A Critical Analysis of the Salafis' Ideological Discourse on Facebook and its Identity Significance

دراسة نقدية للخطاب الإيديولوجي عند السلفيين على الفايسبوك وارتباطه بالهوية

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Abstract :

The present research is a qualitative, critical study of the Salafis' unofficial ideological discourse on Facebook and its identity significance. It aims at investigating the linguistic and discursive strategies employed by some Salafis to generate their discourse on Facebook, with focus on the lexical and text-generating techniques. Given the nature and objectives of the research, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach was adopted in the study, and Van Djik's ideological square model was employed in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Data was collected systematically, targeting Facebook posts - with ideological content - published by the Salafis on their profiles, pages or groups.

Results showed that the Salafis' ideological discourse was of two kinds: *discourse of opposition and discourse of allegiance*. These are the equivalents of Van Djik's polarisation: *Us* equals positive vs. *Them* equals negative. In generating such a discourse, the Salafis used two innovative techniques: creation of new labelling terms through lexical modification, and multimodal text-generating techniques. Moreover, it was found that this type of discourse functions as a practice of identity negotiation and membership alignment among the Salafis. The present research proved that social media offers users the opportunity of creating their own discourses using creative techniques. This has implications for the new research arenas of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Keywords : Critical Discourse Analysis; Discourse; Identity; Ideology; Ideology Square Model; Salafism.

ملخص :

يهدف هذا البحث النوعي النقدي إلى تحليل الخطاب الإيديولوجي غير الرسمي عند مجموعة من السلفيين على الفايسبوك وارتباطه بالهوية من خلال دراسة مختلف الممارسات اللغوية و الإستراتيجيات الخطابية المتبعة. وبالنظر للطبيعة الرقمية لهذا الخطاب، تركز الاهتمام الأكبر للدراسة حول تقنيتين اثنتين: اختيار المفردات وأساليب تشكيل النص الرقمي. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على مقاربة نورمان فيركلاو النقدية التحليلية للخطاب ونموذج المربع الإيديولوجي لفان ديك في تحليل و تفسير النتائج. تمثلت العينة الخطابية المراد دراستها في مجموعة من المنشورات لمستعملين سلفيين على الفايسبوك ، سواء في حساباتهم الشخصية أو الصفحات والمجموعات العامة، بحيث تم اختيارها بصورة انتقائية تبعا لمضمونها الذي يجب أن يكون إيديولوجيا يتوافق مع هدف البحث.

أسفرت الدراسة عن مجموعة من النتائج أهمها أن الخطاب الإيديولوجي لهؤلاء السلفيين تضمن توجهين اثنين: خطاب معادي للإخوان المسلمين وحلفائهم، وخطاب ولاء للسعودية العربية وحلفائها، واعتمد في تشكيل هذا الخطاب على تقنيات إبداعية مستحدثة: إعادة التشكيل لمفردات التسمية والوسم الرسمية، واستعمال الأدوات متعددة الوسائط في تشكيل النص، كما ثبت أن هذا الخطاب الإيديولوجي استعمل كإستراتيجية لإبراز الهوية والتميز الديني. وتبعا لذلك، فالبحث تضمن بعض التوجهات الحديثة في علم التحليل النقدي للخطاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإيديولوجية؛ التحليل النقدي للخطاب؛ الخطاب؛ السلفية؛ الهوية؛ نموذج المربع الإيديولوجي.

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INTRODUCTION:
     In recent years, Social media has emerged as a new space of human interaction. This type of media is different to the old one, mass media, in one key feature: the generation of content. While in mass media the content is generated by official institutions and authors such as news corporations or governmental administrations, in social media, ordinary people can create their own content in their profiles, groups or pages.   Thus, it offers people from different social groupings, ideologies and cultures (such as sports fan groups, people with various health disorders, religious groupings, etc.) the chance to express themselves and create their own discourses. Research on this kind of discourse has been accelerating recently, and many studies have been conducted thus far, investigating a variety of groupings and cultures. However, one aspect that has received little attention from the scholars is religion (religious groupings and ideologies). Moreover, the critical studies of discourse have focused on the offline discourse, and only a few ones dealt with social media discourse. Therefore, the present study is an attempt towards covering this gap.

   The present research investigates the ideological discourse of a religious Islamic grouping, the Salafis, on Facebook as it represents their rivals, on the one hand, and their proponents, on the other hand. The discourse investigated in this study is not the official one, i.e. it is not the discourse of official institutions or figures of Salafism, but that of ordinary Salafis in their personal Facebook accounts and pages. The focus of the study is more oriented towards two discursive techniques: the lexical choices and the multimodal techniques. Moreover, the work investigates how the Salafis identity is presented and negotiated through this ideological discourse. So, it aims to answer two major questions:

- What strategies are used in the Salafis' ideological discourse on Facebook?
- How this discourse is employed in the identity negotiation process?

   Given the qualitative nature of the research and its socio-cultural critical orientation, we leaned upon the critical discourse analysis' (CDA) tenets and Van Dijk's ideological square model in analysing and interpreting the Salafis' discourse and its strategies on Facebook.

 1.   The Theoretical Framework

    The study of ideology and its representation and negotiation in discourse is part of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA was developed in the late 1980s by the European scholars, mainly Fairclough, Wodak, and van Dijk, as a new branch in discourse analysis (Blommart and Bulcaen, 2000). Considering language as a social practice through which people perform different actions in different contexts, CDA adopts a critical linguistic approach and devotes itself to the analysis of the relations between discourse,

ideology, power, and dominance, which are all relevant in the interpretation of texts (Van Djik, 1993; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). "[CDA] is primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis" (Van Djik, 1993, p.252). One of the issues that has triggered much interest from scholars in CDA is ideology, which is strongly tied to people's beliefs and social negotiations and conflicts.

As put by Van Djik (1998), ideology is "the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group" (p.8). Bloor and Bloor (2007) believe that "[we] can gloss ideology as a set of beliefs or attitude shared by members of a particular social group" (p. 10). Accordingly, ideology represents the system of beliefs, views and principles a group of people possess; this system determines their social activities and interactions. For instance, secular groups in Islamic countries believe in the separation of religion from politics and the governments' policies; therefore, this ideology decides their political actions and social relations. And it must be stressed that ideologies are socio-cognitive rather than emotional, i.e. they are "shared negative evaluations (opinions) and not temporal emotions (Van Djik, 2006a, p.731). "This means that ideologies allow people, as group members, to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for them, and to act accordingly" (Van Dijk, 1998, p.8).

As stated by Van Djik (2006a), "it is largely through discourse that [ideologies] are acquired, expressed, learned, propagated, and contested" (p. 732). So, ideologies are usually imbedded within discourse, either explicitly or implicitly. This notion is the basis on which Van Djik built his ideological square model.

In CDA, Van Dijk (1998) "contributes a useful theoretical concept he calls the 'ideological square', which encapsulates the twin strategies of positive 'in-group' description and negative 'out-group' description" (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 33). "The double strategy of this binary opposition is often manifested in discourse by lexical choice and other linguistic features" (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 33, as cited in Hakam, 2009, p. 37). Van Dijk's model is based on the *Us. Vs. Them* dichotomy. As explained by Kuo and Nakamura (2005), the ideological square model depicts the representation of *Self* and *Others* through polarized discourse: *We* are good, and *They* are bad. This ideological polarization is mainly expressed through lexical choices (p.410).

2. The Contextual Framework: The Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood: Conflicting Islamic Ideologies

Islam includes a variety of doctrines and groupings, following the continuous changing it has witnessed through time. Nowadays, Islam includes two major ideologies, which have become more prominent in the last decade following the Arab Spring: *the Salafis* and *the Muslim Brotherhood* (El Karoui, 2018).

2.1. The Salafis

Salafis are fundamentalists who believe in a return to the original ways of Islam. The word 'Salafi' comes from the Arabic phrase, 'as-salaf as-saliheen', which refers to the first three generations of Muslims (starting with the Companions of the Prophet), otherwise known as the Pious Predecessors. Modern-day Salafis believe that there is a need to get back to these ideals, instead of following teachings which have become, in their eyes, corrupted in the intervening centuries. The 100-year-old Sunni-based Salafi school of thought aspires to emulate the ways of the Prophet Mohammed. Recognisable from their distinctive long white robes, long beards and flowing head scarf, Salafis are socially and religiously ultra - conservative ("What is Salafism?, Jan, 2015). Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the father of modern Salafism, rose as reviver in the late 18th century in Najd, Saudi Arabia, to reform the Muslims under the banner of "true" Islam –Salafism- and get rid of such "heretical" practices (Bin Ali and Bin Sudiman, 2016). Moreover, Salafism is adopted as the official doctrine in Saudi Arabia (El Karoui, 2018). Based on this description, the Salafis are clearly tied to Saudi Arabia; they consider it, together with its alliances and institutions, the proponent of their doctrine and the protector and representative of the *real Islam*. Regarding their linguistic ideology, Salafis consider Standard Arabic as 'holy' and is supposed to be the only language used by Muslims in all their interactions.

2.2. The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood (Al-ikhwan al-Muslimun) is a Sunni Islamist organisation that was founded in Egypt by the Islamic scholar Hassan al-Banna in 1928. It has the model of political activism combined with Islamic charity work to reach the real Islamic society. Its core ideology is "focused on reform of existing political systems in the Arab world" who are considered as secular and against Islam ("What is Muslim Brotherhood?" June 18, 2017). In the modern days, one key issue of conflict between the Salafis' ideology and Muslim brotherhood's is the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government revolutions, protests and uprising rebellions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that first started on 17 December 2010 in Tunisia, then spread later on to other countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Syria (Micallef, 2016, para.2-3). It affected profoundly this region. In the last 7 years, every political, economic or social event in the MENA was related in a way or another to the Arab Spring. Having different backgrounds and ideologies, intellectuals, scholars and Islamic doctrines were deeply divided into Pros and Cons towards the Arab Spring.

2.3. Conflicting Ideologies:

Regarding the current ideological conflicts in Islam, as put by Al Karoui (2018), the most prominent rivalry is that between the Salafis and Muslim Brotherhood. He states that while the Muslim Brotherhood seeks political activism (including revolutions and demonstration against the regimes) towards the reviving of the Islamic nation, the Salafis are radically against this idea and are considered "politically quietest". Indeed, this is the major ideological principle of conflict between the two groups. This led to growing confrontations between the two ideologies in different official spheres (such as scholars' writings, newspapers and TV channels, etc.), and recently, in non-official spheres such as Facebook, among ordinary people's discourse. This latter represents the focus of the present research, which sheds some light on one direction of the ideological rivalry: the Salafis' discourse towards Muslim Brotherhood, and their alliances, on the one hand, and towards Saudi Arabia (as their proponent) and its institutions on the other hand.
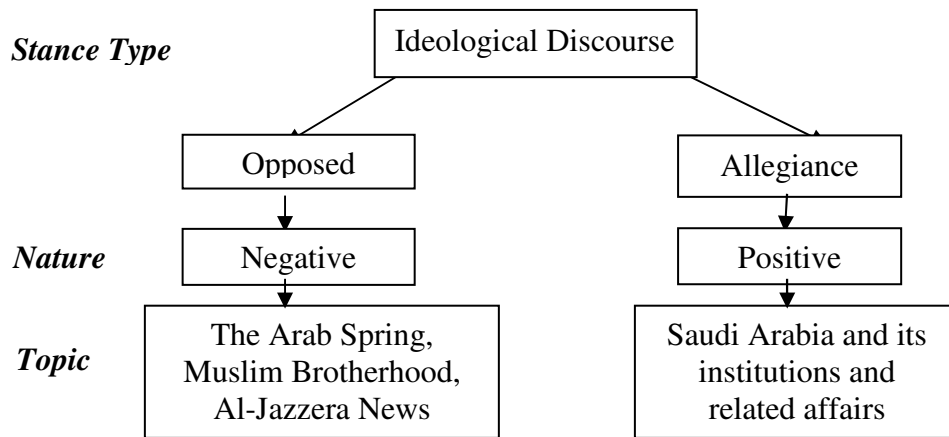
3. EXPERIMENTAL :

The aim of the present study is to critically analyse the discourse generated by the Salafis on Facebook towards their ideological rivals, the Muslim Brotherhood, and their discourse towards their proponents, Saudi Arabia and its institutions. In addition, we investigated the way this type of discourse is employed in the self-representation and identity negotiation process. It should be mentioned that this study is qualitative in nature and does not seek generalisations. It is exploratory research that aims at understanding how discourse is used in the ideological representations on Facebook.

This discourse is in the form of posts generated (or shared) and published by the Salafis (targeted in this study) on their Facebook profiles, or posts published in Salafism's groups and pages. The collection of the data was systematic. Based on a preliminary analysis of the content, we targeted and collected only the posts that generate discourse towards the Muslim Brotherhood (and allied institutions and figures) and Saudi Arabia (and its institutions and figures). The analysis and interpretation of the data was based on Van Djik's ideology square model (aforementioned in section1), with focus on the two discursive strategies mentioned earlier: the lexical choices and the multimodal techniques.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

Results showed that the participants' ideological discourse is divided into two types: *opposed discourse* and *allegiance discourse* (Figure 1). The opposed discourse expresses negative stances towards Muslim Brotherhood, the Arab Spring, and related issues; the allegiance discourse expresses positive views towards Saudi Arabia, its institutions, and its related affairs. These topics has been the major current affairs in the Arab world. They are considered as religio-political issues in this study because they are political affairs with Islamic backgrounds within Salafism.

Fig.1. Classification of the Salafis' Ideological Discourse on Facebook

Stance Type

Ideological Discourse

Opposed   Allegiance

Nature

Negative   Positive

Topic

The Arab Spring, Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Jazzera News

Saudi Arabia and its institutions and related affairs

3.1. The Opposed Ideological Discourse

In the opposed discourse, the participants expressed a negative stance toward the Arab Spring, the Muslim Brotherhood and related issues. The findings of the present study revealed that the research participants were radically against the Arab Spring, the Muslim Brotherhood and related issues and organizations. Based on the critical discourse analysis approach and Van Djik's (2006) ideology square analytical model, the ideological opposed stance was discursively performed on Facebook among the research participants through two means: *the ideological modification of official terms (naming)* and *the multimodal text-generation*. There are other elements in this discourse, but the focus in this study is on these two means.
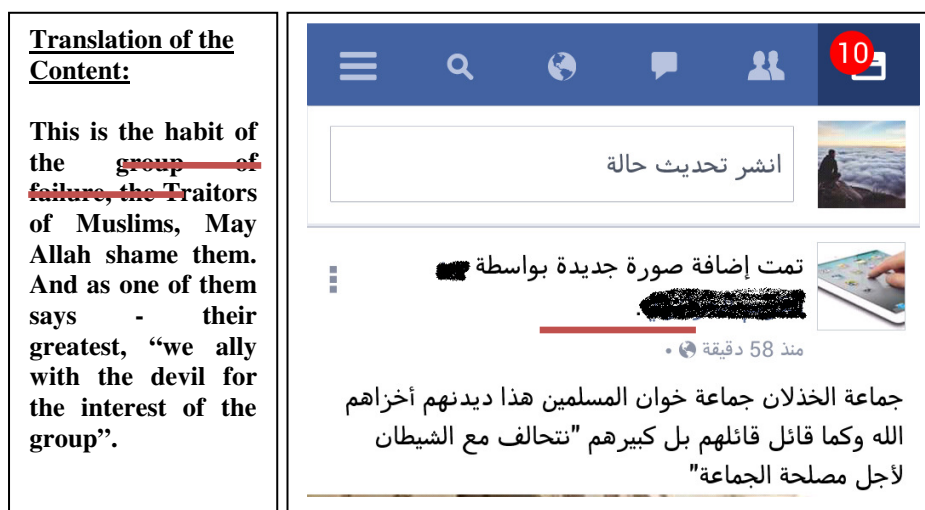
3.1.1. The Ideological Modification of Terms: Naming and Labelling

One strategy the research participants followed to reflect their opposed ideology was the modification of the official terms used to refer to groups, organizations or personalities that are considered as opposing. In other words, in writing about issues related to these opposing subjects, they do not use the common term but a reformulated version of it (of their own), which ideologically displays a specific negative meaning as presented in Figure 2.

The excerpt in Figure 2 is a publication of one of the research participants about the Muslim Brotherhood. The discourse in the publication is ideological

because the participant is opposing this group and its principle of "ally with the devil for the interest of the group". In other words, the Muslim Brotherhood prioritizes the interest of the group (which is also the good interest of all Muslims according to them) over everything else and would make it by any means even if it requires alliance with the devil himself. This principle is prohibited in Salafism and is considered a very sinful deed. Therefore, the participant is expressing his ideological opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood. This opposed ideology is performed through the modification of the official name of the group as illustrated in the underlined words (in red) in Figure 2. To refer to the organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, the participant does not use in his publication the official name, **'الإخوان المسلمين',** but reformulates it into **'خوان المسلمين'** – khawan Al-Moslimin. The lexical modification was performed through the *replacement* of the first word in the term: **'الإخوان'** to '**خوان**'. The new word is

Fig.2. The Lexical Reconfiguration of Terms

| **Translation of the Content:**	
This is the habit of the ~~group of failure~~, the Traitors of Muslims, May Allah shame them. And as one of them says - their greatest, "we ally with the devil for the interest of the group".	انشر تحديث حالة تمت إضافة صورة جديدة بواسطة ▬ ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ منذ 58 دقيقة ⊕ • جماعة الخذلان جماعة خوان المسلمين هذا ديدنهم أخزاهم الله وكما قائل قائلهم بل كبيرهم "نتحالف مع الشيطان لأجل مصلحة الجماعة"

approximately similar in Arabic spelling to the original (differs only in one letter) but has a contradictory meaning. The meaning changed completely from **'الإخوان المسلمين',** which means *the Muslim Brothers,* to **'خوان المسلمين'**, which means *traitors of Muslims*. Thus, the participant's opposing ideology towards the Muslim Brotherhood organization was imbedded in the term he uses to refer to the organization as a group of traitors, and not Muslim brothers with beneficial projects to Islam.

Following the modification of official terms strategy, the research participants used a variety of names to refer to the Muslim Brotherhood as presented in **Figure 3**. All of these names are a result of the ideological

modification of the official name. They have *a negative meaning* which reflects the opposing stance of the participants towards the organization. All the five terms in Figure 3 hold a negative representation of the Muslim Brotherhood. They are formed by the research participants in a systematic way to meet two needs: closer in form (spelling in Arabic) to the original name and reflects a negative status. The negative label the participants give to the organization is equivalent to one of the principles in Van Djik's (2006) ideological square: *the representation of the other or 'Them' as negative.* This is salient in the meaning of the names, which are all labelling the Muslim Brotherhood as: a group of spoilers, bankrupts, criminals and traitors working for the devil.

Fig. 3. The Ideological Modification of the Muslim Brotherhood's Official Name
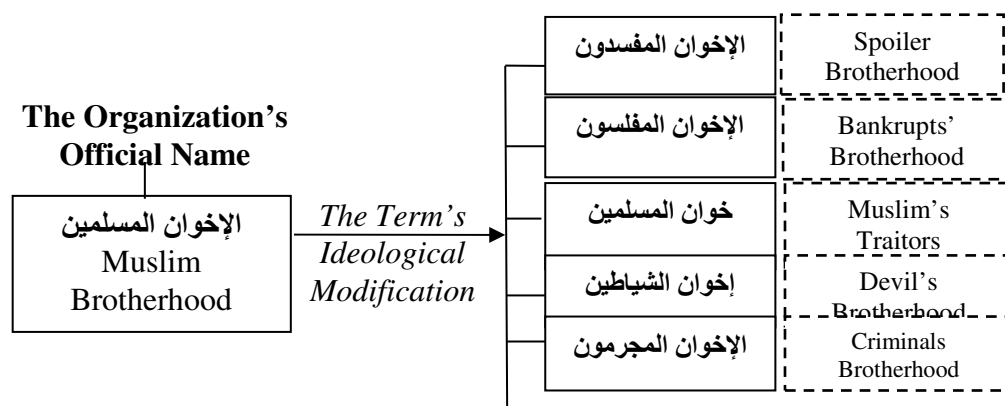
Another line of opposition within the ideological discourse of the participants on Facebook targets organizations or institutions with affiliation to the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Al-Jazeera news channel. In the excerpt in Figure 4, the participant constructs an opposing ideological discourse towards the Qatari news channel, Al-Jazeera, which is considered by the Salafis as part of the Muslim Brotherhood. It spreads the organization's ideology of supporting and pushing peoples in the Arab countries to rebel against their governments. In this Facebook publication, the participant expresses his opposition towards Al-Jazeera because - according to him- it is behind the propaganda that led Arab peoples to revolt against their presidents and to destroy their countries in a dirty civil war, and is trying to do so in Algeria.

To refer to the channel in his discourse, the participant uses an alternating term (underlined in red) and not the official one in Arabic. He uses **"الخنزيرة"** – **Al-Khinzeera**, which means **'pig',** in place of the official term which is **"الجزيرة"** **(Al-Jazeera).** The word 'pig' in Islamic and Arabic culture has a negative connotation and usually used as a label for dirty and bad things. It is

chosen by the participant in his publication in its feminine form to sound similar in spelling to the official name of the news channel in Arabic. Thus, the new term is closer in form to the original one but holds

Fig. 4. The Modified Official Name in the Opposing Ideological Discourse towards Al-Jazeera Channel

Translation of the Content:	
Translation of the Content: O' the people of Algeria **Al-Khinzeera [the Pig] Channel,** after destroying Syria, Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia is surprised how your country has not fallen yet and the army has not turned over the government in a dirty civil war.	انشر تحديث حالة تمت إضافة صورة جديدة بواسطة منذ 50 دقيقة يا أهل الجزائر قناة الخنزيرة و بعد تخريبها لسوريا و اليمن و مصر و تونس تستغرب كيف لم تسقط دولتكم و ينقلب الجيش على الحكام و تدخل دولتكم في حرب أهلية طاحنة

a negative meaning: the channel is labelled as dirty and bad, with evil agendas. Thus, the participant in his publication is expressing the opposing ideology through presenting the *other* – represented by Al-Jazeera- as evil and enemy to the Arab countries and Algeria.

Another discursive mode applying the strategy of ideological modification of official terms is that against famous theologians and scholars of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab Spring. Two of the most targeted biggest personalities by the participants in their publications are Sayyid Qutb and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) was an Egyptian author, educator, Islamic theorist, poet, and the leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and the 1960s; in 1966, he was convicted of plotting the assassination of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and was executed by hanging. He is one of the most influential figures within the Muslim Brotherhood whose ideas and philosophy shapes the organizations ideology. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (b.1926) is also a famous Egyptian, Islamic

theologian and scholar, who is considered as the greatest theorist of the Muslim Brotherhood today.

The participants, in their opposing Facebook discourse, do not refer to these two personalities with their official names but through modified versions of the names as in the following:

- referring to 'يوسف القرضاوي' - **Yusuf al-Qaradawi**, they use the name : 'يوسف القردضاوي' – **Yusuf al-Qardadawi'.** The new name is formed through inserting the letter 'ﺩ' – '**d**' in the middle of the second word in the official name. This modification is giving the name a new meaning. In the word 'القردضاوي' – **al-Qardadawi : the part** 'القرد-' – '**al-Qard-**' means *monkey*.. The word *monkey* connotes a negative meaning in Islam and Arabic culture referring to '*bad and ugliness*'. Thus, the participants through the use of this name are illustrating the scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi as a bad theologian.

- referring to 'سيد قطب' – **Sayyid Qutb,** the participant follow the same strategy as for Yusuf al-Qaradawi. They use usually the name : 'سيئ قطب' – '**Sayyi Qutb'.** This new name is formed through replacing the letter 'ﺩ'- '**d**' in the first word of the official name with the letter 'ﺀ' – '**?**' (sound like the glottal stop). The word 'سيئ' – '**Sayyi''** means literally in Arabic '**bad'.** Hence, in using this name the participants are illustrating the scholar Sayyid Qutb as 'a bad scholar'.

These names, which are used by the participants to refer to Sayyid Qutb and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, are formed systematically and purposefully to connote a negative meaning in the opposing discourse. Thus, this practice is reflecting the participants' opposing stance towards these two personalities. The reason why the participants are opposing Sayyid Qutb and Yusuf al-Qaradawi is their opposing Islamic ideology, mainly that related to armed struggle against the Arabic regimes and the Arab Spring. This ideology is the result of Sayyid Qutb's theories and ideas which are promoted and supported today by al-Qardawi, and that is radically refused and banned by Salafism. Thus, these two scholars are the fathers of death and blood in Islam, according to the Salafis.

3.1.2. The Multimodal Ideological Opposing Discourse :

In addition to the textual practices presented in the previous section, the opposing ideology towards the Muslim Brotherhood and related institutions can be discursively constructed through multimodal means. This is expressed in the Facebook publication in Figure 5 in which the participant generates an opposing discourse towards the Arab Spring and the Muslim Brotherhood.

The discourse in the publication is multimodal: the use of *text* and *image* to generate meaning. In the text, the underlined terms in red refer to the ideological lexical modification mentioned in the previous section. The first is 'الربيع العربي' [**Al-rabi' Al-arabi** – '**The Arab Spring'**] which was changed into 'الربيع العبري' [**Al-rabi' Al-ibri** – '**the Hebrew Spring**]. The participant

modified the term through changing the first word from 'العربي'- **'the Arab'** into 'العبري' – **'the Hebrew'.** He chose this word to replace the original one in the official term because, on the one hand, it has approximately the same spelling form and, on the other hand, it connotes an ideological negative meaning. The word 'Hebrew' connotes a negative meaning (trick and guile) in the Islamic and Arabic culture because it is related to the Israeli and the Jews, who are the divine enemies of Muslims and Arabs. They are behind all catastrophes, problems and instability in the Islamic world according to the Muslims and the Arabs. Therefore, the participant is expressing his opposing ideology towards the 'Arab Spring' through renaming it 'the Hebrew Spring' that implies that these revolutions, named the Arab Spring, are nothing but an evil strategy by the Jews to destroy the Arab World. Indeed, this is explicitly presented in his words in the publication where he says that these revolutions "are planned by the Jews". The participant continues his text relating the 'Hebrew Spring' planned by the Jews to the '**Bankrupt Brotherhood'** and the **Takfiris Kharijits. 'The Bankrupts Brotherhood'** is an ideologically modified term which refers to the 'Muslim Brotherhood' as aforementioned**.** According to Salafism**,** the **Takfiris Kharijits** are Islamic groupings with a radical Jihadi thought towards the non-Muslims (according to them). They consider the Arabic governments as secular, traitors and non-Muslims who must be fought against and stripped out of their governorship in armed struggle.

In addition to the latter textual elements, meaning is generated in the publication (Figure 5) through the visual means: *image*. The image in the publication shows a person lying on a sofa and watching TV. The TV displays the map of the Arab World with explosion fire in some countries. The burning countries are Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. In the middle,

Fig. 5. The Multimodal Ideological Opposing Discourse

Translation of the Textual Content:

A meaningful Picture …..

The revolutions of the **Hebrew Spring** were planned by the Jews and executed by **the Bankrupts Brotherhood** and the **Takfiris Kharijits** in our Arabic countries as shown in the picture.

there is the flag of Israel in Palestine. The person in the image is wearing the Jewish Hat, which indicates that he is Jews. He is lying down on the sofa comfortably with hands attached behind his head. All these imagery elements are forming scenery that tells: *the Jews are watching happily the Arab World burn*. The image is employed here to emphasize the meaning intended by the participant as images are louder than words, as said.

The textual and imagery elements in the publication build a multimodal discourse that expresses the full concept or idea of: the Arab Spring is a group of devastating revolutions, which were planned by the Jews and executed by the Muslim Brotherhood and Takfiris Kharijits in the Arab World. While the Arab countries like Yemen, Syria and Egypt are burning, the Jews are watching happily their plan being executed successfully without shooting a single bullet. Thus, this multimodal discourse reflects the Salafi participant's ideology which opposes the Arab Spring and condemns the Muslim Brotherhood and Takfiris Kharijits for realizing the Jews devastating plan in the region.

The publications presented thus far in this section are typical samples of how the ideological opposing discourse is constructed among the Salafis in this study. Light was shed upon two discursive practices: the ideological modification of official terms and images as being novel and having great role in meaning generation. The ideological modification of official terms and selective images with an implicit meaning are a reflection of one of the basic principles in Van Djik's ideology square model: representing *'Them'* and their ideas and beliefs negatively. The *'Them'* in the ideological opposing discourse are the Muslim Brotherhood and its members, affiliated institutions and personalities. Moreover, anyone adopting the organisation's ideology is considered as the *other* for the research participants.

The *'Them'* discursive aspect is part of the dichotomy 'Us vs. Them'. These two pillars of the ideological discourse are inseparable: the existence of one means the existence of the other. Through expressing the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and affiliated institutions and personalities – the *'Them'*- negatively in their opposing discourse, the research participants are

indirectly expressing their ideology and beliefs – the 'Us'- positively. In other words, in opposing the ideology which backs the Arab Spring and expressing it negatively through discursive practices, the participants are implicitly expressing positively their ideology of *prohibition of revolutions against* the regimes and consider it as religiously correct and rightful. The *'Us'* positive discourse among the Salafis in this study is presented in the next section.

3.2. The Ideological Discourse of Allegiance:

Parallel to the opposing discourse, the research participants constructed an allegiance discourse through which they support a certain ideology or issue related to their doctrine (see Figure 1. in Section: ideological discourse). Given the religio-political nature of the discourse studied in this section, allegiance is approached as the Salafis loyalty to the Salafism religi-political ideology. Results showed that the line of ideological allegiance among the research participants' Facebook publications was expressing allegiance to Saudi Arabia (KSA) and its institutions. In the allegiance discourse, the participants are always presenting KSA, its kings and regime, and related issues positively. This is achieved through a number of discursive practices as shown in the samples of the participants' Facebook publications.

The publication in Figure 6 represents the three frequently used discursive elements in the creation of the allegiance discourse to Saudi Arabia. The three elements are underlined in red in the figure and numbered respectively in the English version in the translation box. The first element (1) represents the practice of *complimenting*. In the phrase *'a blessed Salafi country'*, the participant is using two adjectives to describe KSA positively: *Salafi* and *blessed*. The word 'Salafi' refers to the country as being on the right way of Islam that was determined by the prophet Mohammed (peace and bless be upon him), and therefore applying Islam at a nation's level. The word 'blessed' gives KSA a holy status since blessing comes from Allah only to what is sacred and representing rightfulness in Islam. After complimenting KSA as the sacred Salafi country, the participant moves to an *inclusive/exclusive discourse* in element two (2) where he states that "only he who hates Islam, hates this country".

Through the use of terms such as *only* and *hates,* the participant is performing a classification discourse: those who hate Saudi Arabia are haters of Islam itself, and thereby, those who love it are real Muslims. Thus, according to the participant, one's attitudes towards Saudi Arabia determine his inclusion or exclusion from the Islam's enemies circle. In other words, if he is with Saudi Arabia, he is with Islam; if he is not, he is an enemy of Islam. In element three (3), the participant is praying to Allah to protect Saudi Arabia and its king and endure their glory. These are positive prayers that reflect the participant's love and support for the country and its regime. Someone who is opposing Saud Arabia never pray positively for it. Employing the three

discursive elements in his publication, the participant constructed an allegiance discourse towards KSA. This allegiance discourse defined the participant and those like him ('Us') as supporters of the sacred country and real Muslims, and those opposing ('Them') as the enemies of Saudi Arabia and Islam. Applying Van Djik's (2006) model, the discourse in this publication is promoting the 'Us' ideology and beliefs, and underestimating those of 'Them'.

Fig. 6. The Ideological Allegiance Discourse

Translation of Content:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

is a blessed Salafi country;

only he who hates Islam

hates this country.

May Allah support its king,

and endures its glory.

 Amen.

تمت إضافة صورة جديدة بواسطة

منذ 41 دقيقة

المملكة العربية السعودية دولة سلفية مباركة؛ لا يبغضها
من في ذ   ض للإسلام.
ثبت الله ملكها؛ وأدام الله عزها...اللهم آمين.

picture format. It is not created by the participant himself but someone else (usually Salafi pages on Facebook) through the use of a specific software program. The topic of the picture is the attack and opposition of some Islamic groupings and doctrines on Saudi Arabia. The discourse generated in the picture is ideological because it represents Saudi Arabia positively and the groupings negatively.

Building upon the Arabic proverb that literally means 'the sky is never hurt by dogs' barking' – whose English equivalent is 'Dogs bark, but the caravan keeps on' - the designer creates the multimodal discourse in the picture. On top of the picture, the flag representing Saudi Arabia is placed to illustrate it as the sky. At the bottom, there are three dogs that represent the three Islamic groupings: Sufis, Shiites and the Muslim Brotherhood. The dogs are raising their heads up to the sky and barking. This visualisation is a pictorial representation of the proverb. Between the flag and the dogs, there is a writing that says: *'Dogs bark, but the caravan keeps on' (proverb) - Continue your barking; it fits you.* These words are addressed to the three Islamic groups. At the bottom of the picture, under the dogs, there is a text which states that: Saudi Arabia is hated only by people belonging to groupings with deviated beliefs and principles, and loved only by Muwahideen (real Salafi Muslims who fulfil monotheism and belief in the oneness of Allah). All the discursive elements in the picture generate the

Fig. 7. The Multimodal Ideological Allegiance Discourse

The flag of Saudi

'Dogs bark, but the caravan keeps on' (proverb) Continue your barking, it fits you

From right to left:
Dog1: Sufis – **Dog 2**: Shiites
Dog 3: The Muslim Brotherhood

It is Loved only by Muwahid, and hated only by a follower of his own desires, Kharijits, Shiites or Mubtadi'

meaning of Saudi Arabia keeps moving on her projects and executing her plans and policies, and the Shiites, Sufis and Muslim Brotherhood are nothing but dogs barking at the sky. Moreover, an important notion in the publication is the classification of people depending on their attitudes towards Saudi Arabia. Those with Saudi Arabia are *Muwahideen* (Salafis); those who are against Saudi Arabia belong to Islamic groupings with deviated beliefs and ideologies.

Thus, Saudi Arabia is presented positively and those 'opposing Islamic groupings' negatively. This is an ideological discursive representation, and publishing such a discourse on his Facebook, the participant is supporting the content. He is, thereby, expressing his allegiance to Saudi Arabia implicitly and aligning himself within Salafis and Muwahideen. Along the same vein in the publication in Figure 6, allegiance to Saudi Arabia is discursively set as a basic principle that differentiates Salafis from other Islamic groupings. The two sample publications introduced in this section are typical of the discursive strategies and techniques used by the Salafis in the study to construct their allegiance discourse.

CONCLUSION :

The findings of this research revealed that the Salafis in this study employed the religio-political ideological discourse on Facebook to identify and align themselves within Salafism and dis-identify from other Islamic groupings, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood. This was systematically achieved through the use of different strategies, and two lines of ideology emerged: opposing and allegiance discourse. Applying Van Djik's ideology square model, these two types are a reflection of the *'Us vs. Them'* dichotomy: the *'Us' ideology* is expressed positively and promoted while the *'Them' Ideology* is expressed negatively and underestimated. Thus, the Salafi identity was presented and expressed on Facebook via the ideological discourse. In addition to the modern techniques of multimodal content-generation, the Salafis employed an innovative technique: the lexical modification of official terms of their opponents – a technique that has not been documented prior to this work (to my knowledge). Indeed, social media discourse is rich of such innovative discursive techniques, which are intriguing for researchers in CDA, discourse analysis and language studies in general.

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