

“They Are Khawārij of Our Time:” Relying on Background Knowledge and Long-Term Memory to Justify Fighting ISIS in Jordanian Political Discourse

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Abstract

This study focuses on a discourse practice that metaphorically associates ISIS with an early Islamic sect known as the Kharijites. This practice constructs a discourse that calls back the background knowledge and memory of historical narratives and experiences that create conceptual frames that communicate meanings of war and atrocities. These meanings were used by King Abdullah II of Jordan to justify Jordan’s military participation against ISIS (circa 2014–2018). On the basis of the “blending theory” of conceptual metaphor, this study shows how the discourse practice of depicting ISIS as the Kharijites has undergone selective associations with the ideological aim of constructing persuasive and coercive discourses to justify military intervention against ISIS, primarily by foregrounding scripts of threat and victimization. That, in turn, leads to the instigation of illusive and incomplete associations.

Keywords

Metaphor; conceptual frame; blending theory; ISIS; Kharijites; political discourse

Introduction

Critical discourse analysis studies the relationships among discourse, society, and social cognition. In addition, it reveals power relations in society and the manner of introducing, legitimizing, denying, or concealing these relationships (Fairclough 1993). These relationships are materialized by the recurrent purposeful, and meaningful, use of particular forms of written or spoken language that makes a “discourse practice” reflecting a speaker’s, or society’s, beliefs and ideologies (Fairclough 1993). Each ideology is perceived as “the sum of the ways in which people think, say, and interact with the society” (Fowler 1991, 92), or the ideas, stances, and acquaintances that are common among a certain group of people (van Dijk 1998, 8). In addition

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to its social function of sustaining interests of social groups, ideologies serve cognitive functions of organizing the social representations (such as attitudes and knowledge) of a social group and indirectly monitor its related social practices including the group members' texts and talks (van Dijk 1995a, 256). Meanwhile, an ideology, which is communicated in a discourse, should not be formed in isolation from the discourse recipient's historical contexts and background knowledge where it is produced (Chilton 1996).

In political discourse, one should trace relations of dominance and power in society, which contribute to the production of the discourse and the communication of its ideology. One of the main concerns of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) is tracing the discursive strategies by which dominant 'powerful' groups justify and legitimize decisions, policies, and practices. This question is central in the contexts of politics and political discourse. Ideologies are inseparable from power, and they make "representations of aspects of the world which can be shown for contributing, establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination, and exploitation" (Fairclough 2003, 117).

In contemporary global politics, there is a perceivable emphasis on protecting nations and citizens from terrorism. That is mainly materialized in a discourse that is characterized by representing terrorism as a foreseen "hidden" or "lying" threat. Politicians speak of such a threat to persuade, or coerce, their audience and prepare them to take actions against that threat. Sometimes, politicians approach such threats indirectly by foregrounding historical terrorist incidents that took place during the nation's history. These incidents are called back, along with narratives that foreground some victims' experiences of violence, bloodshed, blasting, assassination, abduction, and ravage (Bruce 2013), and they are conceptualized as *conceptual frames* (Fillmore 1985) of terror and violence. These conceptual frames are stable, but modifiable organizations of background knowledge (or "scripts"), that are cognitively structured through experiences, or narratives, about a subject, and this organized knowledge is stored by discourse recipients (Fillmore 1985, 224).

In an antiterrorism discourse, the organization of background knowledge, or scripts, on terrorism stands as a requirement that enables the discourse recipients to understand the connotations of the conceptual frames related to terrorism and its threat, such as frames of anticipation, anxiety, and constant vigilance. Meanwhile, these conceptual frames can be employed by politicians to authorize and legitimize fighting and eliminate terrorists mercilessly or to discipline any local voices that might dissent or question the legitimacy of such actions (Jackson 2005). Hence, reliance on conceptual frames, which

are based on history and background knowledge, can make persuasive, or coercive, discursive strategies in antiterrorism political discourse because they make people embrace and support decisions, or policies, proposed by the political hegemony. Equally, politicians can produce a coercive discourse that silences opposing, or criticizing, voices.

This study contributes to research on antiterrorism political discourse, and it aims to illustrate how Jordanian politics, represented by King Abdullah II, discursively justified military participation in the international alliance against the "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" (henceforth ISIS) (circa 2014–2018) by metaphorically naming ISIS as the "Kharijites" (a sectarian early Islamic group). The study argues that this metaphorical representation produced persuasive, and coercive, discourses that justified Jordan's military intervention against ISIS. However, the sporadic use of the metaphor by King Abdullah II (henceforth KAI) led to some inadequate representations of ISIS, and their subjects, as agentive social actors who are collectively accountable for their actions. What is more, that representation does not adequately coincide with the historical facts about the Kharijites.

Context of the Study

Between 2014 and 2018, the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS, or Dā'ish) had occupied large territories in Iraq and Syria with notorious brutality, manifested in mass killing, beheading of prisoners, amputation of limbs, burning to death, and carrying out of slave trade and forced marriages, damaging shrines of saints and other atrocities (Gerges 2014; Koch 2018). What is more, ISIS engaged in religious and ethnic cleansing in Iraq against Yazidis and Kurds as well as Shia (Gerges 2014). Meanwhile, ISIS could recruit many supporters and followers through a mixture of ideological and personal motives, and a combination of push-and-pull factors in order to contribute to expanding ISIS's ideology (Stern and Berger 2015, 77). That ideology was primarily based on adherence to a doctrine of total war, with no constraints, and it disdains arbitration or compromise, even with Sunni Islamist rivals (Gerges 2014; Weiss and Hassan 2015). In 2014, and after the fall of Mosul in Iraq, ISIS had expanded its territories in Syrian and Iraqi regions and gained access to large financial resources and military equipment from the Iraqi army (Abdulrazaq and Stansfield 2016; Gerges 2014; Stern and Berger 2015). Subsequently, the international community called for collaborative actions against ISIS, and coalition has emerged from over 60 nations and partner organizations, contributing either military forces or resources (or both) to the coalition (McInnis 2017).

To Jordan, ISIS's threat was predictable, since ISIS had long contact zones on Jordan's northern and eastern borders. Besides, the threat was materialized when ISIS recruited hundreds of Jordanians as "lone wolves" or "sleepers cells" to perform terrorist attacks against its apostate opponents (Jackson, 2002, 113), including the Jordanian state (Shehadah 2018). Jordan reacted by imposing firm security precautions and measures against any form of sympathy or support for ISIS in order to prevent it from targeting Jordan or Jordanians. Meanwhile, Jordan cooperated with the international alliance against ISIS by—at first—providing chiefly "logistical support;" yet, starting in September 2014, Jordan sent few pilots and aircraft from the Jordanian Air Force in strategic air raids and incursions on ISIS's locations in Syria (McInnis 2017).

On the December 24, 2015, ISIS succeeded in targeting a Jordanian fighter aircraft, capturing its Jordanian pilot Mu'ath Al-Kasassbeh and putting him into captivity. The Jordanian government had indirectly negotiated with ISIS to secure and release the pilot, and an exchange deal was proposed by which several ISIS-affiliated prisoners would be released from Jordanian prisons (Chen 2018). ISIS declined the exchange deal and brutally killed the Jordanian pilot on January 3, 2016. About a month later, the Jordanian government confirmed the death of its pilot after ISIS broadcast a video that recorded the pilot's execution on the Internet and in which ISIS justified executing the pilot as retaliation for the air raids on its positions in Syria. Jordan decided to react first by executing a few convicted Jihadists in its prisons and launching rapid air raids on ISIS locations in Syria.

In the following few weeks, the Jordanian public had been charged with anger and desire for revenge, and more voices called for an open and effective involvement on the war against ISIS. These voices produced a discourse that justified military involvement in the war against ISIS because that would serve Jordan's national security and interests. On the other hand, few voices were against such direct involvement under the pretext that the Jordanian armed forces do not directly engage in international crises outside its borders. Nevertheless, the state presented a discourse that called for more substantial Jordanian military participation in supporting the international alliance against ISIS. This discourse argued that such strategic participation served Jordan's national interests and maintained Jordan's security and peace. Furthermore, such participation prevented the expansion of the organization into Jordan until the international alliance neutralized its threat. Among the several discursive strategies used to justify the military intervention against ISIS, it was perceived that Jordanian politicians had been constantly attacking

ISIS using demeaning and impeaching labels and names; the most famous one was the “Kharijites of this era.”

The Kharijites were a separatist Islamic sect that appeared in the seventh century CE. The generic sense of the label *khawārij* means literally “those who went out” or more figuratively “those who rebelled.” The Kharijites appeared as a faction that refused to swear allegiance to the successor of Caliph Othman bin Affan (a companion of Prophet Muhammad), an event that took place after the battle of Siffin in the first Hijri century (37 Hijri; circa 657 CE). The Kharijites refused the arbitration of Ali bin Abi Talib or to bow obedience to him as a Caliph (nor to Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan); so, they had formed a separatist faction and began to spread its beliefs. And despite the fact that they were renowned as overly pious zealots, some factions of the Kharijites were notoriously famous for committing a series of deadly attacks against fellow Muslims who refused to demonstrate agreement with their views (Kenney 2006, 22). Ali himself was killed by the hands of a Kharijite in 661. Later, and throughout the Umayyad period (661–750) and into the Abbasid period, the Kharijites continued their rebellions under various leaders. Still, in several incidents, the Kharijite rebel forces suffered severe defeats, but they were not stamped out. Their remnants took to the desert, from where they launched guerrilla-like raids (Kenney 2006, 22). Consequently, the label Kharijite has become synonymous with any group that rebelled against a Muslim leader or the appointed representatives of the Caliph, along with its original meaning, which refers to the group that protested against the Caliph Ali.

Theoretical Background

The assumptions of this study are based on two grounds; the first is that the metaphorical association between ISIS and the Kharijites was ideologically motivated, and the second is that this association entailed misleading representations incongruent with the historical background knowledge about the Kharijites that has been preserved for centuries in Muslims’ and Jordanians’ long-term memory.

CDA emphasizes the role of language in legitimizing the relationship between society and the dominant power and revealing power relations and the manner of introducing, legitimizing, denying, or concealing them (Fairclough 1993). In addition, CDA scholars work on revealing how particular language representations create discourse practices that communicate the society’s beliefs and ideologies (Fairclough 1993). These ideologies embody what and how people think, say, and interact within their society (Fowler 1991, 92). Van Dijk perceives an ideology as constituting the ideas, stances, and

acquaintances that are common among a certain group of people (van Dijk 1998, 8). What is more, van Dijk accentuates the cognitive functions of ideologies by arguing that they “organize the social representations (attitudes and knowledge) of the group, and thus indirectly monitor the group-related social practice, and hence, also the text and talk of its members” (van Dijk 1995a, 256). Accordingly, by revealing the ideologies communicated in a discourse, the discourse analyst can identify the role of the discourse producer’s, and audiences,’ background knowledge and define the reality that describes the context where the discourse is produced (Chilton 1996). Besides, CDA seeks to trace relations of dominance and power in society, thus providing a chance for criticizing or even resisting them (Wodak 2001); hence, CDA is interested in how a dominant class ideologically could justify and legitimize its decisions, policies, and practices. Ideology is exerted through the dominance of the power holder, and power is constructed on ideologies. Here, social, cultural, political, and ideological factors can be considered while revealing power relations between groups as materialized in their language.

In our everyday interaction, we acknowledge the role of background knowledge and collective memories, which are constantly recalled to reflect on a current state of affairs and compare it with similar past experiences. Those memories, which are about things, facts, events, and people, are explicit memories that refer to *long-term* memory (van Dijk 2006). Long-term memory is created by an individual’s, or society’s, personal memories that define their life histories and experiences (Neisser and Fivush 1994), and they can simultaneously transmit knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies.

Conceptually, events, histories, and experiences that resemble a current state of affair are continually associated with new information and knowledge, and they are all stored in *mental spaces*. These spaces are associated with a discourse while “linguistic expressions will typically establish new spaces, elements within them, and relations holding between the elements” (Fauconnier 1994, 17). In this regard, metaphors can play important roles in the creation of mental spaces and conceptual frames (Fillmore 1985) through conceptual blending operations within an integrated network of associations between two or more similar entities or concepts in a discourse. Through these associations, the essential comparable knowledge, or scripts, can be used in a discourse to persuade its recipients to accept an argument on the basis of some embraced ideologies (Schlesinger 2010).

In parallel, contemporary theory of metaphor regards metaphor as a process of cross-domain mapping (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Gillis Fauconnier and Mark Turner extend this cross-domain model of conceptual metaphor and

suggest that metaphors are the product of many general processes that take place within the human cognitive system (Fauconnier and Turner 1998). These cognitive processes involve a cross-domain series of combinations between different types of information that already exist in conceptual domains, or mental spaces, in our cognitive system, and this process is called *conceptual integration* or *blending* (Grady et al. 1999).

The blending theory (BT) regards a conceptual metaphor as made of structural conceptual domains, and the conceptual metaphor results from complex relationships between some elements in the separate conceptual domains, or *spaces*. The conceptual metaphor occurs when these relationships are highlighted in different scenarios of mappings where they are *blended* in a third domain, or space, in the cognitive system, and this process is called *conceptual blending*. In this regard, each space is abstracted in terms of a mental space in the sense of a coherent bundle of information activated in the mind at a particular time, representing an understanding of real or imaginary scenarios.

Fauconnier and Turner suggest a schematic framework for blends in which conceptual metaphors are characterized by the existence of some degree of irregularity in the mapping process (Fauconnier and Turner 1998). In order to outline the structure of a blend, we need different types of information from two input spaces before drawing the mapping in the conceptual metaphor. In other words, to make a conceptual metaphor, we "blend" some information that we already have with newly acquired experiential knowledge about the object, or person, that we are describing metaphorically. To illustrate, Fig. 1 exemplifies the different mapping processes between the conceptual spaces according to BT (Fig. 1).

To illustrate, Joseph Grady points out that in the expression "this surgeon is a butcher" the speaker, or the writer, aims to convey an idea that the surgeon is incompetent (Grady et al. 1999). The BT model suggests that, in such an example, the speaker is blending some information from his knowledge about the domain of surgery in all its features with his experiential knowledge from the domain of butchery. Accordingly, the BT sees that when perceiving such a metaphorical expression, a series of conceptual mappings occurs between the four conceptual spaces in the cognitive system. First, our mental representations will structure two input spaces: the first involves the real experience and knowledge about the semantic domain of surgery, and the second involves what we already know about the semantic domain of butchery. Then, on basis of the common features of the two spaces and which already exist in the generic space, the two input spaces assign a conceptual

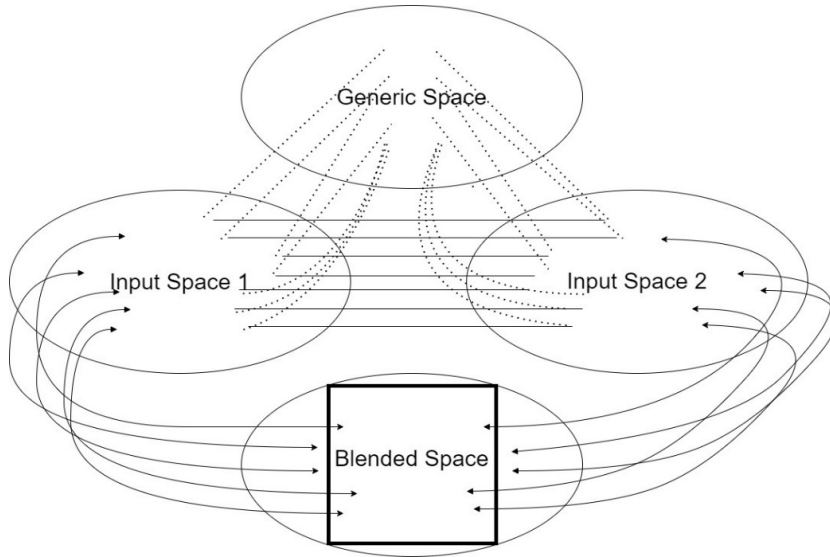


Fig. 1. Different mapping processes between the conceptual spaces according to BT (adapted from Fauconnier and Turner 1998 and 2002).

mapping into the fourth blended space, which carries the new metaphorical structure resulting from the mapping of selected conceptual materials in the two input spaces (see Fig. 2).

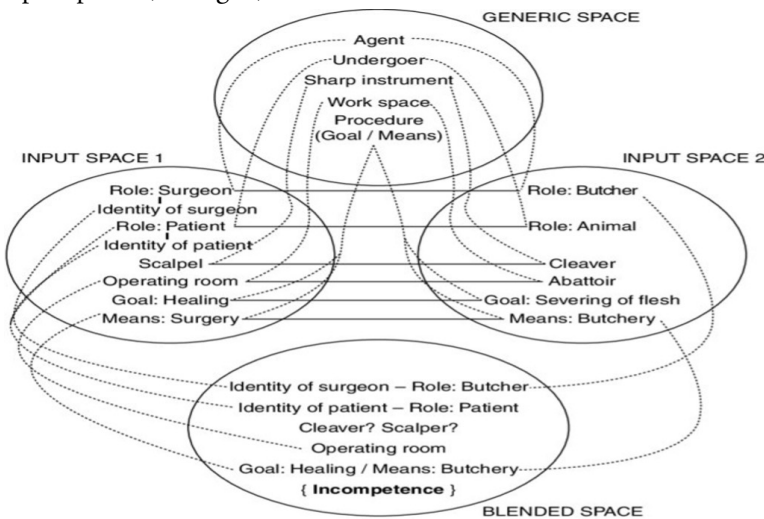


Fig. 2. Conceptual spaces and mapping processes in the metaphor “this surgeon is a butcher” according to the BT (Birdsell 2014).

Figure 2 illustrates how a mapping occurs between some distinctive characteristics of the input spaces on basis of the common features that they already have in the generic space. Then, the different elements from the two input spaces project into the blended space to communicate a new idea with a new relationship that is described by the conceptual metaphor. Croft and Cruse explain the example "this surgeon is a butcher:"

[T]he inference of incompetence arises through an elaboration of the basic elements of the blended space, that is, we imaginatively reconstruct a scene in which a butcher is in charge of an operation, and uses his normal butcher's techniques on the patient: there is a basic incompatibility between the goal and the means, which leads to the inference of X's [the surgeon's] incompetence. (Croft and Cruse 2004, 209)

There are three consecutive stages that must be performed in order to construct the blend: *composition*, *completion*, and *elaboration* (Fauconnier and Turner 1998). By composition Fauconnier and Turner argue that any blending involves certain kinds of attribution between the different elements from the input spaces, which leads to providing relations that do not exist in the separate inputs. In the completion stage, we have a situation where the structure in the blend agrees with the stable background knowledge already stored in our long-term memory. This background knowledge is constructed on the basis of consciously and unconsciously collected contextual information or conceptual frames (Fauconnier and Turner 2002, 48). Finally, in the elaboration stage, certain processes that involve abstract cognitive simulations are developed in the blend. After these stages, a new structure emerges in the blend that is not entirely copied from the two input spaces.

BT is feasible and practical in studying novel (or creative) metaphors, as its four-space model greatly elaborates in detail what particular elements exist behind linguistic metaphors, such as their context sensitivity. This assumption gives the BT capability to deal with the instances of innovative and nonconventional metaphors in different forms of ideological discourse, such as political and religious ones. BT foregrounds the elements that each mental space has and their connections with the other spaces of experience and knowledge that greatly participate in constructing the conceptual metaphor and its ideological assumptions.

Within the context of this study, background knowledge and historical information play a vital role in constructing a persuasive discourse, since they constitute the *conceptual frames* that embody the nation's collective memories based on historical narratives and incidents. These narratives, as

discussed below, associate ISIS and the Kharijites. Meanwhile, Jordanian monarchy plays a significant role as a powerful institution that is capable of producing and enacting power through the repeated reference to such background knowledge. Though this power has been mostly propagated by the prominence of the monarchical institution, chiefly materialized in KAI and his government, who relied heavily on metaphoric associations derived from Islamic history that nurtures the background knowledge of the Jordanians and their collective memories. These associations are discursively, and ideologically, communicated to produce a discourse that justifies fighting ISIS terrorism.

Data and Methods

This study is part of a larger corpus-based project that studies the contemporary political discourse of Jordan's monarchy and militarism; yet, the analysis conducted for the current study takes a smaller-scale orientation and scope. For the purpose of the current study, 40 texts were selected from the corpus to make a smaller corpus of about 50,000 words. The texts involve speeches, newspaper articles, editorials, and columns published on KAI's official website and daily Jordanian newspapers, which reported KAI's discourse on fighting ISIS in the period between February 2016 and December 2018 in the aftermath of ISIS's execution of the Jordanian pilot Mu'ath AlKasasbeh.

Corpus-based quantitative analysis was first made on the original Arabic texts using MAXQDA (version 20.4) to calculate the frequency of the *khawārij* and its collocates and keywords in context (KWICs). The KWICs were identified on basis of their reference to the semantic field of warfare and terrorism, and they have their roots in Islamic history, namely, the reference to the Kharijite sect. Accordingly, MAXQDA queries were mostly about identifying the contexts and collocates of keywords (in Arabic) such as *khawārij* (Kharijites), *'islām* (Islam), *muslim* (Muslims), *'arab* (Arabs), *ḍaḥaya* (victims), *qitāl* (fight), *tahdīd* (threat), *yuwājih* (stand against), *yuhaddid* (threaten), *yastahdif* (targets), among a few other keywords. The aim of this step is to identify the connotation and semantic prosody of the keyword *khawārij* within the contexts in which it appears.

In the following stage, qualitative analysis identified the different conceptual frames that are communicated by the ideational metafunctions of the conceptual metaphor "ISIS are the Kharijites" (mainly, participants, processes, and events). The identification of the conceptual frames is based on BT, and the analysis focuses on two main issues: first, how meanings and ideologies were conceptually framed in KAI's political discourse to justify fighting

ISIS; second, how KAIJ's political discourse relied on historical background knowledge to produce a discourse that persuaded, or coerced, the Jordanians to legitimize the state's decision of military intervention against ISIS.

On the basis of BT, the analysis aims to identify the conceptual elements in each mental space in order to reveal how meanings and ideologies were conceptually framed by KAIJ's political discourse to justify fighting ISIS. In addition, the analysis considers KAIJ's political discourse as part of sociohistorical struggle in which background knowledge and collective long-term memory play significant roles in producing a discourse that legitimizes Jordan's military engagement against ISIS.

Findings and Discussion

The keyword *khawārij* appears 25 times in 14 texts in the corpus; in six instances, it appears as the label phrase *khawārij al-ʿaṣr* (the Kharijites of the time). Collocates with the keyword "Kharijites" within the context of ISIS sporadically refer to specific information or incidents about that Islamic sect. Most of the identified collocates using *wordlist* and *coding* functions in MAXQDA implicitly convey meanings associated with presumed common background knowledge about both the Kharijites and ISIS. These collocations constitute the conceptual framework that depicts ISIS as a sectarian faction originating from Arab and Muslim militias who made an organization "*tanẓīm*," which constitutes a persistent threat to "true Islam" and innocent Muslims and non-Muslims (Gerges 2014, 340). This frame is constructed in the mental space of the recipients by depicting ISIS as a separatist faction, or Kharijites, on basis of the recipients' background knowledge and long-term memory from the first century of Islam. Kharijites' actions and beliefs are essential features of the history of Islam that is taught at schools in the Arab world, and they are a recurring subject of discussion in more specialized works on the first several centuries of Islamic history (Kenney 2006).

The genesis of referring to ISIS as Kharijites can hardly be traced. However, this discursive practice has been routinely appeared in Arabic political discourse among *Salafi* and *Wahhabi* religious scholars and clerks (Gerges 2014, 342). For instance, in 2014, Abd al-Aziz Al al-Sheikh, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, characterized ISIS, along with al-Qaeda, as "an extension of the Kharijites, who were the first group to leave the religion" (Bunzel 2016, 23).

The first reference to ISIS as the Kharijites in Jordanian politics is attributed to KAIJ in a speech delivered at the 12th World Islamic Economic Forum in

Jakarta, Indonesia. In this speech, KAIJ associated terrorists, including ISIS, with *khawārij* by saying:

There is no escape from continually emphasizing the importance of protecting our youth from the dangers of those who engage in killing in the name of the religion. The savagery and terror committed by the *khawārij* of our time in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Africa, Asia, Europe, and America, and across the globe, go beyond the economic challenges which face citizens. This is also an ideological war within Islam, and it requires us to protect the true values of our religion: values of peace and moderation; values of love and respect for humanity, against the evil that seeks to destroy them and distort the image of Islam. (KAIJ's speech at the 12th World Islamic Economic Forum, Jakarta, August 2, 2016²)

The concept Kharijites as presented by KAIJ falls within the conceptual frame of spreading terror and threatening the values of Islam. It is used metaphorically to refer to international terrorists, including ISIS, by first foregrounding their atrocities and their impact on people and religion. This reference constitutes a conceptual frame that defines ISIS as a faction originating from Arab and Muslim militias who made a "formation," or "organization," "*tanẓīm*," and that organization threatens true Islam and innocent Muslims and non-Muslims.

As a conceptual metaphor, and following BT, the Kharijites are constructed in the mental space of anti-ISIS recipients as a separatist political and religious faction on the basis of the recipients' background knowledge of Islamic history. That knowledge could have been, primarily, learned at schools in the Arab world. Besides, the Kharijites are a recurring subject of discussion in more specialized religious and historical works about the first few centuries of Islamic history (Kenney 2006). Most of what is historically narrated about the Kharijites accentuate their rebellious dogma and violence. Naturally, similar narratives are bestowed upon ISIS's dogma and atrocities.

In KAIJ's speech, the metaphor "ISIS is the *khawārij* of our time" involves projecting the recognizable notorious attributes and atrocities of the Kharijites on ISIS. According to BT, this conceptual metaphor, as illustrated in Fig. 3, is motivated by KAIJ's conception of the two groups, the Kharijites and ISIS, thus abstracting two (input) mental spaces that map onto conceptual integration networks:

2 The information provided at the end of each example involves the text title, its place, and its date; they are all extracted from the compiled corpus from texts available on King Abdullah II's Official Website.

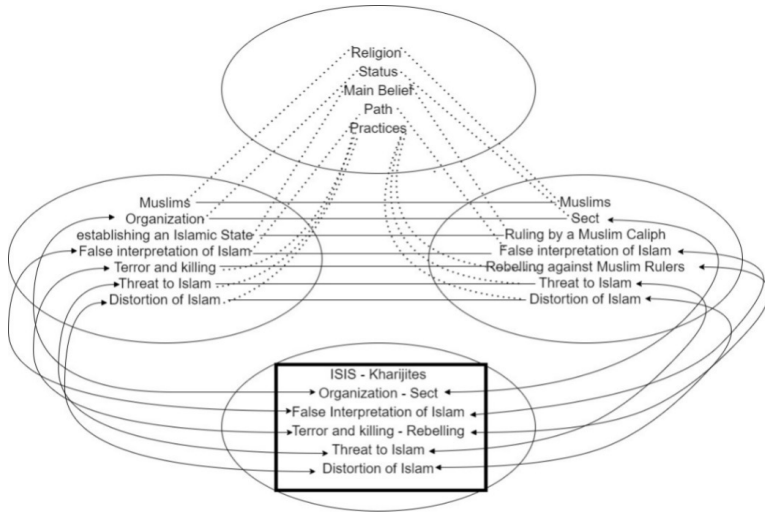


Fig. 3. Conceptual metaphor “ISIS are the Kharijites” according to BT (as conceptualized by KAI).

As Fig. 3 illustrates, the mapping results in an emergent structure that appears in the blended space in which each of the two related elements in each input space, the Kharijites and ISIS, are fused through composition. Thus, the attributes of the related elements in the two input spaces Kharijites and ISIS provide new relations that did not wholly exist in each separate input. This fusion process produced an emergent structure by the selection of attributes and atrocities of ISIS and conceptualizing them in terms of similar attributes, and atrocities, by the Kharijites. The resulted structure in the blend space, then, agrees with the stable background knowledge already stored in the discourse audience’s background knowledge and long-term memory about the Kharijites. Consequently, the structure in the blend accentuates five interconnected elements from each input space. Although these elements were not originally stated by KAI in the speech above, they can be understood as tacit entailments of the metaphoric representation within the speech. In fact, these elements were later elaborated by KAI in an interview in which he was asked about using the label *Khawārij* to mean ISIS, to which KAI responded:

Well in Islam, as traditional Muslims, it is not our right to call people heretics. God decides at the end of the day. The jihadists take it upon themselves to go against the sound principles of Islam and distort them and call the rest of us heretics – as Muslims; you are in a completely different and worse category. And so, in our traditional history, the

outlaws – the *khawārij* – appeared, really, in the early part of Islam. (KAI's interview with Scott Pelley for CBS's 60 Minutes, September 25, 2016)

On the ground of KAI's associations above, the input spaces contain two groups of *people* (ISIS and the Kharijites) and their attributes and behaviors, which are closely related. The people's attributes inherently characterize their ontological identities by which they are recognized and remembered. On the other hand, the people's behaviors are often their noticeable outcomes, or products. Figure 3 shows that the relation between the people and their attributes and behaviors is conceptually captured in the abstract generic space. Then, the realizations of the two parts of the metaphor (ISIS and the Kharijites) are projected from the input spaces into the blended space where the emergent structure arises in which ISIS attributes and behaviors are conceptualized. The juxtaposition of the two input spaces makes a set of *people-attributes* and *people-behaviors* mappings by which Kharijites, with their attributes and behaviors, project ISIS's attributes and behaviors. According to this conceptual frame, the Kharijites' attributes and behaviors had a devastating impact on Islam, Muslims, and non-Muslims as they brought them into several intra-Muslim conflicts (Abu Rumman 2020; Surour 2012). While the King elaborates on the Kharijites, he indirectly refers to ISIS by indicating what they ideologically do when categorizing people into two categories: their followers and the *kufār* "heretics." Similar to the Kharijites, ISIS has embraced a concoction of radical Islam through a theology of *takfrism*, by which it forcefully imposed religion and declared Muslims as apostates. Accordingly, ISIS justified its excess violence against non-Muslims and the believers of Islam who do not embrace their version of pure Islam (Adang et al. 2016, 12). In fact, the Kharijites once pronounced the Caliph Ali and the Umayyad caliphs as infidels (*kufār*), and they are the ones who introduced this notion into the discourse and social life of early Islam (Abu Rumman 2020, 34; Kenney 2006, 34). What is more, the Kharijites did not distinguish between the ruler and the ruled; thus, Muslims and their rulers were subject to the same judgment and punishment, which meant that any Muslim could be condemned as an infidel.

ISIS's ideological categorization is based on a doctrine of total war with no restraints (Gerges 2014, 342). This implies that ISIS's agenda of spreading their ideology was directly based on political, rather than religious, affairs. This account calls back the Kharijites' doctrines, which emphasize their interest in political issues such as the question of succession (Kenney 2006, 24; Kumar 2018, 14). As the message recipients are prompted to conceptualize ISIS as like the Kharijites through a series of conceptual networks, the *elaboration* of such networks makes available the inference that ISIS carries

both a theological and political agenda that creates an existential threat to all those who are against its ideology, including Arabs and Muslims. This inference immediately justifies the king’s stance toward favoring decisive military measures against ISIS and their followers and supporters, despite the many arguments and claims that ISIS “does not represent an existential threat to any Western country” (Stern and Berger 2015, 236).

The Kharijites Conceptual Frame

While the names Kharijites and ISIS metaphorically, and literally, refer to people, this conceptualization makes them principally similar in some way (being Muslims, for instance), even though they are different peoples. When we take into consideration that part of the background knowledge understood by the conceptual frame Kharijites is activated by some historical information that is stored as elements in the input space Kharijites (input space 1), we need to acknowledge that “Kharijites” is a mass noun, and that the behaviors and attributes of this mass are conceptualized as the behaviors and attributes of a single individual, or some sort of a *homogenous* group of people. Accordingly, when such background knowledge is projected into the blended space, it produces an emergent structure in which ISIS’s attributes and behaviors are also conceptualized as those of a single individual, or a homogenous group of people. In contrast, the reaction against ISIS is represented as that of multiplayer agencies such as Jordan and the international community.

While ISIS and the Kharijites are both depicted as homogenous masses, the truth is that there were several groups of people who were involuntarily affiliated with ISIS. For centuries, the Kharijites have been presented in historical resources in terms of a coherent, identifiable group (Surour 2012). This position made it easier to project any idiosyncratic behavioral and ideological characteristics onto a single stationary target instead of projecting them onto a fractured and amorphous movement (Abu Rumman 2020, 34; Kenney 2006, 37).

Contemporary antiterrorism and anti-ISIS political discourse accentuates the depiction of ISIS as a single stationary entity. Conceptually, and following BT, the structure of the blended space projected from the two input spaces does not mention that both ISIS and the Kharijites are actually Muslims. And this is mostly elaborated by KAIJ when he accentuates, in the extract above, that ISIS “... are altogether outside of Islam; they are *khawārij*, outlaws of Islam.” Such *selective* projection in the blended space further contributes to the ideology of the metaphor “ISIS are the Kharijites.” It is important to emphasize that in Islamic theology, the designation “Kharijite” does not

necessarily amount to a charge of unbelief and apostasy (Bunzel 2016, 23). Here, we see that the *religion* element available for recruitment in the generic space is not deliberately projected into the blended space. As we infer from the context of KAI's representation of ISIS, the selective projection of ISIS as non-Muslims in the conceptual blending network is ideologically motivated according to the intentions and purposes of the anti-ISIS discourse. KAI chooses to recruit such a particular structure in order to foreground the perceived reality when fighting ISIS: Jordan is not fighting Muslims. Putting ISIS "outside of Islam," accordingly, authorizes Muslims, and their allies, to act to eliminate ISIS, to eliminate this threat to the well-being of Islam and humanity. Such a situation would inevitably lead to the construction of a *polarization* discourse that contrasts Jordan (and its allies) and ISIS (and its followers and supporters). Interestingly, this very same discourse is employed sporadically by ISIS when performing executions of some of their *kufār* [infidel] captives who were also charged of being Kharijites (Bunzel 2019, 18). Thus, we see that there was a time when there is a conflict between who can use the Kharijite label and against whom (Abu Rumman 2020, 43). It seems that this label has been used by ISIS to establish its image as representative of the Sunni sect, and all those who oppose it belong to the "other," who can be subject to all sorts of opposing labels (Kumar 2018).

Nevertheless, the "ISIS are the Kharijites" metaphor can be the root for *illusory* entailments, for instance, when the behaviors and attributes of a large heterogeneous group of people like ISIS are conceptualized as the behaviors and attributes of an individual that masks the predicament of those individuals who involuntarily live within territories occupied by ISIS. Unlike ISIS, the Kharijites had never occupied or ruled over large areas of land or exercised hegemony over some Muslim, or non-Muslim, communities (Timani 2008). This illusory entailment carries the inference that ISIS is a simple phenomenon that can be handled by overwhelming military force and makes available the inference that dealing with ISIS is similar to that of dealing with criminal gangs [*iṣābāt*] and outlaws. And this is understood by KAI when he said that "Terrorist groups do not inhabit the fringes of Islam—they are altogether outside of Islam; they are *khawārij*, outlaws of Islam." Thus, Jordan's stance is that the solution to ISIS's problem is only through military might. This stance is verbally expressed through the constant use of material processes such as *sanuqātīlu* [we will fight] and *sanadribu* [we will strike] to emphasize the message that ISIS as a whole must be eliminated, and its members must be treated mercilessly; thus, we read the Jordan News Agency quoting KAI:

His Majesty King Abdullah II affirmed that we will hold accountable all those who have committed themselves menace the security of Jordan and the safety of its citizens, and that we will fight the Kharijites and strike them without mercy and with all strength and firmness. (Jordan News Agency, August 12, 2018)

Here one may ponder on the sorts of action one (people or states) is likely to take toward a terrorist organization that resembles an extinct Muslim sect. At the time of the king's speech, ISIS had some material realization on the ground that might be different from what one would have taken towards the Kharijites, who had never had important realization or ground at any time of Islamic history. And that prompts looking into the ideological motifs behind the "ISIS are the Kharijites" metaphor.

Ideology in the Kharijites Metaphor

The nation's collective memories play a substantial role in reflecting its experience of stances and attitudes towards emergent issues. The memories about things, facts, events, and people make the explicit memories that are part of the long-term memory used in constructing and collecting meanings related to experiences and narratives that can be restored when required. Relying on long-term memories is substantial in establishing evaluative meanings, since these memories comprise the essential knowledge used in processing a discourse and to persuade others about a specific issue (Schlesinger 2010). Moreover, the background knowledge stored in the long-term memory links the *new* information and the *given* knowledge, narratives, and experiences from the past. And this helps the discourse maker in constructing persuasive strategies about a given issue in a discourse (Schlesinger 2010).

The critical analysis of KAI's discourse on ISIS aims to construct a well-defined representation of ISIS in order to justify Jordan's military intervention against it. Within this discourse, justifications were encapsulated within referential and evaluative discursive strategy that represents the social actors (mainly ISIS) within a conceptual *polarizing* frame that distinguishes between the international community and ISIS. Here, polarization is employed as a way in which the producers of the anti-ISIS discourse create two narratives of the tale; the first consists of the negative representation of the social actors (ISIS), their actions, and their personalities, who are called the "them group," whereas the second side consists of the good people with a positive representation, the positive actions, and the positive personalities, and then are called the "we group" (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999, 92). Such a strategy is realized linguistically through a method of categorization that is based on

conceptual metaphors like “ISIS are the Kharijites.” Accordingly, negative representations are attributed to the ISIS them group in contrast to our we group positive representation.

The conceptual metaphor “ISIS are the Kharijites” is explained by KAI to accentuate that the we group stands for Jordan, the Jordanians, and the Jordanian armed forces, who are attributed with good values and traits. On the other hand, the we group refers to Arabs and Muslims, and even the international community. This *inclusiveness* is propagated by KAI and Jordanian politics; for instance, the concluding statement at the 28th Arab Summit states:

We commit ourselves to devoting all necessary capabilities to eliminate terrorist gangs and defeat terrorists in all fields of military, security, and intellectual confrontation. Terrorism is a scourge that must be eradicated in order to protect our peoples and defend our security and protect the values of tolerance, peace and respect for the life that unites us, and we will continue to fight terrorism, remove its causes, and work to eliminate the Kharijites of the era within a comprehensive strategy that takes into consideration the centrality of solving regional crises, strengthening the values of democracy, respecting human rights and citizenship, confronting ignorance and exclusion. That can be achieved by dissolving the environments of despair in which terrorism lives and spreads its chaos and aberrance. (Concluding Statement at the 28th Arab Summit, March 29, 2017, Amman)

The Statement constructs a conceptual frame of the we group that contrasts with that of the themgroup. As ISIS here is represented as the Kharijites, the other party is not explicitly referred to by name; instead, it is distinguished by its attributes and values associated with those of the modern free world. These attributes and values are universal and not exclusive to one religion or culture, and they are materialized with their adherence to “the values of democracy, respecting human rights and citizenship, confronting ignorance and exclusion.”—attributes which the Kharijites (and ISIS) are depicted as lacking. ISIS’s Salafi-jihadist doctrine was grounded on a “a totalitarian, millenarian worldview that eschews political pluralism, competition, and diversity of thought” (Gerges 2014, 27). That is why KAI labelled ISIS as *‘iṣābāt* [gangs] or a *tanẓīm* organization that threatens the security and the stability of all those societies opposing it. Labeling is one of the tools used by politicians to cover the negative sides of a person or a group of people (Lee and Lee 1939), and it additionally refers to a name-calling strategy, which means making a nexus between a person, the thought or the action with a negative attribute or a name to make people reject that person, or reject his/her thought

or action without thinking of the real value of it (van Dijk 2006). Along these lines, some other labels are equally found in the language of KAI to refer to ISIS such as *‘iṣābatu dā‘ish* [ISIS gang], *tanẓīmu dā‘ish* [ISIS organization], *quwa at-taṭaruf wal irhāb* [the forces of extremism and terrorism], *quwa ash-shari waẓ ḡalām* [the forces of evil and darkness]. All these labels are semantically related to the main conceptual frame that associates ISIS and the Kharijites on the basis of threat scripts.

In addition to the threat script, the metaphor “ISIS are the Kharijites” communicates another conceptual frame in which Islam is depicted as ISIS’s main target and victim. KAI accentuated that fighting ISIS aims primarily to defend Islam and Muslims from those who hijacked it and practice terror in its name. Here, the keyword *Kharijites* co-occurs in the context of the keyword *alislām* [Islam] and its lemma *almuslimin* [Muslims], and both are represented as the target for ISIS’s atrocities. For example,

Terrorist groups employ a false religious identity. Their aim is to mislead and polarize our societies and peoples. Let us state here, clearly: terrorist groups do not inhabit the fringes of Islam, they are altogether outside of Islam; they are khawārij, outlaws of Islam. Arabs and Muslims, as you pointed out, Sir, make up the majority of their victims. (KAI’s remarks at the Arab Islamic American Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, May 21, 2017)

Focusing on representing Islam as a victim, KAI depicts ISIS as the main cause of wars, atrocities, and conflicts in most Arab and Islamic countries. This is mostly expressed by referring to what ISIS propagates as *zā‘if* [false] and *kāḍheb* [lie] doctrines and beliefs. ISIS’s doctrines make a unique version of extremist *Wahhabism* doctrines, which seek to promote the facade of puritan Islam, by “imposing a linear singularity to the meanings of the canonical precepts of the medieval prophetic mission” (Kumar 2018, 4). ISIS imposed its doctrines that are reinforced by some unbending literal interpretations of the canonized form of religion, which is driven by conservative dogmas and atavistic beliefs (Kumar 2018, 6). Any violation or challenge to those doctrines are brutally faced by the death penalty. Then, KAI’s labels communicate to the addressees the deceptive propaganda that ISIS tries to propagate as an epitome of the “Islamic State.” Besides, this representation calls back the case of one of the Kharijite factions that was known as *Azāriqa* (after their leader, Nafi ben alAzraq) (Kumar 2018). This faction was the most violent of the Kharijites, and it regarded those who did not take up arms in its cause as infidels who were subject to death, as were their wives and children, and their property was subject to forfeiture (Kenney 2006, 23). These atrocities were done to establish “pure Islam” and induce among people a kind of fear of God

(Hitti 1937, 247). KAIJ reiterated what he said several times about how ISIS's practices distort and misrepresent Islam by saying:

As I have said before, this war against terrorism will last for several generations. Its ideological aspect is the ground as the *khawārij* rely on false ideologies that sound religion-based to justify their murderous acts and to provoke sectarianism. We need to do more to expose their lies and crimes; we need to counter their false discourse by a true one. A discourse that seeks human solidarity and hope. (KAIJ's speech at the opening of the annual IISS Manama dialogue, Manama, October 26, 2018)

Van Dijk sees that victimization is related to the ideology of the *we* group and the *them* group; he sees that "when the others tend to be represented in negative terms, and especially when they are associated with threats, then the in-group needs to be represented as a victim of such a threat" (van Dijk 1998, 84). Furthermore, the manifestation of empathy or sympathy for victims of other actions can enhance the brutality of the other (van Dijk 1995b).

Conclusion

The conceptual metaphor "ISIS are the *Kharijites*" has become an eminent representation in Jordanian political discourse. This metaphoric representation has accompanied the emergence of ISIS and the propagation of its terrorist actions and atrocities in several areas around the world. The metaphor constructs a conceptual frame by which some historical accounts from early Islamic history are projected onto the current political situation. These accounts create the common background stored in the long-term memory of the Arab and Muslim recipients of anti-ISIS political discourse. This discourse assumes various forms by labeling and accusing and placing ISIS as a *them* group pole, in contrast to the *we* group' pole. Hence, on the ground of the *Kharijites*' long history of accusations of heresy, rebelling, and spreading terror, ISIS is represented in Jordanian politics as a continuation of that history and identity.

For centuries, the *Kharijites* sects and factions have received a great deal of attention in Islamic history due to the threats they posed to societies and political authorities. Although most violent factions of the *Kharijites*, such as *Azāriqa*, have disappeared in contemporary Islamic history, the label "*Kharijite*" has been recently revived and exploited for ideological objectives to legitimize and justify eliminating ISIS and fighting its followers and proponents. Although there are few sources in which see that the *Kharijites*, to a great extent, were demanding social and political reform (Hitti 1937; Kumar 2018; Surour 2012), what is emphasized is the narrative of the

Islamic orthodox and religious institution that regards Kharijite ideology as only referring to rebellion or schism. Ironically, this narrative is the one that is mostly accentuated and marketed among Jordanian politicians when representing ISIS—a strategy that aims to give ISIS a demonized identity to facilitate their isolation, and then their elimination.

The blending theory of metaphor captures the inadequacy of using the metaphor “ISIS are the Kharijites” as an ideological representation that aims to combat the religious extremism and terrorism manifested in ISIS. What is needed in this regard are more practical and moralizing approaches that are not restricted to labelling and polarizing ideologies evoked via recycled historical terms, and which in turn, advocate only military solutions to the problem of terrorism. One can hardly argue that such solutions have been significantly fruitful, as social media is loaded with novice extremists who are keen to embrace those remnant extremist ideologies that engender religious extremism and political violence in order to change what they see wrong in their societies.

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