

The Antisemitic Origins of Islamist Violence

The Antisemitic Origins of Islamist Violence

A Study of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic State

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Abstract

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The rise of the Islamic State, and its antisemitic ideology, has led to violence against Jews in Europe and a genocide of Shia Muslims in Iraq. This thesis investigates the causes and origins of Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective. It is the first systematic study of Islamist antisemitism and anti-Shiism that accounts for its trajectory from its inception in the 1930s until 2018. The material consists of primary sources of Islamist literature. First, it studies antisemitic perpetrators of Islamist attacks in Europe. Second, it analyses antisemitism in Islamic State propaganda. Third, it studies Sayyid Qutb's antisemitism. Lastly, it studies the anti-Shiite legacy of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Sahwa movement. The study does not situate the problem of Islamist violence within the religion itself or the Sunni or Shia branch of Islam but rather within how political actors use religion for political purposes. This thesis challenges the conventional view of the Islamic State's violence as originating from the theological interpretations of Salafism and argues that rather, it originates from the political ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Furthermore, it centers antisemitism and its interconnected anti-Shiism at the core of Islamist ideology and use of violence. The findings demonstrate that mainly two concepts are central to Islamist antisemitic violence: the war against Islam conspiracy and the imaginary victimized ummah. Additionally, it shows that antisemitism and anti-Shiism are interconnected since the Sahwa movement and ISIS transferred antisemitic notions onto Shiites. The study also shows that the war against Islam conspiracy is the main feature of ISIS antisemitism and that it was developed by Sayyid Qutb, who inspired the Sahwa movement. It also demonstrates that the Sahwa movement inspired ISIS in their politicized genocidal anti-Shiism. The findings can be divided into seven categories: 1) the war against Islam conspiracy; 2) a politicization of religious identities; 3) Muslim identity as either victimized or martial; 4) the imaginary victimized ummah; 5) violence in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah; 6) a transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites; and 7) antisemitic Islamist excommunication of Muslims. This thesis argues that antisemitic and anti-Shiite violence is the result of the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative. In addition, this thesis demonstrates how the Muslim Brotherhood combined Nazi antisemitism with politicized interpretations of Islamic scripture, inspiring the Islamic State's Islamist antisemitism and violence.

Keywords: Islamism, Antisemitism, The Muslim Brotherhood, The Islamic State, Terrorism, Political Violence, Anti-Shiism, The Sahwa movement, Sayyid Qutb, Social identity theory, Islamist Antisemitism, Genocide.

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Dedicated to the land between the two rivers

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1. Introduction

In recent years, antisemitic violence perpetrated by Islamist groups has increased in Europe (Judaken 2018:5), and a genocide against Shia Muslims has taken place in Iraq (Hawley 2017:160). These two seemingly different forms of violence are interconnected, and the common denominator is the rise of the Islamic State and its antisemitic ideology. The *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris on January 7, 2015 killed 55 people. On that same day, an ISIS-affiliated attacker took hostages in a Kosheria nearby, killing four Jews. Furthermore, the first attack in Sweden that ISIS has claimed was the burning of a Shia mosque in Malmö. In fact, after ISIS attacked *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015, attacks against Jews have doubled in France and increased globally (Judaken 2018:5). For this reason, synagogues and Jewish institutions in Europe are now required to have heavy surveillance and protection. ISIS emerged in the early 2000s and occupied substantial parts of Syria and Iraq for four years where they declared a caliphate in 2014. After the international coalition's territorial defeat of ISIS in 2018, the focus is on the ideological challenge that ISIS poses. However, targeted killings of Shiites have continued, and the threat against Jews remains. ISIS is known for its ability to attract foreign fighters, terrorist attacks, and public displays of its brutality but less known for its specific ideological aims. The following study aims at contributing to the scholarly understanding of Islamist violence by examining its origins and characteristics.

This thesis challenges the conventional view of the Islamic State's violence as originating from the theological interpretations of Salafism, rather, it argues that the Islamic State's violence originates from the political ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, it places antisemitism and its interconnected anti-Shiism at the core of Islamist ideology and use of violence. It is the first systematic study of Islamist antisemitism and anti-Shiism that accounts for its trajectory from its inception in the 1930s until 2018. This thesis traces the emergence of the Islamic State to the Islamist antisemitic ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and provides evidence for its affiliated group, the Sahwa movement, as the link between the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb's ideas and the emergence of the Islamic State.

This thesis is concerned with the causes and origins of contemporary Islamist antisemitic violence. To understand these causes from a scholarly perspective, this study focuses on determining the origins and characteristics of contemporary Islamist antisemitism. Hence, the answers to this problem will further the understanding of how contemporary ideologically-motivated violence functions.

The findings of the study emphasize Islamist violence as originating from a violent political ideology that added theology to it in order to make it seem authentic to Islam, while other scholars such as Wiktorowicz (2001, 2006) and Maher (2016) view it as originating from the theological source of Salafism that added violent ideas to it, what is called Salafi-Jihadism.

These differences need to be clarified since they have implications for how violence is understood scholarly and what measures to take against it. If the answer is that it mainly originates from theology, then the measures against violence will also have to focus on such ideas; however, if the answer is that it originates from a political ideology, then measures need to be taken to counter this specific political ideology to tackle violence at the level of its root cause. Specifically, this thesis argues that the root cause of Islamist violence is the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, which incites the violence of the militants.

Although this thesis acknowledges the Salafist inspirations to the Islamic State, it presents a different perspective in explaining violence by studying the trajectory of political Islam in relation to the emergence of the Islamic State. It argues that the Sahwa movement (see Chapter 8) significantly contributed to the Islamic State's genocidal anti-Shiism. Furthermore, this study seeks to explain the causes of violence from a social identity perspective. This approach makes the study different from many others in the research field on terrorism, which tend to focus on who the extremists' reference and the concepts they use to justify violence without making a scholarly analysis and argument as to what causes violence.

The empirical chapters of the thesis are divided into three parts. First, ISIS antisemitism is analyzed by studying the perpetrators of the four most significant Islamist antisemitic attacks in Europe and the antisemitic and anti-Shiite propaganda of ISIS. Second, Qutb's construction of Islamist antisemitism is analyzed. Third, the politicization of Jewish and Shiite identity by the Sahwa movement is analyzed. The Sahwa movement emerged in the 1960s in Saudi Arabia and consisted of mostly Egyptian and Syrian exiled Muslim Brotherhood members. To be accepted in the rather apolitical Salafist religious environment of Saudi Arabia, they started adopting Salafi concepts in an attempt to disguise their political ideology and agenda. The Sahwa movement's influence was immense since it managed to control the educational system in the country. This thesis argues that many of the concepts used by Islamist militants of today originate in the Sahwa movement's combination of political Islam and a politicization of Salafi concepts.

This thesis produced seven main findings:

1. *The war against Islam conspiracy.* Islamist ideology is based on a binary worldview that claims that the world is divided into two camps: a Jewish camp and an Islamist camp. This world view claims that the Jewish camp is conducting a war against Muslims. This conspiracy was laid out by Qutb and is based on a combination of fabricated antisemitic text *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and politicized interpretations of the Qur'an.
2. *A politicization of religious identities.* Islamist ideology politicizes Jewish and Shiite identity by connecting them to notions about evil and world domination and the alleged actions of governments such as Israel, Syria, and Iraq.
3. *Muslim identity as either victimized or martial.* Islamist ideology politicizes Muslim identity by dividing it into two categories: a victimized social identity and a martial social identity
4. *The imaginary victimized ummah.* The victimized social identity is represented by the notion of an imaginary victimized ummah, which is based on the claim that Muslims worldwide are suffering due to the war against Islam. This notion politicizes Muslim identity by appealing to the emotional significance of a shared social identity.
5. *Violence in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah.* Islamist ideology promotes a martial social identity where Muslims ought to view themselves as soldiers, using violence against Jews and Shiites in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah.
6. *A transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites.* The Sahwa movement politicized anti-Shiism and transferred antisemitic notions onto Shiites, which ultimately led to ISIS's genocide against Shiites in Iraq.
7. *Islamist antisemitic excommunication of Muslims.* Islamist excommunication of Muslims is largely based on antisemitism since it excommunicates Muslims on the basis of association with Jews and by transferring antisemitic notions onto them.

This thesis contributes to the scholarship on terrorism and antisemitism by introducing two antisemitic concepts that, as the findings in all empirical chapters will demonstrate, are central to Islamist antisemitic violence:

- The war against Islam conspiracy; and
- The imaginary victimized ummah.

The main argument of the thesis is that it is the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative that causes Islamist¹ antisemitic violence. This politicization of religious identities is two-fold: self-imposed and other-imposed. The ones who believe in this ideology² give themselves a political identity as Islamists engaged in a war with their politicized enemies. The enemies, in this case all Jews and Shiites, are given an imaginary politicized identity; thus, it is other-imposed. The other-imposed politicization of religious identity is not based on a real political identity among Jews and Shiites. These ideas were developed by the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb. The Sahwa movement built on his ideas and added a politicized anti-Shiism and developed Qutb's politicized antisemitism. Ultimately, the thesis argues that Qutb and the Sahwa inspired the Islamic State's antisemitic and anti-Shiite ideology and its use of violence.

The term antisemitism has a long history and a diverse range of definitions. Lewis (2006) suggests that antisemitism has two distinct features: it accuses Jews of cosmic satanic evil and it judges Jews by a different standard from that applied to others. Fein (1987:67) suggests that antisemitism consists of persisting negative views of Jews reflected in attitudes, culture, myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery designed to exclude Jews. Bering (1992) suggests that antisemites share the belief that Jews are naturally evil and bring disaster to the world.

Lewis asserts that "European anti-Semitism, in both its theological and racist versions, was essentially alien to Islamic traditions, culture, and modes of thought" (1998). However, this changed when the Palestinian leader Hajj Amin al-Husseini started cooperating with the Nazis in 1936 to introduce antisemitism to the Muslim world (Küntzel 2021:257). Financed by the Nazis, al-Husseini spread propaganda, combining European antisemitism with Islamic scripture (Küntzel 2021:257).

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan Al-Banna, as a movement that used political institutions in order to Islamize society (Calvert 2009:85). Specifically, the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to reclaim what it understood to be the lost dignity of Muslims caused by British imperialism (Calvert 2009:81-82). In its political endeavor, the Muslim Brotherhood cooperated with El-Husseini and were financially supported by the Nazis (Küntzel 2021:257-258). Additionally, the Nazis invested more money

¹ Islamism is defined as a political ideology and movement that seek to implement a politicized version of Islam in everyday life through Sharia law and most importantly through governance. Moreover, Islamism and Political Islam are used interchangeable throughout the thesis.

² Ideology is defined as a set of beliefs or principles, especially one that a political system, party, or organization is based.

in the Muslim Brotherhood than in any other anti-British organization in Egypt (ibid). It is also important to note that the Muslim Brotherhood became a broad movement when they used the riots in Palestine for antisemitic campaigns, growing the organization from having 800 members in 1936 to having 200 000 members in 1938 (ibid). Hence, antisemitism can be understood as what constitutes their ideology, and a recruitment tool, given that it made the Muslim Brotherhood into the broad movement that it is today.

The main ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood was Sayyid Qutb, who developed an Islamized antisemitism. The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood can be understood as a politicization of Islam. Moreover, Qutb politicized religious identities in his writings starting in the 1940s, and he inspired the Sahwa movement as they preserved and developed his politicization of religious identities within a war narrative.

This politicization of religion changed the interpretations of scripture and changed what it means to be a Muslim by centering a politicized identity as a criterion for being viewed as a Muslim. Moreover, this Islamist identity is created in relation to a politicized outgroup of Jews who are accused of mobilizing a war against Muslims.

Hence, I argue that the notion of having lost a dignity due to imperialism, which the Muslim Brotherhood was founded on, was channeled into the ideas of European fascism that blamed “the Jew” for the ills of the world. This means that Islamist identity construction is dependent on having “the Jew” as an enemy and that without antisemitism, Islamism, and Islamist identity, as we know it today, would not exist.

These antisemitic notions (see Chapter 7), originating from Qutb, were later transferred onto Shiites by the Sahwa movement in the 1980s (see Chapter 8), which ultimately inspired ISIS antisemitism and anti-Shiism (see Chapter 5 and 6, respectively). Moreover, Chapter 5 presents four Islamist antisemitic perpetrators in Europe as examples of what these ideas, presented in the other empirical chapters, can lead to, namely antisemitic violence. By analyzing their identity constructions, I demonstrate that they politicized religious identities within a war narrative and adopted a martial social identity.

The Sunni-Shia divide began in the seventh century after Prophet Mohamed’s death when one group, who later became Shiites, wanted Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, to become his successor, while another group, those who became Sunnis, thought that elite members of the Islamic community should choose the Prophet’s successor. In 681, the significant battle of Karbala took place in Iraq. It was Ali’s son Hussein who confronted the caliph Yazid; he was met by a Sunni army and after ten days of struggles, Hussein was killed.

This event was meant to stop the battles over the Prophet's successor; however, the martyrdom of Hussein became a central part of Shiism and is commemorated every year by Shiites in what is called Ashura. Today, Shiites constitute about 10 percent of all Muslims, and their population is estimated to be between 154 and 200 million.

Sunni and Shia Muslims have lived together for centuries in a relatively peaceful coexistence. However, the rise of ISIS and its consequential violence is often framed in terms of sectarianism, as a conflict between Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims because of their religious differences. This understanding is not only factually incorrect, but it also helps to oversimplify the Islamist violence of today, and its civilian targets are merely viewed as casualties of their "sectarian" belonging.

This thesis intends to bridge this understanding of sectarianism by examining how religious identities have been politicized, self-imposed and other-imposed, in the ideological framework of Islamist ideology. Both Shia and Sunni Islamist groups have politicized religious identities and weaponized it in warfare; however, this study focuses solely on two Sunni extremist groups: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic State.

Here, it is important to emphasize that the study does not situate the problem of Islamist violence within the religion itself or the Sunni or Shia branch of Islam but rather within how political actors use religion for political purposes.

An example of this argument is that Hamas, a Palestinian Sunni Muslim Brotherhood terrorist organization, is supported by the Shiite Iranian regime³ and that Hamas also supports the Shiite Yemeni terrorist group the Houthis.⁴ The fact that both Sunni extremists and Shia extremists are inspired by Sayyid Qutb further strengthens the claim that the issue is not mainly about religion or Sunni and Shia but rather a political issue. At the center of this political ideology is the idea of a war against Islam, where those given a politicized identity, based on their religious background, are also deprived of the status of being civilians from the perspective of the perpetrators. Hence, the politicization of religious identities has a dehumanizing element attached to it.

The thesis is positioned at the intersection of two research fields:

- The research field on terrorism; and
- The research field on Islamist antisemitism.

The thesis contributes to the research field on terrorism by centering antisemitism and anti-Shiism at the core of terrorist ideology, a combination that is

³<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-hails-palestinian-victory-warns-deadly-blows-against-israel-2021-05-21/>

⁴ <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-694236>

rarely done among scholars on terrorism. I argue that, by not studying Islamism as antisemitism, scholars on terrorism have not yet fully explained what constitutes Islamist ideology and violence.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the research field on Islamist antisemitism by showing how Islamist terrorist groups have constructed a politicization of Jewish identity throughout history, how it motivates its violence, and how genocidal antisemitism is transferred onto Shiites, a perspective that the field has not considered. I argue that by not studying the Islamist ideology beyond its expressions, ideas, and history, antisemitism scholars have not yet fully explained the causes of antisemitic Islamist violence.

The scholarly debate on the rise of the Islamic State and its foreign fighters has centered around Olivier Roy's and Gilles Kepel's different explanations. Kepel claims that what we are seeing is the radicalization of Islam, whereas Roy suggests that what we are seeing is the Islamization of radicalism. However, few studies have focused on identifying what actually causes Islamist antisemitic violence.

The research field on Islamist antisemitism is somewhat polarized. One side comprises postcolonial theorists who focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in their understanding of Islamist antisemitism (Bobako 2018; Hassan 2009; Said 1992). In contrast, other researchers focus on the ideological components of Islamist antisemitism. They show that Islamist antisemitism is heavily influenced by Nazi ideology (Küntzel 2005; Laqueur 2006; Lewis 2014; Tibi 2007, 2010).

I argue that, because of this polarization among scholars and the different research fields, there is currently a knowledge gap in identifying the causes and origins of contemporary Islamist violence.

This thesis sets out to contribute with a scholarly understanding of the causes of Islamist antisemitism by analyzing its most influential primary sources and its ideas—the books of Sayyid Qutb, the Sahwa members Safar al-Hawali and Mohammed Surur, and Islamic State propaganda—from a social identity perspective. The method is based on a systematic content analysis and thematic analysis of the primary sources in Arabic and English. Moreover, the study offers a different perspective in understanding the origins and causes of Islamist violence by centering its antisemitism at the core of Islamist ideology and by demonstrating and analyzing the processes of Islamist politicization of religious identities within a war narrative. Specifically, this thesis demonstrates the processes leading to Islamist violence.

Aim and Research Questions

This thesis studies the causes and origins of Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective. The first part of the material focuses on the social identity constructions of the perpetrators of Islamist violence in Europe and the second part investigates different aspects of the ideological construction of identities and the underlying worldview found in antisemitic and anti-Shiite Islamist propaganda. Together, these parts form an answer as to what causes Islamist antisemitic violence.

This thesis has four research questions:

1. How can the violence of the Islamist perpetrators of the most well-known contemporary terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe be understood from a social identity perspective?
2. How can the antisemitism in ISIS magazine *Dabiq* be understood from a social identity perspective?
3. As Islamist antisemitism has its roots in Sayyid Qutb's teachings (Tibi 2012), how can Qutb's construction of Islamist antisemitism be understood from a social identity perspective?
4. How can the antisemitism and anti-Shiism of the Sahwa movement explain the recent development of ISIS antisemitism and genocidal anti-Shiism from a social identity perspective?

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction that outlines the aims and research questions, chapter 2 is a literature review, Chapter 3 describes the theoretical framework, and Chapter 4 describes the methods. Chapter 5 discusses ISIS antisemitic perpetrators in Europe. Chapter 6 discusses ISIS's antisemitic worldview based on a content analysis of antisemitism in *Dabiq*. Chapter 7 gives a historical insight into how Qutb Islamized antisemitism. Chapter 8 focuses on how the Sahwa movement politicizes antisemitism and anti-Shiism. Chapter 9 provides a concluding discussion.

2. Political Islam and Antisemitism

Introduction

Research on antisemitism among Muslims often focuses on the Middle East rather than on contemporary Islamist antisemitism in Europe. It is a research field dominated by historians. However, there are also certain challenges associated with the study of contemporary antisemitism among Muslims. Historian Gudrun Krämer makes the following observation:

In Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, there is today hardly a topic more sensitive and controversial than anti-Semitism in the Muslim world, or, as it is often put, in Islam. Scholars in the field have long hesitated to touch it, be it out of fear to be branded as enemies of Islam, or alternatively, as anti-Semites, be it because they have felt that the subject was not sufficiently well researched to warrant serious treatment. But specialists can hardly remain silent when others, frequently on the basis of scant information and limited insight, engage forcefully in the public debate, forging images and creating stereotypes that become the more difficult to critique the more solidly entrenched they are in the public mind. (2006:243)

As Krämer points out, antisemitism among Muslims is a widely debated topic although rarely from the point of view of solid scholarship. Additionally, this lack of knowledge is sometimes based on the motivations of researchers who want to protect Muslims (by avoiding academic scrutiny) and those wishing to expose Muslims (by showing the “true” antisemitic nature of Islam).

However, both these perspectives seem to assume that antisemitism among Muslims ultimately stems from Islam itself. This can be understood as an essentialist view, which this thesis does not adhere to, mainly because, as a sociologist, I do not view religion and scriptures as an isolated force controlling human behavior. As Durkheim asserts, sociologists should focus on the social aspects of religion (Durkheim 1976; Pickering 2009). Therefore, the understanding of Islamist antisemitism that this thesis adheres to is based on the interpretations of scripture and the ideological and social context in which they occur.

Schroeter (2018) takes Krämer’s criticism of the research field a step further when he describes researchers as creating a “myth” of Islamic antisemitism:

The political motivation that led many scholars and activists to study and expose the anti-Semitism of Arabs and Muslims has resulted in a tendentious reconstruction of history, based on the selective use of evidence that is often taken out of context. A myth of Islamic anti-Semitism was created, and this has served as the almost exclusive lens through which the history of Muslim-Jewish relations is understood. This deeply flawed scholarship fails to distinguish between scholarly analysis, political advocacy, and propaganda. Many writers, including some of the leading historians of anti-Semitism, have become active publicists in a political campaign aimed at exposing the threat of Islam to Israel and the Western world. (2018:1173)

On the other hand, Schroeter also criticizes the opposite tendency in the research field:

Critics of these writings on “Islamic anti-Semitism,” among them scholars of the Middle East and Islam, are often equally biased, having as an underlying objective the defense of Palestinians and the condemnation of Zionism or Israeli policies. While some acknowledge the rise of Judeophobia among Muslims, their objective is not research on the phenomenon of anti-Semitism itself, but rather how the charge of “Islamic anti-Semitism” is exploited to support Zionism and Israel and to denigrate Muslims and Arabs. They counter the claim that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are one and the same by arguing that this fails to distinguish between criticism of Israel and Judeophobia and diverts attention from the role that Israeli policies and attitudes and their supporters play in the growth of anti-Semitism. Both scholars of “Islamic anti-Semitism” and their critics consequently reflect the competing and clashing narratives of Israel/Palestine, trapped in the legitimizing logic of their respective political positions and ideologies. (2018:1173–1174)

As Schroeter points out, scholars of the Middle East and Islam tend to focus on the Palestinian Israeli conflict as an explanation for antisemitism among Muslims. A few studies on Islamist antisemitism have studied this form of antisemitism by only looking at Islamic scripture (Israeli 2011, 2017). However, most scholars have emphasized interpretations of religion and Islamism as a political ideology (Küntzel 2005; Lewis 1986, 1998; Tibi 2007, 2012a). The weakness of the Islam as an explanation approach is that it, in its most extreme forms, adopts an essentialist understanding of religion. It also tends to reproduce scriptures literally, doing precisely what the fundamentalists do themselves.

In contrast, the Islamism approach views religious scripture as something actors interpret and misuse for political aims. The challenge to the Islamist approach is to determine where antisemitic interpretations originate. This is a difficult task since there are many historical, social and political factors at play. To conclude, the Islam approach is somewhat simplified as it only looks to religious sources. In contrast, the Islamist approach is more complicated since it requires that the researcher has a broader knowledge of different

Islamist groups, their influences, and their different interpretations of religious texts.

This chapter will present research on Islamist antisemitism. It addresses different aspects of the problem starting with a brief history of antisemitism and continuing with an account for the relatively peaceful historical coexistence between Jews and Muslims and how it was interrupted when Nazi ideology was imported to the Middle East.

Furthermore, this chapter addresses how this imported antisemitism was Islamized by Sayyid Qutb. It also discusses the research on new antisemitism, which is antisemitism in the name of anti-Zionism. Next, research is presented on contemporary antisemitism among Muslims in the Middle East and Europe. The last part of this chapter deals with radicalization and ISIS.

A Brief History of Antisemitism

The term antisemitism was first used in 1879 by the antisemitic German journalist Wilhelm Marr (Lewis 1986:81). Antisemitism has a long history and a diverse range of definitions, although attributing evil and power to Jews have been common and persistent antisemitic expressions throughout history. Lewis (2006) suggests that antisemitism has two distinct features: it accuses Jews of a cosmic satanic evil and it judges Jews by a different standard from that applied to others. Fein (1987:67) suggests that antisemitism consists of persisting hostile views of Jews reflected in attitudes, culture, myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery designed to exclude Jews.

Jikeli (2020:1–2) reveals that the most powerful accusations against Jews have been related to society's dominant set of ideals. In societies where the ideal was to please God, the most powerful accusations were made in the name of God. Jews were accused of rejecting the "true message of God" and working against God. Moreover, Jews in Christian societies have been accused of being responsible for the betrayal and killing of Jesus Christ (*ibid.*). Jews have also been accused of the desecration of Christian rituals and of killing Christian children for their own rituals, the so-called blood libel (Jikeli 2020:2). Portraying Jews as the anti-Christ is a medieval Christian Judeophobic conception, which is also found in one Hadith (Khaleel 2004:9) (see Chapter 6). Küntzel (2005:182) argues that Islamic and European antisemitism is based on the same imaginary of a Jewish world conspiracy that demonizes Jews as the eternal enemy of mankind. In both cases, seemingly eternal negative character traits are ascribed to Jews to dehumanize them.

Küntzel expands on these themes:

Jewish World Conspiracy theories and antisemitic racial stereotypes have, however, nothing in common with the traditional image of Jews in Islam. It is

rather Nazi ideology which has been resurrected here: in confronting Islamic antisemitism, it is the distorted face of Europe's own history which stares back at us. (2005:182–183)

In Islamic societies, popular accusations against Jews have included the claim that Jews have abandoned practicing the true religion, they have falsified holy scripture, they are the enemy of Muslims, and they cannot be trusted (Jikeli 2020:2).

To sum up, throughout the history of antisemitism, the most common antisemitic motifs have been the myth of Jewish power, ideas about money worship, blood libel theory, associating Jews with revengefulness, accusing Jews of killing Jesus, and promoting ideas about a Jewish world conspiracy, mainly via the influential conspiracy found in the fabricated *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The Antisemitic Imagination—Origins of the Image of “the Jew”

As theories on the antisemitic imagination explain why Jews are targeted, it can be understood as the ideological construction of antisemitism in the form of an identity construction of “the Jew.” The antisemitic imagination refers to ideas about “the Jew”; these ideas have been somewhat consistent across time and place. There have been shifts and nuances, but the main idea remains the same even in contemporary antisemitism (Chatterley 2013:78). The idea of “the Jew” was created in the High Middle ages (Fein 1987:37; Chatterley 2013):

The period of the High Middle Ages (1000–1300 CE) was, in fact, the actual laboratory that created what we know as the antisemitic imagination, and it was during these specific centuries that antisemitism first became a popular mass phenomenon. This vivid, image-obsessed imagination was Catholic and was fed not just visually but also aurally. It had a character at its center that appeared to have the power and determination to control the world, to influence events, and to wreak utter havoc in society. That character, that figment of the European Christian imagination, is “the Jew.” He is the tormentor and killer of Christ—the Savior of universal humanity, according to Christian theology—which continues until the end of time to work against the Church and its Gospel; he is the ritual murderer and host desecrator who compulsively re-enacts the crucifixion with these homicidal anti-Christian Jewish rituals; the well-poisoner and the magician, both of whom are in league with Satan against Christian society; and of course the usurer who recalled Judas Iscariot, the tax collector and archetypal traitor of the Gospels. It is this character of “the Jew” that populates the antisemitic imagination. It is by the appearance of this character that we know we are in the presence of antisemitism and not some form of xenophobia or hostility. (Chatterley 2013:78)

According to Chatterley (2013:79), the diffusion of Christianity and Western culture through European imperialism brought with it antisemitism and,

implicitly, the character of “the Jew” to the world. The Gospels depict “the Jew” as conspiratorial, vengeful, hateful, unrelentingly cruel and unforgiving, arrogant, blind to the truth, corrupted, especially by money, treasonous, criminal, and, at bottom, evil (Chatterley 2013:79), which bears a resemblance to notions in contemporary antisemitism.

According to Chatterley (*ibid*), this relationship was rooted in theology and characterized by a psychological split between good and evil, central in Christian identity formation. Furthermore, antisemitic violence has always been justified in relation to “the Jew” since it is conceived as a form of self-defense. Antisemites, regardless of time and place, see themselves as victims of “the Jew” (Chatterley 2013:80):

In an increasingly complex global economic environment, in an ever-changing bewildering world, it is simply convenient—and therefore appealing—to blame a very well-established and precedential "Jewish Conspiracy" for the fate of the world and for one's misfortune however conceived. This is far easier than engaging in the hard work of investigating the complex social, political, economic, and historical relationships that surround us and that we ourselves influence. (Chatterley 2013:81)

Chatterley suggests that antisemitism is convenient and appealing for some since it shields human beings from interrogating themselves and their surroundings.

Historical Relations between Jews and Muslims

Throughout Islamic history, Jews have had the status of being “people of the book” and a contract of protection—the *dhimma*—secured their lives, body, and property. Krämer (2006:246) emphasizes that Jews were one of many non-Muslim groups and that specific policies and regulations were not directed to Jews as Jews; rather, they were the same for all non-Muslims. There has been much criticism of the *dhimma*, mainly because it consists of a tax that non-Muslims had to pay in Islamic societies, making it discriminatory (Laqueur 2006; Lewis 1986, 2014; Tibi 2012; Wistrich 2013). However, Cohen (2008) suggests that the use of *dhimma* was neither all discriminatory nor all tolerant but somewhere in-between.

Bernard Lewis pioneered the study of Arab and Muslim antisemitism with his book *Semites and Anti-Semites* (1986). He views Muslim antisemitism as a consequence of the Arab-Israel conflict and the humiliation of defeat among Palestinians rather than originating from religion. This humiliation fueled antisemitic Islamist movements. In the same book, Lewis (1986:132) states that in the Islamic tradition, even though there was hostility at times, the idea of Jews as a separate race with negative racial characteristics did not exist but was imported from Europe. In today’s scholarly literature on Jewish and

Muslim relations, there is somewhat of a consensus about Lewis's thesis: Historical relations between Jews and Muslims did not have the hateful, racist, and genocidal history that Jews had with Christians and Europeans (Krämer 2006; Küntzel 2005; Laqueur 2006; Lewis 2014; Tibi 2012).

However, Tibi (2012:54) points out that the Islamic world did have Judeophobia, which is somewhat different from antisemitism. Drawing on the work of Arendt (1951), Tibi makes the distinction that the latter is genocidal. Moreover, leading scholars on antisemitism (Krämer 2006; Küntzel 2005; Laqueur 2006; Lewis 2014; Tibi 2012) agree that antisemitism entered the Muslim world from Europe.

The Nazi Ideology Import to the Middle East

Several studies discuss how Nazi ideology was brought to the Muslim world; however, both Christians and secularists in the Middle East brought antisemitic ideas from Europe to the region before it was translated to a Muslim context. Here, the focus will be on how antisemitism was Islamized since this is the relevant research field for understanding Islamist movements and ISIS antisemitism.

Nazi ideology was imported to the Middle East in the 1930s (Dalin, Rothmann, and Dershowitz 2009; Küntzel 2005; Laqueur 2006; Tibi 2012). A central figure in this transfer was the leader of the Palestinians—the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, from the 1920s to late 1940 (Patterson 2010:110). He is well-known for his collaboration with the Nazis during World War II, and he became a close friend to Hitler's right hand, Henrich Himmler, during his stay in Berlin between 1941 and 1945 (Havel 2015:1).

El-Husseini collaborated with the Nazis in distributing an antisemitic booklet written in Arabic to the Muslim World (Küntzel 2020:5) and the transfer of antisemitism to the Middle East was made between 1937 and 1945 (Küntzel 2020; Patterson 2015:96).

It was mainly al-Husseini and the Muslim Brotherhood who paved the way for antisemitism to enter the Muslim world (Havel 2015; Küntzel 2020; Laqueur 2006). However, it was mainly Christians and secular pan-Arab nationalist ideologues who introduced antisemitic ideas from Europe in the local Middle Eastern context. Crucial here is that al-Husseini and the Muslim Brotherhood Islamized antisemitism (Tibi 2017:117–118). Küntzel (2021:257) has shown that the Nazi government financed Mufti al-Husseini and that he played a critical role in Islamizing hatred of Jews. Herf (2009:243–244) has suggested that al-Husseini borrowed ideas from the Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan

al-Banna and that the two were close and shared an admiration for Hitler (Herf 2009:8).

At the same time, there was the Arabic language broadcast by the German radio in Zeesen, which combined antisemitic propaganda with quotations from the Qur'an (Küntzel 2020:7-8). However, according to Wildangel (2012:543), it is questionable whether Arabs absorbed this antisemitic propaganda, suggesting instead, an opposition to it. His claim is supported by the fact that the broadcasts did not trigger uprisings against Britain, which the Germans hoped for. According to historian Peter Wien, the broadcasts consisted of religious anti-Jewish verses taken out of context combined with European antisemitic slogans (Wien 2018). Moreover, Wien also suggests that most of the Arab world's intellectuals were in opposition to the Nazis until the end of the war. When the conflict in Palestine began to intensify, antisemitism became more accepted in public (ibid). However, Krämer (2006:275–276) argues that we still do not know much about how antisemitism was viewed among the population in Muslim countries before the creation of Israel.

In classical Islamic literature, Prophet Mohammed's conflict with Jews is described as just a minor episode in his life; however, when antisemitism was Islamized, it was given central importance (Küntzel 2020:5). Furthermore, anti-Jewish verses of the Qur'an were not given historical context but were applied to contemporary societies (ibid). There was also an element of conspiracy theories describing that Jews always tried to destroy Muslims (Küntzel 2020:4). Drawing on Küntzel's work, Patterson (2016:193–196) argues that jihadists and Nazis have totalitarian worldviews where Jews are seen as evil. According to Patterson (2016:189), Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Haj Amin al-Husseini played a crucial role. Tibi (2007:35) also argues that Islamism and jihadism should be understood as totalitarian movements.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, a growing number of antisemitic publications spread European antisemitic pictures (Webman 2017:163). As a result, Jews were demonized as immoral, greedy, and treacherous (Webman 2017:171). The image of Jews was that they were a corrupting element within society and that they wanted to dominate the world (Krämer 2006; Webman 2017). Some violent and existential consequences of Islamized antisemitism were present; in 1941, the Jews of Baghdad suffered a two-day pogrom called Farhud. Iraq has 2600 years of Jewish presence and history, and Baghdad used to be a leading Jewish center. It has had a strong Jewish community throughout history, which constituted an essential part of the city's rich intellectual heritage and culture.

However, this long history was disrupted when the Palestinian leader, al-Husseini, spent two years in Iraq and incited the Farhud pogroms against Jews, ultimately carried out by nationalist mobs in a power vacuum after a coup

(Dalin et al. 2009:37). After the Farhud, the Jewish community in Baghdad became more fearful, and with time most Jews left Iraq.

The Farhud is an example of how the cooperation with the Nazis led to killings and mass violence, which ultimately destroyed the Jewish community of Baghdad and Iraq. Furthermore, in the 1940s, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood engaged in propaganda and assaults on local Jews as the alleged fifth column of Zionism, informed by Islamic anti-Jewish references combined with European antisemitic stereotypes (Krämer 2006:258). However, this propaganda did not lead to the Egyptian population showing signs of anti-Jewish feelings (Krämer 1989).

Political Islam, Sayyid Qutb, and Antisemitism

It was mainly the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb who Islamized antisemitism. Political Islam emerged in 1928 in Egypt when the Muslim Brotherhood was founded. Hassan al-Banna was its leader; however, al-Banna was not the main intellectual source for political Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) took on that role.

The Emergence of Islamist Antisemitism—Sayyid Qutb

Modern radical Islamism has its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb’s teachings (Khosrokhavar 2017:51). Qutb was one of the first Islamist theorists to advocate a permanent jihad until Islamism becomes global and embodies the only politico-religious legitimacy (Khosrokhavar 2017:50). Inspired by Mawdudi, Qutb claims that the whole world is in a state of *jahiliyya*, an un-Islamic state, and that *hakimiyya*, Islamic governance, needs to be implemented in order for Islam to exist. These two Qutbist notions, *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya*, have contributed to the excommunication of Muslim leaders.

Furthermore, Qutb is the Muslim Brotherhood’s most important intellectual figure and wrote many of his books in prison. He was further radicalized in his dualistic world view centering on the idea of “Islam against the rest”(Calvert 2009:14–15). Specifically, he justified violence and wrote on jihad and changed its religious meaning from defensive to offensive duty (Ali and Sikandar 2020:107).

He advocated for a religious war between Muslims and the rest of the world. Ultimately, Qutb argued that killing in a religious war was morally sanctioned (Juergensmeyer 2003:83) while advocating for the practice of excommunication (*takfir*) of Muslims (Neffaz 2013:442). Advocating excommunication means that anyone seen as a disbeliever by the jihadists may become a legitimate target of their violence. However, it is important to point

out that Qutb was also inspired by others in his Islamism, such as Mawdudi. Mellor emphasizes that Qutb's discourse was not entirely new:

It is important to note that several of these concepts, such as *jahiliyya*, *hakimiyya*, and alienation from mainstream society, were already in circulation by other leaders, including al-Banna, and later Hasan al-Hodaibi, as well as a number of Azharites. In developing the concept of "*jahiliyya*" (pre-Islam ignorance), Qutb drew on the writings of al-Mawdudi. (2018:45)

Furthermore, research on Qutb's antisemitism is somewhat limited. However, German political scientist Bassam Tibi has researched Qutb's antisemitism. Tibi's research on Islamized antisemitism is relevant for the world view of the perpetrators in chapter 5, the Dabiq material in chapter 6, the Qutb analysis in chapter 7 and the world view of the Sahwa movement in chapter 8.

Tibi starts by making a clear distinction between Islamism and Islam, and he calls the Islamist form of antisemitism an Islamization of antisemitism. He uses the notion of "Islamization" to suggest that antisemitism in the world of Islam largely is an import from Europe and that Islamists distort what has been Islamized with what is authentic.

Tibi (2012:59) asserts that, in Islamist writing, there is no mention of the positive place of Jews in Islamic history that we see in Lewis's work. However, Tibi does not deny that prejudices in the form of Judeophobia exist in traditional Islam, but he emphasizes that antisemitism added a genocidal component. When the argument is being made that Jews are "evil," it leads to approving a murderous antisemitism. This is how Tibi explains the Islamization of antisemitism:

The new totalitarian ideology of Islamism is based on the politicization of Islam, not traditional Islam. Unlike Christianity, in which European Antisemitic ideology is rooted, Islam has no such tradition. Nevertheless, the ideology of Sunni-Islamic fundamentalism introduces this antisemitism to Islam, and it has been able to strike roots. The corner stone was laid by Sayyid Qutb, and this effort is continued today by Hamas. Both combine their Jew-hatred with anti-Americanism and believe that Jews rule the United States through the Israel lobby, which is in control of U.S. foreign policy. (2015:463–464)

Islamist ideology portrays Jews as manipulators in a conspiracy to rule the world and are accused of being evil. Tibi argues that religionized antisemitism is more dangerous than racial antisemitism because it claims authenticity as something native to Islam and therefore can gain a following among Muslims. In his essay *Our Struggle Against the Jews*, Qutb ascribes Jews a "cosmic, satanic evil," and he repeatedly quotes the fabricated *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to support his antisemitic claims (Nettler and Qutb 1987:80).

Qutb's antisemitic ideas in *Our Struggle Against the Jews* are, according to Tibi (2012:91):

- There is a worldwide Jewish-Western conspiracy to destroy Islam.
- Jews want to rule the world and therefore deprive Islam of its own claim to rule the world.
- Jews employ a variety of "secret" forces (such as Freemasonry) to further their goal of world domination, the chief of these being Zionism.
- Since the Crusades, Jews have used Christians as their proxies.
- America is ruled by Jews.

Chapter 7 builds on this research and is based on an analysis of Qutb's antisemitism and adds a new perspective on his ideology by studying how he politicized religious identities within a war narrative.

Sayyid Qutb's work and his brother Mohammed Qutb, who preserved his writings, inspired al-Qaeda's ideology (Ryan 2013; Zimmerman 2004). Today, Qutb's legacy lives on in the antisemitic Hamas charter, which is inspired by Qutb's beliefs.

In summary, Qutb's contribution to Islamism was that he popularized excommunication, claimed that an ongoing Jihad is an individual duty, seen as the intellectual founder of the idea of a war against Islam, promoted religious war between Islam and the rest, and claimed that killing in a religious war is morally sanctioned. Sayyid Qutb was eventually hanged by the Egyptian government in 1966.

The Debate on New Antisemitism

The most enduring and controversial debate within the research field on antisemitism is the one on new antisemitism. The term new antisemitism first emerged in the 1970s and became more common after the wave of antisemitism, which followed the Second Intifada in the early 2000s and the September 11, 2001 attacks. The term was needed to define the new global phenomenon of criticizing Israeli policies and Zionism by intertwining such criticism with antisemitic motifs and by challenging the right of the State of Israel to exist. It expanded old antisemitism to include certain forms of antizionism and certain anti-Israel attitudes and practices (Webman 2012:224). Ultimately, the term new antisemitism is used to describe antisemitism veiled in criticism against the State of Israel.

According to several scholars on antisemitism (Jikeli 2018; McCants 2015; Wistrich 2013, 2016; Yakira 2013), criticism of Israel is often rooted in a veiled antisemitic sentiment. Rosenfeld et al. (2015:21) emphasizes that in the new antisemitism, Israel has become the collective Jew, meaning that traditional notions of "the Jew" are now projected onto Israel.

The new antisemitism proponents also argue that this phenomenon concerns not only Muslim antisemitism but also leftist and middle ground society (Rosenfeld et al., 2015; Wistrich, 2013). Küntzel (2005:183) acknowledges that incidents in the Middle East can mobilize antisemites around the world. However, he also emphasizes that antisemitism is not related to the actual behavior of Jews or Israeli policies.

It is important to note that antisemitism should not be seen as a consequence of the behavior of Jews or Israeli politics, a point that needs to be emphasized since there is a tendency to blame Jews for the antisemitism they are subjected to. Küntzel argues that even though the policies of the Israeli government may give rise to anger, that does not make it plausible to project antisemitic claims onto Israel such as the US is ruled by Jerusalem. That is, this “belief” becomes merely the pretext for antisemitism.

However, the new antisemitism perspective has received criticism from scholars such as Klug (2003:117), who argue that hostility towards Israel is not based on the state being Jewish. Instead, he argues that this anti-Israel hostility is based on the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the Israeli government’s occupation of Palestinian territories (ibid). Klug (2003:138) warns that using the word antisemitism too lightly will make it lose its meaning. In two more recent articles, Klug (2005, 2013) proposes one valid criterion to determine what antisemitism is: namely, by the figure of the “Jew.” This means that, according to Klug, if the antisemitic figure of the Jew is projected onto Israel because it is a Jewish state, it should be considered antisemitic.

Similarly, Silverstein warns about conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitic acts. He critiques what he calls “alarmists” who “over-inflate the statistical evidence of antisemitism due to skewed hate crime reporting requirements” and that they do not care about Islamophobia (2008:26). Furthermore, Silverstein claims that anti-Zionism (and occasionally antisemitism) among North African descendants in the Banlieues is often understood in terms of them showing solidarity with occupied Iraq and Palestine (2008:19).

Bobako (2018) critiques the new antisemitism discourse from a postcolonial perspective by stating that it has Islamophobic implications. Bobako’s main argument is that the term new antisemitism blurs the distinction between anti-Zionism as criticism of a particular political project (or opposition against particular forms of politics of the State of Israel) and antisemitism as a form of racism. Furthermore, the Islamophobic implications Bobako (2018:106) refer to has to do with what she calls the de-subjectification of Muslims that this implies. Ultimately, Bobako argues that there is an ongoing de-politicization of the Palestinian resistance by classifying it as antisemitic and that, consequently, this has to do with Islamophobia.

One can agree that criticism against Israel should not be taken for antisemitism in itself. However, I disagree with Bobako's conclusions. First, this "resistance" often includes both violence and Islamist antisemitism. Therefore, one cannot say that naming it for what it often is de-subjectifies Muslims as doing so would imply that violence and antisemitism are needed or even natural for Muslim subjectivity. Second, this stance within postcolonial theory tends to do exactly what it is trying to prevent: by claiming that this resistance is legitimate and part of Muslims' subjectivity, as Muslims and not as Islamists or individuals, postcolonial theorists are reinforcing stereotypes of Muslims and Islam as inherently violent or antisemitic.

Following Edward Said (1992), Hassan (2009:459) claims that the exclusion of Palestinians from Israel is the cause of their and other Muslim's antisemitism. This view can be found within the postcolonial approach (Bobako 2018; Said 1992), and its weakness is that it merely views antisemitism against Jews and its consequential violence as a form of political resistance, depleting it from all other forms of social, ideological, and historical meaning while inaccurately transforming Jews into a privileged group. Kressel (2012:11–14) criticizes this approach among "the left" for excusing antisemitism in the name of religious tolerance and sympathy for struggling groups. This approach trivializes the antisemitism that Jews are subjected to and partly blames Israel for it.

Furthermore, and this is an even blinder spot among postcolonial and "critical" theorists, the Shiites is a Muslim group that have been among the most targeted by this "resistance," which is said to be an expression of Muslim subjectivity. By ignoring Muslim victims, the heterogeneity of Muslim groups, and the different interpretations of Islam including Islamism while calling those who highlight it Islamophobes, postcolonialism is running the risk of becoming a tool for oppression. Furthermore, the resistance theory is contested by the antisemitic attacks seen in Europe. The attackers sometimes claim to do it for Palestinians, but the only link is that they are targeting Jews, which indicates that it has very little to do with Israel's politics. Another example is scholars who claim that these antisemitic attacks are made in the name of resistance for Iraq.

However, there is no logical connection between occupation in Iraq and attacks on Jews in Europe. Instead, Islamist extremists have attacked Shiites and the rest of the Iraqi civilian population and caused a genocide against Shia Muslims (Hawley 2017:160) in the name of Islamist resistance. To not acknowledge that can be understood as a form of ethnocentrism of postcolonial theory where one does not show any genuine interest in the inner dynamics of Middle Eastern societies. However, I do want to stress that I do not see

postcolonial theory as a problem in itself; rather, I question how it is currently used. This issue will be further discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Wieviorka (2007:69) suggests that the debate on whether anti-Zionism is antisemitic is further complicated since Jewish identity increasingly includes a favorable reference to Israel. Wieviorka states that “while the enemy may be an Israeli, the latter is also Jewish, and the two terms are more easily or spontaneously interchangeable” (2007:70). Moreover, for an antisemite in France who identifies with the Palestinian cause, the enemy is not Israel but rather Jews; therefore, this type of antisemitism should be seen as an imaginary construct that is unconnected to the policies of Israel.

Furthermore, there is one issue that may touch on the core of this debate: namely whether Jews should have the right to self-determination. Lewis (2006) suggests that one distinct feature of antisemitism is that it judges Jews by a different standard from that applied to others. Moreover, as Forster and Epstein (1974) suggest, critics who oppose the notion of new antisemitism tend to show an inability to understand the importance of Israel to Jewish survival.

Küntzel (2005:183) makes a crucial contribution to the debate when he emphasizes that Muslim antisemitism cannot be understood as an immediate result of the present Middle East conflict since it existed before the creation of the State of Israel. However, it is important to note that Zionism existed before the creation of the Muslim Brotherhood. Like Küntzel, Tibi states that the ideology existed before the conflicts and that the conflicts are not the source of the ideological thought of Jew hatred; they can only fuel them (2012:212).

Contemporary Antisemitism in the Middle East

The legacy of Nazi ideology and antisemitism in the Middle East lives on. For example, Webman, a scholar on Arab and Muslim antisemitism, has studied antisemitic perceptions in Arab media. One of her studies (Webman 2012) shows that Egyptian, Palestinian, and Jordanian media became preoccupied with antisemitism in the mid-1990s. In another study, Webman (2014) shows that antisemitism became more common in the wake of the Arab Spring and that no distinction was made between Jews, Zionists, and Israelis. Another study on antisemitism in Arab media (Webman 2015) shows a mix of Islamic anti-Jewish motifs, classical antisemitic ideas from Christianity, Nazi propaganda, the “blood libel” conspiracy, and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Ultimately, this meant that the concept of the “Jew” became a metaphor for evil and the cause of all problems these societies were facing (Webman 2015).

Kressel (2012:170) argues that the root of Muslim antisemitism lies in a dissonance among Muslims who experienced a historic loss of social and political power relative to Jews. Thus, the image of Jews as demonic was established. In “Rethinking the Role of Religion in Arab Antisemitic Discourses”

(2019), Webman concludes that Arab media has exploited Islam for antisemitic purposes, and shows that the most common antisemitic themes were from a “more modern, exogenous vocabulary and perceptions” (2019:1). However, the prevalence of antisemitism in the Middle East remains under-researched.

Before introducing research on contemporary antisemitism in Europe among Muslims, the link between Islamist antisemitism in the Middle East and in Europe is worth mentioning. First, antisemitism was imported to the Middle East from Europe, resulting in an Islamized antisemitism. Second, migration to Europe from Middle Eastern countries also meant that this specific form of antisemitism was introduced in Europe. Third, with the rise of ISIS, extremists from Europe went to the Middle East. Often, these ISIS recruits joined the war because they wanted to fight Shia Muslims as they are seen as undercover Jews.

Contemporary Antisemitism in Europe

The research on contemporary antisemitism in Europe is, similar to the research field on the new antisemitism, a highly contested one. In *The Islamic Challenge in Europe* (2017), Israeli argues that Muslims constitute a threat to Jews and European nations. Specifically, he views Islamic scripture as the problem, describing it as essentially violent and antisemitic. However, Israeli makes no distinction between different interpretations and different Muslim groups, adopting the essentialist approach to Islam and Muslims.

Ansari criticizes Israeli’s book: “Israeli lumps Muslims altogether because he believes that they are all the same—a monolithic mass of Sharia-seekers slowly trying to conquer the European continent” (2010:293). I agree with Ansari’s criticism in that Israeli’s approach lacks credible and relevant distinctions of Islam, different interpretations, and Muslims and therefore also lacks empirical evidence. Israeli’s thesis is also contested by Druetz and Mayer (2018:75), who show that in France antisemitism did not develop after the refugee crisis in 2011; rather, it was an existing problem in society. Refugees interviewed for the study did not show signs of antisemitism, and they also knew very little about the Jewish community in France (Druetz and Mayer 2018:75–76). Moreover, Israeli’s approach is part of a larger contemporary trend of essentialization of Muslims:

Never has cultural essentialism, however, been so strongly applied to Islam. Everything negative that a nominal Muslim does is ascribed to Islam (from sexual harassments to killing sprees), whereas the behaviors of non-Muslims are carefully individualized. (Roy 2017:94)

A Dutch study shows that Muslim perpetrators expressed antisemitic views to provoke the society that they have an antagonistic relationship with; since antisemitism is largely a taboo in the Netherlands, they could use it to target Dutch society's values (Vellenga 2018:186). Similarly, Khosrokhavar (2007:145) suggests that the involvement of young people from the banlieues in antisemitism is due to their hatred of society, which, according to them, rejects them. Additionally, Mayer (2007:56) shows that antisemitic prejudices in France developed among poorly educated people in economic insecurity and socially inferior positions, making minorities the scapegoat for their problems. Other studies show that in 2000 there was an increase in antisemitic violence in France related to the second intifada; it rose when the Palestine-Israel conflict intensified (Arkin 2018:79–80; Judaken 2018:5–6).

A key turning point in antisemitic violence in France took place in 2012 when Mohammed Merah killed three French soldiers of Maghrebi descent (deemed as apostates) and murdered three children and a teacher in a Jewish school (Judaken 2018:5–6; Arkin 2018:89–90). This attack led to an escalation of antisemitic violence from previous vandalism and interpersonal violence to terrorism and mass murder. One year after the *Charlie Hebdo* attack and the subsequent attack on the Kosheria, antisemitic attacks doubled in France and globally; the highest number of reported assaults on Jews and Jewish institutions in seven years was in 2015 (Judaken 2018:5).

Jikeli's (2015:5–6) study on antisemitism among young Muslim European males shows four different forms of anti-Jewish hostility: 1) "classic" antisemitic attitudes, stereotypes of Jews, and conspiracy theories; 2) negative views of Jews related to a narrative about Israel; 3) anti-Jewish sentiment with reference to Islam or ethnic or Muslim identity; and 4) anti-Jewish hostility "without any rationale." The interviewee's hostility against Jews was fragmented; often, their antisemitism manifested as a combination of these categories.

Current antisemitic attacks and threats in France are often carried out by men of north African immigrant descent; they are usually made with reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or in terms of radical Islam (Wieviorka 2007:20). Jikeli's (2018:313–314) study shows that visible observant Jews in France are targeted because of their visibility. Therefore, some Jews hide their Jewish identity in public or emigrate to Israel. Nonetheless, France still has the largest number of Jews in Europe. Although few sociologists have researched antisemitism among Muslims in Europe, Wieviorka and his research team have conducted an important study on antisemitism among Muslims in Europe in France in 2007. This study will be introduced in the next section.

A Sociological Study on Antisemitism in France

Wieviorka's (2007:124–125) two-year field study in the old industrial city of Roubaix shows a strong association between exclusion of Muslims and Jew-hatred. The study is particularly relevant to this thesis as it is the only extensive sociological study on antisemitism among Muslims in Europe. Therefore, I will go into some depth in presenting the results of the study. The findings can be divided into three categories: experiences of exclusion; antisemitism as an imaginary construct; and recognition as a tool to prevent antisemitism. In this survey study, young people and community workers highlighted that those who have antisemitic views are subjected to racism themselves, and often it was North Africans and Muslims being subjected to discrimination after 9/11:

Racism and injustice give rise to an intense feeling of incomprehension in those who are excluded from the promises of the Republic. For them, equality of opportunity has become a myth and no longer corresponds to any reality. In these circumstances, the imaginary Jew personifies all the sources of power which hinder or prevent social and geographical mobility. But this image is constructed in a way which involves identification with the Palestinian cause and with Islam. (Wieviorka 2007:104–105)

In addition to the racism mentioned above, the driving force was a profound sense of isolation. This isolation is enhanced in prison, and some Muslim prisoners claim anti-Islamic racism of guards and the penal institution is prevalent (Khosrokhavar 2007:144–145). The antisemitism developed in prison is related to a desire to belong to an imagined Islamic community; they view themselves as persecuted by the West, and Jews are seen as the driving force behind their persecution. For young Muslims in the banlieues, “the Jews” are seen as successful, while they view themselves as doomed to not succeed in life. This denial of success is projected onto Jews (ibid). The study found that their antisemitism was based on an imaginary construct of the Jew. The Jew was seen as an ally to America and, in some cases, their master leading a campaign against Islam. From this point of view, Islam becomes the religion of the oppressed, and antisemitism provides the main tie uniting the imagined Muslims in their struggle against the West.

This thesis suggests that these beliefs can be conceptualized into two main concepts:

- The war against Islam conspiracy; and
- The imaginary victimized ummah.⁵

⁵ In Islam, ummah refers to the community of the faithful, based on shared observance of the five pillars of Islamic belief, transcending political boundaries for religious unity. However, Islamists have attributed a new meaning to ummah: a politicized meaning (Tibi 2012:4).

These concepts will be presented in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Wieviorka's study shows that Jews are blamed for all evils in an interwoven global and local context, from macro politics (modern economy denying them development) to experiences of everyday racism and injustices of prison life (Khosrokhavar 2007:156–157). However, the global part is purely imaginary:

World politics is transformed into a mythical scene reproducing the inchoate magma of the media, but at the same time polarising it in a very definite direction by giving it a meaning and a coherence which it often lacks. Unity is created around the Israel-Palestine problem which allows a structured view of the world when, in real life, events taken as a whole lack coherence and homogeneity. This is when anti-Semitism appears to be at its most virulent. And when this mythical structuring principle is unable to cope, for example with the idea of a 'clash of civilisations' opposing the West to Islam and no longer only Israel and the Palestinians, anti-Semitic hatred is likely to be replaced by hatred of the United States and by an anti-Westernism in which the Jews are no longer at the root of the misfortunes of the world. Identification with the Palestinian cause, at its most radical, is therefore tacked onto the social difficulties experienced in France. (Wieviorka 2007:157)

Here, there is a projection onto an imaginary Jew who is seen as the source of all problems that face Muslims and Arabs (ibid). The study found that recognition was a tool that decreased antisemitism. Specifically, the participants were asked to talk about their history, including their innermost feelings: "The point at which there is recognition of a history, of a collective trajectory and of tangible roots is the point at which imaginary identifications leading to antisemitic hatred begin to disappear" (Wieviorka 2007:139).

Therefore, recognition can be used as an important tool to decrease imaginary constructs and most importantly to decrease antisemitism. However, Wieviorka's study does not focus on the ideological aspects of antisemitism. Therefore, this study builds on Wieviorka's sociological study by adding an analysis of the ideology of Islamist antisemitism from a social identity perspective.

Radicalization and ISIS—An Overview

The founding father of ISIS, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, built on Qutb's intellectual legacy when he outlined ISIS ideology. Born in Jordan, he was a convicted criminal (Warrick 2015:49). Zarqawi's time in prison is said to have made him "more focused, brutal, and decisive" (Weiss and Hassan 2016:9).

Hence ummah for Islamists is connected to a worldwide politicized and victimized Muslim community. When ummah is used in this thesis, it refers to the Islamist politicized use of the term.

Moreover, Zarqawi wanted to repent by becoming a martyr. His generation of jihadis differ from the previous ones as they lack a theological depth and often come from a marginalized social background (Gerges 2016:57). Zarqawi was uneducated. When his mother was asked about him after his death, she replied that “he wasn’t that smart” (Warrick 2015:51). Zarqawi carried a special hatred against Shiites, advocating suicide bombings against them in Iraq.

Several studies have concluded that anti-Shiism is an integral part of ISIS ideology (Maher 2016; McCants 2015; Stern and Berger 2016; Weiss and Hassan 2016). ISIS believes that Shiites are non-Muslim, undercover Jews and traitors (Rickenbacher 2019). Following the strategy outlined in the jihadist book *The Management of Savagery*, Zarqawi incited chaos to start a civil war in Iraq by targeting Shia civilians with suicide bombings (Bloom 2005; McCants 2015; Weiss and Hassan 2016). Zarqawi wanted to eliminate the Shiites in Iraq, whom he saw as cooperating with the Americans (McCants 2015:10). Genocidal rhetoric eventually became genocidal behavior (Weiss and Hassan 2016:29).

However, the origins of Zarqawi’s hatred of the Shia is somewhat unknown (Kazimi 2006). One overlooked factor is the role of the Muslim Brotherhood; the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s played a crucial role in spreading anti-Shiism (Steinberg 2014:120). It was based on their hatred and struggle against Syrian leader Assad and his branch of Shiism, the Alawite; therefore, their struggle against Assad has been framed in “sectarian” terms against Shiites (ibid).

This study suggests that ISIS anti-Shiism is based on a politicization of Shiite identity, discussed in Chapters 6, 8, and 9. ISIS eventually took control of parts of Syria and Iraq (where most of the population are Shiites) partly by using this hatred in their propaganda by erasing distinctions between Shiites and the governments of Iraq and Syria.

Roy (1998:120) argues that Islamist neo-fundamentalism was in part created by a rapprochement between political Islam (the Muslim Brotherhood) and conservative fundamentalists (Wahabism). Chapter 8, which discusses the Sahwa movement, demonstrates how this rapprochement took place and the specific concepts it developed. Members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood were exiled to Saudi Arabia after a failed uprising in the 1970s, there they established the Sahwa movement. The Sahwa movement was a Muslim Brotherhood organization that added apolitical Salafist⁶ concepts to its ideology.

⁶Salafism is a branch of Sunni Islam whose modern-day adherents claim to emulate “the pious predecessors” of Prophet Mohammed.

It has been argued that Mohammed Surur, a Sahwa movement member from the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, inspired Zarqawi who copied parts of Surur's widely read anti-Shiite book *Here Come the Zoroastrians (Wa-jā'a dawr al- Majūs)* (Kazimi 2006:56). This book and the impact of the Sahwa movement on ISIS anti-Shiism are analyzed in Chapters 8 and 9. Moreover, it has been argued that Zarqawi's legacy might be that he transformed anti-Shiism into a central tenant in jihadism (Kazimi 2006:67).

Research on radicalization tends to either focus on the importance of religion and ideology or the social realities of the recruits. Several researchers (Juergensmeyer 2003; Kepel 2004; Maher 2016; Rickenbacher 2019) have investigated the role of religion and theological sources, but others (Esposito 2015; Roy 2017; Sageman 2017a) have dismissed the religious explanation. Roy (2017) argued that other factors are more critical in understanding radicalization. He emphasizes nihilistic tendencies and a subculture nurtured by the cultural vacuum of the second generation in Europe to explain ISIS attraction. Previous research has shown that grievances are believed to inspire suicide bombers (Atran 2002:271), and Sageman (2017) also emphasizes grievances related to a politicized identity, which can turn into a violent martial social identity. These grievances are part of what I call the imaginary victimized ummah. Furthermore, psychological research has asserted that militant extremists seem to embody ordinary personality features (Arena and Arrigo 2006; Horgan 2003; Silke 1998).

One notable public theoretical debate on ISIS took place between political scientist Kepel and political scientist Roy in France. Kepel, an expert on Islamist ideology, argues that what we see with ISIS is a radicalization of Islam, whereas Roy claims it is an Islamization of radicalism (Zaretsky 2016). Roy (2017:4) suggests that there is no direct link between social, political, and religious mobilizations and the descent into terrorism.

Maher (2016) and Kepel (2017) have argued that ISIS ideology and motivation is Salafi jihadism. However, Roy rejects this idea and claims that ISIS is not Salafist. He argues that ISIS's systematic choice of death is new and has very little support in Islam and among Salafists. Although Salafists recognize the merits of the martyr who dies in combat, Muslim tradition does not prize those who strike out in pursuit of death because it interferes with God's will. Hence, Salafism condemns suicide because it anticipates God's will (Roy 2017:4). Another argument against the religious perspective is that research shows that jihadists often have a secular education (Atran 2011:482). Moubayed (2015) shows that ISIS has secular inspirations as they were inspired by Saddam Hussein's Baathism in its brutality and that many in the elite were formerly part of his military. ISIS also replicated Saddam in many

aspects; for example, they copied Saddam's censorship bureau and had a team that collected information about anyone that could harm ISIS (Napoleoni 2016:188).

However, Islamists use religious scripture in their propaganda. As mentioned earlier, this study looks at how ISIS makes use of interpretations of religious scripture to suit its political goals. ISIS had its own public relations bureau, and its propaganda had many outlets such as magazines, videos, social media, and Nasheed's (Baele, Boyd, and Coan 2020). Bloom (2017:616) shows that ISIS propaganda was adjusted to those groups they wanted to recruit, such as professionals and thrill seekers. ISIS's magazine, *Dabiq*, was written in English and directed towards second-generation Muslims and converts (Colas 2017:173).

Furthermore, ISIS's misuse of religion in their propaganda has been documented in many studies (Armstrong 2014; Gurski 2016; Peters 2015; Roy 2017; Sekulow 2015). Specifically, research shows that *Dabiq* use Hadiths selectively to gain legitimacy (Boutz, Benninger, and Lancaster 2019:972). ISIS only cites Hadiths that can be interpreted as supporting their actions, overlooking Hadiths that would condemn their actions (ibid). Each issue of *Dabiq* has its own theme (Toguslu 2019:98), and the reader is presented with a dichotomous world view where ISIS offers a strong in-group identity (Ingram 2016:458). Research has also shown that many of those who joined ISIS were already criminals (Byman 2016:92), and this is one example of why it is crucial to include social aspects when researching the ideology.

Salafi-Jihadism

Maher has written the first and most extensive scholarly work on Salafi-Jihadism. According to him, Salafi-Jihadism has five features: tawhid⁷, hakimiyya⁸, *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, Jihad⁹, and takfir¹⁰. All these concepts exist within normative Islamic tradition; however, they have been reinterpreted by militants (Maher 2016:14). In his book, Maher details how these concepts have been constantly evolving among Salafi-jihadists such as al-Qaeda and that they ultimately are used to justify violence by Salafi-jihadists. Moreover, Maher concludes that the ideational shift of the concepts has come in response to war. Hence, he suggests that Salafi-Jihadism is principally a militaristic ideology (Maher 2016:208). This pattern is also discussed in Chapter 8 with a

⁷ Tawhid means monotheism.

⁸ Hakimiyya refers to governance.

⁹ Jihadism is defined as an ideological position that emphasizes, in particular, the importance of jihad in the narrower and literal meaning of "holy war."

¹⁰ Takfir is the pronouncement that someone is an unbeliever and no longer Muslim. Takfir is used in the modern era for sanctioning violence against leaders of Islamic states, and Muslims, who are deemed insufficiently religious. It has become a central ideology of militant groups and it is reflected in the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, Mawdudi, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Kathir (Esposito 2003b).

focus on the Sahwa movement. However, these politicized Salafist concepts can also be understood as originating and developed by the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organization the Sahwa movement (see Chapter 8).

First, one of its ideologues, Sayyid Qutb's brother Mohammed Qutb, combined tawhid and hakimiyya and popularized it as tawhid al-hakimiyya, which ultimately refers to the Salafist understanding of monotheism and the claim that it is an integral part of Islamist governance since, according to Islamists, Islam can only be realized through governance. Hence, Qutb claims that a Muslim can only believe in the oneness of God by believing in the Islamic State, and that all who do not believe in the Islamic State are non-Muslims. Mohammed Qutb's concept of tawhid al-hakimiyya is crucial in understanding the violence of Islamist militants, since it suggests that a Muslim should strive for an Islamic state as the realization of the religion.

Moreover, Mohammed Qutb's student Saad Al-Qahtani developed a politicized meaning of the Wahabi notion of *al-wala' wal-bara'* in a book titled *Allegiance and Rupture in Islam (Al-wala' wa-l-bara' fi-l-islam)*, published in 1984, which had a significant influence on Islamist thought. The phrase *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* means allegiance and rupture, it is common among Salafists and Wahhabists and refers to the belief in unconditional loyalty to Muslims and a complete break with infidels (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:12–13):

Al-Qahtani thus establishes an equivalence between the pair *hakimiyya/jahiliyya* and the pair *wala'/bara'*: applying the Law of God, he explains, means declaring allegiance to the *umma*, while advocating *jahiliyya*, notably by subscribing to “contemporary schools of thought” such as nationalism, Nasserism, secularism, and the like, means pledging allegiance to the infidels...In addition, al-Qahtani redefines the notion of allegiance and rupture to make it a weapon directed not only against “heretical Muslims,” as in traditional Wahhabism, but also against the West and its civilization. This usage was adopted and amplified by the neojihadis of the late 1990s. (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:56)

Here, al-Qahtani combined Sayyid and Mohamed Qutb's notion of jahiliyya and hakimiyya with a Salafist concept and changed its meaning to become an anti-western meaning. These are two examples of how Qutbist concepts are used to politicize Wahabism.

Another problem is that the militants copy ideas from the Muslim Brotherhood, but they do not cite them; however, they tend to cite Salafists since they have more religious credentials than the Muslim Brotherhood. In the eyes of the militants, the Muslim Brotherhood is seen as disingenuous since it claims to strive for democracy. However, as Kazimi (2006:56) shows, Zarqawi borrowed Sahwa member Surur's ideas from his book without citing him. Hence, if one only looks at who and what Islamists cite, then one misses the political influence that they do not want to acknowledge.

However, it is important to emphasize that Salafism does contribute to prejudice, sometimes hatred, and certainly isolationism, which undermines co-

existence between different groups in society. Moreover, it entails a literalist understanding of religious scripture, which brings about reactionary understandings of religion. Roy has discussed literalist understandings of scripture in relation to violence as presented in the next section.

The Role of Scripture

Olivier Roy makes the following suggestion:

Jihadis do not descend into violence after poring over the sacred texts. They do not have the necessary religious culture- and above all, care little about having one. They do not become radicals because they have misread the texts or because they have been manipulated. They are radicals because they choose to be. [. . .] The four thousand or so ISIS records of its foreign fighters mentioned previously show that while the fighters are generally well educated (most of them finished secondary school), 70 percent of them state that they have only basic knowledge of Islam. And since nationals from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, and Indonesia very logically record the highest level of religious knowledge, it is in fact well over 70 percent of western recruits who only have basic knowledge. (Roy 2017: 42)

According to Roy, theology involves interpreting scriptures in a comprehensive discursive system that isolates dogma from emotion, imagination, aesthetics, and so on. However, what is at work here is precisely religiosity (not religious ideas), in other words, how the believer experiences religion and appropriates elements of theology, practices, imaginaries, and rites to construct a transcendence for himself (Roy 2017:42). Roy (2017:43) suggests that what works with them is the link between the radical imaginary and the theological “rationalization” provided by ISIS, which is not based on actual knowledge but an appeal to authority.

According to Roy, the imaginary and the appeal to authority is expressed in the brutal, non-discursive affirmation of a verse or a Hadith of one or two sentences, such as this famous verse: “Do not take the Jews and Christians as allies. They are allies of one another.” Short texts such as these are “thrown up in people’s faces (just as the red guards threw Mao quotes up in people’s faces) without ever referring to other texts, let alone seeking a more overall logical significance” (Roy 2017:43).

Roy suggests that radicalization is fueled by a form of misunderstanding or ignorance of Islam that favors extremism. This thesis argues that this extremism is based on the politicization of religious identities situated within Islamist ideology. However, I agree with Roy in that theological texts do not lead to violence in themselves, people do not use violence just because someone tells

them to or because someone can justify it from a religious perspective. Typically, there needs to be more processes and motivations involved in turning to violence.

This study is placed in an intermediary position, between Maher and Roy, in explaining the violence of the Islamic State. Maher (2016:210) does acknowledge that the ideology of ISIS is not as in-depth as al-Qaeda's as it is rather simplified. Moreover, Roy demonstrates that ISIS recruits have a very low level of theological knowledge. This suggests that ISIS is not recruiting people to their cause based on them having read advanced Salafist literature on Salafi jihadist concepts—although some have, most of them have not. Hence, there ought to be an explanation in between utter ignorance and theological advancement, where ISIS manages to convince people to join their cause and use violence.

I suggest that the explanation is on an intermediary level between Roy's and Maher's perspectives and that it consists of two main ideas:

- the war against Islam conspiracy, and
- the imaginary victimized ummah.

This thesis suggests that ISIS violence is based on a politicization of religious identities within a war narrative where the two main concepts are the belief in an ongoing war against Islam and that this war has created a suffering Muslim group worldwide, what I call the imaginary victimized ummah, that needs to be defended through violence. It is this rather simplified narrative and belief that ISIS perpetrators adopt. The strength in this narrative, what makes it convincing for the perpetrators, is that it is deeply rooted in the emotional significance of a sense of a shared social identity, in this case the “Muslim” one, which makes collective action possible.

Hence, what motivates the perpetrators use of violence from a social identity perspective is their politicized social identity (as Muslims), which is understood as shared with the (Muslim) imaginary victimized ummah, whom the perpetrators then, on the basis of them having the same social identity, want to “defend” and “save” through violence.

It is this sense of a shared social identity that makes collective action possible (Sageman 2017b:8–9). Here, it is also important to once again emphasize that antisemitism is at the core of this narrative as Jews are accused of mobilizing the war against Islam.

The Antisemitism of the Islamic State

Research on ISIS antisemitism is very limited. However, theologian Rickenbacher (2019) has written one article on ISIS antisemitism. Like my study,

Rickenbacher focuses on antisemitism in the ISIS magazine *Dabiq*. His results can be summarized into three categories:

- ISIS holds the typical Islamist antisemitic belief that Jews are engaged in a war against Islam.
- Islamist antisemitism is influenced by Western conspiracy theories and Islamic traditions. ISIS's relationship with Western-inspired antisemitic conspiracy theories is inconsistent, wavering between rejection and acceptance.
- ISIS holds an apocalyptic, antisemitic worldview, claiming that the Shia is a Jewish invention intended to sow disunity among Muslims and that the Shia and Jews are working together to destroy Islam. Therefore, ISIS's antisemitism and anti-Shiism are interconnected.

Furthermore, ISIS presents itself as engaged in a defensive war against the enemies of Islam. This worldview serves as justification for ISIS's extreme violence against Jews, Shia, Christians, and other non-Muslims (Rickenbacher 2019:8). Killing civilians and as many as possible is a goal for ISIS, and when ISIS had the chance, they perpetrated genocide against the Yazidis (ibid). ISIS also perpetrated mass slaughter against Christians and the Shia.

Moreover, Rickenbacher suggests that anti-Shiism embodies the Islamic State's ideology. According to Rickenbacher, anti-Shiism is actually an expression of Islamist antisemitism: It adopts elements from the "War against Islam" narrative and antisemitic apocalyptic thought. He suggests that these ideas are from the early 1990s when conspiracy theories gained popularity within Salafist circles, who accused Shiites of working as agents of the Jews in their endeavor to destroy Islam.

They go back to old Islamic legends, which claim that the Shiite denomination traces its roots back to Abdullah Ibn Saba, allegedly a Jewish convert to Islam. Rickenbacher suggests that Western antisemitic conspiracy theories profoundly influenced Islamist thought, challenging their claim that they represent a return to a pure form of Islam. The article concludes that ISIS is genocidal in its ambitions and that its antisemitism is primarily influenced by antisemitic eschatological thought. Chapter 6 will present a systematic study of the antisemitism in *Dabiq*.

ISIS Shia Genocide

According to legal scholar Hawley (2017:160), ISIS has committed genocide against Shiites in Iraq. Hawley's article is one of few academic works that addresses this genocide. Thus, she critiques how these crimes have not undergone extensive legal analysis. In her argument, Hawley points to Shia

Muslims as a protected religious group and that ISIS has been transparent in terms of its genocidal intent; therefore, ISIS's systematic killing of Shiites clearly constitutes genocidal conduct under the Genocide Convention (Hawley 2017:160). There have been initiatives demanding that ISIS violence against Christians be recognized as genocide; however, Shia victims have not had any such initiatives, even though they have a much stronger legal claim, according to Hawley (2017: 160).

Hawley suggests that this lack of analysis has implications, including ignoring Muslim victims of terrorism (Hawley 2017:166). In her analysis of *Dabiq*, Hawley shows that ISIS states that Shia women cannot be married and that Shia men cannot be enslaved; instead, it permits the killing of Shiites even after their "repentance." Compared to other groups, Shia Muslims unique status as enemies according to ISIS "necessitates more severity when applying the sword of jihad to their filthy necks" (Hawley 2017: 166).

Attacks against the Shia in Iraq surged in 2013 when dozens of Shiites were killed at a time (Hawley 2017:167). However, here it is important to emphasize that suicide bombings against Shiite civilians in Iraq have taken place on a regular basis since Zarqawi established himself in the country after 2003. ISIS's most significant anti-Shiite attack occurred in 2014 when ISIS killed approximately 1,700 young, unarmed Shiite air cadets in Tikrit, Iraq (Hawley 2017:167). The same month there was a summary execution of over 600 Shia inmates at Badoush Prison (ibid):

While Christians were forced to convert to Islam or pay a jizyah tax, Shia and Shabak Shia, like the Yazidis, were shown no mercy. ISIS specifically targeted Shia Shabaks and Turkmen compared to the groups' respective Sunni populations. one key distinction between the treatment of Shias and Yazidis can be found: Yazidi women suffered kidnapping and enslavement, while such crimes are not recorded against Shia women. While regional sources report sexual enslavement of Shia women, it appears to be far less pervasive and systemized than that of Yazidi women. According to Yazidis who escaped from ISIS, only other Yazidis were present at holding sites in Iraq and Syria. Shia are more typically killed. One Yazidi survivor said Shia women are burned alive. Regional sources report that male children, when kept alive, are subject to separation from their families to be indoctrinated as child soldiers, but also document direct targeting of children via IED-laden dolls planted at a Shia pilgrimage. More recently, a car bomb struck families eating ice cream after breaking their Ramadan fast, killing 17 people in a predominantly Shia district of Baghdad. (2017:167)

ISIS has also attacked a Shia mosque in Saudi Arabia, killing 21 people; in a similar attack in Kuwait, ISIS killed 27 and wounded 227 others (Hawley 2017:168). In June 2017, ISIS claimed an attack in Tehran, which killed 17 people (Hawley 2017:168). Moreover, ISIS has attacked Shia individuals with bombings, shootings, and stabbings in central and southern Asia, such as

Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan (ibid). Two suicide bombs killed over 80 Hazara Afghans in July 2016 (Hawley 2017:168).

According to Hawley, ISIS's conduct methodically lines up with its ideology:

It should be noted here that while ISIS violence against Christians in practice may qualify as prohibited conduct, ISIS's ideological adherence to the notion that Christians may live peaceably within the Caliphate as long as they pay the *jizyah* presents a formidable obstacle to proving intent. Moreover, instances like the massacre at Badoush showcase the intentional sparing of Christian lives. (2017:171)

According to Hawley, documentation of crimes against Shiites is a compilation of systematic massacres (Hawley 2017:172). Moreover, Hawley points to the fact that “no international action has been taken with the explicit aim of defending ISIS's Muslim victims and considerable domestic rhetoric within the US seeks to actively inhibit fleeing Muslims' protection rights” (2017:173). Hawley does not believe that attacks against Shiites will decrease and points to how it is critical to see “how the growing perception of a Sunni-Shia divide has both propelled and been exploited by the violent Islamist group” (2017:173).

Moreover, Hawley suggests that the Shia status as enemies to ISIS is due to ISIS viewing them as both apostates and *mushrikun* (polytheists); in the case of Yazidis they were never Muslims, so they did not leave the religion and are only accused of polytheism (2017:166). In Chapter 8, I suggest that part of the explanation is that the Sahwa movement transferred antisemitic notions onto Shiites that ISIS later adopted and that the process of a politicization of Shiite identity is crucial in understanding anti-Shiite violence.

Conclusion

The key findings of the literature review are that Nazi Germany heavily influenced Islamist antisemitism and that this ideology still plays a role in contemporary antisemitism in the Middle East and Europe. Furthermore, ISIS antisemitism seems to draw on this tradition as it is genocidal. However, it also adds a new aspect of genocidal anti-Shiism by associating Shiites with Jews. This has led to a genocide against Shiites in Iraq.

The origins of ISIS antisemitism and the transfer of anti-Shiism to the ideology remain somewhat unclear, a research gap this thesis addresses. Specifically, I make a systematic content analysis of *Dabiq* to examine antisemitism. Furthermore, given that Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood ideology influenced much of Islamist antisemitism, I study similarities and differences between their antisemitism and ISIS to trace the origins of ISIS ideology. Moreover, this study demonstrates how ISIS transferred genocidal antisemitism to

Shiites. I do this by primarily investigating the Sahwa movement and analyzing its primary antisemitic and anti-Shiite sources and comparing them to the *Dabiq* content analysis.

3. Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on a social psychological perspective and its leading theory is social identity theory. In the 1970s, Henri Tajfel introduced social identity theory as a theory on inter-group relations and behavior, dealing with the cognitive mechanisms by which social identity is maintained and changed. Thus, this thesis aims to examine the origins and causes of Islamist antisemitic violence using a social psychological perspective that focuses on the role of identity constructions.

Given that the main argument of the thesis is that it is the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative that causes Islamist antisemitic violence, this chapter will present theories on how identity constructions are created, leading to hatred and ultimately violence. The most relevant processes for this argument are self-categorization, politicized social identity, and martial social identity. Sageman asserts that:

The shift from individual to social levels of identification underlies the social identity perspective, which investigates group processes, intergroup relations, and the self-concept. This shared social identity both creates and is created by the group (Sageman 2017b:8-9).

In one of his first articles on social identity theory, Tajfel emphasizes the role of group identity:

The characteristics of one's group as a whole (such as its status, its richness or poverty, its skin colour or its ability to reach aims) achieve most of their significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups and the value connotation of these differences. (1974:71)

According to social identity theory, the concept of the self is fluid, and it varies depending on the relevant contextual comparison (Sageman 2017b:7). However, our attempts to understand the social world always start with a self-categorization process, although social categorizations, group membership, and social identity are also important.

According to Sageman (2017b:6), the social identity perspective is the most significant theory in explaining political violence. Furthermore, using social identity theory, Dutch scholars suggest that social identity is at the

center of protest and political violence (Stekelenburg 2014; van Stekelenburg 2013; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013).

Experiences of self-uncertainty can create a sense of identification with groups that provide a clearly defined identity, such as extremist groups (Hogg 2014; Hogg, Meehan, and Farquharson 2010). Those groups usually have strong ideological belief systems that prescribe group-normative behavior (Hogg 2014; Hogg, Kruglanski, and Bos 2013; Hogg et al. 2010). In the case of Islamist perpetrators, this type of self-uncertainty can be caused by what Roy (2017:63) calls a deculturation among the second generation and converts represented in this category.

Tajfel uses cognitive factors to help explain the emergence of intergroup discrimination and how the protection of group status is central to intergroup behavior. Moreover, Tajfel suggests that human beings differentiate their groups positively from others to achieve a positive social identity (Huddy 2013:5–6).

Social identity theory is applied in all the empirical chapters. Chapter 5 analyzes the construction of social identities among the perpetrators, Chapter 6 analyzes the social identity constructions in ISIS propaganda, Chapter 7 analyzes Qutb’s social identity constructions, and Chapter 8 analyzes the Sahwa movement’s politicization of Shiite identity. This chapter starts with a section on the key concepts of social identity theory. The following section examines social identity theory and violence, the third section discusses the sociology of the radicals, and the last section presents Marc Sageman’s social identity theory on the turn to violence.

Social Identity Theory

Tajfel et al. introduces social identity theory as a tool to understand intergroup behavior by developing concepts such as social categorization, social comparison, and psychological distinctiveness (1979). Furthermore, Tajfel et al. focus on the relationship between individuals and society and how membership in social groups affects self-image and identity.

Table 1. The Key Concepts of Social Identity Theory

1) Social Identity
2) Social Categorization
3) Self-Categorization
4) Positive Distinctiveness

The primary idea in social identity theory is that individuals, in different ways, categorize their environment, a precondition for orientation in the

social world. At the same time, categorization represents a basis for identification with social categories and groups as it constitutes a process of comparison, where individuals, according to different criteria, evaluate themselves and their group in relation to other people and groups. Consequently, the division of the world into categories means comparison and identification where we tend to view our own group as having a positive distinctiveness.

Social Identity

Sageman suggests that social identity is characterized by viewing oneself as an interchangeable member of a social group (Sageman 2017b:8). Tajfel's definition of social identity highlights the importance of the emotional significance of group membership:

For our purpose we shall understand social identity as that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership. Social categorization must therefore be considered as a system of orientation which creates and defines the individual's own place in society. (1974:69)

Therefore, social identity is part of categorizing oneself as a member of a group. It is an automatic and direct consequence of self-categorization: in that context, one's identity is the group identity (Sageman 2017b:8). In the case of political violence, a shared social identity is what makes collective behavior and violence possible (ibid); thus, the constructions of social identities within Islamist movements are of high importance. The social identity of the group shows how they manage to recruit new members, and it tells us what their collective behavior might be:

The shift from individual to social levels of identification underlies the social identity perspective, which investigates group processes, intergroup relations, and the self-concept. This shared social identity both creates and is created by the group. With a sense of shared social identity, we tend to see events in the world in terms of their significance to ourselves as group members rather than their implications for ourselves as individuals. A shared social identity transforms the relationship among members of an in-group to enable coordinated and effective collective action. (Sageman 2017b:8-9)

Therefore, terrorists engage in political violence not for personal motives but for group motives (ibid). A group becomes a group in the sense of being perceived as having common characteristics or a common fate only because other groups are present in the environment (Tajfel 1974:72). Therefore, if it is true that social comparisons on the individual level focus on coming closer to and associating with those who are similar, social comparisons between groups

are focused on the establishment of distinctiveness between one's group and other groups (Tajfel 1974:72).

A shared social identity can lead to group prototypes. Group prototypes are the most representative members of a group who serve as models for others to understand the meaning and norms of their group and therefore they have a strong social influence (Sageman 2017b:20). There are four crucial aspects of leadership among group prototypes that need to be conveyed for it to be effective: 1) being one of us; 2) doing it for us; 3) crafting a sense of us; and 4) making us matter (2017b:7). These dimensions define group prototypes who use a sense of shared social identity to generate influence and power (ibid). The perpetrators in Chapter 5 can be understood as group prototypes as they have acted as role models and inspired other violent attacks, starting with Mohammed Merah.

Social Categorization

Drawing on Berger's (1966:107) claim that every society contains a repertoire of identities that is part of the "objective knowledge" of its members, Tajfel developed the concept of social categorization as a system of orientation that among other things creates and defines the individual's own place in society:

For our purpose, social categorization can be understood as the ordering of social environment in terms of social categories, that is of groupings of persons in a manner which is meaningful to the subject. Therefore, in our discussion the term denotes a cognitive entity that is meaningful to the subject at a particular point in time and must be distinguished from the way in which the term is used in much of the social psychological literature where it denotes an; (most often face-to-face) relationship between a number of people. In other words, social categorization is a process of bringing together social objects or events in groups which are equivalent with regard to an individual's actions, intentions, attitudes and systems of beliefs. (1974:69)

Tajfel notes that society defines and creates psychological reality and that the individual realizes himself in society (ibid). Social categorization leads to psychological group formation, and it has consequences such as intragroup cohesion in the form of positive attitudes toward ingroup members, discriminatory intergroup behavior, and "ethnocentric biases in perception, evaluation, and memory" (Turner and Hogg 1987:28). Tajfel makes the following observation:

Thus, the psychological aspect and consequences of the membership of a group are susceptible to definition only because of their insertion into a multigroup structure. Consequently, social identity of an individual conceived of as his "knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of his membership" can only be defined through the effect of social categorization segmenting an individual's social environment into his own group and others. A social group will, therefore,

be capable of preserving its own contribution to those aspects of an individual's social identity which are positively valued by him only if it manages to keep its positively valued distinctiveness from other groups. (1974:72)

Here, social identity is defined through the effect of social categorization. That is, social categorization compares an ingroup with an outgroup and that the individual stays in the ingroup for as long as it provides a positive distinctiveness in relation to the outgroup. Thus, social categorization and comparison are an inevitable part of social identity constructions. This may lead to intergroup bias and discrimination.

Self-categorization

Drawing on Tajfel's social identity theory, Turner, one of Tajfel's students, developed the self-categorization theory. Self-categorization theory is about the concept of self based on comparison with others and relevant to social interaction (Turner and Hogg 1987:42). Turner's research grew out of work on social categorization; however, although the latter focuses on intergroup discrimination, the self-categorization theory is more general and focuses on how individuals act as a group (ibid). It suggests that our first attempts to understand the social world starts with a process of self-categorization (Sageman 2017b:4).

Sageman suggests that:

People categorize themselves into different groups and this simple process of categorization leads to prejudice, group bias, and is the key to understanding collective behavior, including social movements, terrorism, and counterterrorism. Self-categorization, or the acquisition of a shared social identity, is what makes collective behavior possible. Categorization is a quick, natural, associative, emotional, effortless, and automatic process of simplifying our environment in order to make sense of it by creating categories of objects sorted out on the basis of apparently common attributes. (2017b:6)

Self-categorization is thus the core concept of analyzing the behavior of groups. It suggests that social identity is a higher order level of abstraction in the perception of self and others (Turner and Hogg 1987:42). Some implications of self-categorization are that it accentuates intergroup differences while neglecting intragroup differences; that is, it simplifies social reality and diminishes the individual differences of out-group members (Sageman 2017b:8).

Sageman also stresses that self-categorization processes can lead to dehumanization of outgroup members:

This depersonalization of out-group members combined with reduction to a stereotype may lead to their dehumanization. Some have argued that such a

process is necessary as a mechanism of moral disengagement to carry out political violence. What the SIP implies is that this dehumanization of out-group members may be natural and automatic, part of self-categorization. There is no need for any additional process of desensitization, indoctrination, or brainwashing for this to occur. (Sageman 2017b:8)

In the case of terrorists, this means that the ingroup constructs a unified identity of its members and constructs a stereotype of its enemies, whose lives are seen as worthless. According to self-categorization theory, this is possible due to the simplification of social reality that self-categorization provides.

Positive Distinctiveness

Another critical assumption of social identity theory is that the individual strives to create and maintain a social identity that provides a positive self-image; this is made through positive distinctiveness. Positive distinctiveness emphasizes positive qualities of one's own group or category in relation to the outgroup.

The need for positive distinctiveness has political consequences, such as when high-status groups positively distinguish themselves from outsiders. In contrast, low-status groups need to develop an identity around positively valued group attributes or fight to change their negative image (Huddy 2013:5–6). The very mechanisms that maintain a positive identity will consequently produce negative stereotypes of other groups. Therefore, the maintenance of a positive in-group identity is simultaneously the basis for the creation of stereotypes and division of the world into “us” and “them.”

A construction of positive distinctiveness among Islamists can be noted in their conspiracy of a war against Islam where the martial social identity is portrayed as a savior of the imaginary victimized ummah, while the victim status assigned to the imaginary victimized ummah is what constitutes a positive distinctiveness. Hence, victimhood becomes an ingroup virtue. These concepts are analyzed in all of the four empirical chapters of the thesis.

Social Identity Theory and Violence

When Ingroup Preference Turns to Outgroup Hate

Social psychologist Brewer (1999) has constructed a model for ingroup preference as a platform for outgroup hate. The model consists of five elements: moral superiority, common goals, perceived threat, common values and social comparison, and power politics (Brewer 1999:434–437). The argument underlying this model is similar to that of positive distinctiveness, namely

that discrimination and bias may not result from outgroups being hated but rather positive emotions for the ingroup are reserved only for the ingroup. Those emotions can be admiration, sympathy, and trust, which are then withheld from outgroups (Brewer 1999:438).

Table 2. Five Elements for When Ingroup Preference Turns to Outgroup Hate

Moral Superiority

Common Goals

Perceived Threat

Common Values and Social Comparison

Power Politics

Moral Superiority. When ingroups grow larger and become more depersonalized, an institution's rules and customs, crucial for ingroup cooperation and loyalty, eventually take on the character of moral authority. Moral superiority justifies domination and active subjugation of outgroups. However, the moral order becomes a problem when it is viewed as an absolute rather than a relative condition as this view discourages tolerance for difference. Therefore, when outgroups do not subscribe to the same moral rules, they are met with denigration and contempt (Brewer 1999:435).

Common Goals. According to Brewer, common goals or common threats in an intergroup context imply the need for cooperative interaction, and it makes the absence of mutual trust visible:

Feelings of secure inclusion, ingroup loyalty, and optimal identity are dependent upon the clarity of ingroup boundaries and intergroup distinctions, shared experiences and cooperation with the outgroup threaten the basis for social identification. Particularly for individuals who are exclusively vested in a single group identity, the threat of lost distinctiveness may override the pursuit of superordinate goals and lead to resistance to cooperation (collaboration) even at the cost of ingroup self-interest. (1999:436–437)

This implies that interdependence with an outgroup promotes intergroup conflict and hostility. When negative evaluations of the outgroup, such as contempt or fear, are present, a common threat may also promote scapegoating and blame rather than cooperation (Brewer 1999:436).

Perceived Threat. Regardless of whether real or imagined, the belief that an outgroup constitutes a threat to ingroup interests or survival “creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup are directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice versa” (Brewer 1999:435–436). Thus, the construction of the belief

that an outgroup is threatening the survival of the ingroup automatically creates fear and hostility. Moreover, in the face of intergroup threat, social identity can lead to aggression against the out-group (Merrilees et al. 2013:706).

Common Values and Social Comparison. As mentioned earlier, social identity theory suggests that ingroups strive for positive distinctiveness (Tajfel 1974:72). This implies that groups value those characteristics or achievements to which they see themselves as better than the outgroup and strive to achieve or maintain positive comparisons on the dimensions they value, which might lead to intergroup competition:

When groups hold common values and adopt a common measure of relative worth, the search for positive distinctiveness becomes a competitive one. This means that when superordinate goals lead to mutual social comparison, the potential for outgroup derogation and conflict is enhanced. The reason for that is that ingroups who are relatively advantaged seek to exaggerate the positive comparisons that favor their own group while ingroups that are less advantaged seek to minimize the relative difference or suffer relative deprivation and resentment toward the outgroup. (Brewer 1999:437)

Power Politics. So far, moral superiority, fear and distrust of outgroups, and social comparison have been mentioned as ingroup processes that can lead to hostility and conflict between groups. It is important to note that this can occur on an imaginary level, meaning there might not even be a real conflict over power. However, when groups become political entities, these processes are used as a deliberate manipulation by group leaders in the interests of mobilizing collective action to secure or maintain political power:

Social differentiation provides the fault lines in any social system that can be exploited for political purposes. When trust is ingroup-based, it is easy to fear control by outsiders; perceived common threat from outgroups increases ingroup cohesion and loyalty; appeals to ingroup interests have greater legitimacy than appeals to personal self-interest. Thus politicization, an important mechanism of social change, can be added to the factors that may contribute to a positive correlation between ingroup love and outgroup hate. (Brewer 1999:437–438)

The trust that Brewer is referring to is anti-pluralistic. This model shows that the same factors that make ingroup attachment and allegiance important to individuals also provides ground for antagonism and distrust of those outside the ingroup boundaries. The need to justify ingroup values in the form of moral superiority, sensitivity to threat, the anticipation of interdependence under conditions of distrust, social comparison processes, and power politics all connect ingroup identification and loyalty to disdain and overt hostility toward outgroups (Brewer 1999:443).

The Processes of Justification of Violence

Although the ingroup preference theory explores the mechanisms of hate, the following model builds on it and offers an in-depth theory on ingroup definition and its role in the processes of justification of violence. Reicher, Haslam, and Rath (2008:1313) have developed a five-step social identity model that details the processes through which inhumane acts against other groups can come to be seen as right: identification, exclusion, threat, virtue, and celebration (Reicher et al. 2008:1313).

Similar to the previous model, this model focuses on the definition of the ingroup. The model suggests that the way people define themselves may be more relevant to genocide than the way people define others. For example, a definition of the ingroup is critical to who receives rights. Moreover, a definition of ingroup virtue is necessary to outgroup destruction; it is therefore important to study the centrality of self-understandings in relation to the treatment of others (Reicher et al. 2008:1338).

Table 3. The Processes of Justification of Violence

- | |
|-------------------|
| 1) Identification |
| 2) Exclusion |
| 3) Threat |
| 4) Virtue |
| 5) Celebration |

Identification. The stage of identification is about creating a cohesive ingroup. The concept of self-categorization suggests that social identity, that is, the notion of shared category membership, is the basis of group action (Reicher et al. 2008:1327). Furthermore, groups, especially cohesive and powerful collectivities, are essential to our social presence and our social being; therefore, they can kill and are even prepared to die for their group members (Reicher et al. 2008:1329).

Exclusion. The stage of exclusion is the definition of targets as external to the ingroup. Reicher et al. (2008) use Nazism as an example. Nazism defined the German ingroup in an exclusive way that excluded Jewish people, Roma people, homosexuals, and communists. Jews were excluded from ingroup membership, excluded from society, and denied their rights. However, the persecution of Jews was not limited to the withdrawal of the positive benefits of nationhood and citizenship; rather, it went to the extremes of negative sanctions (ibid).

Threat. Similar to the previous model on ingroup preference turning to outgroup hate, the justification of violence also includes threat as a component. Threat is the representation of these targets as endangering ingroup identity:

The step from withdrawing benefits to active hostility against outgroups maps, we suggest, onto the step from excluding others from the ingroup to construing them as a threat to the ingroup. The problems come where certain groups are seen as constituting a problem for their hosts particularly where the problems are seen as deriving from perceived inherent characteristics of these groups: their stupidity, their aggressivity, their deviousness. Hence the pernicious power of essentialist ideologies such as racism. What counts in these ideologies is not simply what ‘they’ are like, but rather what ‘their nature’ means for ‘us’. (Reicher et al. 2008:1331)

Here, Reicher et al. (2008) emphasizes the perniciousness of essentialist ideology as it defines the “nature” of the outgroups relative to the ingroup. Accordingly, this type of essentialism can lead to the outgroup being viewed as an existential threat as “their nature” entails that the outgroup has characteristics that are natural and thus impossible to change. Consequently, this way of thinking can lead to a violent struggle between two groups where the goal is that only one group can exist in order to survive a supposed existential threat.

Reicher et al. (2008:1331) conceptualize threat as the belief that outgroups, by their actions or their mere presence, endanger the existence of the ingroup members. What constitutes a threat to ‘our way of life’ depends upon what constitutes this way of life (Reicher et al. 2008:1331). Consequently, outgroup threat is not something that is objectively given or even something that is perceived in the situation. Instead, it is something that is actively constructed (Reicher et al. 2008:1332).

Virtue. Virtue is the championing of the ingroup as uniquely good. Reicher et al. suggest that after Jews had been defined as alien and as threatening, the emphasis of German ingroup virtue actively led to outgroup hatred. The last section will show how virtue transformed genocide from a matter of moral opprobrium to a matter of moral duty (Reicher et al. 2008:1336).

Celebration. Celebration is the embrace of the eradication of the outgroup as necessary to the defense of virtue:

Once all the pieces are in place, it becomes easy to see how genocide can be made something to celebrate. Where ‘they’ are defined as not being of ‘us’ and as being against ‘us’, and where, in addition, we create a Manichean view of the world in which we represent good and they represent evil, then their defeat – if necessary, their destruction – becomes a matter of preserving virtue. It is a logic, we suggest, that is central to all modern forms of terror. (Reicher et al. 2008:1336)

In other words, according to this theory, those who object to the slaughter miss the point that such action is seen as morally justified or even a necessary response to an act of violation against the outgroup. The real massacre of innocents is elevated to the status of a holy rite. In this moral universe, those who kill have moral strength, and those who do not are morally suspect (Reicher et al. 2008:1337). Thus, killing is seen as a moral act to be celebrated and it is given a positive value while not engaging in killing is understood as immoral.

The Sociology of the Radicals

When social identity theory is applied to radicals, radicalization can be understood as a prerequisite for the development of a more narrow minded “us”. Roy’s book *Jihad and Death* (2017) is based on data from a French database compiled by him consisting of about 100 people involved in terrorism in France and/or having left France to participate in global jihad between 1994 and 2016. Similar to Sageman (2017), Roy concludes that there is no standard terrorist profile although there are recurrent characteristics. Roy suggests that the profiles have hardly changed over the past 20 years. A majority of those involved in terrorism in France are second generation men who become radicalized in prison (Roy 2017:21). The second generation makes up 60 percent, converts 25 percent, and third generation 15 percent of the sample (Roy 2017:21).

Furthermore, they are often involved in petty crime and with practically no religious education. However, they do have a rapid conversion/reconversion, more often in the context of a group of friends or via the internet and much less often via a mosque. That is, these radicals are not necessarily immersed in religious practice (ibid). Hence, this type of conversion/reconversion can be viewed as a form of social identity construction through a self-categorization into a specific group rather than a religious call. Farhad Khosrokhavar suggests that Islamist radicalization is aided by young people living in segregated neighborhoods of Europe and who are marginalized and live as if they have no future—“as if the hope of economic integration into the larger society is a delusion” (2017:88).

This type of marginalization and dehumanization can be understood as social death or ostracism. Research on ostracism shows that there is a potential for ostracized individuals to be more receptive to extreme groups that show an interest in the individual. At the same time, if the dominant society also ostracizes these groups, they may be predisposed to act in such a way to attract

recognition and attention, possibly through violence (Williams 2006). This relationship was shown in a Dutch study, which found that youth expressed antisemitism to target the society they feel excluded from (Vellenga 2018:186). Thus, feelings of dehumanization and exclusion can contribute to strengthening racist beliefs where an ideological perception of the imaginary Jew, viewed as controlling the world, is held responsible for exclusion. Research on ostracism also shows that when people were ostracized, they judge themselves and those who ostracized them as less human and believed they were viewed as less human by the perpetrators (Bastian and Haslam 2010). These results show a cycle of dehumanization and fluidity between victim and perpetrator. Here, it is interesting to note that social psychologist Florette Cohen Abady asserts that: “antisemitism is, in part, a defense aimed at repressing death related anxieties” (2019:291).

Moreover, as ISIS ideology is nihilistic (Roy 2017) and glorifies death, ostracized and “socially dead” people might be especially drawn to the message of dying a “glorified” death as a martyr. Furthermore, this process is similar to becoming a soldier, and terrorists usually see themselves as soldiers (Sageman 2017a:71). However, according to Sageman, it is important to stress that becoming a terrorist is a process, and most people could turn politically violent when put under certain circumstances (ibid).

The Identity Vacuum

Roy, emphasizing the importance of an identity vacuum to explain the high number of the second generation terrorists, suggests that the recruits have undergone a process of deculturalization. That is, it is easier for them to adopt a politicized Muslim identity. This thesis argues that this “Muslim” identity is politicized by extremists within the framework of Islamist ideology, claiming that there is an ongoing war against Muslims. Thus, terrorist violence is seen as an inevitable part of the ongoing war against Islam.

Brewer suggests that when a person feels isolated, the drive for inclusion is aroused:

When a person feels isolated or detached from any larger social collective, the drive for inclusion is aroused; on the other hand, immersion in an excessively large or undefined social collective activates the search for differentiation and distinctiveness. Equilibrium is achieved through identification with distinctive social groups that meet both needs simultaneously. Inclusion needs are satisfied by assimilation within the group, while differentiation is satisfied by intergroup distinctions. Clear ingroup boundaries serve to secure both inclusion and exclusion. (1999:434)

Roy (2017:63) suggests that the second generation is overrepresented because they have lost the culturally rooted religion of their parents. Thus, they piece together a religion without any social and cultural grounding. Roy calls this a cultural vacuum and a process of deculturalization. Like Roy, Khosrokhavar (2017:82) suggests that transposition of rage to the religious domain occurs all the more easily in Europe, where the young are ignorant of Islam. Both Khosrokhavar and Roy refer to the importance of the imaginary in radicalization. Moreover, they suggest that the imagined community to which jihadists belong is about identifying with the “new Ummah” (a warm and mythically homogenous Muslim community).

Similarly, Tibi and Anderson have called the ummah an imagined community (Anderson 2006; Tibi 2007). In this thesis, I have chosen to call it the imaginary victimized ummah. Here, it is important to note that the war against Islam conspiracy and the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah appeals not only to European recruits but also to an international audience.

Marc Sageman’s Theory on the Turn to Violence

Sageman analyses political violence from the perspective that it emerges out of a conflict between the perpetrators and the state. According to Sageman, loners do not commit terrorist attacks; they are all part of a larger social category. Therefore, self-categorization and de-personalization are essential for collective behavior such as terrorism; that is, individual identity is diminished in favor of team membership (Sageman 2017a:124).

Furthermore, self-categorization erases the out-group’s individual differences and reduces them to one-dimensional characters. This dehumanization enables political violence (Sageman 2017a:115). Sageman believes a scholar must assume that political violence has a meaning for the perpetrators and try to capture this subjectivity:

Political violence necessarily involves contested narratives, and perpetrators defined themselves in contrast to governmental agents and their actions, which gave meaning to their violence in the context of a conflict between them and the state. They viewed their actions as response to state aggression. In their minds, their violence could not be understood outside this escalating conflict. (2017b:x)

In Sageman’s theory, the state can be understood as an enemy out-group for politically violent groups. For example, ISIS view the Syrian state and its leader Assad as an enemy outgroup. Here, anti-Shiism was used in ISIS

struggle against the Syrian state by connecting Assad to Shiism, ultimately creating the politicized enemy outgroup Shiites; thus, expanding the enemy state to include civilians. Table 4 lists the steps in Sageman’s model for explaining political violence.

Table 4. Sageman’s model for explaining political violence

-
- 1) Self Categorization

 - 2) De-personalization of out-group

 - 3) Existential threat

 - 4) Politicized identity

 - 5) Martial identity:
 - a) escalation of conflict
 - b) disillusionment with non-violence
 - c) moral outrage at state aggression
-

According to Sageman, there are four elements in radicalization: moral outrage at recent political events; a warlike ideology such as the war against Islam conspiracy; personal experiences that resonate with this ideology; and mobilization through existing militant networks (2017b:11).

Neumann (2013:873) suggests that the meaning of radicalization is ambiguous as the concept combines two definitions: the cognitive one focusing on extremist beliefs and the behavioral one emphasizing behavior.

Here, it is important to note that being a radical does not presuppose using violence; thus, cognitive radicalization theory is not enough in explaining political violence; one also needs to understand the turn to violence.

Sageman (2017:114) argues that there is no radicalization without self-identification, and he suggests that radicalized individuals undergo a process of adopting a politicized social identity, which is nonviolent for the most part, and that the step to violence takes place when the politicized identity turns into a martial social identity.

This thesis argues that Islamists adopt a politicized identity and impose a politicized identity onto others and that their social identity construction is inherently martial since they believe that they are actors/defenders in the ongoing “war against Islam.” Thus, the two factors leading to violence, according to Sageman, are an integrated part of Islamist ideology and its identity constructions.

Politicized Social Identity

The politicization of identities usually begins with the awareness of shared grievances; consequently, an external enemy is blamed for the group's predicament (van Stekelenburg 2013:227):

Politicization of identities is key to the dynamics of contention. Protest movements are built on politicized identities, and they are populated by people with politicized identities. Politicization of identities is thus simultaneously a characteristic of collectivities and people. At the individual level, a process of politicization typically begins with the awareness of shared grievances. The second step is that an external enemy is blamed for these grievances and claims for compensation are made. (2014:543)

This sense of injustice is what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*. At the most basic level, *ressentiment* is when human beings blame others for their failures and frustrations (Remley 2016:147). The conspiracy theory of a war against Islam, propagated by Qutb, Sahwa, and ISIS, can create *ressentiment* among radicalized individuals since it divides the world into two social categories—Muslims and the rest. Here, the rest, especially Jews and Shiites, are held responsible for the suffering of Muslims in the form of the imaginary victimized ummah. Hence, the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah politicizes Muslim identity and divides it into victims and martial defenders.

Ressentiment is often connected to destructive ideological worldviews that emphasize revenge against those held responsible for one's suffering (TenHouten 2018:58). It comprises three primary emotions and the same three secondary emotions: contempt, shock, and outrage (TenHouten 2018:52). According to TenHouten (2018), the phenomena that *ressentiment* refers to are real and of sociological importance. However, throughout history, wrong categories of persons have been seen as culprits “so that injurious, aggressive behavior comes to be directed toward groups and categories of people that are wrongly held responsible for wrongs and crimes they did not commit” (TenHouten 2018:58).

This tendency was shown in the results of Wieviorka's study on antisemitism among marginalized youth in France; these youth blamed their marginalization on an imaginary idea of “the Jew” as powerful and therefore responsible for their exclusion. This form of *ressentiment* and notion of revenge is also central to Islamist ideology and is analyzed in Chapter 5 with respect to the perpetrators and in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 with respect to the ideology. *Ressentiment* has always fueled antisemitism; however, it has become more central in contemporary antisemitism (Chatterley 2013:81).

Already in 1899, Durkheim (2008) explained antisemitism as a consequence of societies in crisis, *ressentiment*, and the creation of the image of “the Jew” as evil:

One has already seen it in the regions of the East, at the time of the [Franco-Prussian] war of 1870; being myself of Jewish origin, I was then able to observe it closely. The Jews got blamed for the defeats. In 1848, finally, an explosion of the same kind, but much more violent, occurred in Alsace. These comparisons suggest that our current antisemitism is the consequence and the superficial symptom of a state of social malaise. It was the case in 1870 as in 1848 (there was, in 1847, a very serious economic crisis). When society suffers, it needs someone to blame, someone upon whom to avenge itself for its disappointments; and those persons whom opinion already disfavors are naturally singled out for this role. It is the pariahs who serve as expiatory victims. What confirms my interpretation is the manner in which the trial of [Alfred] Dreyfus, in 1894, was greeted. There was a fervent joy in the streets. People celebrated as a success what they should have marked by public mourning. As a result of the trial, people finally knew whom to blame for the economic troubles and the moral distress through which they lived. Evil came from the Jews. The fact was officially certified. By virtue of that alone, it seemed that everything was already better and they felt comforted. (2008:322).

Durkheim views antisemitism as a consequence of social malaise due to economic crises. He describes a behavior similar to *ressentiment*: Jews were blamed for the social problems, and essentially evil was seen as coming from Jews. Durkheim explains the antisemitic imagination both in terms of the image of the Jew as evil and as people carrying *ressentiment* against Jews, which made them joyful and comforted by articulating their antisemitism. Furthermore, he explains what can be understood as a psychological function of antisemitism by noting that in times of crisis, people need someone to blame and avenge.

Arendt criticized the scapegoat theory as an explanation for antisemitism, claiming that it says nothing about why Jews have been chosen for such a role and that whenever someone tries to answer this question, Jews cease to be innocent victims (Arendt 1951: 5–6). In this thesis, the scapegoat theory is somewhat relevant in relation to *ressentiment* in the sense that it shows why Jews are chosen as scapegoats—namely, because of the Islamist politicization of Jewish identity within a war narrative.

Nietzsche addressed the issue of antisemitism in 1887 in his book *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Nietzsche and Diethel 2017). Nietzsche argues that what underlies and makes antisemitism possible is, in fact, *ressentiment* (Remley 2016:148):

A word in the ear of the psychologists, assuming they are inclined to study *ressentiment* close up for once: this plant thrives best amongst anarchists and anti-Semites today, so it flowers like it always has done, in secret, like a violet but with a different scent. (Nietzsche and Diethel 2017:48)

Nietzsche also suggested that people who express *ressentiment* “sanctify *revenge* with the term *justice*—as though justice were fundamentally simply a further development of the feeling of having been wronged—and belatedly to legitimize with revenge emotional *reactions* in general, one and all” (Nietzsche and Diethel 2017:48).

Nietzsche describes *ressentiment* as an emotional, psychological state of vengeance and vulnerability where the individual is concerned with power, but not just as a feeling of self-pity for one’s plight in the world but rather as personal vindictiveness or blame for a perceived and perhaps preconceived injustice (Remley 2016:147). Moreover, *ressentiment* is typified by its obsessive nature and by a type of revenge that seems to manifest itself in a desire to humiliate its target followed by its total annihilation (Remley 2016:147).

A politicized social identity is activated when a serious political grievance divides people into two contrasting sides (Sageman 2017a:117–118). Media and the internet make it possible to identify with victims; this is often based on some commonality such as ethnicity or religion (ibid). Most of the global neo-jihadists that Sageman (2017a:118) interviewed attributed their politicization to watching videos of mass violence against Muslims. This violence outraged them and activated self-categorization into an imagined community, including these victims, in contrast with the states committing these atrocities (ibid).

Furthermore, Sageman’s interviewees expressed an attraction to the rebel style, which they found “cool.” The phenomenon of “jihadi cool” has grown exponentially in ISIS, who branded themselves via an image of being cool (Awan 2017; Matusitz 2020; Picart 2015). Finally, Sageman argues that the imagined political community is not violent in itself; rather, they can become violent if they adopt a martial social identity. Moreover, violence or threats are political when those who feel targeted view the acts of aggression as attempts to undermine them as a community (Sageman 2017b:14).

Bauman suggests that human beings in modern society wear a new identity that they replace with a new one whenever convenient (Bauman 2004).

An example of that is the fast conversion among ISIS recruits that Roy (2017) has pointed out; this way of thinking that Bauman describes makes it easier for them to adopt politicized identities. For Bauman, modern culture looks like “a culture of disengagement, discontinuity, and forgetting” (2004:117). According to sociologist TenHouten (2018), this culture of disengagement and forgetting unleashes resentment against those who are held as scapegoats in society:

It is in a world in which meaning seems to be slipping away, and individuals lose the sense of understanding the events in which they are engaged, resentment finds its fullest expression. In the contemporary world there are endless possibilities that the individual can experiment with, in a process of self-creation and openness to all kinds of experiences and beliefs. This, for some, will mean that life need not be taken seriously, as if it means something, as if it were morally constrained only by outmoded views of the sacred. If no important distinction can be made between true meaning and false meaning, then all meaning becomes false, an illusion, and a deception. But to accept that there is no truth means there is no such thing as a lie, and it is at this point that meaninglessness can become monstrous and unleash the demons of resentment upon those who are held up as scapegoats and subjected to abuse and even brutalization. It is when meaning becomes entirely relative that resentments are set free. (2018:58)

This idea of meaninglessness relates to Roy's (2017) theory on the centrality of nihilism in ISIS ideology, reflecting a culture where life has less meaning and less worth. In Wiewiorka's study (2007), antisemites referred to Jews as political actors embodying power and being held accountable for the actions of the State of Israel. Their own social vulnerability, exclusion, and disappointments in life were interconnected with their antisemitism. In this case, "the Jew" becomes a politicized scapegoat whom *ressentiment* is projected onto. It can also be argued that antisemites' lost sense of understanding the events that they are engaged in makes it possible for them to project their own failures onto Jews. This would also support the findings of Wiewiorka's study, which shows that a recognition of a history decreases antisemitism and therefore self-awareness is the opposite of *ressentiment*.

The Meaning of the Politicization of Religious Identities

When conflicts in the Middle East are described in the media, the violence is often made to seem like the result of the mere existence of people from different ethnic or religious groups living in the same place (Cammett 2019:2). However, these social identities should be understood as constructed and imagined and used for political purposes. Thus, the politicization of religious identities refers to how religious identities and belonging are re-constructed within a political framework. Here, political means relating to the way power is achieved and used in a country or society. Today, collective identities are no longer seen as objective facts but rather constructed or imagined based on perception rather than an essence (Hawley 2017:169).

Kustenbauder (2012:419), studying how political actors in Sudan have politicized religious identity, found that politicized religious identity is used as a polarizing rhetorical device, emphasizing religious duty to mobilize support for warfare and advance political visions (ibid). According to Wimmer (2016), the nature of ethnic politics is conditioned by state-building processes. In contexts where states have built up a strong presence, ethnic or religious identities

tend not to be politicized (Cammett 2019:3). Thus, when states do not provide protection such as welfare and physical protection, people may turn to other alternatives, such as religious institutions (ibid). This indicates that identity politics increases in times of insecurity and state weakness (ibid).

Social psychological research has shown that when groups of people are targeted based on their identity, such as religious identity, the political salience of that identity increases and serves as the foundation for animosity against members of other groups (Cammett 2019:4–5). A politicized group consciousness differs from simple group identification as it entails identification with the political group in question and a conviction about fundamental differences between the interests of the own group and the dominant group (Miller et al. 1981:495).

Wilcox (1989:54) studied the processes of politicized group consciousness among the evangelical community and found that a fundamentalist self-identification did not have a political meaning for those who were not exposed to messages from religious-political elites seeking to develop a politicized group consciousness. However, among those exposed to these messages, fundamentalists were more conservative and more Republican than other evangelicals (ibid).

Hence, this study suggests that a fundamentalist identity is not political in itself, but it can become so when it is politicized by political actors, leading to a politicized group consciousness. This example can be applied to Salafists: their fundamentalist identity is not political in itself, so their religious beliefs do not lead to, for example, wanting to rebel, whereas political Islam is political in itself and is based on the idea of rebellion.

Campbell (2020:88) suggests that there are two dangers with politicized religion: disagreement between the religious and the secular can bring societies to a boiling point when those religious-secular divisions reinforce a political cleavage and the more religion is politicized, the more it loses its prophetic potential.

This can be noted in the Middle East where surveys show that religious beliefs have been decreasing¹¹ in the last decade, one possible explanation is that it is a consequence of Islamist group's advancement and misuse of religion, thus one can suggest that the politicization of religion undermines the belief in and spread of religion.

Martial Social Identity

The previous sections focused on the meaning of a politicized social identity. However, Sageman argues that an imagined political community is not violent in itself; rather, they can become violent if they adopt a martial social identity. Sageman elaborates on how political violence should be understood:

¹¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/middle-east-are-people-losing-their-religion/a-56442163>

When terrorists talk about their violent act, they refer to its *political* purpose, which changes according to the context. This purpose gives meaning to their deed. For example, some may say they acted in order to bring certain political grievances to the attention of an audience and raise its political consciousness. However, after the violence, this audience rarely pays attention to these grievances but instead focuses on its moral outrage at the violence and its effect on them, namely the fear and terror they feel. This may well be the fundamental paradox of domestic political violence as a strategy: it seldom has its intended effect—bringing attention to a set of grievances—but focuses attention, including that of scholars, on the violence and its perpetrators and on how they differ from the rest of society. In carrying out acts of political violence, perpetrators see themselves as acting out the norms, values, and meanings of their group, while out-group members focus on their acts and construct a stereotypical profile of people who can carry out such acts. (2017b:11–12)

In his criticism of research on terrorism, Sageman notes that scholars rarely try to understand the motivations of the terrorists from their perspective; rather, they view the topic as outgroup members. This is a problem that, according to Sageman, has led to stagnation in research on terrorism.

This thesis is not only inspired by Sageman’s theoretical contributions but also by his perspective on terrorism. From the perspective of the terrorist, acts of political violence have political meaning, and this is important to acknowledge in order to make a scholarly analysis of their use of violence. However, this study stresses the imaginary aspects of the grievances that terrorists claim to be motivated by such as the imaginary victimized ummah. Moreover, the political identities, especially the other-imposed, are also viewed as imaginary, hence the study emphasizes questioning the narrative and motives of the perpetrators.

This takes us to the last part of the theoretical framework, namely the construction of the martial social identity. The self-categorization into a martial social identity leads members to turn to violence in defense of their imagined community. A martial social identity means that some start to think of themselves as soldiers:

Three additional conditions need to be met for violence to occur: escalation of hostility between the state and their community, which includes a cumulative radicalization of discourse; their disillusionment with nonviolent legal tactics; and moral outrage at new state aggression against their community. (Sageman 2017a:130)

Escalation can also be the result of police harassment in the form of stop and frisk, constant questioning, and police brutality (Sageman, 2017a:133). According to Sageman, these methods remind them of their outlaw status and social identity; it reinforces the negative image of the policeman and contributes to the escalation of violence between protesters and their enemies, which

is the police. In addition, the prison experience further strengthens this outlaw status and social identity. Moreover, imprisonment can also strengthen hostility toward the state.

According to Sageman, extremists exaggerate the outside threat and danger to gain support, they also discredit internal rivals as being too soft on the out-group and unable or unwilling to protect the ingroup against the out-group. Violence often develops as a reaction to repression from escalating policing, which extremists consider brutal and unjust (Sageman 2017). Thus, violence and so-called counter-violence pair together; increased violence creates martyrs, and it pushes the development of structures and norms that reproduce violence, which leads to political violence (della Porta 2018:471).

Violent discourse helps extremists shape how people feel about or make sense of events, influencing how they act; war metaphors are, according to Sageman, especially harmful as they imply violent action and justify physical violence and therefore decrease the threshold to violence (Sageman 2017a:135). The actual situation is usually not as portrayed by extremists; for example, the struggle with the out-group is often not as significant as they claim (ibid). However, Sageman emphasizes that extremists come to believe their rhetoric.

When a member is killed, he becomes a martyr; their deaths transform them into group prototypes and influence others to turn to violence (ibid). The member's death is seen as the ultimate sacrifice for the group, which "instantly endows them with virtue and cleanses their reputation of any previous flaws" (Sageman 2017a:140–141). This can explain why there are so many previous criminals who become extremists; by dying for a cause, they believe their previous mistakes will be "cleansed."

Moreover, this is exemplified by the way the leader of the Afghan jihad, Abdullah Azzam, described ISIS founder Zarqawi:

I was struck by the way his [Zarqawi's] past seemed to affect him, as he always struggled with a sense of guilt. [. . .] I think that is why he was so brave. He [Zarqawi] would say, 'Because of the things I did in my past, nothing could bring Allah to forgive me unless I become a shahid' – a martyr. (Warrick 2015:53)

According to Sageman, violent action becomes part of the group's possible political actions and inspires other members once the line is crossed:

There was a period when they did not think of themselves as soldiers or defenders of the ummah... Many start out explicitly rejecting violence, but once they adopt a martial social identity, or the state treats them as violent enemies, they act out their new identities... Activation of a martial social identity

legitimizes political violence; the perpetrators are just soldiers defending their imagined community... Self-categorization into a martial social identity means that violence is imminent because people with this social identity are likely to act out who they believe they are. Over time war metaphors subtly replace self-defense as their frame and guide for action. It is but a small step for soldiers to go from defensive to offensive (in the name of general defense of their imagined community). (2017a:144–145)

These self-categorized soldiers usually isolate and limit their exposure to events and other ideas, feelings, perspectives, and interpretations of the world (Sageman 2017a:148). Thus, they experience a narrowing of their cognitive horizon, often centered on an obsession with their enemies (Sageman 2017:148). This type of mindset, caused by isolation, can contribute to prison radicalization.

To conclude, according to Sageman, political violence takes place when identities are politicized and adopts a martial social identity. Islamist ideology, as seen in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8, centers around the notion of an ongoing war against Islam where identities are politicized and given a martial social identity. This implies that examining the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative is crucial in analyzing Islamist antisemitic violence.

Conclusion

This thesis applies a social identity perspective to examine the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence. Specifically, this chapter presents key concepts such as self-categorization, social categorization, social identity, and positive distinctiveness. Furthermore, it has presented a model for when ingroup preference becomes outgroup hate and a model for the processes underlying a justification for violence.

Social identity theory suggests that social identity constructions make collective actions possible, that the construction of a social identity is always made in relation to an outgroup, and that people strive for a positive distinctiveness for their own group. Hence, the construction of ingroup virtues also leads to negative constructions of the outgroup. This can lead to outgroup hate and justifications for violence.

Sageman's social identity theory is central in explaining terrorists' violence; he suggests that it is the step from politicized identity to a martial identity that brings about violence. Moreover, *ressentiment* is often given an ideological meaning by directing hatred against certain groups of people. This

ressentiment is often directed at Jews. In this study, *ressentiment* is directed at Jews and Shiites via Islamist ideology that constructs a martial social identity where “Muslim” identity, Shiite identity, and Jewish identity become politicized.

Table 5 summarizes the theoretical framework of the study and can be used as a scholarly model for understanding Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective.

Table 5. The Theoretical Framework of the study

Identity Construction	Hate	Justification for Violence	Violence
Self-Categorization	Moral Superiority	Identification	Politicized Identity
Social categorization	Common Goals	Exclusion	Martial Identity
Social identity	Threat	Threat	
Positive Distinctiveness	Common values & Comparison	Virtue	
	Power Politics	Celebration	

In this model, power politics refers to political leaders using imaginary notions of an outgroup to manipulate the ingroup for the purpose of mobilizing action to secure their own political power. The politicization of religious identities can be understood as a manipulative tool used by Islamist groups to secure power. Moreover, celebration entails killing as a moral virtue and ritual. This was displayed to the world by ISIS as they recorded and showed different types of brutal executions.

This model can be used to distinguish between identity constructions, hate constructions, and justification of violence constructions and to highlight the processes behind political violence. The politicization of religious identities within a war narrative in Islamist ideology is analyzed with the help of social identity theory in the empirical chapters to examine the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence.

4. Methods

Introduction

The methods applied in this thesis are based on qualitative analysis and the overall research design is content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is used to analyze antisemitism in ISIS magazine *Dabiq*, and thematic analysis is used to analyze the four perpetrators of the most significant Islamist terrorist antisemitic attacks in Europe. Thematic analysis is also used in the Qutb chapter, and the Sahwa movement is analyzed through a reconstruction of the relevant existing research on the Sahwa movement's antisemitic and anti-Shiite ideology.

It is important to note that the study started as a research project on the emergence of the Islamic State and eventually led to the search for its origins. Thus, the empirical chapters are not chronological as they show the findings as they were discovered and developed throughout the research process. The search for ISIS roots was explorative and it was surprising how little of the existing research deals with the origins of Islamist violence and the centrality of antisemitism to it.

Moreover, the process leading to the chapter on the Sahwa movement was the most surprising part since Islamist anti-Shiism and its contemporary violence are often seen as a consequence of the anti-Shiism of the Salafist and Wahabist movement. However, while tracing the origins to ISIS politicized anti-Shiism, it became clear that Salafist anti-Shiism is mainly theological, while the Sahwa movement added a politicized anti-Shiism, making it genocidal. Moreover, the consistency of Islamist ideas, from Qutb to ISIS, was also surprising, although its nuances are also important to highlight since it has had consequences in terms of the development and escalation of violence against Jews and Shiites. Table 6 shows the empirical material of this thesis.

Table 6. The empirical material of this study

1) Perpetrator's identity constructions
2) <i>Dabiq</i> -ISIS antisemitism
3) Qutb-Islamization of antisemitism
4) Sahwa movement-Politicization of anti-Shiism

Four perpetrators are analyzed: Mohammed Merah, Mehdi Nemmouche, Amedy Coulibaly, and Omar El-Hussein. They were chosen because they conducted the most significant Islamist terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe, hence analyzing their identity constructions is meant to contribute to the understanding of the causes of Islamist violence from a social identity perspective. A key turning point in antisemitic violence in France took place in 2012 when Mohammed Merah killed three French soldiers of Maghrebi descent whom he deemed apostates and murdered three children and a teacher in a Jewish school (Judaken 2018; Arkin 2018:89). This attack led to an escalation into antisemitic violence from previous vandalism and interpersonal violence to terrorism and mass murder (Judaken 2018:14; Arkin 2018:90). After Mohammed Merah, two other perpetrators affiliated with ISIS were inspired by his attacks: Mehdi Nemmouche and Amedy Coulibaly. Omar El-Hussein conducted the last significant ISIS-inspired antisemitic attack.

Sageman has some observations regarding studying perpetrators:

Without perpetrators, there is no political violence. It is therefore crucial to develop an adequate understanding of the actor, from his or her perspective, to understand political violence and select appropriate interventions to prevent it. To capture the subjectivity of political actors, one must rely on their words and actions rather than just their ideology. Their relevant words and actions are the accounts generated by the actors themselves about their paths to violence. It is important to focus on the violent actors themselves and not just the ideologues of their communities. (2017b: xvii)

Sageman suggests that the study of political violence requires that we capture the subjectivity of the perpetrators, not just their ideology. However, capturing the subjectivity of perpetrators does not mean that the researcher should adopt and legitimize their perspective but rather to transcend it with the use of a scholarly analysis. In Chapter 5, the actor's perspective is transcended by an analysis of it from a social identity perspective.

The analysis of ISIS antisemitism is based on their magazine *Dabiq*, given that it was their main propaganda outlet. The chapter on Qutb's antisemitism is based on a thematic analysis of his widely read essay *Our Struggle against the Jews* and the book *In the Shade of the Qur'an (Fi dhilaal al Qur'an)*. *Our Struggle against the Jews* is an influential essay outlining the Islamization of antisemitism (Tibi 2012:63). *In the Shade of the Qur'an* is Qutb's commentary on the Qur'an, and the verses sampled from that book are based on the findings in the *Dabiq* material, namely Qutb's interpretation of two of the most common Qur'an verses used for antisemitic purposes. Moreover, the Sahwa movement chapter is based on a reconstruction of previous research on the movement and an analysis of two of the books of the movement's leading figures, Mohammed Surur's main points in his widely read standard anti-Shiite book *Here Come the Zoroastrians*, and Safar Al-Hawali's antisemitic book *The Day of Wrath*.

Pragmatic approach

The philosophical worldview that informs this thesis is pragmatic (Creswell 2009:10-11). A pragmatic approach is concerned with “what works.” Therefore, this thesis uses multiple methods to best answer the research questions. This implies that quantitative and qualitative methods can be employed rather than subscribing to only one method. The pragmatic approach worldview focuses on the research outcomes and solutions to problems (Patton 1990). The researcher emphasizes the practical implications of the research (Creswell 2007:23). However, there are many versions of pragmatism (Cherryholmes 1992; Creswell 2007:22). The pragmatic approach in this thesis is informed by pragmatic sociology (Blokker 2011).

The pragmatic approach provides a lens through which theoretical matters are analyzed beyond determinism and structuralist approaches and it gives the individual researcher some freedom of choice. Hence, the researcher chooses the methods, techniques, and research procedures suitable for their needs and purposes (Creswell 2007:23). In this thesis, I initially collected and read as much information as possible about Islamist antisemitism.

This research procedure can lead to a theoretical renewal; in this case, it led me to see the importance of identity constructions in Islamist antisemitic propaganda in the initial phase of the reading process. Hence, after reading all of the material, I chose to analyze it from a social identity perspective given its centrality and that it helped explain the causes of Islamist violence.

In modern social science, there is a divide between structural explanations and agency-based explanations (Della Porta and Keating 2008:3). In this thesis, I use an agency-based explanation. Furthermore, pragmatists are anti-essentialist (Rorty 1980), while structural explanations tend to lean towards deterministic outlooks on society. Agency-based explanations provide more dimensions to explore the causes of contemporary Islamist antisemitism. Moreover, the agency-based explanations complement the social identity perspective since it further strengthens its emphasis on how ingroups and outgroups are constantly constructed in relation to each other and make agency-based collective actions possible.

Collecting material

Collecting Material on the Perpetrators

The profiles consist of four Islamist antisemitic perpetrators in Europe—Merah, Nemmouche, Coulibaly, and El-Hussein. Three of them pledged allegiance to ISIS, while the first perpetrator from 2012, Merah, was sympathetic to al-Qaeda. However, Merah is included because his attack was the turning

point in Islamist terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe (Arkin 2018:90). Merah's case was also sampled because he inspired others, especially Coulibaly and Nemmouche. Furthermore, in 2012, when Merah's attack took place, ISIS had not formed as ISIS; they were mostly called al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Merah can be viewed as the one who initiated a series of brutal terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe. The other perpetrators—Nemmouche, Coulibaly, and El-Hussein—were all chosen in this analysis because they were the ones who conducted deadly terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe in the name of ISIS.

The attacks are classified as antisemitic. This quotation from the operationalization of the IHRA definition of antisemitism¹² explains why: "Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property—such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries—are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews." Thus, this definition shows that the four attacks under study are antisemitic.

The material for Chapter 5 consists of articles published in English in traditional, reputable, and credible newspapers and magazines such as *The New York Times* and BBC. Tabloids or less serious newspapers and magazines were excluded. Furthermore, I also read academic articles and books that could be found about the perpetrators (five in total).

Overall, 58 newspaper articles, magazine articles, and a few scientific articles were collected, and 28 of these were used in the final material. The excluded ones were repeats of what other articles had already said, meaning they did not add anything new. While reading all of them, I made a thematic analysis and found these recurring themes: a description of the attack; the media description of the perpetrator (background information); and the process leading to violence. The presentation of the perpetrators in Chapter 5 follows this pattern.

Furthermore, details related to the themes were summarized for each profile in a table found in Chapter 5. After that, I organized the material into each profile, reread the material, and organized it under each category. The aim in collecting the material was to use only verified information and that the narratives of the perpetrators can tell us something about what motivated their violence from a social identity perspective.

Dabiq

The *Dabiq* magazine was published online and shared by their followers on social media. Between 2014 and 2016, 15 issues of *Dabiq* were published. I chose to analyze *Dabiq* because it was ISIS's most significant propaganda outlet in English, and its target audience was English-speaking second-

¹² <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

generation Muslims and converts (Colas 2017:173). Moreover, many other researchers have included *Dabiq* in their research (Colas 2017; Ingram 2016; Rickenbacher 2019; Toguslu 2019). However, only Rickenbacher's (2019) study analyzes its antisemitism. I started collecting the material by saving all issues of *Dabiq*. I read each issue and then searched each issue for the following words: Jew, Jews, Jewish, Judaism, Yahud, and Israel.

The hits were the result of the keywords Jew, Jews, and Jewish; I saved these hits as quotations where the context was also included in a raw data document. This is an example of a quotation from *Dabiq*:

Just as the Companions had to face coalitions of various Jewish, pagan, and hypocrite parties in the battle of al-Ahzāb, the Muslims of the Islamic State face various coalitions of kuffār having a common interest in seeing the Khilāfah destroyed. (Issue 11 p:46)

This quotation shows how ISIS compares its battle to historical events. This was later coded as a neutral quotation since the mention of Jewish is mainly referencing a historical narrative which is not explicitly antisemitic. In total, there were 237 quotations in the first raw data document. At the first stage of the coding of *Dabiq*, I saved all the hits of the search words, meaning that some mentions of the search words were not explicitly antisemitic but rather referring to historical events such as the quotation mentioned above. The content was analyzed at a later stage.

Qutb and the Sahwa Movement

To examine the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence, it is essential to search for its origins in primary sources and to study its characteristics and the reasoning behind the emergence of Islamist antisemitism. Thus, Chapter 7 traces the origins of ISIS antisemitism to Qutb's writings. The first analysis, a thematic analysis, outlines the antisemitic themes found in *Our Struggle against the Jews*. *Our Struggle against the Jews* was chosen because it is an influential essay that underlies the Islamization of antisemitism (Tibi 2012:63).

The analysis shows that ISIS used the Qur'an's verses al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120 to justify antisemitism. Hence, Chapter 7, in an analysis of Qutb's interpretation of these verses in his book *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, shows how Qutb Islamized antisemitism. In addition, Chapter 7 analyzes other influences on his book such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The Sahwa movement chapter is based on a reading of most of the research on the movement, and it provides a unique reconstruction of the movement, which illuminates their contribution to the politicization of religious identities. Moreover, it also analyzes quotations from two of their ideologues' works—Mohammed Surur's influential anti-Shiite book *Here Come the Zoroastrians* and Safar al-Hawali's antisemitic book *The Day of Wrath*.

Analyzing the Material

Analyzing the Perpetrators

The profiles were analyzed with the help of a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative research method that is used to identify and analyze themes in different types of material (Nowell et al. 2017:2). A theme is an outcome of a process of coding (Saldaña 2013:14). Nowell et al. (2017:4) suggest that researchers apply six phases in their thematic analysis for it to be a rigorous analysis. I followed these six phases in the analysis of the articles:

1. familiarize myself with the material;
2. generate initial codes;
3. search for themes;
4. review the themes;
5. define and name themes; and
6. produce the report.

Phase one

Here, I present how I applied these steps in the analysis of the material. In the first phase, I familiarized myself with the material by reading all 58 of the selected articles on the perpetrators. I identified recurring themes—e.g., criminality, prison sentences, and similar upbringing. These were recorded in a journal. The first impression of the material was that the stories about the perpetrators were similar in many regards. I was not expecting this and wrote it down in my journal, which I kept for an audit trail. I was expecting some similarities between the perpetrators, but the results showed almost identical life trajectories. Moreover, I looked for differences and mapped out what seemed to be the main motivator for each perpetrator and their social identity constructions.

Phase two

In this phase, the researcher should start theorizing by revisiting the material many times for the initial production of codes (Nowell et al. 2017:5). According to Creswell (2009), this process should be systematic and analytic; the statements found and analyzed are later categorized into themes relevant to the area of study. Coding at this phase meant that I specified the characteristics of the material by giving full and equal attention to each item as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). I developed a list of all the codes. The codes had explicit boundaries, and I ensured they were relevant to the research question and were not interchangeable (Nowell et al. 2017:6). However, whether they are interchangeable is a matter of which definition is used. Reflexive

journaling is usually recommended to establish an audit trail and document the impressions of the material (Nowell et al. 2017:3). I documented the process in phase two in the journal and elaborated my thoughts about the codes. The list of the codes was documented in a separate document. Notes from the journal were also saved to support the study's trustworthiness. Two examples of the codes are criminality and prison.

Phase three

During this phase, all of the material was already coded and organized as recommended by Nowell et al. (2017:8), and it was time to search for themes. I had a list of all the codes and sorted the coded units into themes. My analysis was inductive. The codes showed a pattern of themes on segregation, violence, criminality, and prison. I decided to turn these codes into themes by saving coded quotations under different categories, which became the initially proposed themes. DeSantis and Ugarriza offer the following definition of the concept of theme in maintaining methodological rigor: "A theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole" (2000:362). Two examples of the themes are prison experience and background information; however, these were temporary as they were finalized during phase five.

Phase four

In the fourth phase, the themes were reviewed and refined. During this phase, the researcher reviews the codes for each theme to ensure their coherence. Furthermore, the researcher needs to show clearly how each theme was derived from the material (Nowell et al. 2017:9). I did this by documenting in my journal how the theme was derived from the material by giving a clear definition to each theme to see if the codes were consistent with that definition. I tested the referential adequacy by returning to the raw data and compared it to the developed themes several times to ensure that all conclusions were firmly grounded in the material (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Here I refined the initial theme background information and included the previous temporary themes from phase three: segregation, criminality, and violence. Thus, this theme was broadened; phase five explains why there was a need to broaden it.

Phase five

During the fifth phase, the researcher defines and names the themes (Nowell et al. 2017:10). This is done by conducting and writing a detailed analysis of each theme's story and then considering how the themes fit into the broader context of the research questions. The researcher also identifies how and why the themes are interesting (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2012). The themes I chose were interesting because they showed a pattern among the perpetrators, and the information given in that pattern could not be found in the findings of the

Dabiq material. All of the material, the coding, and the themes were carefully scrutinized four times before the themes were deemed credible and ultimately finalized (King 2004). In this phase, I could clearly define the themes and what they were not (Braun and Clarke 2006). The themes were terrorist attack, background information on the perpetrators, and the process leading to violence. One problem with the creation of the themes that occurred at phase four was that the coding sometimes meant that there was more information on certain perpetrators, such as Merah. Thus, I decided to broaden the themes to find enough information about each perpetrator for each theme.

Phase six

The sixth and final phase focuses on producing the report. As a final step, a thematic analysis should give a “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account” (Braun and Clarke 2006:93) of the material and the themes. Nowell et al. suggest that “the analytical credibility of the research will depend on the coherence of the argument” (2017:11). Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the study is determined by how the material supports convincing explanations (Starks and Trinidad 2007:1376).

After compiling the themes for each perpetrator, they were presented in Chapter 5. Next, I formed these themes based on an analysis of the content in the articles, namely the pattern of sociologically relevant similarities between the perpetrators: the attack, background information, and process leading to violence. These were analyzed with the help of previous research and the social identity theory presented in the theory chapter. These themes formed three themes in Chapter 5: a description of the attack, the description of the perpetrator (background information), and the process leading to violence. The presentation of the perpetrators in Chapter 5 followed the pattern of these themes, and the perpetrator profiles are presented in a chronological order following the date of respective terrorist attack.

Analyzing Dabiq

Qualitative Content Analysis

Content analysis usually involves analyzing some form of media. Max Weber pioneered the method of content analysis, where he analyzed the content of newspapers (Kuckartz 2014:29–30). Thematic analysis is an integrated part of classical content analysis (Kuckartz 2014:29). Furthermore, as content analysis is a method for systematically investigating texts (Leavy 2017:146), it is suitable for my material and aim. Moreover, the method was chosen since content analysis focuses on the nuances and embedded meanings in the material (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014:28). Roller and Lavrakas define qualitative content analysis as “the systematic reduction of content, analyzed with special attention to the context in which it was created, to identify themes

and extract meaningful interpretations of data” (2015:232). Qualitative content analysis presents an interpretative form of analysis where coding is completed based on interpretation, classification, and analysis (Kuckartz 2014:33-34). I will now present the five steps applied in content analysis.

1) Immersion into the content

Content analysis generally involves an initial immersion into the content to gain a sense of the “big picture,” determining the units of analysis, coding, analysis, and interpretation, and involves multiple rounds of coding and analysis (Leavy 2017:147). During the initial phase, I read all 15 issues of *Dabiq* and recorded my impressions in a journal. Those notes were about the language, rhetoric, and central themes in the magazine. One impression is that the tone and style in *Dabiq* are very monotonous and brutal, and the world view is Manichean. Next, I reread each magazine and highlighted the parts where Jews were mentioned while taking notes of my impressions.

2) Determine units of analysis

In the second phase, the units of analysis were determined and an initial coding started. Units of analysis are “chunks of data” (Leavy 2017:147). They can be individual stories or themes (ibid). In my initial analysis, the units of analysis were recurring search words such as Jews, Jewish, and Israel.

I looked for Israel, but it did not occur often because ISIS calls it “the Jewish state.” I also searched for “Yahud,” the Arabic word for Jews. No hits. After the units of analysis were determined, I coded the data. The coding started with a chronological reading of the magazine issues, those parts where Jews were mentioned were copied and pasted into a raw data document. These data were “chunks” or paragraphs with approximately 5–6 sentences, making sure they also captured the full context. The raw data document consisted of 48 pages, and it had headings such as “Issue 1” and “Issue 2,” where the units of each issue were placed under the headline of the issue it was taken from. Therefore, the initial coding had a chronological order based on units of analysis from issue 1 to issue 15. This order was used to see whether there were changes over time. Indeed, anti-Shiism did increase at a later stage and this increase coincided with the intensification of the warfare. However, antisemitism was almost consistent over time.

3) Generate codes

The actual coding started in this phase, after the initial immersion into the data. The material was coded manually without the help of software to ensure complete control over the process of these complicated and sometimes interpretation-based choices. I started generating codes for each unit of analysis. That is, I assigned a word or phrase that captured the essence of that paragraph (Leavy 2017:151), such as “cursed,” “kufir,” “battle,” “neutral,” “masters,” and “*Dajjal*.” I did this by writing the words within brackets under each

paragraph in the 48-page raw data document. The raw data document initially consisted of 237 quotations. Typically, the first phase in the process of coding generates literal codes such as concrete ideas, which are later refined due to continuous analysis and re-analysis of the data (Leavy 2017:147).

The initial codes were descriptive codes, meaning I used nouns to summarize segments of data (Saldaña 2013:88). This initial summarization of the data is typically called the first cycle coding (Miles et al. 2014:80). The refinement of those codes is the second cycle method, also called pattern coding. Pattern codes are more explanatory, and they identify themes or explanations leading to the next phase (Miles et al. 2014:90). There were some difficulties with the coding; one example was what to do with the mentions of Jews who were not clearly antisemitic.

As there were many codes, a more demanding analysis was needed to determine whether they could be interpreted as antisemitic. However, I solved this problem by creating the code “neutral,” and I applied it to all the quotations where it was not clear whether they contained antisemitism. These codes were re-analyzed as the last step, and a few of them were recoded, for example, some were re-coded as “historical” when they could be interpreted as antisemitic. The neutral category was defined as a mention of Jews in a neutral setting, with no explicit hateful message; usually, these were mentions of historical events:

Most of the flags raised by the various apostate Arab regimes—is designed by the British crusader Mark Sykes. Yes, Mark Sykes of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Muslims’ lands into nationalist states, the same crusader who also promoted the infamous Balfour Declaration behind the establishment of the Jewish state. (*Dabiq*, Issue 9:20)

Here, as the Jewish state is mentioned in a relatively neutral historical description, it was coded as neutral. The process of coding was very time consuming and difficult in that I constantly reread the material and its codes to make sure they were correct. This revision meant that I had to change the codes to adjust them more precisely to the content of the quotations. I did this several times until I no longer found a code that could be interpreted in a different way, given the content of respective quotation.

4) The construction of themes

At this phase, I started pattern coding; these codes identify an emerging theme or explanation by grouping the codes from the first cycle into themes. An outcome of pattern coding is that it turns the first cycle coding into fewer and more meaningful units of analysis, a meta code. The function of pattern coding is that it condenses large amounts of data into smaller analytical units, so it takes the process of data analysis a step further, making it more advanced by forcing the researcher to reflect over the material. It provided me with a

cognitive map that helped me understand the material from a social identity perspective. An example of a definition is mention of a war against Islam, and an example of a code, from the theme war against Islam, is war.

After coding of the data, the researcher looks for patterns and the relationships between codes. This process of categorization means that the researcher groups similar or seemingly related codes together (Saldaña 2013:64). These codes then turn into a larger category or more abstract code. Eventually, I identified themes. Memo writing assisted me during this process (Leavy 2017:256). For example, I created the categories “Neutral” and “War.” All the codes belonging to each category were grouped under the respective category in a document named categories. I also engaged in memo writing; that is, I was writing and thinking systematically about the codes and the emerging categories. Leavy explains this process: “Memos are a link between your coding and interpretation, and they document your impressions, ideas, and emerging understandings” (2017:152).

A theme can be seen as an extended phrase or sentence that signals the more significant meaning behind a code or categorizations of codes (Saldaña 2013:175). Hence, the construction of themes is a process of engaging with the material in a deeper, more advanced way. As I engaged with the coded data and the categories by rereading the material and writing memos, I recognized different themes: Theological Sources, War against Muslims, Jews, and Shiites. These theme names were written under each paragraph (under the descriptive code) when I found them in the categories document. The next step was to group the different paragraphs under each theme. Then, I quantitatively analyzed the prevalence of the themes per issue and the prevalence of the search words per issue to assess whether there were any changes. The counting of the themes helped me assess the prevalence of each theme. This helped me refine my themes in the final analysis and in finding subcategories.

5) Final analysis

The first step at this point was to read the text carefully to fully understand it. Next, I abstracted the meaning of each quotation in relation to the type of antisemitism/theme with the help of one abstraction sentence. An example of an abstraction sentence is “The war against Islam is being mobilized by Jews.”

The final emerging themes were War against Islam, Hadith References, and Qur’an References. War against Islam theme was divided into three subcategories: Sunni enemies, American enemy descriptions, Jews, and Shiites. I organized the quotations under their themes and chose the most representative and informative quotations for the empirical chapter. Next, I started researching the meaning of the themes in-depth, I read both religious and scientific sources on their meaning, and then I contrasted that with the meaning ISIS had given them in their specific context (usually politicized, hateful, and violent).

After the coding, I started analyzing each quotation and abstracted its meaning. Then, I put the neutral ones in one category, which I excluded from the end material. One example of how the neutral quotes could look like is this one: "The Islamic State is here to stay, even if all the Christians, Jews, mushrikīn, and apostates despise such" (*Dabiq*, Issue 1:33).

The first step I took in my final analysis of the quotations was to make sure that the religious quotations and sources were accurate. I did this by reading the Hadiths and Qur'an quotations in Arabic and compared them to the English translation. Next, I read different interpretations of the quotations to understand their religious meaning. These interpretations were both religious and academic. I later used the scientific sources as references. The religious interpretation check ensured that the quotations ISIS mentioned existed and that their translation to English was plausible. When I found two errors in translation, I noted it in the raw data document and the journal. Next, I interpreted the themes and each quotation in the respective theme.

In the final analysis, the propaganda was analyzed and contrasted to other views/interpretations. I did this by including scientific material of different interpretations of the religious texts. This suits the analysis of theological texts used by extremists because it does not run the risk of reproducing their interpretations and cause, an ethical aspect of this type of research that is highly important to stress and implement.

Analyzing Qutb and the Sahwa Movement

To have an academic understanding of the causes of contemporary Islamist antisemitic violence, it is essential to scrutinize primary sources and study its characteristics and the reasoning that led to the emergence of Islamist antisemitism. Thus, Chapter 7 traces the origins of Islamist antisemitism to Qutb. The analysis in Chapter 7 focuses on tracing the origins of ISIS antisemitism to Qutb's writings, specifically in *Our Struggle against the Jews*. As the analysis of ISIS antisemitism shows that they frequently use Qur'an verses al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120, Chapter 7 includes an analysis of Qutb's interpretation of these verses to show how he Islamized antisemitism.

The analysis of *Our Struggle against the Jews* was based on a thematic analysis. The essay is relatively short, the codes were few, and the themes were, for example, Qutb's identity construction of Jews as evil, the role of culture in Qutb's antisemitism, and the role of Zionism in Qutb's antisemitism. The analysis of the themes are crucial since they show how Qutb Islamized antisemitism and drew inspiration from the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The analysis of Qutb's interpretation of al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120 is based on his book *In the Shade of the Qur'an*. These interpretations are important because these two verses are commonly referred to by those who want to claim religious legitimacy in their antisemitism. Moreover, it is important to stress that Qutb's *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, a 30-volume book

translated into many languages, has significantly influenced how many Muslims view Islam, the world's second largest religion. Thus, the world view he paints and the identity constructions he makes have been and are significant in current times.

Moreover, chapter 8 on the Sahwa movement is based on a reconstruction of the literature available on them and some of the movement's leading figure, Surur's, main points in his book *Here Come the Zoroastrians*. The main points were chosen after I searched for "Yahud," the Arabic word for Jew, and "Rāfi-dah," a derogatory term used to describe Shiites. This book only exists in Arabic and some South Asian languages. The hits showed examples of how Surur politicized Shiite identity and in some cases connected Shiite identity to Jewish identity; thus, these quotations serve as an example of how the Sahwa movement politicized Shiite identity. The reconstruction of the literature is based on most of the scientific sources on the Sahwa movement; as there are few sources, the study offers a comprehensive reading and analysis of the Sahwa movement.

In addition, the book *The Day of Wrath* by Safar al-Hawali was analyzed using thematic analysis. Several themes emerged: a distortion of Biblical prophecies, constructing Jewish identity as violent, a conspiracy of a Jewish world domination and control over the US, and using the Bible to develop essentialist antisemitic claims. Hence, the Sahwa movement is analyzed through a reconstruction of the relevant existing research and on the Sahwa movement's antisemitic and anti-Shiite ideological developments.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is the most common criteria to evaluate qualitative content analysis. In qualitative inquiry, trustworthiness is needed as it allows researchers to claim their findings and arguments as worthy of further consideration (ibid). One evaluation criterion is that the process of content analysis is reported accurately. Furthermore, there are five ways to assess a study's trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity (Schwandt, Lincoln, and Guba 2007:24). Below I explain the most commonly used of these five criteria in detail and how I implemented them.

Establishing credibility means that the researcher accurately describes the material (Guba 1985). To gather credible data, different sampling methods are required. To ensure credibility, I prolonged the engagement both in length and intensity with the material (Schwandt et al. 2007:18). To identify possible distortion of religious scripture in *Dabiq*, I read the primary religious scriptures in Arabic and English. The data collection process and the results were reported systematically and carefully throughout this chapter and the empirical chapters. I also made several negative case analyses; that is, I searched for

negative instances relating to developing themes and continuously adjusted the patterns until no further negative ones were found (Schwandt et al., 2007:19). Many of the negative instances could be found in the neutral category, which was continuously analyzed and revised. Next, I refined my themes as the inquiry advanced (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, since the material is qualitative, it always requires analysis and is open to different interpretations. I presented the steps in my data collection and the analysis of the material in detail to make the study replicable for other researchers and therefore increase its credibility.

Archiving all records of the raw data provides an audit trail against which later data analysis and interpretations can be tested for adequacy (Lincoln & Guba 1985). All raw data files were dated and stored to provide an audit trail and to confirm the data analysis and the interpretations for adequacy.

One way to indicate the trustworthiness of the findings is to use quotations (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Polit & Beck 2012). Hence, the study includes representative quotations from the material. For example, each central concept should be linked to the data by a quotation (ibid). Examples of many quotations help confirm the connection between the results and data and the richness of data (ibid). The quotations I selected are connected to all main concepts and representative of the sample.

Transferability refers to extrapolation; if another researcher wants to apply parts of the findings elsewhere, a thick description of the data is needed (Schwandt et al. 2007:19). Authenticity refers to the extent to which researchers show a range of realities (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Schwandt et al. 2007). That is, authenticity implies that the findings can be repeated if the study were replicated with the same or similar material in the same context (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Authenticity was ensured by coding the entire material and the presentation of the result. Hence, a researcher who uses the same definitions will most likely find similar results.

Trustworthiness is increased if the results are presented to allow the reader to look for alternative interpretations. It is important to hold onto several possible rival explanations until one explanation becomes increasingly more compelling due to stronger and varied sources of evidence (Miles et al. 2014:269). I did give rival explanations a good chance and it was only after several months of analysis that my main argument, the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative, became clear. Most importantly, the process of data collection, coding, organizing, and analysis was described in detail to enable others to judge whether and how the outcome is based on the material (Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke 2004:174).

Methodological Limitations and Reflections

It is important to point out that the suggested theoretical framework and results are not meant to constitute an all-encompassing explanation for antisemitism and violence. Moreover, the *Dabiq* content analysis is based on detailed interpretations, and the results can change with a different set of definitions of the themes.

There are limitations with the thematic analysis based on news articles; the main limitation lies in the reliability of the articles. I tried to minimize this risk by only choosing articles from well-established news sources, and I cross-checked the information in the different articles to make sure it was accurate. Furthermore, I excluded much of the information in the articles based on private stories, such as what friends had said about the perpetrators. I also excluded information with a pathological character, such as a lawyer calling a perpetrator a psychopath or a narcissist. In addition, private information was excluded. That is, the focus was on the sociologically relevant factors. Moreover, the material was chosen because there was no other available way to get information about all of the perpetrators. However, I could have used certain court documents, but that would mean that only one perpetrator, who is alive, would be included since the others are dead and did not have a trial. Hence, I chose to focus on media material.

Although thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research material (Holloway and Todres 2003). However, consistency and cohesion were ensured by observing previous research and the theoretical framework while developing the themes.

I chose different ways of analyzing the material since the articles on the perpetrators were less detailed and therefore a thematic analysis is more suitable. Given that content analysis is usually used when much detail needs to be given to the material, the extensive and complicated *Dabiq* material was more suitable for content analysis. I chose an inductive approach to the *Dabiq* material since the topic is not well-researched. Therefore, it would have been challenging to test certain categories in advance.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of this thesis are partly related to the previous section. For example, I excluded private information about the perpetrators. However, some other ethical aspects need to be discussed concerning research on extremist propaganda. The first is the risk of becoming a tool for the extremists by reproducing their ideas and self-images. The risk of doing so made me exclude material that was too inciting and too violent. However, the most considerable risk of reproduction lies in an analysis that is not critical of their

narrative. By dissecting and critically analyzing the extremist narrative, the risk of reproduction decreases. Furthermore, this approach can even weaken extremist narratives. To uncritically report ISIS's or the Muslim Brotherhood's version of Islam would be unethical since it would only reproduce their ideas. This is further complicated by the fact that much of their attempts to gain legitimacy lies in their religious claims.

I searched for and presented different interpretations of the religious scripture ISIS was using in *Dabiq*; if I had not done this, the study would have been unethical not only because it would mean reproducing ISIS's version of Islam but also because it can fuel anti-Islam prejudice and sentiments. Given that anti-Muslim sentiments are prevalent, it has become even more important to be wary of how scholarly work can be used for nefarious purposes. However, I do not believe in abstaining from scholarly analysis because of the risk of it being used for nefarious purposes.

Instead, a scholarly analysis is needed to dissuade the myths created when scholars refrain from engaging in academic analysis because of fear of fueling racism or other forms of intolerance. As scholars, we need to believe in our methods and that rigorously following them is the right way to approach controversial topics in the name of advancing knowledge. To refuse to academically engage in sensitive issues turns research into a practice which is mainly political, something which I believe it should not be. Current politics or contemporary taboos and trends should not determine what we analyze or not. Moreover, the risk of reproducing extremist material where religion is used without counterviews was solved by providing different interpretations for each religious claim in the material.

Moreover, respect for cultural heritage is one of the fundamental principles in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (Vetenskapsrådet 2021). Here, it is important to emphasize that Classical Arabic is considered the holy language of the Quran, which is sacred for Muslims. Classical Arabic's holy status means that it should not be used for innovations but rather preserved in its original form.

What is written in the Qur'an cannot be changed; it can only be interpreted. To fully understand the Qur'an, one should know and read it in its original form in Classical Arabic. This makes translations somewhat complicated. I made sure to read the relevant verses in both English and Arabic. Due to its sacred status, it can be sensitive to use the Qur'an for analysis. However, I was aware of this issue throughout the analysis and did not change any of its meaning. Instead, the discussions among most scholars center around different interpretations; this is where my analysis is situated.

Conclusion

The methods applied in this thesis are all compatible with a pragmatic approach. The overall research design was content analysis, thematic analysis, and a reconstruction of previous research. Content analysis was used for *Dabiq* and thematic analysis for the profiles of the perpetrators.

The chapter on Qutb was based on a thematic analysis of *Our Struggle against Jews*, and the material from *In the Shade of the Qur'an* was sampled based on the results from the *Dabiq* material, namely Qutb's interpretation of the two most common Qur'an verses used in *Dabiq*'s antisemitic material, al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120. Furthermore, Chapter 8 on the Sahwa movement is based on a reconstruction of previous research and some of Surur's main points in his book *Here Come the Zoroastrians*. Chapter 8 also includes an analysis of Safar al-Hawali's antisemitic book *The Day of Wrath*. Moreover, an essential ethical aspect of the analysis of extremist propaganda that the study follows is not to reproduce the religious legitimacy that those groups attempt to gain but instead to offer different interpretations and to remain critical when analyzing the material.

5. Islamist Antisemitic Perpetrators in Europe

Introduction

This empirical chapter analyzes four of the Islamist perpetrators of the most well-known contemporary Islamist terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe. The analysis focuses on the critical social characteristics of the perpetrators and their social identity constructions. These four perpetrators were chosen because they conducted the most significant Islamist terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe.

In this case, significant refers to a key turning point in antisemitic violence in France that took place in 2012 when Mohammed Merah killed three French soldiers of Maghrebi descent deemed as apostates and murdered three children and a teacher in a Jewish school (Judaken 2018; Arkin 2018). This attack escalated antisemitic violence from vandalism and interpersonal violence to terrorism and mass murder (Judaken 2018:13–14).

After Mohammed Merah, two other perpetrators affiliated with ISIS were inspired by his attacks, Mehdi Nemmouche and Amedy Coulibaly. The fourth significant ISIS-inspired antisemitic attack was conducted by Omar El-Hussein. This chapter analyzes Mohammed Merah's, Mehdi Nemmouche's, Amedy Coulibaly's, and Omar El-Hussein's antisemitic attacks, their background information, and their process leading to violence from a social identity perspective.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze information about the perpetrators to understand their violence from a social identity perspective. As these perpetrators represent European antisemitic perpetrators, this chapter only concerns antisemitism in Europe.

However, the three remaining empirical chapters are more widely applicable for both Europe and the Muslim world since the propaganda is available for everyone online. Furthermore, the belief in belonging to the transnational imaginary ummah brings them together. The European perpetrators are related to the next three chapters in the sense that their antisemitic attacks are inspired by the Islamist ideology analyzed. Thus, this chapter focuses on those who act out on violent Islamist antisemitic ideas. In comparison to the three other

empirical chapters, this chapter looks at the practical consequences of violent Islamist antisemitic ideology and how Islamist identity constructions lie at the core of the most significant Islamist terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe.

As political violence requires perpetrators (Sageman 2017b:xvii), it is crucial to develop an academic understanding of their perspective to understand political violence. That is, the study of political violence requires that we capture the subjectivity of the perpetrators, not just their ideology (ibid). However, capturing the subjectivity of perpetrators does not mean that the researcher should adopt and legitimize their perspective; rather, the researcher needs to transcend it with the use of a scholarly analysis. In this chapter the actor's perspective is transcended by an analysis of it from a social identity perspective. In summary, this chapter contributes to the aim of the thesis by offering an analysis of the perpetrator's violence from a social identity perspective.

The chapter will start with a presentation of the perpetrators and the analysis for the most part follows Sageman's (2017a) model for explaining political violence (Table 7).

Table 7. Sageman's model for explaining political violence

1) Self Categorization
2) De-personalization of out-group
3) Existential threat
4) Politicized identity
5) Martial identity: a) escalation of conflict, b) disillusionment with non-violence, and c) moral outrage at state.

Table 8 lists the background information about the perpetrators. Following the table, the analysis focuses on Mohammed Merah, Mehdi Nemmouche, Amedy Coulibaly, and Omar El-Hussein, in that order.

Table 8. Islamist antisemitic perpetrators.

Name	Mohammed Merah	Mehdi Nemmouche	Amedy Coulibaly	Omar El-Hussein
Birth year	1988	1985	1982	1992
Birthplace	Toulouse, France	Roubaix, France	Essonne, France	Vordinborg, Denmark
Prison sentence(s) prior to the attack	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age at the time of the attack	23	29	32	22
Place of the attack	Jewish school in Toulouse	Jewish museum in Brussels	Kosher store in Paris	Copenhagen synagogue
The death toll of the attack	Seven	Four	Four	Two
Date of the attack	2012	2014	2015	2015
The motive for the attack	Antisemitic	Antisemitic	Antisemitic	Antisemitic
Place of Radicalization	Prison	Prison	Prison	Prison

Mohammed Merah

The Attacks

Mohammed Merah conducted three attacks in 2012. He first killed a soldier in Toulouse on March 11. Four days later, he killed two more soldiers. In his third attack, he killed four people, including three children in a Jewish school in Toulouse. He used a pistol in all three attacks (CNN 2012). In total, Merah killed seven people. Merah was a French national of Algerian origin, and his attacks were carried out in the name of neo-jihadist ideology (Kepel 2017:202).

Merah's three first victims were killed in two separate incidents four days apart. They were French paratroopers of North African and Muslim descent, and according to Merah, they personified an army against Islam (Wieviorka 2014:54). The third attack was antisemitic and took place at a Jewish school. Merah killed a rabbi, his two young sons, and an eight-year-old girl. Merah filmed his killings. After the attack, he barricaded himself in his apartment with many weapons; while barricaded, he spoke to the police about his motives. He was killed while jumping from the window after a 30-hour standoff with the police (Andre and Harris-Hogan 2013:308).

Background Information

Merah was born in 1988 in Toulouse, France; he grew up in a poor neighborhood with a large North African population in Toulouse. Merah's brother, Abdelghani Merah, wrote a book about their lives where he described their upbringing as filled with abuse, violence, racism, and hatred (Merah 2012). The five siblings grew up with their mother; their father was absent. Merah had been imprisoned for criminal activities from a young age, and after his prison sentence, he became radicalized (BBC 2012). Furthermore, Merah was sentenced 15 times by a Toulouse juvenile court when he was a minor (CNN 2012).

He allegedly grew up in a home where the children were taught that Arabs were supposed to hate Jews (France24 2012). Here, one can note the importance of social identity constructions in Merah's antisemitism. It indicates an identification and self-categorization into a supposed Arab social identity and an early social categorization of Arabs and Jews, with an intent of creating hatred against Jews. It also shows the relationality between social identity constructions and antisemitism. Here, the social categorization leading to hatred is automatic and inherent in the categorization itself; the ingroup Arabs are, according to this way of thinking, supposed to hate the outgroup Jews solely on the basis of these social identities. Hating a certain group based on an other-imposed identity is a form of de-personalization and de-humanization of the

out-group where they are turned into a stereotype. However, it also shows a stereotyping of the category Arab, who are reduced to people who are supposed to hate Jews.

Two years before his attacks, Merah attended an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan (CNN 2012). On February 24, 2012, two weeks before his attacks in March, Merah appeared in court accused of driving without a license and causing an accident. He was sentenced to a month in prison and was supposed to appear before the judge in April 2012 to discuss where he would serve his sentence (ibid). Merah allegedly had a fascination with death, and it developed significantly after his incarceration; he would sometimes attend funerals to watch dead bodies, and he believed that “death was beautiful” (Andre and Harris-Hogan 2013:311).

Olivier Roy (2017:71) describes the fascination with death among Islamist extremists as an ideology of nihilism. According to Roy, nihilism plays a key role in the radicalization process of the new generation of Islamist extremists (Roy 2017:5). The attractiveness of this nihilistic ideology can be related to a state of social death, a state where a person is treated as if they were dead in relation to others.

A socially dead person is more likely to be drawn to a nihilistic ideology since the concept of death is already cognitively available for the individual. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that it was after his prison time that Merah increasingly became fascinated with death. Here, it is important to mention that social psychologist Florette Cohen Abady suggests that: “anti-semitism is, in part, a defense aimed at repressing death related anxieties” (2019:291).

In March 2013, Olivier Roy wrote an article about Merah in the New York Times titled “Loner, loser, killer.” In it, Roy argues that Merah stood at the margins of French society and the Muslim community:

Merah was not known for his piety: He did not belong to any religious congregation; he did not belong to any radical group or even to a local Islamic movement. A petty delinquent, psychologically fragile, he tried to enlist in the French Foreign Legion and then left for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Merah found in Al Qaeda a narrative of solitary heroism and a way, after months of watching videos on the Internet, to achieve short-term notoriety and find a place in the real world. Consider Merah's attack on the French soldiers. If his killings at the Jewish school in Toulouse were a terrible reflection of the kind of antisemitism typically promoted by Al Qaeda, his attack on French soldiers—specifically Muslim ones—was novel and revealing of something else. He saw the soldiers as traitors: French Muslims fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. (2012a)

Roy points out that Merah’s attack on French Muslim soldiers was novel and based on an idea of them being traitors for participating in the war against Islam. However, the idea of certain Muslims as traitors and the

excommunication of traitors has long been part of Islamist belief. For example, Qutb claims that there are people who call themselves Muslims who are not actually Muslim and who participate in the war against Islam.

Therefore, the politicized notion of Muslim traitors is interconnected with Islamist excommunication and the Islamist idea of an ongoing war against Islam. From a social identity perspective, Islamist excommunication of Muslims can be understood as a social categorization of them as an outgroup that should be excluded either through social death or physical death to maintain the ingroup's identity and positive distinctiveness. However, it is important to note that within Islamist ideology this exclusion and excommunication of certain Muslims puts them in a category of an outgroup worthy of death by the ingroup. This shows that the step from excommunication of an outgroup to the ingroup adopting a martial social identity is closely interconnected.

Roy also describes Merah as a loner or at least without belonging to a radical group from the start. However, Kepel (2017:76) argues that the term "lone-wolf" hardly describes Mohammed Merah. Kepel argues that Merah acted alone in March 2012, but the events leading to his terrorist attacks were influenced and assisted by actors such as his family connections in France and the Taliban fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Despite initial reports of Merah acting alone, with time, more focus has been on whether he could have been influenced by social networks and his family in his radicalization (Andre and Harris-Hogan 2013:311).

The Process Leading to Violence

Merah's lawyer, Christian Etelin, has suggested that Merah's radicalization started when he was jailed for 21 months in December 2007 (Bilefsky 2012). Etelin also stated that the prison sentence made him worry about the future (ibid). Allegedly, Merah also tried to hang himself in prison (Bilefsky 2012). Furthermore, Merah's brother also believed that his brother's radicalization was accelerated in prison when he came under the influence of neo-jihadists (Andre and Harris-Hogan 2013:312).

During the siege of Merah's apartment, Merah told a French intelligence officer that he had made up his mind about "joining jihad" in prison (Rosenthal 2016:55). As previously mentioned, prison environments also entail an isolation that can cause a state of social death. Moreover, being socially dead is a step toward death and that can make the individual more prone to adopt a nihilistic ideology or join extremist groups in prison to break isolation.

When Merah left prison in 2009, he was almost completely radicalized and was open about his fascination for violent jihad (Andre and Harris-Hogan 2013:314). In addition to the time Merah spent with radicals at home and abroad, there were several signs of Merah's radicalization before the first attack. He spent significant amounts of time surfing neo-jihadist websites (Andre and Harris-Hogan 2013:315). In 2010, Merah also made a short film

praising neo-jihadist ideology; he was also known to have watched violent jihadist videos online (ibid).

According to Sageman (2017a:117–118), a politicized social identity is activated when a severe political grievance divides people into two contrasting sides. Neo-jihadist websites usually show violent videos of victims in what they call the war against Islam, and with the help of the internet, it has become easier to identify with victims abroad (ibid). Similar to Merah, most of the global neo-jihadists that Sageman (2017a:118) interviewed attributed their politicization to watching videos of mass violence against Muslims. The violence outraged them and activated a self-categorization into an imagined community, which included these victims, and was in contrast with the states committing these atrocities (ibid). This self-categorization is based on a politicized social identity transforming the personal to the political.

In addition to watching jihadist videos, there are other indicators that Merah had adopted a politicized social identity that eventually turned into a martial social identity. During the siege of his apartment, Merah told the police that he considered his killings a retaliation for “Palestinian children killed by the Israeli military” and the French participation in NATO operations in Afghanistan (Rosenthal 2015:58). Merah’s mention of his killings as retaliation for Palestinian children killed by the Israeli military indicates that Merah considered Jewish children in France connected to the state of Israel’s alleged action.

Thus, Merah politicized Jewish identity and placed it within the ideological framework of a war against Islam. Merah also seems to have seen himself as a soldier when he was killing Jews, given that he called his killings a retaliation. This indicates that he had adopted a martial social identity within an ideology where Jews are portrayed as evil political agents fighting Muslims and therefore they should be killed. This notion relates to both ISIS, Qutb’s, and the Sahwa movement’s worldview (see Chapters 6, 7, and 8, respectively).

However, there is one more crucial aspect to Merah’s radicalization that probably occurred before he adopted a politicized identity. As mentioned by Roy, Merah tried to join the French Foreign Legion, which shows that he initially wanted to be a soldier.

This information is interesting given that Merah killed French soldiers of North African descent, having the same origin as himself. Therefore, the gap between him and them might have caused him to hold a *ressentiment*. They had something he was denied: they were French soldiers. In this case, it indicates that Merah resented the Jews and French soldiers. Thus, *ressentiment*, besides an ideological belief, might have been a contributing factor in his killings. *Ressentiment* includes that the person believes himself powerless, yet he retains his arrogance and a false sense of superiority. Thus, his will to power remains intact (Remley 2016:147).

As mentioned earlier, *ressentiment* is also typified by its obsessive nature; it is a type of revenge that manifests itself in a desire to humiliate its target followed by its total annihilation (ibid). That Merah filmed his killings can be understood as a form of humiliation. Killing his victims is, of course, also a total annihilation. Moreover, *ressentiment* is often connected to destructive ideological worldviews that emphasize revenge against those held responsible for one's suffering (TenHouten 2018:58). In Merah's case, those held responsible within the imaginary world view of Islamist ideology were the Muslim soldiers and the Jews in the Jewish school. Merah's rejection by the French military might also have motivated him to adopt a neo-jihadist politicized identity. Thus, one can understand exclusion and *ressentiment* as what comes before adopting a politicized social identity.

Moreover, a politicized social identity is adopted before the martial social identity. *Ressentiment* fuels a politicized social identity since it explains difficulties in terms of a larger social reality and problem, an ideology. In this ideology, they are also given a chance to be "heroes" by taking on a martial social identity and avenging those they claim to be in a war with. The other-imposed social identity is key to understanding this type of antisemitic violence.

Furthermore, the "hero" status that the martial social identity is given and its exposure on social media have been described by Roy as an "extraordinary narcissistic posturing" (2017:49). This narrative is, according to Roy, playing on the image of superheroes from movies and video games. It is part of the Islamic imaginary, such as martyrdom (ibid); however, it is also part of a modern aesthetics of violence and heroism (Roy 2017:50).

The fact that Merah filmed his killings indicates that he adopted a modern aesthetics of violence and wanted to have a hero status. Roy has described this visualization of brutality as a theatricalizing of scripted terror aimed to sow fear (2017:75). With ISIS, this theatricalization of terror accelerated; it is powerful in that it blinds its audience with fear while it strengthens the sympathizer's belief that their cause is all-powerful (ibid). Roy emphasizes that ISIS can only sow fear and its goal of a global caliphate is merely a delusion.

Anthropologist Ariel Planeix, who worked for the French Ministry of Justice on radicalized individuals, believes Merah's life was typical of the terrorists he had seen. He viewed Merah as a template for the generation of jihadists that has emerged since his killings:

The minors Planeix studied had all been abused, abandoned, or raped, and sometimes all three; if they remained in contact with their families, their families systematically denied the existence of any such problems. Their childhoods, like the Merah's were an almost absurd cumulation of horrors. A growing body of research suggests that, among this new generation of jihadis, this is indeed the norm. This is not to suggest that jihadism is merely a social problem, but rather that "radicalization" is much more than a matter of ideology and its transmission. (Sayare 2018:47)

Here, the simple yet important point is made that radicalization is a process that usually includes an ideology and certain social problems. However, this thesis argues that the social problems of the radicalized many times go hand-in-hand with neo-jihadist ideology. As Wieviorka's (2007) study shows, exclusion of Muslims in France and their experiences of racism fuels antisemitism. This can be understood as a form of *ressentiment* held against Jews. However, Jews are targeted because of an ideological component within the Islamist imaginary; that is, it is not based on reality. This neo-jihadist ideology accuses Jews of being in control of the world and the war against Islam. Thus, *ressentiment* is inaccurately projected onto Jews who become targets in a worldview that believes Muslims are being attacked by Jews. I call this idea of Muslims being victimized in a supposed war against Islam the imaginary victimized ummah; its meaning will be further explained in the following chapters.

Moreover, Merah became an inspiration for other antisemitic attackers. This is described by Sageman (2017a:140) as a group prototype. A perpetrator's death can transform him into a group prototype that influences others in the group to imitate him and take up violence. Group prototypes are the most representative members of a group with a shared social identity, and they serve as models for others to understand the meaning and norms of their group and therefore they have a strong social influence (Sageman 2017b:20).

The following section is about a perpetrator whom Merah inspired, Mehdi Nemmouche.

Mehdi Nemmouche

The attack

In 2014, Mehdi Nemmouche stormed the Jewish Museum in Brussels and started shooting. The shootings left two Israelis and two museum staff dead. Nemmouche was captured and later convicted of murdering four people. Before the killings, Nemmouche had joined ISIS in Syria.

Background information

Nemmouche was born in 1985 in Roubaix, France and has both French and Algerian citizenship. Nemmouche never knew his father, and his mother could not take care of him; when he was three months old, he was moved to a foster home in Lille. However, he did not remain there but went to his grandparent, followed by visits to other care homes and an orphanage in Paris (France24 2019b).

Kepel describes Nemmouche's background:

His father was unknown; he was put in various daycare centers and then was placed in contact with his mother's family in La Bourgogne, a troubled neighborhood in Tourcoing, a city adjacent to Roubaix. Like Mohamed Merah and the Kouachi brothers, he was cared for by institutions charged with the responsibility of protecting young people. (2017:97)

Here, Kepel compares Nemmouche to Merah concerning their upbringing in social institutions. Nemmouche was also allegedly inspired by Merah. They both traveled to join jihadist movements. Nemmouche was an ISIS recruit who had spent a year with ISIS in Syria, and Merah had spent time with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Both Merah and Nemmouche shot their victims in the head. Nemmouche was the first ISIS returnee who carried out a terror attack in Europe. Before joining ISIS, he had been arrested for armed robbery, vehicle theft, and vandalism. He committed his first crime at the age of 13, and his offenses continued throughout his teens (France24 2014).

The process leading to political violence

Nemmouche is described as a radicalized prisoner who made Islamist connections in prison (BBC 2019a). In prison, he was known as someone who often spoke of jihad (France24 2019b):

Nemmouche's Islamization occurred during the five years he spent in the prison incubator between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-seven. With no family ties that might have provided him with moral support during his detention, he remained isolated in the penitentiaries of the south of France. It is not rare, in a prison where Islam predominates, for an individual stigmatized for belonging to a minority or other deviant groups to turn this stigma into a source of religious pride, if only to survive the pressure brought to bear by fellow prisoners. (Kepel 2017:98)

Other than the networks created in prison and the need of belonging, the isolation that Nemmouche experienced can also be understood as a form of social death. Moreover, Nemmouche's lack of family may have re-enforced feelings of social death, further strengthening his isolation in prison.

Three weeks after his release from prison, Nemmouche joined ISIS in Syria. Four French journalists held hostage in Syria by ISIS testified that Nemmouche was one of their torturers (Barker 2019). One witness testified that Nemmouche admired Mohammed Merah. This indicates that Merah had become a prototype for Islamist antisemitic terrorist attacks in Europe. Like Merah, Amedy Coulibaly also filmed his killings. Nemmouche wanted to imitate Merah by filming his killings, but his camera did not work well. Moreover, Coulibaly wanted to imitate Merah even closer since one of his killings occurred around a Jewish school (Rosenthal 2016:52–53).

Present at Nemmouche's trial, after being in Syria, was French journalist Nicolas Hénin, who recognized Nemmouche as one of his jailers in Syria (Tablet 2014). As a witness, Hénin told the court that Nemouche was filled with hate towards Jews and Shia Muslims (BBC 2019). This indicates that Nemmouche was ideologically motivated and that he categorized Jews and Shiites as an outgroup, de-personalizing them by hating them on the basis of their identity. Within ISIS ideology, Shiites are often seen as undercover Jews trying to destroy Islam from within, participating in the war against Islam. This will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter on the ISIS antisemitic world view and Chapter 8 on the Sahwa movement.

During his trial, Nemmouche said that he would not speak unless he were guaranteed that he would not be put into Israel's hands (Weitzmann 2014). Nemmouche claimed to be fearful that he would be extradited to Israel. This statement may be understood as conspiratorial, indicating a form of obsession with the country. As mentioned earlier, resentment is typified by its obsessive nature.

While in Syria, Nemmouche became the acolyte of a jihadist named Benghalem. After the Charlie Hebdo and antisemitic killings in the Kosheria in Paris in 2015, Benghalem appeared in a video praising the perpetrators of these massacres, whom he knew well, encouraging more attacks. Kepel recalls Benghalem's hatred:

“Kill them with knives, or at least spit in their faces, but disavow them!” he exclaimed, thus translating, in a way, the recommendations formulated in 2005 in Abu Musab al-Suri's *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. It was this high-ranking activist—Salim Benghalem—who took Mehdi Nemmouche as his acolyte at the jail in Aleppo. This is how a jihadist network took a socially disconnected, intellectual lightweight ex-con and weaponized him, propelling him out of the misfortune that marked his birth in Roubaix and into a worldwide jihad. However, Nemmouche's fortuitous arrest during a routine customs inspection at the bus station in Marseille on May 30, 2014, where he was found with an arsenal of weapons used in his attack on the Jewish Museum of Brussels the week prior, reveals one of the main strategic weaknesses of third-generation jihadism. The latter relies on delegating to unstable individuals the responsibility of choosing when and how to enact jihad. (2017:102)

Here, Kepel points to a difference between Nemmouche and the other perpetrators: Nemmouche is still alive. He was arrested under strange circumstances in a bus station carrying weapons in a bag. That he chose to take a bus indicates a form of carelessness, or what Kepel calls “intellectual lightweight.” However, the fact that he did not choose to die in the attack indicates a different behavior from the other perpetrators given the centrality of death within ISIS ideology. Unlike Merah, Nemmouche was antisemitic as well as anti-Shiite. This shifting trend with an increasing anti-Shiism coming from ISIS is crucial in understanding their ideology scholarly and how it differs from

previous jihadist groups and in understanding how it is interconnected with Islamist antisemitism.

Amedy Coulibaly

The Attack

Amedy Coulibaly took several people as hostages in a kosher supermarket in Paris on January 9, 2015. He eventually shot and killed four Jewish hostages. Before being shot to death at the kosher supermarket by the police, Coulibaly called a French TV network to announce that he had “synchronized” his actions with Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, the two brothers who conducted the Charlie Hebdo attack (Higgins 2015). Coulibaly claimed allegiance to ISIS (Roy 2017:76). Moreover, he filmed his killings and wanted to upload his GoPro camera footage to the internet while still being in the kosher supermarket; Coulibaly hoped that the video would inspire others to commit similar terrorist attacks in Paris (Independent 2015g). Hence, he aspired to become a group prototype.

Background Information

Coulibaly was born in 1982 in France to parents from Mali. He grew up in a banlieue area in Grigny south of Paris, known for its riots in 2005 (Guardian 2015a). Similar to the previous perpetrators, Coulibaly was already known to the police; he had six previous convictions—five for robbery and one for drugs. Coulibaly had spent time in prison; in 2013, he was sentenced to five years in prison for his involvement in a plot to free Smain Ait Ali Belkacem from prison (BBC 2015i). Belkacem is an Islamist who was convicted for the 1995 Paris metro station bombing (ibid). However, Coulibaly was released after one year since he had already spent three years in pretrial detention (Higgins 2015). Thus, Coulibaly was released in 2014, one year before the attack against the kosher supermarket (BBC 2015i).

The Process Leading to Violence

Coulibaly was radicalized in prison. However, he had a violent past and had experienced confrontations with the police. Most significantly, in 2000, when Coulibaly was 18, police allegedly shot and killed one of his friends when they were stealing motorbikes together (CBS 2015). According to Sageman, a politicized social identity is activated when severe political grievance helps to divide people into two opposing sides. Three additional conditions need to be met for violence to occur: 1) escalation of hostility between the state and their community, which includes a cumulative radicalization of discourse; 2)

disillusionment with nonviolent legal tactics; and 3) moral outrage at new state aggression against their community (Sageman 2017a:130).

This escalation can also take place because of police harassment in the form of stop and frisk, constant questioning, and brutality (Sageman, 2017a:133). Given Coulibaly's violent life, these experiences and encounters may have contributed to his politicized identity.

In another incident, Coulibaly's car plunged off a bridge after he robbed a clothing store at gunpoint (CBS 2015). Coulibaly was radicalized in prison. When he left prison, he became even more radicalized, regularly visiting Djamel Beghal, a convicted terrorist living under surveillance in rural central France (Faucon 2015). Beghal came to be seen by the UK and French intelligence as al-Qaeda's leading recruiter in Europe (Guardian 2015a). Coulibaly served time in the Fleury-Merogis prison. While in prison, he filmed the prison's terrible conditions, which were subsequently exposed in a TV documentary (Faucon 2015).

In 2013, Coulibaly was given a new prison sentence (Higgins 2015). He met Cherif Kouachi, the Charlie Hebdo attacker, while in prison and became radicalized (CBS 2015). Coulibaly wanted to imitate Merah's attack. Like Merah, he filmed his attacks. However, Coulibaly wanted to imitate Merah even closer. It appears that Coulibaly had been planning to kill Jewish children the day before the attack but killed a policewoman:

Like Merah, Coulibaly approached his target on a powerful high-end motorbike. Like Merah, he had with him both a machine gun and a pistol. Like Merah, he arrived around 8 a.m., when a maximum number of children would have been arriving at school. Only the unexpected presence of the police appears to have dissuaded Coulibaly, forcing him to resort to an improvised Plan B: the attack on the kosher supermarket the next day. Thus, as recorded on his GoPro camera, Coulibaly would attempt to explain his actions to the hostages by rhetorically asking them about their ethnic "origin." When one replied "Jewish," he exclaimed, "Voilà! You know why I'm here then! Allahu Akbar!". (Rosenthal 2016:53)

Here, Coulibaly was referring to the Jewish identity of the hostages in explaining why he was going to kill them. Thus, Coulibaly makes a clear social categorization of Jewish identity and that this was the reason he was going to kill them. Hence, he made it clear that his killings were motivated by anti-semitism. Before being shot at the kosher supermarket, Coulibaly called a French TV network to announce that he had synchronized his actions with Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, the two brothers conducting the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. The brothers, cornered in a printing plant near Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, were also killed by police, just as Coulibaly. To one of his hostages, André, Coulibaly explained his actions:

Admitted he already killed a policewoman and was working with brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, who carried out the slaughter at the *Charlie*

Hebdo office. He told the hostages: “There are many people like me who are now preparing in Arab countries. I am not crazy. We understand the Koran. We understand the good and the right way.” He repeatedly asked André: “Do you understand why I am doing what I am doing? Do you understand what I am doing here? I am here because the Prophet has given me an order. I am here to stop the war in the Arab countries.” “Again and again,” he said: “This is not my fault. I have to do this. It is not against you personally.” He wanted me to acknowledge his point of view in some way, what had brought him to what he had to do. (Independent 2015g)

Saying “stop the war in Arab countries” indicates that Coulibaly believed in the Islamist conspiracy about a war against Islam and that he was politicized and self-categorized as a soldier, a martial social identity. Furthermore, he imposed a politicized identity on the Jewish hostages since he believed killing them would somehow be related to this war. By saying that it was not his fault and that he wanted to stop a war, Coulibaly seems to be claiming self-defense. Chatterley (2013:80) suggests that antisemitic violence has always been justified in relation to “the Jew” since it is conceived as a form of self-defense; antisemites, regardless of time and place, see themselves as victims of “the Jew.”

By saying “it is not against you personally,” Coulibaly shows that he politicized the identities of Jews and that they no longer were seen as civilians or individuals. Nietzsche suggests that people who hold *ressentiment* “sanctify *revenge* with the term justice—as though justice were fundamentally simply a further development of the feeling of having been wronged—and belatedly legitimize with *revenge* emotional *reactions* in general, one and all” (2017:48).

When Coulibaly says his attack is an attempt to stop the war in Arab countries, he indicates a belonging to an imagined community where radicalized individuals believe themselves to be the spokespersons and from which they seek to exact their revenge. This revenge is understood as being in defense of those victimized in the war against Islam, the imaginary victimized ummah.

Coulibaly was born in France but his parents were from Mali and had, in reality, very little to do with Arab countries, indicating an imagined belonging to a suffering “Arab” or “Muslim” community. Moreover, Coulibaly claimed he had an order from the prophet to kill the hostages, indicating that he was trying to give his actions a religious legitimacy.

In a report prepared for a Paris court, a psychiatric expert found Coulibaly had a sense of morality that was apparently “lacking” and that he had a wish to be “all-powerful” (Huffpost 2015). Coulibaly’s alleged wish to be all-powerful can also be related to *ressentiment*. Nietzsche describes *ressentiment* as a state where the individual is concerned with power (Remley 2016). Remley (2016) explains this process:

Ressentiment is a psychological form of repressed vengeance, the man of resentment desires to lead a certain kind of life that he deems of importance and is generally thought of as a life of supremacy. Nevertheless, his weakness

creates a feeling of inferiority or impotence. Next, this feeling of impotence assumes the essential role of a feature of one's own psyche. The result is the man of resentment sees himself as permanently and ineluctably weak. Of even greater concern is the fact that his loss of power is seen not as some aberration, but as evidence of his constitutional impotency. In the end, the man of resentment believes himself powerless, yet he retains his arrogance and his false sense of superiority. Thus, his will to power remains intact. (2016:147)

This “will to power” can be understood as part of the activation of a martial social identity that leads to political violence; the perpetrators merely see themselves as soldiers defending their “victimized” imagined community. Self-categorization into a martial social identity means that violence is imminent because people (with this social identity) are likely to act out whom they believe they are. Over time, war metaphors subtly replace self-defense as their frame and guide for action (Sageman 2017a:135). Thus, it is a small step for the perpetrators to go from defensive to offensive.

In summary, Merah, Nemmouche, and Coulibaly all believed that they were participating in the “war against Islam” when they were killing, which indicates the centrality of a martial social identity among the perpetrators. Moreover, the fact that Jews were held responsible for the alleged actions of the state of Israel indicates that the perpetrators politicized Jewish identity. Moreover, *ressentiment* is part of the Islamist ideology because it claims that there is an ongoing war against Muslims, who are seen as victimized, and that it involves killing Jews, who are seen as a powerful homogenous group leading the war against Muslims. Thus, *ressentiment* and Islamist ideology seem to strengthen one another in the case of Islamist antisemitism.

Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein

The Attack

Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein shot a film director to death at a café in Copenhagen on February 14, 2015 and killed a Jewish guard of the synagogue in Copenhagen on February 15, 2015. The attacks occurred approximately one month after Coulibaly's terrorist attack. However, Hussein's attacks took place only two weeks after he was released from prison; thus, he might have been inspired by Coulibaly.

The shooting at Krudttoenden Cafe is understood as an attack on free speech since it was hosting a debate on free speech where “Prophet Mohammed cartoonist” Lars Vilks was speaking. Hussein interrupted the meeting by shooting at the cafe (NYT 2015). Later that night, Hussein went to a synagogue, which was having a bar mitzvah celebration, and shot dead the guard

of the city's main synagogue (BBC 2015c). Hence, there is one other similarity with the Coulibaly attack in addition to its antisemitism; the assault attacked freedom of speech since Coulibaly claimed that his attack was synchronized with the Charlie Hebdo attack.

According to Danish security services, El-Hussein acted alone and was not part of an organized terror cell. Moreover, investigators suggest that he could have been inspired by the attacks against the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and Coulibaly's Kosher store in Paris (FT 2015e). Sageman has explained this copycat phenomenon, when violent acts cluster together, as "having acts of violence cognitively available" (2017a:142). When the line is crossed, violence can become part of the group's actions and inspires other members (ibid). El-Hussein was eventually shot to death by police.

Background information

El-Hussein was born in 1992 in Copenhagen. His parents are Palestinian and used to live in a refugee camp in Jordan before migrating to Denmark (Guardian 2015b). As a young man, El-Hussein became involved in theft, burglary, and gang activities (Reuters 2015j). People who knew him described him as passionately pro-Palestinian with Islamist beliefs and a hatred for Jews (BBC 2015h). In November 2013, he was convicted and jailed for the crime of violence and possessing a weapon after stabbing a man. He served his sentence at Vestre Fængsel, one of Copenhagen's largest prisons.

El-Hussein spent most of his life in Norrebro, in what is called a "ghetto" in Denmark. He had problems in school and was known for being an ISIS sympathizer (NYT 2015). According to Aydin Soei, an author and sociologist who met El-Hussein in 2011, El-Hussein was part of a gang called "brothers." At that time, there were many conflicts between different gangs in Denmark, and Soei studied the gangs. Soei said to CNN that "The gang wars in Copenhagen started back in 2008 when [El-Hussein] was 15 years old, and that is the environment he has been a part of" (2015).

This gang war meant that access to weapons and violence became more frequent. According to Soei, it meant that "the generation El-Hussein is from has become much more hardcore than any other generation seen in Denmark before him" (CNN 2015). With time, the gang considered El-Hussein's behavior uncontrollable, and he was rejected, a form of social death, and had to leave his gang. Thus, it seems, he found a new identity in radicalization (CNN 2015).

In the 2015 April edition of ISIS magazine *Dabiq*, El-Hussein is mentioned in the following way:

It was also the rejection of nationalism that drove Abū Ramadān al-Muhājir (Omar Abdel Hamid el-Hussein—may Allah accept him)—despite his Danish birth and upbringing—to target Danish Jews and Danish mockers of the

Messenger (sallallāhu‘alayhi wa sallam) until he achieved martyrdom in Denmark after pledging bay’ah to the Khilāfah from Denmark. (*Dabiq*, Issue 8:5–6)

The text was accompanied by a picture of El-Hussein’s corpse wrapped in linen, only showing his face. These pictures are common in jihadist propaganda and are supposed to signal that “a martyr” has found peace and reached “the goal.” It may also be understood as part of the glorification of death among neo-jihadists. According to Roy, the martyr’s body is also glorified by jihadists when they claim that those corpses are above others and portray them as handsome and with a sweet smell (2017:49).

Moreover, the *Dabiq* quotation confirms that El-Hussein pledged allegiance to ISIS. El-Hussein was mentioned in *Dabiq* in the context of an article about the rejection of nationalism. Hence, ISIS is emphasizing that he “rejected nationalism.” However, if one studies his process leading to violence, the rejection of nationalism does not seem to have been a significant motive.

The process leading to political violence

Like the three other perpetrators, El-Hussein was radicalized in prison. The prison service contacted the security services when they suspected that he was becoming radicalized (BBC 2015f). However, El-Hussein was allegedly moved into a prison cell shared with an open ISIS sympathizer (Local 2015d). As seen in the theory chapter, according to Sageman, there are four elements in radicalization: 1) moral outrage at recent political events; 2) a warlike ideology, the idea that the west is at war with Islam; 3) personal experiences that resonates with this ideology; and 4) mobilization through existing militant networks. El-Hussein seems to have had the three first criteria fulfilled, and the last one might have been fulfilled when he shared his prison cell with an ISIS sympathizer.

El-Hussein was known for being violent, and he did not pay much attention to religion. Furthermore, an inmate who was in prison together with El-Hussein and who became friends with him offered some details to a Reuters journalist. According to his friend, Alexander¹³, El-Hussein did not practice Islam, and he liked to talk about drinking beer and smoking marijuana. At one point, he got a copy of the Qur’an from the library so that he and Alexander could read it together; however, they never followed up on the plan to read it.

Alexander only recalls one time when El-Hussein talked about religion, and the topic was about Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims, Alexander explained that:

¹³ The Reuters journalist contacted a prison source who confirmed that Alexander knew El-Hussein from prison.

He told me that Shi'ites are responsible for everything wrong with the world. [. . .] That Sunnis are the good ones. That is the only time he ever raised a finger with religion [. . .]. He didn't get aggressive, but rather resentful. He turned very serious on this topic, and I felt that this wasn't something we should discuss. He just had his opinion. (Reuters 2015j)

Here, there is a social categorization and comparison between Sunni and Shi'ite identity. Sunnis are given the virtue of being uniquely good while Shi'ite identity is constructed as the opposite to this identity—evil. Thus, a comparison and ingroup virtue is used as a way to construct an ingroup identity and outgroup-hate. Similar to what El-Husseini did, Reicher's (2008:1336) model of the processes leading to the justification of violence suggests that ingroup-virtue is used as a tool to construct out-group hate. Hence, El-Husseini's beliefs indicate an ideological justification of violence or hatred based on social identity constructions. Moreover, by claiming that Shi'ites are responsible for everything wrong with the world, they are constructed as an existential threat to the ingroup, which is another step in the justification of violence model (Reicher et al. 2008).

Furthermore, the identity constructions of El-Husseini indicate he was ideologically motivated like Nemmouche's hatred against Shi'ites and Jews. However, Merah did not mention Shi'ites. This difference points to the deepening in anti-Shi'ism with the rise of ISIS, where the anti-Shi'ism of neo-jihadists became genocidal and Shi'ite identity became heavily politicized (other-imposed). The notion of Shi'ites being responsible for everything wrong in this world is also very similar to antisemitic notions; this will be further explained in Chapters 6 and 8.

El-Husseini's friends have also said that he emerged from prison changed; he no longer talked about cars and girls but about religion, the situation in Gaza, and about paradise. His former classmates described him as a loner with a hot temper who loved to discuss Islam and the Israel-Palestine conflict, and he spoke openly about his hatred of Jews (BBC 2015h). This indicates a politicization of Jewish identity.

Said Soei said this about El-Husseini: "After he went to prison and came out, he did not have anything to lose. I mean, he was a loser man from a ghetto from before he went into prison, and when he came out of prison, he was even more isolated. And it is not a secret that a lot of young men become more radicalized while they're in prison" (CNN). This isolation can be understood as a form of social death: he had been in prison and his gang had disowned him before the sentence, which implies that he might have experienced an identity vacuum since his social identity no longer was that of a member of a certain gang. This might have made him more susceptible to an Islamist politicized and martial social identity.

Soei also points out that El-Husseini got his education in using weapons and dehumanizing other people in Denmark and Copenhagen's inner-city areas (CNN). Just like Merah, Nemmouche, and Coulibaly, El-Husseini was a

second generation European. According to Roy (2017: 63), the second generation is affected by radicalization because a segment of them have lost the culturally rooted religion of their parents. Roy calls this process a deculturation, and it creates an identity vacuum. This vacuum is then filled by the piecing together of a religion without any social and cultural grounding (ibid).

Conclusion

This chapter adds to the scholarly understanding of the causes of contemporary Islamist antisemitism by looking at the motivations of Islamist antisemitic perpetrators through a social identity perspective. It answers the first research question: How can the violence of the Islamist perpetrators of the most well-known contemporary terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe be understood from a social identity perspective?

The results shows that these perpetrators share the typical characteristics of Islamist radicals in Europe. Roy has pointed out that these people are often the second generation, involved in petty crime, and have practically no religious background (2017:32). Hence, self-uncertainty among segments of the second generation can create a sense of identification with groups that provide a clearly defined identity, such as extremist groups (Hogg 2014; Hogg et al. 2010). Those groups usually have strong ideological belief systems that prescribe group-normative behavior (Hogg 2014; Hogg et al. 2013, 2010). In the case of Islamist perpetrators, this type of self-uncertainty can be caused by what Roy calls a deculturation among the second generation and converts represented in this category (2017:63).

Another important similarity between the perpetrators is that they all seem to have been radicalized in prison. Merah, Nemmouche, Coulibaly, and El-Hussein all believed that they were participating in the “war against Islam” when they were killing. This indicates the centrality of an imagined belonging to a community, the imaginary victimized ummah as I call it, in Islamist ideology and its interconnected notion of a war against Islam. The following empirical chapters will demonstrate its ideological origins.

In turn, this politicizes both the perpetrators’ martial social identity as “defenders” of “Muslims” while the victim’s Jewish identity is also politicized. Nemmouche and El-Hussein also allegedly voiced hostility against Shiites. In El-Hussein’s case, he believed that Shiites are responsible for everything wrong in the world and that Sunni Muslims are “the good ones,” showing that

the process of politicization of identities is both self-imposed and other-imposed.

The perpetrators imposed a politicized identity onto Jews by conflating their Jewish identity with alleged acts of the State of Israel. Moreover, *ressentiment* is part of the Islamist ideology because it claims that there is an ongoing war against Muslims and that it involves killing Jews. Thus, *ressentiment* and Islamist ideology seem to strengthen one another in the case of Islamist antisemitism in that it both affirms and constructs notions of revenge:

The engagement in violent action thus has to do with making the connection between a personal revolt, rooted in a feeling of humiliation due to one's attachment to a virtual "community" of believers, and a metanarrative of returning to the golden age of Islam, a narrative theatricalized according to the codes of a contemporary aesthetics of violence that turns the youth into a hero and master of terror. (Roy 2017: 73-74)

As proposed by Sageman (2017b:8-9), terrorists engage in political violence not for personal motives but for group motives. A group becomes a group in the sense of being perceived as having common characteristics or a common fate only because other groups are present in the environment (Tajfel 1974:72). In the case of Islamist ideology, it is the war against Islam conspiracy that holds the ingroup together by constructing the outgroup as the actual perpetrators.

The perpetrators had many similarities, but there were also differences and nuances in what seemed to have motivated them in their attacks. Merah was indoctrinated in his home environment during his upbringing. He had suicidal tendencies, a violent upbringing, and he saw himself as a defender in the war against Islam. Killing soldiers indicates *ressentiment* since he initially wanted to be a French soldier himself.

Nemmouche seemed to have been ideologically driven; he hated Jews and Shiites and joined ISIS. Coulibaly had a violent life; he claimed to do it for the Prophet and referred to the Qur'an. He also claimed to want to stop "the wars in Arab countries" by killing Jews, indicating that he imposed a political identity onto Jews and imposed a Muslim martial identity onto himself. El-Hussein had a gang background and was ideologically convinced about his hatred against Jews and Shiites.

This chapter proposes the following academic understanding of Islamist antisemitic violence in Europe:

Table 9. The Process of Islamist Antisemitic violence model

1) Self Categorization: Islamist identity
2) De-personalization of outgroup: Jews and Shiites as negative stereotypes
3) Existential threat: War against Islam conspiracy
4) Politicized identity: Identification with “victimized Muslims” belonging to the imagined ummah
5) Martial identity: Occurring in prison, identify as a soldier and a “savior” of the imaginary victimized ummah

This proposed model is based on Sageman’s social identity theory explaining political violence. This chapter specifies Sageman’s steps leading to violence by applying it to Islamist antisemitism. As Table 9 shows, first there is a self-categorization of the perpetrators into a “Muslim” or “Islamist” identity. Second, there is a de-personalization of the outgroup, mainly Jews but also Shiites, who are viewed as negative stereotypes with no right to live. Third, the outgroup is viewed as an existential threat; this usually happens through the war against Islam conspiracy that teaches that there is an ongoing war against Islam. Fourth, there is a construction and adoption of a politicized identity where the imagined ummah and its Muslim identity is seen as uniquely good through the claim that it is a victimized group that needs to be defended. Fifth, when the perpetrator commits acts of violence; he views himself as a savior, in the form of a soldier, of his imagined community. This is the martial social identity, and it is the last step that leads to violence.

As suggested by Sageman, the underlying conditions for activating a martial social identity are an escalation of a conflict and a moral outrage against the state. Given that the perpetrators became radicalized in prison, this study suggests that those conditions are fulfilled in the prison environment in the form of a moral outrage at the state as a consequence of incarceration and that it thus may contribute to the activation of a martial identity. Moreover, prison is a recruitment place that offers Islamist networks, but it is also a place where isolation can cause social death, making a nihilistic ideology attractive or more resonant with the inmate.

In comparison to other studies on Islamist antisemitism, this chapter proposes that social identity constructions are crucial in understanding Islamist antisemitic violence scholarly. Having analyzed the motivations of the perpetrators, critical questions remain: Why are they choosing Jews and Shiites as their targets? What are the processes of the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative? What are the identity constructions that the propaganda and ideology offer to the perpetrators? Why is it compelling to them?

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 investigate different aspects of the ideological construction of identities and the underlying worldview found in antisemitic and anti-Shiite Islamist propaganda.

6. The Antisemitic ISIS Worldview

Introduction

This empirical chapter focuses on the findings of antisemitism in ISIS propaganda. Specifically, this chapter answers the second research question: How can the antisemitism in ISIS magazine *Dabiq* be understood from a social identity perspective? This chapter details the characteristics of ISIS antisemitism, how it relates to the idea of a war against Islam, and the construction of different identities in their antisemitic worldview. Understanding these parts of ISIS's antisemitic propaganda contributes to the aim of this thesis: to understand the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective.

Chapter 7 on Qutb and Chapter 8 on the Sahwa movement analyze the causes of Islamist antisemitism as well as include the origins of Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective. Therefore, this chapter on ISIS antisemitism should be understood as the latest development in Islamist antisemitic ideology.

As Chapter 5 shows, antisemitic terrorist attacks in Europe increased with the rise of ISIS, especially after the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attack (Judaken 2018:5). This chapter focuses on the underlying worldview of the perpetrators. *Dabiq* was chosen as the empirical material because it was one of ISIS's most popular propaganda outlets. Thus, its content can be seen as representative of ISIS ideology and suitable for analyzing their antisemitism.

Dabiq resembles a lifestyle magazine but with violent and propagandistic political content. *Dabiq*'s genre is characterized by a style where events and notions are described with certainty in black and white and where no hesitation, balance, or reflection appears to take place. Thus, the style is rather monotonous and focused on forcefully diminishing any form of doubt or balance in the reader. This style serves the purpose of indoctrination. Moreover, the content in *Dabiq* is characterized by a conflation and distortion of theology and contemporary politics.

Dabiq has a high-quality, visually attractive front page that shows that issue's specific theme. The disposition of an issue usually includes comments on ISIS battles, their ideology, a section for women, and a section with interviews of members. Professional images of the respective subject accompany the articles. The content is also concerned with enemy constructions, and the overarching worldview can be summarized as ISIS against the world.

This chapter starts with a detailed account of ISIS's notion of a war against Islam, an idea that the perpetrators believed in. In the first section, the focus is on ISIS's social identity constructions of their enemies. The rest of the chapter investigates ISIS's interpretations of theological references such as the Hadith (sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad) and Qur'an since this is what the coding of ISIS antisemitism found. However, these theological references should be understood as part of political Islam and the Islamization of antisemitism rather than the spiritual faith of Islam.

Roy has described it as:

No religion is an instrument of radicalization or deradicalization. Religion has its own intrinsic dignity, it unfolds its own space, which is neither social nor territorial, but spiritual. (Roy 2017: 98)

Thus, the study does not situate Islamist antisemitism within the religion itself but rather within how religion is used for political purposes. Put differently, this study is concerned with how radical political actors use religious scripture to gain religious legitimacy for their political cause. That is, the study situates the problem of Islamist antisemitism within sociology rather than theology. More specifically, this study is part of political sociology as it focuses on political violence.

According to Firestone, there is no antisemitism in the Qur'an (2020:106). He came to that conclusion after having carefully studied all the mentions of Jews in the Qur'an. However, there are negative views of Jews in the Qur'an. Islamist's misuse and distort these negative views and apply them in today's context when they should be viewed as specific historical accounts. Moreover, Firestone adds that the Qur'an never states that Jews should be killed nor are Jews specifically identified as an enemy (Firestone 2020:106). He also notes that the Qur'an does not associate Jews with the devil, even though this accusation was common in Christian writings when the Qur'an emerged:

It would be wrong to label the Qur'an as antisemitic. The Qur'an does not racialize Jews, nor does it dehumanize them. It certainly does not call for their destruction. (Firestone 2020:106)

However, Firestone notes that certain Muslim leaders racialize and dehumanize Jews and call for their destruction. Firestone notes that these "Muslim religious leaders cherry-pick so-called 'proof-texts' from the Qur'an and use them to support their antisemitic views" (ibid). According to Firestone, the negative material that refers to Jews in the Qur'an is about historical opponents; however, they are exploited to promote antisemitic sentiments, policies, and actions (ibid).

The politicized Islamist interpretation of the Qur'an is sociologically relevant since the Qur'an is considered the most authoritative source for the approximately 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide. Thus, a reference to the Qur'an is of high importance for Muslims since the Qur'an is used as a source of guidance in their lives. Therefore, its interpretations, misuse, and distortion contribute to social consequences, including the phenomenon of Islamist antisemitism.

According to Firestone, the Hadiths, however, do contain antisemitism. Hadiths are narrative records of the sayings and customs of the Prophet Mohammed and his companions (Motzki and Conrad 2004) and is considered the second most authoritative source for Muslims. Thus, studying the use and interpretations of Hadiths is also sociologically relevant since it is used for political reasons by Islamists to influence the thoughts and behaviors of Muslims. Thus, interpretations of the Hadiths can also have social consequences such as antisemitism and anti-Shiism, which will be seen in this chapter. Referring to the Hadiths and Qur'an gives Islamist groups religious legitimacy among Muslims. However, in this chapter, these interpretations will also be carefully analyzed and questioned.

Figure 1 shows the result of the coding of antisemitism in *Dabiq*, as presented in Chapter 4. The categories reflect the most frequent and recurring themes of antisemitism in *Dabiq*. The quotations presented in this chapter were identified based on specific criteria; namely that the quotations are concise and representative examples of antisemitism in *Dabiq*. Therefore, they can be understood as the ideological foundation of ISIS antisemitism.

The most significant category found was the war against Islam theory, and it will be the first category whose characteristics are presented in this chapter. Second comes a qualitative analysis of the Hadith interpretations ISIS uses to

justify antisemitism. Lastly, ISIS's use of their interpretations of the Qur'an for antisemitic purposes is analyzed.

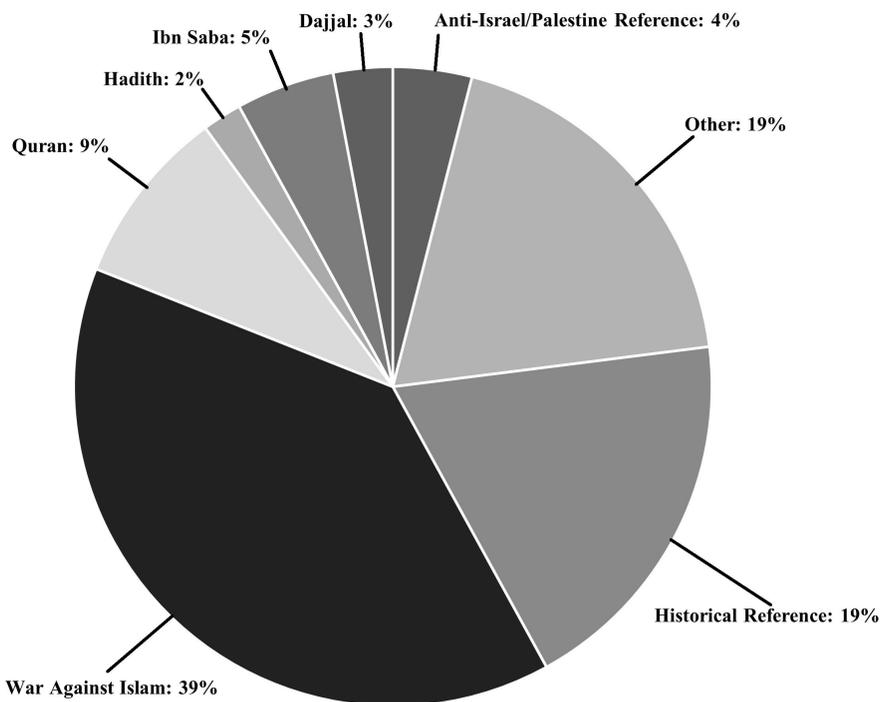


Figure 1. The percentage of each category in *Dabiq*.

The following section, which introduces the characteristics of the war against Islam conspiracy theory, is divided into six sections: The Gulf countries as enemies of ISIS; America as an enemy of ISIS; Shiites as undercover Jews; The conspiracy about Ibn Saba; *Dajjal* and the end of times; and The transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites.

War against Islam Conspiracy

In this section, quotes in *Dabiq* constituting the conspiracy about a war against Muslims related to antisemitism will be presented. This is by far the biggest category in ISIS antisemitism in *Dabiq*. The idea of a war against Muslims has its origin in different Islamist writings and is one of the pillars of Islamist thought. It can be understood as part of the social identity construction of enemy outgroups and the virtuous ingroup, with the goal to incite the ingroup to violence. One of its origins is Sayyid Qutb's writings, examined in Chapter 7.

According to Calvert (2009:15), Al-Qaeda was inspired by Qutb in their idea of a war against Islam. Chapter 7 will show Qutb's war against Islam narrative. Al-Qaeda may have, in turn, inspired ISIS with the idea that they got from Qutb. However, one can also view ISIS and the Sahwa movement's war against Islam narrative as a return to Qutb's original thought about fighting Muslim regimes, combined with attacks in the West, and that Al-Qaeda digressed from it. Al-Qaeda are known for their September 11 attacks targeting the US; however, they also have Muslim countries as one of their main targets. While Qutb, Sahwa, and ISIS mainly focus on Muslim regimes.

However, not much research outlines the characteristics of the war against Islam conspiracy. The following section is an attempt to do that. Here, in this chapter, ISIS's view on the war against Islam and their ingroup and outgroup enemy constructions will be investigated.

The first mention of a war against Muslims that involves Jews can be found in the first issue of *Dabiq*, published July 5, 2014:

Amirul-Mu'minin said: 'O Ummah of Islam, indeed the world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: The camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy—the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the Jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the Jews'. (*Dabiq*, Issue 1:10)

This quotation captures the essence of ISIS antisemitism, namely the idea that Jews are the mobilizers of a war against Islam. Hence, ISIS is socially categorizing Jews into a group who are powerful and who are mobilizing against Muslims. This implies that Muslims, the imaginary ummah, are socially categorized as victims whom ISIS should save. Moreover, the notion of Jewish power, which is expressed in the idea of Jews being mobilizers of a war, is a long-lived antisemitic belief shared by many different types of antisemites (Small 2013; Wistrich 2004, 2013).

Amirul-Mu'minin is an Arabic term for a Muslim leader, and its literal translation is "commander of the faithful," in this case, it refers to ISIS former leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, and the quotation is originally from a speech he made in 2014. Al-Baghdadi urges his followers to view the world as divided into two strict camps, with no other alternatives. Thus, a strict boundary is constructed between the ingroup ISIS and an outgroup of the rest, with no third camp present.

Here, the ingroup self-categorizes as the camp of Islam and faith, giving itself a virtue and positive distinctiveness, while the outgroup is defined as the camp of disbelief and hypocrisy, a social categorization that de-personalizes them with negative characteristics. Thus, the outgroup is reduced to a stereotype, according to Sageman (2017b:8), this may lead to their dehumanization.

In the case of terrorists, it means that the ingroup constructs a unified entity, while everyone outside of this group is constructed as stereotype enemies whose lives are seen as worthless. According to self-categorization theory, this is possible due to the simplification of social reality that self-categorization provides.

Furthermore, ISIS self-categorization implies a moral superiority claim on their behalf since they claim not to be hypocrites. Moral superiority is one of the elements used when ingroup love turns to outgroup hate, and it justifies domination and active subjugation of outgroups (Brewer 1999:435). By describing itself as a camp of faith, ISIS is also trying to unite its recruits with a common goal and value; the faith.

The other camp is described in terms of a threat against the ingroup since the comparison between them is based on a difference in belief and honesty. This means that all the categories in Brewer's (1999) model for ingroup love as outgroup hate are fulfilled: moral superiority, common goals, threat, common values and comparison, and power politics.

By providing a sense of common goals and common threats in an intergroup context, ISIS is implying the need for cooperative action. Brewer suggests that feelings of secure inclusion and ingroup loyalty are dependent upon the clarity of ingroup boundaries and intergroup distinctions, and the threat of lost distinctiveness may lead to resistance even at the cost of ingroup self-interest (Brewer 1999:436-437).

However, the outgroup has different functions according to ISIS. Jews are ascribed the enemy role of being the mobilizers of the camp against Muslims. In contrast, America and Russia are seen as leading the camp. Possibly, this is a reference to the coalition forces, where both America and Russia participated, and their bombing of ISIS-controlled territories.

When ISIS uses the term "Muslims," they only refer to themselves; therefore, "the rest" includes other Muslims as well. This can be understood from the war against Islam conspiracy where the claim is that there are only two camps in the world. As will be seen in the next chapter, excommunication of Muslims is inherent in the war against Islam conspiracy, hence it can be understood as the element of exclusion in the justification for violence model (Reicher et al. 2008). The stage of exclusion is the definition of targets as external to the ingroup; here ISIS excludes Muslims by defining the Muslim ingroup in an

exclusive way while the outgroup is excluded from ingroup membership and denied their rights.

The use of the word trenches can be understood as militaristic and implies that ISIS might refer to a war situation. Furthermore, the use of the word *mujahid*, Arabic for a holy warrior, also implies that this quote refers to a war between ISIS and "the rest." Here, a politicization of Muslim identity is indicated. According to ISIS, a true Muslim must stand by their camp, and some, referred to as *mujahideen*, must take part in their war; thus, another identity is constructed; a martial social identity. To declare someone a *kafir* (disbeliever) within the jihadist movement means that it is also legitimate for them to kill that person for being a disbeliever.

Moreover, ISIS is imposing a politicized identity onto Jews when they claim that Jews are mobilizing a war against Muslims. When ISIS claims that they are in a war, they adopt a martial social identity and promote the idea to their sympathizers, which, according to Sageman (2017), can incite or motivate violence.

In sum, the war against Islam conspiracy entails hate against outgroups, excommunication of Muslims, and a justification of violence against them and others who do not follow ISIS ideology. Moreover, it also includes a politicization of Muslim and Jewish identity and the construction of a martial social identity.

Sageman's theory on the turn to violence suggests that a process of self-categorization, de-personalization of outgroups, existential threat claims, politicized identity and a martial identity need to take place for political violence to occur. This section demonstrates that all these processes leading to violence are represented in *Dabiq*.

Therefore, the war against Islam conspiracy can be understood as carrying an inherent incitement to violence. Moreover, given that the war against Islam conspiracy constitutes the largest category of antisemitism in *Dabiq*, it can be understood as the foundational belief of ISIS Islamist antisemitism.

Table 10. War against Islam Conspiracy

1) Hate against outgroups
2) Excommunication of Muslims
4) Creating Identification with the imaginary victimized ummah
3) Politicization of religious identities; antisemitism and anti-Shiism
4) Martial social identity

The Gulf Countries as Enemies of ISIS

One common theme in *Dabiq* is that Sunni leaders, especially monarchs, belong to their main enemies. Islamists call these leaders apostates or *taghut*, a false God or idol, which refers to “tyrannical rulers who arrogate God’s absolute power and use it to oppress people” (Esposito 2003a). Here, jihadi clerics took the Quranic term *taghut* and built an ideology on it claiming that leaders of the Muslim world are apostates; thus, a Muslim who works for the ruler can be seen as a legitimate target (Hassan 2018:8).

In this quotation from the seventh issue of *Dabiq*, ISIS elaborates on how they view Sunni monarchies and how this is related to their antisemitic worldview:

Be warned of those whom the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) warned against: the wicked scholars, imāms, and callers who deviate the Ummah and corrupt the truth with falsehood. They corrupt Islam so as to put the Muslims to sleep. They only serve the apostate rulers, the slaves of the Jews and Christians. (*Dabiq*, Issue 7:75)

Here, ISIS claims that “apostate rulers” are the slaves of Jews and Christians. Specifically, this implies that ISIS sees Jews and Christians as the actual rulers over Muslim countries. Furthermore, scholars and imams are described as corrupt, and that their goal is to put Muslims to sleep, that is, to pacify them, and that this serves the “apostate rulers,” who in the end are doing what the Jews and Christians want.

The idea of Muslims serving the interest of Jews was popularized by Qutb (Nettler and Qutb 1987). The warning in this quotation is attributed to the Prophet, showing that ISIS is seeking religious legitimacy for their antisemitism. However, there is no evidence that the Prophet made this antisemitic claim. Moreover, this warning strengthens the message of the boundary between the ingroup and the outgroup, which was formed in the first quotation.

ISIS also uses religious legitimacy to incite hatred. Initially, the quotation attributes the warning to the Prophet, and in sentences two and three, it refers to the current context. This way of framing hatred is common in jihadists literature, that is, to use the name of the Prophet or the Qur’an to make a point about contemporary issues.

Roy calls it the linkage between the radical imaginary and the theological “rationalization,” which is not based on real knowledge but on an appeal to authority (2017:43). The radical imaginary in this quotation can be understood as the conspiracy involving the scholars, the imams, the apostate rulers, and the Jews and Christians, while the reference to the Prophet represents the theological rationalization in the form of an appeal to authority. Here, it is important to emphasize that this linkage is not based on real knowledge nor Islamic scripture, rather it should be seen as a propaganda tool constructed by extremists.

In the following quotation, ISIS's idea of their Sunni enemies is articulated in more detail:

He then expounded in detail on the apathy of the tāghūt rulers towards the Muslims and followed by saying, "the Arabian Peninsula's rulers have been exposed and disgraced and have lost their supposed 'legitimacy.' Their treachery has become clear even to the laymen of the Muslims. And the reality of these rulers thereby became apparent. Therefore, their masters from amongst the Jews and Crusaders had no more use for them. And so, their masters began to replace them with the Safawī Rāfidah and the Kurdish atheists. (*Dabiq*, Issue 9:55)

Here, ISIS clarifies that they believe that Jews and Crusaders are the masters of the Arabian Peninsula rulers. Arabian Peninsula rulers are socially categorized as being apathetic, treacherous, and disgraced. When claiming that these rulers are apathetic towards "Muslims," ISIS is most likely referring to what they claim is the victimized Muslims belonging to the imaginary victimized ummah. By saying that these rulers are apathetic and treacherous, ISIS is creating identification for the reader with the imaginary victimized ummah, who are described as abandoned by Muslim leaders.

In addition, these rulers are described as being used by their masters—the Jews and Crusaders. Furthermore, ISIS claims that Arabian Peninsula rulers are being replaced by Shiites (Safawī Rafidah) and Kurdish atheists in an attempt to make them look weak. This quotation has also an apparent war reference, and it shows how ISIS tries to mobilize against and tarnish the image of other Sunni rulers. Ultimately, ISIS is trying to create a positive distinctiveness by making itself look like the only legitimate Muslim force.

The accusations of treachery can be understood as a rhetorical escalation of a conflict that is concomitant to the physical escalation (Sageman 2017a:134). Sageman describes this process as extremists exaggerating the threat and danger from internal rivals to gain support. By claiming that the Sunni rulers have lost their legitimacy, ISIS discredits an internal rival as someone who is not adequately protecting the in-group against the outgroup. Ultimately, ISIS discredits Sunni rulers by referring to them as controlled by "the Jews and Crusaders"; that is, ISIS uses a strategy of discrediting internal enemies by associating them with Jews and Christians, making them look weak. This can be interpreted as a strategy to gain new sympathizers, possibly in the Gulf countries.

America as an Enemy of ISIS

In ISIS's description of the war against Muslims, America holds a special place beside the Jews and the Sunni monarchies. As seen in the first quotation, ISIS claims that America is leading the war against them. This section looks

at how this idea relates to antisemitism. In the following quotation, ISIS exemplifies their idea of who is participating in a war against them:

On August 7, 2014, the crusader, apostate Barack Obama announced to the world the continuation of the American crusade against Islam and the Muslims of Iraq, only to prove to his followers that there is no difference between his partisan politics and that of his predecessor –Bush–apart from cosmetic, superficial touches. His decisions also expose the hypocritical politics of America that only serve the interests of their Jewish ally, Israel, and their own capitalist gluttony. So while genocide is committed by the Maliki, Asadi, and Israeli forces against the Muslims via systematic massacres, chemical warfare, rape, and starvation by siege, Obama watches with euphoria. However, when his brothers in Yazidi Satanism and Peshmergan Zionism are killed, he panics. (*Dabiq*, Issue 3:35)

Here, ISIS describes America as hypocritical and “only serving the interest of their Jewish ally.” That is, ISIS believes that Israel is controlling American politics. Furthermore, the alleged suffering of Muslims is highlighted in different ways and blamed on the oppressors, “Maliki, Asadi and Israeli forces.” They are accused of systematic massacres, chemical warfare, rape, and starvation by siege, and it is claimed that Obama is watching the atrocities with euphoria.

In addition, ISIS is building a clear war narrative where Maliki (former Shiite ruler of Iraq), Assad (Syria’s president), and Israel are the oppressors, allegedly committing genocide against Muslims in the war against Islam. At the same time, ISIS is portrayed as the only savior of the oppressed Muslims. Thus, their struggle is framed as a moral one. The oppressor is described as someone who is enjoying watching Muslims die. This type of war narrative where the outgroup is described as aggressors appeals to emotions, activating a self-categorization into an imagined belonging to the “Muslim ummah.”

When Sageman (2017a:118) interviewed neo-jihadists, he found that they attributed their politicization to watching mass murder against Muslims. It activated a self-categorization into an imagined community where they identified with the victims in contrast to the outgroup, namely the states committing this violence. Hence, these descriptions of violence against Muslims can serve as an effective recruitment tool for ISIS. However, ISIS is also mentioning their own killings of Yazidis and Kurds. First, they associate Yazidis and Kurds with the US by saying that they are Obama’s brothers. By calling Yazidis Satanists, ISIS are, in line with their ideology, signaling that they are an enemy worthy of death.

“Peshmergan Zionism” refers to Kurdish troops being linked to Israel. Furthermore, Kurdish death is motivated by them being “Zionists.” Hence, antisemitism can be understood as a way for ISIS to legitimize violence against Kurds. Moreover, the idea of the US being controlled by Jews is an antisemitic notion often repeated by al-Qaeda (Ryan 2013), suggesting that parts of al-

Qaeda's ideology inspire ISIS. In Chapter 8, the Sahwa movement's role in the development of this notion will be explained.

The following quotation brings in new actors in the war against Muslims:

Most significantly, Russia–Iran's biggest ally as well as an ally of China has entered the Ukraine, which is supposedly claimed by the West. Russia continues to arm the Asad regime against the Muslims of Shām. They have boasted of their nuclear capabilities once again. And yet, Obama insists upon strengthening “the Persian Crescent” and Russian influence in the region. It seems American leaders are blinded by their love of the Jewish State into doing things that only damage supposed Western interests. (*Dabiq*, Issue 4:40)

Here, it becomes clear that one aspect of ISIS's anti-American narrative is to associate Obama with Iran. In this quotation, ISIS is accusing Obama of strengthening the Persian crescent and Russia. Russia is said to arm Assad against Muslims in Sham, that is, Syria.

This is another example of how ISIS portrays the victimized Muslim ummah as suffering in the war against Islam. This portrayal creates ingroup virtue and identification with the victims. This type of social identity construction that focuses on ingroup identification with victims contributes to a politicization of religious identities where some take it a step further and “defend” their ingroup by becoming soldiers. Notions of what I call the imaginary victimized ummah were very common in ISIS propaganda and its interconnected politicization of religious identities contributed to ISIS recruitment in the war in Syria and Iraq.

ISIS describes American actions as damaging to its own interests. Moreover, these relations are ultimately described in antisemitic terms when ISIS explains that American leaders are doing all of this because of their love for the Jewish state. ISIS believes that Israel is pushing America “into doing” things for their own interest, in this case, the interest of mobilizing a war against Muslim by strengthening “the Persian crescent.” Here, ISIS uses antisemitism as a strategy to discredit its enemy. Moreover, once again ISIS believes that the US is controlled by the Jewish state.

Shiites as Undercover Jews—The Internal Enemy

One of the most prominent components of ISIS antisemitism is the conspiracy theory that Shia Muslims are undercover Jews. Shiites are called *Rafidah*, “rejecters,” in ISIS propaganda. Militants use this name since they regard Shiites as people who reject the true Islamic teachings. However, it is important to note that *Rafidah* is a very derogatory term used by Sunni extremists to justify the killings of civilian Shia Muslims.

Since Shiites are seen as rejectors of Islamic teachings, they are also classified as disbelievers by ISIS, making them a target for killings. However,

Shiites are also portrayed as an internal enemy who wants to destroy Islam from within by pretending to be Muslims.

This conspiracy is mainly based on a religious story about Ibn Saba, whom certain Sunni Muslims, such as Salafists and Wahabists, and ISIS view as a historical figure who is claimed to be an undercover Jew. According to ISIS, Ibn Saba attempted to undermine Muslims from within by pretending to be a Muslim.

This is a claim that ISIS partly are making about today's Shia. Thus, ISIS is politicizing Shiite identity, portraying Shiites as an outgroup that wants to destroy Islam; this notion turns them into an existential threat to the ingroup. According to Reicher et al. the portrayal of an outgroup as an existential threat against an ingroup is one component in the justification of violence. Reicher et al. suggests that the destructive power of essentialist ideologies such as racism is that what counts in these ideologies is not simply what 'they' are like, but rather what 'their nature' means for 'us' (2008:1331).

Brewer suggests that regardless of whether it is real or imagined, the belief that an outgroup constitutes a threat to an ingroup's interests or survival "creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup are directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice versa" (1999:435–436). Thus, the construction of the belief that an outgroup is threatening the survival of the ingroup automatically creates fear and hostility towards them. Moreover; in the face of intergroup threat, social identity can lead to aggression against the outgroup (Merrilees et al. 2013:706). Chapter 8, which focuses on the Sahwa movement, explains the politicization of Shiite identity in greater detail.

The Shiites have been targeted by ISIS and seen as one of their main enemies. The reason for it might be the status they are ascribed as being an internal enemy consisting of undercover Jews who fake Islam. In addition, ISIS might also be targeting Shiites for purely strategic reasons since Iraq and Syria, two countries that ISIS occupied, are associated with Shiism: Iraq via the (mostly Shiite) government and most of its population being Shiites and Syria via the country's president Assad, who belongs to the Alawite sect, which is seen as a branch of Shiism.

Thus, ISIS gained recruits ready to fight against Shiites and Shia civilians by politicizing Shiite identity and associating all Shiites with these political leaders. Ultimately, ISIS was claiming that Shiites were conducting a war against "Muslims." This can be understood as a politicization of religious identity for strategic interests.

ISIS has devoted much space in *Dabiq* to Shiites. Issue 13 is dedicated to "the *Rafidah*." The ideological background to ISIS's anti-Shiism is presented in detail in *Dabiq*, and I present its foundations in this subsection. In the

following quotation, ISIS introduces their conspiracy, the section is called “The Rāfidah and the Jews”:

The Tābi’ī ash-Sha’bī (died 104AH) said, ‘I warn you against the followers of deviant desires. And the worst of them are the Rāfidah, as they are the Jews of this Ummah. Some of them are Jews who fake Islam to spread their deviance, just as Paul of the Jews faked Christianity to spread his deviance, hoping the Jews would become victorious. The Rāfidah hate Islam just as the Jews hate Christianity. They did not enter Islam longing for Allah or fearing Him, rather out of spite for the people of Islam and so as to inflict harm upon them. Their prayers do not exceed their ears. Indeed, ‘Alī burned them alive and banished them to other lands. Amongst them was ‘Abdullāh Ibn Saba,’ a Jew from the Jews of Sanaa, who was banished to Sābāt. (*Dabiq*, Issue 13:33)

Here, ISIS claims that Shia Muslims are followers of deviant desires, a rather common anti-Shiite belief. Furthermore, Shiites are also portrayed as the worst followers of deviant desires, placing Shiites in a special category of deviousness. This accusation is followed by an antisemitic notion, namely that Shiites are the worst deviants because they are the Jews of the Ummah. Similar to previous quotations, ISIS is attempting to legitimize hate against their enemies by associating them with Jews. This association is taken a step further in the next sentence of this quotation where “some” Shiites are said to be Jews who fake Islam to spread their deviance.

This indicates that Shiites are not only seen as non-Muslims by ISIS but they are also seen as an internal “Jewish” enemy spreading deviance among Muslims. Next, ISIS compares this situation with Paul, who faked Christianity so that “Jews could be victorious.” Shiites are also described as people who hate Islam and who want to harm Muslims. Moreover, Ibn Saba is mentioned as a historical figure who is supposed to have been a Jew who pretended to be a Muslim. This indicates that ISIS views Shiites as undercover Jews whose purpose is to harm Muslims.

Moreover, when ISIS claims that Shiites fake Islam it may refer to *Taqiyya*, a reference anti-Muslim racists also use against all Muslims (Mariuma 2014: 89). *Taqiyya*, a mainly Shiite concept, refers to a practice where Shiites can hide their identity if it means that their life is in danger; it was formulated as a response to persecution. However, this has been used against Muslims by anti-Muslim actors, who claim that Muslims lie about their identity to “take over the West.” In contrast, ISIS claims that Shiites lie about their Muslim identity to spread deviance. In both cases, a practice that is used to protect life is being politicized into meaning spreading falseness and attempting to take control over societies.

Ibn Saba, Antisemitism, and Anti-Shiism

In the section “Who was Ibn Saba?” in Issue 13 of *Dabiq*, ISIS introduces their notion of Ibn Saba. As previously mentioned, he was claimed to be a Jew from Sanaa who was banished from Sabat:

He [Ibn Saba] wanted thereby to corrupt the religion of the Muslims like Paul – the author of the letters read by the Christians – innovated for the Christians’ heresies by which he corrupted their religion. Paul was a Jew who hypocritically faked Christianity with the intent to corrupt it. Ibn Saba was also a Jew intending the same. He strived to spread falsehood aiming to corrupt the religion but was unable to do so. Ibn Saba died around 40AH, after spreading the seeds of Rafd and fitnah for generations to come. He is the founder of Rafd and considered the instigator of the Khawārij. For this reason, the scholars who wrote about the various deviant sects mention him in their discussions on the Khawārij in addition to those on the Rāfidah. The Khawārij did not emerge except as a result of Ibn Saba’s plot against Uthmān. Ibn Saba’s followers would later agree with the Khawārij on a fundamental tenet of their heresy, that is, like the Khawārij, they would pronounce takfīr upon most of the Sahābah, all the common Muslims, and all the khulafā. (*Dabiq*, Issue 13:33)

Here, Ibn Saba is compared to Paul, who faked Christianity to corrupt the religion. In both cases, Jews are accused of trying to corrupt a religion. Here, once again, antisemitism is used to discredit Shiism. Furthermore, Ibn Saba is accused of being the founder of Shiism and making it possible for the Khawārij to emerge. This can be understood as an effective recruitment tool since the Khawārij are often viewed as one of the most destructive groups in Islamic history.

In addition to Ibn Saba being seen as the instigator to the Khawārij, Ibn Saba and his followers are accused of pronouncing takfīr upon the Sahābah. This is one of the most common anti-Shiite notions today. The Sahābah were the Prophet’s companions, highly respected among Muslims. To claim that Shiites curse them has been an effective tool in discrediting them as Muslims and inciting hatred against them. This quotation indicates an escalation in the negative descriptions of Shiites, from being seen as an enemy to being seen as responsible for the emergence of Khawārij. Moreover, here they are seen as promoting excommunication against all other Muslims, portraying Shiites as a danger to all Muslims and ultimately the survival of Islam.

The following quotation is from a section in *Dabiq* titled “The Meaning of Rāfidah,” where ISIS elaborates on its view of Shiites:

Ibn Saba’s fitnah ultimately led to the forming of the sect known as the Rāfidah, who would carry a modified form of his da’wah. The sect, like all deviant sects, would evolve over time, innovating more and more heresies, kufr, and wickedness. As for the name “Rāfidah,” then it comes from the word “rafada” meaning to reject. They were named so when they came to Zayd Ibn’ Alī Ibn al-Husayn Ibn’ Alī Ibn Abī Tālibs (died 122AH) and asked him to

declare barā'ah from Abū Bakr and 'Umar in exchange for their support. He refused to do so and instead said, "May Allah have mercy upon them both." So they told him, "We then reject you." Henceforth, they were called "the rejecters." The scholars also called them so because the Rāfidah rejected the imāmah of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, because they rejected the Sahābah, because they rejected the Sunnah, and because they essentially rejected the Qur'ān and the religion of Islam. (*Dabiq*, Issue 13:33)

Here, ISIS clearly states that Shiism was a plot by Ibn Saba, with the intent to corrupt the religion of Islam. According to ISIS, Ibn Saba hated Islam and wanted to create strife among Muslims and incite them against the caliph Uthman until he was killed.

This quotation indicates that ISIS's anti-Shiism is partly built on the notion of Shiites as causing *fitnah*¹⁴ by rejecting the Sahaba. Moreover, the quotation indicates that ISIS believes that Shiites reject the Qur'an and Islam. This accusation can be understood as a strategy to strengthen anti-Shiism and to portray Shiites as enemies of Muslims since the Qur'an is considered the holiest book for all Muslims.

Dajjal and the End of Times

ISIS is an apocalyptic movement as it believes that the final battle will occur in Dabiq, Syria. This is why the ISIS magazine is named *Dabiq*. ISIS also believes that it will win the final battle and rule the whole world. However, the end of times scenario also includes a central and elaborate theory where Shiites and Jews are given prominent roles. The war that ISIS claims that Shiites and Jews are waging against Islam involves a figure called the *Dajjal*. Here, ISIS elaborates on this theory:

As the Hour approaches, it becomes important to reflect upon the fabricated accounts of future events, as they will undoubtedly play a role in actions taken up by various deviant sects. Of these accounts is that of the "Mahdī" of the Rāfidah who wages war against Islam and the Muslims, contrary to the just and rightly guided Mahdī of the future described in the Sunnah. The closer the Hour approaches, the more the Rāfidah fall in line with the Jews in preparation for the appearance of this awaited evil leader. Upon reading the Rāfidī account of the "Mahdī," it becomes clear that he is none other than the Dajjāl. (*Dabiq*, Issue 11:16)

Here, ISIS claims that Shiites will fall in line with Jews when the final battle gets closer. Thus, ISIS is politicizing both Jewish and Shiite identity within the imaginary framework of a war against Islam and its doomsday.

¹⁴ *Fitnah* is an Arabic word with many meanings. In modern political terminology, as in this context, it is used as an allegation to discredit the actions of opponents. The accusation of *Fitnah* is usually used against those who are understood as causing disunity among Muslims.

ISIS describes that the “Mahdi” of the Rafidah” actually is *Dajjal*, an evil leader. In the apocalyptic world view of ISIS, it is described that "as the hour approaches," meaning as the last battle approaches, a battle ISIS believe will take place between them and the "Rafidah" and their allies, they should reflect on how Rafidah fall in line with Jews. According to Shia belief Mahdi will come back to save the World, while ISIS describes Mahdi as "Dajjal," who is an evil leader, comparable to the antichrist in Christianity.

ISIS believes that *Dajjal* will work with Jews and Shiites in an attempt to destroy Islam.

Furthermore, ISIS believes that Jews and Shiites are working together preparing for the appearance of “their evil leader,” the *Dajjal*. The description of the ingroup (ISIS) as good and the outgroup (Shiites, and Jews) as evil implies that defeating the outgroup becomes a matter of preserving virtue, a logic central to all modern forms of terror (Reicher et al. 2008:1336). In social identity theory, this mechanism is called celebration and it is based on the idea that the embrace of the eradication of the outgroup is necessary in the defense of virtue.

In the following quotation, ISIS elaborates on how it views the “*Rafidah*” and the Jews:

The Rāfidah are infamous for pronouncing takfir upon the majority of the Ummah including the best of the Ummah – the Companions of the Prophet – rejecting the authority of the khulafā,' even cooperating with the Crusaders and the Tatars against the khulafā' and their Muslim subjects. The Rāfidah have a history of massacring Muslims who refuse Rāfidī beliefs. This became most manifest during the Safawī empire ("1501- 1736CE") and its war against Ahlus-Sunnah in Persia. Finally, the Rāfidah are one of the sects of Qadariyyah, as they deny that good and evil deeds are by Allah's qadar. Hence the apostate Rāfidah combined between major shirk (worship of the family of the Prophet), denial of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (as they claim the Companions fabricated the religious texts), takfir of the Companions and the Mothers of the Believers, and belief in the deviant innovations of the Khawārij and Qadariyyah. When reflecting upon this and the fact that the Jews await their so-called Messiah – as the Jews deny the messengership of Jesus, who will return before the Hour – it is expected that the Rāfidah will ally blatantly with the Jews in the future in their war against Islam and the Muslims. We seek refuge with Allah for Ahlus-Sunnah from the evil of the Dajjāl. (*Dabiq*, Issue 11:17)

Here, ISIS mentions the Safavid¹⁵ empire to claim that Shiites have massacred Muslims who refuse to join them, once again alluding to the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah, this time historically. Thus, historical accounts of how Shiites are considered intrinsically evil are instrumentalized by ISIS in their construction of enemies in the contemporary conspiracy about a war against Islam and Muslims. This can be understood as an other-imposed

¹⁵ The Safavid dynasty was one of the most significant Persian empires (1501–1736).

politicization of Shiite identity. Moreover, this politicization also includes Jews since they are said to ally with Shiites in this war. War metaphors can be understood as especially harmful as they imply violent action, justify physical violence, and decrease the threshold for violence (Sageman 2017a:135). Moreover, war metaphors can activate a martial social identity.

Furthermore, ISIS mentions that Shiites pronounce *takfir* on the companions, people who Muslims hold dearly. This claim is a threat to ingroup cohesion and indicates that an appeal to Muslims' religious feelings may be a strategy in ISIS anti-Shiism.

The quotation follows the use of different historical religious accounts and ends with reference to the future where ISIS claims that Shiites will ally with Jews in their war against Muslims. It shows how interwoven historical accounts are with today's context in ISIS propaganda. Moreover, historical religious accounts can be understood as what Roy (2017:43) calls theological rationalization linked with the radical imaginary of contemporary and future conflicts.

In the same issue of *Dabiq*, ISIS explains that the *Dajjal* will speak Hebrew and rule by the Torah. Furthermore, ISIS believes that the *Dajjal* will be followed by Jews and kill all Arabs. According to ISIS, these claims prove that he is the Jewish *Dajjal* and not the Muslim *Mahdi* (*Dabiq*, Issue 11:52). Lastly, ISIS believes that Jews and Shiites will continue waging war against Muslims until the *Dajjal* makes his presence known.

The notion of the *Dajjal* has been mentioned in previous research on Islamists. For example, Steinberg and Oliver (2003:22) show that before and after the Palestinian intifada in the 2000s, Islamists equated the *Dajjal* with the Jewish Messiah. In the 1960s, the Islamist Mawdudi claimed that the *Dajjal* would emerge as the Messiah of the Jews (Steinberg and Oliver 2003:21). Furthermore, this idea became more common in Gaza and the West bank after the late intifada in the early 2000s (ibid). However, there is actually no mention of the *Dajjal* in the Qur'an.

Although the Qur'an does refer to eschatological events, it contains no Armageddon imagery of apocalyptic prophecies, no end-of-time battles for Jerusalem nor signs presaging the final days (Khaleel 2005:81-82). Khaleel writes that "Muhammad's role as an apostle of God not one that allowed him to predict the future, and he is thus made to say in the Qur'an, on several occasions, that he knows nothing about when the Final Day will occur" (2005:82).

ISIS Transfer of Antisemitic Notions onto Shiites

ISIS makes an interesting comparison between Jews and Shiites, showing how they view them in more detail. The quotation below elaborates on ISIS ideas about the relationship between Shiites and Jews:

He also said, “Indeed, the calamity of the Rāfidah is the same as the calamity of the Jews. The Jews say that only a person from the lineage of Dāwūd is suited for kingship. The Rāfidah say that only a person from the lineage of ‘Alī is suited for imāmah. The Jews say that there is no jihād until the Messiah comes forth and a sword descends from the heavens. The Rāfidah say there is no jihād until the Mahdī comes forth and a caller calls out from the heavens saying, ‘Follow him.’ The Jews distorted the Tawrah. The Rāfidah did the same, distorting the Qur’ān. The Jews are not truthful when they say salām to the believers, rather they say, ‘May sām be upon you.’ And sām means death. The Rāfidah are the same. The Jews consider the wealth of all people to be halāl, as Allah described them in the Qur’ān as saying, {“There is no blame upon us concerning the illiterate [i.e., Arabs]}” [Al ‘Imrān: 75]. The Rāfidah are the same, as they consider the wealth of all Muslims to be halāl. The Jews consider the blood of all Muslims to be halāl. The Rāfidah are the same. The Jews consider the cheating of people to be halāl. The Rāfidah are the same. The Jews hate Jibrīl and say he is their enemy from amongst the angels. The Rāfidah are the same, as some of them claim that Jibrīl mistakenly descended with revelation upon Muhammad and abandoned ‘Alī .” This is a reality of which there is no doubt. The Jews and the Rāfidah are two sides of the same coin. (*Dabiq*, Issue 13:33)

Here, ISIS claims that both Jews and Shiites claim that they will not wage jihad until the Mahdi and Messiah come. Moreover, they are both accused of distorting religious scripture and being untruthful. ISIS also claims that Shiites and Jews believe that the wealth of all Muslims and all people is halal.¹⁶ Furthermore, ISIS claims that both Jews and Shiites believe that cheating people are allowed and that they hate the angel Jibril. These accusations mix religious accusations and essentialist notions. The idea of Jews hating Jibril is not new. However, to relate it to Shiites is an anti-Shiite innovation instrumentalized by ISIS. This indicates that ISIS uses antisemitism to spread anti-Shiite sentiment.

ISIS also claims that both Shiites and Jews consider Muslim’s blood to be halal, a possible reference to the antisemitic notion of blood libel. If so, ideas about blood, historically used against Jews, are now also being applied to Shiites. This indicates that ISIS anti-Shiism is partly based on a transfer of antisemitic ideas to Shiites, creating a form of antisemitism against them. When ISIS calls Shiites the Jews of the ummah, they are transferring their own antisemitic notions onto Shiites while still acknowledging that Shiites exist within the imaginary notion of the Muslim ummah. The quotation ends with “The Jews and the Rafidah are two sides of the same coin,” summarizing the point that ISIS seems to want to make, namely that Jews and Shiites are the same.

The following quotation from *Dabiq* deals with the idea of Shiites as *murtaddīn*:

The Ruling upon the Rāfidah. In addition to their extreme ignorance and deviance, the Rāfidah – both their leaders and laymen – are murtaddīn. Amīrul-

¹⁶ Halal is an Arabic term which refers to something that is permitted.

Mu'minīn Abū 'Umar al-Husaynī al-Baghdādī said, "The Rāfidah are a party of shirk and apostasy" [Qul Innī 'Alā Bayyinah Min Rabbī]. (*Dabiq*, Issue 13:33)

In this quotation, ISIS claims that Shiites are *murtaddīn* which means apostates. Here, it is interesting to observe the certainty of ISIS when it describes Shiites as *murtaddīn*, namely by saying that they *are* *murtaddīn*. The claim does not need any further explanation or evidence. The Shiite identity is viewed by ISIS as intrinsically apostatic and therefore excluded from the Muslim faith by its very existence.

The following quotation refers to Ibn Taymiyyah, a scholar highly respected among Salafists and who is commonly used for anti-Shiite purposes:

Al-Bukhārī said, "It makes no difference to me whether I were to pray behind a Jahmī or Rāfidī or behind a Jew or Christian. They are not to be greeted with *salām*. Their ill are not to be paid a sick visit. They are not to be married. Their funerals are not to be attended. The meat they slaughter is not to be eaten" [Khalq Af'āl al-'Ibād]. Ahmad Ibn Yūnus (died 227AH) said, "If a Jew were to slaughter a sheep and a Rāfidī were to slaughter one, I would eat from the sheep slaughtered by the Jew and not eat from the one slaughtered by the Rāfidī, because the Rāfidī is a *murtadd*" [As-Sārīm al-Maslūl – Ibn Taymiyyah]. Ibn Hazm said, "The Rāfidah are not from the Muslims" [al-Fisal] (*Dabiq*, Issue 13:33)

Here, ISIS uses several critical religious figures and authorities to legitimize their anti-Shiism. The categorization of Shiites as apostates might explain why they are seen as worse than Jews, namely because they are viewed as people who have left the religion of Islam.

Now, in this section on ISIS's views on Shiites and Jews, it is important to point out that several scholars have questioned the narrative of Ibn Saba being a Jew (Hodgson 2012; Ḥusayn 1953; Lewis and Holt 1962). Taha Husayn¹⁷ even questioned whether Ibn Saba was a real historical figure. Furthermore, he carefully investigated the historical accounts and, in my opinion, convincingly came to the conclusion that Ibn Saba was fabricated, the strongest argument being that the narrations of the story are few and therefore weak (Ḥusayn 1953:101–104).

When the Hadith and historical records are evaluated by religious scholars concerning validity, one criterion for labeling it as weak is few narrations. Ḥusayn (1953) suggests that Ibn Saba was invented in order to insert a Jewish element into Shiites to discredit them. Hence, the Ibn Saba story is used to spread anti-Shiism through an already established antisemitism. Bernard Haykel shows that al-Qaeda has resuscitated this Jewish connection in explaining contemporary events such as "the alliance between so-called Zionists and Crusaders with the Shia" to topple Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Iran's

¹⁷ Also spelled Taha Hussein or Taha Husain.

strengthening of the Shia in Syria and Lebanon against the Sunnis (Haykel 2011:189). Therefore, one can suggest that ISIS uses parts of al-Qaeda's narrative in their own ideology construction. The difference being that ISIS is prepared to, more forcefully, act out on these ideas through mass violence against the Shia.

Al-Qaeda also objected to Zarqawi's killings of civilian Shiites in Iraq although mainly for strategic reasons. Zawahiri and Bin Laden, al-Qaeda leaders, believed that killing civilians in Iraq would make it harder to gain the support of the people, which they thought was necessary in order to establish an Islamic state. Zarqawi did not follow their advice or warning.

However, al-Qaeda politicized Shiite identity by associating it with an alliance with "Zionists and crusaders" before ISIS. These notions of Shiites have contributed to the genocide against them in Iraq. This genocide is mainly based on ISIS's continuous targeting of civilians in Shia majority districts¹⁸ in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq through suicide bombings.

Zarqawi pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in October 2004 and established al-Qaeda in Iraq, with his own vision of jihad (Hawley 2017:163); whereas al-Qaeda attacked the US, he focused on Muslim states and Shiites. Thus, one can understand ISIS's choice to focus on Muslims as enemies as a return to Qutb's main ideas through the Sahwa movement rather than a direct continuation of al-Qaeda's ideology. Chapter 8 will propose that the Sahwa movement is a missing link between Qutb's and ISIS antisemitism and anti-Shiism.

Hadith: Gharqad Tree and References to Palestine

This section describes how ISIS uses one specific Hadith for antisemitic purposes. Hadith is a narrative record of the sayings and customs of the Prophet Mohammed and his companions (Motzki and Conrad 2004). Furthermore, the Hadith has been used to justify antisemitism (Patterson 2015:84). ISIS mainly uses one Hadith, commonly used by other Islamist antisemites such as Hamas (Oliver and Steinberg 2003:20)—the Hadith about the Gharqad Tree.

Hadiths vary in religious validity; some are seen as authentic while others are seen as weak. A weak Hadith is most likely not true. The methodology for evaluating a Hadith is based on many rules and criteria defined by religious scholars, and, unlike the Qur'an, Hadiths are narrated by human beings and therefore are not seen as God's words. Nevertheless, Hadiths constitute a second religious authority among Muslims after the Qur'an. The following quotation is the Gharqad Tree Hadith in its entirety:

¹⁸ The city of Baghdad is divided into districts where some are predominantly Shiite. Thus, suicide bombers choose to strike the areas in Baghdad where Shiites live.

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: The last hour would not come unless the Muslims will fight against the Jews, and the Muslims would kill them until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and a stone or a tree would say: Muslim, or the servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him; but the tree Gharqad would not say, for it is the tree of the Jews.¹⁹

In the quote, we see a reference to the last hour, similar to the previous section about the *Dajjal* and the end of times. This Hadith refers to an apocalyptic notion where it is believed that the Muslims will fight against Jews. The following quotation is an example of how ISIS makes use of this Hadith:

As for the massacres taking place in Gaza against the Muslim men, women, and children, then the Islamic State will do everything within its means to continue striking down every apostate who stands as an obstacle on its path towards Palestine. It is not the manner of the Islamic State to throw empty, dry, and hypocritical words of condemnation and condolences like the Arab *tawāghīṭ* do in the UN and Arab League. Rather, its actions speak louder than its words, and it is only a matter of time and patience before it reaches Palestine to fight the barbaric Jews and kill those of them hiding behind the Gharqad trees—the trees of the Jews (*Dabiq*, Issue 2:4).

Here, ISIS uses the Gharqad Tree Hadith in their commentary on the situation of the Palestinians. First, they create the image of the imaginary victimized ummah by mentioning that massacres are being committed in Gaza against Muslim men, women, and children. As seen before, and as observed by Sage-man, descriptions of violence are a common mobilizing strategy adopted by terrorist organizations.

Furthermore, ISIS claims that their path is towards Palestine and that they will strike down those who try to stop them. Moreover, in making this claim, they also use the strategy of making Arab countries seem weak by claiming that they throw empty and hypocritical words in the UN and Arab League. This is in line with the strategy of making rivals seem weak in order to gain support among potential recruits. By attributing passivity to the outgroup, ISIS creates a positive distinctiveness for themselves by claiming that they are the only ones who can act against oppression against Muslims. In the last sentence, ISIS describes Jews as barbaric and promises to reach Palestine.

It is in the last sentence that we encounter the mention of the Gharqad Tree Hadith. Here, ISIS claims that they will “kill the Jews hiding behind the Gharqad trees,” although the Hadith actually says that the Gharqad trees will protect the Jews from being killed. This quotation indicates, at least, three things.

First, ISIS is building a narrative of contemporary politics where they are viewed as the only defenders of the Palestinians, establishing an image of themselves as action-oriented, giving themselves a positive distinctiveness.

¹⁹ This Hadith is called Sahih Muslim 2922 and can be found at this website for Hadith collections in English: <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2922>.

Second, they add a mention of the Hadith to gain religious legitimacy for their violent threats against Jews. However, this mention of the Hadith is distorted to make them seem even more action-oriented as they claim that they will actually kill Jews hiding behind the Gharqad trees.

Third, this shows how ISIS is taking advantage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict being unresolved by furthering their own agenda, possibly as a recruitment strategy.

By saying that they will reach Palestine to fight “the barbaric Jews,” ISIS is politicizing Jewish identity by placing it in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and threatening to kill Jews. Khaleel’s (2004:8-9) research has also shown that the Hadith on the Gharqad tree has been used by religious leaders who want to agitate against lasting peace with Israel.

The following quotation is another example of how ISIS uses the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

Sinai is also a front against the Jews, an important step towards the liberation of Baytul-Maqdis. This expansion brings the battle where the Jews hide behind their gharqad trees closer to the Muslims by ridding the path of the obstacles manifested in the apostate regime and army of Fir’awn. (*Dabiq*, Issue 5:29)

Here, ISIS is once again making use of the Palestine-Israeli conflict. However, ISIS adds that it will liberate Baytul Maqdis, referring to the Mosque in Jerusalem. The notion of “liberating” Baytul Maqdis implies taking over Jerusalem and Israel and it is a belief commonly used by Islamists to symbolize their goals. For Islamists, an Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become a way of taking advantage of the unresolved conflict to further their agenda. As suggested by Mellor, Islamists provide “a new narrative to reshape and reframe the perception of this conflict as being religious rather than political in nature” (2017:514-515),

The following quotation from *Dabiq* is longer and also includes a reference to the Gharqad Tree:

The believer might ask, what has changed after the Russian intervention? The answer is that nothing has changed except that the opportunity for reward from Allah is now greater. The mujāhid who was patient in the face of the crusader, tāghūtī, Nusayrī, and Rāfidī airstrikes gets closer to Allah when he manifests patience in the face of more airstrikes from other crusader nations. The soldiers of the Islamic State who were patient in the face of the overlapping but quarreling crusader coalition and Rāfidī coalition are not changed by the addition of Russia to one of the two anti-Islam coalitions, while realizing that Russia had always been a backer of the Nusayrī tāghūt al-Asad. So are these events precursors to the prophesized truce between the Muslims and the Romans? Will the West abandon its support of the Rāfidah, the murtadd tawāghīt, and the Jewish State? And will the intervention of Russia in favor of Iran in Shām and Iraq lead the West into a truce with the Khilāfah? All one can say is that Allah knows best. And nothing changes for the Islamic State, as it

will continue to pronounce takfir upon the Jews, the Christians, the pagans, and the apostates from the Rāfidah, the Nusayriyyah, the Sahwah, and the tawāghīt. It will continue to wage war against the apostates until they repent from apostasy. It will continue to wage war against the pagans until they accept Islam. It will continue to wage war against the Jewish State until the Jews hide behind their gharqad. (*Dabiq*, Issue 12:46)

This is an example of how ISIS conflates politics and religion. ISIS is commenting on Russia joining the coalition against ISIS. ISIS concludes that the more attacks against them, the more they will be rewarded by God. This can be interpreted as a way to keep up the morale in a situation where the war was escalating against them. It is also a way of trying to diminish any doubts in the ISIS recruits. As Reicher et al. (2008) point out, those who object to the killings by the ingroup are told that such action is a morally justified or even a necessary response to an act of violation from the outgroup. Hence, the massacre of innocents is elevated to the status of a holy rite; in this moral universe, those who kill have moral strength, and those who do not are morally suspect (Reicher et al. 2008:1337).

ISIS views killing as a moral act to be celebrated since they claim that God will reward them. Killing is given a positive value and reward and refusing to kill the enemy is understood as immoral. According to Reicher et al. this is how genocide and other acts of violence are justified by the ingroup. This type of thinking is clear in the imaginary victimized ummah narrative as there is a moral obligation for the ingroup to engage in violence to defend their imagined community. Another aspect that complicates this claim is that it is given a religious legitimacy by the use of the Gharqad Hadith; therefore, those who disagree can be excommunicated by ISIS and become targets of violence.

When ISIS says crusader, taghut, Nusayri, and Rafidi airstrikes, they are referring to airstrikes coming from Christians, Gulf countries, Assad, and Shiites (sometimes in reference to Iran). Here, one can note how they conflate politics with religious identity.

However, ISIS also points out that nothing has changed for them and that they will continue their war until they reach the Jewish State. At this point, ISIS claims that Jews will hide behind the gharqad trees. Since the Hadith refers to the end of times, this quotation might be referring to the last struggle. However, this is unclear since ISIS has claimed that they believe that the final battle will occur in Dabiq, Syria, not Israel. This might explain why they do not elaborate on the apocalyptic part of the Hadith: it indicates an inconsistency in their beliefs.

As mentioned earlier, the Gharqad Tree Hadith is highly disputed. However, it was narrated by Sahih Bukhari, which is regarded as authentic by many Sunni Muslims, sahih meaning authentic or correct in Arabic and Bukhari

being the person who compiled the Hadith. Bassam Tibi has commented on the Hadith:

This hadith refers to the day of resurrection that comes with a fight against the Jews. The battle ends with al-yahudi (the Jew) hiding behind a tree and a stone. The stone shouts: "Oh Muslim, oh server of Allah, a Jew is hidden behind me, come and kill him." But "the gharqad (tree) does not betray the hiding Jew, because it is Jewish." This hadith prescribes the "killing of the Jew" as "a religious obligation" and thus includes the most extreme implication of the religionization of antisemitism. Applied to Israel, it implies eradication. Again, the authenticity of this hadith is doubtful. Plenty of fake hadiths were posthumously attributed to the Prophet. But its quotation in the charter of Hamas is significant in itself. (2012:77)

Tibi notes that the Hadith prescribes the killing of the Jew as a religious obligation; therefore, by using this Hadith Islamists can give their antisemitism a religious legitimacy, which makes this Hadith all the more dangerous.

Previous research on how the Hadith is used has shown that it is applied to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Moreover, one study by Oliver and Steinberg (2003:20) focuses on how Hamas's sheikhs use the Hadith; it shows that Hamas believes that as the "hour" approaches, all the creation will turn against the Jews and that their only ally will be the gharqad trees. Some of the sheikhs said that Israelis plant the trees around settlements in Gaza and the West Bank to protect themselves from attacks (Oliver and Steinberg 2003:21).

Furthermore, as Tibi (2012:77) notes, the gharqad tree is mentioned in Hamas' charter:

Hamas strives for the fulfillment of Allah's promise as the time grows long and the Prophet, Allah bless Him and grant Him salvation, said, "The Hour will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews (and the Muslims will kill them) until the Jews hide behind the trees and rocks and the trees and rocks will say, 'O Muslim, O Servant of Allah, Here are the Jews, Come and kill them!' except the Gharqad Tree because it is a tree of the Jews". (Oliver and Steinberg 2003:20)

When Oliver and Steinberg (2003:23) asked a Hamas sheik why the charter of Hamas mentions the Gharqad Tree, he answered. "Because there are Jews." Moreover, the sheik said the Hadith on the Gharqad Tree was put in the document "to prepare the people for the final battle" (ibid). Most of the Jews, he said, would be killed in that battle, which would take place in Palestine. Palestine would then become an Islamic country, and the only Jews who would survive would be those who left the country.

Here, one can note that all the Hamas sheikh had to do to justify killings was to socially categorize Jews; this indicates that in Islamist thinking, the social

categorization of Jews has an inherent violent aspect to it. To be a Jew, according to Hamas, is to be a person who is in an automatic conflict with Muslims. Here, Islamists politicize Jewish identity to rationalize genocide.

During the intifada in the early 2000s, there was a revival of the Gharqad Tree Hadith:

With the revival of the tradition of the Gharqad as “the tree of the Jews” during the intifada, one can see that the sinister characteristics attributed to the tree increasingly began to function in Islamist thought as a pseudo-natural analog of the Jews themselves. The Gharqad Tree has become such a powerful trope in the Muslim-Jewish and Palestinian-Israeli struggle over Jerusalem and “the Holy Land” that Islamists around the globe now commonly refer to the tree exclusively in terms of the Jews of Jerusalem and Palestine. (Steinberg Oliver 2003:22)

Steinberg and Oliver conclude that the Gharqad Tree symbolizes all the forces of the world believed to conspire with Jews against the Muslims and that it has become a powerful trope in the Muslim-Jewish and Palestinian-Israeli struggle over Jerusalem, leading to Islamists around the globe referring to the tree exclusively in terms of the Jews of Jerusalem and Palestine.

This indicates a politicization of Jewish identity in relation to the imaginary victimized ummah. Moreover, it is important to note that there is no mention of the Gharqad Tree in the Qur’an. However, Palestinian religious leaders have often claimed that the Gharqad Tree Hadith is a religious obligation that applies to today’s Palestinian-Israeli conflict, often with reference to the self-defense argument (Marcus and Crook 2005:125).

Qur’an

According to Firestone, the Qur’an neither singles out Jews nor is it antisemitic (2020:91-106). Firestone has formulated three criteria²⁰ for understanding how the Qur’an views Jews: 1) the Qur’an’s view of Jews needs to be examined in relation to its position on the other communities contesting its status as a divinely revealed text; 2) the Qur’an’s view of Jews must be observed historically in relation to their status with other communities of Late Antiquity; and 3) the Qur’anic attitude towards Jews must be considered phenomenologically in reference to the emergence of Scripture and the birth of a new religion. Hence, this section is not about the Qur’an itself from a

²⁰ See Firestone’s lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CqkA4Wu7uo>.

theological point of view but a sociological analysis of how the Qur'an is exploited and distorted by Islamists to promote antisemitism. In addition, this section contextualizes the Qur'an verse.

When ISIS uses the Qur'an for antisemitic purposes, they mainly refer to one verse: al-Maidah 51. As mentioned earlier, quotations from the Qur'an are normally supposed to be understood in their historical context. However, Islamists apply them to contemporary, primarily political, situations. In Chapter 7, I show how Qutb made this shift possible with his interpretation of al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120. This chapter presents how ISIS has used these two verses for antisemitic purposes. Figure 2 shows the results of the coding of all the Qur'an verses used for antisemitic purposes in *Dabiq*.

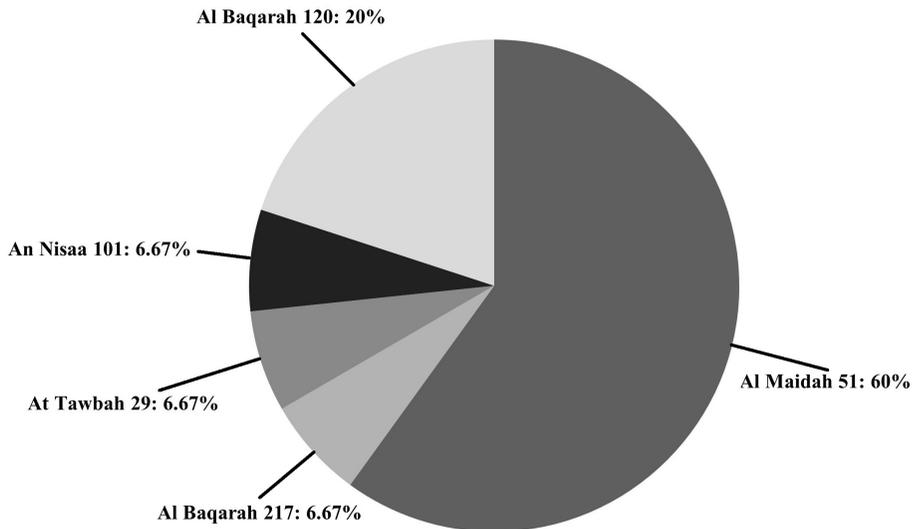


Figure 2. Qur'an verses mentioned in *Dabiq* for antisemitic purposes.

I will start by presenting the verses from the Qur'an that ISIS uses most frequently in *Dabiq* and then show how ISIS uses the verses in *Dabiq*. Finally, I will discuss different interpretations of the verses.

Al-Maidah 51

As seen in Figure 2, al-Maidah 51 is the most cited Qur'an verse related to antisemitism in *Dabiq*. ISIS uses the verse to further its antisemitic ideology. The following is the verse in its entirety:

O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among

you—then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.²¹

The following quotation shows how ISIS uses the verse in its propaganda:

Don't take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you—then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people [Al-Mā'idah: 51]. The people of knowledge said, "Whoever aligns with the kuffār has disbelieved." The biggest form of alliance is support whether by statements, spears, or speech. So those who tread behind Bush in his crusade against the Muslims have disbelieved in Allah subhānahu wa ta'ālā and His Messenger. [. . .] So I say to the Muslims, be wary very wary of allying with the Jews and Christians, and whoever has slipped by a word, then let him fear Allah, renew his faith, and repent from his deed. [. . .] Even if he supported them just by a single word. He who aligns with them by a single word falls into apostasy extreme apostasy [. . .] [Interview—4 Sha'bān 1422H]. (*Dabiq*, Issue 4:44)

This quotation starts with al-Maidah 51 from the Qur'an stating that Muslims should not take Jews and Christians as allies. Then, ISIS adds that "the people of knowledge" have said that whoever aligns with the kuffār has disbelieved. By saying "the people of knowledge," they give it the impression of being an authoritative statement.

An alliance is defined as statements or speech, making the threshold for disbelief very low. Next, ISIS brings in the current political context by referring to Bush and that those who tread behind him in the war against Muslims have disbelieved in God. Finally, there is an accusation of apostasy; those who support Bush even by one word fall into extreme apostasy according to ISIS. This quotation shows how ISIS builds a narrative starting with one quotation from the Qur'an to give it religious legitimacy, apply it to the current political context, and finally claim that a single word leads to extreme apostasy.

According to ISIS, to ally with Christians and Jews as a Muslim equals apostasy. This shows how ISIS uses supposed religious legitimacy for anti-semitism to excommunicate Muslims and legitimize violence against them. However, it is questionable whether the original Qur'an verse supports this notion since it does not mention apostasy. Moreover, this quotation indicates a politicization of Muslim identity, constructed as a distinct politicized camp with strict boundaries against the "disbelievers."

In *Jihad and Death*, Olivier Roy (2017) mentions al-Maidah 51 and how ISIS uses it:

Theology involves interpreting scriptures in a comprehensive discursive system that isolates dogma from all the rest: emotion, imagination, aesthetics, and so on. But what is at work here is precisely religiosity- in other words, the way in which the believer experiences religion and appropriates elements of

²¹ Translation: Saheeh International.

theology, practices, imaginaries, and rites to construct a transcendency for himself and not religion. The linkage between their imaginary and science is brought about by two things: terminology (peppering ones French or English with Arabic words) and the brutal, non-discursive affirmation of a verse or a hadith, made up of one or two sentences at most, such as the famous verse: “do not take the Jews and Christians as allies. They are allies of one another.” Short texts such as these are thrown up in people's faces (just as the red guards threw Mao quotes up in people's faces) without ever referring to other texts, let alone seeking a more overall logical significance. Even those who claim that their knowledge sets them apart from others stick to this incantatory logic. (2017:42–43)

Roy suggests that what works with sympathizers is the linkage between the radical imaginary and the theological “rationalization” provided by ISIS, which is not based on actual knowledge but rather on an appeal to authority. In addition to Roy’s analysis, there are other important aspects of al-Maidah 51, such as different interpretations of the verse.

Other interpretations of al-Maidah 51

To understand al-Maidah 51, one needs to understand its historical context. The following section will present the historical context in which al-Maidah 51 was revealed.

The Historical Context

Understanding the historical context of al-Maidah 51 is needed to understand how extremists distort religious scripture. Duderija (2010) has suggested that the few negative references to Jews in the Qur’an should be understood as references to the specific historical context of the early Muslim community and the specific Jewish opposition against the Prophet Muhammed in Madinah. Moreover, the negative references should be understood as directed against a segment of the Jews in that historical context. This specific Jewish opposition turned into collaboration with Makkan,²² enemies of the Prophet; thus, it would have meant the end of Prophet Muhammad’s mission if it had succeeded.

Moreover, according to Mansur (2016:69), Muslim Judeophobia was centered around tribalism and tribal conflicts in pre-modern times. According to Mansur, Muslim Judeophobia was a form of tribal paranoia (ibid). Like Duderija, he claims that negative Qur’anic references to Jews should be understood as pertaining to a specific historical dispute with the Prophet Mohammed.

²² People from the city of Makkah.

The Meaning of Awliya

First, the original Arabic term in the Qur'an is *awliya* and has commonly been translated as friends or allies, allies as seen in the Saheeh international translation mentioned above. However, some question this translation and propose that a more accurate translation needs to take the political realm into account (Dakake 2012; Meddeb and Stora 2013: 623). Dakake (2012) argues that such translation would provide the proper historical context, translating *awliya* as protector since traditional commentaries on the Qur'an show that this verse was revealed at a particular moment in the life of the early Muslim community.

Protector has a somewhat different meaning from ally, especially if placed in the Islamist antisemitic contemporary use of the verse. Protector is, for example, less militarized than ally and more difficult to generalize into antisemitic beliefs and thus harder to utilize for contemporary terrorism and warfare purposes.

Before the Al-Maidah 51 verse was revealed, the Prophet and his followers (a few hundred) had recently moved to Madinah from Makkah due to persecution by fellow tribesmen (ibid). The people in Makkah saw the growing presence of Muslims as a threat since they preached that there was only one God, while they believed in multiple Gods/idols. Thus, the message of the Muslims threatened the social order in Makkah, which was based on the worship of various gods and the privileges of the wealthy (ibid).

Although the Muslims were few and left Makkah, the Makkans continued to confront the Muslims militarily after moving to Madinah. These battles were crucial events in the history of the early Islamic community. The Prophet realized that it would be communal suicide if his community started taking bonds of loyalty with other groups. Thus, dissent was not allowed. Given this history, *awliya* should be understood as protectors or guardians rather than friends (Dakake 2012). Hence, the verse should be read as follows: "Do not take Christians and Jews as your protectors. They are protectors to one another." This is the message of the verse, and the appropriateness of this understanding is supported not only by the historical context for its revelation but also by the fact that nowhere does the Qur'an oppose kindness between peoples (Dakake 2012).

Al-Baqarah 120

The second most quoted Qur'an verse for antisemitic purposes in *Dabiq* is al-Baqarah 120, which was written in the early years of Prophet Mohammed's rule in Madinah. At this time, the Muslim community was in need of

organization and legislation (Smith 2001:122). Al-Baqarah 120 is one of the most cited verses used by radical Islamist groups to justify the conspiracy theories about others wanting to destroy Islam (Lim 2011:36). Islamists point to the conflicts in Palestine, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and other places in the world as proof of the verse's veracity (ibid). Hence, it is used in the imaginary victimized ummah narrative. I will first introduce the translation of the verse and then give an example of how ISIS uses it in its propaganda. The verse is as follows:

And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper. (Saheeh International)

Baqarah 120 is mentioned in Issue 4 of *Dabiq* in an article named "The fading grayzone":

Since the beginning of this crusade on the media frontline, self-styled jihadist ideologues and quasi-mujāhidīn have tried to position themselves in an area that is neither Islamic State nor Sahwah [. . .] only to be sucked into the trenches of the apostate media and religious scholarship of the Arab tawāghīt. They even imitated the nusayriyyah and secularist opposition by labelling the Islamic State as "Daesh" and "Tandhīm ad-Dawlah," in a manner precisely mimicking the satellite channels and palace scholars of Āl Salūl and Qatar. One of the top "jihadist ideologues" presented a verdict entailing ways to confront the "extremism and takfir" of "Jamā'at ad-Dawlah" matching those expressed by Obama, Chuck Hagel, Dempsey, and the US State Department. His suggestions included preventing financial and human resources from reaching the Islamic State as well as religiously delegitimizing the State in a manner US officials said "Muslim" scholars must do. And yet he and his likes claim they are neutral! It is as if they haven't read the verses of the Qur'ān teaching us that the Jews and Christians fight the Muslims for their religion and that the more one is fought by them for his religion the closer he is to the path of the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). {And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper} [Al-Baqarah: 120]. (*Dabiq*, Issue 4:42–43)

Here, ISIS claims that their rivals are self-styled and "quasi-mujahidin" and led by the "tawāghīt." To call them self-styled can be understood as making them appear less religiously grounded than ISIS. It can also mean that they are seen as less ideologically grounded than ISIS. The latter interpretation is supported by the addition of "quasi-mujahidin," indicating that their rivals are not true warriors. However, ISIS uses ideology and religion interchangeably, and it is unclear how they define ideology as a concept.

This quotation can also be understood as a reference to the destruction of the grayzone by saying that the Quasi-mujahidin have tried to position themselves in an area as neither ISIS nor Sahwah. The grayzone is an essential concept for ISIS, who claim that the emergence of their group means that there is no longer any grayzone for Muslims; either they are with ISIS, or they are with their “disbeliever” enemies.

Here, it is important to note that ISIS’s concept of the non-existent grayzone most likely derives from Qutb’s teachings. Specifically, it seems to derive from Qutb’s description of the world as divided into jahiliyya and hakimiyya, with no middle ground (Shepard 2013:489). Hence, ISIS are in line with Qutb’s idea when they claim that Islam only exists in their Islamist state (hakimiyya), and that the rest of the world, including Muslims, are living under the absence of Islam (jahiliyya).

Furthermore, by claiming that those quasi-mujahidin have been “sucked into the trenches of the apostate media and religious scholarship of the Arab tawāghīt,” ISIS is associating their rivals with what they call apostate media and religious scholarship in Gulf countries. ISIS’s rivals are once again described as followers of the US, and their theologically based opposition to ISIS is described in terms of them mimicking the US. ISIS indicate that these rivals are not following God’s guidance when they refer to Baqarah 120.

The quotation shows that ISIS believes that Jews and Christians fight Muslims for their religion, and that this is an eternal issue, that other Muslims who are not with ISIS belong to this camp, and that this is a good sign for ISIS, a sign that they are on the path of the Prophet.

To prove their point, they use quotations from the Qur’an. This strategy shows how ISIS uses religious legitimacy as a form of moral superiority in their construction of a virtuous ingroup, who should exclude the de-personalized outgroup.

Moral superiority, fear and distrust of outgroups, and social comparison have been mentioned in the theory chapter as ingroup processes that can lead to hostility and conflict between groups. However, when groups become political entities, like ISIS, these processes are used as a deliberate manipulation by group leaders in the interests of mobilizing collective action to secure or maintain political power (Brewer 1999:437). It is this need to justify ingroup values in the form of moral superiority, sensitivity to threat, social comparison processes, and power politics that connect ingroup identification and loyalty to overt hostility toward outgroups (Brewer 1999:443).

In the next chapter, I examine how Qutb, prior to ISIS, made a similar interpretation of this verse.

Transform into Apes and Swine Verse

A common saying that Islamists use to support their antisemitic claims is that God transformed Jews into apes and swine. This saying is attributed to several verses in the Qur'an and is found in *Dabiq* Issue 11:

Essentially, the Americans cooperate with Iran, its forces, and its militias, but through the Safawī Iraqi regime – in imitation of those Jews who worked but “did not work” on Saturday despite the prohibition and who were thus transformed into apes and swine. (*Dabiq*, Issue 11:49)

The apes and swine verses refer to humans being transformed into animals. Thus, they are used to dehumanize Jews. However, ISIS does not refer specifically to any of the verses by giving their name and number. The reason for this might be that the saying that Jews were transformed into apes and swine is widely known as “originating” in the Qur'an among their supporters, so they do not have to refer to it specifically.

This quotation also refers to the supposed double nature of ISIS enemies and that they lie or conceal their actions. It is shown when ISIS claims that Americans work with Iran via the Iraqi regime, meaning they are trying to conceal cooperation and that this behavior is similar to what Jews supposedly have done, referring to a religious story when they were allegedly transformed into apes and swine for working on a Saturday when it is prohibited.

However, these depictions of Jews (and Christians) as apes and swine are distorted by extremists; Mansur, a political scientist, makes the following suggestion:

The Qur'anic admonishment “Be ye apes, despised and rejected,” which is hurled at the Jews by Muslim hate-mongers, is found in a verse that reads as follows in Muhammad Asad's translation: [F]or you are well aware of those from among you who profaned the Sabbath, whereupon we said unto them, ‘Be as apes despicable!’ – and set them up as a warning example for their time and for all times to come, as well as an admonition to all who are conscious of God (2:65–66). The admonishment is figurative, and it cannot be read literally as Muslim hate-mongers do. There is reference here to the Mosaic Law that condemns those Jews violating the Sabbath with death as punishment according to the Hebrew Scripture. (2016:62–63)

Thus, extremists distort the meaning of these verses: in sura 5:60, the Qur'an states that God cursed the sinners among the people of the book (that is, Jews and Christians) and transformed them into apes, pigs, and idolators; according to sura 2:65 and 7:166, he commanded those among the children of Israel who violated the sabbath to transform themselves into apes. Here, what the Qur'an targets are the sinners among the Jews and Christians, not the Jews and Christians as such, underscoring once again that Jews are not always singled out but treated as part of a wider group of non-Muslims (Krämer 2006:270).

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter adds to the understanding of the social causes of contemporary Islamist antisemitism by showing the centrality of the war against Islam conspiracy and that it entails a politicization of religious identities and a martial social identity to justify and mobilize violence against Jews and Shiites.

Social Identity Constructions and Antisemitism

Self-categorization

The first step in the social identity constructions of ISIS antisemitism is an ingroup self-categorization of ISIS members as the “true Muslims.” Thus, ISIS’s definition of the Muslim ingroup involves only those who follow their ideology, while the rest of the Muslims are excommunicated and considered an outgroup. A depersonalization of out-group members combined with a reduction of them to a stereotype leads to their dehumanization. Such a process is necessary as a mechanism of moral disengagement to carry out political violence; thus, there is no need for any additional process of desensitization, indoctrination, or brainwashing (Sageman 2017b:8). In the case of ISIS, everyone outside of their group is constructed as stereotyped enemies whose lives are viewed as worthless. This is possible due to the simplification of social reality that self-categorization provides.

Politicized and martial Muslim identity

In the war against Islam conspiracy, two identities are constructed for ISIS: a politicized social identity and a martial social identity. ISIS self-categorizes into a politicized social identity by identifying with the Islamist notion of the imaginary victimized ummah. Furthermore, it acquires a self-categorized martial social identity for Muslims, since this war is ongoing and Muslims need to engage in it and save their ummah from oppression. A shared social identity enables coordinated and effective collective action (Sageman 2017b:8–9) and it is what makes political violence possible. Moreover, this chapter has shown that ISIS undermines its enemies by associating them with Jews; thus, ISIS uses antisemitism as a general strategy to discredit its enemies.

Imposed politicization of Jewish and Shiite identity

ISIS antisemitism builds on the conspiracy of a war against Islam and it imposes a politicized social identity onto Jews and Shiites, seen as an outgroup enemy. This social categorization means that violence against Jews and Shiites is justified since they are portrayed as an existential threat to the survival of the ingroup in the ongoing war against Islam. According to social identity theory, a perceived common threat from outgroups increases ingroup cohesion

and loyalty since appeals to ingroup interests has greater legitimacy than appeals to personal self-interest; thus, politicization is a factor that contributes to ingroup love becoming outgroup hate (Brewer 1999:437–438).

The central characteristics of ISIS antisemitism are listed below:

1. The belief that Jews are powerful and the mobilizers of a war against Islam and Muslims.
2. A politicization of religious identities based on creating identification with an imaginary victimized Muslim ummah.
3. The belief that America is controlled by Jews and Israel.
4. A transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites and claiming they are undercover Jews.
5. The Palestine-Israel conflict and the Gharqad Tree Hadith are used to incite violence against Jews and to give it religious legitimacy.
6. The Qur'an verses al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah-120 are distorted to claim religious legitimacy in ISIS construction of Islamist antisemitism.

The belief that Jews are powerful is a long-lived antisemitic belief and in the war against Islam conspiracy Jews are also portrayed as the aggressors. Furthermore, the notion about Christians and America as controlled by Jews and Israel might explain why they are not as targeted as Jews and Shiites in ISIS propaganda; their identities are less politicized since they are understood as the tools for supposed Jewish world domination rather than as the instigators. Here, the notion of the *Dajjal* is important, ISIS claims that on the judgment day Jews and Shiites will work together against “the Muslims”; therefore, Christians do not have a prominent role in the doomsday beliefs of ISIS. Moreover, ISIS depends on giving their struggle a religious legitimacy and therefore they are distorting Qur'anic verses in their propaganda.

The Function of the Imaginary Victimized Muslim Ummah

The notion of an imaginary victimized Muslim ummah, meaning Sunni Muslims worldwide allegedly suffering due to a war against Islam—is a powerful emotional tool for Islamists in their recruitment, justification, and

mobilization for violence since it activates a politicized identity. It creates an identification with victims based on emotions coming from a shared social identity.

Table 11. The imaginary victimized ummah

1) Victims of war against Islam
2) Outgroup as existential threat to ingroup survival
2) Appeals to the emotional significance of a shared identity
3) Activates a politicized identity
4) Creates mobilization for martial identity--“saviors”

A process of politicization typically begins with the awareness of shared grievances (Sageman, 2017; Stekelenburg 2014:543). The second step is that an external enemy is blamed for these grievances (Stekelenburg 2014:543); in ISIS propaganda, the outgroup enemy consists of Jews and Shiites.

In the case of ISIS, a politicization of Muslim identity takes place by conveying the idea of an imaginary victimized Muslim ummah for group members to identify with. Identification with an imaginary construct is made possible by a shared social identity. Furthermore, a shared social identity in the form of group membership has an emotional significance attached to it (Tajfel 1974:69); therefore, oppression of an ingroup makes the struggle for the group important for those who identify with it. Jews and Shiites, religious identities, are being held responsible for the imaginary war and victimization of the Muslim ummah.

The thesis proposes that this phenomenon be called the imaginary victimized ummah. That is not to say that Muslims do not suffer from oppression, but that Islamists use oppression for their own gain by distorting reality, calling it a war against Islam, turning it into a shared, political, eternal, and worldwide oppression while holding Jews and Shiites responsible for it, with the intention of inciting violence against them.

The social identity construction that focuses on ingroup identification with victims contributes to a politicization of religious identities where some want to take it a step further and defend their ingroup by becoming soldiers. These notions of the imaginary victimized ummah are very common in ISIS propaganda and its interconnected politicization of religious identities contributed to ISIS recruitment in the war in Syria and Iraq.

The power of the war against Islam conspiracy is that it manages to mobilize people to defend the imaginary victimized ummah against different outgroups. This is how suicide bombings against Shiites, or the killings of Jews, are made

possible; it is via the imaginary notion of a victimized Muslim ummah that these religious identities, which have nothing to do with the oppression of Muslims, are still being targeted by ISIS. It is because of the imaginary notion of them conducting a war. Kustenbauder (2012: 419) evinces that politicized religious identity is used as a polarizing rhetorical device, emphasizing religious duty to mobilize support for warfare and advance political visions.

The imaginary victimized ummah in ISIS propaganda includes people in Syria, Iraq, and Palestine. The politicization of religious identities includes the Palestinian cause, as part of the imaginary victimized ummah, and it demands Muslim identification with this cause by Islamizing it, for instance by using the Gharqad Tree Hadith, while creating a martial social identity by claiming Muslims need to fight for the cause by killing Jews. Media and the internet make it possible and more accessible to identify with victims.

The notion of the imaginary victimized ummah also explains why Jews are targeted around the world through harassment and violence especially when the Palestine-Israel conflict intensifies. It is through the politicization of Jewish identity within a war narrative where the construction of and identification with the imaginary victimized community that some group members adopt a martial social identity and use antisemitic violence.

Most of the global neo-jihadists that Sageman (2017a:118) interviewed attributed their politicization to watching videos of mass violence against Muslims. These videos activated a self-categorization into an imagined community. Therefore, the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah can cause antisemitic violence by making use of the emotional significance that a shared social identity has and its necessity for group action. However, it is important to note that a politicized identity is not enough to cause violence; violence manifests when group members become convinced that they need to save the victimized community by becoming soldiers. However, a politicization of identities is necessary for the martial social identity to be activated.

Antisemitism and Anti-Shiism as the Core of ISIS Ideology

This chapter proposes that the core of ISIS ideology is antisemitism and anti-Shiism and its interconnected notion of a war against Islam. This war against Islam entails a construction and belief in an imagined victimized ummah who need to be saved from Jews and Shiites who are viewed as the aggressors. Thus, notions of the victimized ummah have an inherent politicization of religious identities where violence is imminent since true followers of the ingroup are supposed to become soldiers who defend the ummah. This highlights the importance of countering notions about a war against Islam and the

victimization narrative in order to prevent recruitment to Islamist groups and to prevent terrorist attacks such as the antisemitic ones analyzed in Chapter 5.

Moreover, these notions lead to the escalating Islamist suicide bombings against Shiites in Afghanistan and Iraq, attacks that continue even after ISIS lost its territories, which shows the centrality of anti-Shiism in ISIS ideology. These recurring attacks have their basis in the conspiracy about the war against Islam and the victimized ummah. As noted by Reicher et al., genocide takes place when killings are portrayed as moral and sanctified, seen as “holy,” while inaction, that is, not using violence, is seen as immoral.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, this violence against civilians is viewed by Islamists as an act of self-defense in the war against Islam. As mentioned by Chatterley, antisemitism has always been viewed as self-defense by antisemites; however, this notion has been transferred onto Shiites by the politicization of their religious identity. Hence, there is a transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites, making genocide against them possible.

The Process Leading to Violence

The findings indicate that the mobilization and justification of mass violence against Shiites would not have been possible without transferring antisemitism onto them and politicizing their identity. The supposed alliance between Shiites and Jews is seen by ISIS as stronger by the religious legitimacy ISIS is giving it by referring to the *Dajjal*, who supposedly works for both Jews and Shiites to kill Muslims. This chapter has shown that social categorizations underpin ISIS’s justification of violence against Shiites and Jews and that ISIS uses ingroup love to create outgroup hate.

Table 12. The Process of Islamist Antisemitic violence model

1) Self Categorization:
Islamist identity

2) De-personalization of outgroup:
Jews and Shiites as negative stereotypes

3) Existential threat:
War against Islam conspiracy

4) Politicized identity:
Identification with “victimized Muslims” belonging to the
imagined ummah

5) Martial identity:
To identify as a soldier and a savior of the imaginary vic-
timized ummah

Building on Sageman's theory on the processes to political violence by applying it to the material in this chapter, I demonstrate that ISIS self-categorize into an Islamist identity, de-personalize their enemies, claim that the outgroup is an existential threat against the ingroup, politicize Muslim identity by creating an identification with the imaginary victimized ummah, and uses the imaginary victimized ummah as a requirement for ingroup loyalty and membership. Moreover, ISIS claim that this politicized victimized ummah needs rescuing by soldiers; thus, they also create a martial social identity. This means that ISIS propaganda, as presented in this chapter, fulfills all the steps in Sageman's theory for the processes to violence and that social identity theory thus explains how ISIS antisemitic violence comes about.

7. Sayyid Qutb's Islamization of Antisemitism

Introduction

Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) was an Egyptian author and ideologue for the Muslim Brotherhood.²³ The Muslim Brotherhood is often viewed as one of the most influential Islamist movements of modern times (Clarke 2011:4). Qutb was and still is highly influential among Islamists (Kepel 2008:24). His book *Milestones* has been one of the main inspirations for violent Islamist groups since its publication in 1964. In addition, Qutb is regarded as the one who Islamized antisemitism (Tibi 2015:463-464). However, few studies have looked at how Qutb Islamized antisemitism and how this construction contributes to antisemitic violence. Thus, this chapter will investigate the characteristics of Qutb's antisemitism from a social identity perspective to understand how he Islamized antisemitism. The chapter attempts to map out the origins of the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective. Thus, the findings in this chapter historically precede both Chapter 6 on ISIS and Chapter 8 on the Sahwa movement and can be understood as the main inspiration for both these groups.

Qutb was the main theorist on the war against Islam theory (presented in Chapter 6 on ISIS antisemitism). Moreover, the theory is linked to Qutb's antisemitism in that he, like ISIS, claims that Jews are active participants in the war against Islam. Today's jihadist movements have their roots in Qutb's teachings (Cook 2005:102; Juergensmeyer 2003:83; Khosrokhavar 2017:51). A turning point in Qutb's life was his decade-long incarceration, where his ideology was crystallized. Qutb was imprisoned for plotting to overthrow the Egyptian government, and he wrote many of his books in prison. His prison experience made him further radicalized in his dualistic world view centering around the idea of Islam against the rest (Calvert 2009:14). According to Hassan (2018:7), Qutb provided a political ideology that introduced Islamic supremacy and nationalism and rejected many aspects of modern Muslim society and political regimes. Moreover, Qutb advocated a religious war between Muslims and the rest of the world, ultimately ending in victory for Islam (Calvert 2006:15). Contrary to the classical interpretation, Qutb also claimed that jihad was a permanent and individual duty (Roy 2004:41), inspiring jihadist violence worldwide.

²³ The Muslim Brotherhood is a Sunni Muslim organization.

He also redefined jihad as the fight against “unjust” Muslim rulers; this made him instrumental to the systematic use of violence for political purposes (Cesari 2018:163). Ultimately, Qutb argued that killing in a religious war was morally sanctioned (Juergensmeyer 2003:83) while advocating the practice of excommunication (Neffaz 2013:442) where people seen as a disbeliever by the jihadists will become a legitimate target of their violence. Additionally, Sayyid Qutb’s work inspired Al-Qaeda’s ideology (Ryan 2013; Zimmerman 2004). Moreover, his brother Mohammed Qutb, one of the founders of the Sahwa movement, preserved and developed his writings, as will be seen in Chapter 8.

In summary, Qutb’s contribution to Islamism is that he popularized takfir, claimed jihad is an individual duty, developed the idea of a war against Islam, encouraged religious war between Islam and the rest, and believed killing in a religious war is morally sanctioned. Sayyid Qutb was eventually convicted for plotting the assassination of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and was hanged by the Egyptian government in 1966.

In his essay *Our Struggle Against the Jews*, Qutb ascribes Jews a “cosmic, satanic evil,” and he repeatedly quotes *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to support his antisemitic claims (Nettler²⁴ and Qutb 1987:80). The protocols of the elders of Zion is a text about a supposed Jewish world conspiracy. Webman describes the context of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*:

Twenty-four supposed “lectures,” purportedly delivered by the Grand Rabbi to Jewish Elders of the “twelve tribes of Israel” assembled in the aforementioned Basel cemetery for one of their periodic conclaves to plot the conquest of the world. The essence of the Grand Rabbi’s “lectures” is that world history has been manipulated for centuries by a secret Jewish cabal whose only aim is ruthless self-aggrandizement. Accordingly, the Jews, who scheme indefatigably, with supernatural cunning, to transform humanity into docile cattle, have invented every evil known to humanity, including capitalism, communism, liberal democracy, and mindless popular culture, as diverse means to a single nefarious goal: the enslavement of the world and the establishment of a Jewish world government. (2011:3)

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is the most impactful conspiracy theory about a supposed Jewish world conspiracy (Webman 2011:5). The origins of this antisemitic pamphlet are unknown, but evidence suggests that it was compiled from pre-existing sources by agents of the Russian secret police working

²⁴ Nettler specializes in Islamist antisemitism. Qutb’s essay “Our Struggle Against the Jews” can be found in the referenced book from Nettler. Nettler translated and included this essay in his book. I have chosen to reference Nettler’s text since Qutb’s essay is difficult to find online in English.

in France during the years of the Dreyfus affair (1894–1906) (Webman 2011:2). Accusations against Jews in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were common in French publications in the 1890s, and it is assumed that authors of the text plagiarized numerous sources (Webman 2011:2). Moreover, Hitler was inspired by this pamphlet (Webman 2011:5), and as this chapter will show, also Qutb. Qutb also has some other ideological influences. For example, according to Qutb, jihad is an individual moral act perpetrated against unjust rulers who are not really Muslims since they “do not apply the laws of Islam” (Cesari 2018:182). Here, in promoting political violence, Qutb was influenced by modern revolutionary ideology (Cesari 2018:182–183).

Qutb’s writings are sociologically relevant to analyze since they have contributed to the phenomena of Islamist antisemitism. Thus, to scholarly understand the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence, one has to understand its intellectual foundations. Moreover, it is essential to note that, similar to Chapter 6, this chapter looks at the interpretations of religion for political purposes. Thus, these interpretations are within a socio-political realm and should be understood sociologically.

Since the analysis of ISIS antisemitism shows that ISIS uses Qur’an verse al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120, this chapter will analyze Qutb’s interpretation of these verses to investigate how he Islamized antisemitism. Here, it is important to emphasize that Qutb’s interpretation precedes ISIS’s and that Qutb is seen as one of the first to Islamize antisemitism.

In the two previous chapters, the social identity constructions of Islamist antisemitic perpetrators and ISIS antisemitism were investigated. In this chapter, there will be a comparison to the results on ISIS antisemitism as Qutb was the founder of Islamist antisemitism. Therefore, this chapter traces the origins of the idea of a war against Islam and the construction of the politicization of religious identities to Qutb. Chapter 8 will then show how Qutb’s ideology inspired the Sahwa movement.

The material in this chapter is based on two primary sources of Qutb, *Our Struggle Against the Jews* and his very popular commentary on the Qur’an *In the Shade of the Qur’an (Fi Zilal al Qur’an)*. In his Qur’anic commentary, Qutb applies historical accounts and descriptions, which are supposed to be seen as historical, to current day politics to fuel antisemitism, notions of war, and political violence. The main themes in *Our Struggle Against the Jews* will be presented in the following section. After that, Qutb’s antisemitism in *In the Shade of the Qur’an* will be analyzed.

Antisemitism in Qutb's *Our Struggle Against the Jews*

Qutb's essay *Our Struggle Against the Jews* was written in the early 1950s (Calvert 2009:169), and it has profoundly impacted the Islamization of anti-semitism (Tibi 2015:465-466). In this section, the main antisemitic notions of the essay will be presented.

Qutb's Construction of Jews as Evil

The essay starts with this paragraph:

The Muslim community continues to suffer from the same Jewish machinations and double-dealing which discomfited the Early Muslims. But the Muslim community (today) does not—one must say with great regret—utilize those Qur'anic directives and this Divine Guidance (of the following sort, regarding these problems): Do you really want them to believe you, when a group of them have already heard Allah's word and falsified it knowingly, after having understood it? (Nettler²⁵ and Qutb 1987:72)

This introduction by Qutb to his essay shows two features of his antisemitic views. First, Qutb believes that Muslims have been suffering from Jews' machinations and double-dealings since Islam's historic inception. Second, Qutb advocates for Muslims to use the Qur'an for antisemitic purposes. In this essay, Qutb claims that Jews always have held enmity towards Islam and that Jews plotted against the Muslim community from the first day it became a community. Thus, Qutb relies on a historical narrative in his construction of contemporary Islamist antisemitism. Moreover, Qutb claims that this war that Jews allegedly have launched against Islam has lasted for 14 centuries and is still ongoing: “until this moment, its [the war's] blaze raging in all corners of the earth” (Nettler and Qutb 1987:82). Qutb's social categorization of the Muslim community into a suffering group can be understood as the imaginary victimized ummah, which is constructed against the social categorization of Jews as evil and in relation to an eternal conflict with them. Here, Qutb is also constructing the war against Islam narrative.

So far, the war against Islam conspiracy consists of the belief that Jews have been exposing “the Muslim community” to “their” machinations and double-dealing since Islam's inception. “Machination” has an evil component to it and is thus part of the common antisemitic notion of Jews as evil. Additionally, the usage of double-dealings will be a recurring theme in Qutb's description of Jews and most likely has its inspiration from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* where Jews are accused of deceitfulness.

²⁵ Nettler appears in the reference because he translated Qutb's essay which is found in Nettler's book. However, Nettler did not write these quotations, they are from Qutb.

According to the social identity perspective, the social categorization of a group as not being one of “us” and portrayed as being against “us the ingroup,” where the ingroup represents good and the outgroup represents evil, is dangerous as it implies that their defeat—if necessary, their destruction—becomes a matter of preserving virtue, as suggested by Reicher et al., a logic that is central to all modern forms of terror. Moreover, virtue is the championing of the ingroup as uniquely good. Here, the notion of the ingroup as the uniquely good victimized ummah can be understood as actively leading to outgroup hatred against Jews. In this narrative, it is the acclaimed victimhood in relation to an “evil other” that gives the ingroup virtue.

In the following quotation, Qutb advocates for the use of Islamic sources in order to spread antisemitism:

The Muslim community does not take advantage of the Islamic sources which its ancestors used. Only in this way were the ancestors able to overcome the Jewish conspiracy and double-dealing in Medina. And thus did the religion (Islam) arise; and thus was the Muslim community born. The Jews continue—through their wickedness and double-dealing—to lead this (Muslim) community away from its religion and to alienate it from its Qur’an. (They do this) in order to prevent the community from utilizing its traditional Qur’anic weapons and its perfect Qur’anic readiness for struggle. (The Jews) are secure so long as this (Muslim) community is estranged from the sources of its real power and the roots of its pure knowledge. Anyone who leads this community away from its religion and its Qur’an can only be a Jewish agent—whether he does this wittingly or unwittingly, willingly or unwillingly. (Nettler and Qutb 1987:72–73)

Here, Qutb claims that Jews want to lead Muslims away from their religion, both historically and contemporarily. Qutb’s description of historical events as a struggle against Jews indicates that Qutb believes that Islam’s inception and survival depends on defeating Jews. This is one example of how Qutb uses historical events to promote contemporary antisemitism. By connecting Islam’s survival to a struggle with Jews and applying this idea to the present time, Qutb indicates that antisemitism should be understood as a crucial part of Muslim survival by portraying Jews as an existential threat to Muslims. According to Qutb, the true aim of all Jews is to destroy Islam itself (Calvert 2009:169).

From a social identity perspective, the belief that an outgroup constitutes a threat to the ingroup’s interests or survival “creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup are directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice versa”

(Brewer 1999:435–436). Moreover, in the face of an intergroup threat, social identity can lead to aggression against the outgroup (Merrilees et al. 2013:706). This implies that Qutb’s description of Jews as an existential threat to Muslims can lead to an ingroup identification, which is directly associated with fear and hostility against Jews and can lead to antisemitic violence.

Furthermore, according to Qutb, Muslim identity depends on a struggle against Jews. This implies a politicization of Muslim identity, situating it in a political struggle against Jews. Furthermore, since this struggle can take violent forms, the politicized Muslim identity can also become a martial social identity. Moreover, it also imposes a politicized identity onto Jews by claiming that they are engaged in a struggle against Muslims.

In the quotation, Qutb also adds an element of wickedness to Jews; to accuse Jews of evil is a key feature of antisemitism. Furthermore, in his essay, Qutb describes the Qur’an in terms of “Qur’anic weapons” and “Qur’anic readiness for struggle.” This clearly indicates Qutb’s use of the Qur’an for violent and political purposes rather than a spiritual faith. It also shows that Qutb strives to gain religious legitimacy for his Islamist violent political project and therefore continuously refers to the Qur’an in his argumentation.

Moreover, it is important to note that Qutb views those who do not follow his interpretation of the Qur’an as Jewish agents, thus they have left the Muslim camp and are working against it. This shows that Qutb uses antisemitic notions in his excommunication of Muslims and that the notion of a war against Islam and its two camps are central in Islamist excommunication of Muslims.

Qutb inserts a Jewish element to those Muslims who disagree with him. His excommunication strategy is also based on very loose criteria since he writes that they can be Jewish agents leading Muslims away from Islam even if it is done unwittingly and unwillingly. This clearly shows the totalitarian streak in Qutb’s ideology. When Qutb writes “anyone who leads this community away from its Qur’an,” he is ultimately referring to the belief that any Muslim who disagrees with his interpretation of the Qur’an, regardless of intent, becomes a Jewish agent and therefore is excommunicated. Ultimately, Qutb sees the Qur’an as a source and tool in a struggle against Jews. However, as noted by Firestone (2020:106), there is no support for antisemitism in the Qur’an.

Qutb elaborates on his view of Jews as evil:

The story of Jewish evil-doing was repeated; as were (Jewish) humiliation and expulsion (as punishment for this evil-doing). Whenever the children of Israel reverted to evil-doing in the Land, punishment awaited them. The Sunnah is resolute here: “If you return, then we return.” And the Jews did indeed return to evil-doing, so Allah gave the Muslims power over them. The Muslims then expelled them from the whole of the Arabian Peninsula. [. . .] Then the

Jews again returned to evil-doing and consequently Allah sent against them others of his servants, until the modern period. Then Allah brought Hitler to rule over them. (Nettler and Qutb 1987:87)

Here, Qutb describes Jews as humiliated; as shown in the previous chapter, ISIS also does this. Furthermore, Qutb blames Jews for Hitler's emergence. This indicates that Qutb acknowledges that the Holocaust has taken place and sees it as a punishment from God. Moreover, Qutb indicates that God's punishment took place because of Jew's evilness. This shows how the notion of Jews as evil contributes to Qutb's rationalization of violence against them. Qutb also claims that Jews have been punished by God historically and in modern times. Thus, he uses historical events and connects them to contemporary events, indicating an essentialized eternal evil in Jews.

The tendency to blame Jews for the antisemitism they are subjected to is a common feature of antisemitism and can be found in different antisemitic ideologies. Previous research has demonstrated that a common message taught in antisemitic environments is that because Jews are said to have been detrimental to the societies where they have lived, the persecution against them throughout history has been justified by nations' need to protect themselves and take revenge on them (Marcus and Crook 2005:125).

However, Qutb's Islamization of antisemitism adds an element of supposed religious legitimacy to antisemitism; above all, this can attract those who have limited knowledge of Islam since they are less versed in different interpretations of scripture. As mentioned earlier, both Roy (2017:32) and Khosrokhavar (2017:82) argue that limited knowledge of Islam is a common feature among ISIS recruits. In the following section, Qutb's antisemitic notions related to culture will be analyzed.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Qutb's Antisemitism

In one of Qutb's most famous books, *Milestones*, antisemitism does not take up much space. However, the quotation below from *Milestones* shows parts of his antisemitic worldview. Here, Qutb elaborates on the statement "culture is the human heritage":

Beyond this limited meaning, this statement about culture is one of the tricks played by world Jewry, whose purpose is to eliminate all limitations, especially the limitations imposed by faith and religion, so that the Jews may penetrate into body politic of the whole world and then may be free to perpetuate their evil designs. At the top of the list of these activities is usury, the aim of which is that all the wealth of mankind end up in the hands of Jewish financial institutions which run on interest. (1980:121)

This quotation shows one of the key features in Qutb's antisemitism: the idea that Jews want to dominate the world. This is also the central theme in the conspiracy theory about *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and it inspired

Qutb, who frequently quoted the protocols, especially in *Our Struggle against the Jews*. When Qutb claims that Jews want to penetrate into the body politic, he is politicizing Jewish identity. In this case, Qutb describes this politicization in terms of financial interest, namely by claiming that Jews want to take control of the wealth of mankind through usury and “Jewish financial institutions.”

In *Our Struggle against the Jews*, Qutb elaborates on his antisemitism and its role in culture:

Indeed, this antagonistic force threatening the Islamic world today has a massive army of agents in the form of professors, philosophers, doctors, and researchers- sometimes also writers, poets, scientists, and journalists – carrying Muslim names because they are of Muslim descent!! And some of them are from the ranks of the “Muslim religious authorities”!! This army of “learned authorities” intends to break the creed of the Muslims, in all ways – through research, learning, literature, science and journalism; and by prying the principles of the Creed from their very foundation and derogating from the importance of the Creed and the Shari’ah, in equal measure. (Nettler and Qutb 1987:77)

Here, referring to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Qutb claims that Jews want to break the creed of Muslims. The reference to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is in one of his footnotes: “We shall never permit the existence of any religion other than our own.”²⁶ Hence Qutb borrows antisemitic ideas from classical European antisemitic sources in his construction of Islamist antisemitism.

Moreover, Qutb introduces the idea of some Muslims as a threat to Islam because they are claimed to be part of the war against Islam. The idea about people of Muslim descent who are not really Muslim touches on the notion of takfir, that is, the practice of declaring someone a disbeliever. The ideas of certain Muslims as internal enemies seeking to destroy Islam from within were, as seen in Chapter 6, applied to Shiites by ISIS calling them undercover Jews. Here, Qutb is making a similar claim by using antisemitic notions from the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and applying them onto Muslims in his excommunication of them. Hence, Islamist excommunication of Muslims is interconnected with antisemitism.

So far, this is done either by applying antisemitic notions onto them, such as wanting to destroy Islam, or by claiming that they are undercover Jews or Jewish agents. In order to discredit Muslim religious authorities who do not

²⁶ In Nettler’s book *Past Trials and Tribulations; Our struggle against the Jews* Qutb, p. 77.

share Qutb's interpretation of Islam, he applies antisemitic notions onto them, and based on that, he excommunicates them.

The Islamist antisemitic basis for excommunication of Muslims can be interpreted as a strategy to claim to be the true representatives of Islam. Moreover, Qutb sees the war against Islam as involving an "army" of professions such as doctors, professors, journalists, and Muslim religious authorities. Hence, Qutb seems to view knowledge as a threat to his Islamist worldview since all the professions he mentioned as a threat are intellectual ones. This is similar to the ISIS warning in *Dabiq*:

Be warned of those whom the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) warned against the wicked scholars, imāms, and callers who deviate the Ummah and corrupt the truth with falsehood. They corrupt Islam so as to put the Muslims to sleep. They only serve the apostate rulers, the slaves of the Jews and Christians. (Issue 7:75)

Both Qutb's and ISIS's quotations describe a war against Islam and the need for excommunication. ISIS and Qutb describe Muslim religious authorities who deviate from their interpretation of Islam as actively trying to corrupt Islam. Here, ISIS claims the enemy are "wicked scholars, imams, and callers who deviate from the Ummah and corrupt the truth with falsehood." Ultimately, according to ISIS, these agents serve the interest of the "apostate" rulers, that is, rulers of Muslim countries, who are the slaves of the Jews and Christians. Here, similar to Qutb, ISIS excommunication of Muslim scholars is based on inserting a "Jewish" element, claiming that they ultimately serve the Jews and Christians.

It is also noteworthy that ISIS uses the concept of the ummah in their excommunication of Muslims; ultimately, ISIS is making themselves representatives of Islam while claiming that Muslims who disagree with them are deviating from the "ummah." Here, ISIS is constructing an ingroup, "the ummah," who are being threatened by an outgroup of Muslims who have a different interpretation of Islam than ISIS. According to social identity theory, this construction creates ingroup hostility against the outgroup.

Moreover, ISIS and Qutb see those Muslim religious authorities who differ from their interpretation of Islam as disbelievers participating in the war against Islam. This is also an example of how Qutb and ISIS focus on "the near enemy" while Al-Qaeda often focused on the "far enemy," namely the US. The construction of these social categorizations is crucial to identify since they often determine the targets of Islamist violence.

The Role of Zionism in Qutb's Antisemitism

Following the ideas in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Qutb claims that Zionists work in secret:

The agents of Zionism today are like that [. . .] They agree with each other on one issue [. . .] which is the destruction of this (Islamic) creed at the first auspicious and unrepeatable opportunity. [. . .] This Jewish consensus (on destroying Islam) would never be found in a pact or open conference. Rather, it is the secret agreement of one (Zionist) agent with another on the important goal, as something fundamental (and unquestioned). (Nettler and Qutb 1987:77–78)

Here, Qutb identifies Zionism as a part of the war against Islam. Furthermore, he claims that there is a Jewish consensus on destroying Islam, strengthening his essentialization of Jews as evil. Qutb uses Zionist and Jewish interchangeably, which supports the new antisemitism theory that antisemitic notions of “the Jew” are projected onto Israel. However, neither Qutb nor ISIS conceal their antisemitism by calling Jews Zionists.

By describing “the Jewish plan to destroy Islam” as a secret agreement, Qutb constructs the war against Islam conspiracy by including the European conspiracy theory of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The part that originates from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is about Jews having a secret agreement to dominate the world.

Qutb also claims that Muslims will face hardships until the end of days and that the history of “Jewish transgressions” has given Muslims and their leaders lessons that will help them “know how to treat the disease after knowing its nature” (Qutb and Nettler 1987:85). Qutb’s description of Jews as a disease is a further example of his dehumanization of Jews, and his description of Muslims as having to suffer hardships until the end of days can be understood as part of the imaginary victimized ummah narrative.

In the following quotation, Qutb mentions the “crusader-Zionist war”:

The Jews also conspired against Islam by inciting its enemies against it throughout the world. [. . .] This has brought the Jews in the latest era to the point of being the chiefs of the struggle with Islam, on every foot of the face of the earth. [. . .] The Jews are (also) the ones who utilize Christianity and idolatry in this comprehensive war. [. . .] And they are the ones who create the circumstances and make the “heroes” who carry Muslim names...And they attack every foundation of this religion (Islam) in a crusader-Zionist war!! (Nettler and Qutb 1987:83)

The idea of a Crusader-Zionist war that Qutb constructs here is adopted by al-Qaeda, the Sahwa movement, and ISIS. Qutb also claims that Jews are the chiefs of the war against Islam, which ISIS later calls “mobilizers” of the war against Islam. This quotation also touches upon excommunication since Qutb claims Jews make “heroes” of those with Muslim names. Thus, once again,

Qutb is seemingly using antisemitism as a basis for excommunicating Muslims.

Furthermore, Qutb adds that Jews use Christianity in the war against Islam, making it a crusader-Zionist led war. This indicates that Qutb believes Christianity is merely a tool for Jewish world domination. Moreover, as Sageman (2017a:135) has suggested, war metaphors such as the one Qutb is using are especially harmful as they imply violent action, justify physical violence, and decrease the threshold to violence.

The Imaginary Victimized Ummah

In the following quotation, Qutb elaborates on his ideas about Israel:

And once again today the Jews have returned to evil-doing, in the form of "Israel," which made the Arabs, the owners of the land, taste of sorrows and woe. So let Allah bring down upon the Jews people who will mete out to them the worst kind of punishment, as a confirmation of his unequivocal promise: "if you return, then we return"; and in keeping with his Sunnah, which does not vary. So for one who expects tomorrow, it is close!! (Nettler and Qutb 1987:87)

Here, Qutb is alluding to the notion of an imaginary victimized ummah. Qutb is constructing a Muslim/Arab ingroup going through sorrows and woes, victims of the outgroup Jews, making Israel an oppressor and evil. Furthermore, Qutb describes Israel as an extension of his ideas of the imaginary Jews' inherent evilness. This notion relates to new antisemitism, that is, when antisemitic ideas about "the Jew" are projected onto Israel. Here, Jews are portrayed as a threat against Muslims due to a perceived inherent characteristic of evil. Hence, what counts in Qutb's essentialism is not simply what "they" are like, but rather what "their nature" means for "us," exemplified by the imaginary victimized ummah.

Accordingly, the social identity perspective suggests that this type of essentialism leads to the outgroup being viewed as an existential threat as "their nature" implies that they have characteristics that are natural and not possible to change. Consequently, this way of thinking can lead to a violent struggle between two groups where the goal is that only one group can exist in order to survive a supposed existential threat.

Qutb seems to predict that Jews will meet the worst kind of punishment, suggesting that Qutb is referring to genocide against Jews. Moreover, Qutb claims that this punishment will come very soon. Qutb's description of Muslims as oppressed by Jews and that Jews will face revenge in the form of punishment can be interpreted as alluding to the war against Islam conspiracy and resentment. The embrace of eradicating the outgroup as necessary to the defense of virtue is called celebration by Reicher et al. (2008:1337) and can ultimately lead to genocide. Hence, the quote shows how the notion of the

imaginary victimized ummah can lead to a rationalization of antisemitic violence.

Qutb's Commentary on al-Maidah 51

In the following section, Qutb's antisemitic interpretation of Al-Maidah 51 is analyzed. The quotations are from the book *In the Shade of the Qur'an*.

Essentializing Jewish Identity

In the following quotation, Qutb introduces his commentary on the Qur'an verse al-Maidah 51:

We have, for example, a clear warning against taking the Jews and the Christians as allies. The warning states that whoever establishes an alliance with them actually belongs to them. There is another reference to the fact that those who were sick at heart maintained an alliance with them protesting that they feared a change of fortune. The Muslims are warned against maintaining an alliance with those who mock their faith. There is a clear reference to the fact that the Madinah Jews did mock the Muslims' prayer, making a jest of it. None of this could have happened unless the Jews enjoyed a degree of power and influence in Madinah. Otherwise, there would have been no call for such a clear warning and a threat. Nor would there be any need for exposing the true nature of the Jews, condemning them and denouncing their scheming in such a manner which uses a variety of styles and expressions. (2015:117)

First, Qutb chooses to translate *awliya* to allies. Then, he acknowledges that this verse is about the Madinah Jews, a reference that situates the verse in history. However, Qutb decontextualizes the historical context that Duderija (2010), Mansur (2016), and Dakake (2012) describe, namely that this verse came when there were few Muslims and they needed to support each other to survive. Rather than acknowledging that there were few Muslims during this period, Qutb focuses on Jews by saying that the verse is clear and a warning because Jews were allegedly powerful and had influence. This rhetorical move shows the influence of *The Protocols of the Elders* on Qutb's interpretation of the Qur'an.

The last sentence points to Qutb's racism and exemplifies how he Islamized antisemitism. Here, Qutb first interprets the verse as exposing the "true nature of the Jews" by using the description of true nature, Qutb shows that he is talking about Jews in an essentialist and antisemitic manner. As mentioned earlier, this type of essentialism can lead to the outgroup being viewed as an existential threat since "their nature" implies that the outgroup has characteristics that are natural and not possible to change. Consequently, this way of

thinking can lead to a violent struggle between two groups where the goal is that only one group can exist to survive a supposed existential threat.

Second, Qutb comments that the verse is condemning and denouncing Jews' scheming, these two last components of true nature and Jews' scheming turns the verse to a universal truth about Jews (who are supposedly powerful) rather than to situate the verse into a specific historical context where Muslims were few. Therefore, Qutb deprives the reader of details of the historical context and uses the verse to spread antisemitism, which is similar to what ISIS did to this verse. Hence, Qutb uses Islamic historical accounts together with *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to essentialize Jewish identity by accusing it of evil, being powerful, and intrinsically hostile to Muslims.

The Eternal War Between Islam and the Rest

Qutb's commentary on verse 51 is long, and it continues as follows:

Verses in this passage provide a few glimpses of the Qur'ānic method in educating the Muslim community and preparing it to assume the role God assigned to it. They also explain some of the constituent elements in this method as well as a few principles Islam likes to see established in the minds of individual Muslims as well as in the Muslim community. These elements and principles are constant and apply to all generations, since they influence the very making of the Muslim individual and the Muslim community. (2015:118)

In this quotation, Qutb takes his previous insinuation a step further. Qutb claims that these verses are not only part of a specific historical context but also principles that apply to all generations. Thus, Qutb is creating a situation of eternal enmity between Muslims and Jews.

Furthermore, Qutb also claims that these elements and principles should influence the very making of the Muslim individual and the Muslim community, indicating that what he is referring to are specific characteristics that should make up a Muslim social identity.

Moreover, Qutb states that Muslims cannot be in alliance with a community other than that of Muslims; if they do, they turn away from God's faith and reject his choice and bounty: "[there is] a need to instill in one's consciousness the complete distinction between the Islamic camp and any camp that does not raise God's banner, follow God's Messenger or belong to God's party" (Qutb 2015:118).

This fundamental division between the Islamic camp and others is similar to the dominant idea in ISIS propaganda about a war between Muslims and the rest, and it indicates that ISIS was inspired by Qutb's beliefs. Similar to ISIS, Qutb also claims that this war is a religious war.

According to Qutb, the Qur'an "cultivates a Muslim's understanding of the true nature of his enemies and the war they wage against him. It is a battle of faith since faith is the permanent issue between a Muslim and all his enemies"

(Qutb 2015:118). Here, the addition of permanence makes the commentary particularly dangerous since it can always be applied. When this politicized Islamist commentary is used in today's world, coexistence between Muslims and other faiths becomes impossible.

As mentioned earlier, one key feature in Qutb's antisemitism and worldview is that he sees this conflict as permanent, and he claims that the verses in the Quran are not supposed to be understood as historical accounts.

To exemplify this, I will present a quote from Qutb's commentary on Al-Maidah. Qutb writes: "In the first instance, this verse is an address to the Muslim community in Madinah. It is at the same time directed to every Muslim community which comes into existence in any part of the world at any point in time" (Qutb 2015:122). However, Qutb does not explain how he justifies this shift from a historical account about Madinah to a permanent state. Hence, Qutb constructs a situation of eternal enmity between Muslims and Jews and claims it is religious without having evidence for it being rooted in the Qur'an. Ultimately, these quotations show how Islamists blur the differences between religion and politics in their antisemitic ideology.

Qutb's Construction of a Martial Social Identity as a Prerequisite for Muslim Identity

In the following passage of commentary on verse 51, Qutb constructs a martial social identity as a prerequisite for Muslim identity:

Those who claim to be advocates of this faith do not truly believe in it and are not able to accomplish anything of value on earth unless they come to feel that they are a community apart. They are different from all other communities and camps except for those who raise the same Islamic banner, dedicate their total allegiance to God and His Messenger and have a leadership who shares their belief in God and His Messenger. They will also have to know the true nature of their enemies and their motives, and the nature of the battle they have to fight against them. They also need to know that all their enemies are in actual alliance against them and that they patronise one another in fighting the Muslim community and the Islamic faith. (2015:118–119)

Here, Qutb constructs a Muslim identity that is essentially an Islamist identity. Qutb is constructing a Muslim identity that inevitably will have to fight the rest. This identity can be understood as a martial social identity. Qutb's construction of a martial social identity as a prerequisite for being viewed a Muslim is most clear in his mention of a battle: "They will also have to know the true nature of their enemies and their motives, and the nature of the battle they have to fight against them" (2015:118–119).

As mentioned earlier, a martial social identity is created when those who have adopted a politicized social identity start to think of themselves as soldiers. Qutb's construction of Muslim identity can be understood as a martial

social identity since he first constructs a politicized identity in the form of a politicized Islamist community and the imaginary victimized umma, and then claims that it needs to engage in a war.

Thus, those following his ideas will inevitably start to view themselves as soldiers. As noted by Sageman, the imagined political community is not violent in itself; rather, they can become violent only if they adopt a martial social identity. This means that a politicized identity combined with an idea of an ongoing war may lead to violence.

Qutb explains that the Muslim community, as he understands it, is different from all other communities. To belong to the Muslim camp, one has to raise the Islamic banner, have total dedication to God, and have a leadership that shares their belief in God and the Prophet Mohammed. Here, one can note Qutb's politicization of Islam and politicization of Muslim identity, namely that Muslims are only those who are Islamists; an exclusive group that shares the same Islamic banner and has their own political leadership.

The introduction of politics or political Islam is followed by hostility towards the "rest." This shows that the social identity that Qutb is constructing depends on the construction of an enemy.

The construction of the war against Islam is further developed when Qutb claims that the enemies of the Muslims are all in alliance with each other in their fight against the Muslim community. Hence, a narrative of hostility between Muslims and "the rest" and ultimately the war against Islam is created. Moreover, what Qutb does in this passage is to turn the historically situated verse into a description of a contemporary war between Muslims and the rest.

Furthermore, Qutb declares that Muslims need to know the true motives of their enemies to understand "whom he fights and is reassured as to the justice and the inevitability of this fight" (Qutb 2015:119). Here, Qutb uses "justice" as a moral argument to persuade and legitimize fighting; this can be understood as part of an activation of a martial social identity. Political violence is thus legitimated by referring to being a soldier defending his imagined community. As suggested by Sageman, this type of self-categorization into a martial social identity means that violence becomes imminent.

Moreover, the use of "justice" indicates *ressentiment*. According to Nietzsche, people who hold *ressentiment* "sanctify *revenge* with the term *justice*—as though justice were fundamentally simply a further development of the feeling of having been wronged—and belatedly legitimize with *revenge* emotional *reactions* in general, one and all" (Nietzsche and Diethel 2017:48). Hence, Qutb's use of "justice" can be understood as a form of legitimization, or sanctification, of violence in the name of revenge due to an imagined wrongdoing against the imaginary victimized ummah. Furthermore, social

categorizations such as the ones Qutb constructs erases the outgroup's individual differences and reduces them to one-dimensional characters; this dehumanization is also necessary as a mechanism to enable political violence (Sageman 2017:115).

Imaginary Victimized Ummah in *In the Shade of the Qur'an*

In the following quotation, Qutb explains how he views this constant war against Islam by referring to al-Maidah 51:

Those very people of earlier revelations used to say to the pagan Arabs that they were "*better guided than the believers*" (4:51) It is they who stirred the unbelievers and mobilised them into launching a determined attack against the Muslim community in Madinah. Those people of earlier revelations were the ones who launched the Crusades against the land of Islam, which extended over a period of 200 years. It is they who organised the Spanish Inquisition. In recent history, they turned the Muslim Arabs of Palestine out of their land in order to give it to the Jews. In doing so, they were in alliance with atheism and materialism. The same people of earlier revelations persecuted the Muslims in Abyssinia, Somalia, Eritrea, and Algeria. They further collaborated with atheism, materialism and polytheism in the persecution of Muslims in Yugoslavia, China, Turkistan, India and in many other places. (2015:121)

Here, Qutb starts by mentioning Jews and Christians as the ones who stirred the attack on Muslims in Madinah, starting from Islam's inception. Then, he blames Christians and Jews for the 200-year crusades "against the land of Islam." He also blames Jews and Christians for the Spanish Inquisition. These notions can be understood as part of the imaginary (eternally) victimized ummah, where Palestinians are again used as an example. Moreover, Qutb's worldview can be related to resentment since resentment is related to destructive ideological worldviews that emphasize revenge against those held responsible for one's suffering in a victimhood situation. Hence, resentment can be understood as part of the imaginary victimized ummah narrative.

Worth noticing is the shift that Qutb does in the following sentence where he discusses the recent history. Starting from the inception of Islam, Qutb claims that this war against Islam is still continuing.

The examples he gives are the Palestinian issue and alleged persecution of Muslims in Somalia, Eritrea, and Algeria, even though these conflicts have nothing to do with the Qur'an verse al-Maidah 51 as they did not exist when it was written. One can interpret this as part of Qutb's politicization of Islam, where he uses the Qur'an to make a point about contemporary politics and advocate for war. Finally, Qutb states that Christians and Jews have collaborated with atheists, materialists, and polytheists against Muslims in Yugoslavia, China, and Turkistan, adding to the list of conflicts that he calls a constant war against Islam and its victims in the form of the imaginary victimized ummah.

Muslims Who Ally with Jews and Christians no Longer Muslims –Qutb’s Islamist Excommunication

The following section will analyze Qutb’s construction of excommunication of Muslims.

This quotation from Qutb’s commentary on al-Maidah 51 touches on Qutb’s excommunication of Muslims:

As this is a permanent fact, its consequences are clearly stated. Since the Jews and the Christians are allies of one another, they can only be patronised by someone of their own kind. If someone from the Islamic camp establishes an alliance with them, he actually removes himself from the Muslim camp, abandons the basic quality of Islam and joins the other camp. For this is the natural and practical result: *“Whoever of you allies himself with them is indeed one of them.”* (Verse 51) He, thus, wrongs himself and wrongs the Divine faith of the Muslim community. Because of his wrongdoing, God puts him in the same group with the Jews and Christians to whom he has pledged his support and made himself an ally. God neither guides him to the truth nor returns him to the Muslim ranks: *“God does not bestow His guidance on the wrongdoers”* (Verse 51). (2015:123)

This passage shows Qutb’s totalitarian views of Islam and Muslim identity. First, Qutb claims that a Muslim who allies with Jews and Christians “removes himself from the Muslim camp,” meaning a justification of excommunication of them. Moreover, a Muslim who does so is accused of wrongdoings against himself and Islam. Next, Qutb claims that God places the disbeliever in the camp of the Jews and the Christians because he betrayed his religion. It is also worth noticing that Qutb justifies his excommunication of Muslims by quoting Al-Maidah 51 and by, once again, associating them with Jews and Christians.

Moreover, Qutb claims that God does not return the disbeliever to the Muslim ranks; thus, he makes allying with Jews and Christians an irreversible act of permanent apostasy. This aspect is important to emphasize since it means that an excommunicated Muslim is destined to death and has no chance or right to remorse, according to Qutb’s interpretation. This can be related to ISIS’s actions, which in some cases allegedly let Christians convert to Islam, which would spare them their lives, while Shia Muslims were immediately killed since they were seen as apostates with no chance to “return to Islam” (Hawley 2017:166–167). Hence, Islamist antisemitic excommunication of Muslims, which partly has its origins in Qutb’s writings, is a central practice in ISIS ideology.

Qutb’s Totalitarian View of Islam and Muslim Identity

Qutb believes that those Muslims who follow a system or raise a banner other than that of Islam can no longer contribute or be of any value to the overall

Islamic movement because the first and most essential goal for Muslims is to establish a unique system based on a unique concept:

A Muslim believes, with an absolute certainty which admits no hesitation or wavering, that since the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has conveyed his message to mankind, his faith is the only one acceptable to God. He believes that the system God required him to adopt as the basis of life is a unique system and cannot be replaced or substituted by another. It is the only one that can realise the full potential of human life. The only way for a Muslim to earn God's forgiveness and acceptance is to exert his maximum effort in establishing both the ideological and social aspects of this system, changing no part of it, however small, and mixing it with no other system, be it religious, social or legal. (2015:123-124)

First, Qutb claims that a Muslim should not hesitate or waver, thus requiring Muslim identity to be characterized by a belief in Islamist totalitarianism. Here, totalitarianism is defined as an Islamist system that requires complete subservience to its ideology and an Islamic State. It is exemplified by Qutb when he claims that Muslim identity needs to support a unique system, Islamism. Here, Qutb politicizes Muslim identity by requiring from it an obedience to a system of governance, a system of governance usually called *hakimiyya* by Islamists. *Hakimiyya* means governance, and in Qutb's terms it means governance in the form of an Islamic State. The opposite of *hakimiyya* is *jahiliyya*, an un-Islamic time where ignorance rules.

Qutb claims that modern Muslim societies live under *jahiliyya* and therefore he also apostatized all Muslim leaders; it is only under *hakimiyya* that Islam exists according to Qutb, and he believed that no such society existed during his lifetime. Although these two concepts, *jahiliyya* and *hakimiyya*, have theological roots, Qutb, in part inspired by Mawdudi and Ibn Taymiyya, politicized them and turned them into central cornerstones of Islamist thought. Hence, ISIS declaration of an Islamic State can, to some extent, be understood as the implementation of Qutb's thought of Islam as only existing under *hakimiyya*, which ultimately is Islamist governance.

Moreover, Qutb claims that the only way for a Muslim to earn God's forgiveness is to establish this system's ideological and social aspects. This notion can be understood as part of Islamist rationalization of violence and a mobilization tool; the believer is promised rewards by fighting for this ideology. Thus, it is indicated that old sins are forgiven through fighting for Islamism, an idea that also helps explain why so many criminals joined ISIS.

In the following quotation, Qutb continues to outline his totalitarian view:

A Muslim should pay no heed to the attempts of those who try to weaken his resolve or water down his firm beliefs. Islam requires a Muslim to dedicate all his efforts to the cause of Islam. Only a person who does not understand the nature of Islam and its method can imagine that any human activity, however secondary, may be separated from Islam or that there are aspects of life which

lie outside the Islamic way of life. Such ignorance of the nature of Islam may cause people to imagine that a true Muslim may cooperate with those who are hostile to Islam or those who will not accept anything from a Muslim unless he abandons his faith, as God states of the Jews and Christians in His revealed Book. Such cooperation is impossible from both a faith and strategy point of view. (Qutb 2015:129)

Here, Qutb makes an all-encompassing totalitarian interpretation of Islam. A Muslim is, according to him, someone who dedicates all his efforts to the cause of Islamism. Furthermore, he emphasizes that no human activity can be separated from (his interpretation of) Islam.

Qutb makes a politicized totalitarian interpretation of Islam and what it means to be a Muslim. Moreover, Qutb reiterates his point about Muslims not being allowed to cooperate with Jews and Christians by referring to his interpretation of the Qur'anic verse al-Maidah 51.

Here, one can note that Qutb starts out by referring to Islam, and in the second half of the quotation he starts to refer to political Islam. This shows the Islamist conflation of Islam with political conflicts and intolerant views of Jews and Christians added to it. Qutb's totalization of everyday life was implemented by the Sahwa movement, which will be presented in the following chapter.

Qutb's Commentary on al-Baqarah 120

This section will examine Qutb's interpretation of al-Baqarah 120, which is the second most quoted verse from the Qur'an used for antisemitic purposes in *Dabiq*. The following quotation is from Qutb's commentary on the Qur'an:

"Never will the Jews, nor yet the Christians be pleased with you unless you follow their faith." This is the bone of contention. What they are after is not evidence or conviction of the truth of Islam. Islam and Muhammad have been a constant obsession with Jews and Christians throughout history. The faith of Islam has always been at the center of the crusades and campaigns launched against the Muslim community all over the world. No matter how much the two camps may differ or quarrel between themselves, or how divided each of them may be, when it comes to fighting Islam and Muslims, they are in full agreement and as united as they could be. (2015a:123)

Here, Qutb reiterates the theory of a constant war against Islam and connects it to al-Baqarah 120 much like ISIS. Qutb claims that Islam has been an obsession among Jews and Christians and is at the center of crusades and campaigns all over the world. Qutb views anti-Muslim sentiments as a constant and an all-encompassing evil force spread throughout the world. This view of a war against Islam is similar to the ISIS worldview. The war or campaign against the Muslim community, the war against Islam, can be understood as

targeting the imaginary victimized ummah, a belief held by both Qutb and ISIS.

In the following quotation, Qutb elaborates on his commentary about a war against Islam:

The conflict between the Judeo-Christian world on the one side, and the Muslim community on the other, remains in essence one of ideology, although over the years it has appeared in various guises and has grown more sophisticated and, at times, more insidious. We have seen the original ideological conflict succeeded by economic, political and military confrontation, on the basis that 'religious' or 'ideological' conflicts are outdated and are usually prosecuted by 'fanatics' and backward people. Unfortunately, some naïve and confused Muslims have fallen for this stratagem and persuaded themselves that the religious and ideological aspects of the conflict are no longer relevant. But in reality, world Zionism and Christian Imperialism, as well as world Communism, are conducting the fight against Islam and the Muslim community, first and foremost, on ideological grounds and with the sole aim of destroying this solid rock which, despite their concerted and sustained efforts, they have not been able to remove. (2015a:123–124)

Here, Qutb explains that the enemies are “the Judeo-Christian world” and that this conflict is about ideology, whereas ISIS calls it a conflict of religion. Furthermore, Qutb describes this ideological enemy as “world Zionism and Christian Imperialism, as well as world Communism.” When Qutb claims that “naïve and confused Muslims” have fallen for this stratagem and persuaded themselves that the religious and ideological aspects of the conflict are no longer relevant, he is attempting to convince Muslims about the existence of a religious and ideological conflict and to make it relevant. Thus, Qutb’s worldview depends on constructing a conflict narrative deriving from religion and politics; no other interpretation can be correct or made. Those who view it differently are “confused and naïve”; here, Qutb is once again constructing Muslim identity as a politicized.

While Qutb refutes communism in this quotation, there are conflicting views on whether he was actually influenced by it. Calvert (2009) suggests the following:

Beneath the Qur’anic veneer of Qutb’s Islamist writings resides a structural resonance with modern-era ideological currents. That is to say, Qutb imbibed and repackaged in Islamic form the Jacobin characteristics of the European revolutionary tradition. (2009:16)

Moreover, Calvert suggests that Qutb resembled the 19th century Russian revolutionary Chernyshevsky and Lenin in his conviction that there needs to be an elite cadre of revolutionaries for his ideal society to emerge (Calvert 2009:16). According to Calvert (ibid), Qutb absorbed the revolutionary discourse of his time, which was focused on anti-imperialism and giving colonized and postcolonial people new visions of their future and belonging (ibid).

Thus, at the time, politicized identities were seen as an answer to colonial oppression. Hence, politicized identities were given a positive meaning and became the new belonging. These movements and their politicized identities were united in that they were revolutionary and advocated an overturn of the established order. Moreover, according to Cesari (2018:182–183), Qutb was inspired by revolutionary ideology when advocating for violence against Muslim rulers. Hence, Qutb's politicized interpretation of the Qur'an and Islamism can be understood as inspired not only by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* but also by revolutionary ideologies such as Leninism.

Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the knowledge of the causes of contemporary antisemitic violence by demonstrating how Qutb Islamized antisemitism. Thus, it answers the question of how Qutb's construction of Islamist antisemitism can be understood from a social identity perspective and similarities and differences between Qutb's and ISIS antisemitism.

The Characteristics of Qutb's Antisemitism

The findings of the study show the following characteristics of Qutb's antisemitism:

Zionist-crusader pact against Islam. The notion that Jews are the chiefs of the war against Islam and that Jews control the US.

World domination. Qutb promotes the antisemitic notion that Jews want to dominate the world, inspired by the Russian conspiracy theory *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Evilness. Qutb believes that Muslims have been suffering from Jews' "inherent evil" since Islam's inception until the present and that Jews want to destroy Islam.

New antisemitism: Qutb views Israel as an extension of his ideas of Jews as inherently evil. This notion relates to one feature in new antisemitism: antisemitic ideas about "the Jew" is projected onto Israel. Furthermore, the Palestinian cause is used as an example of Jews' supposed evilness.

Eternal enmity between Jews and Muslims. Qutb claims that Qur'an verses are not only part of a specific historical context but also constant and apply to all generations. Thus, Qutb's interpretations create a situation of eternal enmity between Muslims and Jews.

Table 63. The characteristics of Qutb’s antisemitism—findings of the study

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- 1) Zionist-Crusader pact: Jews the chiefs of the war against Islam

 - 2) World domination: Jews want to control the World (*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*)

 - 3) Evilness: Jews are viewed as inherently evil and wanting to destroy Islam

 - 4) Israel as “the Jew”: New antisemitism

 - 5) Eternal war between Muslims and Jews

 - 6) Muslim identity as dependent on a struggle against Jews

 - 7) Excommunication of Muslims through antisemitism
-

The Antisemitic Basis for Qutb’s Excommunication of Muslims

One contribution of the study is the finding that Qutb developed Islamist excommunication of Muslims using antisemitism. This chapter, together with the previous chapter, show that there is an antisemitic basis for the excommunication of Muslims, which can be categorized into three different categories:

1. Excommunication based on categorizing Muslims as Jews
2. Excommunication based on an alliance with Jews and Christians
3. Excommunication based on a transfer of antisemitic notions onto Muslims

The first category, *excommunication based on categorizing Muslims as Jews*, is exemplified by calling Muslims Jews in different ways, for example, when Qutb says they are “Jewish agents.” Another example is when ISIS calls Shiites “undercover Jews.”

The second category, *excommunication based on an alliance with Jews and Christians*, refers to when Qutb claims that “if someone from the Islamic camp establishes an alliance with (Jews and Christians), he actually removes himself from the Muslim camp,” with reference to Al-Maidah 51.

The third category, *excommunication based on a transfer of antisemitic notions onto Muslims*, refers to when Qutb claims that Muslim rulers, or those with Muslim names, participate in the war against Islam and therefore strive for world domination. Similarly, ISIS claims that Shiites attempt to rule the world and that they are evil. Here, the antisemitic notion of world domination and evil, with its roots in *The Protocols of the Elders*, is transferred onto Muslims.

The next chapter on the Sahwa movement will introduce three more categories of Islamist antisemitic excommunication; one of them is excommunication based on an alliance with the US, with the underlying antisemitic notion of it being controlled by Jews. As seen in this chapter, the antisemitic belief that Jews control the US was, in part, introduced by Qutb.

These categories sometimes overlap; however, they can also be understood as distinct in their subtle nuances. What unites these categories is that antisemitism is the basis for Islamist excommunication of Muslims. Islamist excommunication is also based on a politicization of religion and religious identities. The politicized practice of excommunication that Qutb partly laid the ground for was later adopted by ISIS and used against Shiites and other Muslims. Moreover, the next chapter on the Sahwa movement will show how this came about.

One unique finding of this chapter is that Islamist excommunication of Muslims has since its specific politicized construction by Qutb been based on antisemitism; when Islamists want to excommunicate their Muslim opponents, they call them Jews, transfer antisemitic notions onto them, or claim that there is a “Jewish” element to their person. One notable example is Egypt’s president Al-Sisi, who is called a Jew, and accused of wanting to “implement *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*” by the Muslim Brotherhood.^{27,28}

The construction of Islamist identity is based on the claim that there is only one type of rightful Muslim, this claim depends on the excommunication of other Muslims. Furthermore, Islamist identity is constructed in relation to those they claim are infidels; thus, through excommunication, Islamists achieve a positive distinctiveness in relation to Muslims who are not Islamists.

In the Islamist identity construction of Muslim identity, there is no room for different interpretations of Islam or different types of Muslims. By excommunicating Muslims who are not politicizing their religion, Islamists create the image of themselves as the only true representatives of Muslims and are, many times, able to hide that they are actually an antisemitic political movement with little support from the religion of Islam, and most importantly the Qur’an. However, what makes excommunication a powerful tool for Islamists is that they signal faith as a common ingroup value and virtue in comparison to a “disbelieving” outgroup.

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tg5V91gR1ho>

²⁸ <https://www.memri.org/tv/al-jazeera-commentator-former-mb-official-gamal-nassar-al-sisi-jewish-implementing-protocols>

Here, the outgroup is accused of being disbelievers not because they do not practice their religion in accordance with the five pillars of Islam, which are totally apolitical, but because they do not believe in the political project of Islamism; thus, the criteria for not being excommunicated by Islamists is for a Muslim to believe in its political project. This conflation of politics with religion has led to violence against Jews as well as against Muslims since, often, excommunication entails violence against them. For Islamists, the embrace of eradicating the outgroup is portrayed as necessary to the defense of ingroup virtue.

Qutb’s Construction of the Imaginary Victimized Ummah

In Qutb’s writing, victimhood creates ingroup virtue and outgroup hate since victimhood is automatically endowed with the virtue of unique goodness. In Qutb’s writing, this can be found in his description of Muslims such as Palestinians and conflicts in Somalia, Eritrea, Algeria, Yugoslavia, China, Turkistan, and India as suffering from persecution in the war against Islam led by Jews. Here, the ingroup of the victimized ummah is portrayed as inherently good due to their status of suffering, whereas the outgroup, Jews, is seen as inherently evil. This study suggests that Qutb constructed the imaginary victimized ummah narrative that ISIS uses, as seen in the previous chapter. The notion of an imaginary victimized ummah serves as an effective recruitment tool for Islamists.

Table 14. The pillars of the imaginary victimized ummah

1) Victimized by a war against Islam led by Jews
2) Victims of “unjust” Muslim rulers
3) Appeals to the emotional significance of a shared identity
4) Outgroup as an existential threat to ingroup survival
5) Activates a politicized identity
6) Creates mobilization for a martial identity– “saviors of the victims”
7) Victimhood as an ingroup virtue

An important characteristic of imagined communities is that when people adopt a particular social identity, they seek to discover the meanings and norms associated with their new social category and try to follow them (Sage-man 2017a). Qutb’s construction of the imaginary victimized ummah is based on the core claim in Islamist antisemitism; namely, that there is an ongoing war against Islam. Qutb claims that there is a shared, political, eternal, and worldwide oppression against Muslims since Islam’s inception while holding Jews responsible for the oppression to incite violence against them.

This narrative activates a politicized identity by creating identification with victims based on emotions coming from a sense of a shared social identity. Violent discourse helps extremists shape how people feel about or make sense of events, influencing how they act; war metaphors are, according to Sageman (2017a:135), especially harmful as they imply violent action and justify physical violence, decreasing the threshold to violence.

The notion of the ummah is based on an imaginary notion of a united Muslim community that has never existed. As Sageman notes, self-categorization accentuates intergroup differences while neglecting intragroup differences; thus, it simplifies social reality and diminishes outgroup members' individual differences (Sageman 2017b:8). Furthermore, a shared social identity in the form of group membership has an emotional significance attached to it (Tajfel 1974:69); thus, the notion of oppression of an ingroup makes the struggle for the group important for those who identify with it. This study suggests that the notion of an imaginary victimized ummah is used as a deliberate manipulation tool by Qutb in the interests of mobilizing collective action to secure or maintain political power, the Islamist project.

As mentioned earlier, Sageman (2017a:118) found that neo-jihadists attributed their politicization to watching violence against Muslims. The violence activated a self-categorization into an imagined community where they identified with the victims (whom they wanted to violently defend) in contrast to the outgroup. Hence, the notion of an imaginary victimized ummah, as described by Islamists, should be understood as an important factor in the process leading to political violence.

The Politicization of Jewish and Muslim Identity

The findings of this study show that Qutb Islamized antisemitism by claiming that there is an ongoing war between Jews and Muslims. Qutb claims that this war started from Islam's inception and is ongoing until the Muslims' victory. Furthermore, he claims that Jews want to destroy Islam, strengthening his essentialization of Jews as evil while politicizing their religious identity.

Table 15. War against Islam Conspiracy–Qutb

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- 1) That Muslims always have suffered from “Jewish machinations and double dealings.”

 - 2) That Jews want to lead Muslims away from Islam.

 - 3) That Jews want to destroy Muslims.

 - 4) Excommunication- Muslims who disagree are Jewish agents.

 - 5) Muslim identity as dependent on a struggle against Jews.

 - 6) Includes violence against “unjust” Muslim rulers.

 - 7) Victimhood as an ingroup virtue.

Qutb claims that Muslim identity means that Muslims have to strive for a political system and dedicate every aspect of their lives to doing so. Therefore, Qutb’s construction of Islam and Muslim identity is politicized and totalitarian; the totalitarian element is called *hakimiyya* and it refers to an Islamic State governance. Moreover, according to Qutb, Muslims must engage in the battle against Jews, thus creating a martial social identity.

Qutb’s Use of European Antisemitic Notions

The main difference between Qutb and ISIS antisemitism is that Qutb does not make the connection between Jews and Shiites. However, both Qutb and ISIS believe that Jews are the “mobilizers” or “chiefs” of the war against Islam. Moreover, both Qutb and ISIS believe that this war is eternal until the doomsday arrives; thus, they create a situation of eternal enmity and violence. ISIS and Qutb describe Muslims who deviate from their interpretation of Islam as actively trying to corrupt Islam, participating in the war against Islam (therefore helping Jews), and excommunicate them.

However, Qutb’s antisemitic beliefs are not only inspired by *The Protocols of the Elders* but also very similar to Catholic antisemitic beliefs from the Middle Ages. As Firestone has alluded, the Qur’an does not contain antisemitism. Thus, the study suggests that Qutb also was inspired by, and transferred, Christian antisemitism to Islamist antisemitism when portraying Jews as evil and wanting to destroy Islam. The Christian antisemitic notions from the period of the High Middle Ages (1000–1300 CE) are very similar to Qutb’s

Islamization of antisemitism. However, what Qutb did was to replace Christians with Muslims. Similar to Qutb, the European Christian antisemitic imagination portrays Jews as having the power and determination to control the world, influence events, and destroy societies, which continues until the end of time to work against the Church together with Satan against Christian society (Chatterley 2013:78).

All these notions were adopted by Qutb, who applied them to Muslims while trying to give it a religious legitimacy by referring to Qur'an verses, which he interpreted as eternal rather than acknowledging their historical context. Moreover, Qutb also adopted antisemitic beliefs about Jews and usury from the antisemitic European imagination.

This chapter shows that Qutb interprets and uses historical accounts from the Qur'an to claim that a struggle against Jews is a crucial part of Muslim survival. This is a politicization of Jewish identity and Muslim identity, situating both identities in an eternal struggle. Moreover, Qutb develops an excommunication practice against Muslims using antisemitism. Together, the characteristics of Qutb's antisemitism originate from the image of the Jew from Christian antisemitism, the European conspiracy *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* combined with politicized interpretations of the Qur'an, while being inspired by European revolutionary ideology in his construction of a violent Islamist ideology. In the following chapter, I will suggest that a missing link between Qutb's and ISIS antisemitism is the Sahwa movement.

8. Between Qutb and ISIS: The Sahwa

Introduction

The findings in the previous chapter demonstrate that Qutb plays a crucial role in Islamizing antisemitism. It also found several similarities between Qutb's antisemitism and ISIS's antisemitism, such as the notion of Jews as the mobilizers of the "war against Islam," the notion of Jews as eternally evil wanting to destroy Islam, and the millenarian notion of an eternal war between Jews and Muslims, which is supposed to end in a Muslim victory. Moreover, those Muslims who do not follow this war narrative are deemed disbelievers, belonging to the camp of a war against Islam. Ultimately, from the point of view of this ideology, they become a legitimate target to kill. Both Qutb and ISIS politicized Jewish and Muslim identities, constructing a martial social identity for Muslims. However, one crucial difference between ISIS's antisemitism and Qutb's antisemitism is that the latter does not include Shiites. Qutb does not mention Shiites as an enemy nor does he mention them in relation to Jews. The current supreme leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, has even translated Qutb's book *In the Shade of the Qur'an* to Persian (Moghadam and Fishman 2010:205; Patterson 2015:97; Unal 2016:35).

Qutb's teachings inspired the 1979 revolution in Iran and are still influential among (Shiite) Islamists in the country (Unal 2016:35-39). According to Unal (2016:36), this demonstrates that, contrary to popular belief, modern political Shiism has been influenced by the ideological developments in Sunni Islam. Furthermore, Unal (2016:55) suggests that pre-revolutionary Iran in the 1950s and 1960s lacked a discourse that presented Islam as a total ideology with answers to all of humankind's problems; however, the revolutionaries found this type of thinking in Qutb and therefore translated his works into Persian.

Moreover, Wahabism²⁹ and Salafism are deeply against Shiites and have been involved in violent attacks against them historically. However, currently

²⁹ Wahabism and Salafism are often used interchangeably: "Wahhabism refers to the 18th-century revival and reform movement begun in the region of Najd, in what is today Saudi Arabia, by Islamic religious and legal scholar Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. The hallmarks of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's teachings are his emphasis on *tawhid* (absolute monotheism),

it is not primarily genocidal as ISIS's anti-Shiism. This indicates a missing link between Qutb's antisemitism and ISIS antisemitism when it comes to its interconnected genocidal anti-Shiism. This chapter suggests that the intermediary ideological development that eventually led to ISIS antisemitism and genocidal anti-Shiism originates from the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organization, the Sahwa movement.

Chapter 6 shows that ISIS politicizes Shiite identity by claiming that Shiites will ally with Jews in the war against Islam. This chapter will answer the fourth research question: How can the antisemitism and anti-Shiism of the Sahwa movement explain the recent development of ISIS antisemitism and genocidal anti-Shiism, from a social identity perspective? With the help of social identity theory, this chapter will present different aspects of the ideological construction of identities and the underlying worldview found in the Sahwa movement.

The Sahwa movement drew on Qutb's teachings and was established in the 1960s in Saudi Arabia, mainly by exiled Syrian and Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members. Its ideology is understood as a hybrid between the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and Wahabism (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:52). However, the Wahabi influences were seemingly added to gain legitimacy in Saudi Arabia since the Muslim Brotherhood ideology used to be alien to the country. Thus, the Sahwa movement is a Muslim Brotherhood organization that hid its roots by taking on "indigenous" Saudi Wahabi concepts. Whereas Wahhabism is mainly concerned with creed, the Muslim Brotherhood is primarily concerned with politics (al-Rasheed 2006:76).

Historically, the Wahabists in Saudi Arabia left the political domain for the royal family; however, the Sahwa movement broke that pattern (Hamad 2017:36), which further emphasizes its Muslim Brotherhood agenda. Moreover, the Sahwa movement constructed and popularized notions of a politicized Shiite enemy identity. They did this for mainly two reasons: the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood's struggle against the ruling Assad family (who belongs to the Alawite sect, which is said to be a branch of Shiism) and hostility against Iran (sometimes against the leaders and sometimes against all Shiites) (Moghadam and Fishman 2011:212).

opposition to *shirk* (association of anyone or anything with God), and direct, individual return to the Qur'an and Sunna (example of the Prophet) for interpretation (*ijtihad*)" (DeLong-Bas 2009) and "Wahabism is part of part of a larger phenomenon in Islamic thought: Salafism. The Salaf are the pious forbearers of Islam, usually understood as the first three generations of the Muslim community (as opposed to the Khalaf, or the later generations). Salafism refers to a trend in Islamic thought that places particular emphasis on a return to the piety and principles of the Salaf as the only correct understanding of Islam" (Brown 2009).

Anti-Shiism increased in the years following the escalation of the Syrian civil war starting in 2011, and several derogatory terms have been used against Shiites, some of them will be recurrent in this chapter: Rafidah (rejectionists), Majus (Magianism or Zoroastrianism), Nusayri (Alawites), and Safawi (Safavid) (Siegel 2015:5). Safawi, which ISIS calls Shiites (see Chapter 6), recalls the Safavid dynasty that ruled Persia from 1501 to 1736, and it is used to depict Shiites as connected to or controlled by Iran. It is also used in the saying Zionist-Safavid, implying a conspiracy between Israel and Iran against Sunni Muslims (Siegel 2015:5).

The Sahwa movement has received little attention from contemporary scholars on extremism, even though it was the main source of al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden's militancy (Miller 2015:192). Instead, the scholarly focus has been on what is called Salafi-Jihadism as the root cause of Islamist violence, with an emphasis on Salafism and Wahhabism.

This study challenges this notion by proposing that the root cause is rather the ideology of political Islam; this means that it is primarily the Muslim Brotherhood ideology that has contributed to contemporary political violence.

The underlying argument is that Salafism has, for the most part, been apolitical³⁰ and focused on theology; for example, Shiites are seen as theologically deviant, whereas political Islam has tended to put more emphasis on portraying Shiites as political enemies.

Hence, this chapter suggests that given that the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative leads to political violence, its primary origin ought to be the Muslim Brotherhood and not apolitical Salafism and Wahhabism. However, that does not mean that militant Islamists have not adopted Salafist concepts, they have, as will be seen in this chapter. This thesis suggests that, for the most part, it is political Islam that has appropriated Salafist concepts, rather than, primarily, the other way around. However, it is important to emphasize that it also does seem to go both ways and that this is a topic in need of further research.

This chapter is based on a reconstruction of the relevant existing research on the Sahwa movement. However, it also includes translations of *Wa-jā'a dawr al- Majūs*, an anti-Shiite standard work written in the 1980s by the Syrian Sahwa member Mohammed Surur. According to Kazimi (2006:56), the book has inspired ISIS founder Zarqawi and his anti-Shiism. Moreover, Zarqawi's anti-Shiism is genocidal and led to the ISIS genocide of Shiites in Iraq

³⁰ The Sahwa movement politicized Salafism as will be seen in this chapter. Furthermore, with time, certain Salafi groups have become political; however, these are rather recent developments, mainly after the Arab spring, when the majority, origins, and core of Salafism are for the most part strictly apolitical and against any type of rebellion regardless of the level of oppression people face. For a discussion on Salafi-Jihadism, see Chapter 2.

(Hawley 2017:160). Zarqawi was the one who turned anti-Shiism into a central tenant of jihadism (Kazimi 2006:67). This chapter also analyzes Sahwa member Safar al-Hawali's Islamist antisemitism in the form of his book *The Day of Wrath*, where he uses Biblical prophecies to develop Islamist antisemitism (Reichmuth 2006: 334–335).

The Sahwa established a distinct ingroup identity and its centrality in the definition of outgroups such as Jews and Shiites will be explored in this chapter. Specifically, this chapter shows how their construction of a politicized ingroup identity led to an imposed politicization of outgroup religious identities. Moreover, this chapter will show how events from contemporary history such as the Iranian revolution contributed to a politicized anti-Shiism that led to ISIS's Shia genocide in Iraq, that Azzam, the leader of the Afghan jihad contributed to new interpretations by claiming Muslims can take up arms and leave their homes without their parents or organization's permission, a belief that benefitted ISIS. Furthermore, the Gulf War led to an intensified anti-Americanism among Islamists, and the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 meant that Islamists endorsed suicide bombings in the country. All these events actualized and amplified certain parts of Islamist ideology related to Islamist identity constructions and use of violence. Hence, compared to the previous empirical chapters focusing on ideas and identity, this chapter also adds a focus on crucial recent historical events.

The chapter begins with an introduction to key Sahwa ideologues. Then, it examines the Sahwa movement's emergence and ideology and the meaning that the American troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War had for the Sahwa. Next, it examines how the Muslim Brotherhood shaped Osama bin Laden's militancy, and Safar al-Hawali's contributions to Islamist antisemitism. Finally, the chapter explores the Sahwa movement's influence on ISIS and its anti-Shiism.

Key Sahwa Ideologues

The most well-known ideologues of the Sahwa movement are Mohammed Qutb (Sayyid Qutb's brother), Mohammed Surur, Salman al-Awdah, Safar al-Hawali, and Osama Bin Laden. Mohammad Qutb and Mohammad Surur are regarded as two of the most influential Sahwa leaders (al-Rasheed 2006:66). Mohammed Qutb left Egypt for Saudi Arabia and played a mediating role between his brother's work and al-Qaeda (Nishino 2015:113). Surur is often claimed to have the most followers among the Sahwa in Saudi Arabia (al-Rasheed 2006:70). Surur fled to Saudi Arabia in 1965 as a Syrian Muslim Brotherhood supporter (al-Rasheed 2006:73), and he inspired both al-Awdah and al-Hawali. Moreover, al-Hawali's supervisor was Mohammed Qutb (Nishino 2015:118). In turn, Mohammed Qutb inspired bin Laden. Bin Laden's two favorite scholars were al-Awdah and al-Hawali. This chapter will present

these five Sahwa ideologues' main ideas and their contributions to the development of Islamist antisemitism and its connections to anti-Shiism.

Certain Sahwa members have followed movements such as Hizb al-Tahrir and al-Qaeda (al-Rasheed 2006:70). The link to violence became evident when the Sahwa channeled its jihadi rhetoric to the Muslim world (al-Rasheed 2006:92). During the US invasion of Iraq, Sahwa condemned the war, together with other actors in Saudi Arabia, with slogans claiming that the war was a "Christian-Zionist imperialist plot" and a "New Crusade" (al-Rasheed 2006:93) and encouraging terrorist attacks in Iraq (al-Rasheed 2006:94).

This shows Sayyid Qutb's antisemitic influence on the Sahwa movement and that they continued his legacy of anti-Americanism, a notion that is alien to Islam but central in Islamist ideology, even more so due to Sahwa's contribution, as this chapter will show. The Sahwa movement and its anti-Americanism inspired Osama bin Laden and the creation of al-Qaeda, and it eventually inspired ISIS Islamist antisemitism and anti-Shiism.

Sayyid Qutb's writings were a significant inspiration for the Sahwa movement (Hassan 2018:8), and, in a sense, they worked to and partially managed to implement his Islamist vision. The Sahwa movement's two most pivotal stances where they digressed from the mainstream Wahabi ulema in Saudi Arabia was when they first opposed the US troops being in the country in 1990 and when they endorsed terrorism in Iraq after 2003.

The Wahhabi ulema accepted US troops being in Saudi Arabia, and they did not endorse or give religious legitimacy to violence in Iraq. Meanwhile, the Sahwa used Qutbist political language to claim that it was un-Islamic to have US troops in Saudi Arabia since they consider them infidels and that terrorism in Iraq is a defensive jihad.

The Emergence of the Sahwa Movement

The Sahwa movement, *Al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* (The Islamic Awakening), was established in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s, and it combined apolitical Wahabism with the political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood. Sahwa was formed by Muslim Brotherhood members exiled from their countries, mainly from Syria and Egypt, who eventually dominated the Saudi educational system (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:89), since there was a demand in the country for educated teachers. Hence, the emergence of the Sahwa movement is connected to the history of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. To understand the Sahwa movement, this section will give a brief history of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, which I will argue had a strong influence in shaping the (politicized) anti-Shiism of Islamist groups.

The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood was initially a small organization compared to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Teitelbaum 2004:134). Like Qutb, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood believed that Islam should be applied to all areas of life (Teitelbaum 2011:227). The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood

participated in elections in Syria in 1947 and had their own members of parliament and ministers (Conduit 2016:215–216). However, this influence ended in 1963 when a coup brought the Baathists to power; since 1971, the Assad family has been in power in Syria (ibid).

The Muslim Brotherhood was eventually outlawed in Syria in 1964 (Conduit 2016:215–216). However, they rebelled against the Assad family many times throughout history, one insurrection took place in 1976 (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:152) and only a few years later in 1980, 1982, and the latest one being in 2012 as part of the Arab spring. In October 1980, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood called on the Muslim world to fight against the “secular and heretical” Assad regime and declared war against it (Blanga 2017:51).

In 1982, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood led an uprising against the Syrian regime, which led to the Hama massacre (Weismann 1993:601). The regime killed 5,000 people, which suppressed the movement and left the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood to be viewed as a group that led a failed uprising (Conduit 2016:211).

In 2012, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood had taken up arms again against the regime in Syria by referring to it as a religious obligation (Blanga 2017: 59). However, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood had lived in exile for 30 years before the Syrian revolution and was somewhat disorganized (Blanga 2017:60). Like the uprising in 1982, the uprising in 2012 was violently suppressed by the Syrian regime.

This chapter makes it clear that the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood played a crucial role in politicizing anti-Shiism and transferring it to the Sahwa movement and eventually to ISIS. The reason for this goes back to the 1970s when the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood played a crucial role in spreading anti-Shiism (Steinberg 2014:118). Their anti-Shiism was based on their hatred and struggle against the ruling Syrian Assad family and the Alawite group it belongs to (a branch of Shiism) (ibid). Therefore, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood framed their struggle against Assad in politicized terms against Shiites (ibid; Moghadam and Fishman 2011:212).

The Ideology of the Sahwa Movement

The Muslim Brotherhood, most importantly Qutb, influenced the Sahwa movement’s ideology, and their influence in Saudi Arabia was immense, especially in the Saudi educational system. Lacroix and Holoch (2011) have written the most comprehensive book on the Sahwa movement; *Awakening Islam*. In the following quotation, Lacroix and Holoch describe how the Sahwa movement emerged in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s:

Saudi Arabia experienced a massive influx into the local religious field of an exogenous tradition, that of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the establishment of institutions that were largely in its service in both form and content. This transplantation was the source of a vast social movement that produced its own counterculture and its own organizations and, through the educational system, soon reached almost all the fields of the social arena. Locally, the social movement was known as al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Awakening) or simply the Sahwa. This notion was not specifically Saudi but applied more generally to the widespread Islamic resurgence that had taken hold in the Muslim world since the 1960s. In the Arab world, the phenomenon was closely linked to the rise of Islamist movements, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood. In Saudi Arabia, one of the countries where it was a driving force behind the resurgence, the taboo against political organizations meant that any explicit public reference to the Brotherhood was banned. The term “Sahwa,” less politically charged, therefore prevailed as the name for the movement resulting from its influence. (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:50–51)

Lacroix and Holoch point to how the Sahwa movement established many institutions in Saudi Arabia to exert its influence on society. Additionally, Lacroix and Holoch make a crucial point about the Sahwa movement, namely that they chose the name Sahwa to disguise their Muslim Brotherhood connection since a public reference to the group was forbidden.

Hence, the Sahwa was a political group that, to some extent, had to disguise its political ambitions, including using symbolic language, as will be seen later on in this chapter. Another strategy that the Muslim Brotherhood used to disguise its political goals was to adopt Wahabi ideas and appearances to gain influence in Saudi Arabia, where the Wahabi tradition was already established and accepted (*ibid*).

The Muslim Brotherhood tradition was mainly constructed to challenge the regimes in the Middle East, deriving from Qutb’s thought, whereas the Wahabi tradition was mainly religious and concerned with the creed (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:52). Hence, the Sahwa adopted the methods and (political) thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood and maintained the creed as a Wahabi sign. Moreover, the Sahwa followed Qutb’s ideology because many Muslim Brotherhood members who went to Saudi Arabia in the 1970s had already adopted his way of thinking (Lacroix 2011:53).

Lacroix and Holoch describe the Sahwa movement’s influence on the Saudi educational system as follows:

The Brotherhood’s members affected the Saudi educational system not only as teachers but also by acting as a major force in reconfiguring it and in redefining the curricula. In this way they introduced into the system the essential elements underlying their ideology and view of the world. (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:45)

By gaining power within the educational system, the Sahwa challenged apolitical Saudi Wahabism and spread their ideology to a large audience. Hamad (2017) argues that the Sahwa's political engagement not only challenged the Saudi regime but also

[. . .] posed a threat to other Islamic sects and religious groups who seek protection from Saudi authority. This could be highly applicable to the Shia communities in the Eastern province in Saudi Arabia. Since the early days of al-Sahwa, its discourse has been portraying Shias as the other and the infidels. (Hamad 2017:69)

Here, Hamad points to the Sahwa as a force in Saudi Arabia that has promoted the notion of Shiites as "the other" and infidels since its establishment. Thus, the Sahwa constructed Shiites as the outgroup by claiming they were different from the ingroup majority of Muslims in the country and essentially should not be regarded as Muslims. That is, the Sahwa portrayed Shiites as endangering ingroup identity. According to social identity theory, the step from withdrawing benefits to active hostility against an outgroup takes place when excluding others from the ingroup construes them as a threat to the ingroup (Reicher et al. 2008:1331).

Hence, the description of Shiites as infidels can be understood as an initial exclusion from the ingroup, and the next step of construing them as a threat to the ingroup leads to active hostility against Shiites. Here, it is important to emphasize that outgroup threat is often not based on reality or an objective assessment; instead, it is something that is actively constructed (Reicher et al. 2008:1332), as will be seen throughout the thesis.

The Sahwa view Islam as a total system that should govern every detail of daily life, including dressing, speaking, and social behavior (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:60). In this regard, the Sahwa implemented Qutb's interpretation and construction of Muslim identity as all-encompassing in life and made it available to a larger audience through their influence over the educational system.

The Sahwa also adopted social practices intended to politicize everyday life (Hamad 2017:34; Lacroix and Holoch 2011:60). Moreover, they imitated some of the Wahabi leaders' social practices, preserved for a religious elite, and made them a model for everyone to follow (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:60-61). Altogether, these new practices changed the way people viewed Islam to a more politicized totalitarian version that was not as prevalent previously.

The Sahwa also had special networks called jama'at (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:62); two leading networks in Saudi Arabia met regularly. These networks were secret, and there are almost no written documents about them (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:63). Furthermore, these networks had thousands of officials in the educational system as their members (ibid). These are rarely discussed, and none of their leaders publicly acknowledged their existence (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:63). This secrecy further complicates the

understanding of the impact that the Sahwa had on extremist groups and their way of organizing and thinking. Given their former position in Saudi Arabia, this can be understood as a crucial piece of missing information about Islamist influence over the population.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been designated a terrorist group in Saudi Arabia since 2014, and since the 1990s, Sahwa leaders gradually lost their power. Today, most Sahwa leaders are either dead or in prison. However, those Sahwa members who are living in exile in the West continue to spread their propaganda online. That is, the movement still exists and therefore still poses a challenge.

The Sahwa Movement's Ideological Impact

The Sahwa movement has many well-known leaders who refined the ideology. Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-Awdah, for example, were frequently mentioned in al-Qaeda communications in the 1990s and are cited in the communiqué of Bin Laden's first public declaration of jihad against "The Zionist-Crusader Alliance" (Moghadam and Fishman 2011:84). Hence, the Sahwa movement clearly influenced al-Qaeda's ideology.

Mohammed Qutb was a highly influential Sahwa ideologue who supervised Safar al-Hawali, an Islamist ideologue, and one of the founders of the Sahwa movement who influenced Osama bin Laden (Kepel 2008:24; Nishino 2015:118). Qutb was the one who played a mediating role between his brother Sayyid Qutb's work and al-Qaeda in the intellectual history of Islamism (Nishino 2015:113). Later, I argue that both Sayyid Qutb and Mohammed Qutb had an ideological impact on ISIS's declaration of a caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

Mohammed Qutb

Mohammed Qutb's reworking of Sayyid Qutb's Islamism preserved its appeal for future audiences (Nishino 2015:114). In the 1970s, Mohammed Qutb was appointed to teach creed at the Islamic University of Madinah. This meant that the Wahabi monopoly over theology in Saudi Arabia was slowly eroding (Miller 2015:190). Mohammed Qutb's lectures were admired by many, including a young Osama Bin Laden (Bosanquet 2012:12).

Safar al-Hawali, Mohammed Qutb's student, was the tenth most featured speaker in bin Laden's tape collection (Miller 2015:67) of lectures while Salman al-Awda was the sixth and Nasir al-Omar, another Sahwa leader, the eleventh (Miller 2015:190). Their lectures on Islam and social reality, jurisprudence based on social reality (*fiqh al waqi*) and anti-secularist beliefs, provided a more politicized version of Islam than the Wahabists and made them intellectual superstars among young Saudis (*ibid*). Moreover, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Sahwa addressed discontent caused by high unemployment among the youth (*ibid*).

However, Miller (2015) writes that:

Thoroughly woven into the rhetoric of disenchantment were aggressive new condemnations of Sufis and Shi'as, Muslim minorities in the country whose alleged susceptibility to psychological and cultural sickness provided far more convenient targets for discipline than did the Wahhabi establishment itself. (Miller 2015:190)

Here, it is interesting to note a pattern among the Sahwa: whenever there was a societal crisis, they would attack minorities. Thus, their anti-Shiism can be understood as a way for them to politically mobilize discontent and direct it against religious minorities such as the Shia and Sufi. This can be understood as part of their symbolic language where they could not directly attack the royal family and therefore, at times, their only outlet to voice their political agenda and ideology was to attack what they view as “the impure” minorities, including Jews.

Clearly, this was a more socially acceptable practice and intolerance against other interpretations of Islam was already part of their ideology. Later, their restriction in directly inciting violence in Saudi Arabia instead led them to direct it towards other Muslim countries such as Iraq after the US invasion in 2003. Miller believes that the politicized Sahwa teachings on Islam and social reality meant that the outgroups Shiites and Sufis were regarded as prone to psychological and cultural sickness. From a social identity perspective, this can be understood as building a positive, authentic, and pure Muslim ingroup identity by positive distinctiveness in relation to the outgroup, where the minorities come to be categorized as the opposite, impure.

Tawhid al-Hakimiyya and Sharia

Hakimiyya (sovereignty or to rule/govern) can be understood as the most important concept in Mohammed Qutb's writings; similar to his brother Sayyid Qutb, he sees an inevitable battle between jahiliyya (ignorance) and hakimiyya (God's sovereignty) (Bosanquet 2012:17). For the Qutb brothers, Islamist political governance in the form of hakimiyya is what defines Islam; where it does not exist, there is only jahiliyya and no Islamic society.

For Islamists, hakimiyya can be understood as the governance of God via Islamist interpretations of it; here, Islamists give themselves the role of being the interpreters and implementers of God's governance on earth. This also means that Mohammed Qutb rejects interpretations based on privatized religion; he does so by claiming that private religion belongs to the West (Bosanquet 2012:18). While Sayyid Qutb theorized about Islamism, Mohammed Qutb and the Sahwa would try to implement parts of it in society by showing the politicized interpretation of religion openly.

The Islamists focus on performative practices and superficiality such as forcing women to wear a veil (even though the Qur'an states that there is no compulsion in religion) or as in Mohammed Qutb's belief that women should not work or engage in social interaction in society (Bosanquet 2012:21). Until today, this can be noted in the way the Muslim Brotherhood conduct themselves, as they rarely speak of the spiritual aspects of religion, the centrality of mercy in Islam, or a Muslim's relationship with God, but merely focus on politics and extremism.

Qutb also views sharia (a body of Qur'an-based guidance that points Muslims toward living an Islamic life) as a necessity in an Islamic society and that it should be the sole source of legislation in society (Bosanquet 2012:19). Hence, according to Qutb, the implementation of Islam is a social and political one. However, Islamists' emphasis on sharia does not correspond to its classical portrayal (ibid). For example, Tibi (2012:118) emphasizes that Islamist use of sharia is an invented tradition and that sharia is interpretative and therefore cannot be institutionalized. Furthermore, Tibi suggests that the Islamists "invent a sharia tradition, specifically designed for a totalizing concept of law, that cannot be found in the text of the Qur'an" (Tibi 2012:39). Tibi argues that sharia should be understood from its Qur'anic meaning, which refers to it as a path leading to water, understood as a "right path," a correct ritual and moral conduct rather than the Islamist politicized legislative usage of it (Tibi 2012:39):

Another authority on Muslim law, also Oxford-based, was the late Iranian-born Hamid Enayat. Two statements from his book *Modern Islamic Political Thought* are worth quoting. First, he says of the shari'a doctrine that "there is no such thing as a unified Islamic system, enshrined in integrated codes and accepted and acknowledged unquestionably by all Muslims." Later he adds that the classical shari'a itself does "not form any rigid code of laws." Second, he says of shari'a's place in Islamic history that it "was never implemented as an integral system, and the bulk of its provisions remained as legal fictions." Thus the Islamist attempt to impose monolithic "shari'a" in the form of a rigid code that will be implemented as an integral system has no basis in history. The claim that such a shari'a existed in the past is the epitome of an invented tradition. (2012:160)

In addition to the interpretative challenges of sharia, Tibi also asserts that the term sharia occurs only once in the Qur'an, where it refers to morality, not law (2012:122):

Sura 45, verse 18 [. . .] (We have set you on the right path. Follow it). In this verse the Qur'an mandates the moral conduct of [. . .] (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil). "The Qur'an contains [. . .] prescriptions for the life of the community of Muslims. They were elaborated [. . .] in later times to constitute what is now known as Islamic law, or the shari'a. Basically these rules refer to the five pillars of Islam: (1) submission to Allah, (2) prayer, (3)

legal alms or poor tax, (4) the fast of Ramadan, and (5) the pilgrimage to Mecca. All other uses of the term are post-Qur’anic constructions. (2012:159)

All Islamists have in common that they shari’atize Islam and flatly ignore the fact that the term “shari’a” occurs only once in the Qur’an, where it refers to morality, not law. All Islamists share an agenda of establishing an Islamic state order, or *nizam Islami* [. . .] “*dawla*” (state) nor “*nizam*”—both of which are pivotal in the shari’a reasoning of the Islamists—occurs in the Qur’an. What all Islamists share, therefore, is a modern religionized political ideology geared to a remaking of the world on the basis of an inverted tradition of shari’a. [. . .] The term “post-Islamism,” which refers to Islamist renunciation of jihadism in favor of democratic participation, makes no sense. How can Islamists be “post-Islamists” if they still aspire to create an “Islamist order”? Only if this goal is abandoned may one talk of post-Islamism. I do not know a single Islamist movement that has abandoned this Islamist agenda. Some parties, such as Turkey’s AKP, deny their Islamism to avoid constitutional banning. This is by no means a sign of post-Islamism. (2012:122)

For Mohammed Qutb, all political, social, and private activities should be governed by sharia (Bosanquet 2012:19). Furthermore, the implementation of the sharia is the main criteria in Qutb’s definition of an Islamic society (Bosanquet 2012:22), and it is embedded in the concept of *hakimiyya*. Hence, it is important to understand its background.

The *Sahwa* believed in first spreading their message to the young in a bottom-up approach. Similar to the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, they believed that it should start with the individual, then the family, and then society (Bosanquet 2012:21). Qutb also believed that the social sphere of work and civil interaction should only be for men; the participation of women is, according to him, a threat to order and harmony (*ibid*).

Mohammed Qutb’s worldview influenced al-Qaeda’s ideology in its ideas about the US confronting Islam and his dismissal of democracy and secularism (Nishino 2015:113). Moreover, Qutb’s main purpose was to establish a system with the complete sharia, which is at the core of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the purification of creed, which is at the core of Wahabism (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:54).

Mohammed Qutb’s Political Addition to Salafist Thought

Mohammed Qutb’s development of the concept *tawhid al hakimiyya* changed the meaning of what it means to be a Muslim. Hassan (2018) explained Mohammed Qutb’s ideological hybridization between the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafism in the following way:

Mohammed Qutb integrated ibn Taymiyyah’s three criteria for monotheism and added a fourth, which he called *tawhid al-hakimiyya*, the unity of the sovereignty of God and his laws alone. This fourth criterion was a defining contribution to the *Sahwa* and Salafi-jihadi thought in general. Jihadi clerics took the Qur’anic term *taghut* (false deity) and built a full-fledged ideology on it:

rulers of the Muslim world have been apostatized. Based on this, a Muslim who works for the ruler—from clerics to civil servants—can be a legitimate target. (Hassan 2018:8)

Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), which Hassan refers to, is a literalist Islamic scholar whom extremists also use and sometimes misuse. Ibn Taymiyya, his Salafist followers, and Wahabism view monotheism (tawhid or oneness of God) as central to Islam. However, it is important to note that monotheism is not only an important concept for Salafists but also a concept that all Muslims believe in, and which is part of the first pillar in Islam, namely giving the Islamic declaration of faith, the shahada, which states that there is only one God and that Mohammed is his messenger. It is the most sacred statement in Islam, and after a person understands its meaning and utters it, they are regarded as Muslim.

The Shahadah is also uttered five times a day during the Muslim prayer, the second pillar of Islam. However, the way that monotheism has been used by, for example, Ibn Taymiyya is somewhat more complicated and was used to determine whether certain groups who call themselves Muslims are actually polytheists. Salafists' three criteria for monotheism are belief in the oneness of God, belief in the oneness of the worship of God, and belief in the names and attributes of God. These are the three criteria of monotheism that Salafists follow. It is important to note that these criteria are purely theological and do not relate to governance.

However, the fourth criteria that Mohammed Qutb added, the unity of the sovereignty of God and his laws alone (tawhid al-hakimiyya), is an Islamist, political, addition to the understanding of monotheism. Mohammed Qutb's understanding of monotheism requires the belief in the oneness of God that incorporates the belief in an Islamist state, a belief that was not part of the classical Islamic understanding of monotheism, a focus on worshipping one God.

Hence, Mohammed Qutb changed the meaning of what it means to be a Muslim. Additionally, this change implies that those Muslims who do not believe in Islamist governance do not believe in the oneness of God and are therefore excommunicated, a further totalization of Islamist ideology. Like Sayyid Qutb, Mohammed Qutb claims that the non-Islamist Muslim rulers are apostates as well as the clerics and civil servants who work for them, adding more people to the apostate group and legitimating violence against them. Moreover, Mohammed Qutb used the Qur'anic term taghut to refer to these rulers, giving the excommunication a supposed religious legitimacy. As seen in Chapter 6, ISIS adopted the term taghut to refer to the rulers of the Arabian Peninsula. Another similarity between Mohammed Qutb and ISIS is that they were inspired by Ibn Taymiyya.

It is important to note that Islamist's interpretation and use of Ibn Taymiyya is probably the strongest link between Salafism and contemporary Islamist

violence. However, most literature focus on him being cited by jihadists without an actual analysis of what causes violence. For example, Ibn Taymiyya quotations are used by ISIS to convey highly intolerant views of minorities such as Shiites based on an understanding of their supposed theological deviance; however, viewing a group as theologically deviant does not necessarily lead to violence. It merely depends on the analysis one makes of what causes violence. Hence, the Salafist additions to political Islam and its politicized interpretations can be understood as contributing to contemporary Islamist violence. Moreover, in Mohammed Qutb's example, it is the politicization of the belief in the oneness of God, the belief in and pursuit of an Islamic State, that causes violence rather than the theological belief in the oneness of God.

Mohammed Qutb's Antisemitism and Tawhid al-Hakimiyya

Mohammed Qutb's antisemitism also added new ideas to Islamist thought. For example, he portrayed feminism as a Jewish conspiracy, representing a new development in Islamist antisemitism (Bosanquet 2012:47). Mohammed Qutb's antisemitism also included claims that the European industrial revolution with the division of labor and the workers' alienation from their labor has corrupted Islam's economic platform (Miller 2015:60). Regarding Mohammed Qutb's antisemitism, Miller writes the following:

Echoes of a Marxist critique ring out. These were the legacy of many a fiery treatise by Arab and Islamic theoreticians over the course of the twentieth century. [Mohammed] Qutb distorts them with a more personified *deus ex machina*: the Jew. "By financing the industrial revolution through usury," Qutb states, "the pockets of the Jews filled with gold. Thus, they bought off governments, they bought off the media, and they bought off people's consciences." Qutb's narratives of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy rooted in global capitalism provide an extended coda for his lectures and tap into currents of anti-Semitism that had long colored Muslim Brotherhood ideology. Still, Jews themselves, if the principal beneficiaries of industrial and financial systems run amuck, are not the only targets selected for blame. Those who lend support to their materialist advantage, including Muslims themselves, commit the kind of polytheism that Osama [bin Laden] would later describe as "nullifying" Islam. In his lecture "The Islamic Awakening," distributed by a Riyadh-based studio, Qutb sets the tone for ascetic disengagement from Jewish-dominated global capitalism. (2015:60)

Here, as in the chapter on Sayyid Qutb, excommunication of Muslims is based on antisemitism. More specifically, excommunication is based on "lending support to" the supposed Jewish materialist advantage. This antisemitic notion, as will be seen later in this chapter, inspired Osama bin Laden to an extremely ascetic lifestyle with almost no consumption to avoid supporting what the Sahwa regarded as a "Jewish dominated global capitalism." Furthermore, Mohammed Qutb claims that America is the first country to support the Jews (Miller 2015:60), continuing his brother's antisemitic legacy of conspiracies

about Jewish power over the US. However, Mohammed Qutb also claims that all people on earth today support the Jews except those Muslims who put his Islamism into practice in the world (Miller 2015:61).

Thus, not supporting Islamism in Qutb's view means "supporting Jews". That is, in Mohammed Qutb's view, all Muslims who are not Islamists are apostates, which is similar to his brother's view but somewhat more straightforward. Here, Sayyid Qutb's notion of a war against Islam with only two camps, one of Islamists and the other led by Jews, is clear. This notion was later adopted by ISIS as seen in Chapter 6.

It is also interesting to note that Mohammed Qutb, like his brother Sayyid Qutb, was inspired by European Marxism in his analysis of society. Moreover, it is also clear that Mohammed Qutb is inspired by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* when he claims that there is a worldwide Jewish conspiracy rooted in global capitalism. Miller elaborates on how Mohammed Qutb Islamized anti-semitism:

Jewish exceptionalism, Qutb insists, is secured not only by divine fiat, for God in his omnipotence commands all things, but by the support of America, Russia, and even Muslims themselves. In a legal and ideological idiom that I explore later in the book, Islamic reform begins by recognizing the ways in which general rules in Muslim ethics, such as the precept that, in Qutb's extremist view, all Jews are shameful, are routinely qualified through one's own actions and interpretations. As political doctrinology, Qutb's arguments launched a firestorm that would stoke the passions of students and activists for generations to come. At the King 'Abd al-'Aziz University, the message was clear: Muslims who lend support to Jews, and who cater more generally to the ideology of a New World Order underwritten by Western economic power, risk betraying Islam's basic tenet of monotheism. (2015:61)

Here, Qutb's construction of the Muslim ingroup identity and its positive distinctiveness clearly depends on the construction of the Jews as an outgroup and its imposed negative characteristics. One cannot be a Muslim, according to Mohammed Qutb, if one supports Jews. This means that antisemitism becomes the prerequisite for Muslim identity. A Muslim, who is not an anti-semite, goes against the belief in one God (tawhid); that is, Qutb added anti-semitism to the notion of monotheism.

This addition is made possible through the centrality of his concept tawhid al-hakimiyya since it claims that only an Islamist governed society is Islamic. This claim also implies that they represent God's rule on earth. The establishment of the ISIS's caliphate shows these tendencies of implementing Qutb's Islamist notion of "God's rule on earth."

Here, it is important to note that Islamists ignore Islamic values such as mercy, which is emphasized in the Qur'an. Hence, they distort the message of the Qur'an and given that they also claim to implement God's governance on earth, one can notice the tendency of Islamists actually viewing themselves as *being* God on earth, giving themselves the right to decide over life and death.

The Afghan War

In this context, it is important to mention that the Sahwa's combination of Qutbism and Wahabism inspired the Afghan jihad in the early 1990s (Weisman 2017:59). As a leader of the Afghan jihad, Abdullah Azzam, a former Muslim Brotherhood member who followed Qutb's teachings, stated that defensive jihad was an individual duty for all Muslims and that every Muslim has the right to take up arms without the permission of parents or the organization (Weisman 2017:59–60). This idea was crucial for ISIS as they commanded young people to leave their homes without their parents' permission (Roy 2017:60–63). Moreover, this goes against Islamic tradition and Salafism, where respecting one's parents is understood as a virtue.

Furthermore, ISIS told their sympathizers to attack “enemies” wherever they can, thus not requiring the organization to be directly involved in attacks. It was also during the Afghan jihad that bin Laden persuaded his ally, Zawahiri, to leave Qutb's focus on “indigenous regimes” and to target “the head of the snake”: the United States (Weisman 2017:60–61). Moreover, it is important to note that the support for the Afghan cause meant that the Sahwa members Salman Al-Awdah and Nasir Al-Omar used more explicit anti-Shia rhetoric than other supporters of the cause (Miller 2015:67). This means that once again, the Sahwa were showing that when there is a crisis, they take the opportunity to attack Shiites.

American Troops in Saudi Arabia and Excommunication

In understanding the impact of the Sahwa movement, one needs to understand their reaction to the Gulf war. In 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and brought Iraqi troops to the Saudi border. In turn, Saudi Arabia brought US troops to its country as a protection against the aggression of Saddam Hussein. The decision to have US troops in Saudi enraged the Sahwa movement and the cause became one of the movement's most pivotal stances and an important contribution to Islamist anti-Americanism. The Sahwa claimed that having US troops in Saudi Arabia goes against Islam since the country is considered holy, and the US are considered infidels (Kepel 2004:180–181). Thus, they nearly apostatized the ruling family. Here, Sayyid Qutb's influence on the Sahwa movement and Islamist ideology in the form of anti-Americanism and excommunication is evident.

Although Sahwa openly criticized the decision to have US troops in Saudi Arabia, the Wahabi clerics of the country approved of the decision (Kepel 2004:181). Furthermore, the Sahwa rejected the notion of absolute obedience to the ruler, and the Sahwa figure Salman al-Awdah urged the Saudi government to return to “true Islam” (Ismail 2016:27). He was eventually imprisoned for some time.

However, Al-Awdah was given a TV platform after his release from prison in 1990; on TV he hosted fund-raising for the families of Palestinian suicide bombers who died in the second intifada (Kepel 2004:189).

Safar al-Hawali emerged as the most outspoken anti-American Sahwa voice during the Gulf war. Al-Hawali proclaimed that “The real enemy [of Islam] is not Iraq. It is the West” (Scheuer 2011:81). Al-Hawali’s quotation was later cited in the famous article by Samuel Huntington (1993:35) where he was trying to prove his thesis about an upcoming clash of civilizations.

It is worthy to note that al-Hawali’s thesis, supervised by Mohammed Qutb, was on Qutb’s notion of hakimiyya (Kepel 2004:183). Al-Hawali preserved the Qutbist belief that hakimiyya is the supreme criterion in distinguishing between Islamic states and jahiliyya societies (world of unbelievers) (ibid). This implies that Al-Hawali excommunicated Saudi society and its rulers, as it, according to this belief, belongs to jahiliyya societies.

In September 1990, al-Hawali released an audiocassette entitled *Flee Thus to God*, which was admired by bin Laden. Miller describes the lecture in the following way:

Taking a page from the same Christian apocalyptic narratives that he denounced, most prominent among them those of the Reverend Jerry Falwell, Al-Hawali conjured up scenarios of Jesus’ Second Coming followed by battle with the Antichrist: “those Ba’athists of Iraq are our enemies for a few hours, but Rome is our enemy until doomsday.” In a sermon shortly later on Christian Zionist influences on American foreign policies toward Palestine and the Arab world, he would give more immediate urgency to the impending battle by decrying “the imposition of Israeli and American hegemony over the entire area.” [. . .] Such diatribes would later prove inspirational to bin Laden, as noted by a chauffeur who recalled him listening to Al-Hawali’s sermons on the way to interviews with Arab journalists in Afghanistan in late 1996. (2015:191)

Seemingly, al-Hawali influenced bin Laden’s world view, and between 1994 and 1999 al-Hawali and al-Awdah were imprisoned (Kepel 2004:185). In mid-1994, bin Laden said that the arrests of al-Hawali and al-Awdah were an evil crime against venerable religious leaders. Moreover, bin Laden claimed that King Fahd’s arrests of the Sahwa had been ordered by the U.S. government as part of a “comprehensive Jewish campaign [to humiliate] the Muslim people” (Scheuer 2011:96).

Given a series of terrorist attacks in Saudi and abroad, the Sahwa were eventually co-opted, for a short period, to help the royal family stifle the attacks (Kepel 2004:192). In October 2001, al-Awdah condemned the 9/11 attacks and proclaimed to be a bulwark against terrorism (Kepel 2004:189). However,

in a television interview³¹ in 2005, Salman al-Awdah claimed that the US was “the devil” and “the biggest enemy.” Thus, hateful rhetoric continued, and al-Awdah has been in prison in Saudi Arabia since 2017.

It is important to note that bin Laden’s path to militancy can be traced less to America’s military presence in Saudi Arabia starting in 1990, as is commonly asserted, than to the crackdown on al-Hawali and al-Awdah in the early 1990s (Miller 2015:203–204). According to Miller “Along with Al-Hawali, Al-‘Awdah is widely considered to have been one of Osama’s primary teachers, not least because bin Laden regularly cites Al-‘Awdah and Al-Hawali’s arrests in the early 1990s as a rationale for turning to open militancy” (2015:192).

Bin Laden’s interest in al-‘Awdah’s thought is based on his tendency to polarize contrasts between Islam’s community of the faithful and modern Western secularism under the leadership of the United States (Miller 2015: 192). The distinction between Islam as standing for faith and the rest as un-faithful is also used by ISIS. Lastly, bin Laden claims that violence against Americans is legitimate due to its hostility against the Sahwa (Miller 2015:198). Hence, the imprisonment of the Sahwa can be understood as part of the imaginary victimized ummah and the notion that violence is needed to defend it.

How the Muslim Brotherhood Shaped Bin Laden’s Militancy

Given that Osama bin Laden was the leader of al-Qaeda, the organization from which ISIS emerged, it is important to map the trajectory of his militancy. Bin Laden was a Muslim Brotherhood member close to the Sahwa, and the two scholars that bin Laden admired the most were Salman al-Awdah and Safar al-Hawali (Scheurer 2011:93). From 1996, bin Laden saw himself as an ascetic warrior dedicated to a global Islamist struggle against the US; his discourse was similar to the Sahwa one developed in the 1980s and 1990s. Since most of the Sahwa were jailed by 1994, bin Laden was the one who continued their mission (Miller 2015:9).

Muslim Brotherhood Teachers

Bin Laden acquired his first experiences with the Muslim Brotherhood ideology in middle and high school (Miller 2015:54). The teachers at his school were Muslim Brotherhood members who had fled or been exiled from Egypt and Syria. By the time bin Laden was coming of age, the Muslim Brotherhood had secured many faculty positions at important universities and had a strong influence in Saudi Arabia, where they taught “Islamic solidarity.”

³¹ See the following video at 10:08: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5w5rnehiVY>.

During bin Laden's schooling, the Brotherhood's teachings were conveyed through lessons on Islamic history and culture, lifestyle, health, and community activism (ibid). The Brotherhood also had popular extracurricular activities. In the eighth and nine grade, Bin Laden was part of an Islamic study group that shows how the Brotherhood ideology influenced his worldview and his militant asceticism (Miller 2015:55).

Bin Laden's teacher was a Syrian who taught him and the other pupils lessons and stories such as when a father did not let his son pray, the son chose to kill his father, which ultimately led to the "release of Islam in the house" (Miller 2015:56). This can be understood as part of the symbolic language that the Sahwa use, where the son's rebellion against the father is meant to teach the children to rebel against state authorities to establish an Islamic state. This symbolic language was adopted since the Sahwa were not allowed to openly preach such ideas.

Miller describes how the Muslim Brotherhood continued to influence bin Laden when he started at university in 1976:

While he began pursuing a major in either business or civil administration, he also joined private reading groups where he encountered more extremist writings. Among these were works by the thinker and essayist Sayyid Qutb, widely considered the intellectual heavyweight for modern militant Sunni Muslims, including al-Qa'ida itself, Qutb's book *Milestones* and also *In The Shade of the Qur'an* found their way into Osama's hands during his first or second year in college. Qutb's *Milestones* described Islam as a complete and organic "system" (*nizam*), a way of life (*manhaj*) that provides believers with guidance in how to eat, talk, marry, or conduct themselves piously in any other aspect of life. Vying against Islam's moral order is *jahiliyya*, wrote Qutb, a state of ignorance and barbarism marked by "rebellion against God's sovereignty on earth". (2015:57)

Here, it is important to note that bin Laden read Sayyid Qutb's *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, which is analyzed in the Qutb chapter. Moreover, Mohammed Qutb also influenced bin Laden as he, at this time, held lectures against modernism where he claimed that life was but toil, struggle, and strife. Mohammed Qutb's course on Islamic culture was a required one that bin Laden took while at the university. Furthermore, Mohammed Qutb's lectures would later feature twelve cassettes in bin Laden's Kandahar compound (Miller 2015:59). One of the lectures was entitled "Twentieth Century Jahiliyya," published in 1980. In this essay, Mohammed Qutb "repeatedly evoked Manichean contrasts between God and Satan, sincerity and treachery, the moral and perverse, Qutb blames Muslims above all for straying from the prescribed path" (Miller 2015:59). Mohammed Qutb's Manichean view of the world is dangerous since it can, according to social identity theory, lead to the belief that the outgroup needs to be defeated or destroyed as a matter of preserving ingroup virtue (Reicher et al. 2008:1336).

Sahwa Camps

Osama bin Laden was inspired by Sahwa camps where members would seek physical and spiritual distance from “the corruptions of modern society.” Miller describes this in the following way:

Seeking to claim the moral high ground, the Brotherhood began to organize “desert camps” for religious edification in the stark expanses outside major cities. Participants convened on weekends or in the summer to explore religious activism and identity in “free spaces” beyond traditional urban centers of learning. “Families” were established, each named for a famous Islamic hero, and camp recruits ran obstacle courses, played soccer, and attended lectures on the cultivation of a modern Islamic lifestyle that could deepen rather than compromise one’s faith [. . .] a central component of the Saudi camps was building an identity set apart from the rest. (2015:64)

Bin Laden was indebted to these Sahwa camps early on; around the age of 16, he wanted to put his Syrian school teacher’s lessons to use and began leading his own camps (Miller 2015:65). His first audiotape highlighted the suffering of Muslims worldwide and especially the Palestinians (ibid). Once again emphasizing the centrality of the imaginary victimized ummah in Islamist ideology and how he was influenced by Sayyid Qutb’s descriptions of it in *In the Shade of the Quran*. However, while it was outlawed in the Sahwa camps, bin Laden started military training exercises (ibid). Nevertheless, a decade later, bin Laden still claimed to represent the Sahwa movement’s ideals on the world stage (Miller 2015:65).

Moreover, the central component of building an identity set apart from the rest in the Sahwa camps can be understood as building a politicized social identity through ideological indoctrination. The hero names they used were mostly referring to warriors, which can once again be understood as a form of symbolic language. The Sahwa camps can be understood as a building stone in mobilizing people to become ideologically “mature” enough to overthrow the rulers, building on Qutb’s Leninist belief of vanguardism.

The Centrality of Opposing Muslim Regimes

Central to Bin Laden's ideas was to oppose Muslim regimes. The topics of al-Awdah’s audiotapes in bin Laden’s collection were on the need for Muslims to defend their faith against “corrupt governance within the House of Islam” rather than against non-Muslims beyond (Miller 2015:193). Like al-Awdah, al-Hawali preferred to attack “corrupt Muslim rulers” and the Saudis foremost (Miller 2015:191). Moreover, in the late 1970s, bin Laden read Mohammed Qutb’s book *Concepts That Should Be Corrected*, which argued that impious Muslim rulers must be opposed; furthermore, bin Laden also publicly recommended the book (Scheuer 2011:34).

Miller (2015:12) contests the common view that al-Qaeda was founded with the aim of preparing recruits to combat non-Muslim enemies and the United States especially. Instead, Miller suggests that al-Qaeda emerged from plans to establish the al-Faruq training camp in Afghanistan under Ayman al-Zawahiri and that the organization's aim is to support insurgencies against regimes within the Muslim world itself. To support his argument, he refers to a lecture that identifies Islam's principal enemies as Shia and Arab communists stretching from Afghanistan to the Arabian Peninsula. This understanding of terrorism has been somewhat neglected by scholars researching terrorism.

Furthermore, Miller's argument is supported by the findings of this thesis, since the Islamic State started as an insurgency against the Muslim Iraqi regime, and that ISIS mainly sees Shiites as its enemy. Moreover, ISIS founder Zarqawi spent time in Kandahar with both Zawahiri and bin Laden, who supported him in setting up a training camp there. Zarqawi also spent time in the al-Faruq training camp.

The thesis also argues that Zarqawi most likely acquired parts of his ideological training there and that the view of al-Qaeda as less anti-Shiite than Zarqawi is somewhat exaggerated. Rather, Zarqawi implemented what was always the Muslim Brotherhood's and al-Qaeda's goal: to overthrow Muslim regimes and establish a caliphate. This is also supported by bin Laden as he praised Zarqawi's actions after his death. However, it is important to emphasize that ISIS anti-Shiism is genocidal both in its words and actions.

Bin Laden's Antisemitism

Bin Laden's asceticism, a practice encouraged by the Muslim Brotherhood, meant that he did not allow refrigerators or air-conditioners at home. He would also encourage his family to drink as little water as possible (Miller 2015:63–64). This asceticism was partly based on his antisemitic belief that consumption would benefit supposedly Jewish controlled global capitalism.

In the following quotation, Miller elaborates on asceticism and antisemitism:

The virtue of asceticism proves instrumental to bin Laden's self-defense. While gesturing toward the importance of every form of struggle for protecting "what has slipped away," bin Laden urges Muslims to discipline their spending habits above all. The principal target of cost-cutting should be American-made products, especially given that proceeds from their sale go directly to "the Jews who slaughter our brothers". (Miller 2015:149)

Here, it is interesting to note that bin Laden is referring to the imaginary victimized ummah as a reason not to buy American made products. In a September 1993 speech, bin Laden claims that there is a global campaign orchestrated by America and the Jews to "deprive Muslims of the very best of what they

own” and to knock down Muslims (Miller 2015:184). This view shows the Qutbist influence on bin Laden indicating he is referring to a war against Islam.

On August 23, 1996, bin Laden released a declaration of jihad against “the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places” (Kepel 2004:185). It is known for its subtitle “Expel the Polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula.” After recalling the sufferings of Muslims due to “Zionist-Crusader” alliance upon Muslims in various countries around the world, it describes the “occupation of the Land of the Two Holy Places” as “the greatest of all these aggressions.” Thanks to the “awakening” of Islam, the aggression can be successfully repelled, according to bin Laden, citing both Salman al-Awdah and Safar al-Hawali (Kepel 2003:317–318). Hence, bin Laden is once again instrumentalizing the war against Islam conspiracy and the imaginary victimized ummah as being saved by Islamists.

In February 1998, bin Laden created the International Islamic Front against Jews and Crusaders. He announced it with a text against the “Zionist-Crusader alliance” and issued a fatwa saying that “every Muslim who is capable of doing so has the personal duty to kill Americans and their allies, whether civilians or military personnel, in every country where this is possible” (Kepel 2003:319–320). Moreover, it is important to note that, given the knowledge about the content of bin Laden’s antisemitism, the 9/11 attack against the World Trade Center most likely had an antisemitic motive since it can be understood as an antisemitic attack striking out against what bin Laden understood as “Jewish controlled global capitalism.”

Anti-Shiism and Bin Laden

Bin Laden’s anti-Shiism was most likely inspired by his close connections to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, such as his Syrian teacher. As mentioned earlier, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood politicized anti-Shiism based on their struggle against Assad. For example, in 1976, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood started an insurrection against Assad, and bin Laden worked for them by gathering donations for the insurgents (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:152). This work suggests that bin Laden had a very close connection to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood.

Miller describes bin Laden’s anti-Shiism in the following way:

As in 1989, moreover, the primary threat to Islam comes not from the United States. [. . .] The danger came instead from Muslims themselves: Shi‘a “Rejectionism” (*rafidiyya*), above all, followed by mostly Sunni Muslims who have betrayed their religion for various strains of disbelief including “communism, socialism, Ba‘athism, secularism, the Freemasons and other appellations that are misguided and destructive.” [. . .] Shi‘a Muslims, for example, is a threat not only to Saudi Arabia itself: bin Laden speaks, for example, of “their shedding of sanctified Muslim blood in the sanctified month and on sanctified land,” an assertion that might be linked to a range of events including the 1979

Shi'a protests, clashes involving Shi'a during the 1987 *hajj* season, or any number of scattered outbreaks of violence between Shi'a activists and the Saudi state that occurred during the 1980s. Worse yet, they spread their "deceptive ideas and rotten beliefs in most households across the world, from the Philippines, to Nigeria, to minority Muslims across the entire globe. (2015:165)

Here, bin Laden invokes conspiracies about power when he claims that Shiites spread their ideas in most households in the world. This notion may come from Surur, who claims that Shiites want to dominate the Middle East, as his anti-Shiite book was found in bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad. According to bin Laden, Shiites are not only a threat to Saudi Arabia but also a global threat to Muslims. It is interesting to note that bin Laden ascribes Shiites with deceptive ideas; these accusations of deceit are often used against Jews in Qutb's antisemitism. Hence, connecting deceit to Shiites might be a way to transfer antisemitic notions onto Shiites. Moreover, bin Laden invokes the imaginary victimized ummah in his construction of anti-Shiism when he portrays "Muslims" as suffering due to Shiites shedding their blood.

Hence, Shiites are also described as a physical threat to Sunni Muslims. According to social identity theory, describing the outgroup as a threat to ingroup interests or survival "creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup are directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice versa" (Brewer 1999:435–436). Moreover, in the face of intergroup threat, social identity can lead to aggression against the out-group (Merrilees et al. 2013:706). Hence, the description of the Shiite outgroup as a threat to the ingroup can lead to fear, hostility, and violence, solely based on their social identity belonging.

The Imaginary Victimized Ummah as a Motivator for Violence

The Muslim Brotherhood's influence on bin Laden can be summarized into seven categories:

1. The imaginary victimized ummah narrative;
2. Anti-Americanism;
3. Qutb's books *Milestones* and *In the Shade of the Qur'an*;
4. Sahwa Camps–Islamist identity construction;
5. Mohammed Qutb's opposition to "impious" Muslim rulers;
6. Antisemitic beliefs about world domination; and
7. Shiites as an existential and political threat.

Bin Laden invokes the imaginary victimized ummah as a motivator when he calls for violence:

In light of America's staunch advocacy for Israel despite "the loss of blood among Palestinians in Palestine and the crushing of bones among our sons'

children,” Muslims can no longer sit idly by, “a horrific silence descending upon the community.” Returning to a well-rehearsed theme since his earliest days as an Arab-Afghan volunteer, bin Laden calls his audience to arms. The urgency of defending the homeland is underscored not only by the plight of Palestinians but by what bin Laden claims to be Greater Israel’s designs on Saudi Arabia, including “Tabuk . . . Khaibar, Taima, and Bani Quraidah in [Madina]”. (Miller 2015: 197)

To justify violence, bin Laden is invoking notions about an oppression against Palestinians. Furthermore, the transition to a politicized social identity and a martial social identity is made when bin Laden first invokes the imaginary victimized ummah, creating a politicized identity. In his transition to violence, he asks people to take up arms to defend the imaginary victimized ummah, creating a martial social identity. Here, sympathizers start to identify themselves as soldiers who are “saviors” of people who share the same social identity as them.

The following quotation is from one of bin Laden’s speeches, where he asks his followers to use violence in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah in a more straightforward way:

Hence, all of us are responsible and all of us are strugglers (*mujahidun*). A man is a struggler, a young man is a struggler, a woman is a struggler; each person must do what they can—with the hands, and if this is impossible, then with the tongue, and if this is impossible, then with the heart. It is therefore incumbent that women suckle our children on the enmity of Jews and Christians. This is necessary in order to disassociate ourselves from these polytheists, the enemies of Muhammad. (Miller 2015:44)

Here, bin Laden is encouraging his audience to view themselves as warriors by adopting a martial social identity. It is interesting to note that being a warrior not only means using violence but also means a mother should teach her children to be hostile towards Jews and Christians. This further shows how important social identity constructions are for Islamist belief.

It is interesting to note that the perpetrator Mohamed Merah’s mother, similar to what bin Laden asks for, allegedly taught her children to hate Jews. Moreover, bin Laden claims that this hostility is needed in order to “disassociate oneself from them.” This can be understood as a way to prepare for violence by de-humanizing and dissociating from a supposed enemy. Lastly, bin Laden refers to the Prophet when he makes these claims, showing that he is trying to give his violent ideology a supposed religious legitimacy.

Safar al-Hawali's Contribution to Islamist Antisemitism

Al-Hawali's Distortion of Biblical Prophecies

In addition to bin Laden, Sahwa leader Safar al-Hawali was instrumental in creating the antisemitism of Islamist groups. His book *The Day of Wrath* was published a few days after the start of the Intifada in the early 2000s,³² and there are Arabic and English versions online (Reichmuth 2006:331). What al-Hawali did in the book was to engage with Christian and Jewish apocalyptic literature, and he challenged the view that the Biblical prophecies predict the final victory of Israel over its neighbors. Instead, al-Hawali argued, they can be read as indications of the violent end of Israel and its allies (Reichmuth 2006:336–337).

Al-Hawali makes the claim that Christians and Jews are united by their hate of Muslims (Fandy 1999:75), and his main point in the book is that the Biblical prophecies show that the state of Israel and the United States will be defeated by Muslims, resulting in the annihilation of Israel (Reichmuth 2006:346). By using the Bible to attack Israel and the US, al-Hawali “testif[ied] to a new stage of the sacralisation of political language in the Middle East” (Reichmuth 2006:331). Thus, the Sahwa contributed to a war narrative using new interpretations of Biblical prophecies. Therefore, al-Hawali also contributed to new antisemitic notions.

Constructing Jewish Identity as Violent and Impure

In *The Day of Wrath*,³³ al-Hawali portrays Jewish identity as violent and impure:

If discussing the criminal characteristics and behavior of the Jews is anti-Semitic, as the Zionists claim, then the most anti-Semitic book on earth is the Bible itself. If we gather together all the curses which the churches pronounced upon the Jews, the narratives about them in world literature such as Shakespeare and Dickens, and asked all the poets of the Arab world to put together a compendium of defamatory poetry against them, if we gathered all that together in one volume, it would not equal or even close to what is found in the Old Testament. [. . .] The entire Old Testament—not only Daniel—describes the identity of the abomination in a space of many chapters. [. . .] As for the reprehensible attributes ascribed to them in the Bible, they are innumerable. They

³² I have not found the exact date for when the book was published, therefore, the references only include page numbers.

³³ Link to the book: https://www.kalamullah.com/Books/Day_of_Wrath.pdf.

include every blameworthy behavior without exception. However, there is one attribute that is repeated like a refrain in every book of the Bible, much to the reader's astonishment. His astonishment only increases because of the fact that this attribute should be the last one used to describe a people who claim to be God's chosen based on this same book. This attribute is uncleanness or impurity. It is an uncleanness comprised of blood, barbarity and violence, accompanied by excuse-making and boasting, an uncleanness of the essence, which nothing can purify. (p.87)

Here, al-Hawali refers to the Old Testament and the Bible in his antisemitic descriptions of Jewish identity. First, al-Hawali's description is essentialist since he claims that the negative characteristics that he ascribes to Jews are inherent and cannot change. Furthermore, he imposes criminal characteristics onto Jews. This demonstrates the stage of portraying the outgroup as a threat against the ingroup, which is part of building hate (Brewer 1999) and in justifying violence (Reicher et al. 2008).

Moreover, Jews are referred to as impure and unclean, comprised of blood, which indicates that al-Hawali is referring to the blood libel. By describing Jews as violent, al-Hawali is constructing an outgroup as an existential threat against the ingroup. According to social identity theory, the belief that an outgroup constitutes a threat to ingroup interests or survival "creates a circumstance in which identification and interdependence with the ingroup are directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening outgroup and vice versa" (Brewer 1999:435–436). Moreover, al-Hawali claims that this is an uncleanness of the essence that cannot be purified. Here, al-Hawali is constructing the outgroup in a completely essentialist manner. Like Qutb, these negative characteristics are seen as part of the essence of Jewish identity.

Conspiracy of Jewish World Domination and Control over the US

In this quotation, al-Hawali also claims that "Zionists" want to control the Islamic world:

These changes themselves only came as a result of the fundamental cause of the changes, the Zionist plan for world domination, especially in the Islamic world. (p.21)

Here, al-Hawali is using notions from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to claim that Jews have a plan to control the world and extends the conspiracy to Muslims by claiming that Jews want to dominate the Islamic world. Thus, it shows that al-Hawali politicizes Jewish identity by connecting it to a will to dominate the world. Moreover, in this quote, Al-Hawali is saying Zionists, however, in other parts of the book, he does not distinguish between Jews and Israel. Hence, Zionism, for al-Hawali, represents "the collective Jew" and his use of Zionist and Jew should be understood as being used interchangeably.

Al-Hawali extends the conspiracy of a Jewish world domination to the United States by claiming that Jews control the American government as well as the American economy, media, and politics. According to al-Hawali, Jews use Christian American presidents such as Bush to control the United States. Hence, it becomes evident that, in Islamist thought, the US and Christians are seen as tools for Jews.

Here, al-Hawali elaborates on the belief that Jews control the United States:

They always control the puppet from behind the curtain. If they appeared on the stage, they would be exposed and the magic would be gone. They are careful to adopt every American president and they also plan his downfall should he contradict him, but they cannot and will not even consider having a Jewish president and an openly Jewish government. (Now they have nominated a Jewish vice-president). Another matter which disturbs the Jews of the State of Israel is that it is not within the capacity of blind Jewish greed to remain within the confines of the Biblical land of milk and honey, while the region as a whole contains oil and gold. (p.24)

Al-Hawali believes that Jews control the American presidents and that a Jewish president is not appointed to hide the fact that Jews allegedly control the United States. Moreover, Jews are portrayed as greedy, a common antisemitic accusation, and once again Jews are accused of wanting to expand and take over Muslim countries by claiming that Israel “the land of milk and honey” is not enough for Jews, they allegedly also want to expand and control other countries in the Middle East containing oil and gold. Hence, Jews are once again portrayed as a threat to Muslim societies survival.

Using the Bible to develop Essentialist Antisemitic Notions

Al-Hawali’s book sometimes focuses on the different political negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis, such as in Madrid, Oslo, and Camp David II. These negotiations are used to develop his antisemitic beliefs. For example, al-Hawali claims that there is no Jew who wants to have peace and that there are no “hawks” and no “doves” among Jews. Furthermore, he claims that these are strange terms that have no equivalent in other countries:

In Jewish logic those whom they call hawks and those whom they call doves, compete against each other in zealotry, excess, crookedness, and delay. They oppose each other, yet they are both the same. They are not two sides of the same coin; either party can be either side. Thus, Jews are Jews. There are no hawks or doves. The single permanent factor, whether in war or peace, in government or in opposition, is the Jewish belief system and psyche, which has not lost its particular characteristics since ancient times. This is attested by the books of the Bible, which have been collected over many centuries [. . .]. (p.8)

Al-Hawali claims that Jews are the only existing community with no internal differences; that is, he believes all actions by Jews are derived from the supposed Jewish belief system and psyche. This shows al-Hawali's extreme social categorization of Jewish identity into not just a simple stereotype but the most stereotyped group.

According to social identity theory, this type of social categorization into a de-personalization of an outgroup can enable violence, in this case, against Jews. As Sageman suggests, a de-personalization combined with a reduction to a stereotype can lead to an outgroup's dehumanization (Sageman 2017b:8). Moreover, it has been argued that this is a necessary mechanism of moral disengagement, which rationalizes political violence (ibid). Here, it is important to emphasize, as Reicher et al. does, that the perniciousness of essentialist ideology lies in claims about the threat an outgroup's "nature" has on the ingroup.

Accordingly, this type of essentialism can lead to the outgroup being viewed as an existential threat since "their nature" implies that the outgroup has characteristics that are inherently evil and impossible to change. Ultimately, when the ingroup represents good and the outgroup evil, the ingroup is given a reason to defeat the outgroup, and, when necessary, destroy the outgroup as this becomes a matter of preserving virtue, a logic that is central to all modern forms of terror according to Reicher et al. Therefore, al-Hawali's antisemitic beliefs can be understood as part of a logic of terror that can lead to antisemitic violence and genocide.

The Imaginary Victimized Ummah

Al-Hawali also uses new antisemitism when narrating the imaginary victimized ummah:

To the impudent, hard-hearted persons who aim their bullets at children, who break the hearts of mothers, and who expose the true face of Israel: the 'abomination of desolation,' through their atrocities and barbarism. From those of ancient times to these of modern times, they have not changed their nature. They have not refined their behavior, and their punishment will be no different. (p. 27)

Here, al-Hawali's uses the old antisemitic accusation of Jews being child murderers. Moreover, he claims that it is the "true face of Israel"; thus, antisemitic notions of evil are transferred onto Israel.

Al-Hawali's description of Palestinian children as suffering under "the atrocities and barbarism" of Israel can be understood as expanding on Sayyid Qutb's imaginary victimized ummah narrative by adding an old antisemitic belief. The difference is that al-Hawali refers to the Bible as his source in his predictions even though there are some similarities that make it seem as if Qutb used Christian-inspired antisemitism in his development of Islamist antisemitism.

Here, al-Hawali is also using the imaginary victimized ummah in his construction of Islamist antisemitism. Moreover, his mention of a punishment against “the oppressors” alludes to the notion of *ressentiment*, and the belief that the war against Islam conspiracy requires an activated martial social identity that will “defend” or “punish” the “offenders.”

The Sahwa Movement’s Influence on ISIS

Sururism

In addition to Mohammed Qutb and Safar al-Hawali, Mohammed Surur is a well-known Sahwa Islamist ideologue. Surur lived in exile in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, London, and Qatar as a former Syrian Muslim Brotherhood key figure belonging to the Sahwa movement. He wrote one of the most influential political anti-Shia books *Here Come the Zoroastrians (Wa ja’a Dawr al-Majus)* in the 1980s³⁴ (Moghadam and Fishman 2010:207). Kazimi (2006:56) and Moghadam and Fishman (2010:207) have suggested that Surur’s anti-Shia book has influenced ISIS’s founding father Zarqawi. Although written under the pseudonym Abdallah al-Gharib, it is well-known that Surur wrote the book, and he has also confirmed it.³⁵

Surur combined the organizational methods and the political worldview of the Muslim Brotherhood with the theological puritanism of Salafism. His branch of the Sahwa has been called Sururism (Moghadam and Fishman 2011:207). Specifically, in his teachings, Surur combined Salafist theological anti-Shia thought with the revolutionary concepts of the Muslim Brotherhood as worked out by Qutb (Steinberg 2014:120–121). Hence, the movement was given a political frame with Qutb’s teachings.

In his book, Surur polemized against the Iranian Revolution and warned against Shiite domination of the Middle East. His writings played a significant role in modernizing and popularizing anti-Shiism by adding ethnic and political aspects (Kindawi 2020:44). Surur’s anti-Shiism has been described in the following way:

In contrast to anti-Shī‘a thoughts from the Wāhhābīs and Salafīs viewing Shī‘ism as a deviant sect, Surūr expressed a more political version of anti-Shī‘ism, including doubt about the aspirations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its alliance with the “‘Alawī Syrian regime.” The political context of his homeland of Syria, and especially the repression experienced by the Muslim Brotherhood under the Nusayri (‘Alawī) Syrian regime, clearly informed this

³⁴ I have not found the exact date for when the book was published, therefore, the references only include page numbers.

³⁵ In this interview, Surur talks about being the author of the book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtnX4jeZMDw>.

anti-Shī'ī treatise. In the book, Surūr argued that the Iranians, like their Persian ancestors, sought to control the region with the help of the Arab Shī'īte, whom Surūr saw as a “fifth column”. (Kindawi 2020:44–45)

Here, Kindawi makes an important point when he emphasizes that Wahabists and Salafists mainly view Shiism as a deviant sect, which can be understood as a theological interpretation ultimately leading to what can be called Shiophobia. What Surur did in his book was to politicize anti-Shiism by connecting it to the governments in Iran and Syria. Moreover, Surur claims that Arab Shiites want to control the region with Iran based on them being Shiites, indicating a politicization of Shiite identity.

Surur also uses notions of political expansion and domination in his description of Shiites similar to how Qutb describes Jews. Hence, Surur's description of Shiites can be understood as a transfer of the antisemitic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* onto Shiites. Since bin Laden also did this in the late 1980s, after the book was published, he may have been inspired by Surur's book. Moreover, it is crucial to note Surur's description of Arab Shiites as a fifth column since Arab Shiites are the main targets of ISIS violence in Iraq.

Surur faced some challenges printing his book. In the beginning, the book was banned across the entire Arab world. However, the book eventually gained the acceptance of the Wahhabi establishment, who used it to show their stance against the Iranian revolution (Kindawi 2020:46). This led to the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia lifting the ban on the book in the Kingdom and buying 3000 copies (Kindawi 2020:46).

After the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, the book gained more popularity and influenced other anti-Shiite ideologues who saw the Shia as a political threat; subsequently, the ban on the text was lifted in most countries (Kindawi 2020:47). It is important to note that Surur's book became a bestseller already in the 1980s (Moghadam and Fishman 2010:207). Thus, Surur had a profound role in introducing and establishing a politicized anti-shiism.

Surur and anti-Shiism

Surur's book is called *Here Come the Zoroastrians (Wa-jā'a dawr al-Majūs)*³⁶ and has not, to the best of my knowledge, been translated into English. Thus, the following quotations from the book are translations from Arabic to English. The term *majūs* means Zoroastrians, and in the early Islamic period, it translated as “fire-worshippers” (Kazimi 2006:56). Surur used the term in a derogatory way against Shiites.

Surur's book has been described in the following way:

³⁶ Link to the book:
https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-com-pound/65/651AEC7506A36C4E7111850D5C48B676_11.pdf.

The work draws on a long history of anti-Shi'a polemics and adds political analysis of the Iranian revolution to arrive at the conclusion that Shi'a and Iranians have from the earliest times been nefarious enemies of Sunni Islam and the Arabs. Its blend of theological and historical argumentation, as well as contemporary political analysis, has been the fodder for a number of Salafi-jihadi ideologues and thinkers, most notably Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and his erstwhile mentor the Palestinian Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. (Moghadam and Fishman 2011:188)

Like Qutb and ISIS, Surur blended theological and historical argumentation with a contemporary political analysis. In his book, Surur accuses the Shia of trying to dominate the Middle East, starting with the 1979 revolution in Iran (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:145). Moreover, he accuses Shiites of cursing the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (Kindawi 2020:53). Chapter 6 shows that ISIS also accused the Shia of cursing the Sahaba (the Prophet's companions), a rather common anti-Shiite accusation.

In his book, Surur also criticizes Shia for their practice of taqiyya (dissimulation of the real religious belief and practice in the face of persecution) (Kindawi 2020:53). This is similar to ISIS's claim about Shiites faking Islam, as mentioned in Chapter 6. Moreover, Surur claims that modern Shia are more dangerous to Islam than the Shia of the past (Kindawi 2020:53). Most of these theologically inspired accusations are from the Salafist belief.

It has been argued that Surur's anti-Shiism has paved the way for intensified "sectarian" extremism in many parts of the Middle East such as Iraq, Syria, and Yemen (Kindawi 2020:62). Thus, one can suggest that the movement that politicized anti-Shiism is the Sahwa movement where Surur's book *Here Come the Zoroastrians* has an essential role. However, it is important to emphasize that Shiite extremist Islamist groups have also politicized Shiite and Sunni identity to promote violence and mobilize people in these wars.

Surur's Book

In *Here Come the Zoroastrians*, Surur starts by describing how Shiites and their different branches, according to him, run "their" politics. Furthermore, he claims that all Shia sects are devious through their practices. Surur's anti-Shiism will be presented and analyzed in the following quotations from the book.

Use of Historical References in the Construction of Anti-Shiism

In *Here Come the Zoroastrians*, Surur makes the following claim:

Rāfidah looks at Muslims and Arabs from a hateful lens for no reason other than destroying the Persian empire. History is a good witness to their collaboration with infidels against Sunni Muslims. (p. 222)

Here, Surur accuses Shiites of hating “Muslims” and Arabs. By “Muslims,” Surur refers to Sunni Muslims, indicating that he excommunicates Shiites from Islam. Moreover, he uses the history of the Persian empire to claim that Shiites of today hate Muslims and Arabs. That is, Surur applies historical events to modern times to promote hate, a common technique used by ISIS and Qutb, as seen in Chapters 6 and 7. Furthermore, Surur politicizes Shiite identity by connecting it to the Persian Empire. Moreover, Surur accuses Shiites of collaborating with “infidels” against Sunni Muslims. This shows that Surur is constructing a social identity of the ingroup Sunni Muslims as the true Muslims, whereas Shiites are viewed as a hateful outgroup.

Surur gives a more detailed account of what he is referring to when he says that Shiites have collaborated with infidels against Sunni Muslims:

Christians have used them [Shiites] in their crusades, and they volunteered to fight Muslims on the shores of al-Sham. The Fatimide did what they could to instill crusaders in Egypt, and some of the Shia leaders offered their areas to the crusaders without a fight in some regions of al-Sham. (p. 222)

Here, Surur claims that Christians have used Shiites in “their crusades.” Thus, this might be the historical event that Surur is referencing. However, Surur does not offer any evidence for his claims. By accusing Shiites of participating in the crusades, Surur builds a narrative of them as treacherous and participants in the “war against Islam.”

Moreover, Surur uses Rafidah and Shia interchangeably. Surur’s accusation was also directed against Shiites by ISIS, as found in Chapter 6, in *Dabiq* Issue eleven (p.17), ISIS claims that “The Rafidah” cooperated with the Crusaders against the Muslims. Hence, there is a similarity in how Surur and ISIS portray Shiites and its relation to the notion of a war against Islam where Shiites are given a prominent role as an outgroup aggressor. This indicates that ISIS might have been inspired by Surur’s book.

The Notion of an Eternal Enmity

Surur makes the following claim:

They [Shia] are servants for the enemies of Islam in all eras and places, and it’s delusional to have good thoughts about them, and I believe that the Shia of today is worse than their predecessors. (p. 222)

Here, Surur creates a situation of eternal enmity similar to what Qutb did to Jews. He does so by claiming that Shiites are servants for the enemies of Islam “in all eras and places.” Thus, by politicizing Shiite (enemy) identity, Surur is essentializing Shiite identity, indicating an eternal enmity. Eternal enmity claims are dangerous since they imply that there can be no co-existence. Moreover, by claiming that Shiites of today are even more dangerous, Surur is further strengthening this eternal enmity.

These notions can be exploited for political purposes; as mentioned earlier, Brewer suggests that a perceived common threat from an outgroup increases ingroup cohesion and loyalty since appeals to ingroup interests have greater legitimacy than appeals to personal self-interest. Thus, a process of politicization of identities, such as Surur's construction, can contribute to a positive correlation between ingroup love and outgroup hate. Moreover, when a war narrative is included in the politicization of identities and ingroup members adopt a martial social identity, violence is made possible.

The Muslim Brotherhood Struggle in Syria and its Anti-Shiism

The following quotation shows how Surur framed the Islamist struggle against the ruling Assad family in Syria in terms of anti-Shiism:

Nothing in their creed stops them from any taboos; their belief in Taqiyya made them the most lying nation, their belief in Muta'a made most of them fornicators/adulterers. Their rudeness towards the Prophet's companions made it easy for them to curse the believers and slander them. So, what creed do you think that Rifa'at Al-Assad and his likes were raised to follow? (p. 223)

Here, Surur starts by mentioning some of the most common theologically inspired anti-Shiite notions: belief in Taqiyya (thus liars), muta'a (a form of temporary marriage), animosity towards the Prophet's companions (here, Surur takes it a bit further and claim that Shiites curse "believers"). Next, Surur asks a rhetorical question about the beliefs that Rifat al-Assad was raised to follow.

Rifat al-Assad belongs to the current ruling family in Syria, an Alawite family. Alawites are often seen as a branch of Shiism. Hence, Surur refers to Shiism, but in the book, he also uses Nusayris (more specific reference to Alawites) interchangeably with Shia and Rafidah.

Rifat al-Assad is the younger brother of Hafez al-Assad, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's father and president from 1971 to 2000. Rifat was accused of participating in the Hama Massacre against the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in 1982 (Daou 2021). This might explain why Surur uses his name here, to use a person whom Islamists despise in order to give an example of "evil connected to Shiism." As mentioned earlier, the Hama Massacre became a trauma in the collective memory of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. In addition, Surur connects theological prejudices with political anti-Shiism by first noting how theologically-deviant Shiites allegedly are and then by linking Assad to the Shia "creed." Hence, Assad, a member of the ruling Syrian family, and his evil is being linked to all the negative stereotypes that exist against Shiites, indicating that his political actions derive from it. Ultimately, this shows the essentialization of Shiite identity.

As seen in Chapter 6, ISIS also accused Shiites of being liars and cursing the Prophet's companions. Surur frames the struggle against the Assad family

in terms of anti-Shiism. However, by doing so, he is also politicizing Shiite identity.

Shiites as Wanting to Destroy Islam and Muslims

In Chapter 11, Surur continues to mention the “Nusayyriyon”:

They are in control of the Sham area and plan to destroy Islam and Muslims whenever they have an opportunity. They are also cooperating with Israel, Iran, and the United States. Muslim scholars of old and contemporary times ruled by consensus that this is an infidel sect. (p. 85)

Here, Surur refers to Syria when he says, “Sham area.” He claims that, in this case, Nusayyriyon (Alawites) are planning to destroy Islam and Muslims. Moreover, he politicizes Alawite identity by claiming that they cooperate with Israel, Iran, and the United States. He goes on to say that Alawites are infidels. The accusation of Shiites wanting to destroy Islam and Muslims is significant since it, once again, implies that they are an existential threat to Muslims.

Furthermore, this accusation was also used against Jews by al-Hawali. As Reicher et al. (2008:1331) notes, what counts in these violent ideologies is not simply what “they” are like, but rather what “their nature” means for “us.” When the outgroup is described as an existential threat, it can lead to a violent struggle between two groups where only one group can survive a supposed existential threat. Hence, the description of the outgroup as a threat can lead to violence and genocide. Moreover, Surur is expanding on the war against Islam conspiracy by including Israel, Iran, and US as allegedly cooperating with Alawites, a notion that was later transferred onto Iraqi Shiites by ISIS.

Shiites and Jews Working Together in the War Against Islam

Surur also addresses Iran’s supposed complicity in the war against Islam:

The rulers of Teheran are more dangerous to Islam than Jews. [. . .] They will cooperate with the Jews in fighting the Muslims. Those who are plotting against Iraq, the Gulf, Lebanon, and Syria will not fight Israel. (p. 374)

This notion is similar to what was found about ISIS’s worldview in Chapter 6. Here, Surur claims that “[t]he rulers of Teheran” are more dangerous to Islam than Jews. However, ISIS claimed to refer to Shiites, whereas Surur’s quotation refers to Iran’s leaders. Next, Surur claims that Iranian leaders will cooperate with Jews in fighting “the Muslims.” This accusation indicates that Surur believes in a war against Islam where Jews are involved, like ISIS and Qutb, which ultimately means that (Shiite) Iranian rulers become a threat to Muslim survival.

He claims that they are plotting against Iraq, the Gulf, Lebanon, and Syria but will not fight Israel. Here, Surur uses enmity against Israel to prove his

hatred for Iranian leaders. Moreover, in the first sentence, Surur uses Jews to prove that Iranian leaders are more dangerous than Jews. This can be interpreted as a way to use antisemitic beliefs to discredit an enemy. As seen in Chapter 6, ISIS uses antisemitism as a way to discredit their enemies. In *Dabiq* Issue 11, ISIS makes a similar claim about Iran and Jews by claiming that Iran is tolerant of Jews. Thus, tolerance towards Jews becomes a way to discredit a (Muslim) enemy.

This last quotation is from chapter three in Surur's book. There, Surur claims that Shiism started with the goal of weakening Muslims. In that belief, he mentions Ibn Saba:

Abdullah Ibn Saba'a the Jew and his helpers stood on the side that said Ali was the rightful leader. Since then, the Jewish conspiracies and the malicious plots of the Majoosiah joined forces against Islam and Muslims. (p. 56)

Here, Surur refers to Ibn Saba as being a Jew to discredit Shiites, which is identical to the findings on ISIS discussed in Chapter 6. Furthermore, Surur claims that "majoosiah" and the Jews have, ever since the inception of Shiism, joined forces against Muslims. Majoosiah refers to the ancient religion Zoroastrianism, here used as "fire-worshippers." Moreover, Surur uses it to refer to Shiites.

Here, Surur is clearly referencing the war against Islam as understood by Qutb, where Jews are viewed as the aggressors. However, like ISIS, Surur also adds the element of Shiites as political enemies. Thus, one can suggest that Surur influenced ISIS leader Zarqawi when he outlined ISIS genocidal anti-Shiism. As Sageman has shown, the politicization of identities and a war narrative may lead to political violence. In this case, Surur politicizes Shiite and Jewish identity and places it in the context of an ongoing war. Thus, one can suggest that Surur contributed to the intellectual foundation for the ISIS genocide of Shiites.

Muslim Brotherhood Incitement to Terrorism in Iraq

Surur inspired ISIS founder Zarqawi's genocidal anti-Shiism. However, to understand how this came about, it is important to briefly mention the trajectory of Zarqawi's anti-Shiite ideas and their connection to violence. First, Iraq did not have a notable al-Qaeda presence before 2003 (Miller 2015:4). However, Zarqawi, a Palestinian-Jordanian founder of ISIS, left his training camp in Kandahar, where he was with bin Laden and Zawahiri, al-Qaeda leaders at the time, to establish al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Zarqawi's arrival to Iraq meant recurring suicide bombings directed against the Iraqi civilian population, Americans, and more often against the Shiite civilian population. Moreover, the Sahwa chose to indirectly support Zarqawi by supporting "the resistance" against US occupation in Iraq. Zarqawi's

ultimate goal was to establish an Islamic state in Iraq through the chaos of the civil war he was hoping that his group's suicide bombings would lead to.

The Sahwa issued a declaration where they claimed that the US objective in the Iraq war was to “destroy the Muslim identity of the region and replace it with American culture” and “occupy the region with more war and unrest to protect the security of Israel and destroy the Palestinian uprising” (al-Rasheed 2006:94). Here, it is interesting to note that the Sahwa are referring to the Iraq war in terms of wanting to destroy a Muslim identity, revealing the centrality of identity constructions in their way of thinking.

Moreover, the Sahwa also seem to believe that Israel had a leading role in the Iraq War and that it somehow had to do with the Palestinian cause, once again showing Islamist beliefs in antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Furthermore, leading Sahwa members asked the Saudi government and the established religious scholars to issue a fatwa supporting violent resistance in Iraq. Al-Rasheed describes it in the following way: “Throughout the Iraqi crisis, the official Saudi religious establishment refused to give religious legitimacy to resistance in Iraq” (al-Rasheed 2006:94). The Sahwa were disappointed at the answer from several religious scholars who declared that violence against civilians in Iraq is not permissible from an Islamic point of view (ibid).

In November 2004, 26 religious' scholars, mostly Sahwa members, issued a statement legitimizing violent resistance against the US in Iraq by calling it *jihad* (ibid). The list included Safar al-Hawali, Salman al-Awdah, Nasir al-Omar, Sulayman al-Rushudi, Said al-Ghamdi, and Awadh al-Qarni (ibid). This supports the argument that politicized violence was promoted by the Sahwa and that parts of the Wahabi establishment, in this case, stood against violence. The declaration included the following statement:

It is not allowed for any Muslim to harm any of the men of the resistance, report on them, or harm any of their family or children. On the contrary, the obligation is to support them and protect them. [. . .] It is forbidden to give any support or help to military operations executed by the soldiers of the occupation, as that will constitute a help for aggression. (PBS, 2005)

Point eight in the declaration reads as follows:

There are invisible hands trying to kindle the fire of conflict and to tear down Iraq into different factions. They stimulate internal conflicts between Shia and Sunna or between Arabs and Kurds. Such internal war, people from each fraction get drawn to, is an evident harm and a free service to the Jews who are sneaking in to Iraq and to the coalition forces that use conflict to strengthen their hold. (PBS, 2005)

Here, the Sahwa implemented Qutb's vision through incitement of violence, and it had violent consequences for the Iraqi people and the trajectory of terrorism in the world. It is interesting to note how the Sahwa invokes *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* by claiming that Jews are somehow "sneaking" into Iraq, once again using antisemitism as a means to construct an outgroup identity that is supposedly a danger to Muslim ingroup identity.

Here, one can note that several of the leading Sahwa figures who incited hatred against Shiites now claim that others are doing so and are warning against it; however, it seems that this warning is not based on wanting to unite Muslims but rather on strategically uniting them against the US and the "invisible" supposed Jewish infiltration of Iraq. Hence, the wish for unity is based on anti-Americanism and antisemitism. Moreover, in 2005, the highly influential Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Yusuf al-Qaradawi advocated for suicide bombings in Iraq and Palestine by claiming it is an Islamic duty (Barnett 2005). The fact that the most influential Muslim Brotherhood ideologue advocated for suicide bombings had profound consequences for the level of violence against civilian Israelis and Iraqis. Moreover, al-Qaradawi had millions of viewers on the Aljazeera television channel, which made his views widespread.

On December 7, 2006, 38 Saudi clerics and Islamic preachers signed the Declaration to Stand against Shia and American Aggression in Iraq. This declaration was signed by and published on the websites of Salman al-Awdah and Safar al-Hawali. The clerics urged all Sunni Muslims to unite against the Shia in Iraq and to provide support for the "Sunni cause" by all appropriate means (Ismail 2016:186). This shows that the declaration of Muslim unity that they gave two years earlier was indeed not genuine and that they continued promoting the anti-Shiite beliefs that they had endorsed since the 1980s. However, this time it was in a war situation where terrorists were killing civilian Shiites.

Furthermore, Nasir al-Omar, affiliated with the Sahwa movement, attacked Iraqi Shiites based on the "strong relationship between America and the Rāfi-dah" and claimed they were both enemies of Muslims (Jones 2005:24). In an essay, Nasir al-Omar wrote that Muslims need to resist the US invasion of Iraq with means such as "military confrontation, economic pressure, and social and psychological force" (al-Rasheed 2006:93). Moreover, this shows how the Iraq war further deepened a politicization of Shiite identity as it was linked to the US.

The Anti-Shiism of the Sahwa Movement

The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood constructed Shiites as a political enemy primarily because they were fighting the Syrian Assad regime, which is Alawite, often seen as a branch of Shiism (Steinberg 2014:118). In Saudi Arabia, Sahwa affiliates, Ibn Jibrin and Nasir al-Omar were also promoting hatred against Shiites:

Ibn Jibrin declared in October 1991 that the Shiites were guilty of apostasy and deserved death. Although not going that far, in May 1993 Nasir al-'Umar published a report, *Situation of the Heretics in the Country of Tawhid*, in which he called for banning the practice of Shiism in Saudi Arabia and the exclusion of all Saudi Shiites from any position of power or influence in the kingdom's administrative bodies. (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:183)

Moreover, in a series of tweets, Nasir al-Omar, with a following of 1.8 million, declared that “[i]t is the responsibility of every Muslim to take part in the Islamic world’s battle to defeat the Safawis and their sins and to prevent their corruption on earth” (Siegel 2015:11). Al-Omar also posted a video saying to Saudi men in a mosque that their “brothers” in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen were fighting a holy war against the “Safawis” (Siegel 2015:11).

Here, it is important to note the use of the term “Safawis,” as seen in Chapter 6, was also used by ISIS against Shiites. The use of the term Safawi can be understood as a politicization of Shiite identity, which becomes connected to Iran. Moreover, al-Omar is also referring to the imaginary victimized ummah when he is describing the war against Islam as being in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

The Sahwa leader Salman al-Awdah’s antisemitism and anti-Shiism have been expressed in many of his sermons. For example, al-Awdah rejects any peace process between Arabs and Israelis and claims that its purpose is “reorienting the Arab and Islamic mind toward the Jews and the relations with them” (Fandy 1999:111).

Similar to Qutb, al-Awdah claims that those who promote tolerance and a peace process are agents who work against Islam (ibid). Moreover, al-Awdah claims that normalization would mean “the removal of verses from the Qur’an that are hostile to Israel” and that “attempts to remove statements hostile to Israel from school curricula is a step toward changing Islamic texts” (Fandy 1999:111–112). This shows how al-Awdah falsified and used Islam in order to spread antisemitic ideas.

Al-Awdah’s anti-Shiism became evident when he called on Saudis to pressure the Saudi government to cleanse the country from non-Muslims and to expel the “Rafidah” from Saudi Arabia, that is, to expel Saudi Shiites living

in the Eastern province of their country (Fandy 1999:101). The reason for this is that they, according to al-Awdah, pollute Islam (ibid). Moreover, Fandy (1999:4–5) suggests that since Shiites are a minority in Saudi Arabia, they might not constitute a threat unless they are linked to Iran. This is the politicization of Shiite identity that Surur implemented.

Hassan (2018) makes the following suggestion:

The Islamic State's extreme ideology can be viewed as the product of a slow hybridization between doctrinaire Salafism and other Islamist currents. Many of the extremist religious concepts that undergird the Islamic State's ideology are rooted in a battle of ideas best understood in the context of Saudi Arabia's *Sahwa* (Islamic Awakening) movement in the 1970s, and a similar movement in Egypt, as well as in other countries. In those countries, the interplay of Salafi doctrinal ideas and Muslim Brotherhood-oriented political Islamic activism produced currents that still resonate today... In Saudi Arabia and in Egypt, the marriage of traditional Salafism and political Islam produced new forms of Salafism that were influenced by, and critical of, both movements. Political Islam became more conservative and Salafism became politicized. In many instances, Salafi concepts were substantially reinterpreted, appropriated, and utilized by a new generation of religious intellectuals who started to identify with a new movement. In Saudi Arabia, the *Sahwa* generation moved away from the Najdi school, the adopted name for the Wahhabi clerical establishment. The practice of *takfir*, or excommunication after one Muslim declares another an infidel or apostate, became increasingly prominent, first during the 1960s in Egypt and then after the first Gulf War in the 1990s when veterans of the jihad in Afghanistan began to apostatize Saudi Arabia for hosting and supporting Western troops to fight Iraq's then leader, Saddam Hussein. (Hassan 2018:6)

Hassan suggests that the *Sahwa* influenced the Islamic State's ideology. The impact was based on Salafi concepts being reinterpreted. This is what Mohammed Qutb did with Ibn Taymiyya's teachings, as mentioned earlier. Moreover, Hassan notes the impact of excommunication of Muslims, which has been applied to Shiites by ISIS. ISIS displayed their anti-Shiism to a worldwide audience in the form of their propaganda in English, which reached a large audience.

One well-known anti-Shiite figure was the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood ideologue and Qutbist Said Hawwa. Moreover, Hawwa was politically in line with *Sahwa* norms (Lacroix and Holoch 2011:125). Steinberg (2014) demonstrates how Hawwa views Shiites and Israel as collaborators against Islam:

In fact, the picture painted by Hawwa closely resembles that presented by anti-Shi'i treatises after 2003. While Hawwa was obviously motivated by his hatred for what he considered to be an Alawi regime in Syria, he tries to convince his audience that there is a wider cooperation between the Shi'is and "the enemies of Islam" like the regime of Hafiz al -Assad and the state of Israel. His treatise has influenced anti-Shi'i writers and activists in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq ever since. (Steinberg 2014:120)

This alleged cooperation between Syria and Israel relates to Qutb's notion of a war against Islam. However, Hawwa adds Shiites as an enemy collaborating with Israel. Moreover, when Hawwa claims that al-Assad collaborates with Israel, anti-Shiism and antisemitism are used in a narrative about the supposed enemies of Islam. Similarly, Surur used the narrative of Alawite Assad and Israel working together against Muslims, which may have inspired Hawwa. Hawwa's worldview is another example of the politicization of Shiite identity.

Hassan comments about the connections between Sahwa and ISIS anti-Shiism:

Many of the clerics that the Islamic State cites to justify its anti-Shia ideology come from the *Sahwa* generation or are otherwise associated with the *Sahwa* movement. These include Ibrahim al-Fares, Muhsin al-Awaji, Mohammed al-Barrak, Hamoud Al-Omari, Mohammed Al-Nojaimi, Saad Al-Durhim, and their contemporaries from Egypt and elsewhere, such as Omar Abdulrahman, sometimes known as "the Blind Sheikh." These clerics tend to be particularly outspoken against Shia. Al-Fares, for example, wrote extensively about Shia as an "emblem of treason," and once quoted Ibn Taymiyyah as saying: "The origin of all sedition and calamity is Shia and their allies, and many of the swords unleashed against Islam come from them." Some of these clerics, however, notably Mamoud al-Omari, emphasize that while they deem Shia as a sect to be deviant, violence against Shia civilians is unacceptable, in contrast to Islamic State doctrine. In the Islamic State, Turki al-Binali, from Bahrain, who was confirmed dead in an American strike in eastern Syria in June 2017, was second to Al-Anbari in terms of influence. according to an online biography, al-Binali is a disciple of Salman al-Awda, a prominent figure in Saudi Arabia's *Sahwa*. al-Binali claims that the two were close before Al-Awda started to "deteriorate" or become more moderate. Al-Binali has been associated with Hajjaj Al-Ajmi, an activist Salafi Kuwaiti cleric known for his fundraising activities for radical rebel groups in Syria. Al-Binali has also been influenced by Abdul-Aziz al-Tarifi, a well-known Saudi cleric from the *Sahwa* generation, who was arrested by Saudi authorities in April 2016. (2018:15)

Hassan suggests that ISIS has been influenced by the anti-Shiism of several clerics from the Sahwa movement. Furthermore, he also claims that the Sahwa used ibn Taymiyyah in their anti-Shiism, just like ISIS. However, he also shows that there are disagreements on how to treat Shiites. For example, al-Omari calls Shiites a deviant sect while claiming that violence against Shia civilians is unacceptable. In comparison, ISIS promotes violence against civilian Shiites. Here, al-Omari distinguishes between civilians and political actors. Thus, he does not politicize Shiite identity within a war narrative. This is similar to the current Salafi stance, which views Shiites as theologically deviant, while the Sahwa, for the most part, has also viewed them as a political enemy.

Altogether, the emergence of the Islamic State and its ideology depends on the Sahwa's rewritings of Qutb's ideology, which includes concepts such as

hakimiyya, which became tawheed al-hakimiyya, the war against Islam. Whereas Qutb mainly focused on Jews, the Sahwa also included Shiites as aggressors in the war against Islam, and the imaginary victimized ummah was reworked by Sahwa to include the Syrian people suffering under the Shiite Assad and the Sunni people of Iraq suffered under American occupation and the US-installed Shiite government. Moreover, notions of world domination, used by Qutb against Jews, were transferred onto Shiites by claiming that Shiites want to rule the world via Iran (sometimes in cooperation with Israel).

Conclusion

This chapter adds to the knowledge of the causes of Islamist antisemitic violence by demonstrating how the Sahwa movement is the missing link between Qutb's antisemitism and ISIS antisemitism. Chapter 7 demonstrates that Qutb Islamized antisemitism within a war narrative. Moreover, Qutb's writings inspired the Sahwa ideology regarding the notion of a war against Islam and his brother's, Mohammed Qutb, mediating role. Chapter six found that a significant part of ISIS antisemitism was about Shiites being undercover Jews and transferring antisemitic notions onto Shiites. This chapter shows that the Sahwa movement politicized Shiite identity within a war narrative and that it worked as an inspiration for ISIS's founding father, Zarqawi, in his genocidal anti-Shiism. Hence, the Sahwa were inspired by Qutb, they politicized anti-Shiism, and inspired ISIS anti-Shiism. Surur politicized Shiite identity by connecting it to the governments of Iran and Syria and claiming that they work with Israel to destroy Islam.

This chapter answers the fourth research question in the study: How can the antisemitism and anti-Shiism of the Sahwa movement explain the recent development of ISIS antisemitism and genocidal anti-Shiism from a social identity perspective? This chapter suggests that ISIS's anti-Shiite identity construction originates from the Sahwa movement, that Surur played a crucial role in this identity construction, and that it is interconnected to antisemitism. Moreover, this chapter shows that events such as revolutions, conflicts, and wars actualized and amplified parts of Islamist ideology.

The Interconnectedness of Antisemitism and Anti-Shiism

There are certain similarities between the antisemitism and anti-Shiism of Islamists groups that are worth emphasizing since it is partly the transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites that have led to contemporary violence against them. First, Sayyid Qutb makes use of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* when he claims that Jews want world domination. This notion of world domination politicizes Jewish identity. The Sahwa, mainly Surur, transferred the antisemitic notion of world domination onto Shiites by claiming that Shiites

spread their ideas worldwide and aim at controlling the Middle East. Hence, the Sahwa politicized Shiite identity. It is important to note that the Sahwa also adopted and developed Sayyid Qutb's antisemitic beliefs.

So far, both Jewish and Shiite identity has been politicized. However, the politicization of the Islamist ingroup is also based on the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah. Whereas Qutb claims that Islam suffers mainly due to Jews, the Sahwa added Shiites to the oppressors of Islam. Moreover, whereas Qutb accuses Jews of wanting to destroy Islam and Muslims, the Sahwa made the same accusation but also added Shiites to the category. Qutb claims that Jews are conducting a war against Islam, and the Sahwa added Shiites to the category. Hence, there is a construction of a politicization of religious identities within a war narrative, which can activate a martial social identity; this is when violence can occur according to social identity theory.

While Jews were portrayed as eternal enemies to Muslims and Islam by Qutb, the Sahwa added that Shiites were also an eternal enemy to Muslims and Islam. This is related to the essentialist notion that both Qutb and Sahwa have of Jews as well as of Shiites, hence, since the negative characteristics supposedly cannot change, there is only eternal enmity left. This notion is especially dangerous since it can lead to genocidal tendencies and acts.

Table 16. Similarities between Islamist Antisemitism and Anti-Shiism

1) Political threat–World domination
2) Wanting to destroy Islam and Muslims–Evil
3) Deceit
4) Religious deviousness
5) Blood libel
6) Conducting the war against Islam
7) Oppressing the imaginary victimized ummah
8) Eternal enmity

Mohammed Qutb's Transformation of Muslim Identity as Dependent on Antisemitism

Mohammed Qutb not only preserved his brother's antisemitic writings but also developed Islamist antisemitic thought. The most remarkable addition to Islamist antisemitism that Mohammed Qutb added was that the practice of Islam through believing in the oneness of God (tawhid) and the definition of a Muslim identity, is dependent on antisemitism. Qutb constructed the ingroup Muslim identity in relation to the outgroup Jewish identity and its imposed

negative characteristics. Hence, one cannot be a Muslim according to Mohammed Qutb if one supports Jews. This means that antisemitism becomes the prerequisite for Muslim identity. A Muslim, who is not an antisemite, goes against the belief in one God; therefore, Qutb took the notion of monotheism and added antisemitism. This was made possible due to his concept of tawhid al-Hakimiyya. His brother Sayyid Qutb emphasized excommunication based on an alliance with Jews, while Mohammed Qutb added the concept of monotheism.

New Criteria for Excommunication and Anti-Americanism

Sayyid Qutb's criterion for excommunication was mainly based on antisemitism and can be divided into three categories:

- 1) Excommunication based on categorizing Muslims as Jews;
- 2) Excommunication based on an alliance with Jews and Christians; and
- 3) Excommunication based on a transfer of antisemitic beliefs onto Muslims.

Mohammed Qutb and the Sahwa movement added three more categories:

- 4) Excommunication of Muslims on the basis of them being connected to the US and the US supposedly being controlled by Jews.
- 5) Excommunication based on not believing in an Islamic state, Mohammed Qutb's addition based on the concept of tawhid al-hakimiyya. A Muslim who supports Jews goes against the belief in the oneness of God (tawhid).
- 6) Excommunication based on "lending support" to Jews such as through consumption of American goods, which allegedly supports Jews in oppressing Palestinians and a supposed Jewish dominated global capitalism.

In all these six categories, excommunication of Muslims is grounded in antisemitism. Moreover, Islamist anti-Americanism was, to a large extent, developed by Sayyid Qutb. However, it was the Sahwa movement that established and implemented it in everyday society. In addition, this anti-Americanism also inspired bin Laden's terrorist attack against the World Trade Center.

The Sahwa movement Islamized opposition to the US by claiming that the American troops could not be in Muslim Lands (Saudi Arabia) during the Gulf War. This anti-American notion of Americans not being allowed to be on Muslim land did in turn lead to terrorism after the US invasion of Iraq and terrorist attacks against the US troops and civilians and Iraqi civilians. Terrorism in Iraq was conducted by ISIS founder Zarqawi and his followers,

supported by bin Laden, and ultimately led to the declaration of an Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. This means that these specific ideas have incited militants to use violence.

Mohammed Qutb's Tawhid al-Hakimiyya as Inspiration to ISIS

One overlooked factor in understanding the emergence of ISIS is the importance of the development of Islamist thought that Mohammed Qutb contributed with, especially the concept of a duty of opposing Muslim rulers and tawhid al-hakimiyya. First, opposing Muslim rulers entails rebellion against them; second, tawhid al-hakimiyya entails establishing an Islamic State, which is what ISIS did when they established its caliphate by occupying rather vast parts of Iraq and Syria.

ISIS's pursuit of an Islamic State was partly made possible through the notion of jahiliyya and tawhid al-hakimiyya; an Islamic state was seen as necessary since Muslim rulers are considered apostates and only an Islamist State represents and defines Islam, according to Islamists. This thought would not have been popularized without Mohammed Qutb's reworkings of his brother's books and the Sahwa movement's contributions to Islamist thought.

The politicization of Shiite and Muslim identity, the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah, and the war against Islam conspiracy made ISIS emergence possible and helped mobilize people to fight for the ISIS cause. With tawhid al-hakimiyya, Mohammed Qutb has most likely inspired jihadist violence and groups, and he may also be one of the most important Islamist ideologues. Nevertheless, he has still not been recognized as such by scholars.

Sahwa's Contributions to ISIS Ideology and Practice of Violence

The Sahwa directly encouraged violence in Iraq; what they called "the resistance" was ultimately the group that eventually came to be known as the Islamic State. In many ways, ISIS's emergence and violence can be understood as the result of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology.

The emergence of the Islamic State and its ideology depended on the Sahwa's rewritings of Qutb's ideology, which includes concepts such as hakimiyya, which became tawheed al-hakimiyya, the war against Islam. Whereas Qutb mainly focused on Jews, the Sahwa also included Shiites as aggressors in the war against Islam, the imaginary victimized ummah was reworked by Sahwa to include the Syrian people suffering under (Shiite) Assad, and the Sunni people of Iraq suffering under American occupation and the US-installed Shiite government.

Moreover, notions of world domination, used by Qutb against Jews, were transferred onto Shiites by claiming that Shiites want to rule the world via Iran (sometimes in cooperation with Israel).

Table 17. Sahwa’s Contribution to ISIS practice of Violence

- | |
|---|
| 1) Tawhid al-Hakimiyya-
A Politicization of Muslim identity |
| 2) The war against Islam–Jews and Shiites as existential
threats to Muslims. |
| 3) The imaginary victimized Ummah–
Suffering under “Shiite” Iraqi and Syrian rule |
| 4) Notions of Jewish and Shiite world domination–
A Politicization of religious identities |

The Steps in the Construction of Genocidal Anti-Shiism

What the Sahwa did was take Qutb’s politicized practice of excommunication and apply it to Shiites in their struggle against Syria’s ruling family. Later, this politicization of Shiite identity became further politicized and connected to Iran after the Islamic revolution. The Sahwa directed their anti-Shiism against Saudi Shiites, and it was later adopted by ISIS who committed mass violence and genocide against Shiites in Iraq, who were linked to the US.

Moreover, ISIS turned anti-Shiism into a central tenant of jihadist groups. Table 18 shows the characteristics of the Sahwa movement’s anti-Shiism.

Table 18. The characteristics of the Sahwa movement’s Anti-Shiism

- | |
|--|
| 1) Shiites participate in war against Islam- destroy Islam |
| 2) The struggle against Iran and the Assad family |
| 3) Assad, Iran, and Israel alliance against Muslims |
| 4) Shiites have always fought Muslims (eternal enemies) |

The application of social identity theory results in the following model of the steps involved in the construction of genocidal anti-Shiism:

Table 19. The Steps in the Construction of Genocidal Anti-Shiism–Sahwa

-
- 1) The Claim that Shiites want to destroy Islam

 - 2) The Claim that Shiites are conducting a war against Muslims

 - 3) The Ascription of essentialist evil onto Shiites

 - 4) Calls for violence against Shiites in defense of the imaginary victimized Ummah

Surur’s anti-Shiism centered on connecting Shiites to the governments of Syria and Iran, and claiming their wish to dominate the region and to destroy Islam. Moreover, Surur placed Shiites in a category of unique evil, just like ISIS did.

It is important to note that the politicization of religious identities is a natural outcome of Islamists viewing religion as governance. As Mohammed Qutb and Islamists view governance as the definition of Islam, the belief in it or not also determines whether one is Muslim.

In the case of Jews and Shiites, this way of thinking means that Islamists cannot logically distinguish between Jews and Israel or Shiites and Iran and Syria, since politicized identities are what defines one’s religion, according to this belief.

In summary, the Sahwa movement politicized Shiite identity by connecting it to the governments of Iran and Syria. Moreover, the Sahwa movement’s anti-Shia ideologues inspired ISIS leader Zarqawi in his genocidal anti-Shiism. However, the Salafist, or Wahabist, element in Sahwa contributed to intolerant anti-Shiite notions based on creed, nevertheless, Salafism is mainly apolitical. Thus, if political violence has its roots in the politicization of identities within the framework of a war and an activated martial social identity, as suggested by Sageman, then the element of political Islam, in the form of Qutb and Sahwa, is what causes antisemitic and anti-Shiite violence.

9. Concluding Discussion

Introduction

The thesis begins with a claim that the research on Islamist antisemitism is in need of an analysis of its causes and origins. In this thesis, I demonstrate how antisemitism has been Islamized by Sayyid Qutb, which inspired the Sahwa movement to develop a politicized anti-Shiism. Furthermore, the thesis argues that the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood in the form of Qutb and the Sahwa inspired the Islamic State in its antisemitism and anti-Shiism. Moreover, the perpetrators of the most significant Islamist antisemitic attacks in Europe are analyzed. The main feature in Islamist antisemitism, from Qutb to Sahwa to ISIS is the notion of an ongoing war against Islam, an imaginary victimized ummah, and a politicization of religious identities.

This thesis aims to study the causes and origins of Islamist antisemitic violence from a social identity perspective. The empirical findings in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 addressed this aim. Moreover, the social identity perspective suits this aim since it contributes to an understanding of how intergroup hostility and violence depend on the construction of different social identities.

In this concluding chapter, I summarize the empirical findings. The summary is followed by a discussion of the major points of the thesis: Sayyid Qutb's antisemitism; the Sahwa movement's antisemitism and anti-Shiism; ISIS's antisemitism; the function of the war against Islam conspiracy; the function of the imaginary victimized ummah; the Islamist antisemitic excommunication of Muslims; Islamist antisemitic violence and social identity theory; the non-religious origins of Islamist ideology; the transfer of genocidal antisemitism onto Shiites; and a reflection on the lack of research on Islamist antisemitism and anti-Shiism. Subsequently, there will be a discussion about the political

implications of the findings of the study. Finally, the thesis will end with some concluding remarks.

This chapter addresses the four research questions:

1. How can the violence of the Islamist perpetrators of the most well-known contemporary terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe be understood from a social identity perspective?
2. How can the antisemitism in ISIS magazine *Dabiq* be understood from a social identity perspective?
3. How can Qutb's construction of Islamist antisemitism be understood from a social identity perspective?
4. How can the antisemitism and anti-Shiism of the Sahwa movement explain the recent development of ISIS antisemitism and genocidal anti-Shiism from a social identity perspective?

A Summary of the Empirical Findings

Two main findings are made visible through the content analysis of ISIS propaganda: the war against Islam conspiracy is central to Islamist antisemitism, and ISIS's antisemitism is interconnected to its anti-Shiism. The war against Islam conspiracy was developed by Qutb, who divides the world into two camps: an Islamist one and a Jewish one that supposedly conducts this war.

Drawing on the findings on ISIS, I explore the origins of Islamist antisemitism by analyzing how Qutb Islamized antisemitism and how the Sahwa movement developed Qutb's antisemitism and added politicized anti-Shiism to Islamist ideology. That is, notions originating from Qutb's genocidal antisemitism have been transferred onto Shiites by the Sahwa and later adopted by ISIS, which ultimately led to the ISIS genocide against Shia Muslims in Iraq.

The main findings of the study are listed below:

1. *The war against Islam conspiracy.* Islamist antisemitism is based on a binary world view that claims that the world is divided into a Jewish camp and an Islamist camp, where the Jewish camp is supposedly conducting a war against Muslims.
2. *A politicization of religious identities.* Islamist ideology politicizes Jewish and Shiite identity by connecting them to evil and world domination and the alleged actions of governments such as Israel.
3. *Muslim identity as either victimized or martial.* Islamist ideology politicizes Muslim identity by dividing it into two categories: a victimized social identity and a martial social identity.
4. *The imaginary victimized ummah.* The victimized social identity is represented by the notion of an imaginary victimized ummah. The imaginary victimized ummah is based on the claim that Muslims worldwide are suffering due to the war against Islam. This notion politicizes Muslim identity by appealing to the emotional significance of a shared social identity.
5. *Violence in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah.* Islamist ideology promotes a martial social identity where Muslims ought to view themselves as soldiers, using violence against Jews and Shiites in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah.
6. *A transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites.* The Sahwa movement politicized anti-Shiism and transferred antisemitic notions onto Shiites, which ultimately led to ISIS genocide against Shiites.
7. *Islamist antisemitic excommunication of Muslims.* Islamist excommunication of Muslims is largely based on antisemitism since it excommunicates Muslims on the basis of association with Jews and by transferring antisemitic notions onto them.

The findings on Islamist antisemitism demonstrate that Jewish and Shiite identities have been subjected to an other-imposed politicization by Islamist ideology by claiming it is participating in a war against Islam, from Qutb, who politicized Jewish identity, to the Sahwa movement, which politicized Shiite and Jewish identity and built on Qutb's ideology and antisemitism. Therefore, the origins of ISIS's antisemitism and anti-Shiism can be traced to Qutb's and the Sahwa movement's Muslim Brotherhood ideology.

Moreover, this ideology, starting with Qutb and the Sahwa, has politicized Muslim identity by claiming that it suffers in the form of an imaginary victimized ummah in the war against Islam and that Muslims need to defend it by using violence against Jews and Shiites. It is when a politicized identity starts to view itself as a soldier and adopts a martial social identity that the risk of violence occurs (Sageman 2017a:144-145).

The main argument of the thesis is that the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative leads to violence. This means that killing civilian supposed political enemies becomes part of what Islamists understand as a defensive action in the war against Islam. Chapter five concluded that the perpetrators believed in an ongoing war against Islam and that their violence was part of it. They politicized Jewish identity and their own identity within a war narrative; thus, they adopted a martial social identity. All of the perpetrators had been radicalized in prison, and some of them had committed their attacks only a few weeks after leaving prison.

Previous research has focused on the networks created in prison and how they contribute to recruitment to extremist groups. However, this study suggests that there is also an element of social death embedded in the prison experience, which makes politicized identities easier to adopt. The findings demonstrate that the perpetrators go through a self-categorization process into a politicized social identity and a martial social identity and that they created an other-imposed political identity onto Jews and, in some cases, Shiites. In addition, *ressentiment* also plays a role in Islamist antisemitism since it entails attaching blame to imaginary “powerful Jews” who are held responsible for the sufferings of the imaginary victimized ummah.

Chapter 6 was informed by ISIS’s antisemitism. The conspiracy theory about a war against Islam was the most common category in ISIS’s antisemitic propaganda. The war against Islam conspiracy shows that ISIS has several main enemies they claim are conducting a war against them: the Shiites (who are seen as undercover Jews); the Jews; the US/crusaders/Christians; and the Muslim rulers in the Gulf countries.

The findings suggest that violence against Shiites and Jews will continue even after ISIS territory is gone. ISIS has continuously attacked civilian Shiites; one attack took place at a market in a Shia-dominated area in Baghdad on July 19, 2021, killing at least 35 people and injuring 60. Moreover, on May 8, 2021, a Hazara Shiite girl school in Kabul, Afghanistan was targeted with explosions, killing at least 68 people and injuring 165 (Ochab 2021). Most of the

victims were schoolgirls. No group took responsibility for the attack, but ISIS-affiliated groups have targeted Hazaras.

Chapter 6 also demonstrates that ISIS uses antisemitism to discredit and excommunicate its Muslim enemy rivals. The transfer of antisemitic notions onto Shiites by ISIS can be understood as a genocidal strategy; by transferring an already established genocidal antisemitism onto Shiites, a rationalization of killing Shiites becomes possible.

Moreover, Chapter 6 demonstrates that ISIS quotes the Qur'an selectively, mainly al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120, to justify their antisemitism. ISIS interprets these verses selectively to justify their violent goals, while other interpretations place these verses in an historical context and not applicable to contemporary issues. Here, it is important to emphasize that Islamists also add the antisemitic conspiracy theory of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to their Qur'an interpretations in order to claim that there is an ongoing war against Islam led by Jews. Chapter 6 also points towards Islamism as a totalitarian ideology striving to establish an Islamist system that requires complete subservience to its ideology and an Islamic State.

Equipped with this new understanding of ISIS antisemitism and its notion of a war against Islam and anti-Shiism, Chapter 7 studies how the same themes were used in Sayyid Qutb's writings as previous research shows that he has a crucial role in Islamizing antisemitism. The analysis of Qutb's writings demonstrates that the main feature of Islamist antisemitism is the idea of a war against Islam and that this idea primarily originates from Qutb's use of the antisemitic conspiracy theory in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* combined with a politicized interpretation of the Qur'an verses al-Maidah 51 and al-Baqarah 120. Qutb integrated the notion of a war against Islam into his interpretation of the Qur'an in the same verses that ISIS later used for antisemitic purposes. However, there is a missing link between Qutb's antisemitism and ISIS's antisemitism, including genocidal anti-Shiism. Previous research has suggested that the Sahwa, a group mainly following the Muslim Brotherhood ideology that added and reinterpreted Salafi concepts, has politicized anti-Shiism.

Chapter 8 builds on the suggestion that the Sahwa ideology, influenced by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood's anti-Shiism, laid the foundations for ISIS's genocidal anti-Shiism by politicizing Shiite identity. Thereafter, the focus is on the crucial role of Mohammed Surur in politicizing anti-Shiism. Surur claims that Shiites participate in the war against Islam and are eternal enemies to Islam, transferring antisemitic notions onto Shiites. Furthermore, the results show that Safar al-Hawali developed Islamist antisemitism by adding an analysis based on a distortion of Biblical prophecies.

The results also demonstrate that Sayyid Qutb's brother, Mohammed Qutb, played a crucial role in the Sahwa movement and that he preserved and developed Sayyid Qutb's work by adding Salafist concepts. Accordingly, Qutb's work influenced al-Qaeda. This chapter also shows that ISIS's founding father, Zarqawi, was influenced by the anti-Shiism of key figures from the Sahwa movement.

Bringing these findings together, the analysis points to contemporary Islamist antisemitism and anti-Shiism as originating from political Islam, adding certain Salafist beliefs to it, and its interconnected politicization of Jewish and Shiite identity. Moreover, the ideology of Islamist antisemitism constructs a politicized and martial social identity as a prerequisite for being a Muslim. Together, the results demonstrate that the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative leads to antisemitic and anti-Shiite violence.

Sayyid Qutb, Antisemitism, and Violence

Sayyid Qutb's Islamism is mainly based on two concepts: jahiliyya and hakimiyya. Qutb categorized modern Muslim societies as living in an age of un-Islamic ignorance (jahiliyya) and that Muslims can only fulfil their religion through an Islamic state (hakimiyya), which represents God's governance on earth. This belief popularized the excommunication of Muslims, especially Muslim rulers, and is now a significant part of Islamist ideology and practice. Among Islamist groups, the excommunication of Muslims is used to justify deadly violence against them. However, excommunication (takfir) has mainly been studied from a theological point of view; this study adds to the understanding of Islamist excommunication by showing how it is also based on antisemitism.

The main contributions of the Qutb chapter are:

- Qutb developed the war against Islam conspiracy using a combination of a literalist understanding of the Qur'an verse al-Maidah 51 (Muslims should not ally with Jews and Christians) and the beliefs of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Jews are evil and striving for world domination) to claim that there is an ongoing war against Islam that Jews are "the chiefs" of. This finding points to a politicization of Jewish identity, portraying it as evil, striving for world domination, and wanting to destroy Islam. Christians are part of this conspiracy, sometimes called the "Zionist-crusader war against Islam," but they are mostly seen as proxies for Jews.
- Qutb developed the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah based on the belief that (Sunni) Muslims worldwide are suffering under the war against Islam. The strength of the imaginary victimized ummah narrative

is that it is built on emotional manipulation that appeals to the shared social identity of the imaginary victimized ummah (as Muslims) and Muslims who feel affinity for them. Hence, Muslim identity became victimized by Qutb, who also required that Muslims, based on their identity, defend the imaginary victimized ummah through violence. This suggests that Muslim identity was split into two categories: victims and soldiers.

- Qutb developed three new categories of excommunication of Muslims based on antisemitism:
 1. Excommunication based on categorizing Muslims as Jews;
 2. Excommunication based on having an alliance with Jews and Christians; and
 3. Excommunication based on a transfer of antisemitic beliefs, such as evil and striving for world domination, onto Muslims.
- Qutb politicized Muslim identity by claiming that Muslims will eventually have to fight in the war against Islam. Hence, a martial social identity was constructed as a prerequisite for Muslim identity, and Muslim identity became dependent on a struggle against Jews

Qutb's construction of Islamist antisemitism can be understood as an identity construction where the world is made of a Muslim identity suffering due to a war that Jews are mobilizing. This implies that what causes antisemitic violence in his ideology is a politicization of Jewish identity that connects it to world domination and evil.

In contrast, Muslim identity is constructed as suffering, politically and individually, and as a martial social identity that will have to violently defend the imaginary victimized ummah in the war. Furthermore, Qutb describes Jews as inherently evil and as wanting to destroy Islam. Moreover, according to Qutb, the war against Islam is eternal, and the antisemitic characteristics attributed to Jews are inherent; thus, conflict cannot be solved naturally. This essentialization contributes to making Qutb's ideology genocidal. Qutb's ideas were eventually preserved and further developed by the Sahwa movement.

Sahwa's, Antisemitism, Anti-Shiism, and Violence

The Sahwa movement is a Qutbist one, belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood ideology. The Sahwa believe in Qutb's idea of a war against Islam being led by Jews but added Shiites to the list of its enemies. Moreover, the Sahwa also believe in the imaginary victimized ummah, which they describe as suffering

under Assad, the US, and Iraq. Their anti-Shiism is also influenced by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood's struggle against Assad.

The Sahwa movement's anti-Shiism politicized Shiite identity by connecting it to the regimes in Iran, Syria, and Israel. Moreover, the Sahwa gave indirect religious legitimacy to Zarqawi's violence against Americans and Shiite Arabs in Iraq, where Iraqi Shiites were targeted, through suicide bombings, for allegedly collaborating with the US.

The main contributions of the Sahwa chapter are listed below:

- The Sahwa movement transferred Qutb's antisemitic notions onto Shiites and politicized Shiite identity mainly with the characteristics of evil and striving for world domination. Hence, Shiites became part of the aggressors in the war against Islam and its victims, the imaginary victimized ummah.
- The Sahwa also politicized Shiite identity by connecting it to the governments of Iran, Syria, and Iraq (and the US and Israel). Hence, what these governments allegedly do is not only their responsibility but also the Shiites' responsibility. That is, the Shiites, a religious group, are being politicized and becoming targets of Islamist violence in retaliation for what governments supposedly do against the imaginary victimized ummah in the war against Islam. This same Islamist logic and practice are applied to Jews by holding them responsible for the alleged actions of Israel.
- Mohammed Qutb's hybrid between political Islam and Salafism changed the meaning of what it means to be a Muslim (believing in the oneness of God; monotheism) by adding Islamic governance and its interconnected antisemitism as a criterion to the belief in monotheism. Mohammed Qutb called this concept tawhid al-hakimiyya. Thus, Muslim identity, according to Islamists, became dependent on believing in Islamist governance and antisemitism by the claim that Islamist governance and antisemitism should be viewed as an integral part of the belief in monotheism. This reworking of his brother's Islamist governance belief (hakimiyya) by adding monotheism to it can be understood as an appeal to Salafists. Here, it is important to emphasize that this concept of tawhid al-hakimiyya is Mohammed Qutb's Islamist invention and does not have support in Islamic scriptures.
- The Sahwa added three more criteria to Islamist excommunication of Muslims based on antisemitism:

1. Excommunication of Muslims based on them being connected to the US, and the US supposedly being controlled by Jews;
2. Excommunication based on not believing in an Islamic state, Mohammed Qutb's addition based on the concept of tawhid al-hakimiyya claiming a Muslim who supports Jews goes against the belief in the oneness of God (tawhid) by not being loyal to an Islamic state. Monotheism was added since Islamists believe that Islam can only exist through an Islamist state.
3. Excommunication based on "lending support to Jews," such as through consumption of American goods, which allegedly supports Jews in oppressing Palestinians and a supposed Jewish-dominated global capitalism.

ISIS Antisemitism and Violence

ISIS adopted Qutb's understanding of the war against Islam as being mobilized by Jews. However, they also adopted the Sahwa movement's belief that Shiites are also aggressors in this war. Furthermore, the imaginary victimized ummah was also part of ISIS's war narrative. ISIS also adopted Qutb and the Sahwa's belief that Jews control the US.

The main difference is that ISIS declared the Islamic state that the ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb and the Sahwa, developed in theory.

Moreover, ISIS made use of Qutb and the Sahwa movement's politicization of religious identities in ISIS recruitment and as a tool in their use of violence. Hence, ISIS was inspired by both Qutb and the Sahwa movement. Specifically, the ISIS Shia genocide was based on Sahwa's transfer of politicized antisemitic notions onto Shiites combined with Salafist beliefs about Shiites supposed theological deviance.

The main contributions of the chapter on ISIS antisemitism are listed below:

- Antisemitism and anti-Shiism are at the core of ISIS ideology and use of violence.
- ISIS antisemitism is mainly based on the belief that there is an ongoing war against Islam that Jews and Shiites are mobilizing.

- ISIS antisemitism draws from distorted politicized interpretations of the Qur'an and the Gharqad Tree Hadith.
- ISIS believes that Shiites and Jews want to destroy Islam and that they together with the *Dajjal* (the anti-Christ) will fight Muslims at the doomsday.
- ISIS draws on both Qutb and Sahwa in their excommunication by claiming that Muslim rulers in the Gulf are controlled by the US and Jews and therefore are infidels and should be overthrown.
- ISIS's antisemitic violence is based on the politicization of Jewish and Shiite identity, who are portrayed as aggressors in the war against Islam. Muslim identity is politicized by claiming that the victims, the imaginary victimized ummah, need to be defended through violence. Hence, ISIS also constructs a Muslim martial social identity. This notion is identical to Qutb's; the difference is that ISIS added Shiites to it via the Sahwa and that they implemented Qutb's ideas by using violence against Jews and Shiites. Hence, ISIS can be understood as those who implemented the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood.
- ISIS anti-Shiism has led to a genocide against Shiites where antisemitic notions were transferred onto Shiites. They claim that Shiites want to destroy Islam, that Shiites seek world domination, and that Shiites are conducting a war against Islam, that Shiites are evil, and that Shiites should be defeated through violence in defense of the imaginary victimized ummah. Moreover, Shiites are also viewed as undercover Jews by referencing a religious historical narrative about ibn Saba, which is common among Salafists.
- The analysis of ISIS's antisemitic perpetrators in Chapter 5 found that their terrorist attacks against Jews in Europe were partly seen as a retaliation for "Palestinian children killed by the Israeli military" and French participation in operations in Afghanistan. The mention of killings as retaliation for Palestinian children demonstrates that the ideology considers Jewish children in Europe to be connected to the state of Israel's alleged actions. Thus, Jewish identity is politicized and placed within the ideological framework of a war against Islam, while the perpetrator is politicized by the notion of the imaginary victimized ummah. He also adopts a martial social identity by considering himself a soldier; the war against Islam conspiracy makes this way of thinking and violent actions possible.

The Function of the War Against Islam Conspiracy

The war against Islam conspiracy functions as an overall world view of Islamist groups. The findings in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 show that the main feature of Islamist antisemitism is the notion of a war against Islam. This worldview is binary and based on the belief that the world is divided into two groups: the Jews against the Muslims. It automatically politicizes religious identities.

The notion of a war against Islam portrays the outgroup as an existential threat to the ingroup's survival and it has the function of being a mobilizing factor, and it can be strengthened whenever there is an ongoing political conflict. Moreover, the imaginary victimized ummah narrative is an integral part of it. In addition, the war against Islam conspiracy is based on a combination of Qutb's interpretation of the Qur'an verse al-Maidah 51 and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, creating antisemitic notions that were later transferred onto Shiites by the Sahwa and ISIS.

The findings in the Qutb chapter demonstrate that the war against Islam conspiracy is based on the following beliefs:

- Muslims have always suffered from Jews;
- Jews want to lead Muslims away from Islam;
- Jews want to destroy Muslims;
- Muslims who disagree with Islamists are considered Jewish agents and therefore must be excommunicated;
- Muslim identity depends on a struggle against Jews;
- Violence against "unjust" Muslim rulers; and
- Victimhood as an ingroup virtue.

The findings in the ISIS chapter demonstrate that the war against Islam is based on the following constructions:

- Hate against outgroups; Jews and Shiites;
- Islamist excommunication of Muslims;
- Identification with the imaginary victimized ummah;
- The politicization of religious identities—antisemitism and anti-Shiism; and
- A martial social identity that defends the imaginary victimized ummah.

The Function of the Imaginary Victimized Ummah

The imaginary victimized ummah narrative is part of the war against Islam conspiracy; it represents the victims in the war against Islam. The imaginary victimized ummah leads to a politicization of identities since a process of

politicization begins with the awareness of shared grievances (as Muslims); the second step is that an external enemy is blamed for these grievances.

Hence, the outgroup is portrayed as an existential threat to ingroup survival. In the case of Islamist violence, Jews and Shiites are viewed as external enemies and aggressors, and the victimized group represents the grievances of Muslims. In the imaginary victimized ummah narrative, this sense of shared social identity as Muslims, with its emotional significance, is supposed to awaken a sense of wanting to defend “one’s people” violently. Therefore, the politicization of Muslim identity is two-fold: Muslims as victims and Muslims as defenders.

The imaginary victimized ummah consist of the following elements:

- Eternal victimization by the war against Islam led by Jews and Shiites;
- Victims of “unjust” Muslim rulers;
- Often includes Palestinians and the Palestinian cause;
- Intended to appeal to the emotional significance of a shared social identity;
- Activates a politicized social identity;
- Creates mobilization for a martial identity viewed as saviors/defenders;
- Victimhood is seen as an ingroup virtue; and
- The outgroup is viewed as an existential threat to ingroup survival.

It is important to note that to call this phenomenon the imaginary victimized ummah does not mean that there is no suffering or oppression among Muslims; instead, it suggests that certain sufferings are being exploited and manipulated or fabricated by Islamists.

The imaginary victimized ummah is based on an exaggeration of victimhood and a simplification of reality where there is only one victimized group and one aggressor group where all identities are politicized. The imaginary victimized ummah narrative has the potential to encourage violent acts since it appeals to an identification with victims through a shared social identity within a war narrative.

Another feature of the imaginary victimized ummah is that violence from these groups is sometimes understood as a legitimate consequence of their victimhood, even by non-Islamist actors. Here, a sanctification of the victimized group suggests that moral standards, such as non-violence, are not to be expected. When violence in the name of victimhood is legitimized, in the name of justice, the victimized groups are not held to the same standards of humanity as others. Their violence is often seen as inevitable due to their alleged circumstances, which gives the false impression that a people cannot lose power or go through oppression without using violence. The main problem with this way of thinking is that it neglects the ideological motivations of the violence being used by “victimized” groups and those who claim to fight for them.

These assumptions are often based on a sanctification of victimhood, which is a tendency among many contemporary groups claiming to work for social justice. Nietzsche described this victimhood way of thinking by saying that people who hold *ressentiment* “sanctify *revenge* with the term *justice*—as though justice were fundamentally simply a further development of the feeling of having been wronged—and belatedly to legitimize with revenge emotional *reactions* in general, one and all” (Nietzsche and Diethel 2017:48).

The Muslim Brotherhood participate in the victimization of Muslims by claiming there is a global war against Muslims; in the West, it takes the form of accusations of widespread anti-Muslim sentiments against those who criticize political Islam. Nevertheless, anti-Muslim sentiments do exist in Europe, and the Muslim Brotherhood cynically takes advantage of hate crimes against Muslims to further their own politicized agenda in the form of claiming that it is part of a war against Muslims.

This exaggerated victimization narrative originating from the Muslim Brotherhood is also dangerous since it can discourage Muslims from participating in society by giving them the impression that there is no point in doing so. This is also an outcome that benefits the Muslim Brotherhood in the West since they want to be the only representatives for Muslims; hence, they benefit from other Muslims not advancing in society. Anti-Muslim sentiments, often called Islamophobia, in Europe and beyond is taken advantage of and exaggerated by the Muslim Brotherhood to advance their agenda in Europe, which includes controlling, politicizing, and distorting Islam and Muslim identity.

The Politicization of Identities as Dehumanizing

The other-imposed politicization of religious identities is based on a stereotyping and essentialization that lead to the dehumanization of the out-group. The findings demonstrate that Islamists essentialize religious identities through a politicization; thus, it is not notions about race or “sect” but the politicization itself that ascribes essentialist characteristics such as evil and world domination onto Jews and Shiites. These characteristics are further applied to countries such as Israel.

Shiites in Iraq exemplify how this essentialization is not based on race or ethnicity given that they share these same features with the Sunni Iraqi population.

Anti-Muslim and other antisemitic groups belonging to the far-right also politicize Jewish and Muslim identity by claiming they want world domination. Hence, the far-right worldview mirrors the Islamist one but in reverse regarding Muslims and identical regarding Shiites. The politicization of religious identities is based on the notion of a political struggle between two

opposing groups where violence against civilians is legitimized since dehumanization means no one is viewed as a civilian.

The fact that Jews are subjected to violence in Europe when the Palestine-Israel conflict intensifies shows that this type of new antisemitism is partly based on a politicization of Jewish identity as it is essentialized and connected to the alleged politics of Israel. Therefore, the politicization of religious identities can be understood as a dangerous tool that dehumanizes and contributes to violence against civilians.

Islamist Antisemitic Excommunication of Muslims

Since the inception of Islamism and Qutb's writings, Islamist excommunication of Muslims has been based on the dichotomous world view of a war against Islam where constant boundaries need to be made between those belonging to the Muslim camp and those belonging to the Jewish camp. Therefore, Islamist excommunication of Muslims is based on antisemitism and is necessary for the construction of Islamist identity as it is defined against the outgroup, the Jewish camp. This also entails that Islamist excommunication is based on politicizing religious identities. That is, Islamists depend on excommunication to construct their own identity. Islamist excommunication is also applied to Muslims not believing in Islamist governance, an idea that is at the core of Islamist ideology.

The problem of Islamist excommunication of Muslims gets further complicated when Islamists are supported by Western politicians and governments as the true representatives of Muslims. Vidino has described this in the following way:

Having built an extensive network throughout the West over the past fifty years, these Islamist movements often present themselves as representatives of local communities and seek to interact with Western elites as such. Despite their relatively small numbers and the lack of any clear indication that they have the support of a significant percentage of Western Muslim communities, their activism and capacity for mobilization put them at the forefront of the battle for the leadership of Western Islam. (2010:16)

It is important to note that the Muslim Brotherhood aims to be the only representative of Muslims both in the West and worldwide. However, in Europe, they have taken advantage of a low level of knowledge about Islam to further their political agenda and radicalize the interpretation of the religion, including spreading Islamist antisemitism.

One of the problems with the support for Islamists as the true representatives of Islam is that it entails an implicit excommunication of non-Islamist Muslims, the majority of Muslims, by accepting the definition of Islam as a political system and as a criterion for Muslim identity. Hence, supporters of

Islamists are actually harming the majority of Muslims and interfering in the interpretation of their religion.

Given that Islamists define Muslim identity through a politicized lens, Islamist excommunication today is also used by the Muslim Brotherhood when they call Muslims who disagree with them Islamophobes; this is a somewhat more subtle form of excommunication of Muslims. It is a way of controlling Muslims by excluding opposing views while signaling to the western audience that they will face the same accusations if they support non-Islamist Muslims. It can be understood as a tactic of gaining control and power by instilling fear through intimidation. This would not have been possible if Islamists had not been given the authority to speak for Muslims.

Moreover, by conflating Islam as a religion with a political ideology and by calling critique against a political project Islamophobic, they also trivialize, minimize and neglect Muslims who are actually facing discrimination due to their religion. This makes their strategy of conflation of Islam as a religion with Islam as a political project especially cynical and dangerous in regard to building a genuine coexistence in Europe.

New Additions to Social Identity Theory in the Study of Violence

The findings show that from a social identity perspective, Islamist violence depends on mainly two aspects of social identity constructions:

1. A politicization of religious identities, which also entails a de-humanization of the outgroup; and
2. The imaginary victimized ummah narrative, which depends on the emotional significance of a shared social identity

In Islamist ideology, the war against Islam conspiracy, an imaginary victimized ummah, and a politicization of religious identities are necessary for the construction of an outgroup that needs to be fought violently to preserve the survival of the ingroup. Islamist identity construction is based on constructing a war narrative where ingroup virtue is attained through victimhood and the outgroup is constructed as an aggressor, giving the ingroup a positive distinctiveness. The elements of an existential threat combined with an essentialization of identities contribute to making Islamist ideology violent.

Here, one can note that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were used in the Holocaust, where Jews were accused of being political subjects, as guilty of starting a war and of wanting to destroy Germany, what is called the warrants for genocide (Herf 2006:3). These warrants for genocide are also part of Islamist ideology since it politicizes identities and accuses the outgroup of

conducting a war and claims that the outgroup wants to destroy Islam. Hence, Islamist ideology fulfils the criteria for being a genocidal ideology.

Table 20 lists the findings of the study.

Table 20. The Process of Islamist Antisemitic violence model

1) Self Categorization: Islamist identity
2) De-personalization of outgroup: Jews and Shiites as negative stereotypes
3) Existential threat: War against Islam conspiracy
4) Politicized identity: Identification with “victimized Muslims” belonging to the imaginary ummah
5) Martial identity: Identify as a soldier and a “savior” of the imaginary victimized ummah

Together, the findings in the empirical chapters point to a scholarly understanding of Islamist violence as based on a politicization of Jewish and Shiite identity, which entails dehumanization within a war narrative. Moreover, it is genocidal since it claims that Jews and Shiites need to be destroyed for Muslims to survive.

The findings show that there are certain additions to social identity theory and the study of violence to be made:

- *Victimhood as an ingroup virtue contributes to recruitment to terrorist groups and can mobilize violence.* The findings show that victimhood is an ingroup virtue for Islamists and that it is used to mobilize violence and recruit terrorist groups; its efficiency lies in its appeal to the emotional significance that a mutual social identity has. Hence, a cohesive ingroup, the imaginary Muslim ummah, is constructed through identification with the imaginary victimized ummah by naming them Muslims. This notion of a shared category membership is the basis of group action (Reicher et al. 2008:1327) and therefore can lead to violence; terrorists are prepared to kill and die for their group membership. Moreover, victimhood as an ingroup virtue means that victimhood is used to champion the idea of the ingroup as uniquely good. Reicher et al. suggest that ingroup virtue actively leads to outgroup hatred when the outgroup has been defined in negative terms, an example of that is when Jews are accused of mobilizing the conspiracist war against Islam. Hence, the notion of victimhood

activates hatred against the outgroup and politicizes social identities and therefore can be understood as an initiation into violent extremism.

- *A martial social identity can be activated and use violence purely based on the imaginary constructs of Islamist propaganda.* Islamist war narratives such as the war against Islam conspiracy can lead to hostility against Jews and violence since it builds on an imaginary construct where Jews are held responsible for conflicts and sufferings in the world. Hence, it is not only a conflict with the state that leads to violence, but rather any notion of sufferings can activate the antisemitic imaginary construct where Jews are accused of evil. Sageman suggests that in order for violence to occur the politicized identity need to adopt a martial social identity and that normally three other criteria are involved: 1) escalation of conflict; 2) disillusionment with non-violence; and 3) moral outrage at state aggression. This study shows that a martial identity can be activated without these three criteria through the imaginary constructs that already exist within Islamist ideology, conveyed through its propaganda. Hence, Islamist propaganda and use of violence does not necessarily need an escalation of conflict, disillusionment with non-violence, or a moral outrage at state aggression. The ideology teaches that the war against Islam is global, ongoing, and eternal; hence, it only needs to point towards a certain direction such as a country or people to make violence possible. Conflicts can make it easier for Islamists to point to a certain country or cause and to activate a martial social identity; however, it is important to emphasize that the ideological framework of a constant struggle depends on an imaginary construct of fabricated enemies, causes, and conflicts. One example is the suicide bombings against the Shia in Iraq. They are ongoing even when there is no conflict in the country as Islamist ideology teaches that the war against Islam is ongoing and eternal. Likewise, the antisemitic attacks described in Chapter 5 did not coincide with an escalation of a certain conflict. Hence, Islamist violence is based on the notion of an eternal war against Islam where violence against Jews and Shiites is legitimated regardless of actual conflicts and tensions.
- *A martial social identity attracts people who seek redemption through terrorist violence such as suicide bombings.* A martial social identity within Islamist ideology replaces victimhood and shame in life with honor in death. Honor in death lies in the promise of redemption through martyrdom. This amplifies acts such as suicide terrorism and includes constructing imaginary conflicts where civilians are targeted for the sake of the perpetrators' own need to die to achieve redemption; hence, it has elements of nihilism attached to it. Here, since positive distinctiveness is not achieved in life, killing is used as a motivator for gaining a positive distinctiveness in death.

- *The politicization of identities can lead to genocide.* The politicization of religious identities is integral to Islamism since it defines religious belonging through a binary world view where the only faithful ones are those believing in an Islamist state, and it has the potential of not only becoming violent but also of becoming genocidal due to the essentialist and de-humanizing elements it attaches to the outgroup. This thesis suggests that the scholarly understanding of antisemitism needs to include the essentializing and dehumanizing elements of the Islamist politicization of Jewish identity and that antisemitic notions are being transferred onto other groups. It suggests that antisemitic genocidal notions have been transformed into a specific politicization of identities by Islamists and transferred onto other groups, leading to violence and genocide, as in the case with Shiites. This implies that violence and genocide can eventually be directed against any group that is being politicized and accused of participating in the war against Islam. Hence, the Manichean world view of the Islamists in which the ingroup represents good and the outgroup represents evil can lead to the destruction of the outgroup in the name of preserving virtue (Reicher et al. 2008:1336). Therefore, the politicization of religious identities has a genocidal element to it since it essentializes outgroup identity, dehumanizes outgroup identity, and portrays outgroup identity as an existential threat to ingroup survival.
- *Islamist excommunication of Muslims is based on the need for a positive distinctiveness and a moral superiority that leads to exclusion and violence.* Excommunication is used to create a positive distinctiveness for an ingroup. Islamist excommunication is based on constructing a positive distinctiveness and a moral superiority for the ingroup through the claim of being the only rightful Muslims. The consequence of constructing ingroup positive distinctiveness and moral superiority through excommunication of other Muslims is that it amplifies a construction of the outgroup as a threat to ingroup identity and cohesion. Furthermore, when the notion of the outgroup as a threat is turned into the claim of being an existential threat to ingroup survival, violence based on excommunication is made possible. Here, there is no need for an actual conflict between two groups; it can be, and often is, an imaginary construct based on the need to achieve a positive distinctiveness in relation to other groups. When the other group is close and similar to the ingroup, such as in the case of Islamist excommunication of Muslims, the need for positive distinctiveness can become even stronger in order to construct a distinct and strong ingroup identity. In Islamist excommunication, this is often made by building the claim of an ingroup having a moral superiority by having the “right” religious understanding and practices in relation to the excommunicated outgroup, which is accused of ignorance and deviances in their practice of religion.

The Non-Religious Origins of Islamist Ideology

Islamist ideology, starting with the Muslim Brotherhood, has its origins and inspiration in the following:

1. European Fascism: Nazism, totalitarianism, and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*;
2. Leninism: vanguardism, revolutionism, and anti-capitalism; and
3. A politicized interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadiths that decontextualizes the scriptures while applying it to current times.

Rosenthal (2006) suggests that there is also an ideological connection between Western liberal circles and Islamists. First, he notes that the strong anti-American idea of the Islamist movements has no foundation in traditional Islam. Instead, he states that it is the same anti-Americanism of socialist movements in Europe. Furthermore, he also emphasizes that intellectual figures of the Islamist movements studied in Europe, such as Said Ramadan and Hassan al-Turabi (Rosenthal 2006:58). Moreover, Calvert suggests that Qutb was inspired by European revolutionaries such as Lenin in, for example, his conviction that there needs to be an elite cadre of revolutionaries in order for his ideal society to emerge (Calvert 2009:16). This shows that Western movements have inspired Islamist ideology in many regards.

As mentioned earlier, Islamist ideology was financially supported by the Nazis, who encouraged al-Husseini to spread an Islamized antisemitism. In the 1930s, the Muslim Brotherhood were financially supported by Nazis and used their pro-Palestinian activities to spread Jew hatred (Küntzel 2021:258).

Hence, it is important to emphasize that Islamist ideology was born out of an incorporation and support of Nazi ideology. The cooperation between Nazi Germany and the Muslim Brotherhood and Hajj Amin el-Husseini can be understood as the start of the demise of parts of the Middle East by introducing a genocidal ideology that was Islamized.

The history of Iraq can serve as an example of this argument, and it can explain why Iraqi Baathists were working together with ISIS and why ISIS used child euthanasia against children with downs syndrome in Iraq.³⁷ The contemporary vicious cycle of violence in Iraq, which still plagues the country, emerged with the introduction of fascism and genocidal antisemitism through Haj Amin al-Husseini. His two years in Iraq introduced the country to fascist ideas that inspired a nationalist movement that carried out the Farhud

³⁷<https://www.independent.ie/world-news/middle-east/isis-issues-fatwa-ordering-children-with-down-syndrome-to-be-killed-at-birth-34288467.html>

pogrom in the 1940s that put an end to the coexistence between Jews and Muslims in Iraq.

Eventually, these nationalists overthrew the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 and ten years later, a fascist dictatorship of Baathism was installed and lasted until 2003. In the 1990s, Saddam started Islamizing the country and his self-image in what is called the faith campaign *al-hamla al-imaniyya*. Hence, when he was overthrown in 2003, his former generals chose to join ISIS.

ISIS ideology and practices were also heavily influenced by the Baathist practices of ruling with fear through public displays of violence. The cooperation between Baathists and ISIS can be understood as grounded in an Islamist ideology rooted in fascism, originating from Hajj-Amin al-Husseini's Nazi cooperation. Moreover, ISIS's practice of systematically killing children with downs syndrome is clearly inspired by Nazi eugenic practices, namely the organized killings of children with disabilities. These eugenics practices have no support in Islam.

This suggests that the Islamist violence of today is not mainly based on a theological "sectarian" division or something intrinsically violent about Islam, but rather that Islamism is based on a hybrid between fascism and politicized interpretations of Islam. One of the clearest examples of this argument is the war against Islam conspiracy, which combines the conspiracy theory of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (a text that inspired the Nazis), with a politicized interpretation of the Qur'an verse al-Maidah 51.

The Transfer of Antisemitic Warrants for Genocide onto Shiites

As previously mentioned, the transfer of Islamist antisemitic genocidal notions, such as evil and world domination, onto Shiites led to the genocide against them in Iraq. The Sahwa also added the notion of eternal and essentialized enmity between Shiites and "Muslims" within a war narrative, which implies that there is no other way to remove evil than through eradication.

As has been seen throughout the thesis, this is the case with both antisemitism and anti-Shiism. Like the Jews, the Shiites were immediately killed by ISIS (Hawley 2017:166-167), while Christian lives were, allegedly, sometimes spared.

Moreover, Zarqawi claimed that Islam's victory is tied to the physical eradication of the Shia (Kazimi 2006:67). This is similar to what Qutb initially said about Islam's victory depending on a fight against Jews. This further indicates that these two forms of genocide have similarities.

The Warrants for Genocide

During World War II, the Nazi regime claimed that an actual political subject, called Jewry, was guilty of starting and prolonging the war and that a Jewish international conspiracy wanted to exterminate Germany and the Germans (Herf 2006:3). Herf suggests the following: “In the context of World War II, these beliefs transformed the centuries-old European anti-Semitism from a justification for traditional forms of persecution into what the historian Norman Cohn called a warrant for genocide” (2006:3). According to Cohn, three beliefs are the foundation for the warrants for genocide:

1. The Jew as a political subject;
2. The Jew as guilty of starting and prolonging the war; and
3. A conspiracy saying Jews aim to exterminate Germans.

If these notions are applied to the empirical material of this thesis, then the following conclusions can be made:

1. Qutb, Sahwa, and ISIS view Jews as political subjects. Shiites are also viewed as political subjects by the Sahwa and ISIS.
2. Qutb, Sahwa, and ISIS accuse Jews of mobilizing “the war against Islam.” Shiites are also seen as part of this war by ISIS and the Sahwa.
3. Jews are accused of wanting to destroy Islam by Qutb, Sahwa, and ISIS. In contrast, Shiites are accused of wanting to destroy Islam by the Sahwa movement and ISIS.

Thus, this thesis argues that the three beliefs that constitute the warrant for genocide are what Qutb transferred onto Jews, Sahwa onto Jews and Shiites, and ISIS onto Jews and Shiites. These three notions can be understood as the key elements that transformed genocidal antisemitism into genocidal anti-Shiism. These beliefs are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. Three beliefs underlying ISIS genocidal antisemitism and anti-Shiism

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- 1) A politicization of Jewish and Shiite identity
 - 2) Portraying Jews and Shiites as participants in a war against Islam
 - 3) Accusing Jews and Shiites of wanting to destroy Islam and Muslims
-

Badar (2016:410) suggests that by presenting “disbelievers” as a threat to the survival of Islam, ISIS has subtly transitioned from inciting hatred to inciting its audience to take violent action. Thus, Badar acknowledges the third belief

as being part of the genocide. Similar to the findings in this study, Badar suggests that ISIS uses the Qur'an to justify its actions: "[ISIS] have taken the concept of Islam and used it as its call to arms, evolving it into a revolutionary murderous doctrine, painted over with a broad brush of theological color to give it the appearance of legitimacy" (2016:411). Moreover, Badar emphasizes that ISIS has committed genocide against the Shia, the Yazidi, and Christian communities (2016:411).

ISIS's genocide against Shiites might be officially recognized as genocide with time. Hawley (2017:173) suggests that this can be done by Iraq authorizing a United Nations inquiry on ISIS crimes within its territory. However, this has not happened. Hawley also points to the problem of neither Iraq nor Syria being a party to the Rome Statute, which complicates using International Criminal Court (ICC) jurisdiction. Hence, Hawley suggests the following:

To encourage accountability, the international community should pressure the Iraqi Government to open access for a broad inquiry into crimes committed, not only by ISIS but by government-supported militias. Such efforts are likely best paired with an ad hoc tribunal, created with a mind toward neutrality. (2017:173–174)

Moreover, Badar (2016:411) suggests that ISIS magazine *Dabiq*, based on its genocidal content, can be viewed as the perpetrator of genocide and that the defendants should be convicted by virtue of their relationship to *Dabiq*. Hawley points to the implications that labeling ISIS's crimes a genocide would mean. For example, for asylum seekers and refugees, documentation and analysis of atrocities are crucial (Hawley 2017:174). On the policy level, an increased knowledge of ISIS ideology and that it targets Muslims would help demonstrate how incorrect the notions behind policies such as the "The Muslim Ban" are (Hawley 2017:174).

When Shiites are targeted, as in the case of the burning of a Shiite Mosque in Malmö, Sweden, police authorities and those working within the judicial system ought to be aware of the foundations of anti-Shiite ideology. This knowledge will entail that those crimes are treated as crimes against Shiites as such and highlight their need for protection against violence:

While crimes against Christians and Yazidis are heinous and deplorable, they are not the driving force of ISIS's identity and expansion. And though Western politicians continually overstate the danger posed by ISIS to Western nations, the West has simultaneously underplayed the threat posed by ISIS to the Islamic world, both given their ambitions against the Shia and the apocalyptic war they aspire toward. (Hawley 2017:173)

Reflections on the Lack of Research on Islamist Violence against Jews and Muslims

Research of Islamist antisemitism has focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict where, often, positioning oneself has been emphasized rather than developing a comprehensive scholarly analysis. Moreover, racism against Shiites and the genocide committed against them by ISIS have been largely neglected by researchers within the field of terrorism. One possible reason for this might be the Western focus of terrorism studies. Hence, as Muslims, Shiites do not fit into the narrative about ISIS conducting a war against Christians and the West. This lack of focus on Shiites may also derive from the lack of research on Islamist antisemitism since this study clearly shows that they are interconnected.

The Western focus on terrorism research has overshadowed the Muslim targets of terrorism and Islamist's distortions of Islam. For example, Islamists assault on Islam's intellectual heritage is rarely recognized:

Not only do Muslim fundamentalists and Islamists - that is, fundamentalists with a political agenda-show no interest in formal religious training; they are also "anti-intellectualists," according to Islam's own standards of religious education. On the one hand, they deny any value to endeavors such as independent reasoning (*ijtihad*), a source of legal decisions dear to most Islamic schools of law since the Middle Ages. Consequently, they have no notion of a communal scholarly quest that requires a free space of inquiry and remains by nature open-ended, which was common practice in the classical madrasa. On the other hand, although fundamentalists keep referring to "tradition," a key notion in their ideology, they actually prove to be "anti-traditionalists" with respect to what has historically been the practice of Islam. The damage they are doing to Islam's intellectual and scholarly legacy is of such a systematic nature that it is hard to believe this to be an expression of sheer ignorance of how theological and legal matters ought to be dealt with. It is my deepest conviction that this state of affairs is the result of a well-thought-out strategy designed eventually to remove any scholarly resistance to fundamentalism from within the Muslim world. Whereas much attention has been devoted to its anti-Western ideology, almost no mention has been made so far of its massive assault on the intellectual culture of Islam. (Albertini 2003:455)

Albertini stresses that Islam's intellectual legacy is rich and that the Qur'an and the Hadiths are full of passages encouraging believers to seek knowledge, "broadly defined to include all there is to know, whether it is of a sacred/secular, metaphysical/physical, or theoretical/practical nature" (2003:457).

In comparison, fundamentalists employ an "Islam of identity," solely interested in the knowledge of ritual and legal obligations: the knowledge of "things to be done" (Albertini 2003:458). In a way, the Islamist obsession with identity, superficialities, and intolerance against "the others," as demonstrated in this thesis, has attempted to replace Islam's message of knowledge seeking

and it has tried to impose an anti-intellectual view of Islam to gain power and control over societies.

Here, it is important to note that intellectualism has such a central role in Islam that the very first word and commandment in the Qur'an is "Read." To seek knowledge is, according to Islam, a sacred duty for Muslims. Albertini suggests that fundamentalists aim to destroy the intellectual legacy of Islam and that a weakened scholarship throughout the Muslim world has allowed for the rise of fundamentalism. According to Albertini, the intellectual legacy of Islam threatens fundamentalism's anti-Western ideology and its attempt at controlling and manipulating Muslim societies (Albertini 2003:456). Here, the findings of this study can add that Islamists also use antisemitism and anti-Shiism to control Muslim societies and that the victimized ummah narrative is not Islamic and aims to control Muslims.

As mentioned earlier, postcolonial theorists have adopted a rather rigid position in the research field on Islamist antisemitism. The main issue is that postcolonial theorists tend to derive Islamist antisemitism from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and therefore deny its ideological components and the role of the imaginary. The weakness of the postcolonial argument is that Islamist antisemitism predates the creation of the state of Israel. Furthermore, in no other form of racism would postcolonial theorists blame those subjected to racism for the racism they are subjected to; seemingly, this only happens to Jews.

Moreover, the genocide against Shiites has gone unnoticed among postcolonial scholars. By ignoring the heterogeneity of Muslim groups and the different interpretations of Islam while, sometimes, calling those who highlight it Islamophobes, postcolonialism is running the risk of becoming a tool for oppression. Moreover, the "resistance" theory is clearly contested by the antisemitic attacks in Europe. The attackers sometimes claim to do it for Palestinians, but the only link is that they are targeting Jews, which indicates that it has very little to do with "Israeli politics" but rather that it has to do with antisemitism and the politicization of Jewish identity.

To ignore the nuances and complexities of Middle Eastern societies can be understood as a form of ethnocentrism of postcolonial theory where one does not show any genuine interest in the inner dynamics of Middle Eastern societies. The underlying idea of the guilty West (and Israel) and the "good resistance" (in postcolonial theory) is not only simplistic but also risks lending itself to Islamist legitimization by ignoring Jewish and Muslim victims of Islamists and because this dichotomy is very similar to the one that Islamists

operate from. Furthermore, by viewing Islam and the Middle East in the same way as the Islamists, postcolonial theorists also deny that it is heterogeneous.

Charles Asher Small notes that French philosopher Daniel Sibony takes this criticism one step further when he claims that it is actually a sign of a paternalistic and patronizing attitude towards Muslims:

There is a tendency in certain circles to tolerate and justify reactionary Islamic attitudes, including sexism, homophobia, and antisemitism, despite their own liberal views. It is thus more convenient to blame the Jews for the stalemate in the Middle East and other related problems. Sibony traces this to the colonial mentality of not expecting the peoples of the Middle East and other parts of the world to adhere to the same criteria of human rights and civility as the “civilized” West. (2013:10)

Furthermore, postcolonial academics tend to place knowledge on Islamism and how it affects Jews and Muslims at the margins of knowledge production, an attitude that resembles what postcolonialists themselves call orientalism. In a way, postcolonialism has in many regards become a continuation of orientalism by indifference to Jewish and Muslim life and by preserving a patronizing view of Muslims as merely being victims of Western colonialism. This oftentimes includes the “resistance” of “freedom fighters,” what is normally understood as terrorists. Hence, the postcolonial and Islamist Muslim identity construction is strikingly similar as they both construct Muslims as either victims or violent “defenders.”

Moreover, the development of critical terrorism studies bears certain similarities with the postcolonial one; however, it wants to engage more with the issue of terrorism. It aims to challenge “state-centered” research on terrorism.

Critical terrorism scholars find their explanations through understanding the point of view of the perpetrator without “stereotyping” them and sometimes even view terrorism as a form of resistance to oppression that ought to be viewed that way, ignoring the role of the imaginary constructs that explain why civilians are killed.

Furthermore, they use this perspective to bring themselves closer to a “non-ethnocentric” perspective on terrorism. However, the belief that the Islamist perpetrator perspective against the state is somehow representative of an authentic or “native” Muslim perspective can be understood as a reflection of what seems to be a condescending stereotype of Muslims and Muslim societies that the “critical” scholars might hold themselves. Hence, there is a risk of reproducing stereotypes of Muslims but with the alleged intent of doing the opposite.

Moreover, a “non-ethnocentric” and “critical” perspective focusing on merely the terrorist’s perspective can be understood as more ethnocentric than the research that conventional terrorism scholars produce on Islamist ideology given that understanding the ideology is actually relevant for Jewish and Muslim societies since they are the main targets of terrorism. Here, one can note a

patronizing view similar to that of postcolonialism; knowledge relevant for Muslim and Jewish life is placed at the margins of knowledge production in favor of a “resistance against the state” narrative where civilian targets are ignored.

The Islamist Technological Advantage

Technology and Certainty

There are several reasons why an ideology that does not resemble the religion still manages to recruit Muslims on the basis of the claim that it is. First, Islamists have been very skilled in making use of technology to spread their propaganda. The Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna was well aware of the power of propaganda, as explained by Patterson:

It has already been pointed out that al-Banna learned much from Nazi methods of spreading propaganda against the Jews and that he urged Muslims to go forth and do likewise. “The methods of propaganda today,” he explained, reflecting the lessons he learned from the Nazis, “are not like those of yesterday. The propaganda of yesterday consisted of a verbal message given out at a speech or a meeting, or one written in a letter. Today, it consists of publications, magazines, newspapers, articles, plays, films, and radio broadcasts. All this has made it easy to sway the minds of people, both men and women, in their homes, places of business, factories and pasture lands. It became necessary for the propagandists to perfect all these means so that their efforts may produce the desired effect.” The desired effect was to incite an exterminationist hatred of the Jews. (Patterson 2010:68–69)

The Sahwa and al-Qaeda initially used cassette recordings to spread their message. Furthermore, the Sahwa movement took advantage of social media very early on and therefore gained broader support for their message of being the true representatives of Muslims. This advantage of using technology to spread propaganda is maybe best exemplified by the Islamic State. Islamic State propaganda has skillfully developed and played on emotions of victimhood, belonging, honor, and glory. They also turned Islamist identity and propaganda into something “cool,” what is referred to as “jihadi cool.” The content of their propaganda was convincing for their followers since it appealed to human needs such as a sense of belonging. Moreover, ISIS played on the dichotomy between victimhood and dignity by saying that Muslims live in humiliation in the West and that honor can only be found in the Islamic State. Furthermore, Islamist propaganda provides a simplified framework for understanding the world, and this can be appealing for some since it is an easier way of living than having to self-reflect and interrogate oneself:

In an increasingly complex global economic environment, in an ever-changing bewildering world, it is simply convenient—and therefore appealing—

to blame a very well-established and precedential “Jewish Conspiracy” for the fate of the world and for one's misfortune however conceived. This is far easier than engaging in the hard work of investigating the complex social, political, economic, and historical relationships that surround us and that we ourselves influence. (Chatterley 2013:81)

Hence, one can suggest that critical thinking may be a useful tool in protecting young people from being attracted to extremist propaganda. Moreover, as Wieviorka's (2007:139) study shows, when there is a recognition of people's history, imaginary identity constructions of Islamist antisemitism may start to decrease. This can be connected to Chatterley's description of engaging in the hard work of understanding the complexities of society and history.

Moreover, it is easier for some to be drawn to the simplified politicized interpretation of religion since it is more demanding to actually understand scripture. As the quotation from the perpetrator El-Husseini's jail mate shows, he was not interested in reading the Qur'an, however, he was adamant in saying that all the world's evil and problems came from Shia Muslims. This is the simplified version of reality that attracts the recruits: the war against Islam conspiracy and the imaginary victimized ummah.

The reason why the Islamic State chose to use Qutb's worldview in their propaganda is that it's oversimplification, certainty and religious authenticity claims are appealing to some and an efficient recruitment tool. Qutb offers a justification of ISIS strategy and goals in their pursuit of establishing an Islamic State. This simplified narrative becomes powerful in mobilizing collective action, since it appeals to a shared social identity and a goal beyond the individual.

Replacing Victimhood with Honor in Death

It is important to note that the Muslim Brotherhood was established as a response to what they understood to be the lost dignity of Muslims due to imperialism. However, their response was not to build a genuine faith-based Islamic identity; they created a victimhood identity and most importantly this victimhood is based on antisemitism since they view themselves as victims in relation to Jews. Given that the Muslim Brotherhood is the biggest Islamist movement today, the Islamic State made use of notions that they had already established. Moreover, criminals who joined ISIS partly believed that they would become martyrs and that it would cleanse their sins. Hence, honor was found in death. In a way, the Muslim Brotherhood replaced honor and dignity with victimhood, while ISIS played on this victimhood to mobilize people for the honor of dying for a cause, what can be understood as a form of nihilism.

Implications for Countering Violent Extremism

In countering violent extremism, it is important to define the causes of violence. This study argues that the politicization of identities within a war narrative triggers violence. Thus, it is neither the religion itself nor only a politicization but rather the combination of a politicization of identities and a war narrative that leads to violence. This has some important implications that will be briefly discussed.

In countering violent extremism, it is crucial to demonstrate how Islamist groups distort religious scripture, depriving Islamist interpretations of their religious legitimacy claims. Moreover, the war against Islam narrative, which is given religious legitimacy, should also be refuted by Muslim scholars. Furthermore, it is important to challenge and counter the politicization of identities.

Today, Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood claim to be democratic and non-violent. However, given that the politicization of religious identities within a war narrative leads to violence, the Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, instigate violence with their ideology. Moreover, the study suggests that the Muslim Brotherhood is the main source behind the emergence of al-Qaeda and ISIS. To challenge Islamist ideology, its claims of being democratic and its claims of representing Islam need to be challenged and addressed as incorrect. Nevertheless, the ideology may also live on without its religious legitimacy, but it would probably become a much more marginal movement.

Political Implications for Countering Islamist Violence

The findings of the thesis demonstrate that the Muslim Brotherhood has an antisemitic ideology that incites violence. However, the Muslim Brotherhood is often called and calls itself a non-violent group that believes in democracy. The findings of this study suggest that these labels are worthy of serious scrutiny.

Today, Hamas is a militant Muslim Brotherhood group, designated as a terrorist organization, and a political party that gained power through elections. This shows that the Muslim Brotherhood can combine being “democratic” and being an active terrorist group. Most Muslim Brotherhood members do not use violence; however, this can be understood as a strategic and pragmatic choice based on a calculation that success is more likely gained through democratic processes. This is similar to how far-right groups reasoned when they decreased their violence in favor of parliamentary power in, for example, Sweden.³⁸

³⁸ For more information, see Jeffrey Kaplan’s study “Terrorism in Sweden: The Threat from the Right” (<https://trendsresearch.org/insight/terrorism-in-sweden-the-threat-from-the-right/>).

Designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a Terrorist Organization

There is an ongoing debate on whether the Muslim Brotherhood should be designated as a terrorist organization. Critics point to the distinction between ideas and violent acts and emphasize that the Muslim Brotherhood do not use violence when they refute a designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. Additionally, critics refute the designation by claiming that it will increase Islamist violence since the militants can claim that Islamism via democracy does not work. Both these arguments require scrutiny.

The distinction between ideas and actions is important to make, but it does not consider ideologically motivated incitement to violence. Islamist violence originates from a specific ideology that promotes certain ideas that are rooted in the Muslim Brotherhood ideology. Indeed, this does not mean that someone who has not committed an act of violence ought to be viewed that way. Rather, it suggests that those who use ideology to incite others to use violence are actually committing an act with a terrorist ideological motive.

Nevertheless, the main hindrance for designating the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization is that the criterion for a designation often involves that the group is actively using violence. In, for example, the US only those groups that actively conduct terrorist violence can be designated as terrorist organizations. Since the Muslim Brotherhood as a whole does not use terrorist violence, they cannot be designated as a terrorist group in many countries. However, their affiliated group Hamas is on the US terror list as it continuously attacks Israel.

The second argument against designating the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization is the belief that such a designation will actually radicalize its members. The main problem with this argument is that the risk of an escalation of violence only exists because its ideology promotes it.

Therefore, a counter argument would be that to dismantle the Islamist ideology, and encourage tolerant interpretations of Islam, one needs to uproot it starting with its origins and biggest movement, the Muslim Brotherhood. By doing so, one can prevent future generations of being drawn to militancy. However, if the ideology of political Islam is given a free space to spread, it will undermine the societies it operates in since its ideology undermines social cohesion and creates militants.

To counter the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, one can focus on strengthening laws against spreading intolerance and incitement to violence through an understanding of its ideology and literature. Muslim Brotherhood books such as Qutb's are still read and distributed as an inspiration and indoctrination.

The Muslim Brotherhood endangers Jewish life in Europe through the influence it has over the interpretations of Islam and the infrastructure that it has built with, for example, schools. The Muslim Brotherhood follows and

promotes a far-reaching ideology that implicitly and explicitly promotes violence, and it is the largest Islamist group today.

One constructive way of dealing with the challenges of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology would be to restrict the distribution and access to their literature and to prevent them from having educational institutions. The arguments for restrictive measures against the Muslim Brotherhood can be divided into four categories:

1. To prevent an ideology that incites violence;
2. To protect Jewish life and counter Islamist antisemitism;
3. To protect Muslims and Islam from a radicalization of religion;
and
4. To prevent the politicization of identities and its dehumanization.

Hence, countering the Muslim Brotherhood, its ideology, and its influence requires cutting its funding sources; state and EU funding is a reasonable first step.

Other political implications of the study are that the four main findings—war against Islam, imaginary victimized ummah, excommunication, and politicization of religious identities—contribute to violence. These findings can be used to raise awareness in countries such as Iraq that have been affected by this violence in order to prevent the spread of violence and Islamist ideology, for example, in schools and through policy. This includes Shiite politicization of religious identities that also promotes antisemitism and has also been used to mobilize for warfare and for using violence against civilian Sunni Arabs in Iraq.

Final Remarks

This thesis contributes to the scholarly understanding of Islamist antisemitism and use of violence. It shows that genocidal antisemitism is alien to traditional Islam, that it originates from Nazi antisemitism, that Sayyid Qutb Islamized it and that it eventually was transferred onto Shia Muslims. Regarding the limitations of this study, it is important to emphasize that future research is needed to find other ideological influences on ISIS antisemitism and anti-Shiism and use of violence.

The results show that Islamists quote the Qur'an selectively. Thus, scripture does not need reform, but interpretations do. The Islamist interpretations found in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 are from a rather short period of Islamic history; specifically, it belongs to these last 90 years.

This thesis has shown that political Islam provided the ideological motivations for violence, targeting Jews and Shiites. ISIS violence was largely defeated with their territorial defeat. Nevertheless, the ideology lives on, and the

attacks on Shiites and Jews continue. Furthermore, the Muslim Brotherhood still propagates the notion of a war against Islam. Thus, deconstructing this narrative and its claim to religious legitimacy has become an even more critical undertaking today.

Finally, one can object to my argument about the politicization of identities by claiming that all identities are political or that all religions, or specifically Islam, are political. However, this claim reduces history to current developments, leading to a depletion of the spiritual meaning and value of religion. Moreover, such an argument neglects a thousand-year history where Jews and Muslims, Sunnis, and Shiites lived in a rather peaceful coexistence. Thus, it is crucial to differentiate between religion as faith and politicized religion that uses religion to gain political power.

One can suggest that what is needed is an emphasis on Islamic values before Islamism: the importance of tolerance, Islamic contributions to science, knowledge seeking, and intellectualism. Islamic values that were largely altered by the rise of political Islam and which has led to a financial, philosophical, and political stalemate in many Muslim societies. Most importantly, this thesis shows that to prevent the spread of Islamist ideology and its violence, one needs to begin by uprooting its antisemitism.

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