A Preliminary Study on the "Islamic State" Thought in Modern Islamism

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Abstract: *As a significant idea in the ideology of modern Islamism, the terminology of "Islamic State" has strict political meanings beyond its cultural meanings. The formation and development of the "Islamic State" thought are closely linked to the reality of the environment and situation changes in the Muslim world, which gives it the characteristics of stability and change. As an important political role in the Middle East, modern Islamist forces' ambition and efforts to establish an "Islamic State" has a major effect on regional and even global situations over a long period of time. Thus, understanding the "Islamic State" thought and its theoretical and realistic dilemmas will be an indispensable step to understand conditions in the Middle East.*

Key Words: *"Islamic State"; Islamism; Islamic Sharia Law; Middle East Upheaval*

I. Introduction

With the continuous deterioration and fermentation of the upheaval in the Middle East since 2010, Islamic extremist forces have sprung up in the region, which caused a great threat to the regional and global security. On June 30, 2014, Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq announced the establishment of an "Islamic state" (IS), trying to recall the golden age of Islamic civilization of the Arab

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Empire of Abbasid in the medieval ages. It is not difficult to find that establishing an "Islamic State" is the shared goal in the political vision of modern Islamists. In guise of a response, a century after the *Sykes Picot Agreement* signed by Britain and France in 1916, they try to establish the "Islamic state" intending to break the Middle East's national territories and boundaries drawn by Britain and France since the Great War, so as to challenge the international political order based on the nation-state idea. It can be found that in the vision of the Islamists, the idea of an "Islamic State" contains special political meanings. Most of us are accustomed to thinking that "Islamic State" meant a state which regards Islam as its official religion and the majority of its residents believing in it. However, the fact is far more than it.

Facing the turbulence and disorder of the international order, such as the turbulence in the Middle East, it is useful to clarify the theory of the "Islamic State" in Modern Islamism and further understand and comment on the modern Islamist forces comprehensively and objectively from the ideological level. Also, it could help us to predict the future and the trend of relevant situations' developments and provide a new reference for governance in this region.

"Islamic State" thought is essentially encompasses important political ideas in modern Islamism；hence, it has an impact on Islamists' policies and actions when the principled or causal beliefs they embody provide road maps that increase actors' clarity about goals or ends-means relationships. Generally, ideas are divided into three types: First, *worldviews* that define the universe of possibilities for action such as rationality, sovereignty, privacy; Second, *principled beliefs* that consist of normative ideas and criteria for distinguishing right or wrong, and just or unjust; Third, *causal beliefs* that decide cause-effect relationships and typically come from authorities based on a set of shared beliefs strategies for the attainment of goals (Goldstein, J. & Keohane, R.,

1993: 3-5).

Keeping up with this, the article endeavors to analyze the "Islamic State" thought from the three levels above. In this regard, this paper firstly spells out the origin of "Islamic State" thought with a special focus on its development literally and historically. Furthermore, it throws light on the modern evolution of this thought through analyzing the thought of Islamist theorists, along with that we shall summarize the common key characteristics between them regarding the "Islamic State". Finally, it analyzes the theoretical and realistic dilemmas of the establishment of the "Islamic State".

II. The Origins of the "Islamic State" Thought: Literally and Historically

The word "state" in the Arabic is written as "*Dawlah*" (دولة), which in its root D-W-L literally means "Circulation". According to Mohamed Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī's *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāẓ al-Qur'ān al-Karīm (The Quran-Words Indexing Dictionary)*, "*Dawlah*" appeared twice in the holy *Quran* in the form of "*Dulatan*" (al-Bāqī, M., 1994: 577), the first being, "These are battle-days We alternate (*Dulatan*) among mankind, that God may know those who truly believe and may receive some of you as martyrs - God loves not those who do wrong - and that God may put the believers to the rest, and overwhelm the blasphemers" (3:140);[1] And the second declares, "Whatever God grants His Messenger in booty from the people of the towns belongs to God and His Messenger, and also to kinsmen, the orphans, the poor and the needy wayfarer, in order that wealth does not circulate (*Dulatan*) solely among those of you who are rich" (59:7).[2] And according to the textual research of the Syrian scholar Rowe Safi, the word "*Dulatan*" was

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[1] *The Qur'an*, translated by Tarif Khalidi, Penguin Books, 2009, p.55.
[2] Ibid., p.455.

used to describe the circulation of fortune and property, it didn't have a clear political connotation at its very beginning. While describing the territory under the rule of Islam, early Muslim scholars there were often using words such as *Dar al-Islam* which literally means "the house or abode of Islam", or *al-Amsār* which means "the territory", and other similar cultural geographic or geopolitical terminologies (Safi, R., 1998: 117).

From a historical perspective, the Arabian Peninsula was then dominated by tribalism in politics before the birth of Islam, and there were no clear ideas about state or government. At that time, due to the significant geographic position in the Arabian Hejaz and the religious benefits deriving from the holy Kaaba (the House of Allah), Mecca had become a thriving merchant city and its tribe, the Quraysh, had become rich by trading in the surrounding countries, but in the aggressive stampede for wealth some of the old tribal values had been lost. Instead of looking after the weaker members of the tribe, as the nomadic code prescribed, the Quraysh were intent on making money at the expense of some of the tribe's poorer family groupings or clans. The Prophet Mohammad had been long worried by the injustice which he perceived might lead to a crisis in his city, and the holy *Quran* believed that the desire to chase wealth is the incubator of Mecca's social evil and the reliance on wealth is the cause of moral turpitude, so it condemned those Mecca nobles, "No indeed! You do not honour the orphan, nor urge one another to feed the poor. You consume an inheritance to the last mouthful, and you love wealth with a love inordinate (89:17-20)",[①] and announced that they were apostates, because they thought that they can do anything relying on their wealth but not praying to God (Jin, Y., 2006: 44).

In a sense, Prophet Muhammad's preaching and migration

[①] *The Qur'an*, translated by Tarif Khalidi, Penguin Books, London, 2009, p.510.

was executing also in order to realize the social justice and to prevent wealth being held only by the rich (*Dulatan*) (59:7), and to "know those who truly believe and may receive some of you as martyrs (3: 140)", in order to break the tribalism's ills and realize fair distribution of social wealth. However, after further research of narrated material, some Arab historians insist that wealth circulation (*Dulatan*) is a political concept since the very beginning, for Mohammed had explicitly expressed the wish "to encroach on the treasure of Persia and the Roman Empire's reservoirs, and transfer wealth from the two Empires to the Arabs" (al-Jābiri, M., 1990: 60).

After the death of the Prophet, with the Arab Empire's continuous territorial expansion and political system construction, Arabs became the rulers of West Asia and North Africa, so the *Dulatan* of wealth and *Dulatan* of power gradually transformed toward the tendency of consistency and homogeneity. The word "*Dulatan*" was given the political meaning by Muslim scholars in the form of "*Dawlah*", and gradually evolved to mean a political entity and actually was used to describe the dynasty as such (Martin, R., 2004: 174). At the same time, the word also emphasized the political legitimacy in the regime or the dynasty change, especially in the middle of the eighth century when the Abbasid revolution announced itself opening a new "*Dawlah*" (new circulation) different from the blasphemous Umayyad Empire (Jin, Y., 2006: 125).

At the beginning of the 9th century, the political division of the Abbasid Empire resulted in the advent of Turkish and Kurdish governors who claimed to be Amirs and Sultans and the hands of Caliphs under the nominal authority of the future Abbasid Caliphs (Crone, P., 2004: 146). These governors gave themselves political titles like *Mu'iz al-Dawlah*, meaning "state supporter" and *Nasir al-Dawlah*, meaning "state aid" and *Sayf al-Dawlah*, meaning "state sword", using the name of "*Dawlah*" to enhance their

political legitimacy (Crone, P., 2004: 149), which embodied the importance of the word in Arab political narratives.

But what needs to be pointed out and clarified is that although the "*Dawlah*" began to be frequently mentioned by Muslim scholars, it still lacked a clear definition and it was not the same as the nation-state idea and the sovereignty of people which are becoming popular in the modern international system, in spite of the political connotation of this word. The monarch and the military were still the core in the medieval Arabs' power structure to maintain the rule of a vast empire. The medieval Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun's use of "*Dawlah*" signified that "a state exists only insofar as it is held together and ruled by individuals and the group which they constitute, that is, the dynasty. When the dynasty disappears, the state, being identical with it, also comes to an end" (Khaldun, I., 2013: 69). In addition, using geopolitical dichotomy words like *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* (the house or abode of war) to describe the ancient traditional Islamic international system also showed that as a political entity, "*Dawlah*" lacked clear boundaries and boundary consciousness, and it was actually a relatively ambiguous political idea.

III. The Modern Evolution of the "Islamic State" Thought

With the capital export and the global evolution of the nation-state system of Western countries in the 19th century, the traditional Islamic political theories and the "*Ummah*" (Islamic Religious Community) began to face serious challenges. To secure its territorial integrity against nationalist movements from aggressive powers within and outside of the empire, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II inaugurated the *Tanzimat* (Regulations) reform movement (1839-1876), in which the "*Dawlah*" started progressively to lose its initial characteristics and become

increasingly disentangled from its more personalist connotations of the Amir or the Sultan, influenced by the inevitable accompanying nationalism and nation-state ideas spreading in the Muslim world. Most Muslim scholars even view this word the same as "state" in Western political discourse. Thus, the Tunisian Constitution promulgated in 1861 was known in Arabic as "*Ganun al-Dawlah*" (National Law). It was the first time that the "*Dawlah*" was used to refer to Tunisia as a state (Martin, R., 2004: 174).

Theoretically, earliest modern Islamist theorists, represented by Egyptian scholar Refaa' Tahtawi's reform and Ottoman reformer Kheir al-Din al-Tunisi, opened the exploration of "state" theory in Islamic reformism in the mid-19th century. They insisted that Islam was just as rational as any Western system and the reason why the "*Ummah*" lagged behind the Western world was due to the defects of the political system rather than the social and cultural institutional shortcomings (Belkeziz, A., 2015: 19), and there were no fundamental contradictions between modern Western political system and the political system of medieval Islam. Their common goal was to achieve political justice for "justice is the foundation of all civilizations" (Belkeziz, A., 2015: 29). Therefore, Refaa' Tahtawi and Kheir al-Din al-Tunisi's emphasis on the justice of "*Dawlah*" and "state" led them to support the Westernized reform in the Ottoman Empire's political system. They believed that the Western states' system was equally applicable to the unity of the Islamic "*Ummah*", thus, they firmly supported the reform movement launched by the Ottoman Empire (1839-1876) and maintained the rule of the Ottoman Turks. But they did not clarify the status of "state" in Islamic Sharia law; instead, they just called that the "'state' is pro '*Ummah*' interests" and "it is an obligation in line with Islamic Sharia law" (Belkeziz, A., 2015: 38).

The structural crisis of the Ottoman Empire and its defeat in the Russo-Turkish War in 1877 made the reform movement end

with limited success, Sultan Hamid II began to employ the discourse of pan-Islamism and then succeeded in gaining the recognition and support of the innovative Islamic theorist al-Afghani, who believed that there were reasons and conditions for recreating Muslims' unity, and the base was Muslims' common religious faith of Islam, for the religious tie between Muslims was beyond the differences of human skin colors, languages, races and ethnicity (Chen, J., 1998: 100). Hamid II's use of the pan-Islamism discourse to maintain Ottoman rule compelled al-Afghani to call for the establishment of a powerful caliphate, objecting to the nationalism and coping with its challenges for Islam, but, actually, he utilized the nation state theory and nationalism as his mobilizing discourse to fight against the West's colonial rule on the Muslim world territory. So al-Afghani's efforts were aiming at maintaining the unity and integrity of the "*Ummah*" rather than the Ottoman regime's rule.

After the Great War, the territorial division of the Ottoman Empire through the *Sykes Picot Agreement* and the Kemalist revolution to end the Ottoman caliphate caused the bankruptcy of Islamic reformism and the disintegration of the "*Ummah*" entity in 1924. The collapse of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 provoked vigorous debates among Muslim thinkers. To fill the gap of Islamic ideology and political theory under the absence of caliphate, Rashid Rida proposed the "Islamic state" in his book *al-Khilafa wa al-Imama al-'Uzma* (The Caliphate and the Greater Imamate), emphasizing the implementation of the Sharia and the implementation of Islamic "consultation" system and the reflection of Ulama's leading role in political life. To establish the "Islamic State" was far better than the efforts to constructing the unrealistic caliphate that had become illusory with the development of history.

It is worth noting that Rashid Rida was also influenced by Arab nationalism because of his teachers, al-Afghani and

Muhammad Abduh's stance, so his theory of the "Islamic State" did not directly challenge the theory of nationalism. For his psychological wandering and confusion to the historical environment, he became the representative of the Islamists for proposing the "Islamic State" theory, but he was also advocating Arab nationalism. To some extent, Rida's contradictory attitude also became the common psychological reflex of the confused Muslims of the time (Liu, Z., 2011: 12).

On the bases of Rashid Rida, Pakistan's modern Islamist theoretician Sayyid Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi had considered aspects of modern life reflecting Muslim imitation of the West, as comparable to the modern *Jahiliyyah*, or the modern ignorance to which the decline of the "*Ummah*", the Muslim world and the erosion of Islamic values should be attributed. So, in order to break the external *Jahiliyyah*, concepts such as nation state, secularism, sovereignty of the people and all other non-Islamic values should be abandoned. Al-Mawdudi believed that only by establishing the "Islamic State" in its true sense could the modern *Jahiliyyah* be avoided, and the "Islamic State" aims to establish and govern the country according to the fundamental political principles in the Holy *Quran* and Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah, as well as to realize Allah's absolute sovereignty over the world.

On the same lines, inheriting al-Mawdudi's theory of the modern *Jahiliyyah*, the principal ideologue of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb asserted that the world consisted of two cultures, Islam and *Jahiliyyah*, which included both the West and the atheistic communist world. For Qutb, the only antidote to Jahiliyyah was *al-Hakimiyah*, that is, adherence to the belief that governance, legislation, and sovereignty belong only to Allah. In his famous work *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones), Qutb argued that jihad (holy war), entailing armed struggle, not just peaceful preaching or simple education tool, is necessary to fight against infidels and overturn the corrupt state in Muslim societies (the

modern *Jahiliyyah*), and establish a true Islamic state based on Allah's laws.

After World War II, inspired by the national liberation movement, nationalism, represented by Egyptian Nasserism, became the mainstream among Arab people while modern Islamist discourse declined. Within the Arab camp, to face the influence of the left-wing nationalist secular thoughts, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia secretly supported modern Islamists and spread Salafist Wahhabism in the world, and then welcomed a great number of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members that fled the regime's pressures and persecutions; as a result, Sayyid Qutb's methodology of Jihad and the Salafist Wahhabism doctrines combined in Saudi Arabia.

In the third Middle East War in 1967, Arabs' fiasco marked the bankruptcy of Arab nationalism, seen in the *Camp David Agreement* signed between Egypt and Israel and then the gradual structural imbalances between Arab and Israel. Influenced by the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, the outbreak of the war in Afghanistan, the first Gulf War and the establishment of US absolute hegemony in the Middle East, the ideological vacuum served as the incubator for the rise of modern Islamist discourse. Al-Qaeda, rose during the war in Afghanistan and shocked the world with the 9/11 attacks in 2001, considering the establishment of an "Islamic State" as its long-term pursuit.

After 9/11, the branch of Al-Qaeda in Iraq took advantage of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq and the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011 to seized territory in Iraq and Syria. On June 30, 2014, after sweeping through large swaths of north-western Iraq and eastern Syria, it announced the establishment of the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" (IS), trying to erase the boundaries between states in the region and remodel golden Arab history according to historical territory of the Abbasid caliphate. Actually, the "Islamic State" views its caliphate as having existed since 2006,

when it first declared an Islamic state in Iraq (ISI). More important, however, what distinguishes it from Al-Qaeda and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is that, ideologically, the "Islamic State" subscribes to "Salafist Jihadism", its intent to establish the "Islamic State" becomes more obvious and its desire to carry out the Islamic Sharia law is more urgent, so the violent means it applies becomes more extreme and seemingly limitless, which is evident in its official journal *Dabiq*:

"The flag of Khilāfah will rise over Makkah and al-Madīnah, even if the apostates and hypo- crites despise such. The flag of Khilāfah will rise over Baytul-Maqdis and Rome, even if the Jews and Crusaders despise such. The shade of this blessed flag will expand until it covers all eastern and western extents of the Earth, filling the world with the truth and justice of Islam and putting an end to the falsehood and tyranny of jāhiliyyah, even if America and its coalition despise such... " (*Dabiq*)·

On the other hand, in the camp of Shi'a, Ayatollah Khomeini is credited with infusing the doctrine of *Wilāyat al-Faqih*, or the guardianship of the jurist, into modern Islamic government in Iran. In a series of lectures delivered in Najaf in 1969, under the title of *"al-Hukuma al-Islamiya wa Wilāyat al-Faqih"* (The Islamic Government and the Guardianship of the Jurists), Khomeini presented the main tenets of his thoughts on state. For him, Islam necessitated the establishment of an Islamic State or an Islamic government to uphold the principles and the Islamic Sharia law and implement its injunctions. As the most knowledgeable about the Islamic Sharia law and as representatives of the imam, the *faqih* should play a major role in this government. Since the *faqih* is the source of imitation and serves as imam in religious matters, he can assume his worldly authority and preside over an Islamic government. Following the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the 1979 Constitution of the Islamic Republic carved a prominent role for the *faqih* and entrusted Khomeini to be the supreme leader with overseeing the general policies of the

republic.

In summary, in the eyes of modern Islamic theorists, the "Islamic State" is not only a cultural ideal which regards Islam as the state religion and where the majority of residents believe in Islam, but also contains a considerable political connotation. The common characteristics between them include："in the aspect of political identity, they objected to national identity and advocated religious identity; in the aspect of national power, they refused the secular national sovereignty and advocated the God's sovereignty; in the aspect of the relations between politics and religion, they opposed the separation of politics and religion and claimed to establish the 'Islamic State'; in the aspect of democracy issue, they objected to tyranny and despotism and advocated Islamic democracy based on the principle of 'consultation'" (Liu, Z., 2011: 18). But the focus and methodology of the "Islamic State" are different from one another between these modern Islamist theorists.

IV. The Theoretical and Practical Dilemmas of the "Islamic State" Thought

Regardless of how the "Islamic State" thought itself as being strict and critical, this does not mean that they displace rationality and self-interest, so the role of this thought in causing Islamists' behavior must be investigated empirically. Keeping with this, this part is more concerned with these thoughts' effects and modifications in the reality.

Moving beyond its origins and historical evolution, if the "Islamic State", in the eyes of the Islamists, is the ideal political model to uphold the Islamic values and principles, why has it not been totally established yet? Therefore, the most emergent question that caused the extensive debate among scholars and even among the Islamists themselves, is to which extent could the

"Islamic State" be realized, and how?

Syrian scholar Rowe Safi pointed out that the idea of the "Islamic State" is difficult to define and implement, for the formulations of modern Arab scholars' theory of "state" were influenced, to a large extent, by classical Islamic theory, modern Western political theory, and developments in Muslim world (Safi, R., 1998: 117). More importantly, however, the "Islamic State" thought, as a theory constructed to deal with the dilemma of the reality, its operability has caused vigorous debate and also been questioned by researchers. Modern Islamists insist that Muslims are supposed to look to the "pure and pious Islamic Salafs (ancestors)", who refer to the Prophet Muhammad, the four rightly guided caliphs and three generations of his companions primarily, for guidance. Therefore, the ideal-typical "Islamic State" should go back to the Medina State led by the Prophet Muhammad. However, some Arab historians questioned that the state led by Muhammad in fact is a tribal political union condensed around a charismatic leader but not the consequence of institutionalization of a state with a model for later generations to follow, to imitate (al-Jābiri, M., 1990: 60).

In this regard, the Moroccan famous thinker Mohammad Abid al-Jābiri defined three elements in his book *al-'aql al-Siyasiy al-'arabi* (The Arab's Political Thinking) to analyze the process from the Prophet Muhammad's preaching at the very beginning to his establishment of the Medina State. The three elements are respectively, "tribe", "religious belief" and "war trophies". For al-Jābiri, the "tribe" is the social basis of the Arab societies and it is difficult to be integrated, therefore, the "tribe" needs the Islamic "religious belief" as a political discourse, on the spiritual level, to provide an effective ideological mobilization to unite the opposing tribes. And the "war trophies" provide a realistic material guarantee and vigorous resource to maintain the stability of the Arab societies based on "tribe". Therefore, the existence of a

so-called "Islamic State" actually depends on keeping the three elements above unified (al-Jabiri, M., 1990: 205).

Accordingly, it is difficult to provide an objective and reasonable explanation to understand the "Islamic State" thought simply through religious or ideological element, which also makes it difficult to give an objective and reasonable interpretation to understand the actual decisions and behaviors of modern Islamist forces in the real world.

As an example, "Islamic State's" development and growth process reflect the characteristics of its realism and flexibility to a high degree. The Islamic State group presents itself as the representative of authentic Islam and advocates an ultra-strict reading and compliance of the religious texts; but in its actual operation, its interpretation of the religious texts is selective and multifaceted in order to ensure the group's stability and self-sufficiency of fiscal revenue, and to improve the economic capacity of the group. The "Islamic State" relies not only on the jihadists who firmly support its stance, but also jihadists who do not actually support the group ideologically. Some of its officers and soldiers fight for salaries or are driven by other realistic considerations, contrary to the Islamic belief. According to some Sunni tribal sources, hard-core ideologues represent only 10 percent of the group's total fighting force (al-Dulaymi, Z., 2014: June 6). But, this is helpful to maintain vitality and competitiveness of the group (Fromson, J. & Simon, S., 2015: 10).

On the other hand, the factor of the tribal structure within the "Islamic State's" territory should not be ignored or neglected although its ability to play the religious and sectarian card has served it well in facing the increasing military pressure. To some extent, the group keeps an ungainly loose Sunni union of ex-Ba'athists, tribesmen, nationalist insurgents and frustrated youth in its orbit (Fromson, J. & Simon, S., 2015: 18), and the relationship between them is no longer a mere marriage of

convenience. For example, the group has provided fuel subsidies to convince important tribes to submit to its control, and has used cash to bribe tribal leaders to the same effect (Rogin, J., 2014: July 10). Thus, as al-Jābiri emphasized, the so-called "Islamic State's" stability may be challenged by the factor of "tribe" if these tribes feel there is no more material possibility for them in fighting with the former.

As mentioned above, some modern Islamists advocate clerics' major role and their strict explanation, compliance and imitation of the holy *Quran* and the prophetic Sunnah in governing the "Islamic State", objecting to using individual rationality to rule the state, which also to a large extent becomes a huge realistic obstacle to their actual operation and action. In this regard, Abdullah Ben Mohammad, a theorist from Al-Qaeda, admitted that "as long as the clerics still take control of our organization (group), our military advantages can never be transformed into actual political capital" (Mohammad, A., 2015: April 17). More sharply, professor Firās Sawāh, a Syrian historian, pointed out during an interview I conducted with him, "Whenever the Islamists try their best to copy the texts and imitate the Salafs, realistic demands often force them to kick off the texts and move in the opposite direction of the Salafs."[1]

The reality is that in order to present themselves as the only representative of authentic Islam, as practiced by the early generations of Muslims, Salafists have to use a highly flexible interpretation (*ijtihad*) to overturn history and then construct their absolute religious legitimacy. As the American expert on Salafism Bernard Haykel pointed out, Salafism jihadists use literalism, but by no means do they use textualism (Haykel, B., 2009: 46). As a result, how to completely embody and implement the "Islamic State" idea into reality is a real predicament that the thought itself

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[1] Interview with Firās Sawāh was conducted on June 15, 2016.

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Actually, in order to meet the needs of realistic and democratic politics, some theorists in many former radical political Islamic movements also continue to dilute their ideological stance of the "Islamic State". Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the Tunisian Islamic Ennahdha Movement Party and the Moroccan Justice and Development Party are typical representatives of this trend. Taking the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as an example, its founder Hassan al-Banna stressed the necessity of establishing an "Islamic Caliphate State" or an "Islamic State" (Moosa, E. & Tareen, S., 2015: 212). However, under the influence and stress of Egyptian political changes and the younger generations' left-wing political thought inside the Muslim Brotherhood, the group's famous theorist Yusuf al-Qaradawi proposed the concept of "the civil state based on Islamic principles", which has been recognized later in the Muslim Brotherhood's draft program enacted in 2007, and then eventually appeared in the Freedom and Justice Party's statement 2011 (Tadors, M., 2012: 47). The first chapter in the Constitution of Freedom and Justice Party also clearly stipulates that the so-called "Islamic State" "in the essence is a civil state", "it is not a theocratic state ruled by clerics" (al-Qaradawi, Y., 1997: 52).

Shi'a doctrine of *Wilāyat al-Faqih* also shows a high flexibility and reflects the Western political values. After the 1979 Islamic revolution, for instance, the new Iranian constitution not only ensured the control of religious authorities over political processes, but also adopted modern Western structures of government and the system of checks and balances.

Conclusion

Through a brief review of the historical evolution of the "Islamic State" thought, it can be found that although the "Islamic

State" thought is different from the Western nation-state theory, it does not constitute a monolithic block. It continues to practise, evolve and develop along with the characteristics of the new currents, showing characteristics of coexistence of stability and change. This kind of stability is reflected in the protection and unremitting pursuit for Islamic values by modern Islamists. At the same time, influenced by Western theories, in order to adapt to the *realpolitik*, the thought has also been gradually re-interpreted and weakened.

As the carrier of the "*Ummah*" in Muslim traditional political thought, the "Islamic State" will still maintain its vitality and influence, and continue to influence the development of the Islamic world. In fact, in spite of the collapse of the Ottoman caliphate in the beginning of the last century and the extremist organization's self-declaration of establishing the "Islamic State", the recall for the "Islamic State" is essentially a realistic rebound to the extreme imbalance of social structure and regional order with poverty and backwardness in the Middle East. "Islamic State" group's extremism is over-simplistic. Its extremism is the product of a hybridization of doctrinaire Salafism and other Islamist currents.

Indeed, we need to advocate rationalism and promote moderate Islamic values to response to the ideological upheaval in the Middle East. However, more importantly, how to effectively achieve social development and change the status of the structural imbalance in the region, is the key for nations and the international community to eliminate the incubator of extremist thought and terrorism in the Middle East.

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