes of identification, the pictures of the clerics who were classified as leaders of disbelief were captured in the magazine. Some of them were captured with certain personalities ISIS classified as the traditional enemies of Islam during ceremonies and gathering. This is to communicate that their accusation is true and reliable.

Using the case study of “globalization from above” ISIS utilized and captured in *Dabiq* John Cantlie Op-ed on the *Daily Telegram* for the purposes of political communication. In his words, Cantlie, a former ISIS prisoner-hostage said “nothing will ever change the many Americans and Britain cynically left their people to die while every other nation got their citizens home” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.52 vol: 14).

The excerpt above is in connection with the intransigent posture taken by Obama and Cameron who declined negotiation with ISIS. In order to justify the “*ISIS-good*” people and the West “*bad people*”, they decided to use Cantlie’s article on the West’s intransigent position on negotiation to create a positive image for their group. Here

Cantlie's Op-ed has some consequences captured by this thesis which signifies that the executions of the British and the American citizens is done for the purposes of P.C which finally got ISIS a sort of Public relations coup in the west. Cantlie writes:

The fallout clearly had serious ramifications in the west as well. Because the announcement last year that the USA has changed its policy on hostage negotiation came as a surprise (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.52 vol:14).

This is in consonance with McNair's assertion that acts of terrorism are done by a group in order to strike fear and panic in their enemies. This is to compel governments to change their foreign policy. In line with Kellners critical assertion, globalization has promoted and facilitated the unification of people; and at the same time it produces and incorporates friends and foes. As a result new media has aided ISIS use of the cyberspace for their social movements and advocacy. This is what Kellner calls "globalization from below". Unlike the slow media where there is censorship. This emergence of new media which has aided the unification of people ISIS affiliates to access *Dabiq* online and other online media platforms brings to bare unintended consequences of globalization. This brings to the fore how ISIS is exploiting the techno-globalization in rallying support online. This is to communicate political message: power and ideology.

Furthermore, the observation by Cantlie exposed how ISIS used beheading of their enemies for public relations and subsequent public relations coup and PC. This is in consonance with the Chinese proverb "Kill one - and frighten thousand". Interestingly, instead of ISIS seen in the bad light, rather the intransigent posture of the US and the UK was seen by their citizens and analyst as the "worst-handled hostage crises in modern times". According to Cantlie, his observation was "equally a

sentiment aired by journalists in other pieces published on the matter subsequently” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.52 vol:14). John Cantlie’s Op-ed *The Blood of Shame* became an apparent indication of ISIS’s Public relations coup using violence as a strategy. In line with their objectives of political communication, this thesis found a coterminous relationship with their activities of political communication and their identity construction in *Dabiq*. The researcher found the following observations to be coterminous with their identity construction in *Dabiq*:

First, the beheading of the western nationals portrayed ISIS as the paladins of *sharia* and *jihad*. The *sharia* aspect came up when they requested the governments of those held in hostage to provide money and prisoner-exchange as a ransom for their nationals. ISIS request for ransom in the form of money was done to uphold the Islamic law as opined by Cantlie. The Obama administration and former prime minister of the UK, David Cameron declined the offer because that particular move amounted to funding a terrorist group according to the UK and the US.

Contrarily, Cantlie writes: “the Islamic State pumps millions of dollars a day in oil revenue, they don’t even need the proceeds from ransoms and have not for quite some time” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.53 vol: 14). He added “the Mujahidin continue to seek ransoms only to uphold an order dictated by the Qur’an” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.53 vol:14). Here, ISIS’s attempt to construct an identity as “the people of *sharia*” was testified by Cantlie who was a prisoner in their custody. This strategy of political communication using Cantlie’s Op-ed by ISIS brings to the fore the assumption in the social identity theory tradition that

people have a basic need to see themselves in a positive light in relation to relevant others (i.e., to have an evaluatively positive

self-concept), and that self-enhancement can be achieved in groups by making comparisons between the in-group and relevant out-groups in ways that favor the in-group (Hogg et al., 1995, p.260).

His observations created an image ISIS was already seeking- that is “*ISIS as adherents and paladins of Sharia*” while the US and the UK are “*arrogant-losers, intolerant and vulnerable*” countries. In justifying this observation Cantlie said “make no mistake about it, the Mujahidin follow the Qur’an to the latter, say what they mean and mean what they say” (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.53 vol: 14).

Coincidentally, this thesis observed the descriptive name Cantlie ascribed to ISIS instead of their usual name as a terrorist group. In line with the social identity theory, Hogg et al., (1995) say that social identity describes and prescribes one’s attributes as a member of that group- what one should think and feel, and how one should behave” (p.260). His use of the word “mujahidin” describes who ISIS are. This was equally in line with their ambition and the major identity they constructed in *Dabiq* that is “the adherents of *Jihad*” and *implementers of sharia*. While governments call them terrorists, ISIS see themselves as mujahidin. As a result of this, Cantlie’s observation has enhanced and reinforced their earlier position and their identity as jihadists. In line with SIT in the context of self-verification, ISIS used Cantlie’s Op-ed to create a positive image for the group in order to self-enhance and legitimized their global caliphate agenda. This is to strengthen their in-group norms and stereotype that will largely favor members of the in-group.

Second, Cantlie’s Op-ed portrayed ISIS as a group fighting for the weak and the oppressed as opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood Group that abhors and eschew any

form of violence. As part of their request during the negotiation with the families of the US citizens, ISIS requested a prisoner-exchange. The freeing of Dr. Aafia Siddique and some other Muslims prisoners in Gitmo was in exchange for Steven's life. Unfortunately, the negotiation did not go through which later ended the lives of these hostage-prisoners. This is in line with the concept of depersonalization in SIT where ISIS portrays emotional contagion, group cohesion and empathy for the oppressed. This is to form a common ground with their audiences and affiliates.

As part of the online strategy using PC, ISIS sought to publicize their gains and coups using testimonies from the UN report released on 26 January, 2016. *Dabiq* writes: "On "29 January" Ban Ki-moon *taghut* of the divided "United Nations"- released a lengthy report on the revival of the caliph" (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.56 vol: 14). According to *Dabiq*, "the present report is submitted ... to provide an initial strategic-level report that demonstrates and reflects the gravity of threat to international peace and security by the Islamic state..." (*Dabiq*, 2015, p.58 vol: 14).

In conclusion, ISIS's online magazine use the cyberspace to engage in the discourses of violence, ideological discussions and strategic military exploits. This thesis identified *jihad*, *sharia*, and anti-Islamic infidelity as the identity constructed by ISIS in *Dabiq*. It captures the political communication aspect of ISIS's identity aside their offline strategic military exploits. The use of political communication are in two folds: first, to foster and consolidate support both home and abroad. This is to ensure that they legitimize their global jihadism agenda. Second, PC is again use as an attempt to legitimize and justify their actions and also frame their out-group members in a bad light. This is what the researcher calls *reframing*. While their out-group members frame them as terrorists through their global media establishment in the context of "Globalization from above", ISIS on the other hand do what I called

reframing using their online media strategy in the context of “Globalization from below”.

4.6 Summary

ISIS construct their identity as jihadist was one of the major findings of this thesis. The jihad identity frame was a violent response to the plight of the weak and oppressed Muslims in some parts of the Middle East as the result of invasion by the selected western world. The Shia Rafidha sect who are ideologically opposed to ISIS are also killed and enslaved in ISIS stronghold. *Hijra* or migration to the lands of jihad-Iraq, Syria and more recently Libya was propagated by ISIS. Capable Muslims are persuaded to migrate to the Islamic state where Muslims will find as a safe haven for their worship and spiritual development. Migration is key to ISIS’s message. *Hijra* epitomizes the Prophet’s migration from his homeland Makka to Madina because his homeland was not favorable for worship. In juxtaposition of this, ISIS propagate this message linking the hijra of the prophet to Madina, the first Islamic state as a journey of salvation. Therefore, Muslims who hearken to the call of ISIS are considered sincere. Likewise, Muslims who are incapable for a genuine reason must seek to do jihad in their homelands. This informs the reason for the rise of lone wolf attacks in some parts of the western world. However, Muslims who prefer to live in a secular democratic countries are lampooned and branded stereotypical names. This informs the reason why ISIS most of the time do not spare Muslims in their daily ideological discourse. Next finding was the identity frame of sharia as the implementers of the law of apostasy against Muslims. As regards this, selected Muslims clerics who differed with them ideologically were branded all manner of derogatory names. Aside their ideological differences, those scholars remonstrated and distanced Islam from the activities of ISIS. They equally branded ISIS

stereotypical names. In consequence of this, ISIS declared them apostates. Fighting jihad is to attain martyrdom. Therefore, they construct their identity as celebrants and lovers of martyrdom. The interesting aspect is the strategy ISIS use in *Dabiq* to construct these identities constructed in *Dabiq*. This thesis identified the use of political communications as an online strategy ISIS use to construct the above stated identities online.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with suggestions for future research and some possible recommendations the researcher would like to share with stakeholders to think through for consideration. Central in this chapter is how ISIS construct their identity in *Dabiq*. In fact, ISIS use language as an epistemic tool in communicating who they are. Additionally, the chapter emphasized two broad salient issues in the area of recommendation and suggestions for future research. First, suggestions for future research to be carried out by the intellectual community. This may possibly take a form of interdisciplinarity. Second, recommendations for governments, policymakers and the intelligence community. There were some limitations the researcher had during the study. Therefore, the thesis found it prudent to share with readers.

5.1 Summary of the main findings

This thesis identified certain key messages ISIS propagate in *Dabiq*. The key messages were identified as the themes. First, ISIS construct their identity as jihadists. The jihad identity frame constructed by ISIS are done both in their jurisdiction and outside their jurisdiction. ISIS covert operatives use explosives, cars, knives for attacks to attack their outgroup members in a form revenge for the bombings in Syria and Iraq.

In order to gain a reliable currency for their global jihad agenda, they use a stereotypical name such as “*the crusaders*”. This is to describe the western world especially the countries that formed a coalition to bomb Muslim in Iraq and Syria.

Second, ISIS construct their identity as paladins and implementers of sharia and the law of apostasy. Central in this discussion was the lists of Islamic scholars who remonstrate the activities of ISIS by dissociating the activities of ISIS from Islam. Those scholars call them deviants and extremists. While ISIS claimed they are fighting jihad, the scholars have a contrary opinion. In fact, while the scholars do not oppose and show dislike to secularism and democratic governance, ISIS on the other hand found that to be anathema to the fundamental Islam. As a consequence of this, ISIS declared them apostates and encourage their affiliates to kill them. In order to make the clerics illegitimate in the eyes of their audience, they are stereotyped with derogatory names such as the apostates, liberals, and hypocrites.

This was very apparent when ISIS lampooned the Muslim Brotherhood for participating in a democratic elections instead of fighting. Implementing the sharia instead of adopting a secular constitution.

Third, ISIS construct their identity as migrants to the land of the caliphate. This is to mimic the example of the prophet Muhammad (SAW) when he left his homeland to another land for the purposes of worship. ISIS propagate the idea that the secular environments are hostile to the spiritual development of Muslims. Therefore, capable Muslims must migrate to the Islamic state and do jihad. Those who could not migrate must do jihad anywhere they find themselves. This informs the emergence of lone wolf attacks most especially in the western world. Fourth, they are lovers and celebrants of martyrdom. Therefore, most of them find it comfortable to use explosive devices to blow themselves in the midst of out-group members.

The thesis also covered the online strategies ISIS use to construct their identity in *Dabiq*. A major identify is the use of political communication to construct the identity

of jihad, emigration, sharia and the law of apostasy. They post pictures of their strategic exploits during attacks to scare their outgroup members. The underlying communication is to make their audience believe that their enemies are weak.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, ISIS's online magazine use the cyberspace to engage in the discourses of violence, ideological discussions and strategic military exploits. This thesis identified *jihad*, *sharia*, and anti-Islamic infidelity as the identity constructed by ISIS in *Dabiq*. It captures the political communication aspect of ISIS's identity during their strategic military exploits. The use of political communication are in two folds: first, to foster and consolidate support both home and abroad. This is to ensure that they legitimize their global jihadism agenda. Second, PC is again use as an attempt to legitimize and justify their actions and also frame their out-group members negatively. This is what the researcher calls *reframing*. While their out-group members frame them as terrorists through their global media establishment in the context of "Globalization from above", ISIS on the other hand do what I call *reframing* using their online media strategy in the context of "Globalization from below".

5.3 Limitation

The analysis has focused on a single issue- 14th edition of *Dabiq*. This is inexhaustible of all the issues about ISIS's identity work. Moreover, greater emphasis was on the identity work of ISIS which the group enacted through their communicative praxis and justified beliefs. Therefore, this could be a limitation in terms of the generalizability of who ISIS is. I therefore suggest a future research should endeavor to broaden the corpus of the texts in terms of data selection set.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

I suggest that a comparative study should be done between ISIS and other jihadist groups. This is to determine the variations that exist among these jihadist groups so that policymakers may have a better insight in terms of designing a condition-specific framework that may arrest and confront the menace of violence. In fact, my investigation was done using theoretical triangulation as an analytical framework to examine how ISIS construct their identity. The socio-cognitive aspect examined ISIS's group identity. The epistemic act of their group identity was consciously enacted using language and rhetoric to demonstrate an epistemic justification and justified beliefs. This was facilitated by globalization.

However, I was unable to look at that more broadly because the linguistic aspect was not a major focus of my work but rather a tool to philosophically analyze the use of linguistic elements in identity construction. Therefore, I recommend that future research may adopt approaches like Rhetorical Discourse Analysis, Political Discourse Analysis, Ideological Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis to examine ISIS's corporate interest, identity and their jihad activities both online and offline. To properly contextualize this suggestion, I suggest that researchers may examine the political speeches and sermons of ISIS leadership. In line with this suggestions, the most important data that merits an investigation are the audio visuals ISIS produced for political communication purpose on YouTube. Some of these videos are: *The End of Sykes-picot, the flames of war, the clanging of the sword and upon the prophetic methodology*.

Notwithstanding the above suggestions, it is important to draw the attention of researchers on the need to conduct a comparative study that is aimed at analyzing the content or the text of *Dabiq* alongside *Rumiya* magazine that came to replace *Dabiq*

more recently. Better still, a research can be conducted solely on *Rumiya*. In the area of media, discourse and ideology, the following analytical frameworks may be considered: CDA, IDA and framing theory. Besides, Ellemers et al (2002) sixth taxonomy of group directed threat can be applied to analyze the text of *Rumiya* as a way of verifying and validating previous research.

Finally, I suggest future research may focus on the social media strategy and communication of ISIS. This is to broaden the scope of the political communications aspect of how ISIS use new media technology in order to woo affiliates and at the same time send messages of shock to their perceived enemies. Perhaps, communications scholar Henry Jenkins' (2006) notion of convergence culture may provide an essential theoretical framework in the analysis and understanding of ISIS. Further suggestion as regards new media can attempt to examine the relationship between the cyberspace and Jihad. This suggestion was informed as the result of the pervasiveness of ISIS presence online.

5.5 Recommendation

As indicated earlier, governments, policymakers and the intelligence community must design a new security architecture in fighting ISIS other than the military diplomacy or intervention. The fight against ISIS will yield little or no results if military intervention becomes the deciding factor. While ISIS operates deeply within a defined ideology, governments must equally counter ISIS with an ideology. Military intervention and coalition bomb attacks cannot defeat an ideology. It only destroys lives and property and strengthens ISIS's ideology. In consequence of this, I therefore recommend that policymakers and the international community should design a new security architecture that can defeat ISIS without any recourse to risking the stability of peaceful nations.

Similarly, powerful governments must avoid Pygmalion foreign policies with intended hegemonic ambitions that tend to threaten regional and global security. In fact, Bushes' invasion of Iraq was a major miscalculation of the 21st century under the guise of "war on terror". Bush went to fish in a troubled water but was unable to swim. Bushes' invasion of Iraq was the brainchild of ISIS later to become an excruciating dilemma and enigma for global peace and security and most especially the region. Aside Iraq, Syria and Libya are living testimonies of the West's hegemonic ambition in the Middle East under the guise of ensuring peace and fighting despotic criminals. The West must be reminded that they use bad tools which were not directed at the bad people but rather on innocent nation. The fatal outcome was the origin of ISIS in Iraq, Syria and Libya. Therefore, governments must be mindful of military intervention that risks the stability of a peaceful country even when the citizens face domestic problems.

In addition to this, I humbly recommend that governments and their various intelligence community must exercise intellectual responsibility and adopt bipartisan approach in their attempt to counterterrorism. They must use reliable data and Intel when it comes to arrest and imprisonment.

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