



## Explaining ISIS: Differences and misconception of Jihad and Qital

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### Abstract

Jihad has long been at the center of debate on the validity of actions carried out by religion-based radical groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in justifying their acts of using out-of-context Al-Quran verses and Prophet Muhammad sayings to equate the ancient war times with present day situation in order to create and develop a heavily misled idea of a caliphate. This radicalization arguably contributes to the growing xenophobic sentiments toward Islam and its followers through generalization made by diverse parties especially Islamophobes. To unpack the hugely contested notion of jihad and its use by ISIS, this study examines the differences between jihad and the concept of qital. The non-war view of jihad is then presented through discussions of alternative interpretations of jihad in Quranic verses and the hadiths to exemplify the wide understanding and clarification of jihad. The paper employs a qualitative approach in order to analyze non-quantifiable variables that would include God's decree and sayings of the Prophet. It further incorporates the role of important figures and their thoughts in ultimately shaping warlike ideas of jihad that are outdated and disproportional to the current settings of the world. It finds that extremist groups have been greatly influenced by the skewed thoughts of radical thinkers and eventually resulted in the negative connotations of jihad. Such connotations are arguably far from the relevancy of the verses and hadiths that are timely-appropriate if interpreted correctly. Jihad in contemporary understanding does not only apply to a person's own struggles for his or her own betterment but also for the advancement of the entire community in a non-aggressive manner.

**Keywords:** hadith, ISIS, jihad, misinterpretation, qital, takfirism.

### Introduction

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as the Islamic State (IS), has been reported to call for resistance towards the 'infidels' (Aljazeera, 2017). The emergence of ISIS has been feared by the global community since its establishment by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Iraq and Syria (Hosken, 2015: 15; Bennis, 2015). ISIS is a militant group that grew and established itself out of Al-Qaeda, which was once the biggest terrorist organization in the world based in Afghanistan and served as the core hub of militant groups in Asia. ISIS originated from a militant group, Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTJ), led by Abu Musab al-

Zarqawi in 1999. The members of this group took their oaths of loyalty to Osama bin Laden in 2004 and changed the group's name to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Upon al-Zarqawi's death in 2006 due to a US airstrike, Abu Ayyub al-Masri took over the helm and changed the name of the group to the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). He then named Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as the leader of ISI. Following their deaths in 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the leader of ISI and later transformed ISI into the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which aimed to inaugurate and institute an Islamic caliphate-based state covering Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Cyprus, Hatay in the southern Turkey and Sinai Peninsula in Egypt (Kertas Putih, 2014: 3).

In 2015, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current leader of Al-Qaeda, openly accused Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of "sedition" and no longer considered ISIL as part of Al-Qaeda due to the latter's actions of trying to force the groups under the auspice of Al-Qaeda and members of ISIL to vow their allegiance to him instead of the former (Meek, 2015). ISIL had managed to annihilate and take control of a number of cities in Iraq and Syria and this had allowed al-Baghdadi to proclaim the formation of ISIS on June 29, 2014 (Hosken, 2015: 3). While the threat of new extremism such as ISIS can be catalyzed by various factors, a major reason is the misleading interpretation and connotation of the term jihad as an armed struggle. It is a conscious action by the members of terror cells that is arguably contradictory to the texts they often refer to, i.e. the Qur'an, in order to suit the political purposes of their movement (Hall, 2015: 7).

The objective of this paper is to contribute to policy discourse by discussing the comprehension of the militant organization in its interpretation of jihad and how out-of-context understanding of analyzing the real meaning behind the genuine *sabda* (sayings of the Prophet) or *hadith* (texts explaining the actions done by the Prophet) by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) can generate a radical political movement that runs contrary to the original meanings delivered by the Prophet himself and dangerously threatens the lives of thousands of people worldwide. This paper is divided into several sections. The next section reviews the literature in describing and outlining the relationship between the two concepts of jihad and qital. This is then followed by a brief explanation of the research method. The fourth section entails an in-depth discussion of the findings, while the final section concludes the paper.

## Conceptual literature review

Unlike qital, jihad carries a more general connotation because it holds the meaning for commitment, effort, energy and ability collected in an effort to do everything (Personal communication, 2019). In other words, jihad includes everything that is done physically or intellectually and can be spiritual or intellectual including jihad against lust and is therefore considered as *mujahadatun nafs*. *Mujahadatun nafs* مجاهدون نفس is also known as self-struggle. The word *mujahadah* (مجاهدة) derives from the word jihad that means struggle, whereas *nafs* (النفس) means self or in other word soul. *Mujahadah an-nafs* is categorized as a struggle to remain steadfast and patient in facing life's adversity, turbulence and at the same time, keeping obedience to Allah for Allah is the All-Knowing. Although jihad is often seen as the best deed for Muslims, there is a hadith that explains otherwise without compromising the value of jihad itself as narrated by Abu Huraira (Sahih Bukhari, n.d: No. 594):

*The Prophet was asked, "Which is the best deed?" He said, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle". He was then asked, "Which is the next (in goodness)?" He said, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause". He was then asked, "Which is the next?" He said, "To perform Hajj-Mabrur".*

In fact, there is a hadith of the Prophet sayings that when the companions returned from the battle of Badr, the Prophet said:

*We have gone from smaller jihad to larger jihadist. They ask, what is the meaning of the larger jihad? The Prophet said, one's determination is against his passions.*

Although certain scholars of the Wahhabi and Sufi sects have argued that this hadith is dhaif (weak), it still holds greater meaning if we discuss about jihad and prove it by the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad that *kabir* jihad (makeshift jihad; not jihad in war) was done compared to *saghir* jihad (small jihad; war jihad) (The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2009). In fact, although it is deemed as a weak hadith, it is however always associated with the word of Allah in Surah Al-Ankabut verse 69, which means:

*And those who strive for Us – we will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.*

Jihad in the two forms is recognized as jihad *saghir* and jihad *kabir*, which literally means smaller and greater respectively (Mohd Farid, 2011: 67). Jihad *saghir* is the type of jihad that calls Muslim to engage in warfare to defend physical boundaries of a country and it can only be categorized as a smaller form of jihad because the engagement in warfare is only temporary and executed within particular causes or reasons, and negotiations or diplomacy must be initiated in order to bring the war to an end as well as to avoid further damage and mass destruction of places that concern the civilians. Jihad *kabir*, on the other hand, is a battle within oneself that is characterized by lifetime battle over a long period of time, and it is deemed compulsory for every Muslim to submit himself or herself to the oneness of God and must strive to be the best version of a Muslim to serve other people and elevate one's life quality (Moniruzzaman, 2008: 2-4).

Qital, on the other hand, is used to explain jihad at the physical level of fighting to defend the country, society and Islamic sovereignty. Qital is also a form or manifestation of jihad. In short, jihad has a general meaning that refers to the gathering of energy, while qital is a reflection of jihad on physical and military means. There is a difference between the jihad mentioned in the Madaniyah and Makkiyah chapters (Noor, 2019). Although the Madaniyah verses and chapters were used to dictate war, it would be misconceived to think that what occurred during that period of time could be easily applied to the present time. It is necessary to understand the differences in the context in which at that time, the nature of the relationship between the *qabilah* (tribe) was warlike and war itself was the deterrent factor to peace (Personal communication, 2019).

The misinterpretation is, therefore, believed to be rooted in the differences between jihad and qital. Qital means "to fight". It is derived from the word *qutila* which means "to fight" but it can also have an alternative meaning that means a "lack of guidance reaching them". It is mentioned 54 times in the Quran through several verses relaying the meaning of the word as "to repel" or "to force" but it does not necessarily mean to kill. In another opinion suggested by Ali bin al-Madeeni, the word *Qatal* (endeavor) is more precise to use than *Qital* (fight) (Shaltut, 1983: 5-6). In any cases of waging war during the prophethood of Muhammad, it was done to defend and offer peace treaty rather than to attack or kill those who do not want to follow his teachings prescribed to him as mentioned in several places in the Quran where God had decreed Muhammad as His servant and messenger (Shaltut, 1983: 6). The Prophet once said, "I have been commanded to propagate Islam as much as I can (physically) such as to give da'wah (literal meaning of propagation)". As mentioned, the Prophet used the word *aqatil* that carries the same meaning of *qital*, which is "to fight", "to guide" and not the word that depicts

“to kill” (muqatil) (Mohd Zuhdi & Ahmad Dahlan, 2015: 7). The Prophet once said, “Indeed, among the greatest types of Jihad is a just statement before a tyrannical ruler”, which calls for da’wah to correct the leader of a state or group should anything wrong committed by the parties arise (Khaliyl, 2007: 233).

Jihad nafs refer to the greater jihad where every Muslim engages in internal struggles to fight and control his or her desires in a manner allowed by the religion. This includes daily life struggles against misled spiritual, physical and mental desires. Jihad qital, on the other hand, is the lesser jihad where it involves the waging of war as the last resort after all other avenues have been exhausted or when attacked first. As the Prophet has mentioned in several hadiths, the primary aim is not to punish but to defend oneself, community or state (Sheikh Wahbeh, 2005: 273-274).

The difference in connotation can be gravely misinterpreted by religious extremists due to the linguistic explanations. However, it is important to bear in mind that the resources suggested to “fight the enemies” do not exclusively stand in the form of weapons or terror. Rather, it includes the tongue, knowledge, wealth and other means that again, do not necessarily come in the form of violence and loss of life (Mustafa, 1991; Mohamed, 1999). Sayyid Qutb (1993) in his book *Milestones* states that the way to uphold Islam is not only seen in terms of power to rule as it applies in the 'theocracy' case. The way to uphold the law that Allah Almighty has commanded is that the commandment of Allah is enforced and the final decision for all affairs is to follow that order. But it does not necessarily mean that those who do not identify themselves as Muslim ought to be converted to Islam forcibly (Eikmeier, 2007: 4-7).

Due to the nature of Quranic verses and hadiths that needs a long and elaborate explanation to “code” the meaning behind the verses and what the prophet was trying to deliver during the prophethood of Muhammad, it is at times manipulated to serve the political intention and ambition of certain groups that wish to legitimize and gain acknowledgement for their violent actions in order to obtain community support and minimize resistance that could jeopardize their objectives (Moniruzzaman, 2008: 3-5). Jihad is not only about warfare and the strength of the *ummah* in spreading Islam but more significantly it conveys personal or spiritual sense (striving for a good cause in the name of love for God) and political sense (a foreign policy tool or instrument to achieve a state’s interest) (Mohd Farid, 2011: 67).

## Research method

Methodologically, this paper takes a qualitative approach to the understanding of the underlying problem in order to synthesize facts derived from both primary and secondary sources. The study is designed to adopt an interpretive approach instead of a positivist and pragmatic approach especially when conducting interviews and discussions. This is mainly because abstract and non-quantifiable variables such as finding the connections between the decree of God in the Quran and its relation with human behavior as well as the comparing of different concepts cannot be easily quantified and thus require a qualitative method to elucidate differences and provide a rich analytical interpretation of the study. Primary sources included in-depth and focus group interviews with knowledgeable individuals, while secondary sources encompassed religious texts, journal articles, books, reports, newspapers and other relevant online sources.

## Results and discussions

### *ISIS's basis of understanding: A comparison*

ISIS, in its understanding of jihad, believes in several doctrines and this include leaderships, ideologies and the teachings of the Prophet and Al-Quran. In Islam, these aspects have been thoroughly discussed to ensure that its believers do not stray from the actual teachings of the religion and the Prophet Muhammad is deemed as the best example to mimic in these aspects. Based on Surah Al-Ahzab, chapter 33 verse 21, Allah stated that,

*There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah and excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last day and (who) remembers Allah often.*

However, even though ISIS claimed that they were moving on the path within the teachings of Islam and the Prophet, ISIS misguided their members into believing that their leader's orders must be obeyed even when he goes against what the religion has been endorsing since the time of Prophethood (Bunzel, 2015: 8). The group claimed that this is an act of jihad and whoever wishes to fight for the religion in the name of God must obey the leader's direction (Bunzel, 2015: 9-10). ISIS believed that it is every Muslim's obligation to follow through the steps of the so-called elected caliph that would lead the Muslims and the Muslim world into peace albeit through force and violence, and if the Muslims fail to do so then they are considered as apostates and permissible to be killed (Bunzel, 2015). This is definitely contrary to what the Quran suggests as portrayed in Surah 'Ali Imran chapter 3 verse 159 and Surah Al-Maidah chapter 5 verse 32, which respectively means,

*It was thanks to Allah's mercy that you were gentle to them. **Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would surely scattered away from you. So pardon them, and pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel from them in matters of importance. And when you are resolved on a course of action, place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).***

*Whosoever killed a person...it is as if he had killed all of mankind.*

The Prophet had also reminded the followers in a hadith narrated by Hasan stating that "The worst of guardians is the cruel ruler. Beware of being one of them" (Sahih Muslim, n.d: No. 4504). ISIS's staunch conviction on their course of action is heavily supported by their interpretation of jihad and the system they adopted that imitates the caliphate system – a system left behind by Prophet Muhammad and followed by well-known Islamic empires including the Rashidun caliphate, Umayyad caliphate, Abbasid caliphate and Ottoman caliphate (Abu Muhammad, 2012). ISIS believed that the Daulah Islamiyyah (Islamic State) they wished to establish in favour of their understanding of jihad is an Islamic system of governance that follows the footsteps of the previous empires and thus, gave them a sense of validity amongst the Muslims even if not in entirety. However, this is far from the truth when ISIS, as an organization, fails to grasp the law of governance in Islam. ISIS's understanding of Islamic law can be categorized as extremely shallow, if not misled.

A prominent example of ISIS's facile understanding of Islamic law is through the discussion of syariah implementation and the rules within. Islamic jurisprudence (usul-al-fiqh) is based on two main sources of law namely the Quran and the *Sunnah* as well as hadith of the Prophet. However, there exist additional sources of law namely *ijma'* (juristic consensus) and

*qiyas* (reasoning based on context) (Bakircioglu, 2018: 32-33). In some cases where the answers to modern day issues pertaining to Islamic law are not found within these sources, the jurists then decide on the basis of *ijtihad* – one’s interpretation of the Islamic law based on their personal views and justifications, which is considered to be the weakest form of law (Bakircioglu, 2018: 34-36). It was found that al-Zarqawi did not recognize these sources of law other than that of Al Quran for it contains the words of God and believes that Muslims should only abide by God’s command told in the Holy Book for it is not distorted by “worldly” views of the jurists. This can be further understood through his letter during the trial in Jordan where he had stated that those who take other forms of law and governmental bodies other than the syariah told by Allah and taught by the Prophet are considered as apostates (Bunzel, 2015: 13-15). His belief clearly contradicts the command of Allah in Surah al-Ahzab verse 58 as well as in Surah Yunus verse 99 where Allah says:

*“And those who annoyed the believing men and the believing women without their having earned (undeservedly, while they did not commit any offense), they bore of slander and sin.”*

*“And if your Lord had pleased, surely all those who are in the Earth would have believed, all of them; will you (O Muhammad) then force men till they become believers?”*

This contradiction was also found in one of the Prophet’s hadiths that forbids anyone from calling his own kind an apostate: “If anyone says to his brother, ‘O misbeliever! Then surely, one of them such’” (Sahih Bukhari, n.d: No. 6104).

In an excerpt of the ISIS’s former leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, he laid out the fundamentals that shape their ideology and their interpretation of jihad by quoting the Prophet in most of the elaborations and attempted to bridge the sayings of the Prophet with the current state of affairs, albeit falsely interpreted (Bunzel, 2015: 38). ISIS believed that “the unbeliever and apostasy of the sorcerer and in the necessity of killing him, [and we believe in] not accepting his repentance – as regards judgments in this [lower] world” (Bunzel, 2015: 38-39). This statement can be divided into two arguments. First is on their confidence to take matters into their own hands by killing others who they thought have committed grave sin. This credence is indeed problematic and the Prophet had forbidden the believers from killing the disbelievers in a hadith narrated by Bukhari in which the Prophet said: “Whoever killed a Mu’ahid (disbeliever/non-Muslim who is granted the pledge of protection by the Muslims) shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelt as at a distance of forty years (of traveling)” (Kitab al-Diyat, 2012; INHAD, 2018). Second is on their conviction of “accepting repentance” when they neither have the authority nor the power to accept repentance from anyone because it is only Allah who has the authority and might to accept one’s repentance over their fault and sin as recorded in the Quran in Surah at-Tawba chapter 9 verse 104 and in Surah ‘Ali Imran chapter 3 verse 135 where Allah says:

*Have they not come to know that Allah is He who accepts repentance from His slaves and accepts Sadaqat, and that Allah is Most-Relenting, The Ever-Merciful.*

*And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins – and who can forgive sins except Allah? – and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.*

It was also recorded by Sahih Muslim (n.d: No. 6626) where the Prophet's companion, Abu Huraira R.A reported that Prophet Muhammad said: "When Allah created the creation as He was upon the Throne, He put down in His Book: Verily, My mercy predominates My wrath". In another occasion, another companion of the Prophet, Abu Ayyub Ansari, heard the Prophet said: "If you were not to commit sins, Allah would have swept you out of existence and would have replaced you by another people who have committed sin, and then asked forgiveness from Allah, and He would have granted them pardon" (Sahih Muslim, n.d: No. 6621). It was argued that the said hadith was to signify the glory of God and His mercy towards His creations. ISIS's belief in their so-called authority over accepting one's repentance can be deemed as irresolute and abhorrent as the only one who has the authority to accept one's repentance is Allah. Even the Prophet is reminded to not condemn others in Surah An-Nisa' chapter 4 verse 94:

*O you who have believed! When you go forth (to fight) in the cause of Allah, investigate and do not say to one who gives you [a greeting of] peace "You are not a believer" aspiring for the goods of worldly life; for with Allah are many acquisitions. You [yourselves] were like that before; then Allah conferred His favor upon you, so investigate. Indeed, Allah is ever, with what you do [acquainted].*

This false judgment towards their stand as the *mujahideen* of the religion reflects poorly on their understanding of the principles of Islam including the line drawn by God Himself in terms of basic affairs related to the Oneness of God and how only God has the power over His creation, including them as opposed to the group's authority over the believes of others (Muhammad, 2011).

#### *Takfirism: An ideology of violence*

ISIS operates on a philosophy based on takfirism (Personal communication, 2019). Takfirism stemmed from the word "takfir" or "kafir", which literally means apostasy. Those who believe in takfirism would consider other Muslims other than themselves as deviant and worthy to be executed. This is not only in line with ISIS, but also extremist sects of Wahhabism and Salafism and some extreme orthodox Muslim scholars that believe apostasy is a crime and the punishment is death. This doctrine also underlines the basis of the establishment of other extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram that take the Salafi-Wahhabi extremism to the extent of eliminating their fellow Muslims who do not necessarily share the same values and understandings as theirs (Personal communication, 2019). The extreme Salafis/Wahhabis who swear by the founder of the ideology, Muhammad ibn Abu al-Wahhab, believe that Muslims who are indulged in certain practices that they deemed as against the Islamic belief and practices such as donning in excessive ways (*tabarruj*) are considered as going beyond the permissible practices within Islam and thus, must be corrected. They also stand by their belief that the idea of those who they deemed as apostate even without them knowing is not an excuse to escape their punishment that they have already set for the disbelievers and sinners. ISIS's understanding of Islamic thought mostly rest on these ideologies, but they are not as unequivocal as some would think because they were formed in the early days of the Islamic revolution and counted as part of a state's policies during that time. However, the development of radical thinking is only significant during the wake of Al-Qaeda and its manifestation of Islamic understanding through the establishment of the militant group, which ultimately took the world's attention post-9/11. ISIS relied heavily on the oath of allegiance from like-minded terror cells and extremist movements as its source of legitimation and power (Personal communication, 2020).

The beliefs and practices of extreme takfirism have also conditioned the basis of Boko Haram in the African region especially within the faction led by Abubakar Shekau and Abu Musab al-Barnawi, and extreme sects in Southeast Asia particularly in Indonesia (Personal communication, 2019). Takfirism believers are convinced that they are right to implement parts of the struggle to uphold the Islamic laws and practice the Prophet's words and action even when some of the practices are only relevant during the Prophet's time. Another doctrine that contributes to this holier-than-thou understanding is *al-wala' wal bara'* (loyalty and disavowal). This doctrine means loyalty and hate for the sake of Allah and considered by them to be a doctrine of tawhid (التوحيد). This doctrine leads to the ex-communication of fellow Muslims and the visceral hate towards the non-Muslims who they deemed as infidels that dared to stand against the religion of Allah. This can be viewed in several forms such as in Al-Qaeda's statements toward the United States and its allies, statements issued by Osama bin Laden that often signals hate towards the Western civilization, and also statements by the Boko Haram where they consider a Muslim as deviant if they engage in practices considered as bid'ah (practices that were never done by the Prophet) and shirk/syirik (against the practice of Islam) (Doukhan, 2021). This understanding is otherwise known as Wahhabism. Wahhabism, considered by many to be the basis of Islamic radical thought, is rooted in the thoughts of Muhammad ibn Abu al-Wahhab (1703-1792) that reject any forms of religious innovation (as in the time of the Prophethood) and emphasize the importance of going back to "pure Islam" that is directly proportionate to the idea of Salafism. Apart from that, this ideology also calls for sacrifice and determination of its members to triumph over the changes other entities are trying to bring into Islam for whatever purposes. Though founded on the same strand of belief, Salafis are considered to be apolitical while Wahhabis use the ideology as a tool to reform a government in order to eradicate changes and so-called innovation towards the religion and thus, redevelop the idea of caliphate that Islam once saw during the olden times (Personal communication, 2019).

Eikmeier listed common traits of thoughts, which include the belief that Muslims globally must now come to the purer side of Islam as many have deviated from its true path over decades of change (2007: 86-87). Apart from that, these thoughts also encourage Muslims to create their own interpretation of hadiths and God's commands within the Quranic verses and chapters despite the differences in interpretation that might contradict Muslim scholars' explanations. The justification they have for such encouragement lies within their belief that the current literature and writings involving hadiths and Quranic interpretations have been greatly influenced by contemporary cultures and worldviews that may have corrupted "the true meaning and value" of the verses and hadiths. The only way to become a purist (pure Muslim) is to interpret the verses and hadiths strictly by abandoning the contextual meanings parallel to the present-day society and perception. Qutbism also suggested that relevancy of the verses and sayings should be maintained within the time frame of the Prophethood to secure its purist value for Muslims (Eikmeier, 2007).

As they believed that there can only be Dar al Islam to exist, Dar al Harb must then be abolished. Dar al-Islam refers to the region where Muslims are free and safe. Dar al-Ahd is an alternative to Dar al Sulh. Dar al-Ahd refers to countries that have diplomatic relationship and covenant with Muslim countries, whereas Dar al-Sulh refers to non-Islamic countries that have treaty agreement with Muslim countries. These terms were coined by Imam al-Shafi'i to refer to non-Muslim territories involved in the treaty of sovereignty with Muslim countries but taking into account local autonomy (Sheikh Wahbeh, 2005: 271-272). According to Shafi'i, this agreement is considered to extend Muslim jurisdiction with some land-related tributary payments, which have to be paid to Muslim countries to meet the demands of jizyah (Sheikh Wahbeh, 2005). Dar al-Harb, on the other hand, contradicts Dar al Islam, stating that non-Muslim territories are particularly hostile to Muslims and dangerous to peace and security.



Through his writings, prominently in *Jihad in Islam*, he desired for a world where the order mimics the time during the Prophethood to be applied in modern times. His writings reflect the shared desire of the like-minded scholars such as Hassan al Banna and Syed Qutb (Mona, 2016).

ISIS's takfirism is based on the concept of Dar-al-Harb implied in the olden days. Built upon the traditionalist's ideas such as Wahhabism, ISIS considers non-believers as apostates and hence uses selected Quranic verses and hadiths to justify their killings in the name of religion (Pugachev, 2018: 237). To justify violence and promote their twisted interests, ISIS adopts hadiths and verses that are advantageous to them while dismissing the disadvantageous ones as simply dhaif (weak). Such biases risk jeopardizing the safety of the non-believers and put their lives in grave danger. It further runs contrary to what the Prophet has clearly mentioned about securing their safety and security particularly in the Medina Charter (Azyati Azhani et al., 2013).

The Quranic verses revealed during the war in Prophethood's time cannot be narrowly interpreted as applicable to all people at all times. However, this is not the case for extremists because they interpret it as pertinent to any periods and thus causes internal wars that in turn leads to more damages to the society's understanding of jihad and Islamic practices itself. Extremist groups are those that are educated in a way that would make them a literalist. In Islam, there exists a branch of knowledge known as Asbab-an-Nuzul, which is a study to explore the historical context of Quranic verses' revelations (Personal communication, 2019). ISIS uses the religious scriptures in a way that would strengthen their ideas and position with limited knowledge of certain critical matters. This mostly revolved around the questions of law and order in Syariah-related issues. At the same time, the misuse of the Quran also includes false interpretation of the Prophet's actions by ISIS to suit their own personal interests and cater to their prospective audience. While interpretations should not devalue the meaning of the Prophet's sayings, it needs to be contextualized to take into consideration modern realities and social developments (Personal communication, 2019).

## Conclusion

This paper argues that the struggles championed by ISIS is not founded on true religious reasoning, but rather on the organization's own interests in achieving their goal to establish an Islamic caliphate with their own ideas of jihad that they use interchangeably with qital as a way to validate their violent acts. To summarize, this paper reiterates three major points. Firstly, it must be understood that the organization's idea of jihad is best replaced with qital, which holds more similarity with the acts they portrayed during their times of reign.

Secondly, it must also be understood that the idea of jihad by ISIS was indeed taken out of context by discounting the vast interpretation of the term, physically and spiritually, in reference to the times of the Prophethood of Muhammad. Thirdly, it must be highlighted that their misconception of jihad influenced the thought process of ISIS's leaders and members that have eventually shaped their skewed ideas around the concept of takfirism rooted in the Wahhabis and Salafis interpretations of the Prophet's hadiths. This, then, allowed them to contemplate that their belief and ideas were well founded because the misconceptions they have of jihad aligned ideally to the concept of takfirism. Thus, they used their understanding of jihad as the pillar of their arguments in speeches thinking that they were imitating Prophet Muhammad and advocating for the religion in the name of God when in actuality, they were practicing qital induced by the idea of takfirism.

Ultimately, the ISIS's distorted notion of jihad is more similar to qital in practice, and the arguments of takfirism has shown that the idea of revolutionary jihad held by ISIS is the

basis of modern-day takfir belief practiced by the Wahhabi-Salafi jihadists. Not only does this belief provide the basis for ISIS's arguments, it also becomes a guide to other extreme groups that wish to establish their own notion of an Islamic state by using the same logic and reasoning rooted in their oversimplified interpretation of the hadiths and Quranic verses. The shallow understanding of the terms and subsequent fallacies depicted by radical movements are indeed dangerous and ought to be rectified for the sake of future generations.

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