CyberOrient

Online Journal of the Virtual Middle East

Vol. 9, Iss. 1, 2015

Index

Problematizing Cyber Warfare

Helga Tawil-Souri

New York University

The Middle Eastern region is currently implicated in all kinds of wars - conflicts that in some cases have been going on for decades, others more recent; some involving actors across a global geography; some fought with and through the latest military technologies; some with an extraordinary presence in global media; some compromised in larger ideological battles. There are important geopolitical, structural and technological differences in what is happening in Israel/Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan for example. But the region's conflicts all undoubtedly bring into focus changing conceptions of war, which the essays in this issue contend with.

First, these wars are neither fought along "traditional" battlefields nor (only) between state actors. Second, the technological advancement of the tools of war (drones, remote-controlled warships, surveillance mechanisms, to name a few) have further blurred where and how war is manifested, even as these take place simultaneously to low-tech means which further bring into question what warfare is constituted of: the control over the flow of foods and medicines, the building of enclosure mechanisms, or the practice of (mostly extra-judicial) "precision targeting." Third, the justification of wars and the stories of their battles, survival, and hardships are part and parcel of an ever-wider media landscape in which these are created, disseminated, and consumed: newspapers, TV channels, mobile phones, and the internet. If there is anything conclusive in the convergence of these changes is that national boundaries and national institutions do not define where war ends or begins. As such one question that emerges is how various technologies transform the spaces, practices, experiences, and representations of war.

Corresponding author: Helga Tawil-Souri, New York University, 50 S Washington Square, New York, NY 10012, USA. E-mail: helga@nyu.edu

Donatella Della Ratta takes as her object of analysis the Syrian village of al Ghouta and traces its development from a politically charged, symbolic site of anti-colonial struggle in the 1920s to its role in the TV series *Bab al Hara*, to its eventual destruction and use as a battleground between the Syrian army and anti-Assad rebels. She analyzes how space itself becomes cross-referenced, remixed and remanipulated across mediums and technologies, blurring boundaries between fictional and real, between cyber and territorial, between historical and imagined. Al Ghouta is an "expanded place," she argues: an endlessly networked version of an actual physical, territorial site as it has been destroyed, regenerated, claimed and reclaimed in multiple layers of signification, resulting in new andcontested meanings, realities, and histories.

Technology's role in the expansion of places and meanings of war reverberates in Emily Fekete's piece. Building on the notion of "everywhere war," Fekete looks at Internet uses among various actors. As she touches on examples of viruses, website hacks, vandalism, and disruption of systems, and highlights that these are undertaken for different purposes - legitimizing one's ideological position, recruitment, training, or propaganda - it becomes clear that any definition of cyber warfare is problematic.

Fekete's media-centric analysis is shared with the other three articles. Ruth Tsuria examines on-line English- and Arabic-language news outlets such as *Al Jazeera* and Jordan's *ad-Dustour* and their representations of what is a very Western and Orientalist term "Islamophobia." She suggests that as the term circulates and is problematized - linguistically and otherwise - conveying multiple readings and meanings, that a plurality of "Islamophobias" may be a more appropriate term. In the following piece, Attila Kovacs looks at the influence of the Internet on Palestinian Islamist culture, and how new technologies such as websites and Twitter have been used as a vehicle for visual production and dissemination. Finally, Christoph Günther analyzes the Islamic State's English-language magazine, *Dabiq*. Analyzing the publication's visual and linguistic semantics and presentations, he argues that the magazine's "glossy" look - which helps it reach a global readership - does not compromise the group's ideological intents and worldview.

ISIS's use of new media, so to speak, is deployed within the confines of its strict interpretation of Islamic scriptures.

This special issue of CyberOrient engages with the relationships between "cyber" and "real" battlespaces, the mediatization of war, the need to expand our definition of warzones, and the importance of asking who participates in wars, to what ends, using what kinds of technologies, and for what purposes. Taken together, the five essays demonstrate the expansion and blurring of the spaces of war. As importantly, they highlight that even warfare that is "only" fought in the virtual realm is laced with violent intents and real-life repercussions. Not only can we not separate the cyber from the real so neatly, but we must not overlook that no matter how we wish to classify "new" or cyber wars, it is citizens, along with their ways of life and their cultural records, that continue to be by far the largest losers.

Violence and Visibility in Contemporary Syria: An Ethnography of the "Expanded Places"

Donatella Della Ratta

Copenhagen University

Abstract:

This article reflects on the relationship between visibility and violence as redefined by the combined action of warfare and networked communication technologies. Drawing on the author's own ethnography conducted in Syria in 2010, and on anonymous YouTube videos, it introduces the concept of "expanded places" to look at sites that have been physically annihilated; yet, at the same time, they have been re-animated through multiple mediated versions circulating and re-circulating on the networks. Building on Rancière's work on the distribution of the sensible, the article argues that, at the intersection of those simultaneous actions of annihilation and regeneration, a new geography of visibility and violence is being shaped which rearranges the existing into a completely new political form and aesthetic format. Thriving on the techno-human infrastructure of the networks, and relying on the endless proliferation of images resulting from the loss of control of image-makers over their own production, expanded places are aggregators of new communities that add novel layers of signification to the empirical world, and create their own multiple realities and histories.

Corresponding author: Donatella Della Ratta, University of Copenhagen, Nørregade 10, DK1017 Copenhagen, Denmark. E-mail: szk198@alumni.ku.dk

Fig. 1. The short film "Images in Spite of All" results from the combination of the author's own video ethnography conducted in 2010 at the Damascene Village within the framework of her Ph.D fieldwork on Syrian TV drama; and of several videos produced by anonymous users and Arab TV channels that were widely shared on the networks between 2012 and 2014. The film can be viewed at: https://vimeo.com/133892234

> "Is not every ethnographer something of a surrealist,
> a reinventor and reshuffler of realities?"
> *(Clifford, 1988:147)*

Introduction

This article reflects on the relationship between visibility and violence as re-configured and redefined by the combined action of contemporary warfare and networked communication technologies.[1] It focuses on the interweaving of the destruction of places as a result of war, and the ever-circulating images of those very places, which are endlessly reproduced and recreated through and on the networks. I argue that a new understanding of places is being shaped and brought to light at the intersection of these simultaneous actions of annihilation and regeneration.

This novel geography of visibility and violence is defined around sites that have been physically annihilated; yet, at the same time, they are being re-animated through multiple mediated versions circulating and re-circulating on the networks. I introduce the concept of "expanded places" to define these sites that are enjoying a form of mediated after-life despite the fact

that their physical selves have been destroyed. Here "expanding" does not refer to the repetition, recreation, reproduction, and re-circulation of images; nor to the proliferation of the latter if understood as a mere growth in quantitative presence across contexts.

In order to reflect on the characteristics and implications of the process of "expansion" being generated on and through networked communication technologies I build on the conceptual framework developed by Jacques Rancière (2013) on the "distribution of the sensible," which emphasizes the political dimension of aesthetics, and reads the aesthetic dimension as inherently political. I draw on his reflections on the "aesthetic regime" to look at my own ethnography conducted in 2010 at the Damascene Village (*al qariyya al shamiyya*), a theme park located in al Ghouta, on the outskirts of Damascus. From 2006 to 2010, the site served as a location for the TV series *Bab al hara* (The Gate of the Neighborhood), with its romanticized storyline of the Syrian resistance against French colonial rule in the 1920s; which did in fact start in the al Ghouta district. In 2012, as the Syrian uprising turned into a fully-fledged civil war, the Damascene Village was occupied several times by opposing factions, each of them shooting video accounts narrating the seizure of the theme park using themes, symbols and characters borrowed from the TV series. Eventually the Damascene Village was destroyed; yet, the self-shot videos, once uploaded onto YouTube, continued to fuel the spread of clashing narratives and contradictory understandings of national resistance, which turned a physical site hosting a staged representation of a conflict into a conflict zone itself, endlessly reproduced through social networking sites.

Before being expanded by the combined action of warfare and the networks, the Damascene Village was already a politically charged, symbolic site; as different layers of times and places - the historical al Ghouta of the 1920s anti-colonial struggle - were mass mediated through a fictional representation - the *Bab al hara* TV series - where the actual, physical space had become entangled with its imaginative representations. However, there is something fundamentally new occurring when networked communication

technologies become involved in the process of mediating a space that has been physically destroyed. The aim of this article is precisely to look at the intersection between violence and technology, between annihilation and regeneration, where expanded places are generated; and to explore the new "fictionality" being shaped here, understood as a way of assigning novel meanings to the empirical world, a philosophical device to rearrange the existing into a completely new (political) form and (aesthetic) format (Rancière 2013:33).

My argument is that in order to think of this new form and format of violence and visibility, we have to focus on the techno-social platform triggering the process of expansion of places, that is networked communication technologies, understood both as the multi-layered technical infrastructure of social networking sites mediating signs, spaces, meanings and people; and as the subject of that very mediation, made up of anonymous and unidentified individuals. Using ethnographies of the Damascene Village, studied both as a physical site and as its expanded versions, I will underline how key features of the networks - circulation, reflexivity, anonymity, and decentralized authorship - forge a new relationship between visibility and violence, which, by expanding the former through a never-ending layering and cross-referencing of times and spaces, ceaselessly replicates the latter.

Because of the incessant speed and dissemination made possible by the networks, images of expanded places prove to be extraordinarily resilient. At the same time, they are both the place and the methodological device for violence, if the latter is executed through images. Violence is also inflicted on the image itself, as the dramatic ending of the Damascene Village will reveal.

Prologue: from al Ghouta to *Bab al hara*, turning physical and mediated spaces into expanded places

Al Ghouta (oasis) is an area surrounding Damascus, and was formerly known as the green belt of the Syrian capital. In Syria's collective memory, al Ghouta is the place where the anti-colonial struggle against French

occupation took shape and was organized in the 1920s. The connection between the physical space and its symbolic value in shaping shared ideas of nation, unity, and resistance has been widely celebrated in Syria's cultural production.[2] In the country's collective imagery al Ghouta has become a "place" in Yi Fu Tuan's understanding of the term: something that "feels thoroughly familiar" (Tuan 1977:73).

During the post-independence years, al Ghouta was the favorite venue for picnics and family outings, the ideal place for Damascene families to seek relief from the heat and the hustle and bustle of Syria's capital. However, as a result of the liberalization policies that in the late 1980s considerably expanded commercial ventures in several sectors of the economy previously controlled by the state, al Ghouta was affected by a wave of property development and exposed to a process of uncontrolled urbanization.[3] As part of the transformation of al Ghouta into an urban suburb, a theme park was built to attract further investment to the area, together with a culture of leisure and consumption. Named "the Damascene Village" and located in the Eastern part of al Ghouta, strategically close to the international airport, the entertainment facilities reproduced the stunning beauty of the Old City of Damascus and was home to a number of elegant restaurants, a museum of Damascene folklore, and a zoo.

For five consecutive seasons (2006-2010) the Damascene Village served as the location for *Bab al ḥara*, a Syrian TV series that quickly became one of the highest rated in the history of Arab satellite television.[4] *Bab al ḥara* idealized the daily life and social customs of a Damascene neighborhood at the time of the French mandate, celebrating the people's struggle against colonial rule; which, as said earlier, was organized precisely in al Ghouta, the area where the TV series had been filmed. Therefore, the Damascene Village became a physical replica of the historic 1920s rebel stronghold conceived as a TV set for a reenactment drama of that very struggle; which, historically speaking, took place exactly in the location where the fictional copy had been rebuilt for the sake of media consumption.

In May 2010, in the context of the fieldwork I was conducting for my PhD research on Syrian TV drama, I spent a month in the Damascene Village, embedded with the *Bab al hara* crew. At that time, the physical site of the Damascene Village had been metaphorically turned into *Bab al hara*. Inside the Damascene Village everything, from the architecture of the buildings to the design of the shops and the goods being sold, was the spatial manifestation of a corporate-driven entertainment culture inspired by the Pan-Arab TV series property of a top entertainment group, the Gulf-based, Saudi-owned MBC. The Syrian suburb was occupied, both physically and metaphorically, by pan-Arab capital, which reshaped the symbolic geography of the place, turning it into a mass-mediated reproduction of itself as reenacted in *Bab al hara*.

In November 2010, I took a group of university students and professors on a day trip to the Damascene Village. Everything that happened during the outing was *Bab al hara*-related. We dressed up as its characters; we talked to each other employing its language, making references to its symbolic universe; we even performed sequences from the TV series using them as an access point for discussing contemporary Syria. Our experience was a full embodiment of Jeremy Rifkin's reflection that "theme parks symbolize the primacy of *consumption as formula for organizing social relationships*" (Anton-Clavé 2007:156);[5] and of Guy Debord's understanding of "spectacle" as "a *social relationship between people that is mediated by images*" (Debord 1999:2).[6]

Both domestically and at a pan-Arab level, Bab *al hara* was the perfect media representation of an inclusive national, multicultural project. In fact, the *hara* (neighborhood) portrayed in the series included Muslims and Christians, men and women, all of them united by the common fight against foreign occupation, and struggling to preserve their national unity and a shared identity of *al watan* (the homeland). This message of inclusiveness was in tune with the seemingly reform-minded project backed by president Bashar al Asad and his inner circle of advisors, widely supported by the cultural elites of the country, including the Syrian TV drama makers.[7]

As noted by Lisa Wedeen (2013), TV entertainment, together with other market-oriented languages, had contributed to spreading the fantasy of a multicultural Syria under al Asad's leadership, where consumption, linked to stability and order, could make the "good life" accessible to everybody. The Syria of the 2000s was a fully-fledged "neoliberal autocracy" where aspirations for a good life had become melded to "fantasies of multicultural accommodation, domestic security, and a sovereign national identity" (Wedeen 2013:842-843). *Bab al hara* had rendered this vision into the shiny, corporate-driven language of a blockbuster TV series. Everyone could become part of the Syrian dream, just as everyone potentially belonged to *al wata*n.

However, in March 2011 the Syrian uprising broke out, making *al watan* a very contentious, politically charged issue, and bringing to the surface the contradictions and clashing ideas hidden behind a seemingly inclusive vision of national unity and belonging. One year later, in August 2012, I saw the Damascene Village again, on my computer screen; yet, this time it was not serving as a film location for *Bab al hara*.[8] The place had been occupied by a group of anti-al Asad armed rebels; soon after, it was re-conquered by the Syrian army, then again retaken by opposition forces, who remained there under siege until nothing was left of the former Damascene Village. Video accounts were shot and uploaded to YouTube from both sides, narrating the seizure of the Damascene Village by using themes, symbols and characters borrowed from *Bab al hara*. In some cases, they re-enacted entire sequences from the TV series; a realistic *mise-en-scene* which turned a fictional, romanticized story of unity and resistance against the French occupation into a real-time (and armed) clash between different factions at a time when the uprising was turning into a full-blown civil war.

Syrian and pan-Arab news stations reporting about the events in the Damascene Village edited the YouTube videos taken by the army and the rebels together with archive footage taken from the TV series, using its soundtrack to package their news features. Once again, everything was *Bab al hara*-related. Paradoxically, all the media discourses generated around the clashes in the Damascene Village of the 2010s - including those produced

by non-fiction media - borrowed from the nostalgic, fictitious reproduction of historical events in the Syria of the 1920s. Once circulated online, these media discourses were once again re-manipulated and remixed by anonymous users cross-referencing between the fictional historical Damascus of the 1920s, the real Damascene Village of the 2010s, and the news accounts of the destruction of the latter that eventually became entangled with the narrative universe of *Bab al hara*. This layering of media might be interpreted as a process of "remediation" in Bolter and Grusin's understanding (2000), that is a way of referencing older media and repackaging them in order for new media to achieve its cultural significance.

Yet, there is something fundamentally different in the process of hyperlinking, cross-referencing and generating endless layers of times, spaces and meanings initiated and boosted by any networked content - whether a self-produced video item, or a piece of mainstream television - if uploaded to YouTube and shared across the networks. Jodi Dean (2010) has rightly described the feedback loops and the circuits of drive as the main feature of networked communication technologies. Here the latter is understood as a techno-social infrastructure defined by characteristics of reflexivity and the endless circulation of messages that are shared, manipulated, and repeated over and over again in a loop where any possible meaning is lost. Messages become mere contributions to the ever-circulating flow of data upon which networked communications technologies thrive. The implications of this process in terms of production of meaning are dramatic. According to Dean (2009), the uncontrollable speed and spread of contributions over the networks help prevent the formation of any sort of signification. "Networked communications - particularly in their continued entanglements with the mainstream media - format the terrain of battle between competing conceptions of the Real;" here the latter do not generate a plurality of visions, but a set of "disintegrated spectacles" which undermine any possible condition of belief and generate a feeling of "constituent anxiety" (Dean 2009:173).

This process - which is inherent to the networks - is amplified within highly contentious contexts, such as contemporary Syria, experiencing a violent and bloody armed clash of visions over the country's future. If *Bab al hara*

used to symbolize, at a mass media level, Syrian national unity and a shared idea of *al watan*, the uprising escalated into civil war has turned the TV series into a heavily contentious site. This is apparent from the YouTube videos shot by the Syrian army and the armed rebels.

The Syrian army's video features an unveiled young woman in military fatigues, a TV reporter embedded with the troops whose role is to witness and support the military fight to reconquer the Damascene Village by providing a live account for the wider Syrian audience. This recalls the character of Umm Joseph in *Bab al hara*, an old Christian lady who fights for the independence of her country alongside her male (and Muslim) colleagues, symbolizing the multicultural inclusiveness of the *hara* as a metaphor for the entire country. On the contrary, the rebels' videos feature only men who are mostly bearded; a trait that clearly suggests their religious affiliation. In a fascinating (and surreal) mixture of the real and fictitious, the rebels call themselves *rijal al Ghouta al sharqiyya* (the men of Eastern al Ghouta), borrowing the expression from the TV series; and, at the same time, referring to the real al Ghouta, which stands both as the filming location of *Bab al hara*, and as the area they are conquering while shooting the video. Visually and textually playing with the intertwinement and cross-referencing of places and times, the rebels' videos denounce the siege being imposed by the Syrian army on the al Ghouta of the 2010s, connecting it to the historical siege of that very area carried out by the French troops in 1920s as dramatized and narrated in *Bab al hara*.

These video accounts being circulated on the networks clearly show that the fantasy of inclusiveness behind the *hara* - and behind Bashar al Asad's political project - has now been fragmented into clashing narratives packaged by opposing armed factions that have occupied both the physical space of the Damascene Village, and the symbolic, mediated space of *Bab al hara*. Thus, the Damascene Village has been transformed from a set staging an historical fight fictionalized for the sake of TV drama to a set enabling real armed fighting, used by opposing parties to re-enact *Bab al hara*'s re-enactment of the people's anti-colonial struggle, and to give it novel meanings in the context of the Syrian civil war.

Bab al hara was already a contentious space long before the Syrian conflict broke out. From the time of its first broadcast, back in 2006, the TV series generated several heated debates, mostly on Syrian media. For example, critics had pointed to the inaccurate representation of the women of the *hara*, who were portrayed as passive mothers and wives, subject to their husbands' and fathers' will. Others accused the TV series of ignoring the vibrant cultural life and the high educational level of Damascenes at the time, focusing exclusively on the lower, uneducated class.[9] However, these controversies mostly took place within the space of traditional mainstream media, such as the written press or TV talk shows. Now, the combined action of violence performed in the context of an ongoing civil war and of networked communication technologies has broken up the narrative of a shared nationhood into a variety of competing versions of reality; none of them able to restore the conditions necessary for a belief in a shared national project. A novel space has been created by the entanglement of warfare and technology, where lines are blurred between the physical, lived experiences of war and their media representations, which have gained a new existence by virtue of the endless circulation of the layering of times, spaces, and people enabled by the networks.

This new environment, defined around what I call "expanded places," re-establishes the relationship between violence and visibility, and broadens the very idea of conflict. Here, mediated and symbolic languages are employed to perform and legitimize the violence perpetrated in physical spaces. At the same time, the large scale production and reproduction of this very violence through networked forms and formats serves to actualize and rationalize it, its viral circulation being endlessly nurtured and boosted by the techno-human structure of the networks.

Expanding warfare through the networks: an ethnography of expanded places

Drawing from the ethnographies of the Damascene Village, I want to reflect on the relationship between visibility and violence in the performance of contemporary warfare as defined by and through the networks, and on the

implications of being exposed to violent events in the context of a networked environment. Philosopher Micheal Shapiro (2011) calls this situation of continuous exposure to violence the presence of war. It is by virtue of the "technologies of perception" shaping our communication habitat. He argues that an overlap between the materiality of violence being performed remotely and the comfort of the places where we consume it is produced (Shapiro 2013:137). This reflection is key to approaching expanded places as novel environments generated by the combined action of warfare and networked communication technologies.

Long before new media, scholarship had raised the question of the juxtaposition of conflict zones as places for the production of violence, and comfort zones as environments for the consumption of the latter, emphasizing the role of visual media in bringing together these apparently opposing contexts. Several works have focused on the relationship between violence and visual media, stressing the capacity of the latter to shape a sort of dramaturgy (and ideology) of warfare. Susan Sontag (1977) was the first to underline that the over-saturation of images of violence and violent images had resulted in hindering their potential capacity to generate any sort of ethical responsiveness. Finally, their very existence could not help but bear witness to "the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own destruction" (Sontag 1977:70).

Judith Butler (2009) pushed this reflection farther by arguing that the role of images was not only to document violence, but to actively perform it. This capacity to contribute to the performance of violence is, in her view, closely connected to their rapid spread and dissemination through a diverse set of media. Butler has stressed the importance of media circulation in shaping the relationship between violence and visibility, and has directly linked media representations to modes of military conduct. In her words: "there is no way to separate, under present historical conditions, the material reality of war from those representational regimes through which it operates and which rationalize its own operation" (Butler 2009:29).

Yet the role played by networked communication technologies in generating expanded places exceeds that of facilitating the mere circulation and proliferation of visual media, and of producing and reproducing media representations. Here the networks have to be conceived not only as a techno-infrastructure boosting the endless reproduction of images and texts, but also as the human fabric beneath the mechanism of that very reproduction. The web 2.0 (O'Reilly 2004), also defined as participatory web or "social" web, is in fact at the same time the technological infrastructure and the human network connecting people and information in a system of cross-referencing and hyperlinking. Reflexivity and circulation are key features describing this environment of networked data and people, together with anonymity and decentralized authorship.

The combination of the technological and human element defining networked communication technologies generates a fundamental difference with non-networked media, such as photography or television, which were the focus of Sontag and Butler's reflections. By virtue of the networks' techno-human infrastructure, visuals and data are not just copied or disseminated, but hyperlinked and cross-referenced with other visuals and data, and connected to an ever expanding web of people, places, and times. Within this architecture, everybody is a maker of messages and a connector between one message and another; between one node of the web and another. The hyperlinking of people, places, and times is central to the process of expanding places that have been annihilated by violence and warfare, while at the same time being multiplied in endless mediated versions where new spatio-temporal and symbolic connections are established.

The fate of the Damascene Village makes this apparent. Here, different layers of time have overlapped: the historical 1920s; the 1920s as re-imagined by a media product made in the 2000s; the 1920s celebrated in a fictional version of the 2000s and re-employed in the 2010s by opposing factions to fight a real war and endorse their own version of armed resistance. Places have also merged: the historical site of al Ghouta with its physical replica, the Damascene Village; and the fictional representation of al Ghouta offered by *Bab al hara* with the militarized and physically besieged Dama-

scene Village. New meanings have been generated through this melting of times and places, as shown by the self-recorded video accounts produced by the rebels and the Syrian army. Both sides have linked a fantasy of the historical al Ghouta as re-elaborated by *Bab al ḥara* to their own fantasy of conquering Syria's collective imagination through the physical occupation of the TV series location, which is also the material site where the local anti-colonial struggle originated. By re-articulating the links between historical resistance struggles, the fantasy of this very resistance filtered through TV fiction, and their ongoing armed resistance, both the rebels and the loyalist army have been playing with images and signs, cross-cutting times and spaces.

The multi-layered cross-referencing of a plurality of times and spaces is a result of the process of expansion which occurs by virtue of the techno-human infrastructure of networked communication technologies. This spatio-temporal overlap and the blurring of the boundaries between a fictional replica of a physical, historical place, and the latter's material existence, coincide to shape a continuous real-time and live-presence which characterize time and space in expanded places. The YouTube videos that have been uploaded by the armed rebels and the Syrian army, shared by thousands of unknown users worldwide, remixed by Arab TV news stations, re-manipulated by other unknown users who edit them once again and, finally, re-injected into the ever-circulating data stream generated by the networks, have all contributed to the expansion of the place formerly known as the *Damascene Village*. Expanding a place, in fact, does not only mean multiplying its spatio-temporal existence, but also interconnecting it with other places, times, languages, material existences and individualities.

The endless making and remaking of the connections between images and spaces and the continuous attribution of novel meanings to the empirical and symbolic world generate alternative ways of framing the "existing sense of reality," redefining the "trajectories between what can be seen, what can be said, and what can be done" (Rancière 2009:49). Along these lines a new fictionality emerges; which, as conceptualized by philosopher Jacques Rancière (2013), does not refer to the making up of a fictitious universe,

nor does it evoke a relationship of truth and falsehood. As shown by the story of the Damascene Village, the same symbolic and visual reference (*Bab al hara*) can be employed simultaneously by opposing factions (the Syrian army and the armed rebels) to produce contrasting narratives of resistance, and clashing ideas of nationhood. It can both serve to evoke a seemingly inclusive multiculturalism promoted under al Asad's leadership; and, at the same time, to remind us that an entire nation is being besieged, not by occupying foreign forces but by the Syrian regime.

Fictionality has to be understood as the philosophical device rearranging the existing into a completely new (political) form, and (aesthetic) format. I argue that the relationship between the political and the aesthetic being established in expanded places has to be defined along the lines of Rancière's reflection (2013) on the "aesthetic regime," that is a framework organizing the visible, the thinkable and the sayable independently from the logic of causality or representativity characterizing previous forms of "distribution of the sensible." Within the "ethical regime" and the "representative regime" the question of the image was raised in reference to an external principle (Rancière 2013:16-17); whether ethical (that is "truth content" of the image, its "end or purpose") or representative (i.e., its ability to imitate in a "good or bad, adequate or inadequate" way). Images have been assessed and judged within the ethical and the representative regimes around a principle of truthfulness, or of representation. In the former, images have to aim at something, have to move and mobilize: in the latter, they have to describe "proper ways of doing and making" according to a criterion of representation or mimesis (Rancière 2013:17).

However, the logic of expanded places does not respond to any of these criteria. The fictionality specific to the aesthetic regime is, in fact, a framework marked by a "proliferation of modes of speech and levels of meaning" (Rancière 2013:33) where temporality is defined around a "co-presence of heterogeneous temporalities" (Rancière 2013:21) - as we have witnessed with the continuous layering of times and places in the Damascene Village. In the context of Rancière's aesthetic regime the logic of facts and the logic of fiction are blurred, as much as in expanded places like the Damascene Village.

This seems to bear a resemblance to Jean Baudrillard's *hyperreal* (1994) defined as a space "whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor of the truth" (Poster 2001:170). The proliferation of mediated languages which shaped Baudrillard's understanding of "simulation" (1994) as the main process describing the hyperreal could evoke the layering of forms and formats that have entangled the real Damascene Village with its representations through *Bab al hara*, re-connecting it again to the historical al Ghouta. However, while Baudrillard's simulation is a mediated process which "bears no relation to any reality," expanded places are shaped around the networked re-elaboration, re-imagination, and re-manipulation of materialities, physical places, and historical events (Poster 2001:173). Both the Damascene Village and *Bab al hara* are mediated embodiments of the fantasy of national unity and resistance historically and symbolically represented by al Ghouta. The expanded versions of the Damascene Village generated through networked communication technologies also bear reference to the events happening on the ground in contemporary Syria (the siege of al Ghouta carried out by the Syrian army), re-connecting them to an historical event that occurred in another time (the siege of al Ghouta carried out during the French colonial mandate) which occupies a strong symbolic place in the country's collective imagination.

All the expanded versions of the Damascene Village bear a connection to other times and spaces, a connection which is used by each faction to support its own version of reality. Yet, what we should focus on is not this relation to a supposed ontological reality lying beneath expanded places; but rather the process by which the networks add new layers to the existing sense of reality, and how this results in creating new "communities of sense" (Rancière 2009). The story of the Damascene Village proves that it does not really matter whether the fantasy of al Ghouta elaborated by *Bab al hara* corresponds to an historical reality; what it is important to reflect upon is that this very fantasy has been used to generate and reproduce violence from opposite armed factions, both of which have employed mediated and networked languages to claim legitimacy over their own idea of homeland and national resistance.

In this context "the Aristotelian dividing line between two 'stories' or 'histories' - poets' stories and the history of historians - is thereby revoked, the dividing line that not only separated reality and fiction but also empirical succession and constructed necessity (...) Testimony and fiction come under the same regime of meaning" (Rancière 2013:33-34). Therefore, instead of looking at the questions generated by expanded spaces in relation to an adherence to reality and truth, or in connection with an idea of representation, I suggest focusing on the way new meanings, novel political forms, and aesthetic formats emerge within these environment by virtue of the process of cross-referencing and hyperlinking boosted by the networks. This constitutes a major shift from Sontag and Butler's reflections on violence and visibility elaborated in the context of non-networked media. Both scholars had evoked either an ethical or a representative function of the images which, within the networked environment connecting people and data defining expanded places, is replaced by a logic where "descriptive and narrative arrangements in fiction becomes fundamentally indistinct from the arrangements used in the description and interpretation of the phenomena of the social and historical world" (Rancière 2013:33).

Defining new forms and formats in expanded places

Novel political forms and aesthetic formats appear in the context of networked communication technologies that define expanded places around a new idea of realism. I argue that these forms and formats are fundamentally different from those shaped by non-networked media. Departing from critical theories of realism developed in cinema studies - such as Andre Bazin's idea that the real should be "aimed at" (Deleuze 1989:1) - and from the "ideology of realism" put forward by television - directly linked "to the possibility of 'live'" broadcast (Zimmer 2015:84) - I propose looking at these new forms and formats in light of the characteristics of circularity, reflexivity, anonymity and decentralized authorship which, as previously underlined, describe the networks as a techno-human infrastructure.

Reflecting on the distribution of the sensible and on the different organizational forms it generates, Rancière has emphasized the role that "mechan-

ical arts" played in shaping a new aesthetic, and therefore political, format (Rancière 2013:27). Here technology is not understood as a mere technique of reproduction and transmission; rather, it is the platform that allows a fundamental shift introduced within the aesthetic regime (i.e., "the honor acquired by the commonplace") to emerge and be visualized (Rancière 2013:29). In Rancière's view, the aesthetic revolution - another way of saying modernity - has broken with a certain relation to the image established within the ethical and representative regimes; revoking, on the one hand, "the representative tradition's scales of grandeur," and, on the other hand, "the oratorical model of speech in favor of the interpretation of signs" (Rancière 2013:30).

The combination of an aesthetic shift with the technological possibility of focusing on "the anonymous" and on the "minute details of ordinary life" has given rise a new understanding of history as a continuous process of assigning meanings to material realities, of connecting signs and symbols in unprecedented ways. In this sense we can define history as a "new form of fiction,"[10] and look at reality as capable of "bearing greater fictional invention" by virtue of the never-ending connections between times, places, and people, being continuously made and remade, done and undone (Rancière 2013:34). According to Rancière, documentary films, because of their inner aspiration to capture reality, have a greater chance of rendering the blurring of lines between different material realities and their representations which defines the aesthetic regime.

The French philosopher does not explicitly mention networked communication technologies. However, his emphasis on the anonymous subject as an active producer of history understood in terms of fictionality bears more than a resemblance to the "prosumer" of the networked age.[11] In places that have been expanded by the combined action of warfare and technology everyone can participate in the task of producing and reproducing history, as we have seen in the Damascene Village, where the rebels, the Syrian army, pan-Arab news channels, and thousands of unknown users have all contributed to remaking the connection between the historical al Ghouta and the actual besieged al Ghouta, between *Bab al ḥara* and their own fantasy of national resistance.

The peculiarity of such new formats as the YouTube videos disseminated virally over the web 2.0 is that they combine a visual culture of "compulsive documentation films" packaged to signify the quintessential form of "experience;" with "the diffuse dispersal of information" of the networked experience (Zimmer 2015:97). As argued by Catherine Zimmer (2015:97), "self experience should be exchanged and circulated in order to become relevant. In other words, subjectivity and mediated representation are one and the same," as they are both determined by the techno-human infrastructure of the networks where these formats are produced and circulated. Once again, a technological possibility helps render a fundamental aesthetic - and political - shift, that is the rise of the anonymous subject and decentralized authorship nurtured by virtue of the circularity and reflexivity of the networks. At the same time, serving as a distribution platform, networked communication technologies boost the production of content, which is then re-injected into the networks in an endless cycle of circulation.

Therefore, the new formats of realism shaped on the networks result from "ever-accumulating layers of technological mediation;" they are defined, as Zimmer (2015:112-113) underlines, by "a reflexive structure that makes explicit reference to the manner in which any event or understanding of an event is multiply mediated." The story of the Damascene Village clearly evokes this process of connecting layers of networked times, places, and people; and creating a new understanding of reality which contains all those apparently contradictory strata in a sort of continuous real-time presence. While producing the personal and the individual, at the same time the video accounts shot by the Syrian army and the armed rebels are networked multilayered formations that become "increasingly indistinguishable in aesthetic and function from the social spectacle, the virtual assemblage, and the hypermediation of networked communication" (Zimmer 2015:112).

By virtue of their networked genealogy the formats generated within expanded places shape a fluctuating understanding of reality and history, as they continuously rearrange links between signs and images; being influenced by the circularity, reflexivity, anonymity, and decentralized author-

ship of the networks as they do so. Throughout this process they "reconfigure the map of the sensible;" through the modeling of new perceptions, trajectories and meanings they come to produce new political forms (Rancière 2013:35). A new aesthetic order *à la* Rancière generates "uncertain communities" politically questioning "the distribution of roles, territories, and languages" (Rancière 2013:36). Yet, in expanded places that have been destroyed by violence and warfare, then have been re-born through a networked after-life, this process goes much further. Here, challenging the distribution of the sensible is not only a matter of contentious politics, but of generating and regenerating violence and destruction through the endless circulation of formats of violence boosted by the inner techno-human structure of the networks.

Epilogue: resilience of the image in expanded places

A paradox within expanded places is that, after having been physically annihilated, they are regenerated through their own images which, once injected onto the networks and hyperlinked to other images, times, and spaces, grant to their destroyed selves an endless, networked after-life. In fact, images lie at the core of the process of life-extension. Expanded places are image-fed, growing around the proliferation of the networked forms and formats previously described.

The networks, conceived as the techno-human infrastructure enabling expansion by virtue of its circularity, reflexivity, anonymity, and decentralized authorship, bear another structural characteristic that contributes to strengthening the proliferation of images in expanded places, which is the diffused ownership of the information circulating through networked communication technologies. Having inserted images in the data stream image-makers lose control - and ownership - of their own visual production. This is apparent in the case of the Damascene Village; even in the presence of a mainstream corporate product such as *Bab al hara*, whose ownership is protected by copyrights, its circulation on the networks produces a de facto loss of control over it, resulting in indiscriminate viral sharing and manipulation by anonymous users, other satellite networks, and armed groups like the Syrian army and the rebels.

The loss of ownership over content, which has been widely celebrated by the cultures of sharing and remixing, was already observed in the 1970s by Jean Luc Godard.[12] "Poor revolutionary fools, millionaires of images of revolution," remarked the French filmmaker in his documentary film on the (failed) Palestinian uprising, *Ici et ailleurs* ("Here and elsewhere," 1976). Those Palestinians who had generated thousands of images that were supposed to celebrate the victory of their revolution had actually lost control of those very images; which then could serve to tell multiple, contradictory stories. The condition of being image-makers who are no longer image-keepers is the link connecting a documentary film from the 1970s and the over-mediated and networked environment where expanded places proliferate.

However, it is precisely because of the content producers' failure to preserve their own production that places such as the Damascene Village are granted a further life and can endlessly proliferate and hyperlink with other images within the techno-human infrastructure of the networks. The process of expansion of places relies precisely on this split between image-makers and image-keepers. Images should be left free to circulate in order to nurture the endless data flow upon which networked communications technologies prosper; they should escape from their makers for the sake of being injected into the ever-circulating stream of networked forms and formats. Because of this, a superabundance of images populates expanded places, images that are extremely resilient, and become even more so by virtue of the speed and the dissemination of other data hyperlinked to them in a non-stop flow. Here, images have a dual nature; they are, on the one hand, the methodological device for the performance of violence and, on the other hand, the object of this very violence.

The scholarship has widely reflected on visual media as a tool and technique for executing violence. Analyzing visuals from Abu Ghraib, Catherine Zimmer (2015:44) concluded that torture was not only documented but "performed *through* the act of photography." Summing up a decade and more "politically and culturally saturated by the 'war on terror'," she remarked that this "state of exception" had served as a perfect ideological

context for torture-based media production (Zimmer 2015:53-55). However, violence can be performed on violent images themselves, as the ending of the Damascene Village suggests.

In August 2013, a chemical attack was launched on the area of al Ghouta. It resulted in further deaths, destruction and starvation within the district. Because of the dramatic shortage of food, a *fatwa* was issued allowing people to eat animals not usually consumed. There was a lion in the zoo at the Damascene Village. The Arabic word for lion is *asad*; therefore, in a highly symbolic act, the anti- al Asad rebels under siege killed the lion and ate its meat. A video was shot documenting the entire process, with the purpose of sharing it online. However, shortly after being uploaded, the footage was removed by YouTube, which claimed that it violated the company's community guidelines.

Only a snapshot from the rebels' video has been saved, and it is still circulating (at the time of writing) on the networks. Other images from the video have been sentenced to death by the networks, and condemned to eternal oblivion. Another type of violence has been inflicted on violent images by the networks acting upon a double-edged logic. On the one hand, the technological infrastructure beneath networked communication technologies, functioning around reflexivity and circulation, boosts the expansion of places that have been physically destroyed, regenerating them, and granting them a form of survival after annihilation. On the other hand, that very infrastructure that nurtures "communicative capitalism" (Dean 2009) condemns all things produced to comply with disciplinary frameworks that have been elaborated by private companies and corporate capital.

Hence, those producing violence are also submitted to violence; this operation is much more nuanced and almost imperceptible, as it is perpetrated by the networks adhering to a corporate principle that establishes what should be remembered and what should be forgotten. Contemporary image-keepers are no longer that generation of filmmakers who used to reflect critically on the question of image. The networks have become today's image-keepers; they store and preserve, or delete and destroy images following a logic that still is to be fully explored, understood, and critiqued.

Conclusions

This article has reflected on the increasing role played by networked communication technologies in shaping and re-designing the spatiality and perception of contemporary warfare, and the latter's relationship to visibility and the production of visual economies. Drawing on ethnographies from the Syrian Damascene Village, it has argued that the combined action of violence and visibility, warfare and networked communication technologies produces what I have described as expanded places. Expanded places are endless networked versions of physical sites that have been destroyed, and then regenerated through the multiplication of mediated forms and formats enabled by networked communications technologies. They thrive on the latter's techno-human infrastructure, and rely on the endless proliferation of images occurring as a result of the loss of control of image-makers over their own production. Expanded places are aggregators of new communities of meaning; they are able to catalyze the formation of new meanings and identities, and add novel layers of signification to an existing reality, creating their own multiple realities and histories.

The ethnography that I have conducted on the Damascene Village, with the help of several videos produced and uploaded by multiple subjects (some of them identifiable, others anonymous), constitutes a first case study aiming at discussing the characteristics of expanded places, and at opening up a reflection on multiple spaces generated by the intertwinement of warfare and technology. The article has looked at the prominent role that images play in shaping the expanded places; how they inhabit them; and how they help create new connections between signs and spaces, granting new life to these expanded spaces and catalyzing new communities of sense around them.

The sad ending of the Damascene Village has added another layer for further reflection, which relates to the ownership and control over the images within the networks. The latter not only generate new layers of signification and meanings to an existing reality; they also establish rules, codes of conduct, and a politics to govern and manage expanded places. The disappeared footage of the lion killed in the Damascene Village should stand as

a reminder that the process of expansion and multiplication of mediated languages around a place could be blocked at any moment; and that there is a politics - and a political economy - behind even such seemingly ethereal places, which calls for further investigation.

References

Anton-Clavé, Salvador 2007. The Global Theme Park Industry. Wallingford: CABI.

Baudrillard, Jean 1994. Simulacra and Simulation. The University of Michigan Press.

Bolter, David J., and Richard A. Grusin 2000. Remediation: Understanding New Media. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Butler, Judith 2009. Frames of War: When is Life Grievable? London: Verso.

Clifford, James 1988. The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Dean, Jodi 2010. Blog Theory. Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Debord, Guy 1999. The Society of the Spectacle. New York: Zone Books.

Deleuze, Gilles 1989. The Time-Image. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Poster, Mark 2001. Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rancière, Jacques 2013. The Politics of Aesthetics. London: Bloomsbury, paperback edition.

Rancière, Jacques 2009. Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics. *In* Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics. Beth Hinderliter, William Kaizen, Vered Maimon, Jaleh Mansoor and Seth McCormick, eds. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 31-50.

Shapiro, Micheal 2013. Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn. Abingdon: Routledge.

Sontag, Susan 1977. On Photography. London: Penguin.

Tuan, Yi-Fu 1977. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Wedeen, Lisa 2013. Ideology and Humor in Dark Times: Notes from Syria. Critical Inquiry 39:841-873.

Zimmer, Catherine 2015. Surveillance Cinema. New York: New York University Press.

Notes

[1] I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful and constructive comments that greatly contributed to improving the final version of this article; and the editors for their support during the review process. A big thank you to Kay Wallace who did the final proof-read; to the *Bab al hara* producers for giving me access to the filming in 2010; to Khalil Younes, Hillary Mushkin, Omar Ghazzi, Mohammed Abdallah, Salim Salama, for inspiring me to pursue my work on the "expanded" al Ghouta; to the people of al Ghouta, still living under siege. I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Arab Image Foundation (FAI) in Beirut for giving me access to rare and precious visual material on Syria at the time of the French occupation. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Danish Institute in Damascus for supporting my research work on al Ghouta and expanded places with a research grant.

[2] Such as the literary production by Badawi al Jabal (a pen name of Mohammed Sulayman al Ahmed), a Syrian poet and anti-colonial political activist.

[3] For further reading on neoliberal reforms in Syria, see Haddad, Bassam (2012) Business networks in Syria. The Political Economy of Authoritarian Resilience. Stanford: Stanford University Press

[4] For further reading on *Bab al hara* and entertainment television in the Arab world, see Khalil, Joe F., and Marwan M. Kraidy (2009). Arab Television Industries. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

[5] Emphasis added.

[6] Emphasis added.

[7] For further reading on *Bab al ḥara*, and on the political economy of Syrian TV drama industry, see Della Ratta (2013) Dramas of the Authoritarian State. The Politics of Syrian TV Drama in the Pan Arab Market. Ph.D dissertation, Department of Cross Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen.

[8] The fifth season of *Bab al ḥara* was aired in Ramadan 2010. The TV series restarted several years later; a sixth and seventh seasons were broadcast in Ramadan 2014 and 2015.

[9] For further reading see Della Ratta (2013) Dramas of the Authoritarian State. The Politics of Syrian TV Drama in the Pan Arab Market. Ph.D dissertation, Department of Cross Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen.

[10] The provocatory title of Rancière's essay (2013) is: "Is History a Form of Fiction?"

[11] This definition was coined by Alvin Toffler in 1980 when he predicted that, with advanced technologies, the role of producers and consumers would merge.

[12] For further reading on the cultures of sharing, see Lessig, Lawrence (2008) Remix. Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy. London: The Penguin Press.

The Shifting Nature of Cyberwarfare in Middle Eastern States

Emily Fekete

Oklahoma State University

Abstract:

While some theorists make the claim that "kinetic and traditional military power are losing importance to symbolic and media power," in reality the present military situation is complicated by the variety of tactics used by both governments and civilians in multiple and overlapping war zones. The Middle East has recently been the center of enormous military and media attention regarding the use of many forms of "new" media military operations. However, rather than arguing that online warfare has trumped physical encounters, cyber campaigns must be seen as being deployed in conjunction with on-the-ground military maneuvers. The use of online strategies disperses power and allows for an increasing role by non-state actors in both online and offline spaces of conflict. Drawing from the geographic literature on war, especially Derek Gregory's concept of "everywhere war," examples are offered from Syria, Iran, Gaza, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Introduction

Geographers have recognized the impacts that information technology (IT) has had on the dissemination of information about current events beyond the scale of the local (Adams 2009; Fekete and Warf 2013). As individual knowledge about how to use IT continues to grow across the globe, many people are becoming increasingly involved in the production and distribution of news. Social media and other internet-based technologies have allowed individuals to participate in events on a global scale by either increasing awareness or contributing to cyber campaigns, often undermining state control within societies (Slane 2007). While state-sanctioned military

cyber units are growing in size and number, the increasingly pervasive nature of IT and the Internet has created an environment for non-state actors to participate in warfare traditionally fought by state military forces. The growth of civilian involvement is particularly true for areas located in the Middle East, where a history of state media censorship is gradually losing ground to the growing populations familiar with the Internet and other technologies.

This article focuses on examples of how states and citizens are taking advantage of digital technologies to participate in cyber conflict. Drawing from the geographic literature on warfare, especially Derek Gregory's (2010) concept of the everywhere war, I will argue that current instances of cyberwar contribute to ongoing debates about the shifting nature of the warfare of today. The idea of what constitutes an act of war is changing rapidly with the development of new technologies such as social media, the Internet, and drones. As more civilians have access to these types of technologies, they increase their potential to attack state institutions, broadening the spectrum of what is included in an act of digital war. With civilian groups such as Anonymous committing acts of cyberwar against a state, and private groups, such as the Syrian Electronic Army, commissioned to commit acts of war outside of the state, the definitions of warfare, terrorism, or crime have become murky. At the same time, it is important to see acts of cyberwar or cybercrime in conjunction with the on-the-ground fighting that continues to occur among states. As this article seeks to show, cyber tactics must be seen as another avenue in which wars already being played out in physical space are occurring.

While there has been an increase in the use of cyber tactics in instances of warfare, cyberwarfare does not outweigh or replace traditional military strategies. After a consideration of the literature on cyberwar, the article will turn to examples of the use of cyber campaigns in recent military endeavors in the Middle East from Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iran, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). More information about specific cyber attacks has surfaced in the Middle East following the events of the Arab Spring and the greater proliferation of the Internet in Southwest Asian

countries. This article takes a critical look at contemporary events using case studies from the region that fall within the growing spectrum of cyberwarfare: the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and cybercitizen participation, the actions of the Syrian Electronic Army, the growth of ISIS and its cybercaliphate, and the actions of online activists against the state. These events were chosen because they constitute examples of the ways in which it is difficult to classify cyberwar. Information about these events has been gathered and synthesized from a variety of journalistic sources. While the Internet allows for war to occur at almost any time, anywhere, it also disperses power among state and non-state actors, confusing warfare, cybercrime, and hacktivism. In looking at contemporary examples of the use of Internet-based maneuvers, this article seeks to demonstrate that while there is an increase in the number of events labeled as cyberwarfare, as well as an increase in participants in acts of war, digital actions must be seen in conjunction with traditional military violence.

War is everywhere

The geography of warfare has been shifting primarily due to the establishment of new technologies that allow for a variety of tactics to be used that could not be utilized as little as fifty years ago. For instance, the use of drone warfare has seen substantial growth by the US military, with both critics and proponents alleging the positives and negatives of the use of drones for military maneuvers (Shaw 2013). The ethical implications of drone warfare aside, what the latest technologies such as these have done is to open up new spaces of war and to change the landscape on which war is conducted. No longer is war regulated to a frontline battlefield, but instead can occur well outside of the traditional warzone and can include actors who are thousands of miles from the site of conflict.

There is a darker side to the growing interconnectedness the world has been undergoing with the advancement of communications and transportation technologies. Globalization is having an effect on the way war is conceived and conducted (Fekete and Warf forthcoming). Agnew (2005) has argued for a need to critically engage with the traditional notion of sovereignty

under the umbrella of globalization. Cyberwar not only allows for states to conduct acts of war covertly and over a great distance, but also includes non-state actors and groups, calling into question the power and control of national territories. For Virilio (1986, 1995, 1999), the increased inter-action among nationalistic groups is a product of warfare led by the state as a machine to wage war. As Virilio states, "all human geography is ultimately a product of warfare" (Luke and Ó Tuathail 2000:365). Time-space compression occurs because of the drive by states to conduct war. Virilio sees geopolitics (politics influenced by geographical factors) being replaced by chronopolitics (the politics of time) as advances in technology simply speed up the ability of states to wage war on one another as is the case with increases in projectile speeds, transportation of equipment and personnel, and communications technology. With globalization comes the ability for states to act on one another more quickly and with less friction of distance. The use of cyber methods, as it increases the speed in which actions can occur, further enhances the state's ability to commit acts of war.

Following Graham's (2009) notion of "battlespace," where "everything becomes a site of permanent war" in the city, geographer Derek Gregory uses the term "everywhere war" to explain the ongoing changes that warfare often takes today in its spaces of conduct (Gregory 2010a). For Gregory, the warzone has not just been expanded to urban areas, but also to spaces outside of warzones or even, in the case of drone warfare and terrorist organizations, outside of state borders (Gregory 2010a). It is not unheard of in the geography of contemporary war for an attack to occur well beyond the borders of the warring states. What Gregory calls the boundaries of "frictionless war" are further expanded with the use of remote-controlled drone technology manipulated by soldiers in trailers in the Nevada desert (Gregory 2010b). War, he claims, has become more systematic through the use of computer technology that draws literal targets on grids for drone pilots to hit, mirroring in execution the language of warfare and turning the act of war into on committed by an emotionless machine. The geography of war has been expanded everywhere, bolstering Virilio's arguments that the increased pace in contemporary war further changes the political geography of states.

Not only has the site of war shifted, but the actors involved in military operations are changing as well. Gregory (2010b:166) comments on the rise of private military contractors in the everywhere war, saying "thus these wars are fought not by professional armies but by a volatile mix of para-state and non-state actors, including militias and guerrilla forces, whose alliances and allegiances are notoriously unstable." Today's war is marked by the use of new technology and the neoliberalization of the military to include non-state actors either working alone or as hired guns.

This marked change in direction of the conduct of war is especially observed through the use of cyberwar tactics. Typically defined as a disruption of a country's infrastructure and communications systems through the use of malicious code, cyberwarfare is sometimes perceived as state-sponsored cyber-criminal activity (Kerr, Rollins, and Theohary 2010). The very definitions of cyberwar, cybercrime, and cyberterrorism are problematic and ill defined, with many government officials using the terms interchangeably (Fekete and Warf forthcoming). Cyberwar can be defined as a potentially lethal act that disrupts a country's infrastructure (including telecommunications and financial systems) by using malicious computer code. The definition of cyberwar used by the Armed Service Committee of the US House of Representatives is a premeditated attack on noncombatants' data, computer systems, or programs resulting in violence. A cyberterrorist attack must also be politically or religiously motivated (Conway 2002). Many US government officials are frustrated with the overuse of the term cyberterrorism, stating that in most cases the word is misused to represent an act of cybercrime. Similarly, the term "hacking" has recently undergone a shift in meaning from a form of technological play in the 1990s to being equated with cybercriminal activity (notably through the actions of the hacker collective Anonymous) (Krapp 2005; Coleman 2014). Therefore, while the terms cybercrime, cyberterrorism, hacking, and cyberwar are often used interchangeably, they instead lay along a spectrum of questionably violent and destructive online activity with hacking on one extreme and cyberwar on the other.

The very nature of cyberattacks to have vague or hidden origins also confuses the terms as it is difficult or impossible to trace whether an event was

state-sponsored or not or if it was politically or religiously motivated. Perspective is also important as someone considered to be a "freedom fighter" or "peaceful hacker" from one side may be considered a cybercriminal or cyberterrorist from the other (consider a US citizen working to dismantle the Chinese firewall). The international group Anonymous perhaps best exemplifies the fluidity of online quasi-criminal behavior. Its members engage in "humorous deviance" for a variety of political causes, some taken as lighthearted pranks (such as an attack on the Church of Scientology) while others are seen as national security threats (Coleman 2014). Not only is the nature of warfare shifting in its power structure, but the definition of what constitutes an act of war and who is able to conduct it is also changing as more actions and actors appear to fit the bill.

The confluence of cyberwar and cybercrime led Rid (2012) to argue cyber attacks are the extensions of previously used warfare tactics such as espionage and sabotage, concluding that cyberwar has never occurred and is unlikely to do so in the future. However, there is disagreement among cyberwar experts, as McGraw (2013) asserts that cyberwar is the inevitable next step on the battlefield. Nevertheless, cyber attacks have the capability to inflict real and lasting damage as well as create states of mass confusion among a population.

The boundaries between the real and virtual worlds are growing increasingly blurry, a reality only further illuminated by cyberwarfare. Whether a cyber-threat is posed by a state or non-state actor, cyber-attacks constitute a challenge to state security. Masked by a labyrinth of servers often located in multiple locations across the globe, it is in the very nature of cyber-attacks for the perpetrators to often remain hidden. The indistinct paths that attacks often take make it challenging for states to retaliate against their assailants, especially given that often cyber attacks are not sanctioned by a particular governmental entity, but rather are the brainchild of an independent hacker collective. As Deputy Defense Secretary William J. Lynn III noted, "Once the province of nations, the ability to destroy via cyber means now also rests in the hands of small groups and individuals: from terrorist groups to organized crime, hackers to industrial spies to foreign intelligence services" (quoted in Kerr, Rollins, and Theohary 2010:3).The global nature of cyber campaigns

emanating from individuals and groups poses a challenge to the Westphalian state ideal by cultivating a series of "enemies" that reside outside of the state system. The increase in capabilities for citizen cyber-soldiers opens the door for new ways of governing and policing national territories and also creates new theaters of war. Cyberwarfare shifts the frontline of the battlefield to be located not only on physical battlefronts between states, but also on servers that could be in the Department of Defense or on the computers of hacktivist groups.

The development of military technology, the growing reliance on non-state actors for war aid, and the increased use of cyber operations backs Gregory's (2010a:245) claims of "an emerging model of cyberwarfare that involves both the outsourcing of cyber attacks and the militarization of cybercrime." While some states have their own cyber armies such as China's Unit 61398, Israel's Unit 8200, and the United States' CYBERCOM, other governments are more inclined to hire private cyber groups, sometimes even denying their affiliation, as in the case with the Syrian Electronic Army in Syria or Cybercaliphate, which is associated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). There has also been an increase in participation of "citizen soldiers" unassociated with a state, who contribute to warfare by voicing their opinions over the Internet and social media or by committing actual cyber attacks in the name of a targeted group. If war was brought into the home with television in the 1960s, the Internet has in many ways allowed for citizens to actively participate in battle as opposed to passively watch events as they unfold. This article now turns to several recent case studies from the Middle East to illustrate how cyberwar further reveals new directions of warfare and the everywhere war. These case studies were chosen to provide a variety of instances along the blurry spectrum of cyberwar with examples from state and non-state actors.

Recent uses of cyber tactics

The ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is being waged in both online and offline spaces. Israel has a long history of technology development and the use of electronic means of defense. Israel is unique among

Middle Eastern countries not only as a democratic state, but also in terms of its high technology capabilities. Home to some of the most influential high tech cities in the world, such as Tel Aviv, Israel is a global top spender on research and development as a proportion of GDP. Compared to its Middle Eastern enemies, Israel's internet penetration rate sits at 70.8 percent compared to Iran (55.7 percent), Syria (26.2 percent), and the West Bank (55.4 percent) (Table 1). The statistics in Table 1 point to the fact that many of the states in the Middle East have fairly low Internet penetration rates. The average citizen is unlikely to have access to the Internet on a regular basis in which to develop technological skills. Internet connections and knowledge are likely to lie with those who have the most power, either politically or financially. As a country historically heavily backed by the U.S., Israel has both the political and financial means for a highly developed technological sector.

Country	Internet Users (Dec. 2000)	Penetration Rate (Dec. 2013)
Bahrain	40,000	90.0 %
Iran	250,000	55.7 %
Iraq	12,500	9.2 %
Israel	1,270,000	70.8 %
Jordan	127,300	44.2 %
Kuwait	150,000	75.5 %
Lebanon	300,000	70.5 %
Oman	90,000	66.4 %
Palestine (West Bank)	35,000	55.4 %
Qatar	30,000	85.3 %
Saudi Arabia	200,000	60.5 %
Syria	30,000	26.2 %
United Arab Emirates	735,000	88.0 %
Yemen	15,000	20.0 %
Gaza Strip	n/a	n/a

Table 1: Internet Users and Penetration Rates for Middle Eastern Countries.
Source: internetworldstats.com.

As early as 2000, there were reports of Israeli government attempts to over-load Hezbollah websites. These early cyber campaigns were met with re-taliation by hackers who shut down the Israeli Foreign Ministry's website. During the eight-day conflict in 2012, Hamas was also noted to have uti-lized cyber tactics by making over 44 million attacks on Israeli government websites. Assaults from Hamas cannot simply be stopped by Israel shutting down its Internet because the Palestinian territories use a different Internet service than does Israel (Ackerman and Alexander 2014).

The Israeli government claims that Hamas does not have sufficiently so-phisticated technology to be able to damage its online infrastructure or penetrate Israel's advanced Iron Dome Missile Defense system (Kaplan 2014). However, the continuing conflict has sparked activity from many Palestinian sympathizers, both state actors and those unaffiliated with any specific government. For example, in the days leading up to Operation Pro-tective Edge (the name given by Israel to the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict), the Syrian Electronic Army (SEA) successfully hacked into the Twitter account of the Israeli Defense Force, posting a message saying two rockets had hit the Dimona nuclear facility and warned of a leak (Halleck 2014; Wofford 2014; Kaplan 2014). The Israeli government was able to regain control of the account within a few minutes and assure followers that the previous tweet was false (Halleck 2014). Another public instance of hack-ing took place on July 13 when the Israeli Domino's Pizza Facebook page was taken over by anti-Israeli groups. The sympathizers used the website to post pro-Palestinian statements as well as photos of Israelis in hiding, claiming that they would be hitting them with rockets (Blau 2014; Acker-man and Alexander 2014). While these examples do not themselves con-stitute violence, they effectively spread confusion and fear among the Israeli general public.

Members of the Israeli hacker collective Israeli Elite Force also took to Facebook urging the company to take down the pages of Hamas and Is-lamic Jihad because they were an "incitement to violence." Facebook com-plied and removed the pages, though as of this writing the groups Hamas is Terrorism and I Hate Hamas are still active, bringing attention to the

fact that owners of online private corporations often inadvertently situate themselves on one side of a conflict through their actions (Blau 2014).

Cyber-attacks on Israeli websites and infrastructure have increased by 500 percent since the escalation of on-the-ground conflict in July 2014 (Gilbert 2014b; Wofford 2014). Cyber offensives against Israel, typically in the form of denial-of-service attacks, increased in number, size, and duration, mirroring the intensification of Israeli bombing of Gaza. It is not clear where the incidents are necessarily originating. At the end of July the Israeli cybersecurity firm AdoreGroup claimed that they linked close to 70 percent of the assaults to IP addresses from Qatar (Shamah 2014). However, the hacktivist group Anonymous claimed credit for taking down several Israeli government websites, including that for Mossad, the Israeli secret service, and the Prime Minister's office (Gilbert 2014a; Frizell 2014). The Twitter account *@AnonymousGlobo* announced their attacks in advance using the hashtag *#opsaveGaza* and calling on others to help. In addition to positing details on how to join, the group also posted lists of over one hundred Israeli websites that they claimed to have successfully taken offline (Gilbert 2014a).Part of the increase in Palestinian support by Anonymous was due to the killing of Tayeb Abu Shehada in the West Bank by an Israeli soldier on July 25, 2014. Tayeb Abu Shehada was killed while wearing a Guy Fawkes mask, the signature apparel of Anonymous (Gilbert 2014b).

Many of the current online incursions in Israel resemble those used by the Cyber Fighters of Izz ad-din Al Qassam who had been linked to Iran after attacking the websites of banks in the US periodically from September 2012 to May 2013 (Goldman 2012; Menn 2013). The Cyber Fighters of Izz ad-din Al Qassam used a botnet, Brobot, to effectively shut down the websites of financial institutions for periods of a few hours to an entire day. While it is clear that Brobot is being used to attack Israeli civilian government agencies, military agencies, and financial services, it is unclear who controls it (Gilbert 2014b). Despite these assaults, there was a drop in occurrences during the brief ceasefire on July 27, leading some people to believe that the assailants are still "adhering to real world calls for ceasefire" (Wofford 2014; Gilbert 2014b). Though citizen soldiers have taken to using

cyber attacks to participate in acts of war, it appears that the "rules of war" are being followed by these civilian groups.

Israel and Iran have a history of sending each other cyber threats. The most well-known instance involves the Stuxnet computer worm, launched in 2009 and widely publicized in 2010. Stuxnet is regarded as the most sophisticated cyberwarfare weapon ever deployed. The virus, probably deployed via flash drive or memory stick, is programmed to virtually hide itself for months, recording normal operational procedures, before identifying the optimal time to initiate its destruction sequences (Broad, Markoff, and Sanger 2011). Stuxnet is widely believed to have been developed jointly by the United States and Israel in order to target the IR-1 gas centrifuges at the Natanz uranium enrichment plant in Iran (Markov 2010; Kerr, Rollins, and Theohary 2010). After the initiation of the Stuxnet virus, operational capacity at Iran's uranium plants dropped by 30 percent, keeping large parts of the plant idle for months and delaying its expansion. Iranian software engineers eventually identified and deactivated the malware, though it is estimated that the worm set back the nuclear program in Iran anywhere from 18 months to two years.

Iran replied to Stuxnet with cyber assaults on U.S. banks and military computers, and boasted it would improve its own cyberwar capabilities. On August 15, 2012, Iran is believed to have initiated a large scale cyber-assault on the Saudi Arabian oil company, Aramco. Using a virus called Shamoon that was likely planted in the Aramco computer network through a flash drive or memory stick, data from 30 thousand machines, approximately three-quarters of the company's computers, was erased and replaced with an image of a burning American flag (Perlroth 2012).While the attack failed to disrupt oil production as intended, it is regarded as the most destructive cyber initiative against a single corporation (Reuters 2012). Several days after hitting Aramco, on August 27, a similar computer virus was sent to RasGas, the Qatari natural gas corporation. Due to similarities in coding structure it is assumed Iran was behind the RasGas virus as well (Zetter 2012).Iran has also been previously accused by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu for launching cyber-attacks on Israel (Kaplan 2014).

Cyber attacks in Israel from the Syrian Electronic Army (SEA) are also not new. The pro-Assad group made up of members of the Syrian Computer Society, a technical organization previously run by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, was formed in May 2011 as a counterpoint to information being posted by Syrian rebels (Perlroth 2013). After formation, however, the SEA used basic malware codes and a variety of spearphishing techniques (sending emails asking for personal information from a fraudulent source) to target the opposition, often assuming the identities of activists by using usernames and passwords obtained from rebel hostages (Brumfield 2012; Scott-Railton and Marquis-Boire 2013). The SEA also capitalized on the rebel reliance on YouTube videos for publicizing information about the atrocities in Syria by circulating fake videos embedded with malware or using programs designed to look like updates to Flash player or Facebook security (Arthur 2012). Information collected from rebel computers was sent back to servers with IP addresses connected to Syriatel, the telecommunications corporation managed by Assad's cousin in Dubai, confirming that the SEA is likely working closely with the Syrian government despite the President's denial of the partnership (Hopkins and Harding 2013). The most recent targets in Syria have been foreign aid workers who are likely to be working with rebels (Perlroth 2013).

In addition to targeting forces within Syria as well as aiding Palestine, the SEA has been responsible for a variety of attacks on Western media sources. Claiming to punish news outlets for spreading false information about the Assad regime, the SEA hacked the websites to *The Guardian*, Al-Jazeera, BBC, France 24TV, the *Financial Times*, *The Onion*, and NPR and posted propaganda messages in support of the president (Hopkins and Harding 2013). The SEA has also previously hacked Twitter accounts, such as on April 23, 2013 when it posted through the false account of the Associated Press that a bomb had exploded in the White House that left President Obama with injuries (Perlroth 2013). The immediate effect of the false tweet was a 143 point drop in the Dow Jones index for several minutes (Hopkins and Harding 2013).

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is an example of a non-state actor committing acts of violence and warfare throughout the Middle East. The group has continued to gain territory throughout parts of Iraq and Syria, has occupied Mosul for close to a year, has cut off water supplies from the Euphrates, and occupied several dams, notably the Mosul Dam. Though Iraqi forces were able to take back the Mosul Dam, ISIS's control of water supplies is a serious threat in an arid landscape. The on-the-ground presence of ISIS within the Arabian Peninsula is mirrored by its online presence used for recruitment and, possibly, cyber attacks.

The online activities of ISIS provide another example of how non-state actors have been using cyber campaigning to gain military advantages. ISIS infamously posted videos on YouTube of the beheadings of Western journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, forcing them to make statements in favor of ISIS before being killed. Though similar stunts have been pulled by terrorist groups in the past, including most significantly Osama bin Laden's grainy cave recordings, ISIS marks a distinct shift in that the group has deeply embedded itself in Internet culture for the purpose of attracting new recruits (Ackerman 2014; Graham-Harrison 2015). Videos posted by the militants are in high definition and are made to look like movie trailers. Their use of social media platforms is also vast, even going so far as to post pictures of cats holding AK-47s on Instagram (Ackerman 2014). Videos and other media are widely publicized and distributed by tapping into popular hashtags and posting from multiple accounts (Malik et al. 2014).

Amidst airstrikes from the US and its allies against ISIS that began in August 2014, the US and UK have also responded to ISIS' online presence by suspending Twitter accounts, removing videos showing scenes of murder, torture, and other types of violence, and actively trolling ISIS accounts (i.e., arguing against the posts and creating opposing content) (Malik et al. 2014; Ackerman 2014). Despite the efforts of the US Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, ISIS continues to have a solid online presence that it uses for attracting potential members. As of mid-2015, ISIS is still believed to have the upper hand in its online presence (Mazzetti and

Gordon 2015). Military recruitment has shifted to an online space where the young, the demographic traditionally most likely to be Internet users and most in demand by radical groups, are easily targeted.

In addition to the existing online presence of ISIS used to recruit new members, the group may also be developing its own cyber-army. Dubbed Cybercaliphate, the group claiming to be ISIS sympathizers committed a series of cyber attacks against Western media outlets as well as the US government at the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 (Peterson 2015). The first suspected instance of an attack by Cybercaliphate occurred in December 2014 against the videogame servers of Microsoft and Sony (Raghuvanshi et al. 2015). In January 2015, the website for Malaysia Airlines was reportedly hacked, replacing the homepage banner with a message that read "ISIS Will Prevail" and redirecting site users to a webpage reading "404 - Plane Not Found, hacked by Cybercaliphate" (Chan 2015; Raghuvanshi et al. 2015). The group was also responsible for hacking the Twitter and YouTube feeds of US Central Military Command (Centcom) in January 2015 writing "I love you ISIS" on the pages and tweeting images of publicly available US government documents (Graham-Harrison 2015). The following month, Cybercaliphate claimed attacks such as the 14 minute takeover of the *Newsweek* Twitter feed, sending out threatening tweets to the US first family, tweets reading "Je suIS IS," a reference to the "Je suis Charlie Hebdo" hashtag used in support of the French political magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, and a message reading "we are destroying your national cybersecurity system from the inside" (Chiacu 2015). A similar takeover of the French TV network TV5Monde also occurred in April 2015 when the station went off-air for close to 16 hours and was replaced with the words "Je suIS IS" and flashing images of ID cards of the relatives of French soldiers involved in operations against ISIS. Cybercaliphate urged the soldiers to remove themselves from on-the-ground actions, further entwining online attacks with offline action (Chappell 2015).

Although cyber attacks from Cybercaliphate have recently slowed, possibly due to concentration of efforts at holding physical territory as they face on-the-ground counterattacks from Iraqi forces, the efforts of the online group should not be overlooked. ISIS and Cybercaliphate are different from other

online violent groups because of their "embrace of modern technology, mastery of the difficult art of online propaganda, and appeal to young, computer-literate foreigners including known [criminal] hackers" (Graham-Harrison 2015). Though much of the activity from Cybercaliphate has been equated to online vandalism rather than acts of cyberterror, it is suspected that the group may be capable of greater damage as many of its members are likely operating from outside Syria and Iraq. Anti-ISIS groups such as Western governments, social media companies, and the hacker collective Anonymous have officially declared war on Cybercaliphate. Indeed, Anonymous claims to have attacked 800 Twitter accounts, 12 Facebook pages, and more than 50 email addresses linked to ISIS (Martinez 2015). The case of the online "war" between Anonymous and Cybercaliphate represents actions of two non-state entities committing acts that have the potential to harm citizens, noncombatants and military personnel alike, further blurring the definitions of cybercrime, cyberterrorism, and cyberwar. The fact that a large scale online war is being waged between non-state groups also supports Agnew's challenge that scholars must critically engage with what constitutes sovereignty under globalization and Virilio's notion of chronopolitics as new spaces of war are being created with advanced telecommunications, the victors being the side capable of rapid manipulation of technology.

The events of the Arab Spring also provide an example of the nebulous nature of what constitutes an online "freedom fighter" versus a type of cybercrime. The growing penetration rates of mobile phones in Arab Spring countries (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia) allowed for a wider participation of citizens in the protests, primarily through the use of video technologies (Fekete and Warf 2013). Though more citizens within these states likely participated because of the spread of information through online sources, many of those who took part were outside of these countries and even the entire geographic region. By using a combination of the Internet, social media sites, and traditional news outlets, the actions of activists were broadcast across the globe and supported by people who were not physically involved in the conflicts. During the unrest following the Iranian elections in 2009, for example, there was so much protest activity on Twitter that the media began to talk of a Twitter revolution, although only 0.9 percent of Iranians had Twitter accounts at the

time (Morozov 2009). Most of the tweets of outrage were from people located outside of Iran's borders and uninvolved in the on-the-ground protesting. The We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page was started by a Google executive and many of the tweets circulating out of Syria were from local activists and picked up by traditional media outlets who were not allowed into Syria at the time (Fekete and Warf 2013). Anonymous used the hashtag *#OpSaveGaza* to inform people of how to commit cyberattacks on Israeli government websites (Gilbert 2014a). As of August 14, 2014 the hashtags *#GazaUnderAttack* and *#IsraelUnderFire* were used four million and 200 thousand times each, respectively (Finighan 2014).

While simply tweeting about warfare activities does not directly contribute to war itself, it has the ability to incite political response and create a feeling of involvement and confusion (Fekete and Warf 2013). The actions of the Arab Spring activists should be seen in conjunction with the state brutality brought down on citizens involved in the uprisings. On the one hand, in Syria these rebellions developed into a full-fledged civil war. On the other, in the case of Anonymous' actions, it may lead to citizen participation by clicking on links provided with instructions on how to commit a denial of service (DOS) attack. Online activism by citizen participants has the potential to impact and effect on-the-ground fighting by military and state-sanctioned units. The use of social media by citizen activists further intensifies the notion of the everywhere war. Not only does war occur and can be accessed everywhere, but it can also be committed by everyone. Cyberwar opens up the geography of war to create new spaces of warfare and also to establish new players, spreading the power structure of martial activity beyond the scope of the military and the actions of the state.

The development of cyberwarfare has allowed for military action to move beyond on-the-ground tactics and aerial attacks. War can indeed occur everywhere and cyberspace is not immune to the advances of government and citizen actors. Actions occurring in cyberspace often mirror other traditional military attacks in scope and timing, as is evidenced by the slowdown of online attacks during temporary ceasefires in Israel. Cyberwar frequently has the same motives as physical war: to dismantle government infrastructures

or terrorize the public. However, cyberattacks are not necessarily committed by state militaries, establishing new networks of wartime activity that invites participation from highly organized sub political groups such as the Cyber Fighters of Izz ad-din Al Qassam or ISIS to loosely organized hacktivist collectives like Anonymous. Due to cyberattacks' ambiguous starting points, what constitutes cyberwar and cybercrime are often distorted, furthering confusion as to who is involved in the conflicts. In a geopolitical context where the Westphalian state system still largely dominates foreign policy, the use of cyber initiatives creates a challenge for maintaining traditional wartime tactics and alliances, especially with the rise of citizen activism.

Conflict zones, cyberwar, and the everywhere war

Today, war can indeed occur everywhere, cyberspaces included. Summing up Gregory's arguments of the everywhere war, warzones are no longer the only active combat spaces during war time. Fighting can, and does, occur anywhere, aided by new technology such as drones and the Internet. The rise of citizen soldiers and online activists further pushes what constitutes military activity to the realm of cyberspace. Cyber motions also demonstrate the neoliberal shift of military control from the hands of the state to private corporations and hands-for-hire, a phenomenon Gregory astutely observes. The general public is increasingly participating in warfare events, either by working directly for or as a subsidiary of the state, or as citizens taking matters into their own hands through social media activism or hacktivist collectives. The new warfare of online spaces has the potential to do much physical destruction. Denial-of-service attacks committed both by the state and by activist groups are likely to confuse and disrupt state governments, theoretically leading to harm against citizens or damage to physical infrastructure and property.

However, in spite of the potential harm to the economy, infrastructure, and billions of dollars of computer technology, cyberwarfare still largely serves as a supplement to conventional military tactics rather than a replacement for on-the-ground action. The war between Israel and Gaza, which began

on July 8, 2014, resulted in 2,100 Palestinian deaths, most of them civilians and many of them children. Israel sustained 67 deaths from its advances on Gaza, including 64 soldiers (al-Mughrabi and Lubell 2014). Despite multiple attempts at ceasefires as well as encouragement from Egypt and the United States to negotiate a peace treaty, the reality of rockets being launched from both sides has generated an estimated $6 billion in damages for Gaza and another $2.9 billion for Israel (Piven 2014). Between 425 and 485 thousand people are believed to have been displaced, with many of them fleeing to an already overloaded Jordan (al-Mughrabi and Lubell 2014).

The impacts of physical warfare are not to be understated in a time when the media is increasingly emphasizing the role of IT in warfare and state unrest in the Middle East. Countless Syrians are leaving their country for Jordan as well to escape the bloody rebellion against the Assad regime. In addition to Jordan, the nine million Syrians who have been displaced have taken refuge in other parts of Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, and parts of Europe, putting a strain on these states to maintain refugee camps (Syrianrefugees.com). The Syrian conflict, which began in March 2011, has already claimed at least 230 thousand lives, with no end in sight (CNN 2014). Syria has also become a hotbed of recruiting activity for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, which claims to have 50 thousand soldiers within Syria (Al-Jazeera 2014). The militant group also maintains that it has 30 thousand soldiers in the territories it took from Iraq. ISIS has been demanding Western nations to end their aerial attacks on Iraq, threating to continue posting YouTube videos of the beheadings of journalists following the video of James Foley as a warning for what will happen to other captives if the strikes are not called off. As of writing, at least 20 hostages have been taken by ISIS (Chulov 2014). The US has responded to ISIS with a series of airstrikes, close to 1,500, as well as continued deployment of ground troops to Iraq to aid Iraqi training forces. On June 10, 2015, the deployment of 450 American advisors to help train Iraqi forces was authorized. The engagement with ISIS is still in its infancy.

While undeniably a threat, cyberwarfare must be looked at in conjunction with traditional war tactics, the speeding up of state power via war as Virilio argues. Death tolls, injuries, and displacement of citizens are very real

outcomes of war. Cyberespionage causes disruption of military communications and creates confusion among civilians with access to social media and the Internet. The Internet has also allowed for non-state actors to play a greater role in traditional warfare by permitting hacktivist groups to take war into their own hands and target those entities they deem to be on the wrong side. The reality of warfare today is that it is changing. As Gregory has expressed at length, war is everywhere and the development of cyber tactics and technology have only further opened up the geography of war. War also has the potential to be committed by everyone. Technology has established new ways for governments to wage war, but also for citizens to be involved, either through attacks of their own or by participating in networks of online support. Traditional military activity does still have its place as evidenced by on-going conflicts in the Middle East. The danger of the war of today may be to overemphasize the activities that occur in cyberspace and overlook the realities of physical violence.

Acknowledgements

References

Ackerman, G. and C. Alexander 2014. Domino's becomes battleground in Hamas cyber onslaught on Israel. Bloomberg News. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-17/domino-s-becomes-battleground-in-hamas-cyber-onslaught-on-israel.html, accessed August 14, 2014.

Ackerman, S. 2014. Isis's online propaganda outpacing US counter-efforts, ex-officials warn. The Guardian. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/22/us-battle-counter-isis-propaganda-online-officials-warn, accessed September 25, 2014.

Adams, P. 2009. Geographies of Media and Communication. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Al-Jazeera 2014. Islamic State has '50,000 fighters in Syria'. Al-Jazeera. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/islamic-state-50000-fighters-syria-2014819184258421392.html, accessed August 21, 2014.

al-Mughrabi, N. and M. Lubell 2014. Gaza war wages on, Hamas says Israel tried to kill its military chief. Reuters. http://news.yahoo.com/gaza-war-resumes-deadly-strikes-rocket-fire-005426636.html., accessed August 21, 2014.

Agnew, J. 2005. Sovereignty regimes: Territoriality and state authority in contemporary world politics. Annals of the Association of American Geographers 95(2):437-461.

Arthur, C. 2012. Syrian activists targeted by fake YouTube. Guardian Online. March 20, http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/mar/20/syrian-activists-fake-youtube, acessed July 23, 2013.

Blau, U. 2014. The Israeli hacktivists cyberwar in Gaza. Mashable.
http://mashable.com/2014/07/18/israeli-hacktivists-gaza/, accessed August 14, 2014

Brumfield, B. 2012. Computer spyware is newest weapon in Syrian conflict. CNN Online, February 17. http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/17/tech/web/computer-virus-syria, accessed July 23, 2013.

Chan, K. 2015. Malaysia Airlines Website Hacked By Lizard Squad. Huffington Post Online. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/26/malaysia-airlines-website-hacked_n_6544412.html, accessed May 27, 2015.

Chappel, B. 2015. French TV Network Hacked By 'Cyber Caliphate' Group. NPR Online. http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/04/09/398492643/french-network-tv5monde-is-hacked-by-cyber-caliphate-group, accessed May 27, 2015.

Chiacu, D. 2015. #CyberCaliphate hacks into Newsweek's twitter account. CS Monitor Online. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Latest-News-Wires/2015/0210/CyberCaliphate-hacks-into-Newsweek-s-twitter-account-video, accessed May 27, 2015.

Chulov, M. 2014. Islamic state militants seize four more foreign hostages in Syria. The Guardian. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/20/islamic-state-isis-foreign-hostages-syria-aleppo, accessed August 21, 2014.

CNN 2014. Syria civil war fast facts. CNN World. http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/27/world/meast/syria-civil-war-fast-facts/, accessed August 21, 2014.

Coleman, G. 2014. Hacker, hoaxer, whistleblower, spy: the many faces of Anonymous. London: Verso Books.

Conway, M. 2002. Reality bytes: Cyberterrorism and terrorist 'use' of the Internet. First Monday 7(11).

Fekete, E. and B. Warf 2013. Information technology and the "Arab Spring." Arab World Geographer. 16(2):210-227.

Fekete, E. and B. Warf Forthcoming. Emerging geographies of cyberwar and cyberterrorism. Space and Polity.

Finighan, A. 2014. Gaza and Israel: war of the hashtags. Aljazeera. http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2014/07/who-winning-social-media-war-over-gaza-2014722172425666235.html, accessed August 14, 2014.

Frizell, S. 2014. Off the battlefield, hackers are waging war against Israel and Palestine. Time. http://time.com/3089473/israel-gaza-hackers/, accessed August 14, 2014.

Gilbert, D. 2014a. Anonymous continues cyber attacks on Israeli government websites knocking Mossad and IDF offline. International Business Times UK. http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/anonymous-continues-cyber-attacks-israeli-government-websites-knocking-mossad-idf-offline-1459689, accessed August 14, 2014.

Gilbert, D. 2014b. Iran-linked botnet helps drive cyber attacks against Israel up by 500 percent. International Business Times UK. http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iran-linked-botnet-helps-drive-cyber-attacks-against-israel-by-500-1460178, accessed August 14, 2014.

Goldman, D. 2012. Major banks hit with biggest cyberattacks in history. CNN. September 28. http://money.cnn.com/2012/09/27/technology/bank-cyberattacks/index.html?hpt=hp_t3, accessed August 5, 2013.

Graham, S. 2009. Cities as battlespace: The new military urbanism. City13 (4):383-402.

Graham-Harrison, E. 2015. Could Isis's 'cyber caliphate' unleash a deadly attack on key targets? The Guardian Online. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/12/isis-cyber-caliphate-hacking-technology-arms-race, accessed May 27, 2015.

Gregory, D. 2010a. The everywhere war. Geographical Journal, 177(3):238-250.

Gregory, D. 2010b. War and peace. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers. 35:154-186.

Halleck, T. 2014. Syrian Electronic Army hacks Israel defense forces twitter, falsely claims nuclear reactor leak. International Business Times. http://www.ibtimes.com/syrian-electronic-army-hacks-israel-defense-forces-twitter-falsely-claims-nuclear-reactor-1619314, accessed August 19, 2014.

Hopkins, N. and L. Harding 2013. Pro-Assad Syrian hackers launching cyber-attacks on western media. The Guardian, April 29. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/29/assad-syrian-hackers-cyber-attacks, accessed July 23, 2013.

Howard, P., and Hussain, M. 2011. The role of digital media. Journal of Democracy 2(3):35-48.

Kaplan, R. 2014. Cyber warfare: the next front in the Gaza-Israel conflict? CBS News online. http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cyber-warfare-the-next-front-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/, accessed August 14, 2014.

Kerr, P., J. Rollins, and C. Theohary 2010. The Stuxnet computer worm: Harbinger of an emerging warfare capability. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. http://pubs.mantisintel.com/R41524.pdf, accessed August 14, 2014.

Krapp, P. 2005. Terror and play, or what was hacktivism? Grey Room (21):70-93.

Luke, T. and G. Ó Tuathail 2000. Thinking geopolitical space: The spatiality of war, speed and vision in the work of Paul Virilio. In Thinking space. M. Crang and N. Thrift, eds. Pp. 360-379. London: Routledge.

Malik, S., S. Laville, E. Cresci and A. Gani 2014. Isis in duel with Twitter and You-Tube to spread extremist propaganda. The Guardian. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/24/isis-twitter-youtube-message-social-media-jihadi, accessed September 25, 2014.

Martinez, M. 2015. Cyberwar: CyberCaliphate targets U.S. military spouses; Anonymous hits ISIS. CNN Online. http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/10/us/isis-cybercaliphate-attacks-cyber-battles/, accessed May 27, 2015.

Mazzetti, M. and M. R. Gordon 2015. ISIS is winning the social media war, US concludes. New York Times Online. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/13/world/middleeast/isis-is-winning-message-war-us-concludes.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=0, accessed June 15, 2015.

McGraw 2013. Cyber war is inevitable (unless we build security in). Journal of Strategic Studies 36(1):109-119.

Menn, J. 2013. Cyber attacks against banks more severe than most realize. Reuters, May 18. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/18/us-cyber-summit-banks-idUS-BRE94G0ZP20130518, accessed August 5, 2013.

Morozov, E. 2011. The net delusion: The dark side of Internet freedom. New York: Public affairs.

Perlroth, N. 2013. Hunting for Syrian hackers' chain of command. New York Times. May 17, p. B1.

Perlroth, N. 2012. In cyberattack on Saudi firm, US sees Iran firing back. New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/24/business/global/cyberattack-on-saudi-oil-firm-disquiets-us.html?pagewanted=all, accessed August 20, 2014.

Peterson, A. 2015. Newsweek Twitter account hijacked by pro-Islamic State group. Washington Post Online. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-switch/wp/2015/02/10/newsweek-twitter-account-hijacked-by-cyber-caliphate/, accessed May 27, 2015.

Piven, B. 2014. $6B in damage: Gaza economy reels from four weeks of war. Al-Jazeera America. http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/8/5/fixing-gaza-economy.html, accessed August 21, 2014.

Raghuvanshi, G., P. Newley, and J. Ng 2015. Malaysia Airlines Website Hacked by Group Calling Itself 'Cyber Caliphate'. Wall Street Journal Online. http://www.wsj.com/articles/malaysia-airlines-website-hacked-by-group-calling-itself-cyber-caliphate-1422238358, accessed May 27, 2015.

Reuters 2012. Aramco says cyberattack was aimed at production. New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/10/business/global/saudi-aramco-says-hackers-took-aim-at-its-production.html?_r=0, accessed August 20, 2014.

Rid, T. 2012. Cyber war will not take place. Journal of Strategic Studies 35(1):5-32.

Scott-Railton, J. and M. Marquis-Boire 2013. A call to harm: New malware attacks target the Syrian opposition. The Citizen Lab, June 21. https://citizenlab.org/2013/06/a-call-to-harm/, accessed July 23, 2013.

Shamah, D. 2014. Qatari tech helps Hamas in tunnels, rockets: expert. Times of Israel. http://www.timesofisrael.com/qatari-tech-helps-hamas-in-tunnels-rockets-expert/, accessed August 14, 2014.

Shaw, Ian G. R. 2013. Predator empire: The geopolitics of US drone warfare. Geopolitics. 18 (3):536-559.

Slane, a. 2007. Democracy, social space, and the Internet. University of Toronto Law Journal 57:81-104.

Syrianrefugees.com 2014. Home. http://syrianrefugees.eu/, accessed August 21, 2014.

Virilio, P. 1986. Speed and politics. New York: Semiotext(e).

Virilio, P. 1995. The art of the motor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Virilio, P. 1999. The politics of the very worst. New York: Semiotext(e).

Wofford, T. 2014. Hackers attack Israel as Israel attacks Gaza. Newsweek. http://www.newsweek.com/hackers-attack-israel-israel-attacks-gaza-263256, accessed August 14, 2014.

Zetter, K. 2012. Qatari gas company hit with virus in waves of attacks on energy companies. Wired. http://www.wired.com/2012/08/hack-attack-strikes-rasgas/, accessed August 20, 2014.

Islamophobia in Online Arab Media

Ruth Tsuria

Texas A&M University

Abstract:

What is Islamophobia? A popular term among many newspapers articles, politicians' speeches and scholarly texts, it is rarely clearly defined. Although the concept of 'Islamophobia' is difficult to define it has been a source of heated discussion in academic work, public diplomacy, government policy and news media. Governments, social think tanks and various scholars have attempted to define Islamophobia in order to counter incidents of physical, legal or verbal abuse of Muslims, Islamic artifacts and symbols, etc. Those attempts tend to present Islamophobia as a global phenomenon, similar in all its occurrences and definable as a concrete observable fact. This article supports a move from Islamophobia singular to Islamophobia(s) plural by exploring notions of Islamophobia in Arab and Muslim online media. It is suggested that multiple, localized "Islamophobias" exist and that varying uses and understanding of the term may occur in that media. Furthermore, the article problematizes the emergence of the term and its sometimes over-simplified uses, stepping away from an 'Us' against 'Them' dichotomies. Through careful and thematic analysis of the sources, the political and religious apparatuses of "Islamophobias" are crystalized.

Introduction

In December of 2014, soon after the tragic events in Paris where three Islamic extremists killed seventeen people, various attacks on Muslims and Islamic spaces took place. These attacks included "Three training grenades thrown at a mosque... A bomb blast at a restaurant adjacent to and associated with a mosque... [and] a boar's head and entrails were left outside an Islamic prayer center in Corsica with a note: 'Next time it will be one of your heads.'" (Fisher 2015)

Corresponding author: Ruth Tsuria, Texas A&M University, 102 Bolton Hall, 4234 TAMU College St., TX 77843, USA. E-mail:ruthless20@gmail.com

Although these events can easily be seen as a response to the horror of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, the Muslim community in Europe is not completely unfamiliar with such abuses. For the last four decades, verbal and physical abuse of Arabs, Muslims and individuals that were considered Muslims have been reported all over Europe (see for example: Runnymede Report, 1997, 2004; EUMC, 2002, 2006). Some leaders and scholars have termed such events 'Islamophobic.' Like many social phenomena, the concept of 'Islamophobia' is difficult to define and has been a source of heated discussion in academic work, public diplomacy, government policy and news media. Governments, think tanks and various scholars have attempted to define Islamophobia in order to counter incidents of physical, legal or verbal abuse of Muslims, Islamic artifacts and symbols, etc. Those attempts tend to present Islamophobia as a global phenomenon, similar in all its occurrences and definable as a concrete observable fact.

This article would like to join a growing trend in scholarship that argues for the locality of Islamophobia (Iqbal 2010; Scalvini 2011) thus problematizing the universal term. In a recent review of the term Islamophobia offered by Brian Klug, the assertion is made that the term has 'come of age' and thus "Once a word has come of acquired a life of its own, the quarrel that we might have with it - as distinct from the concept for which it stands - becomes a quibble." (2012:674). I do not wish to quibble with Islamophobia, but I would like to question what are the concepts for which it stands?

The use of Islamophobia as a universal term has been noted by several key political and scholarly figures, such as Kofi Annan, who lamented the need for the term (United Nations, 2004). It has allowed for a common discussion of incidents of legal, cultural, verbal and psychical violence against Arabs, Muslims, Islamic symbols or spaces, or people/spaces associated with Islam. As such, it is useful for a constructing a political discourse. However, some of the political or academic attempts to define or use Islamophobia as a global, unified term might make the unconscious assumption of the purity of cultures and the unavoidable clashes between them. By assuming a global Islam/Muslim, suffering/oppressed/beaten by a global West/White Man, we risk adhering to Huntington's Clash of Civilization (1996). Thus, in a similar vein to

Queer theory resistance to a global term of 'Woman' or of Patriarchy (Jagose 1996), we might want to think how Islamophobia could use some queering up. Using Islamophobia in a mega-narrative of 'the west' is afraid of 'Islam' could possibly Orientalize (Said 1979) Muslims as victims of a unified White Man.

Therefore, by looking at local occurrences and interpretations of Islamophobia, such as "Islamophobia in Italy" (Scalvini 2011), "Islamophobia in Poland" (Gorak-Sosnowska, 2014), or "Islamophobia in the UK" (Saeed 2007), we allow for a more nuanced, careful use of the term. Furthermore, one can argue that these local observations, this use of the plural term 'Islamophobias' would give us information about the real, and not the imagined, sufferings of people in specific times and spaces.

It should be noted that even those scholars that emphasize the localities of Islamophobia, tend to do so in a Eurocentric or Western-centric way. For example, Nafar Iqbal introduces Islamophobia in the following way: "the phenomenon is subtle, hard to understand, and too complex to measure. Nonetheless, it is conspicuously observed all across Europe, Australia and USA." (2010:82). Here, Iqbar might be referring to the fact that most definitions and material written about Islamophobia has been produced in western countries. This article wishes to contribute to the growing study of Islamophobia by providing an initial (limited) presentation of Islamophobia in Arab media. By exploring this avenue, we might gain a new perspective for understanding acts of violence carried out against Muslims and Arabs as they are understood by Muslim or Arab media, a perspective that might differ from the western discourse in certain ways, agree in others, and will certainly offer another locality.

This article suggests that the idea of a global, coherent Islamophobia is not helpful and should be replaced with the concept of "Islamophobias" - a variety of incidents, each uniquely created within its context of time and place, which can only be understood on a local level. However, in order to speak of these different perspectives, localities - or simply, Islamophobias - we need to consider what is the core set of features shared by all the Islamophobias. This is a difficult task, one that perhaps cannot be fully answered by this ar-

ticle alone. What this article does offer is a new, non-western produced (but perhaps western-informed?) review of media, which in turn gives voice to a myriad of perspectives that can clue us in a direction for this core set of features of Islamophobias.

I will begin by shortly reviewing the emergence of the term and its development in western literature. Then an explanation of the unique methodology that allows the author of this article to examine Arab media will be presented, followed by an analysis of the sample of Arab media selected. By highlighting key findings from the analysis of the Arab media, I conclude by proposing a set of feature of Islamophobias.

Origins of the term Islamophobia

Islamophobia as a term started circulating in western literature at the end of the 20th century. According to Sayyid and Vakil (2010), the term Islamophobia sparked interest in the late 1980s. In these first publications (Mescher 1980; Wright 1985; Batunsky 1990), Islamophobia was understood as the fear and hate of Muslims by non-Muslims (Sayyid and Vakil 2010).

The fact that the term was coined before the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 has some importance, a point stressed by Esposito and Kalin (2011), in their introduction to the book *Islamophobia: The Challenges Of Pluralism In the Twenty-First Century*. In fact, one of the most well-known and influential reports about Islamophobia is a British report written in 1997. This report is known as the Runnymede Trust Report and is entitled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (Runnymede Trust 1997). It was the first serious and comprehensive attempt to research the phenomenon of Islamophobia, and some argued that "Islamophobia only emerged in contemporary discourse with the 1997 publication of the report." (Bleich 2011:1582). Although the September 11 terror attacks and other terrorist events have increased the hostility towards Muslims as well as awareness of Islamophobia, the term and the concept have already been in circulation for at least a few decades. However, the definition of Islamophobia is still a controversial topic. While the term Islamophobia is used in academic writing, public debates, and in the media, it is not al-

ways formally defined. Many academic scholars, including such prominent researchers as Esposito, use the definition and features of Islamophobia suggested by the Runnymede Report, with little or no critical examination of the report.

The Runnymede Report *Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All* was written in 1997 by a British committee as part of the Runnymede Trust, a research center dealing with issues of ethnicity. The Runnymede Trust considers itself: "UK's leading independent race equality think tank. We generate intelligence for a multi-ethnic Britain through research, network building, leading debate, and policy engagement" (Runnymede Trust 2014). The trust produces reports about issues of race and equality, based on data collected by scholars and independently by the trust. In 1996 the rationale for a committee on Islamophobia emerged and the committee members gathered data by taking a few consulting tours in different areas of the UK (Allen, 2010). The committee included 18 members, as well as the Chair, Professor Gordon Conway, all of whom came from different social and religious backgrounds. Despite the diversity among the committee members, one of the criticisms against the report has been that too much attention is given to relations between the different religions, and too little attention to issues of race (Allen 2010).

In the introduction to the report, Islamophobia is referred to as "a new word," a concept that emerged, as has been previously pointed out, throughout the 1980s. According to the report: "The word is not ideal... [but] is a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam - and, therefore, the fear or dislike of all or most Muslims" (The Runnymede Report 1997:1). This simple definition seems to be a general way to describe Islamophobia, but it lacks nuance and precision. Perhaps out of awareness to this weakness, the report authors choose to define Islamophobia anew already in the second chapter. In the second chapter, which is dedicated to illustrating the "nature of anti-Muslim prejudice," a deeper observation of Islamophobia takes place. Here, Islamophobia is defined as an "unfounded hostility toward Islam. It [Islamophobia] refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the

exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs." (The Runnymede Report, 1997:4).

This "unfounded hostility toward Islam" is what the Runnymede constantly refers to as "closed views." According to the report, one should distinguish between "open" and "closed" views regarding Islam. As rule of thumb, an open attitude toward Islam sees Islam as a complex and diverse religion and Muslims as a heterogenic group of people, while a closed attitude sees Islam as a monolithic religion and Muslims as a completely uniform group. This results in eight distinctions between closed and open views, which became recognized as features of Islamophobia, and are used by scholars. For example, Göran Larsson, in his examination of the web portal "Wiki-Islam," relies on these characteristics when he concludes that the website is Islamophobic (Larsson 2007).

Seven years after the Runnymede Trust report, in 2004, a report titled *Islamophobia: Issues, Challenges and Action* was created by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, led by researches Hugh Muir and Laura Smith. This report was intended to follow up on the Runnymede Report, and answer the question "In what ways have things improved since 1997, and in what ways have they got worse?" (Muir and Smith 2004:3). One of the notable changes is perhaps not in the phenomenon examines by the report, but in the way Islamophobia is discussed in the report itself. First, this report is much more attuned to the influence of global (and specifically USA) media on UK conceptions of Islam, Muslims, and Islamophobia. Second, it takes a broader attitude to Islamophobia, one that is not only centered on the religious aspects. Most notably for the purposes of this article, this report, unlike the 1997's one, begins to recognize the multiplicity of Islamophobia:

> Hostility towards Islam and Muslims has been a feature of European societies since the eighth century of the common era. It has taken different forms at different times and has fulfilled a variety of functions. For example, the hostility in Spain in the fifteenth century was not the same as the hos-

tility that was expressed and mobilised in the Crusades. Nor was the hostility during the time of the Ottoman Empire or that which prevailed throughout the age of empires and colonialism. It may be more apt to speak of 'Islamophobias' rather than of a single phenomenon. Each version of Islamophobia has its own features as well as similarities with, and borrowings from, other versions. (Muir and Smith 2004:7)

Unfortunately, the report does not specifically point to the features shared by all Islamophobias. Instead, it does the important work of contextualizing Islamophobia in Britain. Similarly, recent reports and studies of Islamophobia in various spaces in the west tend to highlight the specific context of Islam and Islamophobia in that country, a point made explicitly clear by Hutchings, Flood, Miazhevich, and Nickels: "national contexts impact differently upon Islamophobia." (2011:8). However, both national and media contexts explored in current scholarship tend to be western, that is, in Europe, the US or Australia. Less attention has been given to understandings of Islamophobia from the (more) emic perspective of Muslim and Arab media. The next section explores such a perspective, although it does so through a web-based retrieval and translation system, which has serious limitations, namely, that the computer generated translation is not always coherent. The sample, its limitation and possible key findings, which support the notion of a multiplicity of Islamophobia, are discussed below.

'Islamophobia' in Arab Media

Method

Using the Texas A&M Media Translation System, the author of this article has accessed web articles with content concerning Islamophobia, out of which thirty-six articles were selected for this sample. The Texas A&M Media Translation System, MTS, was built by Raytheon (MTS, 2014). The system archives and translates international media in two outlets: the BMS system, targeting television broadcasters in three languages: Arabic, Chinese and Russian. The second outlet is the WMS system, collecting web content

in five languages: Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi and Urdu. For the purposes of this article, only web content was examined, using the existing WMS system, which currently covers 65 websites of news broadcasters, military websites and other news-related content websites. The Arab web media included in this sample contains the following news sources and websites: Al Jazeera, Ad-Dustour, Asharq Al-Awsat, Asre Nou, MehrNews, Aldiyar Online, Al-Hayat, Akhbar-Rooz, Radiofarda, Al-Quds Al-Arabi, and Tabnak.

The sampling strategy was complex due to the nature of the system. During the months of March and April 2014, data was collected through the employment of several different search words. The first search word used was "Islamophobia." However, it yielded problematic results. It seems that the system's subject article results in Arabic or Persian for the English phrase "Islamophobia" was far from accurate. For example, the system returned results such as a story about a new TV show, about water waste and so on. One possible reason for these inaccurate results might be the translation. When conducting some translation work, it seems that the system translated "جابه," meaning opposition (according to Almaany online dictionary, 2014) into Islamophobia. Therefore, any article concerning hostility, disagreement or opposition was retrieved, out of which only few were relevant to the topic of Islamophobia.

The next step was to search for the Arabic phrase for Islamophobia (الخوف من الإسلام), which retrieved a variety of related results (see Appendix, Items 1-5). However, many of them were distorted due to the nature of the search phrase, since the phrase contain three words "fear" (الخوف) "of" (من) "Islam" (الإسلام), any article was retrieved by the system if all three words were present, which led to many articles concerning Islam and fear, but not necessarily fear of Islam. This search also led to the consideration of using the phrase "Stigma of Islam" (الإسلام قد وصم) which yielded a few articles (see Items 6-8). The next logical step was to search only the term "stigma" "وصم," which yielded an article about the demonization of jihad (Item 9). Then, a search of the term "الخوف من الإسلام" (fear of Islam) was conducted while using quotation marks, which retrieves only articles in which the entire phrase is found

(Items 10-12). The term "إسلاموفوبيا" - which is the word Islamophobia in Arabic script - yielded only two results (Items 11 and 13), one of which was already found under the other search terms (Item 11, titled *alaslamwfwbya*).

While reading the article titled *alaslamwfwbya*, it was discovered that "Alaslamwfwbya" is the transliteration of Islamophobia. This transliteration was probably produced by the MTS system for Islamophobia (al-aslam-wf-wbya), and searching for this term arrived at a several articles (Item 14-21). Other phrases, like "hate of Mosques," "hate of Muslims," etc., yielded no results when searched for as a distinct phrase, but without the quotation marks, one interesting result was returned (Item 22). Similarly, the phrase "Muslims suffering" (المسلمون يعانون) brought up two articles (Items 23-25).

The last method attempted for collecting this sample was using current events that were considered Islamophobic by Western media. Information about such events was gathered from two leading anti-Islamophobia websites: *Islamophobia Today – Americans against Islamophobia* (Islamophobia Today 2014) and the British website *Islamophobia Watch* (Islamophobia Watch 2014). Islamophobia Watch, for example, covered a story concerning threat letters sent to a mosque in France (Islamophobia Watch 2014a). A search was conducted for phrases such as "Muslims in France" and "A mosque in Paris" (both in English and Arabic), which resulted in a few articles (Items 26-30). Similarly, the author of this article searched for current events that might spark interest in the discussion of Islamophobia. First, a search for the EU parliament election in English and in Arabic was run, which brought five articles related to Arab or Muslim issues (Items 31-35). The second search was for "Brandeis University" after the university cancelled its plan to give an honorary degree to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a feminist critic of Islam (Perez-Pena and Vega 2014), an act which was considered possibly Islamophobic. This resulted in only one article, published by Al-Hayat (see Item 36).

Lastly, it is interesting to note that other search words of events mentioned by the above sites, yielded no results. For example, Islamophobia Today reports an Islamophobic radio talk given by Bryan Fischer, the spokesman for American Family Association, in which Fischer claims that "Allah is

a demon" (Islamophobia Today 2014a). However, the Arab Media accessible via the Texas A&M Media Translation System, show no interest in Fischer, as both searching his name in English or Arabic retrieved no results.

This section has covered the various methodologies used to arrive at a collection of articles dealing with Islamophobia from Texas A&M Media Translation System's Arab Media. It is detailed not only for methodological interests, but also to show the complexity of this topic and the advantages and limitations of working with a closed and experimental translation system. With these limitations considered, thirty-six articles were collected from a variety of Arab and Persian sources. An analysis of these sources follows.

Analysis

In this section a short descriptive statistical analysis of the material is offered, followed by a much more detailed thematic analysis. The descriptive statistical analysis includes two tables: one including the thirty-six articles' publication dates, and the second table examining the distribution of the articles' publication sources (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). As can be seen from the figures, most of the sources were from 2014, which is not surprising given the fact that the WMS system can only retrieved web content from the last 90 days (pre-2014 articles were retrieved due to a new comments or edits added in the last three months).
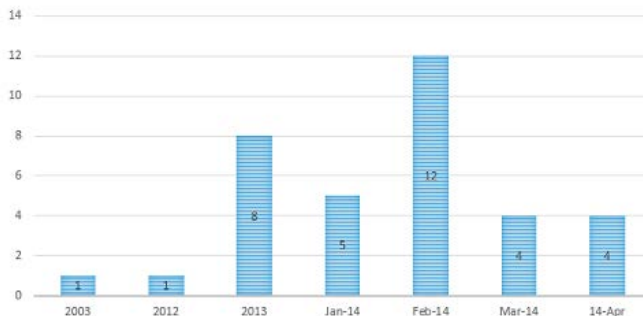

FIGURE 1: ARTICLE PUBLICATION DATE

Figure 1. Article publication date.

Figure 2 clearly shows that the leading news source in Arab media dealing with this topic is Al-Jazeera. This can be explained in various ways. One possible explanation lays in the fact that Al-Jazeera is the biggest producer of content on the Arab world (Lahlali, 2011), and as a result has the largest amount of articles. Another possible explanation is that Al-Jazeera, being a point of contact between the west and the Arab world, is influenced by western notions of Islamophobia, and covers more stories of Islamophobic attacks in western countries (Gilboa and Powers, 2007).
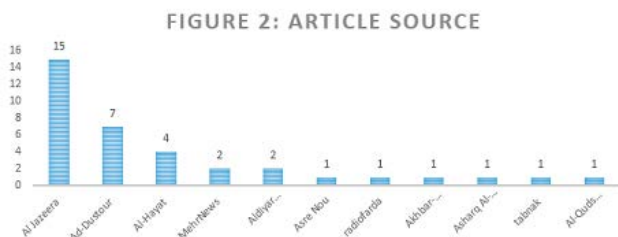

Figure 2. Article source.

The second step of the analysis was to conduct a detailed thematic analysis of the sources. Each article was closely read for repetitive or related words (such as Islam, hate, fear, violence, politics, etc.). While conducting this analysis the author took notice of the limitations of a computer-translated text. Therefore, a closed, descriptive analysis was not conducted, rather a general inspection of themes and concepts. The analysis arrived at twenty-four sub-themes, which can be clustered to six themes: media, globalization, religion, violence, politics and Islamophobia. A short examination of each theme will reveal something about the complexity of the phenomenon.

Media

Under the cluster of media, the following three themes are found: Arab media, new media and international media. Arab media can be traced in the multiple mentions of Al-Jazeera. In many of the articles published by Al-Jazeera, the authors cite previous news stories from Al-Jazeera. Therefore, although Al-Jazeera is mentioned several times it is mostly used as a

self-referential source. The second theme, new media, is mentioned only a few times, and in one article (Item 15) "racist attacks" against Muslims on the World Wide Web are mentioned. The last theme, international media, seems to be the most dominant within the cluster of media. International media includes words such as western media, world media, Israeli media, international radio and television, western propaganda, global awareness, and mentioning of specific western media such as BBC and the "British Guardian newspaper." The context of international media was not unified. In some cases, it was merely mentioned as a source, for example, the phrase "According to some international sources" can be found in one of the articles (Item 5). In other sources, however, it is clear that international media is framed as the cause for Islamophobia. For example, in one article international media is explicitly framed as distorting Islam and promoting Islamophobia: "Father Dr. Antoine Dhaw... warns of the seriousness of movements... that distort Islam and promote [Islamophobia], and the role of inciting [international] media..." (Item 16).

Globalization

Under the cluster of globalization several themes can be found: geopolitics, "The West," colonialism, international organizations, economics, and immigration. It is interesting to note the variety of places mentioned: USA, Britain, France, Lebanon, Somalia, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Myanmar, Palestine, Central Africa, Turkey, Syria, Netherlands, Sudan, Kenya, Malaysia. A diverse spread of places of interest can be noted from this list, suggesting that Arab media covers attacks on Muslims or Islamophobia in a variety of places. This is interesting especially when compared to western understanding of Islamophobia, which is mostly focused on happenings in western countries.

That being said, it seems that Islamophobia is highly connected to western media, history and politics. Variation of the word 'west' appeared fifty-four times across the thirty-six articles. In several incidents, the west was closely associated with colonialism. For example, in Item 25 we find the question: "If France-led left-wing does it change its policies Western imperialist

Powers [?]" [*sic*]. Terms such as imperialism, colonialism, orientalism, and post-colonialism are presented in some of the articles, perhaps as political powers that maintain, if not produce, hate and fear of Islam. Lastly, we see mentions of other globalization factors, such as migration, economic powers and global organizations, such as NATO, UN, the Association of Muslim scholars, and Islamic Cooperation.

Religion

The cluster of religion contains themes such as: Islam, attacks on Islam, Christians and Muslims, religious freedom, and the mixture of identity or community (race/ethnicity/culture and religion). This is perhaps the largest collection of themes, and suggests that for the Arab media in this sample, the topic of religion is pivotal for the issue of Islamophobia. Religion seems to be brought up in the context of identity, of politics and conflict, and in a general discussion of Islam. The last context appears as religious teachings. For example, talk of God, Imams, morals, the Qur'an, and love for Islam is present in several articles (Items 14 and 22, for example). Furthermore, one article calls out to stop supporting extreme Muslims and Islamic terrorists, as they are damaging and distorting Islam: "Extremism is a violation of the rights of all Muslims because it harms the image of Islam" (Item 4). Other articles, however, focus on the harm being done to Islamic symbols and traditions, such as attacks on mosques (mentioned three times), preventing the building of new mosques (mentioned once), burning the Quran (mentioned once), not allowing Halal food (mentioned once), or attacking women who are wearing the hijab or other 'Muslim wear' (mentioned eight times). Some of these harmful phenomena are specifically framed as conflicts between Christians and Muslims. This framing is found both when referring to violence in Africa, as in the article titled *Africa's Muslims trapped between terrorism and anvil of genocide* (Item 5), and in the west, in the article titled *10 years later; interaction between Islam and the West in the shadow of the consequences of September 11 attacks* (Item 24).

However, a much more common context for religious terms within the data analyzed, is in the construction of identity or community. For example, one

Ruth Tsuria

of the reasons to combat Islamophobia, according to one article (Item 18), is "in order to [help people] maintain their dignity and identity, culture, religious [*sic*]." It seems that religion plays part in defining one's identity and community. The term 'Muslim community,' for example, is used several times in different forms and contexts. Furthermore, the different identity makers: religion, ethnicity, and race are often mixed. 'Arab and Islamic thought,' 'Arab and Muslim,' 'religious and cultural identity,' ,black Islam,' and 'religious and cultural identity' are examples of such mixtures. This can be understood as part of the complexity and fluidity of these identities.

Violence

The cluster of 'violence' includes themes like: terrorism, attacks, attacks against women, war and security, and racism. Most of the mentions of attacks refer to internal safety of Muslim or Arab people intra-nationally, while terrorism, war and security refer to more international, global happenings, such as September 11 or 'the war on terror.' The attacks on Muslims are sometimes framed as 'racist attacks.' One example from the article titled *Muslims in Myanmar* (Item 23) assembles together race and religion, and describes the attacks as "the ugliest kinds of racial and religious discrimination." The attacks include, as mentioned above, attacks on religious symbols, but also 'physical and verbal assaults,' 'racist graffiti such as *Islam outside France*,' 'aggression,' 'sabotage,' 'harassment,' 'breaking a number of windows and throwing pieces of pigs inside,' and 'incidents of verbal or physical harassment against women because of Muslim dress.'

As can be noted from this list, the violence is understood to take place in three different forms: the first is verbal, as in aggression and harassment; the second is physical, as in sabotage, vandalizing buildings, and physical assault; and the last is religious violence, such as setting fire to the Qur'an, and, perhaps, "insulting the Prophet" and describing the religion of Islam as "a religion of violence" (the last two examples are from Items 11 and 36).

Politics

The cluster of politics includes themes such as: politics, political Islam, legalities, human rights, minorities, and social/cultural politics. First, names of specific politicians and parties, as well as political positions, were mentioned, such as: Obama, Kerry, Mohamed Morsi, Merkel, Al-Sisi, Mubarak, US Defense Ministry, Muslim Brotherhood, Interior minister, right-wing, etc. These were mentioned either as part of international events or in reference to the lack of government involvement in stopping Islamophobic events. An example for the last use can be found in the quote: "the failure of government policies in the integration of immigrant groups" (Item 17).

The next sub-theme refers to political Islam, both as a positive development and as a cause of Islamophobia, as can be deducted from the article title *Is the West in fear of political Islam?* (Item 10). Lastly, we find talk of politics in the social sphere: some articles call for "social coexistence," "call for tolerance," and "a culture of tolerance and respect among religions" (Items 15, 3 and 18, respectfully). Similarly, 'human rights' and 'human rights activism' are mentioned several times, and are usually framed as part of the efforts to protect minorities and reduce violence against Muslims and Arabs. For example, in an article from Al-Hayat, the title and body of the article clearly state how human rights groups are fighting to stop Islamophobia: *Groups of Human Rights to combat "alaslamwfwbya"* (Item 18). Some of this political effort to stop Islamophobia takes shape through calling for national and international laws, and to consider "the balance between freedom of expression of the one hand, and protection of religions on the other hand." (Item 18). The cluster of politics, then, compresses international politics, social politics and the influence of these political actions and institutions on instances of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia

It was difficult to cluster Islamophobia with any of the other terms - is it related to violence? Politics? Religion? Therefore, in order to conduct a careful thematic analysis, the term received a cluster of its own. The word "Is-

lamophobia" is mentioned fourteen times, usually describing attacks. All of the occurrences of the word are in the transliterate form of *alaslamwfwbya*. Other terms also describe violent events: racist attacks, ethnic and religious hatred, anti-Muslim acts, hostility towards Islam, fear of Islam, hatred and discrimination against Muslims, anti-Muslim, fear or hatred of Islam and stigmatization of Islam. The variety of terms might result from the translation system, or of the wide search terms used to gather this information. It might also go to show that there is a diversity of terms used by Arab media to describe Islamophobia. It is interesting to note that typically, Islamophobia was used to describe incidents in European countries, or as a general phenomenon. The other terms were used when talking about incidents in Asia and Africa, as well as attacks in Europe and the Americas.

Key Findings

The examination of these clusters reveals the complexity of the topic, in which even similar themes are presented differently in the range of articles. For example, if we look solely at the articles that use the term '*alaslamwfabya*' (Islamophobia) we see a very geographically western - specifically European - focus. However, when the other terminologies are considered, we get a much more global depiction of the phenomenon, which includes violence against Muslims in Africa or Asia. The location and meaning of Islamophobia are related to terminology and search words used to retrieve the articles. For example, when searching for "EU parliament election" in English, most results concerned EU foreign policies: their resolution about Iran nuclear power, about Iran election, etc. In contrast, when searching "EU parliament election" in Arabic, the articles retrieved were cornering Muslims and Arabs within the EU. This probably occurred due to the nature of the WMS's translation tools. It might still be worthwhile to reflect whether Islamophobia is considered as happening within a country, as an internal affair; or as an international affair, in the relationship between countries.

Second, the different articles offered a few explanations for the cause of Islamophobia. Some sources frame international media as responsible for the fear of Muslims. For example, in Item 16 we find the clear statement that

"media distort Islam and promote '*alaslamwfwbya*' (Islamophobia)." Another example shows how "attacks against Muslim women constantly by the extreme right, fostered by spiteful media incites continuously" [*sic*] (Item 13). Other sources see Islamophobia as a result of colonialism, meaning that colonialism allows for expressions of hate or fear of Islam. For example, one article frames Islamophobia as being nurtured by "the spirit of old colonial" (Item 11). Yet other articles point a finger at extremist Muslim groups, and call other Muslims to break away from them in order to minimalize Islamophobic attacks. In Item 18, for instance, the writer calls for the "reduction of extremism and fanaticism" and instead to "deliver of the message of Islam" [*sic*]. Another article (Item 30) calls for Muslims in France "to be vigilant and calm about the cowardly acts of provocation and degrading." Thus, we find that the information points to a variety of global spaces in which Islamophobia is happening (and not just in western countries), and it also indicates a variety of explanations as to why is it happening.

Another interesting finding is the distinct volume of articles published by Al-Jazeera in comparison to the other news-sources. Although the sample is not generalizable, out of the thirty-six articles in the sample, fifteen were published by Al-Jazeera. As previously noted, one possible explanation is Al-Jazeera's close connection to western media (Gilboa and Powers, 2007). This can result in the appropriation and frequent use of western terminology, as well as a need to cover more stories that happen in western countries. Gilboa and Powers recognize Al-Jazeera's external attempt to "represent to the world Arab and Muslim perspectives on regional and international events" (Gilboa and Powers, 2007:53). Perhaps as a by-product of this role, western ideas and terms find their way into the language Al-Jazeera uses when producing content for the Arab world. The second leading source of articles was the newspaper Ad-Dustour, which published seven of the articles in the sample. Ad-Dustour is a Jordanian media company, founded in 1967 (Ad-Dustour, 2014). According to El-Sarayrah (1986), Ad-Dustour relies heavily on western sources for their coverage of foreign affairs. Therefore, similar to Al-Jazeera, exposure and promotion of western sources might carry with it western terminology.

After viewing the variations of "where" and "why" Islamophobia is happening according to Arab media, we should also frame "what" is happening. In other words, what do these sources describe as Islamophobia? The analysis suggests three categories: Attacks against religious symbols (such as mosques and the Qur'an), verbal and physical attacks on Arabs or Muslims, and legal, political or social discrimination. Lastly, and perhaps most important, the analysis reveals a variety of terms for Islamophobia: 'anti-Muslim acts,' 'hostility towards Islam,' 'the stigmatization of Islam,' 'hatred and discrimination against Muslims,' 'anti-Islam,' and 'fear or hatred of Islam.' Furthermore, both in the Arab media and in the western literature, Muslims and Arabs are used interchangeably, and attacks are framed as either based on racist, xenophobic or anti-Islam worldview. Therefore, we can see that the idea of 'Islamophobia' carries a complex set and web of different concepts. One possible explanation for this lack of clear definition might be that this phenomenon takes on different manifestations in different localities. As can be seen from the data, violence against Muslims in Africa is not similar to throwing a pig's head into mosques in France, nor is it similar to cancelling an honorary degree in an American university. Verbal harassment of Muslim individuals are not the same as making cartoons of the Islamic prophet, and the fear of political Islam is not the same as the mistreatment of Arab immigrants to Europe. We might need better tools and terminologies to discuss the similarities and differences between these phenomena. The variety of terms and stories covered in the Arab media of this sample might be a useful first step to consider the common set of features these incidents share.

Conclusion

It is challenging to paint a picture of 'Islamophobia in Arab Media' not only due to methodological difficulties, but also due to the variety of definitions, the diversity of opinions and the locality of these descriptions. Other terms, such as 'hostility against Islam,' 'anti-Muslims,' and 'the stigmatization of Islam' are found to possibly replace the use of Islamophobia in these articles. Therefore, we might benefit from recognizing Islamophobia's multiple appearances by embracing the term "Islamophobias." Much like Eisensta-

dt's (2000) 'multiple modernities' stress how modernity occurs differently in different settings, we can recognize that what might be considered Islamophobic in Myanmar is different than an Islamophobic act in France, the USA or Yemen. The specific histories of Islam in China, in Africa, in Myanmar, in the US, Australia, and Europe, informs the ways in which conflicts and violence related to Islam might take place. The attempt to define Islamophobia as a coherent and globally accepted phenomenon, which mostly takes place in western countries, is problematic. Instead, we might consider a core set of features that can be associated with multiple forms of Islamophobia. I suggest we consider the following features:

> 1. Islamophobias are informed by ideology/religion - As suggest by Chis Allen (2010) a definition of Islamophobia must include an ideological aspect, as Allen defines "Islamophobia is an ideology... that sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meaning about Muslims and Islam..." (2010:190). This ideological worldview can also be a religious one, which then views Islam as a threat to the religion, or a secular one. This feature can also be associated with the Runnymede distinction of closed/open views, in which one's ideology informs the closed views about Islam/Muslims.

> 2. Islamophobias consist of a form of violence - As noted by the variety of sources, Islamophobic violence against Muslims can take many shapes: It can be symbolic, verbal, legal, or physical. It can be a micro-aggression or an aggressive assault. The violence can be pointed towards buildings, symbols or people.

> 3. Islamophobias can happen in different localities - the phenomenon is not limited to the west, it can happen in Asia, Africa, Latin America, anywhere. What need to be considered is the history of the locality to understand the specific phenomenon.

4. Islamophobias can be related to global flows, specifically global media -as some of the sources suggest, global flows of media, economic power, immigration and political power all play some role in the increase of Islamophobias.

5. Islamophobias interact with other types of political fears, such as racism and xenophobia: race, religion and nationality still play a part in the identity construction that tends to be the building blocks for ideologies that inform Islamophobias. Therefore, the Othering discourse that takes place in Islamophobias can parallel, substitute or contribute to discourses of racism and xenophobia.

The first feature is very important, in my opinion, because it suggests that not *any* form of violence against *any* person considered to be Muslim or Arab is Islamophobic. The other features are important because they expand our understanding of Islamophobia and allow for multiple, varying types of Islamophobias. This core set of features is only a suggestion, one that scholars should further examine and develop. But it can, I hope, serve as a pilot for a scholarly expansion and consideration of Islamophobia as it is understood, described and experienced from different perspectives.

Further research into this topic might also be useful to overcome some of this current study's limitations. First of all, an examination of western media sources in addition to the government and scholarly sources presented here could shed light on how Islamophobia is presented at the grass-roots level in western countries. That is, we might benefit not only from studies showing how the media creates Islamophobia (Saeed, 2007; Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2008) but also how western media presents violence/discrimination against Muslims/Arabs. In the same spirit, additional exploration of Arab media in the new and developed MTS system at Texas A&M, might pull in more sources, which could make the finding generalizable. Therefore, this article can be considered a first step in the attempt to use the resources at Texas A&M in order to reframe the term Islamophobia. This reframing, I hope, will help crystalized the complexity

of the phenomena and in turn produce new and better ways of decreasing it, and other forms of violence.

Acknowledgment

References

Ad-Dustour 2014. Home Page. Ad Dustour. http://www.addustour.com.

Allen, Chris 2010. Islamophobia. Surrey, UK: Ashgate Press.

Aziz, Mohammed, Duaa Izzidien, Intissar Khreeji, and Dilwar Hussain 2006. Perceptions of Discrimination and Islamophobia: Voices from members of Muslim communities in the European Union. Salburg, Austria: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.

Batunsky, Mark 1990. Islam and Russian culture in the first half of the 19th century. Central Asian Survey 9(4):1-27.

Bleich, Erik 2011. What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept. American Behavioral Scientist 55(12):1581-1600.

Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah 2000. Multiple modernities. Daedalus:1-29.

El Sarayrah, Mohamed 1986. Foreign news in two Jordanian newspapers. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly 63(2):363-365.

Esposito, John L., and Kalin, Ibrahim, Eds. 2011. Islamophobia: the Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century. UK: Oxford University Press.

Fisher, Max 2015. This map shows every attack on French Muslims since Charlie Hebdo. Vox, January 10. http://www.vox.com/2015/1/10/7524731/french-muslims-attacks-charlie-hebdo, accessed January 26, 2015.

Geertz, Clifford 1973. The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic.

Gilboa, Eytan, and Powers, Shawn 2007. The Public Diplomacy of Al-Jazeera. *In*: New media and the new Middle East. Philip Seib, ed. Pp. 53-80. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gorak-Sosnowska, Katarzyna 2014. Deconstructing Islamophobia in Poland. Story of an Internet Group. Warsaw:University of Warsaw.

Gottschalk, Peter, and Greenberg, Gabriel 2008. Islamophobia: making Muslims the enemy. Rowman & Littlefield.

Huntington, Samuel 1996. The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order. Penguin Books India.

Islamophobia Today 2014. About. Islamophobia Today. http://www.islamophobiatoday. com, accessed January 26, 2015.

Islamophobia Today 2014a. Bryan Fischer "Allah is an extremely powerful demon god." Islamophobia Today. http://www.islamophobiatoday.com/2012/08/04/bryan-fischer-allah -is-an-extremely-powerful-demon-god/, accessed January 26, 2015.

Islamophobia Watch 2014. About. Islamophobia Watch. http://www.islamophobiawatch. co.uk, accessed January 26, 2015.

Islamophobia Watch 2014a. Threat letter to French mosque praises far right. Islamophobia Watch. http://www.islamophobiawatch.co.uk/threat-letter-to-french-mosque-praises-far -right/, accessed January 26, 2015.

Iqbal, Zafar 2010. Islamophobia or Islamophobias: Towards Developing A Process Model. Islamic Studies, 49(1):81-101.

Jagose, Annamarie 1996. Queer Theory: An Introduction. New York: New York University Press

Klug, Brian 2012. Islamophobia: A concept comes of age. Ethnicities 12(5):665-681.

Lahlali, El Mustapha 2011. Contemporary Arab broadcast media. Edinburgh University Press.

Ruth Tsuria

Larsson, Göran 2007. Cyber-Islamophobia? The case of WikiIslam. Contemporary Islam 1(1):53-67.

MTS 2014. About ATS. Media Translation System. http://mts.tamu.edu/html/summary. html, accessed January 26, 2015.

Mescher, Heidi 1980. Policing and Islamophobia in Germany: the role of workplace experience. International Journal of Conflict and Violence 2(1):138-156.

Muir, Hugh and Smith, Laure 2004. Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia Runnymede Trust: Islamophobia: issues, challenges and action; a report. UK:Trentham.

Perez-Pena, Richard and Vega, Tanzina 2014. Brandeis cancels plan to give honorary degree to Ayaan Hirsi-Ali, a critic of Islam. The New York Times. April 8. http://www. nytimes.com/2014/04/09/us/brandeis-cancels-plan-to-give-honorary-degree-to-ayaan -hirsi-ali-a-critic-of-islam.html?_r=0, accessed January 26, 2015.

Runnymede Trust 1997. Islamophobia, A Challenge For Us All. http://www.runnymedet-rust.org/publications/17/32.html, accessed January 26, 2015.

Runnymede Trust 2014. About the Runnymede Trust. http://www.runnymedetrust.org/ about.html, accessed January 26, 2015.

Runnymede Trust 2014a A Very Light Sleeper: The persistence & dangers of anti-Semitism. http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/33/32.html, accessed January 26, 2015.

Saeed, Amir 2007. Media, Racism and Islamophobia: The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media. Sociology Compass 1:443-462.

Said, Edward 1979. Orientalism. New York: Vintage books.

Sayyid, Salman and Vakil, AbdoolKarim, eds. 2010. Thinking through Islamophobia: global perspectives. Cinco Puntos Press.

Scalvini, Marco 2011. Italian islamophobia: the church, the media and the xenophobic right. *In:* Islam in Its International Context: Comparative Perspectives. Stephen Hutchings, Chris Flood, Galina Miazhevich, and Henri Nickels, eds. Pp. 151-167. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

United Nations 2004. Secretary-General, addressing headquarters seminar on confronting Islamophobia. Press release SG/SM/9637, HR/4802, PI/1627.

Wright, Robin 1985. Sacred Rage: The Crusade of Modern Islam. Linden Press: Simon and Schuster.

Appendix 1:
Index of articles retrieved from WMS, during March-April 2014

#	Source	Title	Date Created	Date Archived
1	Ad-Dustour	The most important stories kept the media in 2013	4-Jan-14	15-Apr-14
2	Al Jazeera	Two advisers lmrsa [المرسى]: supporters of the coup will him	29-Nov-13	2-Feb-14
3	Al Jazeera	Fatih February on a global veil	1-Feb-14	1-Feb-14
4	Asharq Al-Awsat	Iyad Madani: extremist voices must be deprived of the deployment of their views and carrying the banner of Islam	3-Feb-14	3-Feb-14
5	Al Jazeera	Africaʻs Muslims trapped between terrorism and anvil of genocide	14-Mar-14	27-Mar-14
6	Asre Nou	Jannati: the introduction has been prepared and should have waited for	3-Mar-14	21-Mar-14
7	MehrNews	The head of the Kalím culture of Cultural Heritage and Tourism.	10-Nov-13	30-Jan-14
8	Ad-Dustour	A miserable year 2013	2-Jan-14	12-Apr-14
9	Ad-Dustour	Demonize "jihad" the height of Sanam Islam!	14-Aug-13	16-Apr-14

10	Al Jazeera	Is the West in fear of political Islam?	26-Mar-14	29-Mar-14
11	Al Jazeera	Alaslamwfwbya	20-Jan-14	26-Mar-14
12	Ad-Dustour	Reflections in the event of Islam alywm	5-Jan-14	14-Mar-14
13	Al Jazeera	Party that wants to oblige Muslims in Britain by the deletion of verses from the Koran	15-Feb-14	16-Feb-14
14	Al Jazeera	The road to the enemy embodies "alaslamwfwbya"	11-Feb-14	11-Feb-14
15	Al Jazeera	A campaign to resist alaslamwfwbya [الاسلاموفوبيا] in the Netherlands	21-Feb-14	27-Feb-14
16	Aldiyar Online	The mind Heresy: reading in the curriculum excluding	18-Feb-14	18-Feb-14
17	Al Jazeera	Swedish ymhwn [يمحون] the effects of the aggression on a mosque with flowers	13-Feb-14	13-Feb-14
18	Al-Hayat	"Alkhthlan [الخثلان]" of "life": Group of Human Rights to combat "alaslamwfwbya [الاسلاموفوبيا]"	11-Feb-14	11-Feb-14
19	Akhbar-Rooz	Iranian newspapers write what?	27-Mar-14	30-Mar-14
20	MehrNews	Holding the ninth international conference on the doctrine Mahdaviyat/ st international fair on the Qur'an	N/A	24-Mar-14
21	Ad-Dustour	The Muslim Brotherhood in the heart of the storm	5-Jan-14	13-Apr-14
22	Ad-Dustour	US need to be corrected!	3-Jan-13	15-Apr-14

23	Al Jazeera	Muslims in Myanmar	14-Jun-12	29-Mar-14
24	Radiofarda	10 years later; interaction between Islam and the West in the shadow of the consequences of September 11 attacks	5-Apr-14	04-Apr-14
25	Ad-Dustour	France therefore escalates against Pan-Islamists	2-Dec-13	27-Apr-14
26	Al-Hayat	Le Pen's party would prevent the provision of halal food for students in France	4-Jun-14	7-Apr-14
27	Al Jazeera	European interior ministers discuss dialogue of religions	30-Oct-03	3/25/2014
28	Aldiyar Online	Bernard Levy: veil is a call to rape! Shows in Ukraine also!	25-Feb-14	25-Feb-14
29	Al Jazeera	Study: the growing proportion of hostility to Islam in France	5-Feb-14	5-Feb-14
30	Al-Hayat	Crucifixes "square brackets" jdarn [جدارن] on a mosque in France	2-Jan-13	11-Feb-14
31	Al-Quds Al-Arabi	Amsterdam - Reuters: A senior aide resigned fyldrz [فيلدرز] Khairat right-wing Dutch politician of the Freedom Party becoming the latest of a prominent anti-leader's comments resigns for Moroccans	23-Apr-14	27-Apr-14
32	Tabnak	Behind the European Parliament resolution	27-Apr-14	27-Apr-14

33	Al Jazeera	The rights of women between the International Covenants and the Shariah Islamic	N/A	8-Mar-14
34	Al Jazeera	Europe ignore calls to move to solve the crisis of migration	10-Feb-14	10-Feb-14
35	Asharq Al-Awsat	Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament: we need a new framework for cooperation with Arab world	21-Feb-14	21-Feb-14
36	Al-Hayat	US University cancels in honor of lnashtah [لناشطة] described Islam as "a religion of violence"	9-Apr-14	9-Apr-14

Visual Representation, Propaganda and Cyberspace: The Case of the Palestinian Islamist Movements

Attila Kovacs

Comenius University in Bratislava

Abstract:

The article analyzes the changing position of the visual representation in the context of Islam from the starting point set up in the Qur'an and more specifically in the prophetic tradition to the theoretical positions of Islamic reformism and radicalism and the practice of Islamism movements. To understand this changing relationship is crucial for the research of ideology and propaganda of the contemporary Islamist movement. In the second part, the article illustrates this new position of images in the visual representations of Palestinian Islamist movements, specifically of Hamas – The Islamic Resistance Movement and its military wing the Brigades of the Martyr 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam, the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine and its military wing the Phalanges of Jerusalem and finally the Popular Resistance Committees and its military wing the Victorious Salah al-Din Brigades.

> "One image is more powerful than a million words"
> *("Sister Harb," the leading anchor of the al-Qassam brigades' online discussion forum)*[1]

The introduction and propagation of basic views and ideas, or ideology, to the widest possible audience plays the same vital role in the existence of Palestinian Islamist Movements as in that of nearly all political organizations. This is the goal of the creation, publication and distribution of large numbers of text materials, including the party's platform, charter, various leaflets and sound materials, as well as and picture materials, such as posters, billboards, graffiti, audiovisual materials and computer graphics. The aim of this study is the closer inspection of the latter, specifically the

"visual ideology" of Palestinian Islamist movements - their representation in pictures and propaganda materials - and the influence of cyberspace and the Internet on them.

The examination of such issues poses two main problems concerning methodology. The first includes the selection and interpretation of analyzing the images; the second concerns the relation of Islam, specifically the Islamist movements, to the visual, or more accurately, figurative, representation. It is therefore essential to include a brief characteristic of these two issues before examining the relationship between cyberspace and the visual representation of Palestinian Islamist movements.

In this article I am going to analyze the changing position of the visual representation in the context of Islam from the starting point set up in the Qur'an and more specifically in the prophetic tradition to the theoretical positions of Islamic reformism and radicalism and the practice of Islamism movements. To understand this changing relationship is crucial for the research of ideology and propaganda of the contemporary Islamist movement. In the second part of my article I am going to illustrate this new position of images in the visual representations of Palestinian Islamist movements, specifically of Hamas -The Islamic Resistance Movement (*Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*) and its military wing the Brigades of the Martyr 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam (*Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam*), the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (*Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi Filastin*) and its military wing the Phalanges of Jerusalem (*Saraya al-Quds*) and finally the Popular Resistance Committees (*Lijan al-Muqawama al-Sha'biyya*) and its military wing the Victorious Salah al-Din Brigades (*Alwiyya al-Nasir Salah al-Din*).

Image and representation in Islam

A number of scientific methods have proved to be useful in the analysis of images, for instance iconology and visual representation (for methodology see: Emisson and Smith 2000; Mitchell 1986; 1994; 2005; Rampley 2005; Rose 2001; in the context of contemporary Islam: Gruber and Haugbolle

2013; Elias 2012; Khatib 2013) The basic thesis of these approaches says that similar to texts, an image provides an abstracted viewpoint mirroring the social, religious and political context of its place and time of origin, and as such is of at least the same value as a source and material of interpretation as a text. Of course, the basic qualitative differences between a text and an image make the use of different methods of interpretation necessary. The essential differences between them may be explained by examining their effect on their target audiences, the readers (or listeners) or viewers. Whereas the use of the written word requires certain acquired skills (for instance literacy in the case of written texts and comprehension abilities in both the case of reading and listening to texts) and an "active approach" or an "intellectual effort," an image induces an immediate and, importantly, emotional reaction in its viewer. This may lead to the impression that "understanding" an image is an easy task, but one could not be farther from the truth. When interpreting an image, the scientist steps on very uncertain grounds. When interpreting a text one can easily rely on a well-defined methodology with an established and serious tradition; by contrast, the methodology of image interpretation is new and its tools have not yet been fully established. Responding to this new challenge is not a simple matter, but it is, as many other new methodological approaches, able to present the object of research in a new or different perspective, which is in most cases the basic criterion to a better understanding and interpretation.

Islam, idols and visual images

Visual representation has always belonged among the sensitive, in certain periods even highly problematic, issues of the Islamic tradition. This was especially true for various depictions of living creatures, or "creatures possessing a soul," which in the Islamic view show human and animal beings (see: Baer 2004; Elias 2012:84-99; Naef 2007:12-22). When taking this basic Muslim viewpoint into account, one could assume that the movements and thinkers of radical Islam, which emerged during the 19th and 20th centuries, further stressed the fundamentals mentioned above, the same as in many other issues, and would pursue forbidding and refusing images as such for their movements and followers. However, the situation is much

less unequivocal. Despite theoretical prohibition, or, more accurately, strict control, one often finds themselves facing an extensive visual culture while examining the various radical and reformist Islamic movements. The aim of this work is to briefly introduce the factors behind these ostensible contradictions, that is to characterize schematically the viewpoints of leaders and thinkers of various Sunni[2] Islamic radical and reformist movements concerning visuality.

There is no direct reference concerning visual depiction or its prohibition in the Qur'an. When discussing the issue, the verses concerning the prohibition of idolatry are the most frequently cited (see mainly 7:148 and 21:51-54, as well as 7:191-198; 16:20-22; 25:3-4; 35:40; 53:23). This is where the explicit prohibition of depicting human and animal figures hails from, since they correspond the most with the forms of the idols. Various expressions are used to describe them in the Qur'an: *awthan* (sing. *wathan*) (22:30; 29:17, 25) "idol," "depiction of God," especially made of metal; *tamathil* (sing. *timthal*) (21:52; 34:13) "picture," "pictorial representation," "statue, *ansab* (5:90) or *nusub* (5:3; 70:43) especially with the meaning of "sacrificial stone" (for more information see Hawting 1999, Naef 2007:12 Mirza 2005:414-417).

The word *sura* (plur. *suwar*), used in modern standard Arabic for "picture" is mentioned in the Qur'an several times (3:6; 7:11; 40:64; 64:3), but always in connection with Allah as God - Creator and as a meaning of stressing of "forming" or "shaping" as a privilege of God. "He is Allah, the Creator [al-khaliq], the Inventor [al-baqi'], the Fashioner [al-musawwir] (...)" (59:24) In summary, the Qur'an gives an exact and at the same time banning viewpoint concerning visual representation only in relation to idolatry and/or its potential dangers. The opinions offered by the Sunna, *the prophetic tradition, are much more unequivocal*. Numerous references concerning images can be found in the classical *hadith* collections.[3] They can be roughly categorized in the following way:

> (1) The first category includes the hadiths which consider images "unclean" and preventing human obligation ('*ibadat*)

towards God, for instance the practice of prayer (*salat*). This group is well characterized by the prophetic tradition, which claims that "Angels will not enter a house in which there is a dog or there are pictures."[4]

(2) The next category of *hadiths* commenting on the prohibition of images could be characterized by concern over creating images and statues, since this activity itself violates Allah's exclusive right of creation and forming. This group is well characterized by this statement, attributed to Muhammad: "Those who make these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be said to them. "Make alive what you have created. But they will be unable to do so."[5]

(3) The following group includes traditions, which allow the portrayal of non-human and non-animal creatures. This field is not free of troubles either, since not all the standpoints concerning plants are unequivocal.

(4) The fourth and last group of hadiths is created by the exceptions of the categories mentioned above. We mean the prophetic tradition concerning the "most favorite" wife of Muhammad, 'A'isha. It is well-known, that 'A'isha became the Prophet's wife at a very young age and therefore Muhammad made an exception and allowed her to perform her daily prayers accompanied by her dolls - anthropomorphic visual representations![6]

As the examples and categories presented above illustrate, the Sunna has a firm and, compared to the Qur'an, very definite view concerning visual representations. Naturally, this theoretical viewpoint changed numerous times in various historical periods and in various geographical settings. It covered or tolerated various practices and ranged from firm prohibition to permissive, even supportive standpoints. However, this short work does not allow detailed elaboration of the issue, therefore attention will be paid to Sunni reform or radical movements in the following part.

Islamists and the visual images

The re-definition of visual representation belongs among the numerous challenges, which the nearly two-hundred year-old reformist Islamist movements need to face in modern times. There exist two fundamentally disparate standpoints concerning visual representation (*taswir*):

(1) The first was formulated by the Wahhabism, a movement leaning on a neo-Hanbali tradition led by Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). The early definition of this standpoint opts for a complete refusal and visual representations are, among many other things (for instance the veneration of saints, coffee, smoking etc.) listed among the impermissible innovations (*bid'a*) or things to be destroyed. This standpoint is kept by most modern Saudi religious scholars and various radical groups following the neo-Hanbali or neo-Wahhabi traditions.

(2) The second standpoint, which differs significantly, relies on the teachings of the representatives of the Egyptian *Nahda*, especially those of Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935). This standpoint retains a certain lenience, while keeping in mind the prohibition of idolatry.

This line is followed by the Muslim Brotherhood (*Jama'at al-ikhwan al-muslimin*) and the thinkers and movements connected to it, both in theory and practice. The fairly rich visual culture of, for example, the Palestinian Hamas movement relies on this standpoint as well. In the next part of this article we shall further examine the development and relationship between these two interpretations.

We may begin with the neo-Wahhabi tradition and the practice of individual Neo-Salafi, Jihadi and Takfiri groupings. The interpretation of Islamic doctrine formulated by Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab has changed signifi-

cantly in the past centuries, but despite this, the thought and practice which creates the essential character of Saudi Islam is based upon his teachings. One of the defining official representative organs of this standpoint is the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Issuing Fatwas (*al-Lajna ad-da'ima li 'l-buhuth al-'ilmiya wa 'l-ifta'*). For a long time, the leader of the Committee was 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abdullah bin Baaz (1909-1999). Its members included Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan (born 1933), Shaykh Muhammad b. Salih al-Uthaymin (1925-2001) and the present leader of the Committee, Muhammad b. Hadi al-Madkhali (born 1931). These key figures of neo-Wahhabi thought have paid a lot of attention to the issue of visual presentations.[7] Their fatwas, despite representing the "hard line," do not refuse the use of images in all cases. It is tolerated as necessary (*daruri*) in cases such as ID photos, pictures in newspapers "mediating information" or portraits on banknotes, but they may never be self-serving.[8]

This standpoint was followed at the turn of the 21stcentury by those radical Jihadi groups which, like al-Qa'ida for instance, rely on many aspects of the neo-Wahhabi tradition. However, there is a field where the thought and practice change completely, namely the audiovisual depiction. The video-messages of Osama bin Laden (1957-2011), Ayman az-Zawahiri (born 1951), and Abu Mus'ab az-Zarqawi (1966-2006) are well-known. How is this possible despite strict refusal and banning of visual representations? The answer is more simple than one may expect: the judgment of modern telecommunication devices and technologies in the neo-Wahhabi tradition is very pragmatic, since they may be viewed as excellent and highly effective tools of the mission (*da'wa*) and therefore serve the common interests of the Muslim community. As for the human depictions occurring in such cases, they are not viewed as images but only as "shadows" of humans or other beings. This standpoint created space not only for the videos carrying ideological messages mentioned above, but also for other film material directly ordered by the Saudi government, such as cartoons presenting the life of the Prophet Muhammad or religious TV channels, for example *al-'Iqra*. In a slightly paradoxical way, these visual forums often feature the vehement opposers of visual representations as well. However, in the past centuries several jihadist movements have turned away from this Wahhabi

tradition marked by the policy of al-Qaeda and, despite applying several restrictions, assigned visuality a much more important place in its propaganda. The most typical example could the so-called Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant (*Da'ish / ISIL / ISIS*), which created its own visual world, hand-in-hand with "classic" video messages and fighter videos (see Winkler and Dauber 2014).[9]

Besides the strict stances mentioned above, there exists a different and much more lenient tradition, which led to the creation of several new reformist-radical movements, which have a rich and fairly diverse visual culture. The Palestinian Islamist movements presents the best and most decorative example, even though such a progressive use of imagery as seen here is definitely not a Palestinian characteristic.

This contemporary moderate Islamist interpretation of pictorial tools can be traced back to the leading personality of the Egyptian *Nahda* movement - Muhammad 'Abduh. He is the main thinker who established this lenient, even approving tradition. He devoted a separate text to the issue, titled "Paintings and sculptures: their usefulness and ruling" (*as–Suwar wa 't–tamathil wa fawa'iduha wa hukmuha*) ('Abduh 1972). ᶜAbduh of course kept in mind the dangers of idolatry hiding behind visual culture, but he kept a stance allowing the use of images, which he called "a form of poetry that one sees instead of hearing" ('Abduh 1972:206).

The second important representative of the *Nahda*, Muhammad Rashid Rida, is not so enthusiastic about visuality. In a writing published in *al-Manar*, the main text of the *Nahda* movement, he systematically names the fields in which he considers visual representations to be allowed. They are the following: (1) "beings possessing a soul" in books, in case their verbal description is not possible or sufficient; (2) in works concerning the natural sciences, especially anatomy; (3) in works concerning military technology (first of all in the case of weapons and topography); (4) in works concerning security policy and spying (cf. Naef 2007:114). In his work titled "The Caliphate or the Great Imamate," Rida sharply commented against the, in his consideration Ottoman, practice of the public depiction of high-ranking

statesmen. This seemingly strict standpoint in many ways approaches those of various radical jihadist groupings, which, not accidentally, often refer to Rashid Rida, and not only on the issue of visual representation.

However, the viewpoints of 'Abduh have found their followers as well. Among these can be found personalities of no smaller significance than Hasan al-Banna' (1906-1949), the founder and first leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. In his pamphlet titled "Our Mission" (*Da'watuna*), Banna' even calls visual propaganda praiseworthy (al-Bannā' 2006:60-62). The later ideologist of Egyptian Islamists, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), shared the same position. The Brotherhood retained this standpoint in later periods as well, not only in Egypt, but also in the organization's branches abroad (e.g. in Syria, Jordan, Palestine etc.) and in movements inspired by them, for instance the aforementioned Palestinian Hamas movement.

This is the basis of the standpoints of Shaykh Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradhawi (born 1926), which are best described in his well-known book "The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam" (*Halal wa haram fi 'l-Islam*) (al-Qaradawi n.d.:48-56). Qaradhawi is one of the most influential and controversial representatives of modern radical Islam. Being of Egyptian origin, he began his activities in the Muslim Brotherhood, but then he was forced into exile. He lives in Qatar, where he regularly explains his viewpoints on issues of all kinds. The most significant discussion among the above-mentioned radical standpoints is connected to Qaradhawi. Several renowned Saudi scholars, including Muhammad Nasr ad-Din al-Albani (1914-1999) and Salih al-Fawzan, have sharply criticized Qaradhawi' s lenient views concerning images. Salih al-Fawzan dedicated an entire book to this issue, "The rules of Islam on Visualization" (*Hukm al-Islam fi 'l-taswir*). However, despite all criticism, Qaradhawi cannot be accused of extensive permissiveness. In fact, he applies the standard Islamic tradition to the challenges of the modern era. His standpoints are moderate, yet still characteristic of a certain "puritanism." A proper example is his view on the use of images, for example portraits of family members, in Muslim households. This is permissible according Qaradhawi; however, it should not be overdone and rational thinking should be kept in mind (al-Qaradawi n.d.:53). Despite

this standpoint, Qaradawi, similarly to Rashid Rida, refuses the public displayal of historical figures or "heroes"[10] (al-Qaradawi n.d.:54). Qaradhawi, together with numerous religious scholars holding moderate views on visual depictions, forbids three-dimensional representations, that is, statues of all kinds (al-Qaradawi n.d.:102).

However, besides scholars who permit the use of visual representations while obeying certain rules, such as Qaradawi, there are ones who pronouncedly support it. One of the most important of them is without a doubt Hasan at-Turabi (born 1932) from Sudan. In his article "The Dialogue of Religion and Art" (*Hiwar ad-din wa 'l-fann*) (at-Turabi 1991) Turabi presents the view that images, photographs, and even sculptures (!) are allowed, as long as they depict the persons appropriately (respectfully, fully dressed etc.). Furthermore, visual culture - together with poetry and theater - should, according to at-Turabi, become the most suitable tool of Islam's fight against the "Western cultural invasion" (at-Turabi 1991:243).

Visual representation and Palestinian political movements

Though not in at-Turabi's decorative way, numerous Islamist organizations view visual representations as the first and most important carrier of their political, religious and ideological messages. Visuality is complex, does not struggle with language or other similar problems, has a direct effect on emotions and is probably the most straightforward method of communication, and therefore it became the basic propaganda tool of several Islamist movements. They opted for the largely pragmatic and indoctrinative use of images and imagery, which in many cases led to the creation of a new, rich and widespread visual culture of radical Islamist movements, which might be "foreign"[11] in its formal elements, but whose content is undoubtedly Islamic. This new world of images became an important and inseparable part of these movements' way of expression and the researchers examining these movements are required to involve the new visual culture in their analyses besides the traditional reading and interpreting of texts.

Attila Kovacs

But the practice of using visual representations and images for spreading a political ideology isn't the invention of the Islamist in the Palestinian context. Leftist and national Palestinian movements invented an impressive visual culture starting from the early 1960s (Ridwan 1992).[12]

The Palestinian issue soon after its genesis became one of the most important multi-dimensional problems of regional and world politics. In the context of the Cold War it was one of the main subjects of the conflict between the West and the East; for the Arab nationalist, it was the "main" issue and, later, from the 1970s on, it also became an important issue for Islamists. Because of this multi-dimensional characteristic, Palestinian visual culture was not only inspired by the visual representation of all those contacts, but also became one of the basic topics in the visual production of all those ideological contexts. It led to the creation of a large and rich Palestinian political visual culture, which became in the 1980s on one of the most established in the Middle Eastern and Muslim contexts (Boullata 2003).

Many prominent authors and artists participated in the Palestinian political visual production: for example, Naji al-Ali (1938-1987), who created the most iconic visual symbol of Palestine, the figure of Handala, a ten year-old boy portrayed from behind, who, according to the author, is the self-portrait of himself at the time of the *an-Nakba* (al-Ali and Sacco 2009). On the other hand, international attention and peace movements also did their part in the further development of Palestinian visual culture. Such artists as the cartoonist Joe Sacco or the graffiti artist Banksy made many iconic visual representations inspired by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which had a great influence on global Palestinian visual culture.

Leftist and nationalist Palestinian movements had the strongest and earliest impact on the development of Palestinian political visual culture. Their inspiration came naturally from the "comrades," for example, from Soviet and Cuban political posters. In this visual context, political posters are the main form of visual representation. Such groups as, for example, the far leftist / communist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (*PFLP*) produced a numerous posters created by Palestinian artists and authors, but

also some by Cuban and other internationalist figures. In that early period in the cultivation of politically motivated images and representations, the PFLP was probably the most active Palestinian leftist movement, but many other posters and images were created by the Fatah, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (*DFLP*), and the PLO. The largest collections of those political posters, mainly from the 1970s and 1980s, are located at the American University of Beirut and in the Arab press archive of the Dayan Center at the University of Tel Aviv. One of the best analyses of these posters is the book by Zeina Maasri, *Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War* (Maasri 2009).

Besides political posters, the Palestinian leftist and nationalist movements cultivated their visual representations in magazines and pamphlets, where images play an important rule. Before the brink of the first *Intifada*, political posters and pictures used in printed propaganda were the main form of politically inspired visual representation of Palestinians, but the main symbols and topics (for example, the key as a symbol of *an-Nakba* etc.) of Palestinian visual representations had already been developed in that context and later were adapted by the Islamists as prefabricated building blocks for their visual culture.

The brink of the first Intifada was a turning point also for the visual representation of the Palestinian movements. Besides political posters and images in publications, another form of visual representation started playing a central role in the "visual weaponry" of the Palestinian movements: murals and graffiti (for the Palestinian context see for example, Arnoldi 2015; Gröndahl 2009; Heffez 2013; Olberg and Smith 2013; Steinberg and Oliver 1994). We already had this kind of visual representation in Palestine before the *Intifada*; in the contexts of refugee camps and occupied territories, those verbal and visual sentences "written on the wall" played a central role in the development of the collective national or ideological identities, but during and after the first Intifada their role became more important.

The building of the Israeli "security barrier" started a new chapter in the history of Palestinian murals and graffiti. Such a huge wall naturally pro-

voked many graffiti and mural artists and became one of the main media for visual and verbal political messages for Palestinian and international authors as well.

After technical developments made it possible, the Palestinians adapted many new methods and routes for the creation and spread of their images. All the Palestinian movements made video tapes, CD-ROMs and DVDs, created websites and Facebook accounts, and utilized new technical possibilities for creating text and images as well.

This visual culture rooted in leftist and nationalist ideologies was the cradle and main source of inspiration for Palestinian Islamist visual representations. In some cases this leftist influence can be quite evident, as in the case of the logo of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (*fig. 9*), where the upraised fist is originally one of the main political symbols of the left and the civil rights movement.

The leftist-nationalist context was the main, but not the only, inspiration for the Palestinian Islamists. A second visual inspiration came from a rather unlikely source: the Shi'i based visual representations of the Iranian Islamic revolution. The Iranian revolution of 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran was the beginning of the richest modern-day politically based visual culture in the Middle East (Balaghi and Gumpert 2003; Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999). Post-revolutionary Iranian Islamist visual culture is rooted in the Shi'i tradition, while the Palestinian Muslims belongs to the Sunni branch of Islam, but in this case common political goals were more important than any sectarian division. We can find minor traces of some Iranian or Shi'i visual symbols and signs in the productions of the Palestinian Islamists, for example the red tulip as the symbol of martyrdom, etc. These Iranian influences many times came through the mediation of the Lebanese Hizballah, in spite of the fact that Palestinian perceptions of Shi'i Islam, Iran and Hizballah itself can be very negative (*fig. 35*).

A third and quite important source of inspiration is commerce-many times western visual culture. Like most of us, Palestinian Islamists are living

in a globalized visual world and they don't hesitate to use visual symbols rooted in a western visual context, but transform it into a messenger serving their Islamist ideology (*fig. 16, 35*). Commercial visual symbols such as geographical maps, postcards (Semmerling 2004), Hollywood movies, etc. can be used for this purpose.

The fourth important source, not only for Islamist Palestinian visual representations, is the visual culture of the military and political occupation. Any occupation creates a typical and common visual environment of violence and oppression and symbols like the picture of the M16 submachine gun (*fig. 8*), Israeli made Merkava tanks (*fig. 17*), checkpoints, etc., became a very important part of the visual representations of Palestinian political movements (Hochberg 2015).

The visual representations of the Palestinian Islamic movement were born in this environment and under these influences. Despite being founded relatively late (the two main Islamic movements in Palestine were officially founded in the 1980s), and the humble beginnings of their first visual representations (some of the first posters of Hamas at the beginning of the first *Intifada* where only handmade drawings), the Palestinian Islamic movements have not been prevented from making a quick start. During and after the second Intifada, within the last fifteen years, the Palestinian Islamists have not only equaled the visual representations of the other Palestinian movements in terms of quality, but have significantly taken the leading position in visual propaganda and made their visual representations dominate Palestinian visual spaces.

Text-image relationships in the context of the Palestinian Islamist Movements

To illustrate this issue, let's see some examples of parallels between textual and the visual representations of the most important Palestinian Islamist movement, Hamas. The first quotation is from the Chapter of the Hamas: "Hamas is a mass movement." For a visual representation of this sentence, we can find numerous examples showing the "visual history" and

genealogy, as well as the organizing structure of the movement (*fig. 1 and 2*). The second quotation from the same source is "Hamas is an Islamic movement". We can find several visual images with Islamic symbols, such as the Qur'an (*fig. 3*) or the Ka'ba in Mecca (*fig. 4*) with the members and leaders of the movement. The third quotation says "Hamas is a Palestinian national movement." Visual representations illustrating this are also very common in the propaganda of Hamas. Leaders of the movement pose with the Palestinian national flag and/or the map of "all Palestine" (*fig. 5 and 6*). The concepts of Palestinian nationalism and Islamism are based on the ethos of Jerusalem. In the visual representation of this idea, Jerusalem is almost always symbolized by the Dome of the Rock. We can find this iconic symbol of Palestine in the emblems of all the Palestinian Islamist movements: Hamas (*fig. 7*) and its militant wing the Brigades of the Martyr Izz al-Din al-Qassam (*fig. 8*),and the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (*fig. 9*) and its Phalanges of Jerusalem. The golden dome of this building is also present in the emblems of the Peoples' Resistance Committees (*fig. 10*) and its military wing the Victorious Salah al-Din Brigades (*fig. 11*). We are also able to find many images showing the fighters of the Qassam brigades protecting Jerusalem or coming to protect the Dome of the Rock (*fig. 12*) or the al-Aqsa mosque (*fig. 13*). On some of those images we can directly find the two most important textual representations of the Palestinian Islamists according Jerusalem in the form of slogans claiming, "Jerusalem is ours!"(*fig. 14*) and "Jerusalem, we are coming!" (*fig. 15*). In the texts of Hamas we can also often read the about "the Zionist enemy" or "the Zionist occupation." Generally "Zionism," Israel and Jews are the stereotypic symbols for "the enemy" of the movement. In visual representations, this "Zionism" - which in the ideological context of the Palestinian Islamists doesn't mean the historical Jewish nationalist movement - is often symbolized by Israeli politicians in demonized form. "The favorite Zionist" in the visual representations of Hamas is definitely former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon (1928-2014). We can see him as the "butcher of Sabra and Shatilah" (*fig. 16*) or in different unpleasant positions. On the other hand, the "heroes" of the movement are also visually represented: the leader, commanders, and, most of all, the fighters of the Qassam brigades. In the ideology of Hamas, martyrdom plays a central role and more than

half of the images produced by the movement and used in the propaganda war are portraits of "those who sacrificed their lives in our struggle...". The most typical are the "martyrdom posters" (*fig. 17-21*) of different shapes and forms, but we can also see images of the martyred leaders of the movement "on the way to" (*fig. 22 and 23*) or "in paradise" (*fig. 24 and 25*). The fighters of the Qassam brigades are many times called as the "brave horses, lions or falcons of Palestine..." and the visual images depict them in this zoomorphic form. The pictures of horses (*fig. 26*), lions (*fig. 27*) or falcons (*fig. 28*), or simply fighters with wings (*fig. 29*), are also present in the visual representations of Hamas.

These few examples illustrate that there is no major or minor topic in the ideology of Hamas which is not also represented visually. However, these images are not able to "work properly" without the contributions of computers and cyberspace.

Palestinian Islamists, cyberspace and computer-mediated visual images

The development of Palestinian Islamist visual culture and its increasing role in their modus operandi and propaganda is to a great level due to computer graphics, the Internet and cyberspace. The role of the visual images as new media is far from being the only decisive factor; we cannot underestimate their impact on the content and nature of the visual representations of the Palestinian Islamist movements, as well as the role they play in the ideology and propaganda of the movements.

With the spread of computers, the Internet (at first in the form of internet cafes) and the associated "new media" (see Anderson 2000, 2003, Bunt 2003, 2009, Eickelman and Anderson 2003) had a crucial impact on the Palestinian community, both in their homeland and in the diaspora (Aouragh 2011:75-108), as well as on the visual representations of Palestinian Islamist movements. Computers, the Internet and digitalization offer a full range of possible new vehicles of visual production, from e-mails, to torrents and other freely accessible databases, to various social websites

such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as the never-ending possibilities of electronic visual production. This means that, to lead a widespread visual campaign, one only needs basic technical knowledge, a laptop and Internet access. This makes the creation and spread of information a lot easier, also in the form of basic visual materials, whether online (web-pages, e-mails etc.) or offline (e.g. DVDs and CD-ROMs). These developments offered the Palestinian movements a great opportunity, which they have taken full advantage of. In this process, the speed of digital cameras also played a leading role. We can see many images produced by Palestinian Islamists showing activists of Hamas or the Islamic Jihad posing with cameras while firing a submachine gun or a rifle (*fig. 36 and 37*). In the war of images, the digital camera became an adequate weapon.

The Palestinian Islamist movements started developing their Internet strategies in the second half of the 1990s, when visuality began playing a leading role, and slowly gained their position in cyberspace. Achieving this position was not simple, like everything else connected to the existence of these movements. By the end of the 1990s, and especially during the second *Intifada*, a conflict between the Palestinian authors of such webpages and the Israeli police, as well as sympathizers of both sides, broke out. This conflict, manifested mainly by the hacking of enemy websites and other forms of electronic sabotage, alternately dubbed the "electronic *jihad*" and the "electronic fight against terror," caused the relatively short durability of the webpages of the Palestinian Islamist movements. They continuously move from old disabled addresses to new ones, registered mainly in countries which do not tend to liquidate them, for example Iran and Russia, as a sign of protest against the Israeli government. Despite the fight against them, each movement has not only its own webpages, even if their addresses change frequently, but also its own discussion forums and sections on sites such as YouTube, Facebook and elsewhere. The maintenance, updating and security of these webpages is taken care of by special Internet departments of the individual movements' information offices or by the Internet divisions of their military wings. Similar to the cameramen, the programmers and IT specialists of these movements like to pose in front of their "tools of the *jihad*," that is their computers, as "cyber fighters" (*fig. 30*

and 31), in the same way as fighters do with their weapons. Visual materials started to accumulate in large numbers on the webpages of the movements, where independent folders were created for them, which led to the creation of extensive online databases of the movements' visual materials. The Internet and computers gained such a crucial position in spreading the message and propaganda of the individual movements that these themselves became an object of visual productions, whether in the case of their propagation (*fig. 32 and 33*) or, for instance, in reminding the public of the increase in the number of members of the most significant Palestinian discussion forum (*fig. 34*).[13]

As mentioned above, computers have significantly simplified not only the circulation, but also the production of visual materials of all kinds, from posters to films. For example, posters during the first *Intifada* were printed in printing stations, spread by means of manual distribution and personal contact from person to person or through mosques and only later, sometimes after years, were they digitized. In the course of the *al-Aqsa Intifada*, this process was reversed: visual materials were first created in digital formats and distributed electronically, and only a small number of them actually got a physical shape. This had a major impact on the quality and amount of visual materials. The simplification of production techniques led to an increase in the number of authors and consequently to the varying quality and content of the visual materials.

This leads to a very important aspect of the visual productions of Palestinian Islamist movements, their authorship. Who are the people who create these visual materials? The issue of authorship is enchanting, simply because it is often untraceable. Older visual materials produced by Palestinian Islamist movements, for example posters or graffiti, are often unsigned, but the visual productions of Palestinian Islamists began later and the individual materials were signed by the organizations and not individuals, if they were actually signed at all. However, the fragmentation of authorship, the spread of electronic visual materials and the huge development of visuality in propaganda and the presentation of Palestinian Islamist movements changed the situation significantly. When taking a closer look at posters and especially at the electronic visual productions which began after the breakout of the *al-Aqsa*

Intifada, one will find a great number of names and signatures. According to the author's experience, almost two thirds of the electronic materials of Palestinian Islamist movements are signed in some way. In the majority of cases, they occur in the form of pseudonyms, but sometimes e-mail addresses (*e.g.fadibox@hotmail.com, zakcall2002@yahoo.com, nour_suns@ yahoo.com, Mah_isa@hotmail.com, Guvara1981@yahoo.com etc.*), web-pages (*e.g.www.paldf.net, www.alw3dnet.com, www.izzadden1980.jeeran.cometc.*) or even images. As for pseudonyms, first names (arab.: *ism*, for instance Abbas, Majdi, Muhammad, Ahmad, Mahmud, Hanin etc.) or kunya (Abu 'l-Bara', Abu 'l-Walid, Abu Bilal, Abu'Id, Abu Yahya etc.) are often used. One may encounter "speaking names" (e.g. *Mujahid* - "The fighter of *jihad*, "*Shams al-Islam* - "the Sun of Islam, "*Nur* - "Light" etc.) and *noms du guerre* (e.g. Abu Sayyaf). The signatures are often inscribed using Latin letters and sometimes they are even in English (e.g. *Predator, Action*). The signatures often feature a visual symbol (for instance a rifle, a sword, an eye, a pen or an eagle). The use of such pseudonyms, the Latin alphabet and English names partly reflect a universal Internet identity and are a sign of the individualization of the electronic jihad, even though the chosen names are often a reference to some organization (e.g.'Izz ad-Din, Abu 'l-Qassam or others). Some authors have their own websites, where not only their visual materials (posters, photographs etc.) are found, but often their poetry or pamphlets are published as well. The web and Facebook pages of the three most active authors associated with Hamas, "Wesam,"[14] "Khaleel"[15] and "Eyelash,"[16] are very good examples. The pseudonyms are also a certain security filter, which is not surprising in a Middle East "obsessed" with security and in the overall hostile cyberspace, but they make it quite difficult to identify the authors. They are very distrustful and cautious, not only in publishing visual and other materials, but also in electronic or personal communication. However, despite these obstructions, I managed to create an approximate profile of an "average" author of electronic visual materials, mainly by means of correspondence with certain authors and with the help of secondary sources.

In most cases, they are young men[17] aged thirty-five or younger, with a secondary or tertiary technical education (IT engineering, programming,

webdesign, etc.), or having completed courses with a similar content. They often work as technicians, for example in Internet cafes or in educational institutions. A typical complete profile often includes drawings and photographs, apart from webdesign. They are usually not direct employees of the movements, but sympathizers or only fans of the "Islamic solution," as evidenced by the fact that the same author often creates materials for, for example, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Palestine. This connection slightly changed after Hamas took power in Gaza. For example, "Eyelash" left anonymity and began publishing under his legal name, Khalid Safi, but such cases were more of an exception. "Eyelash"[18] had published his CV online before; however, it did not include his real name, date of birth or photograph. Most authors remained anonymous, using their pseudonyms and remaining mobile within cyberspace. The authors of the images often view their work as a form of *jihad*, which is comparable to armed fighting.[19] On these grounds, I was able to distinguish about 45-50 different authors. Some have published one or two posters; others, like "Khaleel," put out about 2500 digitally designed posters and dozens of drawings and photographs.

Anonymity makes the identification of the time of creation of individual e-posters and other documents hard, often even impossible. The task is furthermore complicated by frequent visual citations and overlapping within the production as a whole. There exist no limitations within these processes, and commercial, Iranian and many other citations become integrated parts of posters and images of Palestinian Islamic provinces and the overtaking and mobility of certain symbols and signs are traceable as well. These processes and changes are due to the global character of cyberspace and are unlikely to change.

Conclusion

As has been shown by the preceding analysis of Palestinian Islamist movements, their visual representations to a great extent agree with their ideological principles, political goals and aspirations. An amalgamation of verbal ideology and propaganda into a "visual ideology and propaganda" is clearly visible, and the result is at least an equal part of the general representation

of the individual movements and is continuously gaining a stronger position as the distribution of materials is growing ever faster. This was enabled by, (1), a continuous indoctrination of image interpretation within the modern interpretations of Islam concerning the use of images; (2), the application of pragmatic approaches in the use of images as highly effective means of propaganda of the movements' ideology and thoughts, and, (3), commercialization of images especially by means of digitization and the use of electronic tools in their creation and distribution.

As for the process of the indoctrination of image interpretation, its roots can be found in the works of some of the thinkers of the Egyptian *Naḥda* movement (e.g. Muhammad ʿAbduh) and especially within the ideology of the movements (e.g. Hamas) which take the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and its founder Hasan al-Banna as their base. Highly relevant is also the work of current radical Muslim thinkers, such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi or Hasan at-Turabi. These lines disapprove of the strict Wahhabi rules that condemn or tightly regulate the use of images and have created a legitimate space for visual representations, even of figurative characters (human and animal beings). This happened with the aim of following specific ideological or political goals, but that does not change anything about the fact that images and visual culture became an indispensable part of the ideological armory of these movements. In some cases, for example, in the case of several Palestinian Islamist movements, this process has gone so far that the main protagonist of the visual representation has become the pictorial of a human, that is the representation of a human being, which the classical Islamic interpretation finds the most troublesome, has become an everyday part of the movements' propaganda. However, since these radical Islamist movements often created their ideological base around a certain "cult" of leaders or "martyrs," their visual representation copies these ideological schemes.

In the case of pragmatic approaches to the use of images as a highly effective means of propagating the movements' ideology and thoughts, a basic fact applies: images as an ideal carrier of a direct and often emotional message perfectly fit the needs and goals of these movements, since they want to address their potential audience directly, without language or other

barriers (literacy and understanding of written texts), with the aim of creating mainly an emotional reaction. In this sense, images are much closer to live speeches - a favorite verbal tool of these movements' propaganda - than written texts (pamphlets or books). One should not forget that the understanding of a written text is, compared to verbal expression or images, a much more difficult and complex task. Images, unlike books, allow an effective distribution of highly simplified ideological messages. As a plus, the ideology of radical Islamist movements is rarely significantly sophisticated; however, even if the situation were different, images could still serve the function of the first and primary level of propaganda, ideological indoctrination or struggle.

The third prerequisite of the creation and development of a visual culture of radical Islamist movements is the technological factor associated with the commercialization of imagery. As was mentioned several times above, before the era of modern technologies of reproduction (e.g. press, photography, television, computers, digitization etc.), images were a luxurious and relatively inaccessible product. That means, that no matter how effective they were as carriers of any messages, they were useless due to their low accessibility. This changed rapidly in the twentieth century, especially in its last decade, when the spread of computers and digitization became a true accelerant of the world's global visualization. Computers and the Internet provided opportunities not only for simple reproducing, but they became unprecedentedly effective tools of the distribution of these images. So the digitalized images of Islamists occupied a pivotal position in the cyberwars and propaganda of many radical Islamist movements and definitely did so in the cases of Palestinian Hamas or the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine. In this context we shall remember the almost forgotten worlds of Marshall McLuhan, who - in the context of television - said that "the medium is the message" (1994:7-17). It means that the medium - in this case digitalized images - has changed the content and sometimes even the essence of the message - in our case radical Islamist ideology.

Due to these factors we have witnessed a massive "visual boom" of certain radical Islamist movements at the beginning of the 21st century.

These movements have not only created their own images and other visual representations with the aim of spreading their ideological message and propaganda, but they have connected them with an integrated visual culture. This applies especially to the visual culture of individual movements, for example Hamas, but one may also observe the creation of a larger visual area, for instance regional or national (e.g. Palestinian), or ideological, based on an ideological connection (e.g. between Iran and the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine), where certain rules and patterns apply and exchange and citation of symbols or even of entire visual constructions takes place. A certain "emancipation" of images in relation to texts is occurring. While the "classical" Islamic tradition has been based on texts and their interpretation, some Islamist movements have begun a wide use of visual representations as well. This practice of using images (too) led to a great extent to what might be called a "pictorial turn," using the words of T. J. W. Mitchell (1994:11). For this "Islamist pictorial turn," the "digital turn" described earlier worked as a powerful catalyst. Despite the fact that Mitchell elaborated his theses in a Western context, several aspects of his iconology (see also Mitchell 1986;2005), which he applied mainly to Christianity, can be, with certain modifications, applied to Islam or Judaism.

However, in the case of radical Islamist movements, one may not say that the images can fully substitute for texts, due to the very recent shift from texts to images. The issue is more about the interconnection of texts and images, in which both components have equal positions. As seen in the examples analyzed in this work, the text is often an integral part of the image and the same applies vice versa. However, this "equal position" means a significant shift, and the process of a "pictorial turn" in the case of these Islamist movements is without a doubt one of the most dynamic and fascinating changes that we witness in the current Muslim world. Researchers focusing on present changes in the contemporary Middle East, Islam and Islamism should definitely not underestimate them.

References

'Abduh, Muhammad 1972. as-Suwar wa 't-tamathil wa fawa'iduha wa hukmuha", *In*: 'ABDUH, Muhammad, al-A'mal al-kamila, Bajrut, al-Mu'assasa 'l-'arabiyya li 'd-dirasa wa 'n-nashr, vol. 2, pp. 171-208.

Al-ali, Naji and Joe Sacco 2009. A Child in Palestine: The Cartoons of Naji al-Ali, London: Verso Books.

al-Qaradawi, Yusuf n.d. The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam. al-Qur'an al-karim, Amman, Dar al-islam, 1999.

Anderson, Jon W. 2000. Producers and Middle East Internet Technology: Getting Beyond 'Impacts.' The Middle East Journal 54(3):419-431.

Anderson, Jon W. 2003. New Media, New Publics: Reconfiguring the Public Sphere of Islam. Social Research 70(3):887-906.

Aouragh, Miriya 2011. Palestine Online: Transnationalism, the Internet and the Construction of Identity, London: I. B. Tauris.

Arnoldi, Ea 2015. Renaming Shuhada Street: Palestinian Activism, Spatial Narratives and Graffiti in Hebron. Romano-Arabica 15:17-38.

Baer, Eva 2004. The Human Figure in Islamic Art: Inheritances and Islamic Transformations. Costa Mesa, Mazda Publishers.

Balaghi, Shiva and Lynn Gumpert, eds. 2003. Picturing Iran: Art, Society and Revolution. London: I. B. Tauris.

Al-bannā', Hasan 2006. Our Mission. *In* AL-BANNĀ', Hasan, Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Bannā' (1906-1949). A Selection from the Majmūcat Rasā'il al-Imām al-Shahīd Hasan al-Bannā'. IIFSO, 55-84.

Boullata, Kamal 2003. Artists Re-Member Palestine in Beirut. Journal of Palestine

Studies 32(4):22-38.

Bunt, Gary R. 2003. Islam in the Digital Age. E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments. London: Pluto Press.

Bunt, Gary R. 2009. iMuslims: Rewiring the House of Islam. Chapel Hill - London: The University of North Carolina Press.

Chelkowski, P. J. and Hamid Dabashi 1999. Staging a Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran. New York: New York Uiversity Press.

CREED Pictures and Photographs n.d. Fatwa-Online.com. http://www.marabic.com/creed/pictures/index.htm, accessed October 13, 2015.

Eickdman, Dale F. and anderson, Jon W., eds. 2003. New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere. Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Elias, Jamal J. 2012. Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Representation and Practice in Islam. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Emmison, Michael and Philip Smith 2000. Researching the Visual: Images, Objects, Contexts and Interactions in Social and Cultural Inquiry. London, SAGE Publications.

Gröndahl, Mia 2009. Gaza Graffiti: Messages of Love and Politics. Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press.

Gruber, Christiane and J. Sune Haugbolle, eds. 2013. Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hochberg, Gil Z. 2015. Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hawting, Gerald R. 1999. The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Attila Kovacs

Heffez, Adam G. 2013. Words and Walls: Social Commentary through Graffiti in Israel and the West Bank. New York: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Islamic Law 2006. Islamic Awakening. http://forums.islamicawakening.com/f16/what-correct-ruling-tasweer-2535, accessed October 13, 2015.

Jafet Library n.d. American University Of Beirut. http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/jafet/posters/english.html, accessed October 13, 2015.

KhaleelStyle 2011. Facebook Inc. https://ar-ar.facebook.com/khaleelstyle, accessed October 13, 2015.

Khatib, Lina 2013. Image Politics in the Middle East: The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle. London: I. B. Tauris.

Maasri, Zeina 2009. Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War, London: I. B. Tauris.

McLuhan, Marshall 1994. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Mirza, Younus 2005. Abraham as an Iconoclast: Understanding the Destruction of 'Images' through Qur'anic Exegesis. Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 16(4):413-428.

Mitchell, Thomas W. J. 1986. Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mitchell, Thomas W. J. 1994. Picture Theory: Essay of Verbal and Visual Representation. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mitchell, W. J. T. 2005. What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Naef, Silvia 2007. Bilder und Bilderverbot im Islam. Von Koran bis zum Karikaturenstreit. München: C. H. Beck.

Olberg, Steven T. and Smith, David 2013. Political Graffiti on the West Bank Wall in Israel/ Palestine. London: Edwin Mellen Press.

Palestine Poster Project Archives 2009. Palestine Poster Project Archives. http://www.palestineposterproject.org/, accessed October 13, 2015.

Paldf.net n.d. Paldf.net. http://www.paldf.net, accessed October 13, 2015.

Rampley, Matthew, ed. 2005. Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ridwan, Shafiq 1992. al-Mulsaq al-filasatini: mashaqil al-nishat wa 'l-tatawwar, Dimashq, Munazzamat al-tahrir al-filastini.

Rose, Gillian 2001. Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials. London: Sage.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1997. 9 volls., English-Arabic. Riyad: Maktaba Darussalam.

Sahih Muslim 2007. 7 volls. Riyad: Maktaba Darussalam.

Semmerling, Tim Jon 2004. Israeli and Palestinian Postcards: Presentations of National Self. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Steinberg, Paul and A. M. Oliver 1994. The Graffiti of the Intifada: A Brief Survey, Jerusalem: Passia.

at-Turabi, Hasan 1991. Hiwar ad-din wa 'l-fann. al-Ghadir 2:229-244.

WesamStyle 2010. Facebook Inc. https://ar-ar.facebook.com/wesamstyle2, accessed October 13, 2015.

Winkler, Carol K. and Cori E. Dauber eds. 2014. Visual Propaganda and Extremism in the Online Environment. Washington: Strategic Studies Institute - U.S. Army War College Press.

Appendix - Image Gallery

Figure 1. Image showing the "visual history" and genealogy as well as the organizing structure of the Hamas movement.
(author: Abu'l-'Izz, source: http://www.hamasonline.org)

Figure 2. Image showing the leaders of Hamas Ahmad Yassin and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi with the fighters of the Qassam Brigades.
(author: Khaleel, source: http://www.khaleelstyle.com)

Figure 3. The female activists of Hamas with the copies of Qur'an and with the gest showing "there is no god but God".
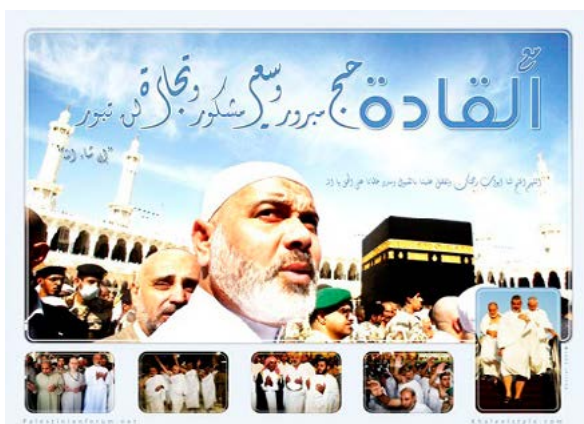**(author: Wesam, source: http://www.palistinianforum.net)**

Figure 4. Isma'il Haniya, the "prime minister" of Hamas on the great pilgrimage in Mecca with the Ka'ba.
(author: Khaleel, source: http://www.khaleelstyle.com)

Figure 5. The leader of Hamas Khaled Meshal with the Palestinian flag and the map of "all Palestine". (author: anonym, source: http://www.paldf.net/forum)

**Figure 6. The spiritual leader and founder of Hamas sheikh Ahmad Yassin prostrated with the Palestinian national flag.
(autor: Abu 'l-Walid, source: http://www.paldf.net/forum)**

Figure 7. The emblem of the Hamas movement.

Figure 8. The emblem of Brigades of the martyr 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

Figure 9. The emblem of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.

Figure 10. The emblem of the Peoples resistance committees.

Figure 11. The emblem ofthe Victorious Salah al-Din Brigades.

Figure 12. The fighters of the Qassam brigades protecting the Dome of the Rock.
(author: dwarq, source: http://www.alaqsa-online.net)

Figure 13. The fighters of the Qassam brigades protecting the al-Aqsa mosque.
Poster to the 19th anniversary of the founding of Hamas.
(author: Khaleel, source: http://www.khaleelstyle.com)

Figure 14. "Jerusalem is ours" and "No to the third temple", a fighter
of the Qassam brigades "protecting" the Haram al-sharif in Jerusalem.
(author: anonym, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

**Figure 15. "Jerusalem, we are coming!" a fighter of the Qassam brigades "coming to"
Jerusalem. (author: Wameed, source: http://www.hamasonline.org)**

**Figure 16. Ariel Sharon as the "butcher of Sabra and Shatilah".
(author: Khaleel, source: http://www.khaleelstyle.com)**

Figure 17. The "martyrdom poster" of 'Abd al-Karim Bikroun from the Qassam brigades. (author: anonym, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

Figure 18. The "martyrdom poster" of Muhammad al-Ghulfrom the Qassam brigades. (author: AbuMukin, source: http://www.palestinegallery.com)

Figure 19. The allegoric "martyrdom poster" of Raid Jalil Musa from the Qassam brigades. (author: al-Bara', source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

Figure 20. The allegoric "martyrdom poster" of Ibrahim Abu 'r-Rabb from the Qassam brigades. (author: AbuNabit al-Hamsawi, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

Attila Kovacs

119

Figure 21. The "martyrdom poster" of Muhammad 'Ali al-Ghalbanfrom the Qassam brigades. (author: anonym, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

Figure 22. A poster about the assassination of sheikh Ahmad Yassin of Hamas. (author: Abu 'l-'Izz, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

Figure 23. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin of Hamas "on the way to paradise".
Yassin is riding to the paradise on a carriage like the Helios or prophet Elijah.
(author: anonym, source: http://www.paldf.net/forum)

Figure 24. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin of Hamas "in paradise".
(author: Khaleel, source: http://www.khaleelstyle.com)

Attila Kovacs

Figure 25. "To the garden of paradise", sheikh Yassin and other "martyrs"
of Hamas as "the sunflowers of paradise".
(author: Abbas, source: http://www.palistinianforum.net)

Figure 26. "The brave horses of Palestine".
(author: anonym, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)

Figure 27. "Qassami lions". (author: Khaleel, source: http://www.khaleelstyle.com)

**Figure 28. A fighter of the Qassam brigades with an eagle or falcon as a symbol
of brewery. (author: Hamas, source: http://www.almotlaqa.ps)**

**Figure 29. A fighter of the Qassam brigades with wings from Gaza.
(author: mif min, source: http://www.paldf.net/forum)**

Attila Kovacs

Figure 30. A photography of an activist "cyber fighter" of the Phalanges of Jerusalem, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad in Palestine working on computer. (author: Jihadi media, source: http://saraya.ps)

Figure 31. Two activists "cyber fighters" of the Phalanges of Jerusalem, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad in Palestine working on computer. (author: Jihadi media, source: http://saraya.ps)

**Figure 32. Poster advertising the new website of the
Qassam brigades: http://www.alqassam.ps**

**Figure 33. Poster advertising the multiple websites
of Islamic Jihad in Palestine: http://saraya.ps**

Figure 34. A poster reminding the public of the raise of the number of members of the most significant Palestinian discussion forum. (author: Khaleel, source: http://www.paldf.net)

Figure 35. An example of the influence of popular visual culture on the visual representation of the Palestinian Islamist: Hassan Nasrallah of Hizballah as "a leader of the gang" in the style of the pirate Jack Sparrow from the movie The pirates of the Caribbean. (author: Wesam, source: https://ar-ar.facebook.com/wesamstyle2)

**Figure 36. A digital poster showing the cameraman of the
Qassam brigades "in action". (author: Information office of the Qassam brigades,
source: http://www.alqassam.ps)**

**Figure 37. A photography showing the cameraman of the Islamic Jihad
in Palestine in the fields. (author: Jihadi media, source: http://saraya.ps)**

Attila Kovacs

Notes

[1] Cited from: http://www.alqassam.ps/vb3 (no longer active).

[2] Due to the significantly different standpoints and practices of Shia Islam, this work only deals with the Sunni interpretation and practice.

[3] *Sahih al-Bukhari* 1: 8: 419, 426; 2: 23: 425; 3: 34: 318, 428, 440, 659; 4: 54: 447, 449; 4: 55: 570, 571; 5: 58: 213; 5:59: 585; 7: 62: 110; 7: 63: 259; 7: 72: 833-844; 8: 73: 130, 151; 9: 93: 646-647; *Sahih Muslim* 24: 5252, 5246, 5249, 5253, 5258, 5262, 5264-576.

[4] *Sahih al-Bukhari* 7: 72: 833 and elsewhere.

[5] *Sahih al-Bukhari* 7: 72: 835 and elsewhere.

[6] *Sahih al-Bukhari* 8: 73: 151 and elsewhere. Among others, this precedent enabled the creation of the "Muslim Barbie doll," distributed under the name *Fulla*.

[7] See CREED Pictures and Photographs n.d.

[8] Shaykh Abdul-Aziz bin Baaz: "The Islamic Ruling Concerning Tasweer" (see Islamic Law 2006).

[9] As an example: http://alplatformmedia.com/vb/index.php

[10] This is probably closely connected to the cult of Gamal 'Abd an-Nasir and his followers in the post of Egyptian president, who harshly stood up to the Muslim Brotherhood several times.

[11] E.g. rooted in leftist, nationalist political or popular visual culture (see *fig. 23* and *35*).

[12] For examples see Palestine Poster Project Archives 2009 and Jafet Library n.d.

[13] See for example Paldf.net n.d.

[14] See WesamStyle 2010.

[15] http://www.khaleelstyle.com (no longer active); KhaleelStyle 2011.

[16] http://www.eyelash.ps (no longer active).;

[17] However, women are present as well, and not only the famous "Umayya Jaha," but others, as documented for instance by the signature "Haneen."

[18] See: http://www.khaledsafi.com;

[19] Based on e-mail communication with authors.

Presenting the Glossy Look of Warfare in Cyberspace – The Islamic State's Magazine Dabiq

Christoph Günther

University of Leipzig

Abstract:

Since Ramadān 1435 (June/July 2014), the so-called 'Islamic State' (dawlat al-is-lāmiyya, IS), the 'State of the Caliphate' (dawlat al-khilāfa), publishes a periodic magazine entitled Dabiq. This glossy outlet, produced and distributed by al-Hayāt, one of the movement's media organizations, is widely disseminated on the Internet and forms part of IS's advancement in the field of the media. Published in English and other European languages, it allows the movement to spread its messages to an international audience. This article analyzes and evaluates four issues of Dabiq published in English between June and October 2014.It argues that three aspects are crucial for framing the ideological justification of the movement's warfare and help to rally support for their state-building project: the development and establishment of images of the enemy, the notion of 'strangeness,' and the call for emigration. Within this framework, the magazine intertwines textual and visual accounts of the movement's physical and virtual battlefields and mediates these to a non-Arab speaking public. Thus, Dabiq is – chronologically, technologically, and ideologically – the most recent and very well elaborated attempt of the Islamic State at winning support among the broadest public possible on a global level. The article concludes that the magazine at large and the abovementioned aspects reflect both the ideological structure of the movement and its current situation in Iraq and Syria. Utilizing derogative images of their enemies helps the Islamic State both to maintain its claim for legitimacy and to position their adherents and opponents within a dichotomous ideological framework. On this basis, it calls its followers to immigrate to the land of the two rivers and the Levant in order to support the establishment of an Islamic State and eradicate nation state borders.

Introduction

Dabiq is issued as a periodical according to the Islamic calendar. Its first issue appeared in Ramadān 1435, No. 2 dated from Ramadān, No. 3 from Shawwāl, and No. 4 of Dūl Hijja 1435.[1] The length of the issues at hand varies between 42 and 56 pages. It can be described a magazine that attempts to strengthen the pillars of this Jihadist state-building project by providing its audience with religious teachings, news on social and political affairs as well as on organizational and military developments. Taken together, the issues under consideration present a consistent pattern of the movement's world view and strategy in accordance with the aim of previous and subsequent publications issued by the Islamic State[2] and its predecessors both in Arabic and other languages. What is remarkably new about *Dabiq* though is its scope: The magazine is produced for and directed at the movement's international and English-speaking audience that supposedly comprises potential followers as well as those activists who cannot speak and/or understand Arabic well enough to comprehend the meaning of the movement's other media outlets. Interestingly though, the magazine includes a whole range of theological terminology in the broadest sense which is not translated from Arabic. It thus remains questionable to which extent the textual messages are understandable for the movement's non-Arab audiences and to which extent visualizations can bridge this knowledge gap.

To a large extent, every issue so far follows a standard composition: A graphically elaborate front page provides the theme of the lead article of the respective issue (Fig. 1).

Fig.1: Cover designs of Dabiq issues 1-4.

It is followed by a content page that introduces the subsequent articles. Furthermore, each issue contains a foreword which is followed by an article introducing the cover story, a section named "Islamic State Reports" which probably replaces a publication with the same name,[3] a lengthy feature of the cover story itself, a section devoted to "The Islamic State in the words of the enemy," and a concluding section with varying topics. Beside this standardized structural composition which bears strong resemblance to Western periodicals, *Dabiq* reflects the Islamic States' professionalism in utilizing latest media and communication in order to spread their messages widely. Moreover, the interdigitation of glossy visualizations and text, of the sacred and the profane, of religion and politics, and of accounts of the delightful living in the Islamic State and of the atrocities perpetrated by the movement to reach its goals is altogether essential to the magazine's style and structure.

However, these parameters might also be crucial to the magazine's attractiveness to its readership. Nevertheless, further empirical research needs to be done to shed light on the questions of who reads this magazine for which reasons and to which extent the reading affects its audience - a group of people of which some might follow the Islamic State's call for support and engage in Syria or Iraq as the "foreign fighters" whose numbers surpass the Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s (Neumann 2015). It is not only that the issue of "radicalization on the Internet" and the media strategies of Jihadist movements[4] require further research on the motivational factors to join IS's ranks and the social environment of people who do so (cf. Carter et al. 2014; Malik and Gani 2014; Heinke and Raudszus 2015). Also, the term "foreign fighters" itself bears a certain vagueness as it comprises all people who emigrate their home countries towards the Islamic State to partake in its evolution on various levels such as civil, humanitarian, religious, and military services and so on and so forth. It is due to these uncertainties that this article does not attempt to scrutinize the extent to which *Dabiq* affects its targeted audience. This article rather focuses on the offerings which the Islamic State makes its English-speaking readership on an ideological and 'ideographical' level.

While bound to the formalities of an electronically published periodical, content-wise it comprises the whole spectrum of Jihadist media production through "narrative-rich depictions of typically goal-oriented violence [...] and narrative-light displays of ostentatious destruction and killing" (Cottee 2014). In this regard, *Dabiq* resembles the magazine *Inspire* which has been issued by *al-Qā'ida on the Arabian Peninsula* (AQAP) to "recruit independent individuals in the West to carry out "lone wolf" missions in their home countries" (Sivek 2013:586; cf. Kovensky 2014). In contrast, *Dabiq* attempts to attract its readership by offering"an overall religious, military, and political vision" (Gambhir 2014:1) through a combination of highly instructive textual elaborations on the movement's creed with mere celebrations of its glorious achievements. While the movement's self-glorification is overwhelmingly discernible in the magazine, one also finds rare confessions of obstacles in this state-building project which are meant to underline the urgent need for all Muslims to embark to the 'caliphate' that "requires the allotment of many resources" (Dabiq 3:34). More frequently than these rare critical acknowledgements, one finds citations from various Jihadi fighters and ideologues as well as accounts of their enemies such as Senator John McCain and President Barack Obama on the situation in Iraq and Syria which serve to textually enhance their failures and portray them as being caught in the Jihadist's trap.

Despite its glossy look, *Dabiq* strictly follows the Jihadist narrative which derives its dynamic and plausibility as an alternative model mainly from its dichotomous, aggressive world view. It attempts to gain legitimacy byre-connecting to the religio-cultural heritage and a favorable past, a glorious early Islamic history, and frames its self-perception in terms of an apocalyptic battle between good and evil. Consequently, the title of the magazine is derived from a *hadīth* that serves to frame the movement's self-understanding in eschatological terms (Fraser 2014). It predicts the victory of a Muslim force against the Byzantines in "an area in the northern countryside near Aleppo" (Dabiq 1:4) leading to a severe defeat of Christian forces[5] and replicates Abū Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's anticipation of Jihadist advancement to Syria where the spark lit in Iraq "burns the crusader armies in Dābiq" (Zarqawi 2004b).

It is not the mere belief in the implementation of utopian and eschatological promises which both seem to inspire the Jihadi-Salafi arena in general (Paz 2009) and can be considered a driving force for adherents of the Islamic State in particular as they are reflected and constantly reiterated in the movement's textual and visual media (Günther 2014, 2015).[6] Feeding the sense of the apocalypse is a crucial part of the their creed and is meant to strengthen the movement in portraying itself as a vanguard (*talī'a*) of strangers (*ghurabā'*) which awaits the fall of dominant political and social orders worldwide eager to restore Islam's glory on their ruins. It fulfills divinely ordained duties by establishing an Islamic State, a "marvel of history that has only come about to pave the way for al-Malhamah al-Kubrā (the grand battle prior to the hour)" (Dabiq 2:6) which will take place in the Levant (Dabiq 3:9; cf. Filiu 2012; Cook 2008:126-149). Thus, these people - "the best of Allah's slaves" (Dabiq 3:11) - will establish a new world by partaking in an imminent apocalyptic battle in Syria and the neighboring countries and by destroying the currently existing world.

Portraying itself first and foremost as a vanguard driven by eschatological expectations implies to resound less with the "major motivational resources of public order - fear of death, family ties, the necessity to negotiate" (Scheffler 2003:43-44). On the contrary, the Islamic State also strives to be considered "a reality that everyone can see" (Dabiq 2:6) and even goes so far as to claim to be "large enough and serious enough for any politician to deal with" (Dabiq 4:55), hence opening the door for negotiations. Taken at face value, these notions are indeed contradicting and present one of the several ambivalences which contemporary Jihadist movements face.[7] Beneath the surface though, apocalyptical and utopian expectations supposedly serve as driving forces for IS's adherents, yet the movement's commitment to the "innerworldly eschatology of Sunni mainstream Islam, that is [...] the conviction that it is the duty of Muslims to establish a just world order here on earth" (Scheffler 2003:47) is given far greater weight in their communicative outlets.

In the subsequent sections, I shall focus on the narratives which frame the establishment of such a world order. I will scrutinize three aspects which

seem crucial for framing the ideological justification of the movement's warfare, help to rally support for this state-building project, and are closely related to these functional aspects of the movement's ideological framework: the development and establishment of images of the enemy, the notion of 'strangeness,' and the call for emigration.

These narratives derive their argumentative power from being linked to historical precedents as well as from being constantly reproduced, re-iterated and re-framed. They help to support and justify the physical warfare of adherents and fighters of the Islamic State on the ground and concurrently serve as a means of psychological warfare as they denounce and belittle the movement's opponents. These motifs and themes represent a continually repeated commitment to unifying the Sunni community, establishing a societal model grounded in 'proper' Islamic beliefs and improving the life of their main audience (i.e. Sunni Muslims). In order to achieve these goals and establish an Islamic State, key motifs and themes moreover mirror the extent to which the movement continuously contests several opposing social, political and religious authorities, institutions, structures, and subsequent drivers of identity.

Furthering Images of the Enemy

Similar to its predecessors, the Islamic States understands the world as being "divided into two camps [...] the camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy [...] all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the Jews" (Dabiq 1:10). While the former consists of few people who are qualified as following the lead of their pious ancestors, hence constituting the adherents to "absolute truth" (Dabiq 2:5), their many opponents would follow "complete falsehood" (Dabiq 2:5). Generally speaking, approaching the world within a binary logic and dividing it in "them" and "us" might be a widespread notion among neo-traditionalist movements which uphold intergroup biases in order to strengthen in-group coherences. More specifically, it serves a strategic purpose as it allows both to present adherents and opponents as fairly homogenous groups and to identify the position of every individual and collective accordingly.

The Islamic State identifies itself, its institutions and adherents as being of the same essence as the Muslim *umma*. Hence, this state which represents a societal model inspired and driven by divinely revealed commandments and the belief to act according to the ideal of the first Muslim community in Medina scheme is understood to be the only effective corrective of the present and the only way for the Muslim community to fulfill its expectations of salvation.[8] This notion is the basis for the movement's claim of hegemony over the Muslim community and includes a denial of the freedom of choice for all men (Dabiq 2:5-11), hence strictly rejecting opposing worldviews.

The Islamic State conveys its opponents on the political stage, that is the governments in Baghdad and Damascus as well as their respective institutions and allies, as fairly homogenous entities. To frame the movement's relationship to these opponents in collective terms not only helps to reduce the complexities of reality and the differences between the various political and religious actors but also serves to somehow 'dehumanize' these people in order to belittle their concepts and ideas as well as to limit an identification of fighters and adherents with fellow citizens. Consequently, while the effects of Western politics and economies (the 'far enemy') constitute an important reference for its ideological framework, the movement's media focuses on enemies that are 'near' in spatial and cultural terms. This is not only due to the Islamic State partaking in a fierce conflict about Syrian and Iraqi soil but also because it is engaged in disputes about the nature of Muslim societies, the role of religion in the operation of all spheres of life, and about the rightful religious practice that leads to salvation.

Within this primarily ideological conflict, fellow Muslims - Sunni and Shi'i alike - are those who understand the meanings and the theological basis of the Islamic State's ideology, who know which symbols and semantics the movement uses to persuade its audiences, and who have the skills to unmask those attempts. Thus, military forces may be of tactical relevance but in the long run the strategic commitment of an ideology is decisive -rather than military victories. The attempt to strengthen the distanced relationship to other segments of the society in turn includes drawing par-

ticular images of those regarded as enemies, a typecasting meant to reduce and condense those depicted to their essentials (Günther 2014).

Both the Syrian and the Iraqi government are addressed with and framed in confessionalist and derogative terms such as *nusayrī* for the Syrian 'Alawīte[9] government and *rāfidī* and *safawī* for its Iraqi counterpart. As much as this terminology suggests a differentiation between the two by recognizing their historical evolution, it also homogenizes both factions under the rubric of general accusations against Shi'ite Muslims as being heretics and traitors that are deeply rooted in Islamic history (see Ende 1990:221-222). This notion is on the one hand inspired by earlier Sunni polemical writings against Shi'i doctrines (see i.a. al-Jamil 2010, Steinberg 2011), hence reiterating widespread sentiments that resonate well with those who are culturally affiliated. On the other hand, it draws on various books and pamphlets that were published throughout the Middle East since the Iranian revolution of 1979 (Ende 1990:226). While questions about who can legitimately claim for religious interpretations of the world and about the theological justification of power structures are most prominent motifs in these publications, they are also closely linked to questions of economic competition in the region which is reverberated in recent public evocations of an advancing 'Shi'ite crescent' (cf. ICG 2005; Hatina 2011:216).

Consequently, referring to the regime of Bashar al-Asad as *nusayrī* denounces it as merely an esoteric extremist sect which is supported by Iran and its allies eager to suppress the Sunni majority in the country. The relationship of these enemies of 'true' Islam is visualized in Fig. 2 which appeared in a three-page-article in *Dabiq* 4 under the title "The Crusade serving Iran and Russia" (Dabiq 4: 38-40). Taking up on an audio-message by late Abū Hamza al-Muhājir (al-Muhājir 2006), until his death in 2010 *wazīr al-harb* ('secretary of war') to the 'Islamic State of Iraq' (*dawlat al-'Irāq al-islāmiyya*, ISI), the article reverberates the advent of a 'Shi'ite crescent' since the US-led military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Muhājir addressed al-Asad as Syria's *rāfidī-nusayrī* tyrant (*tāghiyatihā al-rāfidī al-nu-sayrī*) who opened his country to the "ancient Persian empire" (*al-imbarā-turiyya al-fārsiyya al-qadīma*) in collaboration with Hasan Nasrallāh who is

derided as "the agent of the Anti-Christ" (*al-'amīl al-dajjāl*) *nasr al-lāt*, that is the advocate of one of the polytheist goddesses in Mecca before the advent of Islam.

Fig. 2: Bashar al-Asad meeting with Hizbullāh leader Hasan Nasrallāh (left) and Iranian president Mahmūd AHmadinejād (right) at Damascus 2010, Photo: AP; reprinted in Dabiq 4:38.

In this regard, medieval Sunni polemics against the Nusayriyya by clerics such as 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d.1037) and Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) still affect, as Friedman (2005:349) points out, the 'Alawīte's image in Middle Eastern societies and provide the justification for their dismissal as heretics and the call for *takfīr*.[10] Interestingly, none of these sources is explicitly referred to in the four issues of *Dabiq* under scrutiny (to the knowledge of this author neither in other issues up to n° 10). Neither do the authors of the magazine attempt to elaborate on theological justifications of their position towards the 'Alawites as a religious group that go beyond attributing them as "filthy" (Dabiq 2:42). This suggests that the audience of the magazine either is expected to be familiar with theological debates and historical developments surrounding this notion or that a differentiation of this approach which is full of presuppositions is deemed too complicated to fit into a rather simple dichotomous worldview.

Christoph Günther

138

In a more general manner, the pejorative appellation *rāfidī* (rejectionist, renegade, pl. *rawāfid*) has been widely used among Sunni critics of Shi'i doctrine.[11] Employed to frame historical disputes over authority over the Muslim *umma*, it is used by modern Sunni religio-political movements to uphold the notion of an everlasting enmity between the two sects as opposed to attempts for re-conciliation or rapprochement (*taqrīb*). In *Dabiq*, as in other media outlets of the Islamic State and its predecessors, it is mostly used interchangeably with or in relation to the term *safawī*. The latter formally refers to the Safavid dynasty which ruled Persia between 1501 and 1722, established the Twelver school of Shi'ite Islam as the state religion and claimed a religio-political protectorate over the entire Shi'ite community. Its application by the Islamic State links the term to a combination of historical and present events by pointing to the relationship between Shi'ite political actors in Baghdad and the Iranian government. This insinuates that Baghdad ["the safawi dogs of the crusaders" (Dabiq 4:18)] and its "safawi army" (Dabiq 2:26) would be controlled by "the safawis in Tehran" (Dabiq 2:26).

Identifying Iran as a "Safawi State" (*dawla safawiyya*) and the Iraqi and Syrian governments as its acolytes resonates well with apprehensions among secular and religious Sunni circles in the Middle East towards an advancement of a 'Shi'ite crescent.' It reframes an allegedly continued conspiracy of the Shi'a against Sunnis in contemporary terms which is also illustrated by referring to Iraqi Shi'ite politicians as "descendants of Ibn al-'Alqamī" (*ahfād Ibn al-'Alqamī*).[12] Furthermore, this narrative serves strategic considerations on part of the Islamic State as it both strengthens their polemics against Shi'ite Muslims as potential religious and political troublemakers and fosters their attempts at filling the void left unattended by the governments by offering Sunnis in Iraq and Syria a sociopolitical perspective.

Being Strangers as a Noble Trait

Just like other publications of the Islamic State and its predecessors, *Dabiq* frames the participants of this project also as 'strangers' (*ghurabā'*, sing. *gharīb*) in their societies and consequently calls for their psychological

and physical withdrawal from their immediate environment. It draws upon a *hadīth* that considers Islam as having begun as "something strange and it will return to being something strange as it began, so glad tidings to the strangers" (Dabiq 3:6; cf. Muslim 145). To include this dogma in their ideological framework is not an invention of jihadist movements. Riexinger (2015:5-6) identifies this *hadīth* as a motto of the Wahhabiyya and states that it also inspired several revivalist movements both in Islamic history and contemporary times but that its use is not limited to puritan circles. The latter, however, have been referring to this *hadīth* and the notion of being strangers as a means of self-stylization to express their unease with their environment and to clarify their position towards those who fail to fulfill the commandment to *tawhīd*, that is to obey and follow the divine order and its representatives by following idols and falling prey to heresy.[13] When Arab volunteers joined the battle against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, "the term *al-ghuraba*, or 'strangers,' was illustrative of the Arab-Afghan community in Afghanistan, many of whom were fugitives and estranged from their homelands" (Lia 2008:250). The concept thus comprises both a physical and spiritual state and process of alienation from someone's homeland and/or their immediate environment. One of these men, the Jordanian Ahmad Fadīl Nazzāl al-Halayla who was later known by his *nome de guerre* Abū Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, also broke up from his hometown and went to Afghanistan in 1989 to fight alongside other Arabs. He then took up the pseudonym of Abū Muhammad al-Gharīb and allegedly kept on preferring this name to the one he later became famous with (Maysara al-Gharīb 2007:6; Lia 2008:251). Some years later, he transferred the concept to the battlefields in Iraq when he addressed his followers in an audio message and explained that "a stranger [is someone who] breaks off from his family and tribe" (Dabiq 3:6; Zarqawi 2005b).

Choosing this alias expresses one of the paradoxes Jihadist movements struggle within their public appearance: On the one hand, their ideological concepts need to attract a broad public in order to ensure the latter's support and enable the movements to bring about social and political changes according to their ideology. On the other hand, their ideas need to be ex-

clusive to a certain extent in order to ensure their coherence and immunize them against external criticism. The latter often implies belittling 'the masses' who are referred to as "a hundred camels amongst which you almost can't find any that are fit for riding" (Dabiq 2:9) as opposed to the few righteous believers "who agreed with and followed the truth" (Dabiq 2:9).

**Fig. 3: Images illustrating an article in Dabiq 3 entitled
"Those who break off from their tribes."**

Consequently, the authors of Dabiq notice a "widespread ignorance amongst the people" (Dabiq 2:10) due to a plenty of choices and lack of a clear guidance. The Islamic State and its fighters (Fig. 3) thus embody an antithesis to these developments which the small group of believers would fight according to the paradigmatic action of historical role-models such as the prophet Muhammad, the *sahāba*, and other biblical prophets. They would have warned their people and punish them pursuant to God's commandments and thus be identified as 'strangers' to their immediate environment. Portraying the Islamic State as their successors, this approach not only serves to legitimize the movement as *the* institution which is willing, able, and obliged to lead the people with clear advice, calls for saving their subjects from punishments both on earth and in the hereafter, and fulfills divinely obtained commandments in order to rectify people's wrongdoings. It also helps the movement to address its recipients by way of calling on their religious affiliation and affirming a sense of social selectivity and exclusiveness.

This sense is particularly emphasized by the notion of a vanguard (*talī'a*). Perceiving themselves in this way to a certain extent 'disburdens' the actors of the liabilities towards their societies. It also superelevates, so to speak, the meaning of their thinking and action because their voluntary separation - be it physical or psychological - from their immediate environment and even from the majority of a given society must not lead to exasperation or weakness. Rather, this dissociation is considered a sign of strength and volition with subsequent struggles being regarded as spiritual tests (cf. Fishman 2006:21). A separation of this kind, a *reservatio mentalis* towards their immediate environment, furthermore implies a dismissal of generally accepted moral constraints. It allows justifying actions such as bomb attacks against civilians which would be condemned by the public.[14] Hence it may limit the ideology's attractiveness to outsiders or potential followers as much as it might help to broaden the appeal of the Islamic State in the face of otherwise despicable action. It might seem obvious to compare this notion of a vanguard to other social-revolutionary movements of the 19th and 20th century (both leftist and right wing) which applied similar paradigms to their thinking and action.[15] The concept of a vanguard and Marxist-Leninist theories of social struggle also inspired Sayyid Qutb (see i.a. Calvert 2010) whose ideological influence on contemporary Jihadist movements cannot be overestimated. His ideas also gleam through in the Islamic State's perception of the world and its own position therein although there are no direct references to the *jāhiliyya* or other of Qutb's concepts. Contrary to leftist secular movements and groups, the acceptance or rejection of religious norms, values, and beliefs in particular here affects conflicts around sovereignty and the organization of a society. It is not immanent principles of rule and governance but rather the reference to a transcendent order that determines the legitimacy of the vanguard's code of conduct. Therefore, obedience to or rejection of the Islamic State do not relate to a sociopolitical movement in the first place but rather to an entity that represents divine will.

To the opinion of this author, this ideological operation is crucial to understand the movement's ambivalent position towards its own establishment as a 'mass phenomenon'. The Islamic State thus oscillates to some extent

between its self-perception as an avant-garde which entails a high grade of inner cohesion by a strong segregation from the outside and the need to establish a movement on a broad basis with popular support that would satisfy the requirement of an Islamic body politic because it is willing to make compromises. Over the course of their evolution, Zarqawi and his group as well as their successors have been seemingly considering radical ideas and a commitment to an unrestrained vanguard more valuable than the attractiveness of a popular movement. However, they refer to themselves as a marginalized, elitist movement of "poor strangers" (Dabiq 3:5) with a social-revolutionary agenda and thus consider themselves strangers in their own societies. Hence, internal coherence and ideological immunization as well as attractiveness and persuasiveness to external actors are all strongly dependent on a successful mediation of their ideas, norms, values, and beliefs. Furthermore, a successful call for support of or participation in their movement has been a viable need and the Islamic State uses *Dabiq* (among other textual and audio-visual publications) as a communicative means to long out to their audience.

The Emigration to the Battlefield

Using several communicative platforms such as social media, Youtube channels, and Internet forums, the Islamic State disseminates various audio-visual media to call its audience for support. In order to grant success to its state-building project, the movement demands the emigration (*hijra*) of its audience from their countries of origin to the nascent Islamic State which requires not only a spiritual, but also a practical commitment to the evolution of this project. To give special attention to this issue again aims at strengthening the notion that current developments are linked to early Islamic history. In this sense, those people who partake in the progression of the Islamic State stand in aline of continuity with their pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-sālih*), that is the people who followed the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina leaving their home town in order to establish a divinely ordained order.

Interestingly though, this topic only became prominent to global Jihadism since the 'Islamic State of Iraq' had been announced in late 2006. Neither

Christoph Günther

Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and his *al-tawḥīd wa-l-jihād-group* who affiliated himself with al-Qā'ida in 2004, nor al-Qā'ida under the leadership of Usāma Bin Lādin insistently called their audiences for emigrating to the battlefields in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya or elsewhere in order to establish a political order based on religious norms, values, and beliefs. Zarqawi for instance only rarely highlighted the call for an emigration of Muslim fighters to the battlefields in the land of the two rivers (Zarqawi 2005a) although he addressed Mujāhidīn in Iraq (and his followers in particular) as *muhājirūn* (emigrants) and *ansār* (supporters). After its establishment in October 2006, ISI's first 'Commander of the faithful' (*amīr al-mu'minīn*) Abū 'Umar al-Baghdādī and Abū Hamza al-Muhājir in their audio messages frequently referred to the motif of emigration to the extent that al-Baghdādī considered "the basis of this religion the oath of allegiance and the emigration and the Jihād" (Baghdadi 2007). This citation densely expresses that ISI was grounded in the fervor of its adherents and their commitment to its visionary, utopian prospect based on their belief in ISI as an institution establishing a divinely ordained world order. This system favors 'true' Muslims who commit themselves to "listen to and obey" (*fi sam' wa-tā'a*) their leader and swear an oath of allegiance (*bay'a*), leave their countries of origin behind them and fight for the establishment of this order.

It is this motif that is constantly reiterated as "first priority" (Dabiq 2:3) for the adherents of the Islamic State who would have little more in common than their belief in the righteousness of this project (Dabiq 3:5-6). Consequently, the reader not only frequently encounters the motif of *hijra* in all issues of *Dabiq* at hand, the theme also prominently features the magazine's first and third issue whose cover stories are entitled "From Hijrah to Khalifah" and "A call to Hijrah." Reducing the complex reality and putting it into simple terms, the first article develops a fairly straight line of five phases from emigration over community building, destabilizing of opposing political, social and religious powers to a stabilization of the respective group and a proclamation of a caliphate. Framing the whole process, the concepts of emigration and caliphate are presented as re-emergence of their idealized antetypes in (early) Islamic history. Moreover, they present

a linkage to Zarqawi and his group who would "strive for the re-establishment of the caliphate on earth" (Zarqawi 2004c) and prospected the "dusk of the State of the Quran" (*fajr dawlat al-Qur'ān*) (Zarqawi 2004a).

Providing an overview of events after the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the article openly admits that Zarqawi, "by using methods that led to maximum chaos and targeting apostates of all different backgrounds" (Dabiq 1:37) sought to prevent the government in Baghdad and its allies from stabilizing the country. The text mentions that these methods resulted in a civil war with "Rafidi militias seeking revenge against Ahl us-Sunna" (Dabiq 1:37, cf. ICG 2008), yet it does not reflect upon the fact that Zarqawi and his group were not able or willing to act according to their promises. When they fueled xenophobia and sectarianism (cf. Inglehart *et al* 2006; Haddad 2011), they were not at all capable to protect those who they considered their subjects (i.e. Iraqi Sunni Muslims) and their actions even fostered the establishment of tribal militias fighting against al-Qā'ida in Iraq (Benraad 2011). By putting it as being tested by God, previous statements of al-Muhājir and Abū 'Umar al-Baghdādī disconnected the movement's strategic and military failures from its prospected final victory (al-Muhajir 2008; Abu 'Umar al-Baghdādī 2008) - in a way of argumentative self-immunization of ISI's ideology. In line with this, the article portrays the serious backlash that the group experienced on the hands of their opponents in 2005/2006 as a "test decreed by Allah [...] [in order to] solidify the newborn Islamic State and prepare it for greater responsibilities" (Dabiq 1:39).[16] Hence being pushed to seek new alliances among other Jihadist groups and the broader populace, the group began to wave the black flag and utilize the euphonic and culturally resonating title of 'Khilafa' for its state-building project. This was not used as a means of internal stabilization by providing a unifying vision, but rather to employ communicative measures which could also pave the way for ISI to gradually fill physical and psychological voids being left unvalued by the central government in the Western areas of Iraq. Furthermore, it provided the movement with an instrument that would enable it to effectively communicate with a broader public and concurrently broadening its appeal to a tremendous reservoir of culturally resonating textual and visual signs (Günther 2014,2015).

The movement sincerely needed to combine as many measures and techniques as possible to attract more followers to their state-building project. It is this notion that determines the second article, "A call to hijrah" (Dabiq 3:24-34) which addresses potential followers among Muslims worldwide. Other than the article in Dabiq 1, this feature tries to appeal to different audiences on different levels which can be boiled down to a spiritual and an emotional motivation. On the spiritual level, the article repeatedly refers to the Islamic State as the institution which takes responsibility for fulfilling God's commandments on earth "while relying on Allah alone" (Dabiq 3:27) and appeals to every Muslim to consider the covenant between them and God. It argues that particularly professionals, intellectuals and students - those whose expertise the movement seeks for the most - "should now make [their] number one priority to repent and answer the call to hijrah" (Dabiq 3:26) which includes a physical and mental break off from their social surroundings in order to conduct a "Hijrah from hypocrisy to sincerity" (Dabiq 3:25).

Fig. 4: Photograph of textbooks and a notepad representing the professionals, intellectuals and students among Muslims in Western countries, Dabiq 3:26.

In a similar manner, the article calls Muslims to join the 'caliphate' as their life among Non-Muslims, that is non-believers/apostates, and their contact with a lifestyle which is not according to the societal model and code of conduct of the Islamic State would be weakening each individual's strength

of belief (Dabiq 3:32).This notion reifies a strict rejection of free choice or free will among the people andre-iterates the identification of the Muslim community with the Islamic State as well as the supposed role of this state in securing its subject's salvation.

On an emotional level, the article points to the lack of "might and honor that every Muslim should live and experience" (Dabiq 3:29) as well as to social disintegration of Muslims in Western societies. The feature takes up on the case of a martyr of the movement who is said to have felt a "sentimental death" (Dabiq 3:28) when being confronted with reports about people suffering in the Islamic and Arab world. As he took measures into his own hands and died for the Jihadist cause, the article tries to appeal to others who may experience the same feelings and condition calling that "there is no solution for it except by taking the first step towards jihād - hijrah" (Dabiq 3:28). By taking this step, Muslims would be granted the chance to escape "modern day slavery" (Dabiq 3:29).

Fig. 5: Photograph of metropolitan environment depicting "modern day slavery." Dabiq 3:29.

Fig. 5 visualizes the environment in their home countries where they live in anonymity in large cities and their identity as a Muslim would be constantly suppressed by their employer, their "kāfir master" (Dabiq 3:29), and their spiritual needs would be obscured by the worldly affairs that surrounded them. The Islamic State therefore offers them a combination of spiritual

custody and material care (*dunyā*) all of which is dependent on God's will and the obedience of the people towards His order. In this sense, successfully waging a war against 'the enemies of Islam' promises "the noblest income" (Dabiq 3:29), that is booty and spoils of war, and transcends the legitimization of those partaking in warfare as Mujāhidīn would deserve wealth more than their opponents and put it to good use in order to worship God or fulfill their religious duties (cf. Dabiq 4:10-13).

Conclusion

With its glossy look, *Dabiq* is a medium issued to widen the scope of public communication of the Islamic State. It is designed to appeal to segments of non-Arab societies that, due to language barriers, might not have been in the reach for the movement's ideological teachings. Although this leads to a differentiation of its messages and a pluralization of its adherents, the Islamic State and its media organization claim to neither let their claim for hegemony over the Muslim *umma* nor their strict and rigid way of interpreting the scriptures and implementing a divinely ordained societal model be compromised by these developments. In this sense, *Dabiq* both concisely reflects the ideological framework of the Islamic State and mirrors its current situation in Iraq and Syria.

The three aspects that were identified in this article as key to the movement's ideological structure are strongly related to its current situation. The Islamic State maintains and further develops textual and visual images of its enemies which have been in use in earlier days or were designed by their predecessors. Framing their religious, political, and social opponents in derogative terms and the struggles for hegemony and power within a dichotomous worldview allows the movement to sustain and further deepen sectarian strife and political divisions which are part of its military and political success since the beginning of 2014. Moreover, belittling their various opponents helps to support the claim for legitimate statehood which is structurally linked to the notion of strangeness and the call for emigration. The notion of a vanguard of strangers who are willing and able to use every means necessary to accomplish their mission can be a decisive feature in

the attempt to realize a societal model inspired by Islamic traditions on the territory of two sovereign nation states. Against the backdrop of the 'Arab Spring' and the apparent failure of many governments in the Middle East, the Islamic State is able to offer an alternative to secular political systems. The narrative that the movement presents in *Dabiq* derives its cogency both from its link to a favorable past and its supposed confirmation through the IS's resistance against global powers as well as its ability to take up state-like functions which have been left unfulfilled by the Iraqi and Syrian governments. Dabiq calls Muslims worldwide to leave their home countries, break off from their social networks, and join the community of the Islamic State. This call comprises notions of adventure and promises to undo defamations. Both promises are important to the individual and collective consciousness and the prospect of a life that leads to the fulfillment of salvation expectations. It is this composition that enables the Islamic State to provide those people with answers to their questions and needs who might feel depraved of the achievements and benefits of a globalized world.

References

Abu Hamza al-Muhājir 2008. Dawlat al-nabbawiyya [The Prophet's State].

Abū Hamza al-Muhājir 2006. Inna al-Hukm illā-llāh [Legislation is not but for Allah].

Abū Musʿab al-Sūrī 2000. Ahl al-sunna fi-l-Shām fi-l-muwājaHa al-nusayriyya wa-l-salībiyya wa-l- yahūd [The Sunni People in the Levant Confronting the Nusayris, the Crusaders and the Jews].

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi 2004a. Risāla min Abī Musʿab al-Zarqawi ilā al-Shaykh Usāma Bin Lādin [Letter from Abū Musʿab al-Zarqāwī to the Shaykh Usāma Bin Lādin].

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi 2004b. Ayna ahl al-murūʾāt? [Where are the people of a knight's virtues?].

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi 2004c. Kalima al-Shaykh Abī Musʿab al-Zarqāwī [Speech of the Shaykh Abū Musʿab al-Zarqāwī].

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi 2005a. Ayanqus al-dīn wa-ana Hay [Religion decreases while I live].

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi 2005b. al-Qābidūna 'ala l-jamr [Those who possess the blaze].

Abu Umar al-Baghdadi 2007. Fa-amma al-zabbad fa-yudhhab jufa' [As for the foam, it vanishes, (being) cast off].

Abu Umar al-Baghdadi 2008. Wa'd li-llāh [A promise to God].

Al-Jamil, Tariq 2010. Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hillī. Shi'i Polemics and the Struggle for Religious Authority in Medieval Islam. *In:* Ibn Taymiyya and his Times. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, eds. Pp. 229-246. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Armborst, Andreas 2013. Jihadi Violence. A Study of al-Qaeda's Media. Berlin: Duncker et Humblot.

Awan, Akil N. 2007a. Radicalization on the Internet? The RUSI Journal 152(3):76-81.

Awan, Akil N. 2007b . Virtual Jihadist Media. European Journal of Cultural Studies 10(3):389-408.

Awan, Akil N. 2011. Jihadi Ideology in the New-Media Environment. *In:* Contextualising Jihadi Thought. Jeevan Deol and Zaheer Kazimi, eds. Pp. 99-119. London: Hurst & Co.

Awan, Akil N., Andrew Hoskins, and Ben O'Loughlin 2011. Radicalisation and Media. Connectivity and Terrorism in the New Media Ecology. Media, war and security. Andover: Routledge Ltd.

Bengio, Ofra, and Meir Litvak, eds. 2011. The Sunna and Shi'a in History. Division and Ecumenism in the Muslim Middle East. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Benraad, Myriam 2011. Iraq's tribal "Sahwa." Its rise and fall. Middle East Policy 18(1):121-131.

Calvert, John 2010. Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism. London: Hurst & Co.

Campbell, Bruce 1998. The SA Generals and the Rise of Nazism. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky.

Carter, Joseph A., Shiraz Maher, and Peter R. Neumann 2014. #Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ICSR-Report-Greenbirds-Measuring-Importance-and-Influeunce-in-Syrian-Foreign-Fighter-Networks.pdf, accessed June 14, 2015.

Cook, David 2008. Contemporary Muslim apocalyptic literature. Religion and politics. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.

Cottee, Simon 2014. The Pornography of Jihadism. What ISIS videos and X-rated movies have in common. The Atlantic.http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/09/isis-jihadist-propaganda-videos-porn/380117/, accessed October 30, 2014.

CTC n.d. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/publications, accessed June, 14 2015.

Deol, Jeevan, and Zaheer Kazimi, eds. 2011. Contextualising Jihadi Thought. London: Hurst & Co.

Elter, Andreas 2008. Propaganda der Tat. Die RAF und die Medien. Edition Suhrkamp, 2514. Frankfurt a. M: Suhrkamp.

Ende, Werner 1990. Sunni Polemical Writings on the Shi'a and the Iranian Revolution. *In:* The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World. David Menashri, ed. Pp. 217-228. Boulder: Westview Press.

FFI n.d. http://www.ffi.no/en/research-projects/Terra/Sider/Publications.aspx, accessed June 14, 2015.

Filiu, Jean-Pierre and M. B. DeBevoise 2011. Apocalypse in Islam. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fishman, Brian 2006. After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq. The Washington Quarterly 29(4):19-32.

Fraser, Giles 2014. To Islamic State, Dabiq is Important - but it's not the End of the World. The Guardian, October 10. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2014/oct/10/islamic-state-dabiq-important-not-end-of-the-world, accessed October 30, 2014.

Friedman, Yaron 2005. Ibn Taymiyya's Fatāwā against the Nuṣayrī-'Alawī Sect. Der Islam 82(2).

Gambhir, Harleen K. 2014. Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State. Washington (D.C.)http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Dabiq%20Background-er_Harleen%20Final.pdf, accessed June 14, 2015.

Günther, Christoph 2014a. The Land of the Two Rivers under the Black Banner:. Visual Communication of al-Qaida in Iraq. International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies 8(1):35-53.

Günther, Christoph 2015 (forthcoming). Al-Qaida in Iraq beyond Rhetoric: The Visualization of an 'Islamic State of Iraq.' Sociology of Islam Journal.

Haddad, Fanar 2011. Sectarianism in Iraq. Antagonistic visions of unity. London: Hurst & Co.

Hatina, Meir 2011. Debating the "Awakening Shi'a." Sunni Perceptions of the Iranian Revolution. *In:* The Sunna and Shi'a in History. Division and Ecumenism in the Muslim Middle East. Ofra Bengio and Meir Litvak, eds. Pp. 203-221. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hegghammer, Thomas 2014. Interpersonal Trust on Jihadi Internet Forums.http://hegghammer.com/_files/interpersonal_trust.pdf, accessed June 14, 2015.

Heinke, Daniel H. and Jan Raudszus 2015. German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq. CTC Sentinel 8(1):18-21.

Ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qāhir 1999. al-Farq bayn al-firaq. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīya.

Inglehart, Ronald, Mansoor Moaddel, and Mark Tessler 2006. Xenophobia and In-Group Solidarity in Iraq: A Natural Experiment on the Impact of Insecurity. Perspectives on Politics 4(3):495-505.

International Crisis Group (ICG) 2005. Iran in Iraq. How much influence? ICG Middle East Report 38. Amman: International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group (ICG) 2008. Iraq's civil war, the Sadrists and the surge. ICG Middle East Report 72. Bagdad/Damaskus/Brüssel: International Crisis Group.

ISCR n.d. http://icsr.info/category/publications/, accessed June 14, 2015.

Islamic State Report 2014. Jihadology.net. http://jihadology.net/category/islamic-state-report/, accessed June, 14 2015.

Kimmage, Daniel and Kathleen Ridolfo 2007. Iraqi Insurgent Media. The War of Images and Ideas. Washington (D.C.): Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Klausen, Jytte 2014. Tweeting the Jihad. Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 38(1):1-22.

Kohlberg, Etan 1979. The term "Rāfida" in Imāmī Shī'ī Usage. Journal of the American Oriental Society 99(4):677-679.

Kovensky, Josh 2014. ISIS's New Mag Looks Like a New York Glossy - With Pictures of Mutilated Bodies.http://www.newrepublic.com/article/119203/isiss-dabiq-vs-al-qaedas-inspire-comparing-two-extremist-magazines, accessed June 14, 2015.

Lia, Brynjar 2008. Architect of Global Jihad. The Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri. New York: Columbia University Press.

Malik, Shiv and Aisha Gani 2014. One British jihadi killed in Syria and Iraq every three weeks, study finds. The Guardian, October 24. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/24/british-jihadis-killed-syria-iraq, accessed June 14, 2015.

Maysara al-Gharīb 2007. Zarqāwī kamā 'ariftuhu [Zarqāwī as I knew him].

Meijer, Roel, ed. 2009. Global Salafism. Islam's New Religious Movement. London: Hurst & Co.

Neumann, Peter R. 2015. Foreign fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s.http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syri-airaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/, accessed June 14, 2015.

Paz, Reuven 2009. Debates within the Family. Jihadi-Salafi Debates on Strategy, Takfir, Extremism, Suicide Bombings, and the Sense of the Apocalypse. *In:* Global Salafism. Islam's New Religious Movement. Roel Meijer, ed. Pp. 267-280. London: Hurst & Co.

Riexinger, Martin 2015. Der Islam begann als Fremder, und als Fremder wird er wiederkehren. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhābs Prophetenbiographie MuHtasar sīrat ar-rasūl als Programm und Propaganda. Die Welt des Islams, 55(1):1-61.

Rogan, Hanna 2007. Abu Reuter and the E-Jihad. Virtual Battlefronts from Iraq to the Horn of Africa. Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 8(2):89-96.

Scheffler, Thomas 2003. Apocalypticism, Innerworldly Eschatology, and Islamic Extremism. Orientwissenschaftliche Hefte(10):43-80.

Schwartz, Dov 2009. Religious-Zionism. History and Ideology. Emunot : Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah. Boston: Academic Studies Press.

Seale, Patrick and Maureen McConville 1989. Asad of Syria. The struggle for the Middle East. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sivek, Susan Currie 2013. Packaging Inspiration: Al Qaeda's Digital Magazine in the Self-Radicalization Process. International Journal of Communication 7:584-606.

Steinberg, Guido 2011. The Wahhabiyya and Shi'ism, from 1744/45 to 2008. *In:* The Sunna and Shi'a in History. Division and Ecumenism in the Muslim Middle East. Ofra Bengio and Meir Litvak, eds. Pp. 163-182. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

The Islamic State's Magazine 2014. Clarion Project. Accessed June 14, 2015.

Torres Soriano, Manuel R. 2012. Between the Pen and the Sword: The Global Islamic Media Front in the West. Terrorism and Political Violence, 24(5):769-786.

Weissbrod, Lilly 1981. Delegitimation and Legitimation as a Continuous Process: A Case Study of Israel. Middle East Journal 35(4):527-543.

Zizek, Slavoj 2014. ISIS Is a Disgrace to True Fundamentalism. http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/03/isis-is-a-disgrace-to-true-fundamentalism/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1, accessed November 16, 2014.

Notes

[1] See all the magazine's issues at The Islamic State's Magazine 2014.

[2] I will refer to the movement as *Islamic State* or IS in this article. Although the movement changed its title in June 2014 to *dawlat al-Islām* (*Islamic State*, IS) and also refers to itself as *dawlat al-khilāfa* (State of the Caliphate), particularly in the Anglo-American academe it is still referred to by using its former title *dawlat al-islāmiyya fī-l-ʿIrāq wa-l-Shām* (The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/the Levant, ISIS/ISIL). However, the variety of terms that refer to the Islamic State in Arabic ranges from the above mentioned over *tanzīm al-dawlaal-islāmi-yya* (Organisation of the Islamic State) to the colloquial abbreviation *dāʿish* which mostly carries a derogatory meaning and is rejected by the Islamic State.

[3] See Islamic State Report 2014.

[4] See i.a. Klausen 2015; Hegghammer 2014; Armborst 2013; Torres Soriano 2012; Awan 2007a,b, 2011; Awan et al. 2011; Kimmage and Ridolfo 2007; Rogan 2007a,b; CTC n.d.; ISCR n.d.; FFI n.d.

[5] Muslim 18/21-22.

[6] It should be clear that despite these tendencies - which can be observed in the publications of a broad variety of fundamentalist revolutionary groups with a religious inspiration - 'apocalypticism' (like 'terrorism') as epistemological terms do not suffice to thoroughly understand attractiveness, thought and action of this Jihadist state-building project.

[7] Among those ambivalences is their ever recurring insistence on their superiority over the 'nonbelievers' while they constantly warn their potential supporters to intermingle with the latter out of fear from having their belief weakened (Dabiq 3:32; cf. Zizek 2014).

[8] Consequently, this means that the code of conduct enacted by the 'Islamic State' is the only way to fulfil expectations of salvation. Hence it must also be implemented forcefully.

[9] The self-appellation as 'Alawī is a modern redefinition of this Shi'ite congregation. See Seale 1990:9.

[10] Beyond Ibn Taymiyya's *fatāwa* examined by Friedman (2005) see i.a. 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī 1999. For modern accounts see i.a. Abū Mus'ab al-Sūrī 2000.

[11] For the evolution of the term has originally been used in intra-Shiite polemics see Kohlberg 1979.

[12] This legend refers to the siege of Abbasid Baghdad to a Mongol army in 1258, which was allegedly facilitated by the Shi'ite vesir Ibn 'Alqamī who opened the city's doors to the Mongols. In linking this historical event to the present, Jihadist narratives purport Shi'ite politicians both in exile and Iraq would have opened Iraq to American and multinational forces as well as to Iran's influence in 2003. This is frequently to be found in publications of the 'Islamic State' and its predecessors, hence receives no reference to singular documents here.

[13] See i.a. Abū Mus'ab al-Sūrī ('Umar 'Abd al-Hakīm) who in 1999 founded the *al-Ghuraba Center for Islamic and Media Studies* (Lia 2008:272). Another example can be found in the person of Sayyid Qutb who used the image of the stranger in his poets as a way to express his feelings of dissociation with his environment but also with himself (see Calvert 2010).

[14] And, intriguingly, considered unnecessary by the group itself if the circumstances were different and they would reach a utopian (or at least idealized) situation where they would "find the state of Islamic affairs that existed in the generations of the sahābah, who were taught by the prophet Muhammad [...] For there was no baathism, secularism, liberalism, democracy or anything that would contradict the essence of tawhīd.," that is nothing which would distract people from obeying God in a "proper" way.

[15] Among the manifold accounts on leftist groups inspired by Marxist-Leninist theories of revolutionary struggle see i.a. Elter 2008:140-144; Weissbrod 1981; Schwartz 2009:95-104. For the NSDAP in Germany and their approach of leading the masses as a vanguard see i.a. Campbell 1998.

[16] Interestingly, ISI's withdrawal from its previous strongholds in Western Iraq here is presented as a reaction to the establishment of the Sahawāt. To the contrary, al-Muhājir had presented the Sahawāt a reaction to the establishment of ISI in one of his speeches (al-Muhajir 2008).

CyberOrient

Online Journal of the Virtual Middle East