

# **The Attractions of Jihadism**

## **An Identity Approach to Three Danish Terrorism Cases and the Gallery of Characters around Them**

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# Part 1



# Chapter 1: Introduction

“Jihadism is the largest violent utopian, anti-Western, and anti-democratic movement in the world” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:1)

Jihadism – which is also referred to as militant Islamism, Islamic militancy, al-Qaida-inspired terrorism, Islamic terrorism, radical Islamism, radical Islam, extreme Islam, Militant Islam, etcetera – has attracted much attention in recent years and is occasionally identified as the main threat to security today. On 3 September 2010 former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair argued that:

“After the September the 11<sup>th</sup> – rightly or wrongly – I felt the calculus of risk had changed. And I feel it is still changed. I still think there is the most enormous threat from the combination of this radical extreme movement and the fact that, if they could, they would use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons” (Blair, 2010)

Much has been said and written about Jihadism and the main contribution of the present dissertation is it is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Denmark which stretched over more than two years and included the narratives of participants who have been convicted of planning terrorism as well as of participants who have not been in trouble with the authorities.

Over the course of five terrorism trials which I attended as part of this fieldwork it became evident that the individuals who had ended up on trial and some of their acquaintances perceived themselves as parts of something which most other individuals were not a part of. These individuals perceived themselves as sharing something – something which included worldviews, norms, dress codes, language and insights. They perceived themselves as parts of a ‘shared we’.

This ‘shared we’ and the attractiveness of it is what ties together the present dissertation and the aim is to attempt to grasp it and shed some light on it. I argue that this ‘shared we’ can best be understood as a counterculture. A counterculture within which there are diverging analyses of what should – and could – be done. Some individuals and groups within it believe the best one can hope for is to pave the way for change by setting a good example via one’s own behaviour. Others have

abandoned the hope that status quo can be changed for anybody other than themselves and have resigned to distancing themselves from surrounding society to protect their own purity. Yet others have confidence in education as the answer and therefore engage themselves in developing and disseminating material which explains their points of view, they engage themselves in demonstrations to invoke the attention of surrounding society or perhaps engage themselves in activities to attract the attention of the media. Others believe only through violent means can anything really be changed. Yet others engage themselves in collecting money and other resources for the individuals and groups who engage in the abovementioned activities or simply support them in words.

## Research Questions

A puzzle identified by Wiktorowicz captures what guided my research:

”This makes the attraction of radical Islam in the West much more perplexing. These movements not only face considerable constraints from law enforcement and new antiterrorism legislation, but they also operate in hostile Muslim communities determined to marginalize the radical fringe and eliminate the appeal of militancy – hardly an auspicious recruiting ground. The fact that these groups require that activists assume high costs and risks for the cause makes the decision to participate seem irrational. Yet some individuals defy authorities, confront their own communities, and willingly assume risk”  
(Wiktorowicz, 2005:4)

In my view the question which had to be posed to shed light on this puzzle was: ‘what is in it – what are the attractions that outweigh these costs and risks?’ Under this overall question I formulated two more defined research questions:

- Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?
- What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?

The dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part sets the scene by introducing the theories and methods upon which I have relied in chapter 2. In chapter 3 *The Three Cases* the three terrorism cases and the outcomes of the trials I have attended are introduced. The three cases are the Glostrup-case, the Glasvej-case and the SÜ-case. The trends and debates in the existing literature to which the present dissertation contributes are introduced in chapter 4.

The second part of the dissertation consists of the four chapters in which I present and analyze the empirical data and the conclusions. In the four chapters I subject the material to different analyses and draw on different theories.

In chapter 5 *Counterculture* I combine Kaplan & Lööw (2002) with Roszak (1995) and analyze contemporary Jihadism in the West as a counterculture which interacts with mainstream society and with a broader under-wood of society which questions the majority's definition of normality. In this chapter the first research question "Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?" is explored and I show that there is more to contemporary Jihadism in the West than violence and terrorism. It is also a counterculture which attracts individuals who use it for different purposes. As a consequence contemporary Jihadism in the West is not only a phenomenon related to terrorism and violence but also a phenomenon related to identity and to social mechanisms. The second research question "What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?" is also explored in this chapter drawing on a combination of theories on identity: Jenkins (1997), Baumann & Gingrich (2004), Jackson (2002) and Honneth (1995).

It is argued that three *types of attractions* can be identified: *individual attractions*, *context dependent attractions* and attractions which are *specific* to the Jihadism counterculture.

Four archetypes of *individual attractions* which motivate individuals to look up the Jihadism counterculture are identified:

- Action
- Social belonging
- Intellectual challenges
- Being counter

Because individuals look up the Jihadism counterculture in their search for different rewards the counterculture serves different purposes. As a consequence individuals *act* differently within the counterculture not because of the counterculture or its ideology but because of what the individuals are searching for.

The counterculture provides a framework which the individuals who look it up need – a framework which can transform individual motivations and needs into collective needs and a greater cause. The counterculture also provides a network where individuals can find resources – financial, intellectual, social or material. The counterculture in itself does not cause anything but it does make things possible.

It is argued that, in theory, any counterculture could hold these attractions but the Jihadism counterculture has a comparative advantage in how it is being perceived and received by its context – i.e. that it is high-profiled and treated as a threat to security. These are the *context dependent attractions*. Many of the individuals inhabiting the Jihadism counterculture would probably have inhabited another counterculture at another point in time – and some have. There are examples of individuals who have a past in left-wing and right-wing countercultures as well as in criminal settings. But at present the Jihadism counterculture is the most high-profiled. An individual who signals that he or she is part of this counterculture will not only be recognized as being against the established, find social belonging, find access to action or find intellectual challenges – he or she will also be recognized as a security threat and therefore be taken seriously. The third type of attractions – the attractions which are *specific* to the Jihadism counterculture – are explored in chapter 7 *Eschatology* and chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility*.

In chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms* the question “Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?” is further explored by focussing on the violence and terrorism aspects of contemporary Jihadism in the West. The narratives of one individual who has been convicted of planning terrorism and two individuals who claim to have been actively engaged in Jihad are analyzed by drawing on Hegghammer and Lacroix’s distinction between two types of Jihadism. It is argued that the violence and terrorism aspects of contemporary Jihadism in the West must be divided into Territorialized Jihadism – which only sanctions violence in areas where there is violent conflict – and Global Jihadism which sanctions violence anywhere.

In chapter 7 *Eschatology* the question “What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?” is further explored. A series of narratives are analyzed as elements of identity and as

attractions. These are attractions which are specific to the Jihadism counterculture. In this chapter I draw on the abovementioned combination of theories on identity.

In chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility* the way credibility is attributed to sources, to others and to oneself is explored. Drawing once again on the combination of theories of identity I analyze how this too is part of identity and serves as an attraction which is specific to the Jihadism counterculture.

The present dissertation thus not only sheds light on violence and terrorism but also on other aspects of contemporary Jihadism in the West.

Certain facts and quotes are subjected to different analyses in the respective chapters. To make reading easier I have opted for providing these facts and quotes every time I use them. This implies that there are some repetitions which may seem tedious but I prefer such repetitions to referring to previous chapters which interrupts the process of reading.

## Concepts

### Jihadism

Conceptualization of the object of study in the present dissertation is a continuous challenge. As indicated above it is conceptualized in a number of ways but I have opted for *contemporary Jihadism in the West*. There are several reasons why.

The concepts *Jihadism* and *Jihadi* are used by some informants – interchangeably with *Mujahid* and *Mujahideen* – when they conceptualize themselves. Others refer to themselves as *Ahl us-Sunnah* and as *Salafi*.

The concepts *Mujahid* and *Mujahideen* are classical Islamic concepts. They are also established Arabic words which simply mean those who perform *Jihad* and they do not capture the particularities of the phenomena at hand. The concept *Ahl us-Sunnah* (people of the Sunnah) is also a classical concept which simply means those who live by the *Sunnah* (the practices of the Prophet). This concept therefore does not capture the particularities of the phenomena at hand either. In a similar way, the concept *Salafi* is much too broad and simply refers to those who imitate the *Salaf as-Salih* (the pious predecessors) who were the companions of the Prophet, the followers of those and their followers – i.e. the first three generations of Muslims. These concepts are all used about a much broader range of phenomena than the ones dealt with in this dissertation and were therefore discarded. This leaves *Jihadism* which is surely not a concept which can be used without problems

either. *Jihad* in itself is a classical Islamic concept which is derived from the verb *jahada* which translates into “to strive” or “to endeavour” (Wehr, 1990) and which covers a variety of actions and intentions including striving to become a better person, striving to excel in life, striving to help others – which are part of the *Greater Jihad* – and then striving to defend Islam by violent means – which is the *Lesser Jihad*. Violent means are therefore in no way an integral part of the concept Jihad.

In spite of these challenges I have opted for using the concept *Jihadism*. This is because the concept and the suffix “ism” connote exactly what I wish to capture: individuals who regard engagement in the Lesser Jihad – i.e. violent defence of Islam – as a central aspect of their lives and of being practising Muslims. The ism-suffix connotes that this is an *interpretation* of Jihad and therefore in no way can be viewed as the true meaning of Jihad. One informant captured the essence of Jihadism in his testimony:

“A ‘carton’ is a mujahid who wants to engage in combat but has not yet been in action” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, 2 June 2009, my translation)

I use the term Jihadism when writing about the phenomenon, whereas the term Jihadist is used as an adjective – e.g. the Jihadist organization – and the term Jihadi is used as a noun to describe an individual who perceives him or herself as practising Jihadism.

### **Terrorism, Terrorists and Radicalization**

Here, I shall not enter the discussions about whether and how *terrorism* and *terrorists* can be defined (For more on this see, e.g.: Schmid & Jongman, 1988; 2005; Zulaika & Douglas, 1996; Brunner, Conze & Koselleck, 1990) but simply note that there is no commonly accepted definition and they should therefore be used with caution.

As a consequence of the lack of a commonly accepted definition of terrorism who and what is categorized as terrorists and as terrorism varies. One example of such variations is the organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir. This organization is legal in Denmark as it is in most of Europe – even though it is frequently debated whether it should continue to be – whereas it is illegal and viewed as a terrorist organisation in most of the former USSR republics, most Arab countries and in Germany. Members of Hizb ut-Tahrir are therefore categorized as terrorists in one country and not in another.

The concepts *radical*, *radicalization* and *extremism* are as ill defined. Although they are frequently used in courtrooms as well as in media and research they are not used in a consistent manner. Sometimes they are used as alternatives to the concepts terrorism and terrorists and sometimes they are used to conceptualize something which is supposed to precede terrorism, e.g. *radicalization processes*.

One of the objectives of research is to analyze and conceptualize complex phenomena to develop and communicate meaningful theories but it is necessary to continuously assess whether a given concept is helpful or limiting. Any conceptualization of any phenomenon shapes and limits how the phenomenon can be thought of, how it can be analysed and which questions can be posed about it. Concepts which are used in an inconsistent manner in everyday language cannot easily be used in research. Even if the researcher defines how the concepts are used the concepts will still carry different connotations and these may affect research as well as communication about it.

In the following I use the concepts *terrorist*, *terrorism*, *extreme*, *radical* and *radicalization* when referring to existing literature, when quoting, and when not using them would appear forced. I do, however, not conceptualize my field, my informants or my data within this framework. Instead, I conceptualize them as *contemporary Jihadism in the West*. The West is defined as Europe, North America and Australia.



# Chapter 2: Theories and Methods

In this chapter I position the present dissertation and introduce the theories which I draw on and the methods which I rely on. As indicated in the introduction the overall question which guided my research was ‘What is in it for them?’ This overall question was translated into the two research questions ‘Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?’ and ‘What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?’ and to answer the questions I opted for conducting fieldwork. Relying on fieldwork to answer such questions is not unproblematic and I accordingly include a passage on the ethical challenges encountered.

## Positioning the present dissertation

### Moderate social constructivism

Guba and Lincoln argue that there has been a: “distinct turn of the social sciences toward more interpretive, postmodern, and critical practices and theorizing” or in other words a “non-positivist orientation” (Guba & Lincoln in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:191). The present dissertation is positioned as a part of these developments and as what could be termed ‘moderate social constructivist position’ focusing on “constructed and co-constructed realities” (Guba & Lincoln in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:193). This should not be confused with the radical social constructivism where individuals are regarded as inventing or constructing the world as they please in terms of intentionality and utilitarianism (Andersen, 2005; Collin, 1998). According to Crenshaw “to say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed is not to say that that category has no significance in our world” (Crenshaw in Fineman & Mykitiuk, 1994:112). This means that categories may be constructed but they do have consequences for individuals who are placed in them. These consequences, however, can be negotiated and are subjects to changes over time depending on context. That social reality and social categories are constructed and co-constructed thus does not mean that they are freely chosen or figments of imagination. It means that they are not stable and that they are embedded in political, economic and cultural contexts.

## Epistemology

On the epistemological level, I follow the constructivist position defining knowledge as always historically and socially mediated and constructed.

‘Meaning’ and ‘truth’ are temporary products of ongoing struggles over what counts as legitimate knowledge and as research (Guba & Lincoln in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). There is no definite or objective truth to which the researcher can gain privileged access providing that he or she employs the correct means and objective procedures – there is no “Cartesian mirror of the mind” (Smith & Hodkinson in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:916) through which the committed researcher can gain access to the informants’ hidden thoughts, intentions or motivations.

This is particularly important considering the themes of this dissertation and the way in which data was generated. Parts of the data were generated by attending trials and documenting the testimonies given. There is no doubt that the testimonies given by defendants were not intended to provide a ‘true’ account but rather to provide an account that would ensure acquittal. But, following the line of thinking in Jackson (2004), it is not only testimonies given in court that are not objective truths. Any narration – or story – is affected by the narrator’s position, needs, etc. at the point in time when it is being narrated:

“In this pragmatic sense the truth or falsity of a story cannot be decided by measuring it against some outside reality, for what matters is how stories enable us to regain some purchase over the events that confound us, humble us, and leave us helpless, salvaging a sense that we have some say in the way our lives unfold [...] This is why one may no more recover the ‘original’ story than step into the same river twice. The fault is not with memory *per se*, but an effect of the transformations all experience undergoes as it is replayed, recited, reworked and reconstructed in the play of intersubjective life [...] The changing circumstances of history are, of course, critical to this process of narrative revision [...] Where, at one period or in one context or conversation, a multi-ethnic understanding of the past is accepted, in another time and

place “the subtle and complex nuances of local history” are arrogantly dismissed, and any empirical evidence that flies in the face of the newly invented tradition is seen not only as untrue but as treasonable” (Jackson, 2002:17-23, italics in original)

This implies that all the data generated should be viewed with reservations – it is not *the* truth, it is *a* truth. The data generated is a ‘snapshot’ which captures a truth at a specific point in time in its context.

This epistemological position has consequences for the validity of the research. Lather (Lather in Richardson, 2001) defines validity as: “the power to determine the demarcation between science and not-science” (Lather in Richardson, 2001:243). The positivist criterion for validity is *correspondence* between the researcher’s categorizations and the ‘objective truth’ but this is challenged by social constructivism (Lather in Richardson, 2001:244; Kvale, 1997:234-235). Since social constructivism has abandoned the notions of neutral, objective or universal knowledge the criteria for validity must be altered. Within social constructivism there is not one commonly accepted criterion for validity. Richardson and St. Pierre offer three criteria for validity which I find relevant for assessing the validity of qualitative, social constructivist studies:

“1. *Substantive contribution*. Does this piece contribute to *our understanding* of social life? [...] Does this piece seem “true” – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the “real”? [...]

3. *Reflexivity*. How has the author’s subjectivity been both a producer of and a product of this text? Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view? [...]

4. *Impact*. Does this piece affect me emotionally or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move me to write? Does it move me to try new research practices or move me to action?” (Richardson & St. Pierre in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:964, italics in original)

To these I add the criterion of *craftsmanship* (Kvale 1997:236-239) which relates to the quality and adequacy of the data production and the analytical strategy and to whether the researcher provides a persuasive and well-argued analysis.

## Theories

To organize the generation of data, analyze the data and answer the Research Questions, I relied on a complex of theories.

As mentioned in the introduction I draw on Kaplan & Lööw's *The Cultic Milieu. Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization* and on Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture. Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* to shed light on contemporary Jihadism in the West as a counterculture in chapter 5 *Counterculture*.

To shed light on the complexity of contemporary Jihadism in the West in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms* I draw on Hegghammer and Lacroix's distinction between "Classical Jihadism and Global Jihadism" in a Saudi Arabian context.

To shed light on how the informants construct identity and what the attractions of Jihadism are in chapter 5 *Counterculture*, chapter 7 *Eschatology* and chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility* I draw on Jackson's *The Politics of Storytelling*, Jenkins' *Rethinking Ethnicity*, Baumann & Gingrich's *Grammars of Identity/Alterity* and Honneth's *The Struggle for Recognition*.

## Cultic Milieus and Countercultures

I combine Kaplan and Lööw's theorizing on Cultic Milieus with Roszak's theorizing on countercultures to attempt to capture and shed light on the 'shared we' – and not least the attractiveness of it – my informants perceived themselves as parts of.

A 'cultic milieu' can be described as a broad under-wood which exists in any modern society:

“The cultic milieu can be regarded as the cultural underground of society [...] it includes all deviant belief systems and their associated practices [...] Lastly, the cultic milieu is manifestly united by a common ideology of seekership which both arises from and in turn

reinforces the consciousness of deviant status” (Kaplan & Lööw, 2002:14-15)

A cultic milieu is, in other words, something which exists at all times in literally all modern societies. It is a minority position in contrast to a majority which has the right and the power to define ‘normality’.

The cultic milieu is very much defined by being in opposition to mainstream and by seeking. The perception of self as being ‘deviant’ implies individuals who perceive themselves as different from the majority-defined culture and normality and in search of another culture and normality:

“[...] the special character of cultic groups as stemming from their deviant and heterodox position in relation to the dominant societal culture.” (Kaplan & Lööw, 2002:13)

The cultic milieu is in itself primarily a milieu where seekers meet other seekers and where seeking is acceptable and respected. It does not in itself lead to anything but it is *conducive* to what Kaplan & Lööw refer to as ‘cults’ or ‘cultic groups’ taking form in it:

“Given that cultic groups have a tendency to be ephemeral and highly unstable, it is a fact that new ones are being born just as fast as the old ones die. There is a continual process of cult formation and collapse, which parallels the high turnover of membership at the individual level. Clearly, therefore, cults must exist within a milieu which, if not conducive to the maintenance of individual cults, is clearly highly conducive to the spawning of cults in general. Such a generally supportive cultic milieu is continually giving birth to new cults, absorbing the debris of the dead ones and creating new generations of cult-prone individuals to maintain the high levels of membership turnover.” (Kaplan & Lööw, 2002:14)

But:

“The nature and problems of cultic organizations derive primarily from the fact that they attract and recruit seekers. Seekership is probably the one characteristic that all members of cultic groups have in common, and while this facilitates the formation of groups, it poses special problems for their maintenance. Seekers do not necessarily cease seeking when a revealed truth is offered to them, nor do they necessarily stop looking in other directions when one path is indicated as *the* path to the truth.” (Kaplan & Löow, 2002:18)

### **Theodore Roszak**

Roszak’s study of a counterculture – the movement born in the 1960’s which is known by several names today, including: ‘beatniks’, ‘hippies’ and ‘flower-power’ – offers an interesting addition to Kaplan and Löow.

Roszak describes the affluence in post-depression America as being essential to the birth of the movement under study. This affluence gave room for scepticism towards existing values and provided an atmosphere where everything appeared to be possible. But it also gave room for a generation of young people who viewed their parents as a “laughingstock” (Roszak, 1995:xxiii) because they had “sold their souls to General Motors” (Roszak, 1995:xxiii) and therefore some young people in this generation searched for other role models. The youth were yearning for “an entirely different quality of life” (Roszak, 1995:xxv) and questioning all aspects of contemporary culture and tradition. They were, indeed, questioning “the very sanity of that culture” (Roszak, 1995:xxvi). The counterculture which Roszak studied was characterized by a deep-felt distrust of authority and leadership and lacked organization – and it included violent extremists. Roszak’s description of the counterculture born in the 1960’s appears to resemble contemporary Jihadism in the West to some extent and his analyses appear helpful. I replace Kaplan and Löow’s concept ‘cult’ with Roszak’s concept ‘counterculture’ not only because contemporary Jihadism in the west resembles Roszak’s counterculture but also because the concept captures a central aspect of contemporary Jihadism in the West – that being ‘counter’ or being in opposition to the established is

a crucial source of credibility<sup>1</sup> and because the concept ‘cult’ is confusing in relation to my material. In everyday language ‘cult’ connotes the worshipping of a person and one of my informants in fact uses the concept to describe exactly the worshipping of a person when explaining why he broke with a specific mosque.<sup>2</sup>

These theories on cultic milieus and countercultures are combined in chapter 5 *Counterculture* to provide a framework for understanding contemporary Jihadism in the West as something which interacts with mainstream society, with a broader under-wood of society which challenges the majority’s definition of normality.

## **Classical versus Global Jihadism**

### **Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix**

Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix both work with Salafism and Jihadism in Saudi Arabia and make a distinction between Classical Jihadism and Global Jihadism which are both based on pan-Islamism:

Pan-Islamism as an ideology dates back to the late nineteenth century, and is based on the idea that all Muslims constitute one people or nation (*umma*) and should unite to face the challenges of the modern world. From the late 1970s onwards, a more alarmist and xenophobic form of pan-Islamism emerged in the Muslim world, based on the view that the *umma* is being systematically oppressed by outside forces, and that all Muslims have a responsibility to help other Muslims in need (Hegghammer, 2008:703)

Hegghammer divides Saudi Arabian Jihadism into two categories:

In the mid-1990s, however, the Saudi Jihadist movement split into two main branches: the ‘classical jihadist’

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<sup>1</sup> This is discussed and elaborated in chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility*

<sup>2</sup> See ‘The case of Hammad Khurshid’ in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms*

current and the more radical and marginal ‘global jihadist’ current. The difference between the two was, simply put, that the classical jihadists preferred to wage semi-conventional warfare in confined theatres of war, while the global jihadists were prepared to use all means in all locations (Hegghammer, 2008:706)

Lacroix elaborated on the differences between Classical and Global Jihadism in his presentation “Al-Qaida’s campaign in Saudi Arabia: Why it could have worked and why it failed” at a conference in Copenhagen<sup>3</sup> and provided an overlook. Classical Jihadism is characterized by:

- Referring to Muslim land which must be liberated from foreign occupation. This means that Classical Jihadism is territorialized and clearly remains within the framework of Jihad as being defensive
- Following the classical rules of war – e.g. by making a distinction between combatants and non-combatants
- An interpretation which is close to that of Abdallah Azzam (see for example Azzam, 1979; 1987)

Global Jihadism is characterized by:

- Not being limited by territory and therefore sanctioning attacks in non-conflict areas. A country which has troops in a Muslim land can be attacked anywhere. It can be attacked in the Muslim land, in its own territory or in places where it has interests.
- Making no distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Civilians in democracies are responsible for electing their governments and therefore responsible for actions ordered by their governments. As a consequence they can be held responsible.
- An interpretation which is close to that of Osama Bin Laden (see for example Ladin, 1998)

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<sup>3</sup> “The Jihadi Affiliates of al-Qaida” 24-25 May 2010, Danish Institute for International Studies

This theory is used to shed light on the complexity of contemporary Jihadism in the West in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms*.

## **Identity-theories**

The identity-theories I draw upon are all based on the understanding of identity as something being constructed in the encounters between ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ – group identity becomes visible in the meetings *between* groups and is, to a large degree, defined by what it is *not* – namely ‘the other’. This understanding is inspired by Barth’s<sup>4</sup> work but whereas Barth primarily focuses on the construction of the ‘own group’ in the interaction with the ‘other group’ Jenkins focuses on the groups’ competitive constructions of *each other* in these encounters – and in these power and position matters (Jenkins, 1997:53). Baumann & Gingrich add to this a framework for analyzing the different – but limited – ways in which the self and the own group is capable of constructing the other. Jackson adds to this a framework for analyzing how events and experiences are reconstructed and reconstituted in stories in the privacy of the individual’s mind or in social interaction to be able to live with the events and experiences and to construct a sense of community. Honneth adds to this a framework for analyzing how experiences of disrespect and lack of recognition affect the individual and – provided the individual encounters a group which shares these experiences and includes the individual – can motivate the individual to engage in conflict to regain a positive self-image.

## **Richard Jenkins**

Jenkins writes about ethnicity but his theorizing can be used to analyze groups which base themselves on other identities than their ethnicity. The processes involved can easily be transferred to groups which base themselves on other identities.

“First , there are processes of *internal definition*: actors signal to in- or out-group members a self-definition of their nature or identity. This can be an ego-centred, individual process or a collective, group process, although it only makes sense to talk of ethnicity in an individual sense when the identity being defined and its expressions

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<sup>4</sup> Barth, 1966; 1969

refer to a recognizable collective identity and draw upon a repertoire of culturally specified practices. Although conceptualized in the first instance as internal, these processes are necessarily transactional and social (even in the individual case) because they presuppose both an audience, without whom they make no sense, and an externally derived framework of meaning. On the other hand there are processes of *external definition*. These are other-directed processes, during which one person or set of persons defines the other(s) as ‘X’ and ‘Y’, or whatever. This may, at its most consensual, be the validation of the others’ internal definition(s) of themselves. At the conflictual end of the spectrum of possibilities, however, there is the imposition, by one set of actors upon another, of a putative name and characterization which affects in significant ways the social experience(s) of the categorized” (Jenkins, 1997:53)

Power and authority play crucial roles in the competitive constructions of ‘the self’ and ‘the other’. A majority group’s construction of ‘the other’ – the minority – has much more impact than a minority group’s construction of ‘the other’ – the majority:

“In the first place, more than an audience is involved: the others here are the object(s) of the process of definition, and implied within the situation is a meaningful intervention in their lives, an acting upon them. Thus external definition can only occur within active social relationships, however distant or at however many removes. Second, the capacity to intervene successfully in other people’s lives implies either the power or the authority to do so. The exercise of power implies competitive access to and control over resources, while

authority is, by definition, only effective when it is legitimate. Power and authority are necessarily embedded within active social relationships” (Jenkins, 1997:53)

A minority group’s identity is thus more constricted by the majority group’s construction of it than a majority group’s identity is by a minority group’s construction of it. It further implies that the identities available to any group are limited – and even more so if it is a minority group. Identity cannot be constructed out of nothing or to fit any needs – it can only be constructed in interaction with context and within the frames provided by context.

In essence a minority can either embrace the construction offered by the majority group and work within the frames offered or reject them and repeatedly fight against them. From this perspective, embracing the offered construction and working within it actually becomes the easier way – even if this is an identity which is portrayed by the majority as negative and unwanted.

### **Gerd Baumann & Andre Gingrich**

Baumann & Gingrich work with an understanding where “ identity and alterity as mutually constitutive categories of thought” (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:197) and identifies three distinct ‘grammars’ by which this can be done. The concept ‘grammar’ is defined as “Socially shared and normatively endowed classification structures” (Baumann& Gingrich, 2004:199) and can be explained as patterns via which the self and the other can be constructed. Baumann & Gingrich do not explicitly focus on power or the relationship between minority and majority but acknowledge that:

“All three of the grammars, so it must be admitted, depend upon a certain measure of violence for the privileged people to continue defining the ‘people below’ them as ‘others’” (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:42)

The first grammar is the grammar of ‘Orientalizing’ or ‘Reverse Mirror-Imaging’ which is exemplified by Edward Said’s work (Said, 1978).

The essence of this grammar is that the individual or group constructs its own identity by contrasting it to what it is not – the in-group is defined by mirroring the out-group: “Orientalizing creates self and other as negative mirror images of each other” (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:47).

This is, in other words, not simply a grammar in which the in-group is defined as good and the out-group as bad. Rather the in-group is the reverse of the out-group in positive as well as in negative terms. Baumann & Gingrich offer a diagram with examples derived from Said’s work:

<i>Self</i>	<i>Other</i>
<b>Occident Positive</b> Rational Enlightened Technological	<b>Orient Negative</b> Irrational Superstitious Backward
<b>Occident Negative</b> Calculating Sober Materialist	<b>Orient Positive</b> Spontaneous Luxuriant Mystical

(Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:20, my additions in italics)

One might add that the orientalisising grammar is most likely to be preferred or employed by the majority or the party in power. The ‘exotic’ and ‘fascinating’ other will never amount to much and will therefore never represent serious competition – as a consequence there is no need to take it serious.

The second grammar is the grammar of ‘Segmentation’ which is exemplified by Evans-Pritchard’s work (Evans-Pritchard, 1940) where “segmentation defines self and other according to a sliding scale of inclusions/exclusions” (Baumann& Gingrich, 2004:47). The grammar of segmentation, in other words, is a grammar in which ‘the other’ is not a constant other. Who ‘the other’ is and who ‘the self’ is depends entirely upon context and on who the individual or group needs to be in alliance with.

The third grammar is the grammar of ‘Encompassment’ where “encompassment defines ‘the other’ by an act of hierarchical subsumption” (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:47). This implies ‘the other’ being constructed as the same as ‘the self’ – ‘the other’ just does not realize it. ‘The other’ is therefore indulged and tolerated because ‘the other’ is unknowing and erring but not fundamentally

wrong. One might add that the encompassment grammar is most likely to be preferred and employed by a minority – similarly to the grammar of orientalising this grammar smacks of patronization and indulgence towards the simpleminded ‘other’ but where the grammar of orientalising leaves the impression of a sense of superiority in which ‘the other’ can be kept at a distance – because ‘the other’ is in minority or less powerful – the grammar of encompassment leaves the impression of a practical need to take into account ‘the other’ – because ‘the other’ is in majority or more powerful.

According to Baumann & Gingrich these three grammars are the only patterns available for constructing own identity vis-à-vis ‘the other’ and Baumann & Gingrich conclude:

“There may thus be good logical reasons why such a limited repertoire of only three grammars of identity/alterity can be offered as a useful analytical tool. Thinking of wholes and parts, of selfings and otherings, only three permutations appear to be possible: whole vs. whole (orientalization), whole as part and part as whole (segmentation), and whole as part (encompassment).”  
(Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:199)

Baumann & Gingrich, however, also identify a fourth pattern – the anti-grammar:

“Everyone knows such examples, and they are easy to find under key words such as genocide, ethnocide, political, racial or religious extermination or annihilation. Each of these spells a breakdown of all three grammars and a return to the anti-grammar of: ‘we are good, so they are bad’ with the genocidal conclusion: ‘we must live, so they must die’” (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:42)

If this anti-grammar is employed the three grammars are discarded. ‘The other’ is no longer acceptable and there is no longer a need for constructing ‘the other’s’ identity – there is only a need for the removal or annihilation of ‘the other’.

## Michael Jackson

Telling stories or narrating events and experiences is an individual as well as a social act. Any account of any event or experience provided by any individual is a story or a narration – no individual is capable of providing an account without affecting it. Individuals struggle to bring into harmony the self-image they (wish to) have and their experiences. They do this by narrating their experiences – to themselves or to others – and by doing so process these experiences:

“To reconstitute events in a story is no longer to live those events in passivity, but to actively rework them, both in dialogue with others and within one’s own imagination. This narrative imaginary involves an interplay of intersubjective *and* intrapsychic processes, since every transformation of inner monologue into social discourse – and every countervailing appropriation or subversion of this discourse in individual consciousness – depends as much on private reveries, fantasies, daydreams, and undeclared thoughts, as on public speech. In other words, while storytelling makes sociality possible, it is equally vital to the illusory, self-protective, self-justifying activity of individual minds” (Jackson, 2002:15, italics in original)

Stories and narratives are not accurate reproductions of reality or of the truth. They are processed to make experiences acceptable:

“[...] no story is simply an imitation of events as they actually occurred. In changing the order of things, stories construe what happened adventitiously as something decided by the protagonists themselves. Stories are counterfactual or fictional, not because they aspire to mirror reality and fail, nor because they offer escapes from reality, but because they aid and abet our need to believe that *we* may discern and determine the meaning of *our*

journey through life: where we came from and where we are going. In making and telling stories we rework reality in order to make it bearable” (Jackson, 2002:16, italics in original)

As a consequence the researcher cannot gain access to ‘reality’ or ‘the truth’ through stories or narratives – which is any account of any event or experience provided by any individual:

“This is why one may no more recover the ‘original’ story than step into the same river twice. The fault is not with the memory *per se*, but an effect of the transformations all experience undergoes as it is replayed, recited, reworked and reconstructed in the play of intersubjective life [...] The changing circumstances of history are, of course, critical to this process of narrative revision [...] Where, at one period or in one context or conversation, a multi-ethnic understanding of the past is accepted, in another time and place “the subtle and complex nuances of local history” are arrogantly dismissed, and any empirical evidence that flies in the face of the newly invented tradition is seen not only as untrue but as treasonable [...]” (Jackson, 2002:22-23, italics in original)

What the researcher can gain access to is *a* truth and *a* reality and to an understanding of how this truth and reality is being constructed – and for what purposes.

### **Axel Honneth**

Before introducing Honneth’s theory a clarification of the concept “recognition” is needed. Recognition is translated from the German term “*Anerkennung*” which does not connote exactly the same as the English “recognition”. As the translator of *The Struggle for Recognition* notes:

“In English, the word ‘recognition’ is ambiguous, referring either to ‘re-identification’ or ‘the granting of a certain status’. The former, epistemic sense translates the German ‘*Wiedererkennung*’, which is distinguished from the practical with which Honneth is concerned here, expressed in the word ‘*Anerkennung*’. Throughout the present translation ‘recognition’ and ‘to recognize’ are used in this latter sense, familiar from such expressions as ‘The PLO has agreed to recognize the state of Israel.’ It is perhaps useful for understanding Honneth’s claim that love, respect, and esteem are three types of recognition to note that, in German, to ‘recognize’ individuals or groups is to ascribe to them some *positive* status” (Honneth, 1995:viii)

Axel Honneth’s approach to recognition theory takes its starting point in how individuals in order to form identity require the ability to realize themselves as autonomous beings and to do this they need the recognition of others to develop what he labels *self-confidence*, *self-respect* and *self-esteem* (Honneth, 1995).

These three are theoretical concepts used with a meaning which differs somewhat from everyday usage. To build *self-confidence* the individual needs recognition through emotional support as experienced in primary relationships; to build *self-respect* the individual needs recognition through cognitive respect in legal relations and to build *self-esteem* the individual needs recognition through social esteem within a community of shared values (Petersen and Willig, 2002).

Honneth explores how denial of this recognition can affect the individuals’ construction of identity, perception of self and ultimately the individuals’ actions. Denial of recognition leads to feelings of being disrespected and a sense of ‘tension’ appears which leads the individual to seek relief. If the means of articulation of a social movement are available the experience of disrespect and the subsequent tension can become motivations for acts of political resistance (Honneth, 1995:139) and through these acts the tension can be relieved. Engaging in conflict can thus be a way to escape the feeling of passively enduring humiliation and degradation (Honneth, 1995:164).

Honneth includes the concepts *emotions* and *moral* in social conflict arguing social conflicts are in fact caused by denial of recognition and are driven by a struggle for recognition rather than by formulated goals and interests.

“For the victims of disrespect [...] engaging in political action also has the direct function of tearing them out of the crippling situation of passively enduring humiliation and helping them, in turn, on their way to a new, positive relation-to-self. The basis for this secondary motivation for struggle is connected to the structure of the experience of disrespect itself. As we have seen, social shame is a moral emotion that expresses the diminished self-respect typically accompanying the passive endurance of humiliation and degradation. If such inhibitions on action are overcome through involvement in collective resistance, individuals uncover a form of expression with which they can indirectly convince themselves of their moral or social worth. For, given the anticipation that a future [...] community will recognize them for their present abilities, they find themselves socially respected as the persons that they cannot, under present circumstances, be recognized for being. In this sense, because engaging in political struggle publicly demonstrates the ability that was hurtfully disrespected, this participation restores a bit of the individual’s lost self-respect” (Honneth, 1996:164)

When individuals come together in groups and engage in conflict they are therefore coming together under a ‘shared language’ through which they can relieve the tension of their own individual lacks of recognition, gain recognition from the group and from the group’s surroundings – because they are now a group causing conflict – and narrate themselves as living in a future in

which they are recognised for what they are. This represents a way to restore the positive self-relation.

It is this complex of identity-theories which I draw on to shed light on how the informants construct identity and what the attractions of Jihadism are in chapter 7 *Eschatology* and chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility*.

## Methods

To generate and analyze data I relied on a complex of methods. In the following I present the analytical principles which guided the data production and analyses to reflect upon the ways in which I generated knowledge and thereby the ways in which I answered the research questions. I also present the methods employed in the data production and the ethical challenges which emerged from them.

### How to find settings for observations and potential informants

The first theme I will address is how practically to go about identifying potential informants for the project, where to find them and how to make contact with them.

What made an individual a potential informant for the project was his or her views and values. When the fieldwork was initiated Danish authorities framed these views and values as potential threats to security because they were believed to be precursors – or even causes – of terrorism.<sup>5</sup> There were therefore no organizations or spokespersons who could be contacted for potential informants, neither were there public arrangements – such as protests – where identification and contact could be made. This presented a severe initial obstacle.

Buijs, Demant & Hamdy did an excellent study of ‘radically and democratically’ minded Muslim youngsters in the Netherlands focussing on variations within the Salafi ideology (Buijs, Demant & Hamdy, 2006). To reach their objectives they opted for the method of interviewing twenty-two individuals who they contacted in universities, colleges and mosques – well aware that they were unlikely to find participants who had truly radical views (ibid.). Copying this approach would not ensure me the participation of individuals relevant for my project. Going into a university

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<sup>5</sup> This was treated in chapter 4 *Trends and Debates in the Literature* where the understandings of *radicalization processes* were explained and discussed

or a mosque and asking for interviews with individuals who share the views of individuals suspected of planning terrorism is unlikely to bring success.

Khosrokhavar (2005; 2008) and Trujillo et al. (2009) among others have generated data by interviewing individuals convicted under terrorism legislation in prisons. This approach was, however, problematic in a Danish context. In January 2008, when the fieldwork was initiated, only six individuals had been convicted and imprisoned. Of those six individuals only one individual's case had been finally concluded, the remaining five either had appealed or were considering appealing. This minimized the chance that they would be willing to participate in a research project as participation might influence their appeals.

As an alternative, I decided to attend trials against individuals accused of having planned terrorism. I reasoned that since I defined contemporary Jihadism in the West as individuals who regard engagement in the Lesser Jihad – i.e. violent defence of Islam – as a central aspect of their lives and of being practising Muslims, potential informants were likely to take an interest in such trials and attend them.

This turned out to be a correct line of reasoning and in time the fieldwork was moved beyond the courtrooms. Initially it was moved to trains and other public areas such as cafes and parks and later it was moved to a mosque, to private homes and to my office. But the venue in which the work was initiated has had an impact on all data generated. The informants were approached in particular situations – during trials – and these initial meetings have affected the data generated not only in the courtrooms but also in other venues. The trials were the frame of all interactions.

### **How to generate data – asking, looking and listening**

Fieldwork was carried out in cooperation with my colleague Dr. Manni Crone. Smyth recommends that researchers: “seek[...] methods such as the use of co-researchers and inter-subjective analysis to interrogate their own subjectivity more effectively” (Smyth, 2007:16).

The fact that we cooperated made it possible for us to compare our observations and analyses and thereby not only interrogate our own subjectivity but also qualify our individual work by discussing the analyses.

Dr. Crone and I also conducted several interviews in cooperation. This allowed us access to situations which would have been problematic for one woman alone such as meetings with male informants. At the same time, however, the cooperation also limited our access. There were informants who shied away from us when we were together but were willing to engage with only

one of us. We then accommodated for this but still, it is very likely there were potential informants who we were both cut off from because of our cooperation.

Once having identified and made contact with potential informants the challenge was how to go about generating data. I opted for a combination of observations and interviews and considering the project's explorative nature I opted for informal conversations, research conversations and qualitative, semi-structured research-interviews (Kvale, 1997) as opposed to quantitative or structured interviews. For quantitative or structured interviews to be useful the researcher needs extensive background knowledge to be able to formulate the questions. In the absence of such knowledge informal conversations, research conversations and qualitative, semi-structured research-interviews constitute the better alternative which allows the researcher room to uncover what he or she does not yet know is relevant.

Interviews can only grant the researcher access to what the interviewees are capable of verbalising – what they have to some extent recognised – and to what they are willing to verbalise – how they want to portray and present themselves. When interviews are supplemented by observations discrepancies are occasionally revealed and these discrepancies can pave the way for new avenues of inquires in future interviews. Observations can make the researcher aware of aspects of the field which the researcher did not know of in advance – or did not realize were relevant.

When opting for observations as a method the researcher must make a choice about which role to adopt during the observations. Gold (1958) distinguishes between four roles which the researcher can choose from:

- The *complete observer* “is as detached as possible from the setting under study. Observers are neither seen nor noticed”
- The *observer-as-participant* “is known and recognized, but relates to the ‘subjects’ of study solely as a researcher”
- The *participant-as-observer* “is more fully integrated into the life of the group under study and is more engaged with the people; he or she is as much a friend as a neutral researcher”
- The *complete participant* “disappears completely into the setting and is fully engaged with the people and their activities” (Angrosino, 2007:54)

Considering the nature of the project and of the field I opted for the role of observer-as-participant and continuously referred to my research and to my role as a researcher. Since the fieldwork stretched over a period of more than two years there is, however, no guarantee that some informants did not occasionally view me as something other than an observer-as-participant and a researcher. This led to some ethical challenges which are dealt with in the passage *Ethical challenges*.

Methodologically, my overall interest in what individuals gain from doing what they do – in ‘what is in it for them’ – implies that I have asked, looked and listened for this during the production *and* the analysis of data. As Back (2005) puts it; I have actively *listened for* certain kinds of stories and practices.

Data was generated in different settings and relying on different methods:

### **Trials**

I attended five trials and made a point of attending every minute of them. During the trials I observed and wrote elaborate field notes. In this initial stage my aim was to document the testimonies, to establish and re-establish rapport, to get a general feeling of ‘what was going on’, to observe activities, and to make contact with informants.

### **Informal conversations, research conversations and interviews**

Relying on the ‘snowball’ method I had the informants whom I met during the trials introduce me to other informants whom they saw as relevant. This means that there was not only self-selection among informants but that informants also selected other informants.

In the first phase of the informal conversations, research conversations and interviews I allowed informants to explain their views and elaborate on what they saw as important. This phase was therefore very much guided by what my informants put emphasis on. In combination with the data from the trials this provided me with a ‘mapping’ which directed further inquiries. The first stage, then, can be described as an *orientation and mapping phase* which enabled me to include different positions and issues in the remaining part of the data production and thereby refine it.

In the second phase I was able to make further inquiries into what the first phase had revealed to be relevant. In this phase I was also able to probe about discrepancies, disagreements, different positions and negotiations among the informants.

The majority of the conversations and interviews included more than one informant and typically lasted between two and five hours.

## **Observations**

Both during the trials and outside the context of the trials I made observations. These observations supplemented the testimonies and the first phase of the informal conversations, research conversations and interviews and helped me navigate. The observations often served as themes on the basis of which I could probe and open discussions in subsequent conversations and interviews.

The generation of data was undoubtedly limited and to some extent shaped by the informants' willingness to participate. Some were very interested in participating and in providing information whereas others were much more reluctant. There were also potential informants who were not willing to engage in conversations or interviews.

Occasionally informants asked me not to quote specific statements or refer to specific themes we discussed and I have respected such requests.

This all means that there is not a homogeneous collection of comparable interviews in which informants answer previously formulated sets of questions. Rather there is a heterogeneous collection of data consisting of observations, conversations and semi-structured research interviews, to which some informants have contributed more than others.

The fieldwork spanned over a period of two years from January 2008 to April 2010. Generally, I tried to establish more regular relationships with the informants by meeting and chatting informally in different contexts. This was done because “multiple visits over time combined with the intimacy of intensive interviewing do provide a deeper view of life than one-shot structured or informational interviews” (Charmaz in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:529).

All the data generated should be viewed with reservations. In the words of Jackson: “one may no more recover the ‘original’ story than step into the same river twice” (Jackson, 2002:22). The data generated do not uncover *the* truth – they shed light on *a* truth and they are a ‘snapshot’ capturing this truth at a specific point in time and in a specific context.

## **Written narratives**

I supplement the data generated through fieldwork with two written narratives offered by individuals who claim to have been engaged in Jihad. These are the document *Mein Weg nach Jannah* which translates into *My path to Paradise* (El-Almani, 2010) and the book *Danskeren på*

*Guantanamo – den personlige beretning* which translates into *The Dane on Guantanamo – the personal account* (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004). I provide very extensive extracts from these because I wish to make them available to a wider audience by translating them into English.

### **Mein Weg nach Jannah**

In May April 2010 a document entitled *Mein weg nach Jannah* written by Abdul Ghaffar El Almani and published by Elif Media emerged on the internet. Abdul Ghaffar El Almani is also known by his German name Eric Breininger and has been wanted in Germany for years. He is believed – and claims – to have travelled to Afghanistan to fight. Although it is impossible to determine the origins of this document it seems reasonable to assume that Eric Breininger is the source of it due to the level of detail and the contents. As Christopher Radler and Behnam Said write in a note on *jihadica.com* about the document:

“It is not clear however, if Breininger wrote the document himself. In the messages he delivered from Waziristan, he spoke a very simple and often grammatically incorrect German. By contrast, the language of the published book is far more elaborate and correct. On the other hand, the content and details in the book argue for the authenticity of the document. Interestingly, the spelling of names differs throughout the book, which could indicate a collaborative effort. So we can assume that Breininger either 1) wrote it down by himself and had some help from his friends, or 2) told his story to some of his fellow jihadists and they wrote it down, as Spiegel journalist Yassin Musharbash suggested.”

The fact that the spelling of names differs throughout the document is not the only indicator that the document is the result of collaboration. Some parts of the document appear to be written for non-Muslims as there are footnotes explaining what a *burka* and *Eid* is whereas *Ramadan* and the Islamic names for the five daily prayers are not accompanied by explanations in other sections.

The conclusion of the document is obviously written after Breininger's death as the circumstances under which he died on 28 April 2010 are described. It is written by others who probably also saw to it that the document was published. This section is typed in another font than the remaining document. There is, however, a paragraph preceding this conclusion which is written as part of the document – in the same font – but differs on crucial points. This indicates that the paragraph is written without Breininger's participation. Under the headline "German Taliban Mujahideen" (El-Almani, 2010:101) the establishment of a German branch of Taliban is briefly explained. This is followed by an invitation to all German speaking Muslims to join this group or at least support its battle financially. Further, all unmarried Muslim women are encouraged to join as there are many brothers wishing to start a family – Breininger included. Starting a family in what is called "Jihad land" (El-Almani, 2010:101) – the place where Breininger is living – is described as being close to the ideal. In the paragraph it is stated that women who join will learn to handle weapons like the men so that they are not helpless. It is also stated that children can be brought up without bad influence from school or *kuffar* (infidel) – such as being forced to learn about the theory of evolution – and they will become multilingual. Finally, the children will be brought up with Islamic values and knowledge and will receive physical training, weapons training and be taught war tactics from an early age (El-Almani, 2010:101-104). At this point there is a subtle change. The next paragraph reads:

"With Allah's permission, this offspring will become a very special generation of terrorists, who are not to be found in any database or list of the enemies of Allah. They will speak the languages of the enemy, know his customs and because of their European appearances they can infiltrate the countries of the kuffar. This will hopefully enable them to carry out one operation after the other against the enemies of Allah and thereby sow fear and terror in their hearts" (El-Almani, 2010:104, my translation)

Two aspects in this paragraph indicate that it is not written by the same authors as the remainder of the document. Firstly, the concept *terrorist* is not used anywhere else in the document – throughout

the document the concepts *Mujahid* and *Mujahideen* are used. Secondly, the paragraph revolves around the idea of infiltrating European countries and carrying through attacks in them.

Even though German authorities have continuously worried that Breininger would return to Germany to do exactly this, Breininger has in fact rejected the idea. In September 2008 German authorities published pictures of Breininger warning that he was dangerous and planning an attack in Germany and in October 2008 Breininger appeared on a video repudiating the accusation and explaining that he was in Afghanistan and did not plan to carry out attacks in Germany.

This discrepancy could be the result of Breininger changing position on attacks in Germany since 2008 but in the remaining document there are no indications of such a change nor are there any references to attacks in other areas than where Breininger himself is situated, i.e. Afghanistan. The document exclusively uses references which do not sanction violence in non-conflict areas, e.g. Abdallah Azzam and does not refer to e.g. Osama bin Ladin. As a consequence it is more probable that the paragraph is added by another author.

As it is the case with the data generated through fieldwork this document should be viewed with reservations. Returning to the line of thinking in Jackson (2004) any narration is affected by the narrator's position, needs, etc. at the point in time when it is being narrated. This implies that any data should be viewed with reservations – it is not *the* truth, it is *a* truth and it is a snapshot captured in a specific point in time and a specific context. There is little doubt that this document was written with the purpose of portraying Breininger in a manner that would inspire others to follow his example and it should be viewed as such.

### **Danskeren på Guantanamo – den personlige beretning**

In April 2004 the two journalists Hans Davidsen-Nielsen and Matias Seidelin from the Danish daily *Politiken* interviewed Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane after his release from Guantanamo two months earlier. The journalists had rented a summerhouse and spent a week there with Abderrahmane interviewing him. The interviews resulted in the autobiography *Danskeren på Guantanamo – den personlige beretning*.

There is no uncertainty about how the book was created, who created it or whether it is based on Abderrahmane's own narrations. There are, however, certain aspects of the book that call for attention. Similarly to the document *Mein Weg nach Jennah* the book *Danskeren på Guantanamo – den personlige beretning* should be read with some reservations. There is little doubt that

Abderrahmane had an agenda when agreeing to give the interviews – like Breininger he probably intended to portray himself in a way that would inspire others to follow his example.

It is also worth noting that Abderrahmane was interviewed only two months after he had been released from Guantanamo – where he had been held for more than two years. This is likely to have affected his narration. Once again returning to the line of thinking in Jackson (2004) any narration is affected by the narrator's position, needs, etc. at the point in time when it is being narrated.

An example of how Abderrahmane's narration appears to have been affected by his situation at the point in time when the interviews were conducted is the way in which he narrates his experiences of being arrested and detained. His accounts of the years he spent in Guantanamo are quite superficial and he focuses on how he found comfort in studying the Quran while other prisoners broke down. (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004) Abderrahmane also, rather en passant, notes that he was tortured by Algerian police when he was arrested in 2001 and claims that when he was released he made jokes about it to his father (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:56-60). This resonates with Jackson's argument:

“[...] no story is simply an imitation of events as they actually occurred. In changing the order of things, stories construe what happened adventitiously as something decided by the protagonists themselves. Stories are counterfactual or fictional [...] because they aid and abet our need to believe that *we* may discern and determine the meaning of *our* journey through life: where we came from and where we are going. In making and telling stories we rework reality in order to make it bearable” (Jackson, 2002:16, italics in original)

When *Danskeren på Guantanamo – den personlige beretning* was published in Denmark it was subject to some criticism. One of the critiques was that it was too sympathetic toward Abderrahmane and that the two journalists did not challenge him sufficiently. Holm (2004) wrote that “The two authors have difficulties hiding their sympathy for the man Slimane” and argued that the book was problematic:

”because the two authors allow the Algerian Dane Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane to speak freely apparently without many challenges [...] Slimane is selectively blind in his presentations of the world and the authors allow him to dodge a series of questions which the reader is left with” (Holm, 2004)

I use *Mein Weg nach Jennah* and *Danskeren fra Guantanamo – den personlige beretning* as what they are – secondhand sources which cannot be verified. Since I have not generated the data I have no way of knowing whether the data would have differed substantially if I had had the opportunity to generate them myself. The authors of the document and the book have probably not asked the same questions as I have asked and they have probably not *actively listened* (Back, 2005) for the same themes that I have actively listened for. Similarly to my own data, the document and the book focus on the informants’ own narrations but these have been subject to analyses, interpretations and selection prior to the publication. Nonetheless, the document and the book are sufficiently interesting that I draw on them and use them to put some perspective on my data. I therefore use them as additions to my own data and do not draw conclusions solely on them.

## **The data**

Data are not separate from or untouched by the researcher. As “social scientists, we *define* what we record as data, yet how we define data outlines how we represent them in our work” (Charmaz in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:511, italics in original). In other words, data are not found, observed or collected – they are *produced* or *generated* by the researcher in interaction with the informants.

Therefore I have chosen to make my presence in the generation of data explicitly visible in the present dissertation. This is done by including my questions, comments, etc. and by reflecting on the role of my presence in the analyses of the data.

## **The positioned researcher**

Since the researcher plays a role in the generation of data the question of my position in the research sites is a crucial one. As Hasse (2000) argues, we are always participants in the social space within which we do fieldwork and observe – we are always interpreting as well being interpreted (Hasse, 2000:43).

My embodied and social position – white Danish middle-class woman in her early 30s, without any particular religious conviction, unmarried, university-based PhD student – constituted the backdrop of my location. There was no way I could ‘pass as’ or be ‘taken for’ one of the informants myself (Grünenberg 2006; Fortier 2000). My participation and my position were always visible.

As an obvious outsider I was, to a certain degree, able to pose questions a Muslim could not have posed – I could be the ‘stupid outsider’ and this allowed room for questions about Islam and practices which were relevant. As a woman I was, to a certain degree, able to pose questions a man could not as easily have posed – not only to women but also to men about sensitive topics such as family relations, how to bring up children and the relations between men and women. This, however, also limited what I was granted access to. There is little doubt there were issues which men would not discuss with me as a woman and issues which Muslims would not discuss with me as a non-Muslim.

Sometimes I was explicitly positioned as a *Danish* listener representing Denmark to whom experiences of racism or discomfort could be passed on so a wider public would eventually hear about them. One informant directly asked me to pass on his message to the media and the broader public whereas another asked if I could facilitate contact with politicians. This also implied that I, occasionally, functioned as a channel of frustration but the critique was never personal but rather directed at the societal and political level. In most cases, however, I encountered hospitality, friendliness, confidence and willingness to spend time with me even if many of the informants were extremely busy and some were caught in unfortunate situations. My ‘otherness’ could thus both disable and enable communication.

Being a *trustworthy* person was perhaps the most important position in terms of gaining access and carrying out fieldwork. The fact that I was genuinely interested and did not have a hidden agenda meant that I did not contradict myself or could be caught attempting to conceal anything.

### **Processing the data**

I began processing and analyzing data already during fieldwork, initially making notes of the main empirical and analytical points of each interview and observation in order to start developing concepts and themes.

I have edited interview reports to make quotes fluent, thereby transforming the spoken language to written prose (Kvale, 1997). When I have translated quotes from Danish into English I have strived to maintain the tone of the statements. This is also the case with the written material which I

include where the quotes from the book *Danskeren på Guantanamo – den personlige beretning* (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004) were translated from Danish into English and the quotes from the document *Mein Weg nach Jannah* (El-Almani, 2010) were translated from German into English.

When I have translated a quote I explicitly write “my translation” in the brackets following the quotes. There I also provide information about who is being quoted and on which date and in which context the statement was made – e.g. during the informant’s own trial, during another trial or during interviews in which case I indicate the city in which the statement was made. When informants use e.g. Arabic terms I reproduce those – transcribed in Latin letters – and provide a translation inserted in the quote. I use the following transcript signs in the quotes:

- *Italics* = Words pronounced with emphasis
- ... = Short break
- [...] = Words or sentences omitted
- [explanation/translation] = Explanation or translation of a word or an expression

This emphasizes that although the quotes in the dissertation are based on the interviews they are also translated, edited and selected. In all cases, they are *transformed but loyal re-presentations* of the interviews.

In some countries the courts make court-transcripts available. This is not the case in Denmark. During the trials a secretary writes what is referred to as the ‘court book’ which can best be described as a summary of the proceedings in which emphasis is put on aspects which are relevant to the question of guilt. This means that much of what is being said and done in courtrooms is not documented anywhere.

During the trials spectators are allowed to bring pen and paper but no electronic equipment – such as tape recorders or cameras – may be used to document trials.

During the five trials that I attended I made careful notes of who was present and of everything that was said and done and at the end of the day I wrote out these notes. Observation made outside the courtrooms were written down as soon as possible – at the latest when I returned to my office at the end of the day.

As the fieldwork moved beyond the courtrooms I continued to rely on notes rather than recordings. This choice was made to uphold an informal atmosphere and because I believed most

informants would feel uncomfortable with a tape recorder. Even though there were informants who asked if I did not wish to record the interviews I believe the choice was constructive.

When it was possible I made notes during observations, conversations, etc. but occasionally this was not possible. When it was not possible I made notes as quickly as possible afterwards adding as many details as I could. When I made notes I typed them as quickly as possible – again adding as many details as I could. I also wrote detailed descriptions of the interviews and observations, memorizing the context, the atmosphere and the main empirical points. Occasionally, I also wrote detailed descriptions of how I was affected by the context and the atmosphere. Similarly, I wrote memos of the encounters, telephone calls, etc. and kept separate files for ideas for analysis and interpretation. This was all particularly valuable because I spend more than two years generating data. It allowed me to trace how I changed my understanding and analyses over time in interaction with the fieldwork and the informants.

## **Ethical challenges**

Certain challenges arise from the attempt to generate data on clandestine and stigmatized phenomena and individuals through fieldwork and at the core of these challenges is the protection of informants. This is particularly important because long-term fieldwork – relying partly on observations and informal conversations – does not easily meet the principle of achieving informed consent. I particularly found inspiration for dealing with these ethical challenges in Smyth & Robinson (2001), Flick (2007) and The British Sociological Association (2002).

Even though the researcher opts for the role of observer-as-participant and is completely open about his or her positions and interests the researcher's engagement in informal relationships over extended periods of time increases the risk that the researcher's role is forgotten at times. This means the ideal-type situation in which the researcher is in complete control of the situation and can define it and thereby be sure that she or he is achieving informed consent is simply not realistic. As a consequence it is the responsibility of the researcher to carefully weigh the interests of the participants against the interests of research.

Given the nature of my specific field it was also necessary to consider the possibility that representatives of the authorities could take an interest in the material generated.

Being uncertain about researchers' obligations vis-à-vis authorities I required legal advice and was informed that if a researcher were to receive information on concrete criminal activity the

researcher is obliged to report it. In case the authorities suspect specific individuals of concrete crimes the researcher might ultimately be obliged to assist the authorities in solving the case.

To minimize the risk of such a situation occurring, I consciously avoided touching upon matters which could lead to information about concrete criminal activity. The questions guiding ‘Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?’ and ‘What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?’ and the objective of the project was therefore not to shed light on possible criminal activity. Avoiding touching upon such matters therefore did not represent a problem.

To minimize the damage which my work could potentially cause I opted for anonymizing most of the informants already in my notes. This choice was inspired by Horgan (Horgan in Silke, 2004) and Smyth (Smyth in Jackson, Smyth & Gunning, 2009). Each informant was attributed a number and two separate documents were created. One document linked the number to an alias which I created for the informant and another document linked the alias to the informants’ real name. Both documents were then kept in separate and secure places and were destructed once the data had been processed into quotes. There were, however, exceptions to this rule.

The names of individuals who are convicted are made public by the media and it does not make much sense to anonymize these individuals in my work. Similarly, Eric Breininger and Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane’s names have also been made public.

The names of most of the individuals who have been prosecuted but not convicted have not been made public and their initials were used instead – the exception to this is that the names of all of the defendants in the Glostrup-trial were made public in some media during their trial. I have opted for using these individuals’ initials when I quote what they have say during their own trials – including the ones whose names have been made public in some media because I do not wish to add injury to insult by repeating their names. Two of the individuals who have been prosecuted have, however, also contributed as informants outside the context of their own trials – where they were informants on the same terms as other informants. This represented a challenge: if I were to consequently use these individuals’ initials when quoting them – as *defendants* and as *ordinary informants* – I would be offering them less anonymity than the other informants because their identity could be traced through court documents. The testimonies these individuals gave during trials were meant for the court and the defendants had no say in whether or not I documented them and used them. This made it even more crucial that I protect their anonymity when using their testimonies – they have not consented to me using them.

The best solution to this challenge was to use these individuals' initials when quoting them as *defendants* and attributing them a number like all other informants when quoting them as *informants* – in short to divide them into two. This solution is not unproblematic: the traceability is compromised because the reader cannot decode whether an informant has previously been prosecuted. However, I weighed the protection of my informants' anonymity against traceability and opted for favouring protection of the informants. I particularly attached importance to two circumstances: it was only two informants and the information they provided as *informants* did not shed crucial light on the information they provided as *defendants* or vice versa. What was to be gained from compromising their anonymity therefore did not outweigh what was to be lost. This means that in the present dissertation I identify informants in three different ways:

- Individual numbers are used when quoting informants
- As an exception full names are used when quoting individuals who have been convicted and other individuals whose names have been made public with their consent
- As another exception initials are used when quoting defendants who have not been convicted for statements made during trials

## Chapter 3: The Three Cases

In Denmark there have been several trials under terrorism legislation since §114 of the Danish penal code was revised in 2002<sup>6</sup> as a consequence of the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and the subsequent UN resolutions. The first trial under the revised §114 was against Said Mansour who was charged with having incited to terrorism in 2005.

The second trial under the revised Danish terrorism legislation was the Glostrup-trial where four men were charged with having planned terrorism. The trial began in December 2006 and ended in February 2007 when the jury found all defendants guilty. The judges, however, overruled the jury's verdict and sentenced only one man. As a consequence there was a second version of the Glostrup-trial which began in January 2008 and ended in March 2008. This was the first trial which I attended.

The second trial which I attended was the Glasvej-trial where two men were charged with having planned terrorism. The trial began in August 2008 and ended in October 2008. The third trial was the SÜ-trial where one man was charged with having planned terrorism. This trial began and ended in November 2008. The fourth trial I attended was the appeal of the Glasvej-trial which began in May 2009 and ended in June 2009 and the fifth trial I attended was the appeal of the SÜ-trial which began and ended in August 2009.

Below I introduce the three cases and the outcomes of the trials. The introductions are intended as introductions and therefore do not exhaustively describe all aspects of the cases or the trials. Further details to the cases and the trials are provided in chapter 5 *Counterculture* and chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms* when relevant to the research questions posed.

Before this introduction it is, however, relevant to mention that these three cases are far from the only trials under the revised §114 of the Danish penal code. Here I shall draw attention to the most prominent ones. In November 2007 three men were convicted of having planned terrorism in the Vollsmose-case. In September 2008 six individuals were convicted of having provided financial support to terrorism in the *Fighters+Lovers*-case. In March 2007 the association *al-Aqsa* was found not guilty of having provided financial support to terrorism. Additionally, a young man is to be prosecuted under §114 in early 2011. He is accused of having attempted to carry through a terrorist

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the revision of Danish terrorism legislation see e.g. Vestergaard, 2002; 2006; 2007

attack by attacking the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard<sup>7</sup>. Westergaard drew the most famous of the cartoons first published in the newspaper Jyllandsposten in September 2005 and his cartoon plays a central role in the cartoon-crisis<sup>8</sup>

## The Glostrup-case

October 19<sup>th</sup> 2005 two men were arrested in an apartment in Sarajevo. One of them was a twenty year old Dane by the name of Abdulkadir Cesur, the other was an eighteen year old Swede by the name of Mirsad Bektasevic.

In the apartment the police found 19,841 kg explosives including Nitro-glycerine, TATP and TNT, what was described as a “suicide-belt”, a loaded gun and a videotape featuring two men with covered faces showing a large collection of weapons and a voice explaining that “these brothers have sold their lives to please Allah” (documented by the prosecutor, Glostrup-trial, January 7<sup>th</sup> 2008). Two other men were subsequently also arrested in Bosnia.

The arrests in Bosnia triggered arrests in other countries. In the United Kingdom the three young men Younes Tsouli, Waseem Mughal and Tariq al-Daour were arrested October 21<sup>st</sup> 2005. In Denmark more than thirty individuals were arrested on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2005 – these arrests were quickly named ‘the Glostrup-case’ in the media because many of them took place in the town Glostrup which is a suburb of the Danish capital Copenhagen. The police suspected the men in Bosnia had planned a terrorist attack somewhere in Europe and the men in the United Kingdom and Denmark had assisted them.

In July 2007 Younes Tsouli, Waseem Mughal and Tariq al-Daour were convicted of having incited to terrorism. Younes Tsouli was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, Waseem Mughal was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months imprisonment and Tariq al-Daour was sentenced to 6 years and 6 months imprisonment.

In January 2007 Abdulkadir Cesur and Mirsad Bektasevic were convicted of having planned terrorism. Abdulkadir Cesur was sentenced to 6 years and 4 months imprisonment whereas Mirsad Bektasevic was sentenced to 8 years and 4 months imprisonment. One of the two Bosnian men was

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<sup>7</sup> Two Tunisian citizens have also been accused of planning to murder Westergaard in 2008. These two men have not been prosecuted under §114 but because they are not Danish citizens. Instead they have been ‘administratively deported’ – which means that they will not be prosecuted but are to be deported from Denmark. For more on this case see e.g. Hansen & Voller, 2009

<sup>8</sup> For more on this crisis see e.g. Holm, 2006

also convicted of having planned terrorism and sentenced to 4 years imprisonment whereas the other Bosnian man was convicted of having dealt illegally with weapons and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment.

Of the many individuals who were arrested in Denmark only four were eventually prosecuted. IJ was 19 years old when he was arrested and had dropped out of high school halfway through his senior year. He was born and raised in Denmark by parents who migrated from Syria and Palestine. AA was 20 years old and studying at a polytechnic school to become a mechanic. He was only weeks away from completing when he was arrested. AA was born in Bosnia and came to Denmark at age 8 as a refugee with his family. EH was 16 years old when he was arrested and was a high school student. He was born and raised in Denmark by parents who had migrated from Morocco. Abdul Basit abu Lifa was also 16 years old and a high school student when he was arrested. He was born and raised in Denmark by Palestinian parents.

The trial against the four young men began in December 2006 and in February 2007 the jury found all four men guilty of having planned terrorism. The judges, however, overruled the jury finding that only one man – Abdul Basit abu Lifa – could be convicted. Abdul Basit abu Lifa was subsequently sentenced to seven years imprisonment.

Because the judges and the jury had disagreed the three remaining defendants were to be prosecuted once again but within the following months the prosecutor dropped the charges against AA and IJ. EH was therefore the only one who was prosecuted in the second version of the trial. During this trial the prosecutor attempted to prove that EH had been involved in planning a terrorist attack which Mirsad Bektasevic and Abdulkadir Cesur were preparing in Bosnia.

The fact that EH had met Mirsad Bektasevic via the internet, had invited him to Denmark and had introduced him to Abdulkadir Cesur and to Abdul Basit abu Lifa was a crucial part of the prosecutor's case. EH's participation in a chat with Mirsad Bektasevic and Abdulkadir Cesur – while the two were in Bosnia – and Abdul Basit abu Lifa who was in Denmark was also considered evidence of EH's guilt. During this chat Cesur wrote that AA was not part of "the group which we founded that evening at your brothers" (Glostrup-trial, documented by the prosecutor, 4 February 2008, my translation). According to the prosecutor this indicated that the four men participating in the chat had founded a group in abu Lifa's brother's home – and that this was a group planning a terrorist attack.

Another fact which was considered evidence of EH's guilt was his affiliation with Said Mansour who was convicted of having incited others to terrorism in April 2007 and sentenced to 3 years and

6 months imprisonment. Said Mansour migrated from Morocco to Denmark in 1983 when he was 23 years old. In Copenhagen he ran a bookstore and a publishing house named *Al-Nur Islamic Information* through which he published a plethora of material which included speeches by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Abu Qatada and videos featuring executions. EH was in possession of some of Said Mansour's material and he was also in personal contact with Said Mansour and the prosecutor considered this evidence that EH was planning terrorism. In Said Mansour's verdict the facts that several of the defendants in the Glostrup-case had been in possession of his material and that he had been in contact with them was considered evidence that he had incited to terrorism. In March 2008 EH was acquitted.

## The Glasvej-case

September 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 eight men were arrested in and around Copenhagen. They were suspected of having planned terrorism and in one of the men's apartment a small amount of the explosive TATP was found. The case was quickly named the Glasvej-case because this apartment was situated on a street named Glasvej in Copenhagen.

Of the eight men who were arrested two were eventually charged with having planned terrorism. Hammad Khurshid was 21 years old when he was arrested. He was born in Denmark to parents who had migrated from Pakistan. When he was a baby the mother moved to Pakistan where she brought him and his siblings up while the father stayed in Denmark. Abdulghani Tokhi was also 21 years old when he was arrested. He was born in Afghanistan and the family fled when he was an infant. After having lived in Thailand for six years the family came to Denmark and was granted asylum.

According to the prosecutor Hammad Khurshid had received training in an al-Qaida training camp in the tribal areas in Pakistan and had returned to Denmark with a bomb-manual and plans to orchestrate a terrorist attack. In Denmark he involved his friend Abdulghani Tokhi in the plot and the two proceeded with the plans and preparations. Tokhi bought the chemicals required to manufacture TATP<sup>9</sup> and Khurshid manufactured a small amount. The two detonated the TATP in the staircase of the building in which Khurshid's apartment was located and recorded the explosion

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<sup>9</sup> A primary explosive

on a mobile phone. There was no evidence of where an attack was to be launched but the police found a drawing and some notes which were interpreted as a plan to detonate 5 kg TATP in a bus.

Hammad Khurshid and Abdulghani Tokhi were convicted of having planned a terrorist attack and according to the verdict Khurshid was considered to be the driving force behind the plans whereas Tokhi was considered to be following Khurshid's orders. The verdict offered no indications of where the judges and jury presumed the attack was to take place.

In October 2008 Hammad Khurshid was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment and Abdulghani Tokhi to seven years imprisonment. Because Tokhi was an Afghan citizen he was also sentenced to expulsion when he has served his sentence. The case was appealed and in June 2009 the two were once again found guilty: Hammad Khurshid was once again sentenced to twelve years imprisonment whereas Abdulghani Tokhi was sentenced to eight years imprisonment. The decision to expulse Tokhi was not changed.

## The SÜ-case

SÜ was arrested in Copenhagen on November 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 and accused of having planned a terrorist attack. SÜ was born in Turkey in 1985 to a mother who lived there and a father who lived in Denmark. When SÜ was twelve years old his mother decided to join the father in Denmark with the children.

On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 – two months after the arrests of Hammad Khurshid and Abdulghani Tokhi – SÜ engaged in a chat with a friend in Turkey. After having chatted for 45 minutes, the friend in Turkey wrote to SÜ that more than 100 individuals had been arrested and accused of planning terrorism in Turkey. SÜ replied by writing about the arrest of his friends in Denmark. He did not write their names but explained that one was a Pakistani whereas the other was an Afghan and in court he explained that he was referring to Khurshid and Tokhi (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008).

In the chat SÜ then wrote: “Life for life – blood for blood. Exchanging a *Kuffar* [infidel] for a Muslim”. The friend apparently did not understand and SÜ explained:

“You should not retaliate by punishing them in the same way, but exchange them [...] Give me back my brother or this kuffar will die – to exchange, that is to swap prisoners

[...] That is, exchange the chicken, that is the kuffar, who he will catch there with the ones who are here”. (SÜ-trial, documented by the prosecutor, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

The chat was intercepted by the police who had placed SÜ under surveillance because of his close relationship with Khurshid and Tokhi and was interpreted as an attempt to plan terrorism.

In court SÜ explained that:

“By chickens I meant Danish soldier [...] In the chat I mean generally that someone who is responsible ought to catch soldiers at war and exchange them for Hammad and Abdulghani [...] I am not saying to my friend that *he* should do something” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Three days after SÜ had engaged in the chat he was approached by representatives of the Danish Security and Intelligence Service who asked him to inform on his contacts in Turkey and in Denmark. SÜ taped the conversation on his mobile phone and gave the recordings to some of his friends who leaked them to the Danish press when he was arrested. During the trial this was a theme and the prosecutor attempted to prove that the Danish Security and Intelligence Service were not aware of the intercepted chat when SÜ was approached because it had not been translated from Turkish. As soon as the chat was translated SÜ was arrested and accused of planning terrorism. In November 2008 SÜ was acquitted. The case was appealed and SÜ was once again acquitted in August 2009.

# Chapter 4: Trends and Debates in the Literature

Over the past decade the body of literature which is relevant to the present project has grown considerably. According to Schmid & Jongman (2005) the body of literature within the field of terrorism is today so extensive that “no single researcher can survey the field alone any longer” (Schmid & Jongman, 2005: xiv). The body of literature on Jihadism is also extensive and according to Khosrokhavar:

“There are many explanatory approaches to Jihadism, a large body of literature having appeared after September 11 (more than fifteen hundred books and articles up to 2007)” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:8)

Simultaneously, terrorism and Jihadism are studied in numerous fields and through numerous approaches:

“Some stress psychological factors, cultural determinants, international crisis, the media’s role, and the Internet as well as the breakdown of social bonds as causes of Jihadist terrorism. There are, as well, those who explain Jihadism through the crisis of the state (weak or failed states) combined with some of the above factors. Some sociologists explain Jihadism as a social movement or a campaign. From this perspective, Jihadists frame social demands as opportunities for violent action, networking among themselves, forging collective identities, building up cells and informal organizations, making specific claims against the state and other institutions, and encouraging their members to accept sacrifices and other costs even though in most cases the success is not

guaranteed by the action. For some researchers, accounting for terrorism in terms of global conditions (political, economic, cultural, or demographic) is inadequate. Terrorist activity may rise or decline with otherwise constant global conditions; the important factor is the intent and purpose of small groups and their representation of reality. These scholars insist on organizational dynamics, and many focus on the statistical data available on Jihadists and their terrorist cells to learn their generic characteristics” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:8)

Providing an actual review of the entire body literature<sup>10</sup> would therefore require much more space than the present dissertation allows for – and calls for. Instead I introduce the most prominent trends and debates in the literature to which the present dissertation contributes. I focus on literature which is related to Jihadism in ‘the West’ – here defined as Europe, North America and Australia – because the research questions guiding the present dissertation revolve around contemporary Jihadism in the West.

Since this body of literature has occasionally had a direct impact on policy I will also direct attention to some of the policy initiatives which are linked to the respective trends and debates.

## **Terrorism research**

The concept ‘terrorism’ is and always has been a contested subject – and there is little to suggest that this will change in the near future. In 1988 Schmid & Jongman took stock of the research on terrorism and documented an absence of agreement on the definition of terrorism – 109 different definitions were identified (Schmid & Jongman, 1988).

The study of terrorism is multidisciplinary, spanning a number of fields including political science, psychology, criminology, sociology, history and many others. The explanations about causes of terrorism can roughly be divided into three categories:

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<sup>10</sup> Schmid and Price (2010) provide an excellent overview of “Selected Literature on Radicalization and De-radicalization from Terrorism”

- Structural explanations which revolve around factors such as poverty, relative deprivation, repression and exclusion from the political process (examples include: Gurr, 1970; Ross, 1993).
- Psychological explanations (examples include: Post, 1990, 2002, 2008; Hoffman, 1998, 1999; Ross, 1996; Borum, 2004).
- Rational choice explanations in which terrorism is regarded as a method chosen by groups and organizations after cost-benefit analyses (examples include: Pape, 2005; Bloom, 2005; Crenshaw, 1991).

Since Schmid and Jongman's stocktaking Silke (2004), Ranstorp (2006) and Jackson, Smyth & Gunning (2009) have taken a critical look at the state of terrorism research, identified its shortcomings and suggested ways forward. One of the reappearing critiques of terrorism research and terrorism researchers is that there is a shortage of cumulative efforts – which is not surprising considering the diversity indicated above but which should nonetheless be addressed. As Ranstorp states:

“In a nutshell, it is this task that this edited book is about: to contribute to the larger and necessarily continuous mapping process of terrorism research in order to assess what contributions have been made from different social and behavioural disciplines and from different themes, research questions and methodologies” (Ranstorp, 2006:4)

In 1981 Crenshaw encouraged researchers working with terrorism to engage themselves in cumulative efforts and: “establish conceptual distinctions among different types of factor” (Crenshaw, 1981:381). Crenshaw set an example by dividing the causes of terrorism into two types:

“First, a significant difference exists between preconditions, factors that set the stage for terrorism over the long run, and precipitants, specific events that immediately precede the occurrence of terrorism. Second, a further classification divides preconditions into enabling

or permissive factors, which provide opportunities for terrorism to happen, and situations that directly inspire and motivate terrorist campaigns. Precipitants are similar to the direct causes of terrorism” (Crenshaw, 1981:381)

What Crenshaw referred to as *preconditions* have later come to be referred to as *root causes* whereas *precipitants* are generally referred to as *trigger causes* (TTSRL, 2008).

In her article Crenshaw drew on Social Movement Theory which also guided others like della Porta (1995) in a comparative study of movements engaging in political violence in Italy and Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. Della Porta emphasized the interaction between the state, the violent group and the individual – the “macro-, meso-, and micro-dynamics” (della Porta, 1995:207) as crucial for the turn to violence. Della Porta concludes by quoting Rule (1988):

“The idea that there must exist underlying causes for civil violence *in general* – or invariant characteristics of its participants, organizations or settings – deserves much skepticism. To be sure, we have no proof of the opposite position, for these are not matters that can be proved in advance. But it would be wiser to proceed from the more prudent assumption that, for civil violence as for other things, what appears as “the same” effect may proceed from a variety of causes, and that “the same” causal influences may yield a variety of different effects in various settings” (della Porta, 1995:210)

Through the 1970s and 1980s much of the research on terrorism was focussed on nationalist groups such as IRA and ETA and left-wing groups such as RAF and the Red Brigades. Following the attacks in USA in the 1990s and in September 2001 much attention was, however, directed towards terrorism which was justified by references to Islam and following the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and in London in 2005 much of this attention was further directed towards individuals living in the West who attacked their own countries. As a consequence new trends and debates emerged in the literature.

## New versus Old

In the 1990's some researchers began arguing that terrorism justified by references to Islam was a new type of terrorism which could not be understood within the same framework as other types of terrorism (examples include: Hoffman, 1998; Benjamin & Simon, 2003; Laqueuer, 1999; Lesser et al, 1999). This view spurred a critical debate among researchers. Duyvesteyn (2004) wrote:

“New terrorism is a concept that has recently been used by many and questioned by few; “Many contemporary studies begin ... by stating that although terrorism has always been a feature of social existence, it became ‘significant’ ... when it ‘increased in frequency’ and took on ‘novel dimensions’ as an international or transnational activity, creating in the process a new ‘mode of conflict’” [...] this quote makes sense in light of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, were it not that it was written in the early 1980s describing a situation starting in the 1960s” (Duyvesteyn, 2004:439).

Duyvesteyn was quoting Rapoport (1984) and used the quote to illustrate how “The present generation is thus not the only one to perceive terrorism to be fundamentally new” (Duyvesteyn, 2004:439). Crenshaw (2008) also criticized the dichotomy and argued that:

“The “new terrorism” viewpoint is bound to overestimate the effect of religious beliefs as a cause of terrorism and as a cause of lethality. It underestimates the power of nationalism. The distinction between religious and nationalist or secular revolutionary motivations is not clearly established or substantiated in fact. Few groups are classified as exclusively religious; most have mixed motives” (Crenshaw, 2008:135)

Even though Crenshaw (2008) quoted Khosrokhavar (2003) for referring “to “new” terrorism in *Les Nouveaux Martyrs d’Allah*” (Crenshaw, 2009:117) Khosrokhavar (2009) offers an understanding of contemporary Jihadism which corresponds well with the critique of the notion of a fundamentally new type of terrorism:

“It combines many ideological items of the extreme left (the fight against American “arrogance” and imperialism among others) and of the extreme right (the restoration of the “virtuous” family, sending women back to the task of motherhood, and eradicating all the social “vices” like homosexuality and alcohol consumption)”  
(Khosrokhavar, 2009:1)

Although there may have been a period in which “Knowledge of the “old” or traditional terrorism is considered irrelevant at best, and obsolete and anachronistic, even harmful, at worst” (Crenshaw, 2008:117) this appears to have changed. Existing knowledge on other types of terrorism in other periods is by most deemed relevant to the study of contemporary terrorism justified by references to Islam – and existing knowledge on other phenomena than terrorism is considered too. In the present dissertation this is definitely the case.

## **Ideology and al-Qaida**

Another area which has been given much attention in the literature is *al-Qaida* and its *ideology*. The history and development of al-Qaida as an organization has been the theme of several books including Hoffman (2006) which analyzes how al Qaeda has changed since 2001 and focuses on the organization’s tactical use of communication; Wright (2006) which presents biographical material on the movements, leaders and ideologies which influenced al-Qaida; Lawrence (2005) which provides translations of statements from Osama Bin Laden and analyzes his ideological development; Gunaratna (2002) which focuses on al-Qaida as an organization; and Kepel (2002; 2004) which trace the failure of Islamism and the evolution of al-Qaida’s ideology as a replacement arguing that:

“For all its political successes in the 1970s and 1980s, by the end of the twentieth century the Islamist movement had signally failed to retain political power in the Muslim world, in spite of the hopes of supporters and the forebodings of enemies. The waning of the movement’s capacity for political mobilization explains why such spectacular and devastating new forms of terrorism have now been visited on the American homeland” (Kepel, 2008:4)

The Jihadist ideology is thoroughly treated in Lia (2008a) which accounts for the life, strategy and ideology of Abu Musab al-Suri and presents translations of his most influential pieces of work which have had severe impact on the development of contemporary Jihadism. The ideology is also treated in McCants (2006) which maps the ideology and “identifies the most influential thinkers in the Jihadi Movement” (McCants, 2006b:5).

In the past years a debate on the role of al-Qaida vis-à-vis terrorism in the West has emerged. Sageman (2008) has argued that terrorism justified by references to Islam is not organized by al-Qaida but rather orchestrated by individuals and groups who find inspiration in al-Qaida and in the spectacular attacks in September 2001. The concepts ‘wannabees’ and ‘Jihadi cool’ were introduced to explain the dynamics among what Sageman conceptualized as “the foot soldiers at the bottom of the terrorist pyramid” (Sageman, 2008:24). Following this a virtual feud between Sageman and Hoffman erupted revolving around whether al-Qaida was primarily a threat to security as an organization organizing terrorism through *top-down* processes or as an inspiration inspiring terrorism through *bottom-up* processes<sup>11</sup>. Roy (Roy in Emerson, 2009) has criticized the focus on ideology and argued that: “Ideology plays little role in the radicalization of the jihadist internationalist youth: they are attracted by a narrative not an ideology” (Roy in Emerson, 2009:14). Roy continues:

“Al Qaeda provides not so much an ideology as a narrative. The first part of the narrative is the suffering of the “ummah”. But this ummah is a virtual one: all crimes

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<sup>11</sup> A summary and an analysis of the debate which primarily took place in American media can be found in Sciolino & Schmitt, 2008

(depicted through gruesome videos) committed against Muslims anywhere in the world are put on the same level. These stories are not contextualized: the picture of a tortured man could come from Bosnia, Chechnya or Kashmir. The ummah is presented as an undifferentiated whole. The second part of the narrative is centred on the individual who is suddenly put in the situation of becoming a hero who would avenge the sufferings of the community. It addresses an individual by combining different elements:

- Self-image: all personal humiliations or shortcomings are redeemed by the act of terrorism. The death is staged as is the self itself (hence the video, declaration, will, etc.).
- Salvation and death: there could be only one definite action that will turn the suicide bombers into a permanent icon; death is the definite seal on the story, it is part of the story.

The third part of the narrative is the religious ‘qotbist’ dimension, which also plays its role here: jihad is a personal compulsory duty, the vanguard of the ummah is made of a few outstanding and devoted heroes; salvation is through sacrifice and death. [...] But a fourth part of the narrative is less religious: it is the enactment of the fight against the global order. To people not specifically motivated by religion, al-Qaeda is the only organization present on the market that seems to be effective in confronting the ‘evil’ that is the West. The fact that AQ is constantly presented by Western leaders as the biggest threat gives more value to the decision to join it. The narrative is substantiated by the Western reaction to it” (Roy in Emerson, 2009:24-25)

The body of literature focusing on the role of ideology appears to have informed several programmes designed to prevent and counter radicalization and terrorism. In Hearne & Laiq (2010) the ‘deradicalization’ programmes and counterterrorism programmes in seven countries<sup>12</sup> are presented:

“While “hard” approaches to counterterrorism are more militaristic in approach – involving targeted assassinations or even warfare – “soft” counterterrorism programs seek to undo the radicalization process by engineering the individual’s return to moderate society, usually by providing them with a stable support network, probing their original reasons for radicalizing, and divorcing them from their extreme beliefs and social contracts” (Hearne & Laiq, 2010:3)

Of the seven countries’ programmes six are indicated to focus on changing the ideological and religious views of the individuals who are to be deradicalized. Only one country’s programme is not indicated to include such a focus, namely Indonesia.

A similar trend can be detected in The United Kingdom’s strategy designed to “Stop[...] people becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists” (HM Government, The Prevent Strategy: front cover). The strategy lists seven objectives of which the first is: “Challenging the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices” (HM Government, The Prevent Strategy:17).

## **Radicalization processes**

Another crucial trend has been the focus on *radicalization processes* where the individual’s decision to engage in violence and terrorism is the centre of attention. In 2004 Sageman’s book *Understanding Terror networks* scrutinized the biographical data on 172 individuals who had participated in Jihad and concluded that assumptions about poverty and particular traits of character – such as madness or malice – playing crucial roles in terrorism justified by references to Islam

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<sup>12</sup> Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia

could not be supported. According to Sageman al-Qaida was not an organization but rather a social network and social bonds played a crucial role in the individuals' decision to engage in violence. The book sparked a series of studies of individuals and groups who had been involved in planning terrorism (examples include: Nesser, 2004; Taarnby, 2006; Bakker, 2006) which attempted to identify patterns which could explain why individuals turned to violence and terrorism focussing on contacts and networks.

Another branch of the literature focused on humiliation, exclusion and loss of identity due to migration, modernization and globalization leading to a 'hybrid identity' as explanations to why individuals turned to violence and terrorism (examples include: Kepel, 2004; Roy, 2004; Khosrokhavar, 2005; 2009). Khosrokhavar introduced the concept of "humiliation by proxy" (Khosrokhavar, 2005; 2009) to explain how individuals living in one part of the world could identify with individuals living in another to such an extent that the latter's humiliation was felt as his or her own humiliation and could motivate violence. In Buijs, Demant & Hamdy (2007) a similar line of reasoning was applied and the notion of 'major events' leading individuals with such hybrid identities to experience cognitive openings causing the individuals to be open to new identities was added. Wiktorowicz (2005) also works with the notion of cognitive openings making individuals open to new identities and describes how specific groups – such as *al-Muhajiroun* – attract followers.

Wiktorowicz's conference paper "Joining the Cause: Al-Muhajiroun and Radical Islam" (Wiktorowicz, 2004) presented at a conference at Yale University appears to have played a central role in the search for *radicalization processes*. In the paper Wiktorowicz introduced a model of "a process of persuasion" (Wiktorowicz, 2004:1) which includes four steps:

- “1) cognitive opening – an individual becomes receptive to the possibility of new ideas and worldviews;
- 2) religious seeking – the individual seeks meaning through a religious idiom,
- 3) frame alignment – the public representation proffered by the radical group “makes sense” to the seeker and attracts his or her initial interest;
- 4) socialization – the individual experiences religious lessons and activities that facilitate indoctrination,

identity-construction and value changes. The first three processes are necessary prior conditions for the fourth (socialization)” (Wiktorowicz, 2004:1)

Wiktorowicz’s model found resonance and the notion of a causal process through which individuals came to *be* terrorists gained ground. The notion particularly gained ground with authorities in charge of preventing terrorism. From this came a series of models of radicalization which primarily focused on the individual’s path from *ordinary* to *terrorist*. Some described this process as a series of phases through which the individual gradually comes to identify with a given ideology and to accept the use of violence (examples include: Silber & Bhatt, 2007; PET<sup>13</sup>) whereas others described a process in which the individual loses resilience to an existing supply of violent ideologies because of a cognitive opening (examples include: NCTb, 2007; INM, 2008).

This development in turn led to a critical revision of the simple causality which the models could be interpreted as promoting and to a critique of the models’ “major methodological and substantive shortcomings” (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009:17). These shortcomings included:

“First, simple phase models make a methodological error referred to as ‘selection on the dependent variable’ (eg., King, Keohane & Verba, 1994; Geddes, 2003), which leads the researcher to select cases with a particular value on the dependent variable to find patterns that result in the same outcome. Just as it is impossible to explain the outbreak of revolutions by studying revolutions, or to explain why books become bestsellers by examining only bestsellers, it is impossible to explain radicalization only by cases of radicalisation. Phase models, however, do exactly this. They select observations of ‘successful’ radicalisation and start reasoning backwards to describe the radicalisation process which the radicals have presumably gone through. This selection procedure will produce biased results and is therefore unsuited for

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<sup>13</sup> “Radikalisering og terror”. Published by The Danish Security and Intelligence Service. No date of publication

deducing or testing hypotheses about causal inferences. [...] The second critique is of a more substantive nature. Phase models run the risk of applying ‘statistical discrimination’ due to their inability to prove that the phases they describe apply only to successful cases of (violent) radicalisation. Statistical discrimination occurs in this context when general traits are used as a signal of other unobserved traits that relate to radicalisation. In phase models, people who appear to be in a particular phase of the model will be suspected of radicalising toward violent outcomes, even though people who are not radicalising at all, or who are radicalizing but not in a violent direction, might display similar behavior – phase models at least cannot prove otherwise. Consequently, innocent people might be singled out on the basis of race, religion, or particular behavior and suspected of radicalisation” (Veldhuis & Staun, 2009:17-18)

Ranstorp (2010) suggests a logic alternative to the ‘selection on the dependent variable’ – namely that researchers broaden their focus:

“As such, it will require (terrorism) researchers to talk to different stakeholders and pursue research agendas in a broader academic mode and manner in the future, beyond focusing on terrorists themselves and wrestling clarity of motivation out of violent backgrounds forensically mined for deviance and other clues in a *post-hoc* fashion” (Ranstorp, 2010:7, italics in original)

At the conference *The Discourse on the Radical*<sup>14</sup> in Copenhagen in November 2009 the entire ‘radicalization discourse’ and the many initiatives launched to prevent and counter radicalization were scrutinized. It was argued that the concept radicalization is ill defined but is nevertheless widely used in public and political discourse and as a consequence: “the discourse has in other words become self-preserving” (DIIS, 2010:3, my translation). It was also argued that the concept of radicalization is a concept from “the political agenda (and thereby implicitly a part of it). As a consequence it is important to note who is using the concept and how” (DIIS, 2010:11, my translation)

This debate on radicalization processes can also be traced in recent reports which recommend distinguishing between different types of radicalization – for example between non-violent and violent radicalization (Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010) and between condoning violence in conflict areas and in non-conflict areas (Kühle & Lindekilde, 2010).

## Contributions

The present dissertation’s primary contribution to the existing body of literature is that new empirical data on contemporary Jihadism in the West is presented. Empirical data is a scarce commodity within terrorism research (Silke, 2001; 2004; Silke in Jackson, Smyth & Gunning, 2009; Horgan in Silke, 2004; Ranstorp in Jackson, Smyth & Gunning, 2009) and within the narrower field of research on Jihadism:

“Major differences distinguish the study of Jihadism from most other social fields. To begin with, those who work on urban sociology “go and see” what is happening on the ground. No one expects sociological or anthropological research on an urban district to be done without observing it in person, analyzing its streets, landmarks, and other features. Studying Jihadism, in the overwhelming majority of the cases, means working on

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<sup>14</sup> *The Discourse on the Radical*. Conference arranged by University of Copenhagen, University of Aarhus, Danish Institute for International Studies and the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs and co-funded by the Danish Foreign Ministry

secondhand documents, mostly produced or published by intelligence agents; consulting data on the Internet; or analyzing statistics put at scholars' disposal by government authorities" (Khosrokhavar, 2009:5)

The dissertation contributes to the debate about New versus Old terrorism by arguing that contemporary Jihadism in the West must be understood as a counterculture comparable to other countercultures and by documenting how some individuals have passed through several ideological contexts before engaging with Jihadism. This implies that violence or terrorism committed within the framework of Jihadism can be compared to violence and terrorism committed within other frameworks and that research on other types of violence and terrorism as a consequence is relevant.

By shedding light on the role of ideology and of al-Qaida via the empirical data the dissertation provides contributes to the debates about the role of ideology and al-Qaida vis-à-vis terrorism in the West.

The present dissertation also engages with the debate about radicalization by shedding light on the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West and on how credibility is assigned based on the narratives of informants who have been convicted of planning terrorism as well as of informants who have not been in trouble with the authorities.

The conclusions resonate with analyses offered by other researchers and confirm Roy's argument:

"In fact it is more productive to understand al-Qaeda in Europe as a youth movement, which shares many factors with other forms of dissent, either political (the ultra-left), or behavioural: the fascination for sudden suicidal violence as illustrated by the paradigm of random shootings in schools (the 'Columbine syndrome'). [...] A 'transversal' approach (comparing youth violence among non-Muslims with al-Qaeda recruitment) sheds much light on the present process of radicalisation among youth, and seems more fruitful than a vertical approach in terms of Islamic intellectual legacy (from the Koran to Sayyid

Qotb, through Ibn Taymiyya). Instead of looking vertically through Muslim history and theology to explain al-Qaeda's violence, one should connect it to the general phenomena of radical violence among youth. The leap to violence is not the result of a long process of indoctrination and maturation. We have already noted the predominance of activism on ideological and intellectual formation: there is a very short time between religious re-conversion and passage to violent action: Violence is at the core of the fascination of al-Qaeda" (Roy in Emerson, 2009:22)



# Part 2



# Chapter 5: Counterculture

In this chapter I explore the question “Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?” by analyzing Jihadism as a counterculture. To do this I draw on the combination of Kaplan & Löow (2002) and Roszak (1995) introduced in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods*. I also explore the question “What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?” by analyzing motivations for being attracted to the Jihadism counterculture formulated by a selection of individuals who have been in trouble with the authorities and a selection of individuals who have not. To do this I draw on the combination of Jenkins (1997), Baumann & Gingrich (2004), Jackson (2002), and Honneth (1995) introduced in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods*.

Over the course of the terrorism trials I attended, it became evident the defendants were far from isolated individuals or groups. The defendants in all three cases – the Glasvej-case, the Glostrup-case and the SÜ-case – knew each other and shared several acquaintances.

Already on the first day of the second trial which I attended – the Glasvej-trial – I recognized individuals in the galleries who had also attended the Glostrup-trial. As the days passed an increasing number of individuals who had attended the Glostrup-trial appeared in the galleries and two of the individuals who had been prosecuted and acquitted in the Glostrup-trial – EH and AA – also attended the Glasvej-trial regularly. These two men also attended the SÜ-trial as did other individuals who had attended the Glostrup-trial and the Glasvej-trial.

During the Glasvej-trial the prosecutor probed about the friendship between the two defendants – Hammad Khurshid and Abdulghani Tokhi – and EH and AA who had been prosecuted in the Glostrup-trial and there were no attempts to conceal the fact that they were friends. AA was even called as a witness when the Glasvej-trial was appealed. The prosecutor in the Glasvej-trial asked Hammad Khurshid if he knew Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane – a Dane who was arrested in Pakistan in December 2001 and subsequently spent more than two years in Guantanamo<sup>15</sup> – and Khurshid explained: “I have met Slimane a few times – the first time was probably in the mosque” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008, my translation).

There was no doubt SÜ, Hammad Khurshid and Abdulghani Tokhi were friends – their friendship was the reason why SÜ wrote what he did in the chat which got him in trouble with the authorities. But SÜ was also friends with EH and AA. During his own trial he explained: “They also helped me with finding places to sleep” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

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<sup>15</sup> Abderrahmane’s narrative is reproduced in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms*

During this trial the prosecutor asked SÜ if it was correct that EH had collected money for Abdulghani Tokhi's family when Tokhi had been convicted and that the father had rejected the money. SÜ explained: "Yes. [...] Brothers have collected money for other brothers too but the families refuse to receive them. No money was collected for Hammad. He is better off than Abdulghani." (SÜ, SÜ-trial, August 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

It also became evident that the individuals who were prosecuted in the three trials and some of their acquaintances who attended the trials did not perceive themselves as merely acquaintances – they also perceived themselves as part of a 'shared we'. During conversations I regularly encountered statements which included words such as 'we' and 'us' exposing this perceived, 'shared we'. A few examples include:

"We are the *Ahl us-Sunnah* [people of the Sunnah]" (2 and 9, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

"When we walk in the streets people look at us like we are terrorists, people are afraid of us" (20, Copenhagen, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

"We are not terrorists, we are the just ones" (2, Copenhagen, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation)

"When some of my friends get on the bus the *kuffars* [infidels] get off [...] They must be able to see that we are Muslims and they will flee in awe" (SÜ in chat, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented during SÜ-trial, August 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

"We must write our histories about why we became Muslims and explain why people become terrorists or fundamentalists. People need to know that we are not terrorists we just have obligations in relation to our maker. Explaining why people become terrorists is a

difficult task” (2 to Abdulghani Tokhi, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented by prosecutor, Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)  
“We wear what is called Sunnah-clothes” (14, Copenhagen, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

This ‘shared we’ indicates the individuals who had ended up on trial and some of their acquaintances perceived themselves as part of something which most other individuals were not a part of. This ‘shared we’ cannot be simply defined as friendship – some obviously were friends but others can better be described as mere acquaintances or simply as travelling in the circles. The boundaries of the ‘shared we’, however, appear too fluid to allow for the definition of it as an actual group.

But the individuals did perceive themselves as sharing something – something which included worldviews, norms, dress codes, language and insights. Attempting to grasp this shared ‘something’ and ‘shared we’ – and not least the attractiveness of it – appears relevant and in the following I will do so by drawing on the theorizing on cultic milieus and countercultures introduced in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods*.

## **Cultic Milieus, Meta-countercultures and Countercultures**

### **Cultic Milieus**

A cultic milieu is something which exists at all times in literally all modern societies. It is a minority position in contrast to a majority which has the right to define ‘normality’. The potential size of a cultic milieu is closely related to the majority definition of ‘normality’: the narrower the definition is the more individuals will potentially feel excluded from it and consequently search elsewhere for a ‘normality’ within which they can see themselves. The potential size of a cultic milieu is also related to affluence. In a society where individuals struggle to survive fewer will find energy to contemplate alternative ‘normalities’ than in a society where there is social security and affluence.

The cultic milieu is very much defined by being in opposition to mainstream and by being seeking. I understand the perception of self as being ‘deviant’ to be implying that the individuals

perceive themselves as being different from the majority-defined culture and normality and in search of another culture and normality:

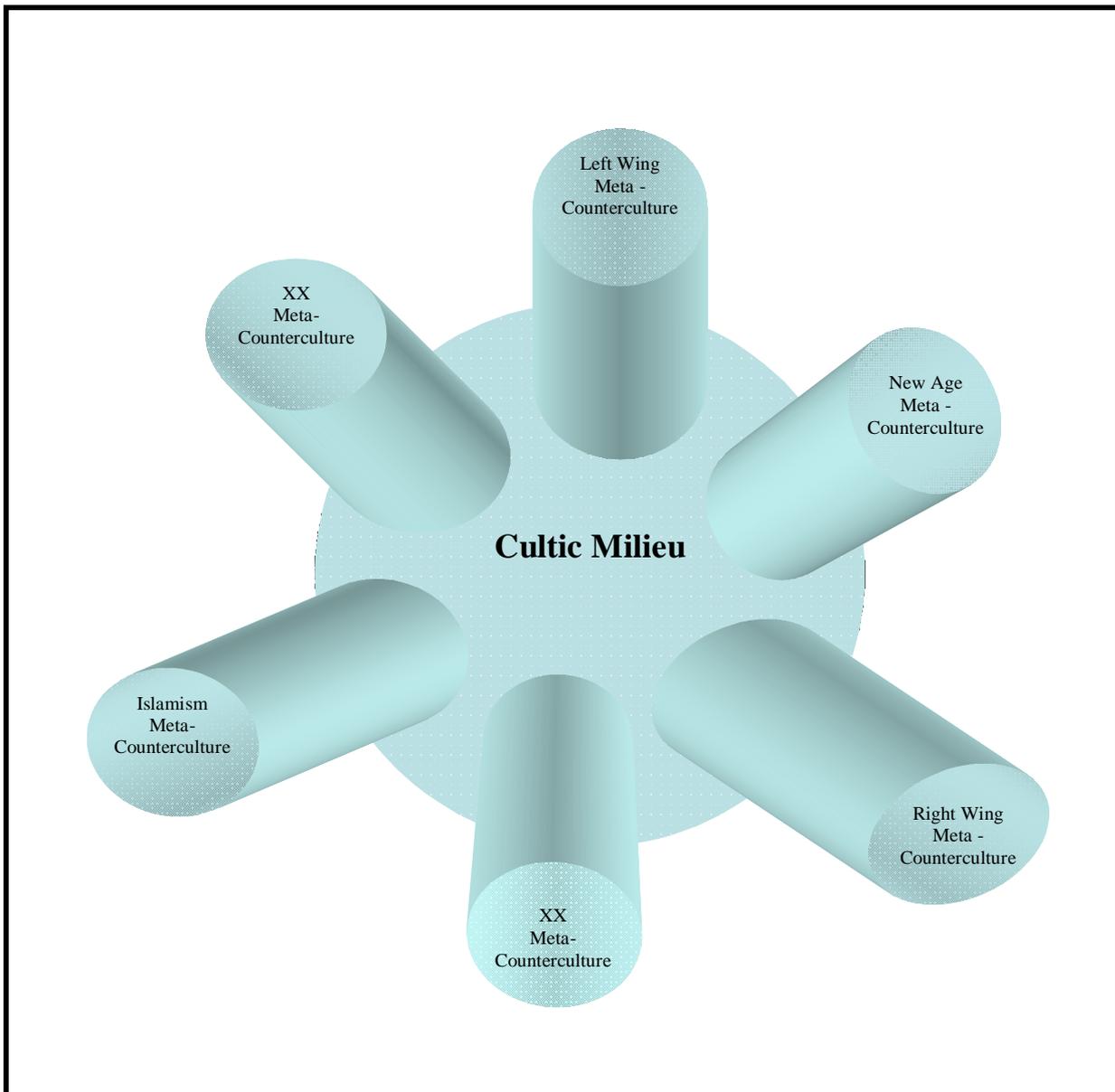
“[...] the special character of cultic groups as stemming from their deviant and heterodox position in relation to the dominant societal culture.” (Kaplan & Lööw, 2002:13)

What is shared in a cultic milieu is the sense that status quo is not optimal and the search for better alternatives. This does not mean all individuals inhabiting the cultic milieu agree on what is wrong with status quo but they do agree that something is wrong with it. The individuals inhabiting the cultic milieu do not agree on what would be a better alternative either.

The cultic milieu is in itself primarily a milieu where seekers meet other seekers and where seeking is acceptable and respected. It is therefore conducive to the formation of what Kaplan & Lööw refer to as ‘cults’ or ‘cultic groups’. As explained in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods* I find the concept ‘cult’ to be confusing and therefore replace it with the concept *counterculture*. The concept *counterculture* captures the fact that the individuals involved define themselves as being counter to majority society’s normality and culture but also that they define themselves as an alternative to them. They construct their own normality and norms, thereby constructing their own shared culture which includes a distinct language – shared words, shared ways of using words, shared ways of greeting each other etc. – dress codes, codes of conduct, etc. Additionally, the concept *counterculture* captures a central aspect of contemporary Jihadism in the West specifically – that being ‘counter’ or being in opposition to the established is a crucial source of credibility. This will be treated in chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility*.

To capture the complexity and many layers of the entities which can emerge in a cultic milieu I have divided the entities into two. The first layer of entities which can take shape within the cultic milieu is what I refer to as *meta-countercultures*. Within the broad and accommodating cultic milieu some individuals may find each other in a shared definition of what is wrong with the status quo and of a direction in which to look for a better alternative:

## A cultic milieu including meta-countercultures:



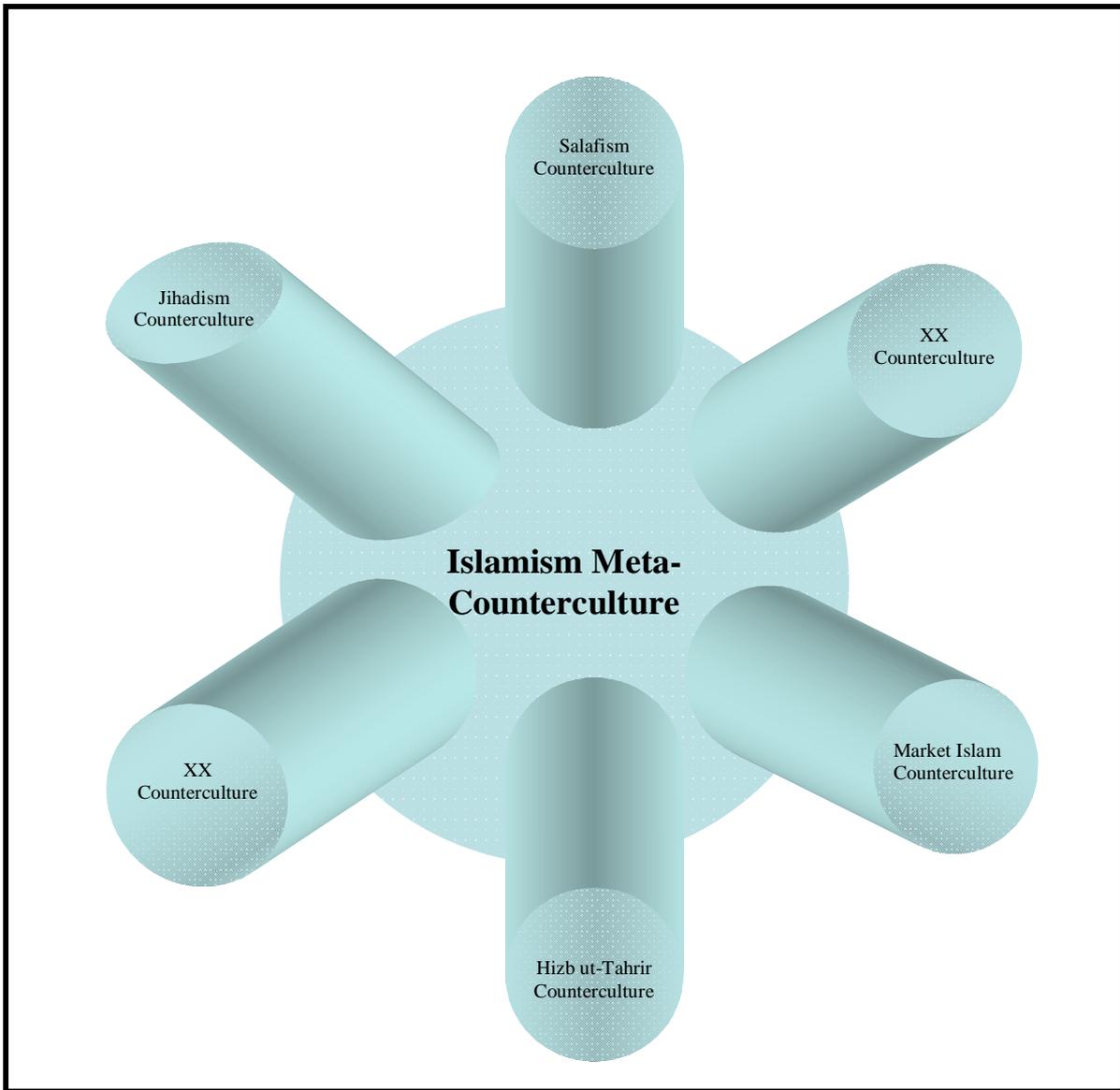
## Meta-Countercultures

The meta-countercultures indicated in the model are in no way to be seen as an exhaustive list – they are merely examples. This is illustrated by the inclusion of ‘XX meta-counterculture’ into which any meta-counterculture can be read. I use the concept ‘Islamism’ to describe a meta-counterculture where the direction in which to look for a better alternative is defined as a society governed and guided by principles found within Islam – nothing more and nothing less.

The definition of what is wrong with the status quo may be shared by several different meta-counter cultures but the definition of the direction in which to look for an alternative is unique to the respective meta-counter cultures.

The level of detail in the definitions of what is wrong and of what would be a better alternative may vary greatly between the meta-counter cultures. It may also vary within a meta-counter culture and this can lead to the emergence of more defined and refined entities within the meta-counter cultures. These are the actual counter cultures:

**A meta-counter culture including counter cultures:**



## Countercultures

The countercultures<sup>16</sup> indicated in the model are in no way to be seen as an exhaustive list. As it was the case with the previous model they are merely examples.

The model, to some extent, compares to Roy's (2004) distinction between 'Neofundamentalism' – which would include all other countercultures than the Jihadism counterculture – and 'Jihadism' as well as to Khosrokhavar's (2009) distinction between 'Fundamentalism' and 'Hyperfundamentalism' – which would include all other countercultures than the Jihadism counterculture – and then 'Jihadism'.

When zooming into a counterculture one finds a much more detailed definition of what is wrong with status quo and of what would be a better alternative. The definitions of what is wrong with status quo may still be shared with other countercultures – and with meta-countercultures. What is distinct for the individual countercultures is the definition of what is the better alternative – or rather what is *the solution*. In a counterculture the individuals are required to subscribe to the counterculture's shared vision of Utopia – and to the shared 'culture' and 'normality' which includes shared language, dress code, norms, etc. Subscription to these is a requirement for gaining access to the counterculture and its resources. In chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility* it is illustrated how straying from the counterculture's shared culture can cause problems.

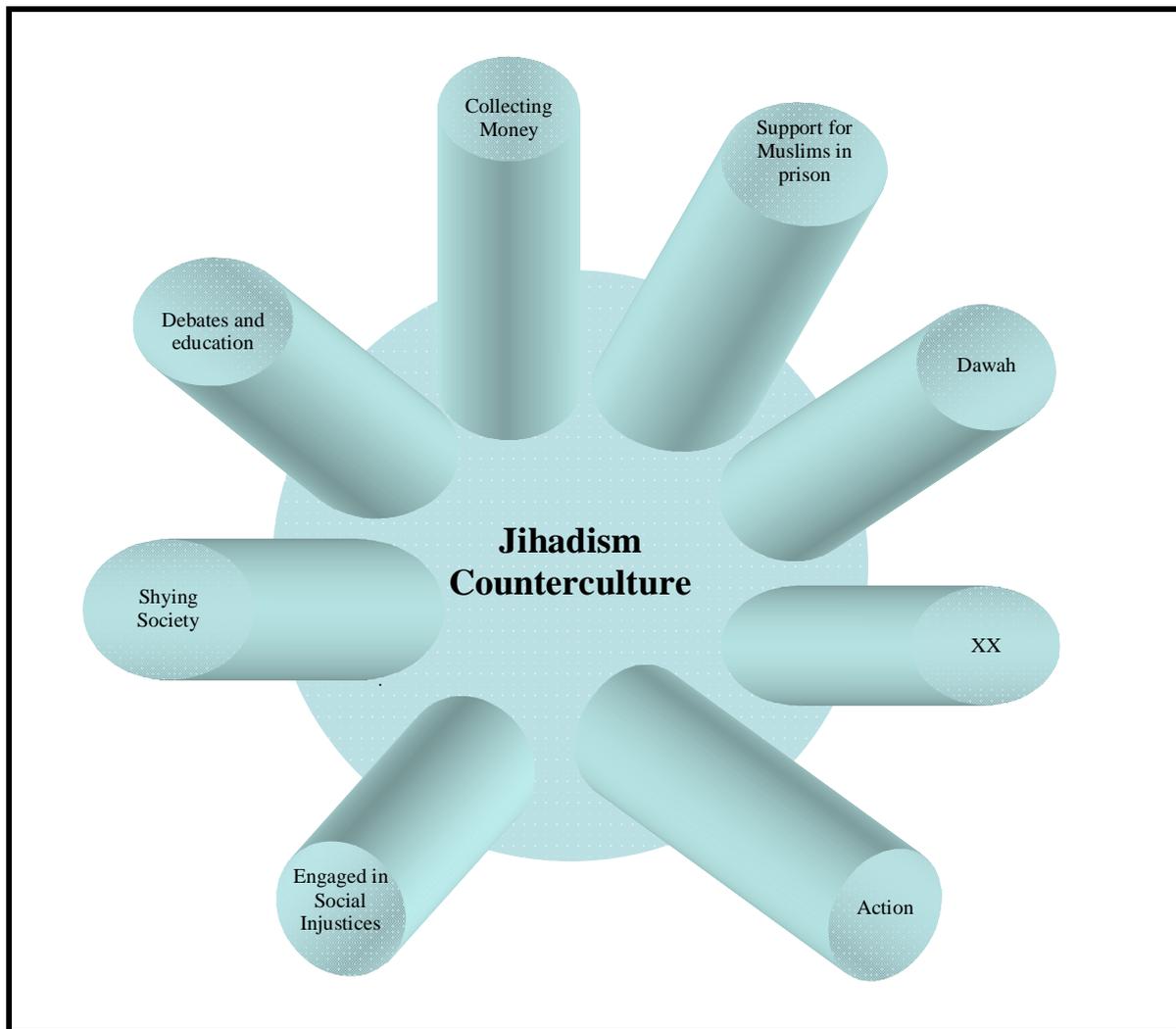
Within these countercultures there may, however, be diverging analyses of what should – and could – be done to move from status quo to the solution.

Some individuals and groups may believe the best one can hope for is to pave the way for change by setting a good example to others. Others may resign to distancing themselves from the surrounding society to protect their own purity believing that nothing can be changed. Others may have confidence in education as the answer and engage themselves in developing and disseminating material explaining their points of view, engage themselves in demonstrations to invoke the attention of the surrounding society or perhaps engage themselves in activities to attract the attention of the media. Others may believe that only through violent means can anything really be changed. Yet others may engage themselves in collecting money and other resources for the individuals and groups who engage in the abovementioned activities. This leads to different positions within the counterculture:

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<sup>16</sup> The term 'Market Islam' was coined by Haenni (2005) to describe how a focus on personal salvation, self-improvement and a quest for economic success has led to a new market for popular products which are framed as Islamic – e.g. clothes, food, beauty products, applications for PC's and mobile phones etc.

**A counterculture including different positions:**



As it was the case with the two previous models the positions indicated are in no way to be seen as an exhaustive list.

**The Jihadism Counterculture**

Within the Jihadism counterculture the shared definition of what is wrong with the status quo is that society is regulated by man-made laws and rules. Because man is in essence flawed, selfish and self-serving man's laws are too. This leads to a society in which materialism, hedonism, greed, exploitation and capitalism rule and in which the stronger use and take advantage of the weaker. This definition is to some extent shared by the Islamism meta-counterculture but also by the Left-Wing meta-counterculture and by the New Age meta-counterculture.

The shared definition of what is the better alternative – or rather what is *the solution* is the establishment of a Caliphate which is ruled by Sharia – Allah’s laws – and in which everybody – including the ones who are in power – fear Allah to such an extent that they are never tempted to serve their own interests. This definition is to some extent shared by the Salafism counterculture and the Hizb ut-Tahrir counterculture.

The shared culture includes a very literal imitation of the Prophet in every way – including which clothes to wear, what food to eat, how to eat the food, how to greet one another, etcetera. It also includes the view that engagement in the Lesser Jihad – i.e. violent defence of Islam – is a central aspect of life and of being a practising Muslim. It also includes a shared language which is infused with Arabic and Islamic terms but also with Danish terms which are used in distinct ways which differ from mainstream language and newly constructed terms in Danish. An example of a Danish term which is used in a distinct way which differs from mainstream language is ‘modernistisk’ which translates into ‘modernistic’. This is used to describe individuals or groups who attempt to adapt Islam to modern life. An example of a newly constructed term in Danish is the term ‘fortyde’ which is used instead of ‘fortolke’ about religious sources. The term ‘fortolke’ translates into ‘interpret’ in English. The term ‘fortyde’ is not a Danish word – it is a combination of the first part of the term ‘fortolke’ – ‘for’ – and the term ‘tyde’ which also translates into ‘interpret’ in English. But in Danish the term ‘tyde’ connotes something slightly different than the term ‘fortolke’. ‘Fortolke’ connotes that the reader so to say reads what is written between the lines which is what is done with e.g. poetry to uncover the *deeper meaning*. ‘Tyde’ connotes that the reader so to say deciphers what is on the page which is what is done with e.g. hieroglyphs to uncover what is *written*. The shared culture also includes a dress-code:

“We wear what is called Sunnah-clothes” (14,  
Copenhagen, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

This makes up the Jihadism counterculture’s normality and ties it together.

### **The cultic milieu, meta-countercultures and countercultures in different times**

Within the cultic milieu in Denmark different identifiable meta-countercultures and countercultures have attracted the most attention through the past decades. In the 1960’s and 70’s

the most visible were probably ‘the hippies’, in the 1980’s it was probably ‘the punks’, and in the 2000’s it was the Jihadis.

The explanation to why a given counterculture attracts the most attention and the most followers at a specific point in time is to be found in a combination of factors.

Firstly, cumulative processes play a role – once a given counterculture has gained some attention it becomes more visible to potential participants and it becomes more attractive to individuals who want attention, who then attract even further attention and followers.

Secondly, different individuals search for different rewards in the cultic milieu and are further attracted to different meta-counterculture and countercultures because they believe they can find what they are searching for exactly there. In the following I explore what attracts individuals to the Jihadism counterculture.

## **What’s in it? Towards a typology of purposes which the counterculture can serve**

In the following I present the views and motivations formulated by a selection of individuals who have been prosecuted in Denmark, by Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane and Eric Breininger, and by informants who have not been in trouble with the authorities.

On the basis of this I draw a picture of four types of attractions which motivate individuals to look up the Jihadism counterculture.

### **Motivations formulated by individuals who have been prosecuted**

#### **Hammad Khurshid**

Hammad Khurshid was accused and convicted of planning terrorism in the Glasvej-case. He was born in Denmark in 1985 by Pakistani parents but his mother moved back to Pakistan with him and his siblings when he was one year old while the father stayed in Denmark.

Khurshid had a very close relationship with his mother, did well in school and finished high school. When Khurshid was a teenager the father joined the family in Pakistan and when Khurshid turned eighteen in 2003 he moved to Denmark. His older brother had also moved to Denmark when he turned eighteen. The two brothers shared an apartment in Copenhagen and both worked many hours – the older brother as a taxi-driver and Hammad Khurshid as a painter and in a furniture-shop.

Khurshid was saving up money to pay for a permit so that he too could drive a taxi. He did, however, also have another plan: “I was looking for a movement I could trust” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). The movement which Khurshid was looking for should be: “a good group, one that respects others, is open and does not oppress others” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). In his search for such a group Khurshid explored several possibilities. He:

“went to a few meetings with Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark  
[...] I went to everybody offering education in  
Copenhagen – Abu Ahmad [Danish Imam], Abu Laban  
[Danish Imam], Hizb ut-Tahrir” (Hammad Khurshid,  
Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Khurshid travelled to Pakistan every year to visit his family but he also continued his search during these visits. In 2006 he met a man named Abu Ali. According to Khurshid, Abu Ali “was a good man” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). Khurshid was immediately attracted to Abu Ali because he was an educated Imam from Saudi Arabia and as he explained “the best come from Saudi Arabia – that is where the Salafi come from” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). The two planned to travel to Lebanon in the summer 2006 to fight against Israel. But Abu Ali procrastinated and they never made it to Lebanon so Khurshid continued his search.

In early 2007 Khurshid narrowed down his search to two mosques in Pakistan. This was, according to his explanation, the Grand Mosque in Lahore and the Red Mosque in Islamabad. After having visited both mosques Khurshid found that the Grand Mosque – which “was *Ahl-e-Hadith* [People of the Hadith]” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) – was too focused on the leader Sheikh Hafiz Said. “He almost became a cult” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). He then decided to focus on the Red Mosque:

“People in the Red Mosque openly supported  
Afghanistan’s Mujahideen – I liked that” (Hammad  
Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

In Khurshid's view the Mujahideen were absolutely good and just:

"The Mujahideen are heroes who fight for their nation and their people. Taliban is a movement – it is a synonym for all those who fight for freedom and for that which is good" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The goals which Khurshid wished to pursue were quite simple:

"It is about maintaining the country's original culture and resisting foreign influence – it doesn't matter which culture or tribe as long as they are open to others. [...] I'm not interested in politics" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid was willing to engage in combat to pursue his goals: "I had decided I would travel to Pakistan to fight in Afghanistan" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) but he also had a clear view on where he did and did not want to engage in combat:

"War? That is in Afghanistan and Iraq – why then would you go to Pakistan? Killing innocent people is not OK – it has nothing to do with war" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

"I don't think you have found any material in my possession which says that it is OK to attack the West" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

In May 2007 Khurshid returned to Denmark bringing with him a document which contained recipes for explosives and detonators. In court, he explained he had copied this during one of his

visits to the Red Mosque. There, a man “read from it and two or three would write it down.” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Khurshid explained he copied the document because “It would be good lessons for a soldier preparing for combat” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Relying on one of the recipes in the document Khurshid manufactured approximately ten grams TATP in his apartment in Copenhagen and in court he explained that:

“I thought it was exiting. And the feeling I had – that I had manufactured this, that I detonated it – that was fun” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

“I wanted an opportunity to touch it and see it and smell it – I was curious” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid also brought a special light bulb with him from Pakistan. This light bulb could be used to manufacture a detonator described in the document. In Denmark he tested it and during his trial the prosecutor asked him why. Khurshid replied: “I just wanted some action” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). Khurshid repeatedly referred to a search for action and adventure: “I just wanted action in my life – something exiting” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Religion obviously played a role in Khurshid’s life:

” I have always wanted to be a good practicing Muslim and I have always had trouble being it” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

But it was not at the centre of his attention. In court Khurshid’s defence asked him if he wanted to become a scholar and he replied: “I thought about it but I thought it was boring – there wasn’t anything exiting in it” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). He further expanded on this in court:

“I didn’t want to study and read the Quran then – I would rather spend my time on other things” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

In a conversation with Tokhi this was also a theme. During one of Khurshid’s stays in the Red Mosque in Pakistan he and Tokhi spoke on the telephone and Tokhi asked Khurshid if he had begun studying the Quran to which Khurshid replied: “I’m not really up for it. I would rather find people who have contacts who do things” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid did not indicate ideological engagement as a primary motivation for joining the Red Mosque either:

“I went there to support the people who demonstrated [against the government’s plans to close down the mosque] When it developed into being about implementing Sharia I went along” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Khurshid was quite aware of the random nature of his search:

”You speak as if I was very conscious and had thought everything through and planned a long time ahead. It wasn’t like that. Things just happened” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Hammad Khurshid appears to have been a young man who was very much motivated by a search for action – understood as action and adventure as well as taking action and engaging in combat. His interest in ideology and religion was limited. In his own words he just went along when the movement around the Red Mosque began working for implementation of Sharia and he was not interested in studying Islam because it was not exciting.

Khurshid did not appear to rely heavily on the company of others – he had made the decision to engage in combat and whoever wished to join him was apparently welcome.

## **Abdulghani Tokhi**

Abdulghani Tokhi was accused and convicted of planning terrorism in the Glasvej-case. He was born in Afghanistan in 1986 but his parents fled the country when he was an infant. The family spent six years as illegal refugees in Thailand until the father made his way to Denmark where he was granted asylum and the family was reunited. Tokhi was described as a popular boy by several witnesses – he was quiet, calm and helpful. Tokhi finished public school and enrolled in high school but dropped out after a year and a half. After this he held temporary jobs as a driver and as a guard in the subway.

During his trial Tokhi was asked if he became increasingly religious over the years and he replied:

“The older I got the more I have pulled myself together”  
(Abdulghani Tokhi, Glasvej-trial, August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

Hammad Khurshid described Tokhi as someone whom he admired:

“Tokhi is a good man and I would like to be like him – he stays away from girls and away from bad people”  
(Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

“Tokhi is a good person. He doesn't ask questions if you ask him to do something – he just says that he trusts you and does it” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

During his trial Tokhi was asked why he copied parts of the document containing recipes for explosives which Khurshid had brought back from Pakistan and he replied:

“How many people have a recipe for explosives? I wanted that” (Abdulghani Tokhi, Glasvej-trial, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

About Tokhi’s copy Khurshid explained:

“Abdulghani didn’t need to know a lot – he wasn’t curious like me” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Tokhi’s level of enthusiasm did not always impress Khurshid. Khurshid made Tokhi responsible for finding a light bulb similar to the one he had brought with him from Pakistan which was to be used for a detonator but: “Two months had passed and he still had not gotten them” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

Khurshid also put Tokhi in charge of purchasing the chemicals needed to manufacture TATP and instructed him in how to behave when he went to purchase them: “you should just be this quiet and calm person” (Hammad Khurshid, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented Glasvej-trial, 28 August 2008, my translation). Tokhi was less than eager and explained that he was “sleeping 12 -13 hours a day – there’s nothing to do” (Abdulghani Tokhi, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) Khurshid became angry and said: “Pull yourself together. Haven’t you got the note?” (Hammad Khurshid, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In court Khurshid explained that the note he was referring to was a list of chemicals which he had written for Tokhi (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Tokhi finally managed to purchase the chemicals and called Khurshid on the mobile phone to let him know and explain he had encountered some problems when making the purchase:

“There were only women there, man” (Abdulghani Tokhi, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007) Khurshid teases him saying: “That’s OK – you’ve got all women” (Hammad Khurshid, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007) and Tokhi replies: “Shut up, man” (Abdulghani Tokhi, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

A few days later Tokhi and Khurshid were watching videos on YouTube. From *Globalterroralert.com* they found a video entitled *Al-Qaida training camp in Waziristan* and Khurshid explained to Tokhi: “There is very little electricity in the villages. You will need a good flashlight, a good watch and a plate to sleep on” (Hammad Khurshid, August 18<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008, my translation). To this Tokhi replied: “I have a really cheap flashlight at home, but it is really good” (Abdulghani Tokhi, August 18<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented Glasvej-trial, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008, my translation).

During the trial the prosecutor asked Khurshid as well as Tokhi about the plans the two apparently had. Khurshid explained:

“I had decided that I would travel to Pakistan to fight in Afghanistan – it would be OK if he wanted to join me” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Whereas Tokhi explained:

“I wasn’t dismissive to the idea of following Hammad to Pakistan and Waziristan” (Abdulghani Tokhi, Glasvej-trial, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

Khurshid and Tokhi were obviously very close friends:

“We exercised together every day, ate together, went for walks together – did practically everything together” (Abdulghani Tokhi, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

“There was no difference between Tokhi’s money and my money” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

But the friendship was not an equal one:

“In all the time I have known Abdulghani I have been the dominant one and he just says OK – he is a good man but he is much too nice” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, June 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Abdulghani Tokhi appears to have been a young man who was very dependent on his friends and particularly on Hammad Khurshid. He was interested in religion and asked Khurshid if he had begun studying the Quran when Khurshid was in Pakistan. Tokhi was also fascinated by the idea of being part of something spectacular – he wanted to have a recipe for explosives and he wanted to be part of a plan.

But when it came to actually acting by purchasing chemicals Tokhi’s level of commitment was not as high as Khurshid could have wished for. Tokhi’s comments about having a cheap but good flashlight at home which he could bring with him to Afghanistan indicates that he was less than realistic about the plans.

## SÜ

SÜ was accused and acquitted of planning terrorism in the SÜ-case. SÜ’s father came to Denmark in 1979 and later married a woman who lived in Turkey and brought up their sons there. SÜ was therefore born in Turkey in 1985 and spent most of his childhood there but when he was twelve years old the mother decided to move to Denmark.

SÜ had a close relationship to his family in Turkey not least to his grandfather. After the family had moved to Denmark the grandfather fell ill and he joined the family in Denmark. During his stay SÜ developed an even closer relationship to him and it was hard for him when the grandfather died in February 2007:

“His last wish was that the family began practicing. That is why – so that he would be proud of me” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

SÜ never had a close relationship with his father: “He wasn’t satisfied with me” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) and he described his father as “mentally ill [...] I have no problems with my father but he has problems with me” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

SÜ finished public school but did not continue along any path to get an education. In fact:

“I am not very good at Turkish. I speak a little Kurdish, a little Turkish and a little Danish” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

At the time of his arrest SÜ was on sick leave from a temporary job as a driver because he had dislocated his shoulder when playing soccer. He had also been thrown out of the family’s home by the father and was homeless:

“I was on sick leave. I had no home and couldn’t go home and most of my friends worked so I hung out with whoever was around” (SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

SÜ knew the young men who were prosecuted in the Glostrup-trial from the mosque and as he explained: “They also helped me with finding places to sleep” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). He also knew the men who were arrested in the Glasvej-case:

“I spent a lot of time with Hammad and Abdulghani. I was unemployed and living in the Mosque” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

In court SÜ explained that after the two friends were arrested he spoke with Hammad Khurshid’s older brother and:

“I felt that I should do something. Collect money, write letters, visit the family – but I didn’t get any further than

thinking” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

The prosecutor asked SÜ if they spoke a lot about the arrests made in the Glasvej-case in the Mosque and SÜ replied: “Yes. And I searched the internet for more. Even when I was in Turkey I searched the internet – TV2 and DR [The two national Danish TV-stations]” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 13<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

SÜ also used the internet for other purposes. He downloaded numerous videos from YouTube, particularly *Nasheeds* (Islamic vocal music) even though: “I don’t understand the words” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). SÜ also downloaded videos featuring Osama bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In court the prosecutor asked why he had downloaded those videos and SÜ explained: “I wanted to know what they thought and what they referred to” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

SÜ also downloaded videos featuring bloody executions and when the prosecutor asked him about these he explained:

“I haven’t been to war. I don’t come from Palestine, Iraq or Somalia so I wanted to see how people die” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 SÜ engaged in a chat with a friend in Turkey which brought him in trouble. During the chat SÜ told the friend about the arrest of his two friends, Abdulghani Tokhi and Hammad Khurshid. He wrote that “chickens” ought to be kidnapped and exchanged for the two. In court he explained that by chickens he meant “Danish soldiers” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) but added: “I am not saying to my friend that *he* should do something” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

SÜ further explained: “In the chat I mean generally that someone who is responsible ought to catch soldiers at war and exchange them for Hammad and Abdulghani” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) adding: “The chat is a hypothetical discussion between two persons who are not capable of doing anything” (SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

In the same chat SÜ also wrote about the “fascist party in Denmark who want to use drawings of our Prophet in their propaganda” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In court

he explained he was referring to the Danish People's Party which was planning to use the cartoons which caused the cartoon-crisis on their election posters and added "Muslims in Denmark do not do a lot, they don't arrange demonstrations, and they do not go out into the streets" (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

In another chat SÜ wrote to his wife "I am tired of being a keeping-quiet-child" (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In court he explained what he had meant by this: "I wanted to have beard like the Prophet – I didn't want to be a child who is controlled by the family" (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

While SÜ was in Turkey visiting his family and looking for a wife he and Abdulghani Tokhi spoke on the telephone. SÜ mentioned that his family had ordered him to shave off his beard and Tokhi said: "Just wait till you get to Denmark – *Inshallah* – they cannot do anything" (Abdulghani Tokhi, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in SÜ-trial, August 27<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

SÜ appears to have been a young man who was socially marginalized and who was ostracized from his own family. He was very dependent on his friends and looking for a place to belong as well as a way to break free from his family.

## **EH**

EH was accused and acquitted of planning terrorism in the Glostrup-case. He was born in Denmark in 1989 as the son of Moroccan immigrants. His father was one of the founders of a mosque named Taiba in Copenhagen. EH describes himself as having had "a religious upbringing" (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). When EH was twelve years old his father allowed him to participate in a project coordinated by the Danish priest Peter Garde who wished to write a book for schoolchildren about Islam. Peter Garde contacted the Arab school where EH was enrolled and asked to be put in contact with a religious child. The result was a small book entitled 'Islam' (Garde, 2006). (Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). EH was a very good athlete and particularly excelled at karate.

As EH grew up he continued to be interested in religion. "I was immersed in religion and wished to learn more [...] I had always wanted to know more about Islam and at this point in time I was doing something about it" (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). But he found it difficult to find answers to the questions he had and began searching in other places than mosques:

“You hardly get any knowledge in the mosque. Lessons are rare and I didn’t like the ones that were offered. On the internet you discuss a lot of things such as interpretations of things that happen – like terrorist attacks” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

“The Imams in the mosques don’t relate to life here. They come from another country and they don’t speak my language” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

EH attended classes by a self-proclaimed Imam called Abu Ahmed (a Danish Imam who the prosecutor during the trial described as extreme):

“I went there a few times. He just read texts and did not give his own interpretations. I can do that myself” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

In June 2004 EH travelled to London to attend a conference featuring Omar Bakri Muhammad:

“It wasn’t arranged by anyone in particular. It was more like a group of people who wanted to go and then agreed to go together [...] Omar Bakri was one of the speakers. He had left Hizb ut-Tahrir and I was interested in finding out why” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

When asked in court EH explained his view on Hizb ut-Tahrir:

“They are all parrots. They don’t talk about Islam they just talk about politics. They don’t come to the mosque to

pray they come there to talk politics” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

After attending the conference EH attended Omar Bakri Muhammad’s lessons on Paltalk but:

“You didn’t learn anything or hear anything new. He just says what he always says” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

When EH was arrested the police found numerous CD’s and downloads. EH had CDs containing quotes by Abdullah Azzam, Abu Qatada<sup>17</sup> and Muhammad Bouyeri<sup>18</sup> and pictures of Omar Abdel Rahman<sup>19</sup> and speeches by Ayman al-Zawahiri<sup>20</sup>. He also had folders on his PC entitled ‘Islamic Collection’ and ‘00Jihad’ but he also had downloaded a debate aired on the TV-channel Mustaqila, a video featuring Adam Gadahn<sup>21</sup> from ABC News, several broadcasts from 60 Minutes, CNN, BBC, a programme about Abu Musab al-Zarqawi<sup>22</sup> from Al-Jazeera and texts from SITE Institute<sup>23</sup>. (Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). EH explained:

“I downloaded everything I came by because I wanted to know more. I wanted to know all the different positions and have all information about these new subjects [...] I have browsed through numerous videos by fast forwarding and rewinding and viewing a little here and a little there. I am interested in what is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan and I want to have primary sources” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

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<sup>17</sup> Jordanian cleric residing in the United Kingdom. Convicted in absentia in Jordan for having planned terrorism and held in house arrest in London since 2008

<sup>18</sup> Convicted of murdering the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh

<sup>19</sup> Convicted of having participated in planning the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 1993

<sup>20</sup> Central sheikh in al-Qaida

<sup>21</sup> An American who has appeared on several videos speaking as a representative of al-Qaida

<sup>22</sup> Leader of al-Qaida in Iraq

<sup>23</sup> The organization *Search for International Terrorist Entities* which ceased its non-profit monitoring of the internet in early 2008.

EH also downloaded much from *al-Hesba* and from *ansar.net*<sup>24</sup> where he was a member. In court he explained:

“Al-Qaida publishes on Ansar al-Islam and on al-Hesba but they are not only positive towards Al-Qaida. There is also critique of Osama bin Laden and other things [...] Abu Basir al-Tartousi is a known man in London who criticizes the use of suicide operations, the attacks in London and so on” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

EH downloaded numerous more classical texts by Sheikh Mohammad bin-Saleh al-Uthaymin<sup>25</sup>, Ibn Taymiyya<sup>26</sup> who, according to him, is “one of the great scholars” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation), Bin Baz<sup>27</sup> and Ibn Kathir<sup>28</sup> (Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

EH also downloaded a posting on *ansar.net* by a person calling himself Mustadrak which contained photos of dead men. In court EH explained:

“They are of men who rebelled against the Saudi regime and I saved them because the document also contains titles of books which I want to read. One of the dead men is a Sheikh who has written one of these books” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

The real name of the man calling himself Mustadrak was Ehsamul Islam Sadequee and he was living in USA. EH often translated texts from Arabic to English for this man and during a chat between the two Mustadrak asked EH if he was currently working on something and EH replied he was working on a text entitled *Message to those who abstain from weapons* (Glostrup-trial, February 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In court EH added:

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<sup>24</sup> Jihadist websites

<sup>25</sup> Sheikh who is a pupil of Bin Baz

<sup>26</sup> Sheikh who was born in the 13<sup>th</sup> century who called for Jihad against the Mongols

<sup>27</sup> Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia from 1993 until his death in 1999 who criticized Osama bin Ladin

<sup>28</sup> Sheikh who is a pupil of Ibn Taymiyya

“Abdul Basit often helped me with the translations. He transcribes audio-files and then I can translate it into English” (EH, Glostrup-trial, February 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

EH’s father was a friend of Said Mansour who had also migrated from Morocco. In 2007 Said Mansour was convicted of having incited to terrorism and sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment. The contact between Said Mansour and the four defendants in the Glostrup-case was produced as evidence in his trial as well as in the Glostrup-trial.

EH defined his relationship to Said Mansour in the following way: “He was like an uncle to me. An older person whom you respect” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

EH sometimes helped Said Mansour and on may 7<sup>th</sup> 2005 he copied a video to a CD for him. The video featured a debate between Abu Qatada and Abu Issa<sup>29</sup> and the theme was the Caliphate in the United Kingdom:

“Abu Issa is for a Caliphate in the United Kingdom. He calls for it. Abu Qatada is against it [...] I converted the video so that it could be posted on the internet because many had asked for it” (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

EH appears to have been a young man who was searching for knowledge and intellectual challenges. He was very interested in religious and ideological discussions and as he did not find these within the conventional framework of mosques he searched elsewhere.

He was in possession of an impressive collection of religious and ideological material which included diverging positions on matters such as suicide operations and the Caliphate and also engaged in translating and disseminating such material.

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<sup>29</sup> Possibly from the group *Takfir w-al Hijra*

## **Motivations formulated by individuals who claim to have engaged in Jihad**

### **Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane**

Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane was arrested in Pakistan in December 2001 and transferred to Guantanamo in 2002 from where he was extradited to Denmark in 2004. In Denmark he was released and no charges were brought against him. Abderrahmane claims to have been sent to Afghanistan to receive military training to engage in combat in Chechnya by a man in London:

“He told me that he came from a group which sent people to Afghanistan to be trained in handling weapons. The man also said that when I got to Afghanistan I would get to know what I needed to know. Finally, he told me that when you returned from Afghanistan you would be sent to Chechnya [...] I didn’t know that you had to go to Afghanistan. At that point in time I thought you would receive the necessary training in handling weapons in Chechnya or Algeria if I was going there. I was surprised but thought: ‘well, OK’. Now it was for real and I wasn’t about to regret. Not at all” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:64-65, my translation).

Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane was born in Denmark in 1973 to a Danish mother and an Algerian father who had migrated to Denmark. When Abderrahmane was seven years old the family left Denmark and moved to Algeria but after just one year the mother returned to Denmark leaving Abderrahmane and his two sisters with the father in Algeria.

At age 15 Abderrahmane participated in violent demonstrations against president Chadli Bendjedid<sup>30</sup>. About participating in these fights he says:

“You got something out of it after having been held down for so long” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:26, my translation).

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<sup>30</sup> President in Algeria 1979-92

To Abderrahmane politics and religion were intertwined:

“To me religion and politics is the same. They do not differ from each other. You could say that religion is also sort of political ideology. When an Islamic party suddenly appeared in Algeria I supported it, off course I did” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:27, my translation)

As Hammad Khurshid Abderrahmane describes a lengthy search for a group which could grant him access to battlefields:

“I was also looking for a group where I could get started but nothing ever came of it. Perhaps it was because I had lost faith in a future in the possibility of having a future in a country under dictatorship like Algeria. So I began contemplating travelling to Denmark where I was a citizen” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:28, my translation)

And like Khurshid Abderrahmane explains how he viewed himself as having always been destined for something greater than ordinary life:

“In the back of my head I’ve always known that one day I would follow my faith” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:36, my translation).

About his view on Jihad Abderrahmane explains:

“It is a means you are supposed to employ if a Muslim people is attacked and their land is taken from them. Jihad is a way to defend yourself, your faith and your

brothers” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:36, my translation )

And about his decision to attempt to gain access to a battlefield Abderrahmane explains:

“There was no other reason for me wanting to go than the violations I saw on TV. I hadn’t listened to any tapes or seen some video with some Sheikh urging people to go to Kosovo and kill Serbs. It was the acts of the Serbian military that enraged me” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:37, my translation)

“Something just snapped in me. I asked: ‘What are we? Are we just someone who others can kill? First Bosnia and Kosovo and now this’. I said to myself enough is enough” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:37-38, my translation).

In early 2000 Abderrahmane went to an Arab mosque in Aarhus and attended Friday sermon and quickly presented his wish to travel to Chechnya to fight. The imams were not helpful but an unnamed man advised Abderrahmane to spend more time in the mosque:

“I got to talk to another man. I told him a little about myself and said that I wanted to go to Chechnya” (Davidsen-Nielsen, 2004: 39, my translation). “‘Come to the mosque a little more often’ was his advice [...] After a week of daily prayer and reciting the Quran he decided to become a true believer. ‘It felt good. For many years I had not worshipped God as I ought to. Now I was going to be orthodox, really care about it, gain more knowledge, read the Quran and live by its rules’” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:39, my translation)

Abderrahmane describes how he found some of his inspiration on the internet – especially on *azzam.com*. This website was named after Abdallah Azzam and dedicated to disseminating news and interviews particularly from Afghanistan and Chechnya until 2002. Abderrahmane emphasises a definition of areas where Jihad is allowed which he found on this site:

“Jihad may only be performed in areas where there is battle. Killing outside the so-called jihad-areas is not allowed.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:42-43, my translation)

“I didn’t know that you had to go to Afghanistan. At that point in time I thought you would receive the necessary training in handling weapons in Chechnya or Algeria if I was going there. I was surprised but thought: ‘well, OK’. Now it was for real and I wasn’t about to regret. Not at all” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:65, my translation).

Similarly to Hammad Khurshid Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane appears to have been a young man who was very much motivated by a desire to engage actively in combat – to gain access to action. Although Abderrahmane refers to awareness about religion his ideological and religious engagement appears to be something which was adopted after the decision to engage in activities had been made. When Abderrahmane began searching for access to combat he was advised to spend more time in the mosque to be able to meet the persons who could assist him. It was only after this advice Abderrahmane decided to ‘really care about it’.

### **Eric Breininger**

There are not many indications of why Breininger decided to travel to Afghanistan and engage himself in combat in *Mein Weg nach Jennah* but there are some. Very soon after Breininger had converted to Islam he began focussing on the sufferings of his newfound community:

“Hussayn often came and visited us and we talked about the problems and the suffering in the Islamic Ummah (Nation). [...] We followed the events in the Jihad-regions and watched movies about how the Mujahideen (soldiers of God) fought the Crusaders. [...] I instantly knew that I had to do something to resist these Crusaders who violated my brothers and sisters [...] My personal studies of Islam now revolved around the theme of Jihad” (El Almani, 2010:52-53, my translation)

And after four months he was ready to engage in combat to make a change:

“I had only been in Islam for 4 months and yet I knew what my duty was. I wanted to go into Jihad but I did not know how and the brothers I knew could not help me. I wanted to go to a so-called ‘Muslim Land’ where I could meet persons who could assist me” (El Almani, 2010:76, my translation)

Similarly to Hammad Khurshid and Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane Eric Breininger appears to have been a young man who was very much motivated by a desire to engage actively in combat – to gain access to action. Although there is little doubt that Breininger was very interested in religion the fact that he decided to seek access to combat only four months after he had converted to Islam indicates that his ideological and religious studies have primarily been conducted *after* that decision was made.

### **Motivations and views formulated by informants who have not been in trouble with the authorities**

Being against the establishment and those in power is a fundamental aspect of the cultic milieu and therefore also a part of the attraction of it. Being against the establishment and those in power is also a crucial part of the Jihadism counterculture. This will be thoroughly treated in chapter 8 *Sources*

*and Credibility*. Here I shall only draw attention to some indications of the opportunity to be counter and to be recognized as an attraction:

One informant always wears a *dishdasha* (a traditional Arabic white shirt for men which covers the knees and has long sleeves and buttons at the front), white trousers which do not cover the ankles, a multi-pockets vest, a white *shora* (a traditional Arabic headscarf for men) around his shoulders and he wears his beard and hair long. On several occasions he has explained how these clothes get him into trouble. On the streets strangers shy from him and some shout at him or even assault him. On one occasion this informant explained the ordeals he and his peers were experiencing. One of his friends' wife was "waiting for the bus in the street when some other passengers assaulted her. They spat her in the face and pulled off her *niqab* [traditional women's garment which covers everything except the eyes]". He explains this as characteristic of how they are treated in public by others and to clarify his message he gets up and asks: "What do you think people in the street think I am when they see me?" I hesitate and ask him to tell me what he thinks they are thinking but he insists that I answer. I then ask if they perhaps think that he is an extremist. He replies "Yes, but what more?" and pulls his *shora* up so that it covers his head. I then ask if they perhaps think that he is a terrorist and he enthusiastically says "Yes!! They think I am a terrorist" (2, Copenhagen, March 18<sup>th</sup> 2010, my translation).

The same informants shed some light on the reason why such public displays and the responses are important:

"There are three groups in Saudi Arabia that have been imprisoned. [...] They speak up about the royal family's flaws without fearing anything. [...] One group was thrown out of the country. Another was released but not allowed to leave the country. A third group cannot leave their town. They are good" (2, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

"Sheikhs who are in opposition to the rulers are trustworthy – if they have been imprisoned and are still speaking up they are more trustworthy. There are some sheikhs in Saudi Arabia who have been imprisoned and

are persecuted and still they speak up against the rulers – they are very good.” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

As these quotes illustrate, being against the establishment and the ones who are in power and paying a price for this opposition is a source of credibility.

The fact that this specific counterculture at present is not only obviously against the establishment but also framed as a threat only adds to the attraction:

"If it hadn't been for September 11<sup>th</sup> I would not have become a Muslim. Everybody was saying that they were dangerous and the worst of the worst so I wanted to see for myself and I began studying Islam" (14, Copenhagen, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

## **A typology of purposes which the counterculture can serve**

The quotes presented above illustrate that there are various motivations for looking up the Jihadism counterculture. Different individuals are attracted to the counterculture in their search for different rewards and the counterculture therefore serves different purposes. Consequently different individuals *act* differently within the counterculture not because of the counterculture or its ideology but because of what they are searching for – what they are using the counterculture for.

The counterculture provides a framework which the individuals who look it up need – a framework which can transform their individual motivations and needs into shared needs and allow them to be part of a greater cause. It also provides a network where individuals can find resources which they need – be they financial, intellectual, social or material. The counterculture in itself does not cause anything but it does make things possible.

The explanations provided by the four defendants and by Abderrahmane first of all appear to support what some have concluded after a yearlong search for terrorist profiles and radicalization-processes: that no single profile or process can be identified (See e.g. Hudson, 1999, Borum; 2004;

Nesser, 2004; Bjorgo, 2005; Victoroff, 2005; Sageman, 2004, 2008; Travis, 2008; Veldhuis & Staun, 2009; DIIS, 2010).

The explanations, however, also indicate that different and distinctive types of attractions which motivate individuals to look up a given counterculture can be identified. Hammad Khurshid appeared to have been primarily attracted by action – understood as action and adventure as well as taking action as opposed to speaking or thinking. He was not very interested in the ideological or religious discussions. When Tokhi asked him if he had begun to study the Quran Khurshid replied: “I’m not really up for it. I would rather find people who have contacts who do things” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) and when the movement around the Red Mosque in Pakistan began working for the implementation of Sharia he ‘went along’ without many reflections. Khurshid did not appear to be very dependent on the company of others or their recognition. As he explained:

“I had decided that I would travel to Pakistan to fight in Afghanistan – it would be OK if he wanted to join me”  
(Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The same appeared to be the case for Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane. Although Abderrahmane referred to awareness about religion his ideological and religious engagement appeared to be adopted only after he had decided to engage in combat. When he began searching for access to combat he was advised to spend more time in the mosque to be able to find persons who could assist him and *then* he began practicing Islam.

From the limited material available Eric Breininger too appeared to have been motivated by a desire to engage in combat – to gain access to action. Although there is little doubt that Breininger was very interested in his religion the fact that he decided to seek access to combat only four months after he had converted to Islam indicates that his ideological and religious studies have primarily been conducted *after* that decision was made.

Abdulghani Tokhi appeared to have been attracted by something entirely different. He procrastinated when Khurshid put him in charge of purchasing a light bulb and chemicals and Tokhi’s comments about having a cheap but good flashlight at home which he could bring with him

to Afghanistan indicated he was less than realistic about the plans. Abdulghani Tokhi appears to primarily have been attracted by friendship and by the prospects of being part of something.

SÜ too appeared to primarily have been attracted by friendship and social belonging. He was ostracized from his own family, homeless and without employment. SÜ expressed an interest in finding alternative information on matters such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and in understanding why some individuals killed others and how they justified this.

EH appeared to have been primarily attracted by intellectual debates. He was very interested in ideological and religious discussions and had an impressive collection of literature and other material. EH was interested in different positions on controversial matters including suicide operations and a modern Caliphate. With the help of Abdul Basit abu Lifa he also translated Arabic material into English.

From these explanations three archetypes of attractions of the counterculture appear to emerge: *action* (understood as action and adventure as well as taking action as opposed to speaking or thinking), *social belonging* and *intellectual challenges*.

The motivations formulated by individuals who have not been in trouble with the authorities, however, add a fourth type of attraction: the opportunity to be against the established and those in power and to be taken seriously – *being counter*.

On the basis of this, four archetypes of attractions which motivate individuals to look up the Jihadism counterculture can be identified:

- Action
- Social belonging
- Intellectual challenges
- Being counter

I must stress that these archetypes only offer a constructed model into which very little will fit perfectly.

## **Action**

Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action can only be satisfied by being active. Talking, demonstrating, educating, studying, collecting money, supporting prisoners or the like can neither satisfy the need for action and adventure nor the need to take action.

The three individuals who indicated being attracted by the prospects of action have either been convicted of planning terrorism or claim to have been engaged in what they perceive as Jihad. This does not imply all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action will necessarily end up in conflict with authorities or the law. It does, however, indicate that individuals who manage to make it as far as e.g. Afghanistan are very determined and driven by something which cannot be satisfied by anything other than action.

When it comes to violence or terrorism individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action are crucial because they are the only ones who can only be satisfied by action. Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging, intellectual challenges or being counter can be satisfied in other ways.

### **Social belonging**

Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging are satisfied by inclusion, recognition and friendship. Provided they involve these rewards talking, demonstrating, educating, studying, collecting money, supporting prisoners or the like can satisfy such individuals.

The individuals who indicated being attracted by the prospects of being included and finding a place to belong found themselves in trouble with authorities. One was acquitted and the other was convicted of having planned terrorism. This does not imply all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging will necessarily end up in trouble with authorities. It does, however, indicate they are available to anybody who will include them – also if this inclusion requires illegal activities.

### **Intellectual challenges**

Individuals attracted by the prospects of intellectual challenges are satisfied by intellectual discussions, ideological debates, studies and dissemination of the results of those to a broader audience.

Provided they revolve around intellectual and ideological aspects talking, demonstrating, collecting money, supporting prisoners or the like can easily satisfy such individuals.

The individual who indicated being attracted by intellectual challenges found himself in trouble with authorities. He was accused of having planned terrorism but was acquitted. This does not imply all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of intellectual challenges will find themselves in trouble with authorities but they are indispensable to the counterculture and to the individuals who

engage in violence or terrorism. Such individuals provide the glue that holds together the counterculture and they provide the framework which transforms individual needs into collective needs and a greater cause.

## **Being counter**

Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of being against the establishment and those in power in a way which is easily recognized and which is taken seriously can be satisfied simply by being part of the counterculture. They can be satisfied by talking, demonstrating, educating, studying, collecting money, supporting prisoners or just by being associated with individuals who are involved in illegal activity.

The individuals who indicated this as the attraction of contemporary Jihadism in the West had not been in conflict with authorities. This does not imply no individuals who are attracted by the prospects of being counter will end up in trouble with authorities. It does, however, indicate they are less likely to do so. Unlike individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action these individuals are not longing for action or adventure. As a consequence they do not need direct confrontations which can lead to conflicts with authorities. Unlike individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging and friendship these individuals are not yearning for inclusion.

As a consequence they are less likely to be available for illegal activities because they are not easily tempted by the prospects of being included into something exclusive.

The attractions indicated in this typology clearly illustrate that contemporary Jihadism in the West is about more than violence or terrorism and that the individuals inhabiting it are not all on a path to becoming terrorists.

## **Other typologies**

The four archetypes of attractions in the typology are not linked to personalities, backgrounds, or profiles – they are the purposes which the counterculture can serve and the attractions which motivate individuals to look it up. Nesser (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010) and Khosrokhavar (2009) have both provided typologies which are linked to personalities and to backgrounds – without being actual profiles – which deserve attention here.

Nesser offers a “tentative typology of jihadi terrorists in Europe” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:91) based on “the different features of core members of eight jihadi terrorist cells that operated in Europe” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010: 91). In this four types are identified:

- The entrepreneurs
- The protégés
- The misfits
- The drifters

The entrepreneurs are

“critical for terrorist cells to coalesce and go operational. They proactively connect with jihadi networks, and they proactively recruit, socialize and train their cadre. [...] They are typically (but not always) senior to and more experienced than their accomplices, and socially well-functioning. [...] The entrepreneurs are charismatic religious and political activists possessing a strong sense of justice. They are passionate about and committed to social and political causes and demand respect from their surroundings. They are not militants for their own sake, it seems, but out of what they consider a religious duty to defend others. [...] Entrepreneurs embrace jihadism gradually through intellectual processes, activism, idealism and a call for social and political justice. Frustrated with political affairs and poor prospects of having much influence through non-violent means, the entrepreneurs will seek alternative ways to making a difference. [...] Entrepreneurs are typically well read and sometimes they contribute with their own ideas through preaching or writing texts” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:92-93)

The protégés are

“similar to the entrepreneurs, but junior and inferior to them. They are typically second in command of cells. Protégés are also devout idealists and activists with strong personalities and a strong sense of justice, and they are very close to, and seem to be admiring their mentors. They seem to embrace militancy through a combination of loyalty to the leader and intellectually justified activism (social, religious and political). [...] Protégés tend to be very intelligent, well-educated and well-mannered persons, who excel in what they do, professionally, academically and socially” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:93)

The misfits are

“individuals that perform less well socially, and they often have troubled backgrounds as well as criminal records. They appear to be less ideologically committed than the entrepreneurs and the protégés. They also appear to have somewhat “weaker” and more hesitant personalities, and display more personal vulnerabilities than the former. Misfits typically join the militants to cope with personal problems or out of loyalty to their friends, or some combination of the two. [...] The age of the misfits varies, but typically they too are younger than the entrepreneurs. [...] Some misfits have displayed violent tendencies and some have been convicted for acts of violence before they became involved with militants” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:93-94)

## The drifters

“do not constitute a well-defined category. It is indeed difficult to differentiate the drifters from the entrepreneurs, protégés and misfits because they might have similar educational backgrounds, professions and general backgrounds. Drifters differ by having less specific reasons for teaming up with the jihadis in the first place. They tend to be people who are “going with the flow” rather unconsciously. The dominant motivations for joining appear to relate to social networks and commitments. They do not come across as ideologically committed activists before they hook up with people belong[ing] to the militant networks. [...] It seems as if the drifters could have gone in a very different direction if they had connected with other people and other milieus. [...] At times, recruitment of drifters also seems to involve stronger elements of youth rebellion, search for adventure and lack of viable options, than is the case for entrepreneurs, protégés and misfits” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:94-95)

Khosrokhavar (2009) concludes: “One can distinguish five types of Jihadist personalities” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:233). These are:

- The missionary
- The macho
- The upholder of justice
- The adventurer
- The existential man

## The missionary

“seeks to expand Islam to the world, according to the religious writ. Among the Jihadists some would like to behave according to the letter of the holy text. They firmly believe that Islam has the calling of becoming universal and no compromise should be made on this mission. [...] These people believe that humiliation of others through bombing, maiming, and killing is a necessity to implement Allah’s sentence at the present time, because of Muslim’s military inferiority toward the West” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:234)

## To the macho

“Islam restores the family and social bonds on a sane basis, according to men’s needs. According to the Koran, a man has the right to marry up to four wives, on condition of being “just” toward them; he can impose, in the name of Allah, “modesty” on women and exert his authority toward children within a patriarchal family. In the Jihadists’ minds, this dimension is connected to another, the rejection of Western sexual and, more generally, gender values. [...] But violence is justified only by Jihadists to oppose Western culture that contaminates Muslims in the Western diasporas and in the Muslim world through illegitimate governments, which are subservient to the West” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:234)

The upholder of justice believes that

“Injustice in the world is due to the Western, and more particularly, American hegemony. The fight against it cannot be based on leftist ideologies anymore. Muslims are the “oppressed” (*mustadh’afin*), and the legitimacy of the fight against the “oppressors” (*mustakbirin*) is recognized by the Koran. Many dimensions of the extreme left ideologies are coupled with the lure of taking a “holy” revenge against the West” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:235, italics in original)

For the adventurer

“Jihadism has a play dimension that can be satisfied in many ways. The adventure involved in taking trips and journeys all over the world [...] is one of the stimulating dimensions of Jihadism; the adventure of meeting “extraordinary” people who make history is another one. Socialization within these groups through the Internet or direct links breathes life into an otherwise grey existence [...] The adventurer can as well be motivated by what is in “vogue” and “fashion”, in the same way as martyrs in the Iranian revolution were proud to follow a “martyrdom fashion.” [...] They revere Bin Laden not only because of his role as an Islamic Robin Hood who takes revenge against the powerful for the sake of the “oppressed,” but also because of his stardom. [...] Unlike “cheap” Western stars. Who just imitate action in their fake heroism, he does what he says.” (Khosrokhavar, 2009: 235)

To the existential man

“The deep crisis between multiple identities rejected by the host societies is a major problem [...] The split self can be pushed toward Jihadism through two major factors. The first is the deep humiliation from not being seen as equal to the others in Western culture, where equality is a major ingredient of collective identity. [...] Radical Islam resolves the dilemma by rejecting both of the ingredients: the French and Algerian components are declared illegitimate and godless in the same manner as the Pakistani and English ones. Jihadism, in its modern version in the West, is deeply egalitarian: blacks, whites, ethnic people from all over the world become members of a new “international Jihadism” that realizes, through the fight against the West, the very egalitarian values promoted by the West. It washes away humiliation and replaces it with a deep sense of pride” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:237)

Comparing Nesser’s and Khosrokhavar’s typologies to the typology which I have offered is difficult – not least considering that they are typologies of different things and are based on different types of material. Nesser’s typology “should be seen as an empirical systematic description (based on the available sources) of the different features of core members of eight jihadi terrorist cells that operated in Europe” (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:91). Khosrokhavar writes that “I interviewed in French prisons in 2003 a dozen people condemned for having taken part in Al Qaeda terrorist activities” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:5). Khosrokhavar, however, includes other sources in the book “The following cases are based on the media and other open sources available” (Khosrokhavar, 2009:260). I therefore draw the conclusion that Khosrokhavar’s typology includes a broader selection of material than the interviews conducted in French prisons.

Regardless of these challenges, an attempt at comparing the typologies should be made. Nesser defines the *entrepreneurs* as “critical for terrorist cells to coalesce and go operational”. This

resonates with how I define the individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action. But there are some crucial criteria in Nesser's description which the narratives which indicated action as an attraction do not meet. The first is that the entrepreneurs are "charismatic religious and political activists" and the second is that they "are typically well read and sometimes they contribute with their own ideas through preaching or writing texts". The narrative which indicated the prospects of intellectual challenges as an attraction, however, to some extent met these criteria.

Nesser's *protégé*-type could also include some of the aspects of the narratives which indicated attraction to action and to intellectual challenges. The criterion "Protégés tend to be very intelligent, well-educated and well-mannered persons, who excel in what they do, professionally, academically and socially" is, however, not necessarily met by the narratives which indicated the prospects of action as an attraction.

It is tempting to draw a parallel between Nesser's *misfits* and the narratives which indicated social belonging and being counter as attractions but individuals who are attracted by the prospects of belonging or being against the establishment are not necessarily misfits who "perform less well socially, and often have troubled backgrounds as well as criminal records". None of the individuals who indicated the prospects of social belonging or being counter as attractions had a criminal background and Abdulghani Tokhi was described as a popular boy by several witnesses.

Nesser's final type, the *drifter*, is the most recognizable – in fact it could include all of the narratives upon which I base the typology of attractions.

Turning attention to Khosrokhavar's typology, most of the narratives upon which I base my typology of attractions to some extent fit into the *missionary* and the *upholder of justice*. This is because seeking "to expand Islam to the world, according to the religious writ", wishing to "behave according to the letter of the holy text", and agreeing that "Injustice in the world is due to the Western, and more particularly, American hegemony" and that "Muslims are the oppressed and the legitimacy of the fight against the oppressors is recognized by the Koran" is part of the Jihadism counterculture's shared definitions and of its culture – it is part of its normality.

The *macho* could correspond with two of the indicated attractions: being counter and social belonging. Which type of attraction it corresponds with depends on why the *macho* needs Islam to "restore the family and social bonds on a sane basis, according to men's needs" and "oppose Western culture that contaminates Muslims in the Western diasporas and in the Muslim world through illegitimate governments, which are subservient to the West". The *macho* could either need a framework for his opposition to the authorities and those who are in power which is easily

recognized. Or he could adopt these views to be granted access to a counterculture where he is included and finds friendship.

Khosrokhavar's *adventurer* could to some extent include the narratives which indicated action as an attraction – if the *adventurer* is combined with the *upholder of justice*. The narratives which indicated action as an attraction revolved not only around action understood as adventure but also understood as taking action to change the status quo.

Khosrokhavar's final type, the *existential man*, corresponds very well with the narratives which indicated social belonging as an attraction.

The most remarkable outcome of this comparison is that Nesser's *entrepreneurs* and *protégés* were difficult to identify in the typology of attractions. The explanation to this is most likely to be found in the fact that the typologies are of different things: Nesser's typology is of "terrorist cell members" (Nesser in Ranstorp, 2010:88) whereas the typology I offer is of attractions of the Jihadism counterculture.

## Shopping

There are examples of individuals in the Jihadism counterculture who have previously been involved in ordinary crime and even of individuals who have previously inhabited other countercultures. Among my informants one indicated he had previously been active in a left-wing organization whereas several have been involved in ordinary crime – particularly crimes related to property.

This is in no way unique to the Danish context. There are several examples from other countries only a few of which shall be referred as examples here: the two Bosnian men who were convicted of having assisted Abdulkadir Cesur and Mirsad Bektasevic in Sarajevo in January 2007<sup>31</sup> reportedly both had a criminal past (Skjoldager, 2009); David Headley from USA, who has pleaded guilty to having been involved in planning the Mumbai-attacks in 2008 as well as an attack in Denmark which was foiled in 2009, reportedly has a drug-conviction (Thompson, 2009); Khaled Kelkal from France, who was involved in the attacks in Paris in 1995, reportedly had a criminal past too (Holm, 2007); and Ralf Lennart from Sweden reportedly had passed through neo-Nazism prior to his engagement in Jihadism (Hedin, 2007).

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<sup>31</sup> See chapter 3 *The Three Cases*

Within the framework of cultic milieus and countercultures it is no surprise that there are individuals who pass through several countercultures. This simply illustrates how such individuals have been searching for something for quite some time and either they did not find what they were searching for in the first counterculture or what they were searching for changed over time and as a consequence the first counterculture no longer provided them with what they needed.

Individuals who travel in a cultic milieu may 'try on' several meta-countercultures and countercultures to find what they are looking for because:

“The nature and problems of cultic organizations derive primarily from the fact that they attract and recruit seekers. Seekership is probably the one characteristic that all members of cultic groups have in common, and while this facilitates the formation of groups, it poses special problems for their maintenance. Seekers do not necessarily cease seeking when a revealed truth is offered to them, nor do they necessarily stop looking in other directions when one path is indicated as *the* path to the truth.” (Kaplan & Löow, 2002:18)

At present the Jihadism counterculture, however, has certain advantages which other countercultures do not. Firstly, it is undoubtedly the most high-profiled one. Because it is perceived as associated with al-Qaida and terrorism it is perceived and received as a threat to security. An individual who signals that he or she is part of this counterculture will not only be recognized as being against the established, find social belonging, find access to action or find intellectual discussions – he or she will also be recognized as a security threat and therefore be taken seriously. Or in the words of Lia:

“[...] al-Qaida has created for itself *a powerful and captivating image*. It has become the world's most feared terrorist organisation, which has an immense attraction for certain groups of young people. In some countries in Europe, it has become “cool” to be a jihadi [...] Al-

Qaida's acts of violence provoked massive countermeasures by the United States and its allies. You will probably recall that the Bush Administration stated that 9/11 was not an act of terrorism, but rather it was "an act of war" [...] By using the word "war" about 9/11, the US President *de facto* declared that al-Qaida was a worthy counterpart in a global confrontation with the United States. To remove any doubt about who was the key player in the post 9/11 world order, the United States unleashed the so-called "Global War on Terror" against al-Qaida. In other words, the whole world witnessed a new drama unfolding. And it was al-Qaida and the United States who starred in this drama, nobody else. Needless to say, this contributed immensely to skyrocketing al-Qaida's popularity, at least for a while, and making its brand name the strongest on the market" (Lia, 2008b:3-5, italics in original)

Secondly, because the Jihadism counterculture is high-profiled and is perceived and received as a threat to security it does appear to hold the most potential for granting access to action. This makes it particularly attractive to individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action and of being counter. The individuals attracted to action in turn attract further attention to the counterculture through their actions and strengthen its profile. The individuals attracted by the prospects of being counter primarily add volume to the counterculture and thereby contribute to the extent of it.

Finally, the nature of the public and political debate on Islam can contribute to the attractiveness of the Jihadism counterculture. According to Jenkins (1997) a minority can either embrace the construction of its identity offered by the majority and work within framework of it or the minority can reject this construction and repeatedly fight it. From this perspective embracing the construction offered by the majority and working within the framework of it is the easier alternative. Roy writes:

"Objectification of Islam is also reinforced by pressure from non-Muslims, especially in periods of crisis, when

Muslims are summoned to answer questions such as, ‘What does the Koran say on ... [*jihad*, violence]?’ . It is also the product of a mirror effect between Western societies and Muslim public opinion, which explains why non-Muslims are more inclined to listen to conservatives and fundamentalists than to liberal thinkers. Conservatives and fundamentalists give definite answers to the question ‘What is Islam?’, something that is more difficult for a Sufi, a spiritualist or a lay Muslim to do” (Roy, 2004:154)

When majority society in this way reinforces and confirms conservative and fundamentalist versions of Islam *as Islam* the easier alternative for a Muslim is to accept this and work within the framework of it. This makes the Jihadism counterculture as well as the other countercultures found in the Islamism meta-counterculture attractive and convenient. Assuming the identity of a fundamentalist Muslim is easier than claiming that other Muslim identities are possible.

## **The role of ideology**

As illustrated by the motivations for looking up the Jihadism counterculture ideology does not play a causal or even a primary role. It would be more accurate to refer to ideology as an *effect* than as a *cause* of looking up the counterculture. Ideology is a crucial part of what ties together the counterculture – it is part of the shared culture which must be adopted to become part of the counterculture but it does not appear to be the reason why individuals look up the counterculture neither does it appear to be the reason why they choose their position in the counterculture – e.g. collecting money, shying society or taking violent action.

This does not mean that the individuals who inhabit the counterculture are not genuinely enraged about the injustices they see in the world neither does it mean that they are not genuinely passionate about practicing their ideas, ideologies, narratives and religion. It means that the way these individuals decide to *act* on their enagement and their passion is not dictated by the enagement or the passion but by the individuals’ analyses of what has to be done and by the individual’s motivations for looking up the counterculture in the first place.

## Conclusions

In this chapter the question “Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?” was explored by analyzing Jihadism as a counterculture and by analyzing the motivations for looking up this counterculture formulated by a selection of individuals who have been in trouble with the authorities and a selection of individuals who have not. This illustrated that contemporary Jihadism in the West is more than one phenomenon because it is about more than violence and terrorism. It is also about identity and social mechanisms.

The question “What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?” was also explored and *two types of attractions* were identified. The first type of attractions was the *individual attractions*. Four archetypical individual attractions which motivate individuals to look up the counterculture were offered:

- Action
- Social belonging
- Intellectual challenges
- Being counter

Since different individuals look up the counterculture in their search for different rewards the counterculture serves different purposes. This implies that different individuals *act* differently within the counterculture not because of the counterculture or its ideology but because of what the individuals are searching for – what they are using the counterculture for.

The Jihadism counterculture provides a framework which the individuals who look it up are in need of. This framework transforms individual motivations and needs into shared needs and a greater cause. Simultaneously, the counterculture provides a network where individuals can find the resources they need – be they financial, intellectual, social or material.

In essence, the counterculture in itself does not cause anything but it does make some things *possible*.

Some of the individuals inhabiting the Jihadism counterculture have previously inhabited other countercultures. Examples of individuals who had a past in radical left-wing and right-wing countercultures as well as in criminal settings were provided. This brought attention to the second

type of attractions of the Jihadism counterculture which was identified: *the context dependent attractions*. These attractions are provided by the context in which the counterculture exists.

In theory, any counterculture could hold the individual attractions but, at present, the Jihadism counterculture has a comparative advantage because of how it is being perceived and received by its context. At present the Jihadism counterculture is the most high-profiled and it is treated as a threat to security. An individual who signals that he or she is part of this counterculture will therefore not only be recognized as being against the established, find social belonging, find access to action or find intellectual discussions – he or she will also be recognized as a security threat and therefore be taken seriously.

The Jihadism counterculture, however, also offers a third type of attractions: the *specific attractions*. These are unique to the Jihadism counterculture and they are the theme of chapter 7 *Eschatology* and chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility*.

Before directing attention to these I will, however, further explore the question “Is contemporary Jihadism one phenomenon?” by focussing on the narratives of three individuals who have attempted – or managed – to engage in combat which they define as Jihad.



## Chapter 6: Jihadism or Jihadisms?

In this chapter I focus on the violence and terrorism aspects of contemporary Jihadism in the West. I explore the question “Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?” by analyzing the narratives of one individual who has been convicted of planning terrorism and two individuals who claim to have actively engaged in what they perceive as Jihad. To do this Hegghammer’s and Lacroix’s distinction between ‘Classical Jihadism’ and ‘Global Jihadism’ is operationalized.

There is a tendency to view Jihadism in the West as one phenomenon in research as well as in policy. Whether an individual or a group attacks NATO soldiers in Afghanistan or civilians on a bus in the UK is of little importance because it is the Jihadist ideology which is assumed to be the causal factor.

When it comes to Jihadism in other parts of the World there appears to be an awareness of different types existing at the same point in time, often alongside but also often in conflict with each other. The competition between Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam in Somalia is a contemporary example:

“[...] Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam shared a similar vision and model of Sharia, but they are divided on two crucial issues [...] One area of division is Somali nationalism. Hizb al-Islam’s two traditional leaders, Sheikh Hasan Dahir Aweys and Sheikh Hasan Abdullahi Hirsi, [...] are nationalists and strong advocates of the creation of a greater Somalia, which incorporates all the Somali-inhabited regions into one state. Al-Shabaab sees its agenda as much broader than the Somali-inhabited regions of the Horn of Africa. It aspires to creating a new global Islamic Caliphate, with undefined geographical boundaries.” (International Crisis Group, 2010:4-5)

It is quite obvious that Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam disagree even though they share many views and their practices and ways of administering areas which they control resemble each other:

“Harsh punishments like amputations, stoning, and flogging are common in all Hizb al-Islam and Al-Shabaab-controlled areas. It is also mandatory for women to wear the *jilbab* and the *niqab* face-veil.” (International Crisis Group, 2010:4)

This example illustrates that even though the two groups share some ideological visions – the view on Sharia and on how it is to be implemented – they disagree on what the goal is.

If there is a differentiation between different types of Jihadism in the West it tends to be a differentiation in time. Several scholars work with a conceptualization based on the existence of a series of ‘generations’ in Jihadism. In this conceptualization there was a first generation of Jihadis who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980’s, then there was a second generation of Jihadis (generally understood as Al-Qaida) who attacked American and other targets through the 1990’s and on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and finally there is a third generation who are ‘homegrown’ and ‘inspired by Al-Qaida’ who attacked or plotted to attack primarily in Europe in the 2000’s (Bakker, 2006; Sageman, 2004, 2008; Taarnby, 2006).

This conceptualization implies that there has been a development over time and indicates that one generation has *replaced* the previous. The Jihadism which was practiced in Afghanistan in the 1980’s is not practiced in 2010 because it has been replaced by two generations which are connected to Al-Qaida either by association – the second generation – or by inspiration – the third generation. This again indicates that Jihadism after 2001 is linked to Al-Qaida either by association or by inspiration.

This is, however, not necessarily the case. Rather than being a case of *generations* of Jihadism *replacing* each other it may be a case of different *types* of Jihadism attracting the most attention in different periods in time and thereby appearing to be unrivalled in these respective periods in time. This would imply that the various types of Jihadism at present have the potential to attract followers and that not all contemporary Jihadis in the West necessarily are associated with or inspired by Al-Qaida.

During my fieldwork I have not encountered any informants who referred to Al-Qaida or Osama bin Ladin as direct sources of inspiration. I have noted Osama bin Ladin being referred to as “a great human rights activist” (2, Copenhagen, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) but I have also

noted scepticism towards Al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden. As one defendant explained during his trial:

“There are foreign soldiers in Afghanistan and they have no right to be there. I like Osama bin Ladin when he supports my people but not when he speaks of Global Jihad” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

“ Hamas is right in fighting Al-Qaida. There are also Mujahideen in Pakistan and in Afghanistan who do the same [...] Al-Qaida they just come from Saudi Arabia and all over the world and want to take charge – they say kill yourself and kill everybody. Hamas has a right to defend their own country and others cannot just come and take charge” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

Those informants who have voiced support for the use of violence have voiced it in terms of going to join their brothers in combat to fight foreign occupation and defend the innocent – as in the example above – or in terms of behaving in accordance with the prophecy of the End of Days<sup>32</sup> by joining the black banners coming from Khorasan: “When you see a group carrying black banners coming from Khorasan you must join them – even if you have to crawl on your knees over ice” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation).

This indicates that there are nuances which are not grasped by the abovementioned conceptualizations of Jihadism. In the following I propose a way to distinguish between two different contemporary types of Jihadism in the West which is inspired by Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix. This also takes into consideration the recommendation recently made by researchers (Kühle and Lindekilde, 2010; and Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010) to distinguish between condoning the use of violence in areas where there are openly violent conflicts and condoning the use of violence in areas in which there are none.

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<sup>32</sup> The narrative about the End of Days is thoroughly described and treated in chapter 7 *Eschatology*

# **Distinguishing between support for violence in conflict areas and in non-conflict areas**

Kühle and Lindekilde (2010) have recommended making a distinction between individuals who support the use of violence in conflict areas and individuals who support the use of violence in non-conflict areas because their informants clearly do. The same recommendation is made by Bartlett, Birdwell & King (2010). In the following I provide documentation which supports this distinction.

## **Two different Jihadisms**

As explained in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods* Hegghammer and Lacroix work with a distinction between ‘Classical Jihadism’ and ‘Global Jihadism’:

Classical Jihadism is characterized by:

- Referring to Muslim land which must be liberated from foreign occupation
- Following the classical rules of war
- An interpretation which is close to that of Abdallah Azzam (see for example Azzam, 1979; 1987)

Global Jihadism is characterized by:

- Not being limited by territory and therefore sanctioning attacks in non-conflict areas
- Making no distinction between combatants and non-combatants
- An interpretation which is close to that of Osama bin Ladin (see for example Ladin, 1998)

Both types of Jihadism are relatively new interpretations and differ from classical Islamic jurisprudence on crucial aspects which will be dealt with below. Because of this the term ‘Classical Jihadism’ can be somewhat confusing. The crux of the matter in the differentiation between the two types of Jihadism presented above is where and against whom the use of violence is sanctioned. Global Jihadism sanctions violence anywhere and against anyone as long as Muslim land is under occupation. Classical Jihadism sanctions only violence on Muslim land under occupation and does not hold every citizen in a democracy responsible for the government’s decisions. Classical Jihadism works with a geographically limited area which is ‘Jihad Land’ whereas Global Jihadism regards the entire world as Jihad Land.

Because of this I have taken the liberty of replacing the concept ‘Classical Jihadism’ with ‘Territorialized Jihadism’ which I will use from here on.

Territorialized Jihadism and Global Jihadism both differ from classical Islamic jurisprudence because they base themselves on the interpretation of the *lesser* (violent) Jihad as being *fard ‘ayn* (individual duty). This means that participation in the violent Jihad is seen as the duty of every individual Muslim wherever he or she may live. Individual salvation depends upon this.

This represents a crucial breakaway from classical Islamic jurisprudence which is based on an interpretation of the lesser – violent – Jihad as being *fard kifaya* (collective duty) which means that participation is a collective responsibility and if a sufficient number of individuals participate in Jihad the ones who do not participate are relieved from the obligation. In other words one Muslim’s engagement can compensate for another Muslim’s lack of engagement.

The change from *fard kifaya* to *fard ‘ayn* is a change from participation in violent Jihad being a collective duty upon which the liberation of territory depends to an individual duty upon which individual salvation depends. Abdallah Azzam formulated this crucial breakaway in *Defence of the Muslim Lands, the First Obligation after Faith*.

The two types of Jihadism are based on the notion of a global *Ummah* – a worldwide community of Muslims transcending national boundaries and taking responsibility for each others’ wellbeing. But they differ from each other with regards to the consequences of this. To Territorialized Jihadis the fact that the *Ummah* transcends national boundaries does not mean that they reject national boundaries whereas Global Jihadis do.

Accepting violence in conflict areas – where Muslims are under attack – is not based on an entirely new interpretation in this framework but on a reinterpretation of tradition. What is new in this context is the notion of participation as being *fard ‘ayn*.

In Territorialized Jihadism this interpretation is accompanied by a duty to only target combatants and avoid hurting civilians which is not present in the Global Jihadism. This leads to different receptions in broader circles. Hegghammer writes:

“At the heart of this systematic differential treatment is of course an issue of legitimacy. There is a difference between guerrilla warfare against the Russian military in Chechnya and suicide car bombs on civilians in Saudi cities. The Saudi regime no doubt considered “classical

Jihadism” – private military involvement in other Muslim’s struggles of national liberation – as less reprehensible than global jihadist or revolutionary violence. This, of course, is a view they share with most Muslims (and probably by many non-Muslims for that matter).” (Hegghammer, 2009:414)

By merging the Territorialized versus Global Jihadism framework with the distinction between support for violence in conflict areas and violence in non-conflict areas it is clear that support for violence in conflict areas fits into the Territorialized Jihadism and that support for violence in non-conflict areas fits into Global Jihadism.

In the framework of Territorialized versus Global Jihadism the difference between the two choices of targets is not purely a matter of a moral distinction but also a symptom of two different interpretations of sources, tradition and context. They represent two different worldviews and therefore the distinction is relevant.

### **The crucial breakaways**

As mentioned, Territorialized Jihadism is close to Abdallah Azzam’s version of Jihadism. Azzam’s writings are believed to be central to the development of Jihadism in general and to Al-Qaeda in particular and Azzam is often referred to as “the Godfather of Jihad” or “the Imam of Jihad” (Hegghammer in Kepel, 2008:81). But Azzam’s work has been used by Al-Qaida as inspiration for interpretations which actually differ from his own:

“Still, it seems important to note that on many points Azzam’s ideas were far more moderate than those of Bin Laden and Zawahiri in the late 1990s. Although Azzam turned attention from the enemy within to the external enemy, he was never in favor of carrying out strikes on the territory of the faraway enemy. He may have argued enthusiastically for jihad, but he seems to have envisaged a strategy closer to guerilla warfare than to terrorism. And despite his pan-Islamist, international perspective, he

never called for a “global insurrection” against the enemies of Islam.” (Hegghammer in Kepel, 2008:101)

Azzam puts into words a breakaway from classical Islamic jurisprudence by framing Jihad as *fard ‘ayn* which also represented a breakaway from his contemporary radical Islamists – e.g. in Egypt – who interpreted Jihad as a fight against unjust rulers in Muslim countries who called themselves Muslims:

“Primarily, Azzam shifted the target from combat against the enemy within to combat against the external enemy. He redefined the main casus belli of jihad: occupation of Muslim territories by foreign aggressors. This marked a change in relation to the Egyptian radicals, who asserted that jihad was essentially a fight against the tyranny of Islamic governments.” (Hegghammer in Kepel, 2008a:99)

But the next breakaway – from targeting foreign aggressors occupying Muslim territory *in* Muslim territory to targeting foreign aggressors occupying Muslim territory *outside* Muslim territory or even in *their* territory and further on to targeting civilian inhabitants in countries whose governments are regarded as being involved in or supportive of aggressions in Muslim territory – cannot be attributed to Azzam. This is very much the work of Osama bin Ladin and Al-Qaida.

This is where we find the effect and the importance of the differentiation between Territorialized Jihadism and Global Jihadism – between adherence to the philosophy of Abdallah Azzam or Osama bin Ladin and between Jihadism inspired by Taliban or by Al-Qaida – in the West as well as in the rest of the world. It is in the diverging analyses of where violence is an acceptable means – in the analyses of what is ‘Jihad-land’ and what is not.

Individuals or groups who are inspired by Taliban or other organizations subscribe to a worldview which is distinct from the one inspired by Al-Qaida and they are unlikely to commit acts sanctioned only by Al-Qaida but not by Azzam’s work unless they become convinced to replace one worldview with the other.

This implies that individuals or groups travelling – or dreaming of travelling – to Afghanistan or another conflict area to engage in combat is not necessarily going to become a danger to national

security in the homeland if they return alive. They will only consider violent acts in the homeland if the Territorialized Jihadist interpretation has been replaced by the Global Jihadist interpretation.

The risk of this happening is at hand. If such individuals attempts to travel to e.g. Afghanistan there is a risk that they will meet representatives of Al-Qaida in their search for access to the battlefields. Al-Qaida feeds on local conflicts and has an interest in attracting individuals with Western passports. Al-Qaida needs such individuals to be able to carry out attacks in the Western world where attacks have become almost impossible due to the security measures installed over the past ten years and the increasing professionalism of the security apparatus.

If it is easier to find Al-Qaida than another organization, movement or group then aspiring Jihadis – motivated by a search for action – travelling from the West to engage in combat may become part Al-Qaida. Simply because Al-Qaida promises access to the battlefields and thereby offers the reward they are searching for.

If an individual has fought with Al-Qaida there is every chance he has become a Global Jihadi and will pose a threat to his homeland if he returns. If he has not fought with Al-Qaida he may have remained Territorialized Jihadi and will not pose a threat to his homeland.

One individual who, according to his own explanations, attempted to travel to Afghanistan to engage in combat is Hammad Khurshid who was convicted of having planned terrorism in the Danish Glasvej-case. In 2008 he was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment.

## **The case of Hammad Khurshid**

Hammad Khurshid and Abdulghani Tokhi were accused and convicted of having planned a terrorist attack in an unknown location in the Glasvej-case. The prosecutors painted a picture of the unknown location being in Denmark primarily based on Khurshid's behaviour. He had brought a document containing recipes for explosives and detonators and a small light bulb with wires attached to it with him from Pakistan to Denmark. This light bulb was an important component in a recipe for a detonator featured in the manual. In Denmark he discovered the light bulb did not work and involved several friends – including the other defendant Abdulghani Tokhi – in attempting to purchase a similar one.

Khurshid also involved Tokhi in purchasing chemicals and he manufactured a small amount of the explosive TATP<sup>33</sup> on the basis of the manual. In the company of Abdulghani Tokhi he detonated the TATP in the staircase of the building in which he lived.

When Khurshid was arrested the police found a sketchy drawing which according to the prosecutor was a drawing of a bus and the effects of a bomb detonating in it. According to Khurshid the drawing was of a dangerous bridge between two cliffs in Waziristan – a region in North-Western Pakistan. He explained that he had visited a friend in Waziristan in 2007 and during his stay he had been a passenger on a truck which passed a wooden bridge between two cliffs. The bridge was in a very poor condition and crossing it was nerve-racking and when Khurshid returned to Denmark he made the drawing as an illustration when he told Tokhi about the experience.

The prosecutor argued that Khurshid's behaviour indicated that he was planning an attack in Denmark. The prosecutor found it hard to imagine that Khurshid had brought the recipes for explosives and detonators and the light bulb to Denmark, had put energy into manufacturing TATP and had detonated it in Denmark if he was not preparing for an attack in Denmark.

Khurshid on the other hand argued that he did not plan an attack in Denmark and during the second trial he explained he was actually planning to travel to Afghanistan to fight NATO troops who – in his view – had invaded a Muslim country. He was only experimenting with recipes from the manual because he was curious and had too much free time. The verdict – as well as the indictment – referred to a terrorist attack in an unknown location and therefore did not reveal which explanation the judges and jury trusted.

Hammad Khurshid was born in Denmark in 1985. His parents were Pakistani immigrants and when he was one year old the mother returned to Pakistan with the children while the father stayed in Denmark to work. After spending the majority of his life with his mother and siblings in Gujarat, Pakistan Khurshid arrived in Denmark in late 2003. When he arrived he had all but forgotten the Danish language but became practically fluid in it within months. Khurshid then began working hard to make money. He worked several jobs as a painter and in a furniture shop.

Over the course of the two trials Khurshid revealed that he had had an interest in weapons since childhood: “weapons, guns, especially from the military” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). When the prosecutor documented a photo of Khurshid placing a bullet on his sister's head while she was holding a shotgun in her hands Khurshid explained that it is a tradition in Pakistan to shoot up in the air at weddings and other celebrations and that he loved these

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<sup>33</sup> A primary high explosive which can be extremely instable

opportunities to get his hands on weapons and ammunition: “It was primarily me who was fascinated by all that with shooting up in the air – it was an opportunity to shoot some rounds” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid also explained that he had always been aware he did not want the ordinary life his parents planned for him. As he explained: “I didn’t want a traditional life. I didn’t want to work, earn money, marry, have children and die” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). He wanted something else: “I just want excitement. I don’t have any goals. I just want excitement in my life. I think I’ve had enough excitement now” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid explained he had come to realize how Muslims in many places are oppressed and that he wanted to support them: “They are my people; my brothers and where they are I also want to be – I was going to support my people” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Hammad Khurshid explained how he spent years searching for access to a battlefield. He was not very concerned with where he could join the fighting. In his search he “went to a few meetings with Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark [...] I went to everybody offering education in Copenhagen – Abu Ahmad [Danish Imam], Abu Laban [Danish Imam], Hizb ut-Tahrir” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). What Khurshid was looking for was “a good group, one that respects others, is open and does not oppress others” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid travelled to Pakistan every year to visit his family and continued his search for access to a battlefield during the visits. In 2006 he met a man called Abu Ali. Khurshid was immediately interested in Abu Ali because he was an educated Imam from Saudi Arabia and as he explained: “the best come from Saudi Arabia – that is where the Salafi come from” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

The two planned to travel to Lebanon in the summer 2006 and Khurshid explained that the idea of going to Lebanon to fight at that point in time was widely supported in Pakistan: “Even in the parliament there were people who wanted to support those who wanted to go to Lebanon to fight but the president was opposed” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). But Abu Ali procrastinated and the two never made it to Lebanon so Khurshid continued his search for access to combat.

In early 2007 Khurshid narrowed down his search for contacts to two mosques. This was, according to his explanation, the Grand Mosque in Lahore and the Red Mosque in Islamabad. He was “looking for a movement I could trust” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

After having visited both mosques Khurshid found that the Grand Mosque – which “was *Ahl-e-Hadith* [People of the Hadith]” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) – was too focused on the leader Sheikh Hafiz Said: “He almost became a cult” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). This led to a “conflict between the Grand Mosque and the Red Mosque” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) and Khurshid decided to side with the Red Mosque.

Khurshid began going to the Red Mosque in early March 2007 which was a point in time when there were violent confrontations with representatives of the Pakistani authorities<sup>34</sup>. He: “went there to support the people who demonstrated [against the government’s plans to close down the mosque] When it developed into being about implementing Sharia I went along” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Khurshid spent much of his time in the Red Mosque and he had a good reason: “The first challenge was getting into the system and getting to know people” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). It was in the Red Mosque that he met a man who invited him to Waziristan.

During the first trial Hammad Khurshid refused having had any intentions with spending time in the Red Mosque other than supporting the demonstrators who were opposed to the government’s plans to close down the mosque. He explained that he was: “ready to engage in combat to defend the Red Mosque” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). Khurshid also claimed he only went to Waziristan to visit a friend and be a tourist.

The case was, however, appealed and during the second trial Khurshid told another story: “There is always a beginning and the Red Mosque would be a good beginning – but I was looking for a way to Afghanistan” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

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<sup>34</sup> The Red Mosque (*Lal Masjid*) in Islamabad was at the centre of a violent conflict which broke out in early 2007 when the government decided to close down the mosque and the schools associated with it. In July 2007 the mosque was stormed by government troops after a siege. The Red Mosque attracted international attention after the 7/7 2005 bombs in London because one of the perpetrators – Shehzad Tanweer – “was suspected to be linked with the mosque” (Siddique, 2008:14) and because “its clerics and students have openly expressed support for the Taliban and al-Qaeda” (Siddique, 2008:10)

Khurshid expanded on his choice of the Red Mosque: “The Red Mosque is against the state and it dares say things that others do not, it supports the battles in Afghanistan.” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

During the second trial Khurshid also explained that in the Red Mosque he met a man named Sahid who told him about a young man named Hamza who went to school in the mosque. Hamza came from Waziristan and Khurshid befriended him to “get access to Waziristan” (Hammad Khurshid, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Khurshid explained to Hamza that he wanted to find someone who could take him to Afghanistan: “People in the Red Mosque openly supported Afghanistan’s Mujahideen – I liked that” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Hamza then brought Khurshid to his home in Waziristan “because it would be easier to find contacts there” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Hamza’s home was in Sani Kheel “which is near Mir Ali [...] Their women are very covered and you are not allowed to speak to them at all” (Hammad Khurshid, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

In Waziristan Khurshid introduced himself as “Muhammad Anaz from Lahore and didn’t tell that I was from Denmark” (Hammad Khurshid, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). He explained that this was because “In the Red Mosque you were not supposed to give your real name. Then you would be identified and kidnapped – and suspected of being a spy. They were very aware of security in the Red Mosque” (Hammad Khurshid, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

When Khurshid began telling people that he wanted to go to Afghanistan “They said ‘you are a good man’ – but nothing came of it” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

During Khurshid’s stay in Waziristan an old man came to him and asked him what he wanted: “He said ‘why have you left the Red Mosque when you have promised them your help?’” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). The old man “thought I was someone who just talked and that I wasn’t serious. He asked for a reference from Abdul Sheikh Razi [leader of the Red Mosque] to prove that I was serious and not an agent” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Khurshid therefore returned to the Red Mosque and asked for such a reference but Sheikh Razi did not know him and was not willing to just give him a reference. “Razi said that there were at least 200 people in the Red Mosque who wanted to go to Afghanistan and he couldn’t just hand out

references [...] He said that I should stay in the Red Mosque and prove my worth – but that could take six months or even a year!” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

During this stay in the Red Mosque Khurshid met a man who was in possession of a document containing recipes for explosives and detonators. “He read from it and two or three would write it down.” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Khurshid was allowed to copy this manual. He explained: “It would be good lessons for a soldier preparing for combat [...] It was a good thing to have in Afghanistan” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

While Khurshid was copying the manual a man named Suleiman, according to Khurshid, “asks Usman if he hasn’t introduced Hammad to Abid?” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Suleiman then asked Khurshid what he was waiting for and Khurshid explained that he was waiting for Sheikh Ghazi to give him a reference.

Suleiman decided to help Khurshid and brought him to a small mosque in a village nearby where he “introduced me to Haji Abid” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Khurshid explained to Haji Abid that he wanted to go to Afghanistan to fight. Abid asked what was so special about Khurshid and said that there were many who wanted to go to Afghanistan. Khurshid therefore decided to compromise his anonymity and reveal the truth about his identity to Haji Abid. He explained that he was a Danish citizen and “That is why I can’t just wait for someone to pick me [...] I have come all the way from Denmark to fight in Afghanistan” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). About revealing his identity Khurshid said explained: “It was my last chance” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Haji Abid told Khurshid to return to the Red Mosque and then Haji Abid would arrange that Khurshid was sent to Afghanistan. Haji Abid also told Khurshid to continue

“to Denmark and raise money [...] He asked me if I could raise money and I said that I knew a lot of people in Denmark [...] He also gave me a list of things to buy: A set of digital scales, binoculars with night vision and an ohmmeter [...] This was a way to prove my commitment” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Khurshid was told that if he did as he was asked then “We will trust you and give you a recommendation so you can go to Afghanistan” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Back in Denmark Khurshid went to several mosques and asked if he could collect money for the Red Mosque. “They all said no [...] I asked if I could collect money for victims of earthquakes and they also said no” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Khurshid subsequently tried to collect money without backup from a mosque but quickly realized that it was difficult: “People were insecure and donated perhaps ten, twenty or thirty DKK” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

In court the prosecutor asked Khurshid why he didn’t send any money to the Red Mosque if that was what he was supposed to do. Khurshid replied: “It isn’t fair that you ask me why I haven’t sent money to the Red Mosque. I tried from the very beginning. I worked and was at it when I was arrested” (Hammad Khurshid, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Back in Denmark Khurshid made use of his recipes for explosives and manufactured approximately ten grams TATP which he and Abdulghani Tokhi later detonated in the staircase where Khurshid lived. About the explosives Khurshid explained: “I wanted an opportunity to touch it and see it and smell it – I was curious” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Khurshid stayed in touch with Abu Ali – the man with whom he had planned to travel to Lebanon but who procrastinated – and in fact the contact intensified over the summer 2007 even though Abu Ali had disappointed Khurshid and he had decided to go to Afghanistan. Khurshid explained he stayed in contact because “I was afraid that I had lost my contacts in Pakistan. The Red Mosque was gone [the Red Mosque was stormed in July 2007] there was war in Waziristan so maybe it would still be possible to go to Lebanon” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

According to the prosecutor Khurshid’s visit in Waziristan was in fact spent in an Al-Qaida training-camp and the deal Khurshid had struck with the Sheikh was not a deal that would result in him being granted access to Afghanistan but rather that Khurshid would return to Denmark and carry out a terrorist attack.

However, Khurshid was accused of planning a terrorist attack in an unknown location and in the closing arguments the prosecutor argued that it did not matter whether the judges and jury

believed that this attack was going to be carried out in Denmark, Afghanistan or in a third place – what mattered was whether they believed he had planned a terrorist attack.

In reply to the prosecutor's many questions and analyses Khurshid more than once said: "You speak as if I was very conscious and had thought everything through and planned a long time ahead. It wasn't like that. Things just happened" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid was found guilty and the presiding judge stated that the judges and the jury found it proved that he and Tokhi had planned a terrorist attack in an unknown location.

The explanation offered by Khurshid obviously falls under the category 'support for violence in a conflict area' whereas the one offered by his prosecutor obviously falls under the category 'support for violence in a non-conflict area'.<sup>35</sup>

## **Al-Qaida inspired?**

Over the course of the two trials Khurshid shed some light on his views on different movements and conflicts. Khurshid compared the conflict between the movement around the Red Mosque and the

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<sup>35</sup> The case was further complicated by the fact that Denmark is part of the NATO-alliance and has forces in Afghanistan. After Khurshid had offered his explanation the prosecutor asked him if he would fight Danish soldiers in Afghanistan and Khurshid replied he "would if he encountered them but he would not actively seek them out" (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). According to Danish law (The Danish Penal Code, Chapter 12) a Danish citizen fighting Danish soldiers would constitute subversive activities. Had Khurshid instead explained he wanted to go to Chechnya to fight the occupation of Muslim land it would have been another case because there are no Danish troops in Chechnya. Whether Khurshid in such a case could have been accused of terrorism would then depend on whether the group he chose to fight with was on a terror-list. The explanation that Khurshid offered meant that he was in fact confessing to planning a crime which was as punishable as the one his prosecutor accused him of planning. The moral distinction between violence in conflict areas and in non-conflict areas is problematic for yet another reason. According to UN resolution 1373 (2001) members of the UN have an obligation to cooperate to prevent international terrorism by sharing intelligence and extraditing alleged terrorists. This implies that if a country were to allow an individual to travel to another country - which he or she regarded as a conflict area – and fight, the former country could be in conflict with the UN provided another member of the UN regarded the individual traveling as a terrorist. Since the resolution does not define 'Terrorism' members may disagree on what terrorism is and neglecting to prevent any individual from traveling anywhere to engage in any conflict is potentially problematic.

Pakistani authorities to the conflict which the movement around *Ungdomshuset*<sup>36</sup> (the Youth-house) in Copenhagen was involved in with the Danish authorities:

“The only difference is that in Ungdomshuset they throw rocks whereas in Pakistan there is access to weapons – in Pakistan there is more violence [...] If you do not get anything out of it you will take it to the next level to get attention” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid was in other words comparing a conflict between Pakistani authorities and a movement around a mosque which was considered to be linked to Al-Qaida and Afghan Taliban as well as to one of the individuals responsible for the 7/7 2005 bombs in London (Siddique, 2008) to a conflict between Danish authorities and a movement around a house which was viewed as housing individuals who distanced themselves from mainstream society and who were provocative and occasionally annoying.

The comparison is provocative but Khurshid’s analysis of the difference between the two is interesting: the different levels and types of violence employed by the two movements are the results of their contexts. Between the lines Khurshid is claiming that if *Ungdomshuset* had been placed in the context which the Red Mosque was placed in then the movement around *Ungdomshuset* would have employed the same level and type of violence as the movement around the Red Mosque did. In other words: the level and type of violence which can be justifiably employed is determined by the immediate context.

Khurshid also explained his views on Taliban:

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<sup>36</sup> *Ungdomshuset* was a house in Copenhagen which housed a variety of individuals and groups who distanced themselves from mainstream society. The house gave room to alternative art and music and took pride in accommodating for alternative lifestyles. *Ungdomshuset* existed from 1982 in a building which was owned by the municipality of Copenhagen but in 1999 the municipality put the house for sale and in 2000 the building was sold. For several years activists refused to vacate the building to allow the buyers to take over the house and in August 2006 the High Court affirmed a judgement ruling that the building had to be vacated. After months of protests and several attempts of mediation the police began clearing *Ungdomshuset* March 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. In the following year Copenhagen was the scene of numerous demonstrations, happenings and violent clashes. The street fighting which erupted from time to time were among the worst ever in Copenhagen.

“There is none other than Taliban who can control Pakistan – so if they come into power I will support them but if something better comes along I will support them” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

Khurshid was, in other words, not uncritical of Taliban – he simply viewed them as the best alternative available. He also elaborated on his understanding of Taliban:

“There are many groups who are in contact with each other but their politics are not the same – they are just fighting to liberate their country. Taliban is one such group [...] When I say that I wanted to fight with Taliban I mean such a group. Taliban is a Western definition” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Khurshid appeared to be even more critical of Al-Qaida than of Taliban:

“Al-Qaida is not linked to a country, they just want to kill and die themselves. They think that anyone who does not sympathize with them should just be killed” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

It is obvious how Khurshid put great emphasis on territory – what he explained he supporting was the defence of territory. He accepted al-Qaida when it engaged in such defence – but not unconditionally:

“Some of the things Osama bin Ladin does are good. If he supports someone who has a goal – to defend their country – then it is OK. Not if they just kill random

people” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

He further expanded on this and explained his support for groups who resisted Al-Qaida’s interferences:

“ Hamas is right in fighting Al-Qaida. There are also Mujahideen in Pakistan and in Afghanistan who do the same [...] Al-Qaida they just come from Saudi Arabia and all over the world and want to take charge – they say kill yourself and kill everybody. Hamas has a right to defend their own country and others cannot just come and take charge” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

Khurshid also offered an explanation of why he then was tolerant of Al-Qaida:

“Al-Qaida has never been a big word in my head. The Red Mosque supported Al-Qaida but it didn’t really matter to me. I needed to find someone who could grant me access to Afghanistan.” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

When asked why he was in possession of material produced by Al-Qaida if he was so critical of the organization Khurshid explained:

“They [al-Qaida] make some good videos – good propaganda. When you watch the videos you are emotionally affected and you see things in a different way” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

And he later expanded: “They are the ones who produce the most and it is really hard to find anything else” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Finally, Khurshid concluded:

“I don’t think you have found any material in my possession which says that it is OK to attack the West”  
(Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Jihadism in the West is often referred to as being linked to Al-Qaida – by association or by inspiration – and since Al-Qaida are Global Jihadis the underlying assumption is that all Jihadis in the West are Global Jihadis and therefore a direct threat to their homelands. If individuals aspire to engaging in conflicts in Muslim countries under (what they describe as) occupation it is generally assumed this is only because they are not capable of carrying out attacks in the West. Once they have acquired experience or received training they will return and wage Jihad in their own countries.

The first part of the assumption – that Jihadism in the West is linked to Al-Qaida either by association or by inspiration – may be a misunderstanding. As mentioned, I have not encountered references to Al-Qaida as a source of inspiration in Denmark. On the other hand, I have encountered many references to Afghan Taliban as a source of inspiration and descriptions of the regime that Afghan Taliban created in Afghanistan as being close to perfection. Hammad Khurshid referred to Afghan Taliban as a source of inspiration and not to Al-Qaida.

Afghan Taliban has links to Al-Qaida and they have aligned with Al-Qaida to some extent, but they have not necessarily aligned in terms of becoming Global Jihadis – or perhaps more accurately: they are not viewed as having aligned. Hammad Khurshid certainly did not view Taliban as having aligned with Al-Qaida. This indicates that individuals who support Taliban are not necessarily supporting Al-Qaida and accordingly will not necessarily accept the use of violence in a non-conflict area.

Which groups adhere to Territorialized Jihadism and which adhere to Global Jihadism is, however, constantly changing. Groups change from Territorialized Jihadism to Global Jihadism for various reasons – mainly because they want to do something and need to find justification for it or because they need resources which they believe Al-Qaida can provide. Some will probably also

change from Global to Territorialized if they realize this will serve them better – not the least in terms of being able to mobilize support.

The second part of the assumption – that individuals who travel to conflict areas and receive training or participate in combat will return to their homelands and wage Jihad in them – can be correct if the training or the combat they engage in is organized by Al-Qaida. If the training or the combat they engage in is organized by a Territorialized Jihadist group this will, however, not happen.

Whether Khurshid is an example of an individual who travelled to a conflict area and received training organized by al-Qaida and returned to Denmark a Global Jihadi or received training organized by another group and returned to Denmark a Territorialized Jihadi remains an open question. His prosecutor claimed he received training from al-Qaida whereas Khurshid claimed he received training from another group. His prosecutor claimed he returned to Denmark to orchestrate a terrorist attack whereas Khurshid claimed he returned to Denmark to await being sent into combat in Afghanistan. The judges and the jury did not indicate which explanation they trusted because both constituted planning terrorism<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Another factor which contributes to turning individuals into Global Jihadis is Al-Qaida's propaganda which appears to be increasingly focussed on attracting individuals in the West. In early July 2010 an English language magazine entitled *Inspire* (al-Malahem, 2010) was published by *Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula* on the internet. When it was first made available the file was corrupted and only the first three pages were available. One week later, however, the magazine was made available in its entirety. The magazine in itself was no sensation. It is not the first online Jihad-lifestyle magazines in English – in 2009 four issues of the magazine *Jihad Recollections* were published – and it is in no way the first example of Al-Qaida propaganda being distributed in English. Al-Qaida's own publication house *Al-Sahab Foundation for Islamic Media Publication* has always included English subtitles in their most important publications. But *Inspire* featured a theme which is quite interesting in the context of this dissertation.

On the cover of the magazine is a picture of the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard – from the cartoon-crisis – and inside the magazine is an eight page theme (out of sixty six pages) entitled “The Cartoon Crusade”. This theme includes a timeline of events from the publication of 12 cartoons of the Prophet in a Danish newspaper in September 2005 to the attacks on Kurt Westergaard and the Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks in 2010. This is followed by “A hit list for the ummah to take out pertaining to the figures related to the blasphemous caricatures” (al-Malahem, 2010:22). The theme is concluded by an article in which: “Our guest writer Shaykh Anwar [al-Awlaki] writes on the seriousness of the caricature issue & what must be done” (al-Malahem, 2010:22).

The fact that so much energy is being put into the subject of the cartoons is revealing. Over the past years – since the first publication of the cartoons in September 2005 – it has become obvious how the cartoons hold potential to justify actions and mobilize support and Al-Qaida is not one to let an opportunity slip away. That is why the

## Two more examples – a well-known path and not so new

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter differentiation between different types of Jihadism in the West has primarily been a differentiation in time. According to this differentiation there was a first generation of Jihadis who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980's, then there was a second generation of Jihadis who attacked USA through the 1990's and on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and finally there is a third generation who are conceptualized as 'homegrown' and 'inspired by Al-Qaida'.

The type of Jihadism which I have referred to as Territorialized Jihadism so far would fit into the first generation and would therefore easily be assumed to be something of the past.

I have attempted to challenge this differentiation in the analyses of Hammad Khurshid's narrative but two more examples will be provided in the following. The first example is a case which is contemporary to Khurshid's whereas the second example is a decade older. The latter therefore also serves the purpose of showing that all things have not necessarily changed profoundly from the late 1990's to the late 2000's. Both narratives also illustrate the appropriateness of the differentiation between Territorialized Jihadism and Global Jihadism.

### The case of Eric Breininger

In May 2010 the document *Mein Weg nach Jennah* appeared on the internet. It was published by Elif Media and the name of the author was Abdul Ghaffar El Almani. Abdul Ghaffar El-Almani is also known by his German name Eric Breininger.

Breininger is particularly interesting in relation to Hammad Khurshid because Breininger's and Khurshid's narratives origin from the same period in time and resemble each other on several points. The main difference between the two is that Breininger (claims to have) succeeded in gaining access to the battlefields in Afghanistan whereas Khurshid did not. According to Breininger, he spent close to three years as a *Mujahid* in South-East Asia until he was eventually killed in April 2010. Breininger appears to be an example of a Territorialized Jihadi who remained territorialized. Even though German authorities have continuously worried that Breininger would return to Germany to carry through attacks, Breininger has in fact rejected the idea. In September 2008 German authorities published pictures of Breininger warning that he was dangerous and planning an attack in Germany and in October 2008 Breininger appeared on a video repudiating the

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organization puts so much energy into the cartoons. Considering the number of failed and foiled plots against Denmark it would appear it is not only in conflict areas Al-Qaida can

accusation and explaining that he was in Afghanistan and did not plan to carry out attacks in Germany. In *Mein Weg nach Jennah* Breininger explains his views on Jihad and uses references which do not sanction violence in non-conflict areas, e.g. Abdallah Azzam and not to e.g. Osama bin Ladin's work.

Breininger was a friend of Daniel Schneider, also known as Abdullah, who was arrested in September 2007 and convicted in March 2010 for being part of the *Sauerland group*. This group planned to attack the U.S. Air Force's Ramstein base in Germany. Breininger himself went to South-East Asia in 2007 and joined the *Islamic Jihad Union*.

From Breininger's and Schneider's different choices of location it would appear that Schneider was a Global Jihadi whereas Breininger was a Territorialized Jihadi. As indicated above the choice between Territorialized and Global is not necessarily completely ideologically motivated and well thought-through. The individuals have not necessarily studied the different positions, read Abdallah Azzam's and Osama bin Ladin's collected works and weighed Territorialized Jihadism against Global Jihadism. It may also be a case of adjusting to circumstances.

Neither what Breininger apparently did – travelling to Afghanistan, receiving military training and ultimately gaining access to the battlefields – nor what Schneider apparently did – getting hold of chemicals, manufacturing explosives and launching an attack in Germany – is *easy*. But one may be more *feasible* than the other as a result of the resources available – such as money, contacts, intellect, training, etc. Therefore it is not unthinkable that two good friends could choose different paths and remain friends.

Breininger appears to have consistently remained true to the Territorialized Jihadism doctrine. In *Mein Weg nach Jennah* he makes references to Abdallah Azzam whereas he does not make references to Osama bin Ladin.

Breininger offers an account of his own path to engagement in combat in the document. He describes himself as an average German boy who grew up “neither rich nor poor” (El-Almani, 2010:6, my translation) and whose “parents were divorced” (El-Almani, 2010:6, my translation).

Breininger grew up and began studying at a Business College and earned money loading packages on lorries. It was via this job Breininger met a colleague who got him interested in Islam and Breininger began considering converting:

“The brother told me of another German – his name was  
Abdullah, born Daniel Schneider – who had recently

embraced Islam. He came from the same town as we did and was currently studying Arabic in Egypt. [...] As we passed an open space he thought that he saw Abdullah but he was not sure because he thought that he was in Egypt. We turned around and drove back. And he was not mistaken. We saw Abdullah and Hussayn al-Malla. We got out and introduced ourselves. We spoke for a brief while and then they said goodbye. When Abdullah said goodbye to me he held my hand and said to me: ‘If you embrace Islam it will give you strength!’” (El-Almani, 2010:38, my translation)

The men spent some time together and Breininger ultimately decided to convert:

“My Muslim friend invited us all to meet at his place. He had prepared wonderful food and was very hospitable. Hussayn [...] led me to Islam. I heard what he said and knew that he was telling the truth. [...]Hussayn and Abdullah had to go to work. I stayed for a while and reflected on what Hussayn had said. On this evening I was determined to embrace Islam. I told my Muslim friend that I wanted to recite the creed” (El-Almani, 2010:38-39, my translation)

Apparently Breininger was living with his girlfriend at this point in time. She knew nothing about his interest in Islam and was somewhat surprised to learn he had converted:

“When I came home this evening and told my girlfriend that I had embraced Islam she reacted very strangely and asked if I was insane. We argued but it ended quickly. I tried to encourage her to embrace Islam and brought her

to the wife of my Muslim friend” (El-Almani, 2010:39, my translation)

After a short period the girlfriend also converted: “I got the happy news that she had also embraced Islam, which made me very pleased” (El-Almani, 2010:39, my translation). The two were soon married and Breininger decided to quit school and take a fulltime job instead. This led to a conflict with the family and soon after Breininger received some shocking news:

“Shortly after, I met a former classmate. He knew me and my wife from before. He told me that he had seen my wife in a disco during the weekend. I was very surprised and could not believe it so I immediately returned to our home to find out [...] When I came home I immediately asked her. At first she denied everything but then she admitted. She then told me that she had never been convinced by Islam and had only embraced it because she loved me. She told me that she never felt what she heard and that she never believed in God” (El-Almani, 2010:51, my translation)

Breininger explains he attempted to convince his wife to truly embrace Islam but eventually gave up and the two were divorced. “From now on I wanted to dedicate myself to my religion and I sought more contact with my Muslim brothers. I asked Abdullah if I could move in with him because this would be better for me and my religion” (El-Almani, 2010:51, my translation)

The two men spent most of their time together and a man named Hussayn al-Malla often joined them:

“Hussayn often came and visited us and we talked about the problems and the suffering in the Islamic Ummah (Nation). After a short period Hussayn left the country. He said goodbye to me but I didn’t know where he went. We followed the events in the Jihad-regions and watched

movies about how the Mujahideen (soldiers of God) fought the Crusaders. [...] I instantly knew that I had to do something to resist these Crusaders who violated my brothers and sisters [...] My personal studies of Islam now revolved around the theme of Jihad” (El-Almani, 2010:52-53, my translation)

In the document Breininger refers to Abdallah Azzam as he provides his definition of Jihad:

“In the following I give short extracts from the book ‘The defence of Muslim Land’ by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, may Allah have mercy on him. The curious reader can download this book from the internet” (El-Almani, 2010:60, my translation)

Breininger subsequently provides a summary of his interpretation of Jihad:

- “1. Jihad with one’s own person is Fard Ayn for every Muslim on the Earth
2. With regards to Jihad it is not allowed for one to take the place of another or for a parent to replace the child
3. Jihad with ones fortune is Fard Ayn and it is Haram to save up as long as Jihad is in need of the money of Muslims
4. Neglecting Jihad is like neglecting to fast and to pray. More than that, neglecting Jihad these days is worse” (El-Almani, 2010:63, my translation)

Four months after Breininger had found Islam he decided to actively engage in Jihad:

“Abdullah was under surveillance in Germany. [...] That proved to me that I had to leave Germany. I had only been

in Islam for 4 months and yet I knew what my duty was. I wanted to go into Jihad but I did not how and the brothers I knew could not help me. I wanted to go to a so-called ‘Muslim Land’ where I could meet persons who could assist me” (El-Almani, 2010:76, my translation)

Breininger and two friends discussed where he could initiate his search: “We considered the situation in different countries and then opted for Algeria” (El-Almani, 2010:76, my translation). Breininger took a farewell of his mother and headed for Marseille from where he could sail to Algeria.

On the way he stopped in a mosque to meet a man he knew. This man was of Algerian descent and Breininger hoped he could assist him in his plans but:

“He asked me what I wanted to do in Algeria. I answered him: ‘Among other things I would like to learn the Arabic language’. He then told me that the situation in Algeria would not be good for me since the country was moving away from religion [...] I knew that I had to come up with a new plan in a hurry as the situation in Germany would only get worse for me. So I went to a travel agency and inquired into flights to Syria or Egypt [...] I opted for Egypt and bought a ticket. The plane left the next day” (El-Almani, 2010:77, my translation)

The next day Breininger flew to Egypt carrying with him notes which others had written for him in Arabic. One note explained “that I came from Germany and needed a bus from Hurgada to Cairo” (El-Almani, 2010:77, my translation) and on another was written “the address of a school where they teach Arabic” (El-Almani, 2010:77, my translation)

When Breininger arrived at the school in Cairo he found a teacher who invited him to stay at his house until he could find something more permanent. Breininger spoke no Arabic and very little English so the first period in Egypt was lonesome and he had problems settling in. Therefore he was hoping to meet other Germans:

“I spent the following days at the school or in the mosque nearby. Many foreign Muslims came to this mosque. I was hoping to find a Muslim from Germany there since my everyday was strenuous because I did not speak the language and therefore could not speak with anyone. Unfortunately, my hopes were not met. The days passed. One evening I went to the mosque like so many times before and a native man came to me and said that he knew me. He began to ask questions in English. Where I came from and so on. I told him that I came from Germany and had converted to Islam. He told me that at this mosque there was another convert whose name was Ali and who came from Denmark [...] Ali found me by himself in the Mosque where there were some 400 persons. Ali greeted me. The man made Ali aware of the fact that I came from Germany. Then Ali spoke to me in German which surprised me. He had learned German from his stepmother. [...] I told him that I did not have a place to live and needed to find another school to learn Arabic. He gave me his number and we agreed to meet another day and said goodbye” (El-Almani, 2010:78-79, my translation)

The Danish man helped Breininger register at a school where he could study Arabic but as the month of Ramadan was approaching the school was closing. Breininger decided to begin his studies after the Ramadan. The two men then went to a nearby mosque where they met two Bosnian men and Breininger’s problems with accommodation were solved: “[...] the other Bosnian brother was looking for someone to share his apartment with. I was so thrilled that I immediately took him up on the offer without seeing the apartment” (El-Almani, 2010:79, my translation)

On the internet Breininger read that his friends back in Germany had been arrested:

“I stumbled upon a webpage which reported that Abd al-Malik, Talha and Abdullah had been arrested. The BKA [national intelligence service] accused them of planning a Martyrdom-operation in Germany. This accusation at first made me very happy because it meant that there were people who were ready to risk their lives to spread Allah’s word and bring back Islam. But on the other hand I was saddened because the brothers had been arrested and were in the hands of the infidels and one therefore could not know what their situation was” (El-Almani, 2010:80, my translation)

Breininger spent his first Ramadan in Cairo and during it he received a phone call from Hussayn al-Malla in Germany who told Breininger that he was coming to visit him in Egypt. Al-Malla arrived after the Ramadan and told Breininger how he had been imprisoned:

“He told me how he was arrested in Pakistan and how the Pakistani Murtadin (apostates) had placed sacks over his and his brothers’ heads. They then brought them to a secret American prison to torture them to get information. The prison was placed under ground and was very modern. One knew that it was American because there were American soldiers there. [...] When they did not find any proof against him they sent him back to Germany. In Germany he was under surveillance around the clock. Brothers who wanted to visit him had to visit the police a day ahead and explain what they wanted. The German authorities could not prove anything either and he took the chance and emigrated to me. He also told me that he knew a path to Afghanistan and that he had decided to go. He just wanted to know if I would join him” (El-Almani, 2010:82, my translation)

At first Breininger wanted to continue studying Arabic as he had planned. He believed that he would be able to learn what he needed in three months. “Hussayn said: ‘I don’t think you will have time to study a language when you are at war – we will stay in contact, Inshallah, and after three months I will prepare a path for you’” (El-Almani, 2010:82, my translation)

Breininger, however, continued to think about al-Malla’s offer and after a few days he decided to join him:

“Now the first step had been taken. After four months in Egypt a path to Jihad in Afghanistan presented itself. There were fighters coming from Khorasan (i.e. Afghanistan etc.) with black flags. The Prophet (*Salallahu ‘aleyhi wa salam*) instructed us to go there even when we had to crawl on our hands and feet over ice because under them Al-Mahdi will be” (El-Almani, 2010:83, my transcription in Italics, my translation).

Breininger and al-Malla flew from Cairo to Teheran from where they continued their journey to Bam in Iran by bus and from there to Zahidan:

“In Zahidan Hussayn knew Abdussalam. We took a taxi to a mosque where Abdussalam believed we could find people who could help us to continue. [...] Abdussalam did not search for long before he found a person whom he knew. They spoke and shortly after this man took us to a house. In this house lived two Ansars (helpers) who gave us shelter. The Ansars knew someone who would leave with other Mujahideen in a few days. On the day when this party was to depart we met another four Mujahideen. Two came from Mecca and the other two from Kurdistan (the border between Iran and Iraq. [...] Abdussalam disappeared for a few hours and when he returned he told me to take my bag. We were going to another place [...]

we set out to another person named Mustafa. There we were told how we should continue to reach Waziristan [Tribal area in North-Western Pakistan]. What I did not know was that Mustafa had a plan. He gave us two burkas [woman's dress used in Afghanistan] which we were to use to cross the border safely and without problems" (El-Almani, 2010:84-85, my translation)

The group then headed for the border between Iran and Pakistan where "Mustafa left the car and went to one of the soldiers who guarded the border and gave him a bribe" (El-Almani, 2010:85, my translation). They continued towards Waziristan where

"[...] two Ansars took us to a house where I was finally able to take off the burka. There was no end to the waiting. We waited for a car that would take us to the next control. When this was over we went via a mountain road (where we ran for hours) to a house where Ansars from Islamic Jihad Union lived. [...] We were to wait in the Ansars' house for some more Mujahideen until we were a group which would then be send to the mountains in Afghanistan for education. [...] More Mujahideen joined us from Turkey and Tajikistan. Shortly thereafter we were on our way to Afghanistan headed for a training camp to be trained for Jihad against the Crusaders" (El-Almani, 2010:85, my translation)

Breininger and Abdussalam were enrolled in the training camp but

"Abdussalam decided to leave the camp without any explanation. I tried to get a reason and asked him. He did not really give any reason. At this point in time the training was really hard for me.[...] The only thing I could

do was bite my teeth and endure the training” (El-Almani, 2010:87, my translation)

Breininger pulled through and was enrolled in

“a second training. [...] The training camp was situated in the Afghan mountains. We were to wait there for another group who were still completing the first training. [...] One day we went into the mountains to observe the American camps and to practise with our weapons” (El-Almani, 2010:87-88, my translation)

Breininger completed this second training and headed for his first experience with combat

“In a town we met with more Mujahideen from Taliban and al-Qaida. [...] Then the Amir [leader] divided us into four groups. One group of Mujahideen would attack helicopters [...] I was in a BM1-group. We spent two days in the mountains before we engaged in *Amelia* [probably a word for combat]. We hauled the heavy weapons through the mountains and prepared to initiate the bombardment of the Crusaders [...] The kuffars shot at us with fighter jets in this direction and there was nothing to do other than going in the other direction. We fled from bush to bush and hid in a thicket while the jets [...] whistled by. [...] We met some woodcutters who had a camp in the mountains. These men boarded us and gave us a place to sleep. The next morning the woodcutters brought us to a place where a brother was waiting in a car” (El-Almani, 2010:96-97, my translation)

Breininger apparently enjoyed his newfound role and stayed but he continued to feel lonely:

“After three years with the Islamic Jihad Union I was still having trouble communicating with the other Mujahideen. They were all really good brothers but I missed having a brother with whom I could converse. [...] I began to do dua [prayer] for Allah. I asked him that he would send a German brother to our Jama’a [group]. [...] The Amir came to me and told me that he was training a German brother. He allowed me to visit this brother. In the beginning I thought that he would be staying with IJU [Islamic Jihad Union] but he told me that he wanted to go to Taliban. I then began contemplating if it would be better for me to be in a Jama’a where I understood the brothers. [...] Even in the days of the Prophet (*Salallahu ‘aleyhi wa salam*) bringing people together in tribes [...] had advantages because they had the same customs, habits and culture. [...] Taliban was considering setting up a subgroup. In the beginning we were six brothers who founded the ‘German Taliban Mujahideen’ [...] This Jama’s was to be a home to all German speaking Muslims who can come here from all over to fulfil their obligations to Allah. (El-Almnai, 2010:101-102, my transcription in Italics, my translation)

According to Breininger German Taliban Mujahideen is a success:

“Thanks to Allah our group grew steadily and it is not only single brothers who come. Even families with children come. [...] It would be good if unmarried sisters would do hijra [migrate] to here too since there are many unmarried brothers here who wish to start a family. I too hope to find a German or Arab speaking wife” (El-Almani, 2010:102-103, my translation)

According to Breininger life where he is living is close to ideal:

“Here the sisters will learn to handle weapons – like the Mujahideen. [...] The children will grow up far from the infidel Western societies. Here there is no forced schooling where the children are forced to learn the lies about evolution or – as it is the case in Germany – to be sexually corrupted in primary school” (El-Almani, 2010:103, my translation)

Breininger and Khurshid ventured out into the world at the same point in time – in early 2007 – and their accounts resemble each other on several points. They both decided to engage in combat to defend Muslims who they saw as under attack. They were both very open to where this should take place – as long as it was a place where the conflict was already violent. They both set out searching for access to one place but adjusted to circumstances along the way and therefore opted for another place. And they both went through many ordeals to reach their goal – in the end Breininger succeeded whereas Khurshid failed.

Looking at an older account is interesting because the similarities indicate that not much has necessarily changed over the past decade.

### **The case of Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane**

Another Dane, Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane, has presented his account in the book *Danskeren på Guantánamo – den personlige beretning* (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004) which is based on two Danish journalists’ interviews with Abderrahmane. In the book Abderrahmane describes the events preceding his imprisonment in Guantanamo in early 2002.

Abderrahmane and Khurshid were no strangers: “I have met Slimane a few times – the first time was probably in the mosque” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008, my translation).

Like Hammad Khurshid, Abderrahmane spent a great deal of his childhood away from Denmark even though he is a Danish citizen. Abderrahmane was born in Denmark in 1973 as the son of a Danish mother and an Algerian father. The family left Denmark and moved to Algeria when Abderrahmane was seven: “I think my father wanted us to experience our Algerian

background too” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:22, my translation). After just one year the mother, however, returned to Denmark leaving Abderrahmane and his two sisters with the father in Algeria.

At age 15 Abderrahmane participated in demonstrations and violent fights against the Algerian president Chadli’s dictatorship: “You got something out of it after having been held down for so long” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:26, my translation).

In 1990 when the Islamist party FIS (Front Islamique du Salut) won the elections Abderrahmane supported it:

“To me religion and politics is the same. They do not differ from each other. You could say that religion is also sort of a political ideology. When an Islamic party suddenly appeared in Algeria I supported it, off course I did. At a point in time around 1990 you almost felt that you were living in an Islamic state because FIS had so much power in the capital” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:27, my translation )

After FIS was banned in 1992 Abderrahmane was attracted to *GIA (Groupes Islamiques Armés)*:

“The way I saw it, GIA was the same as the Danish resistance movement during the war [Second World War]. There were many different small groups who fought the same enemy. Some of the groups were more moderate than others but they were gathered under one name and one leadership. I was also looking for a group where I could get started but nothing ever came of it. Perhaps it was because I had lost faith in the possibility of having a future in a country under dictatorship like Algeria. So I began contemplating travelling to Denmark where I was a citizen” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:28, my translation)

Abderrahmane did leave Algeria and moved to Denmark. He explains the decision was partly motivated by his reluctance to do military service in Algeria (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:28, my translation).

When Abderrahmane arrived in Denmark in 1993 he had forgotten the Danish language but rather quickly became fluent in it – like Khurshid – and later began studying mathematics at the University of Aarhus and took an interest in techno music.

In 1998 Abderrahmane was enraged by the footage from the conflict in Kosovo which he saw on TV and decided to engage himself in collecting food and clothes for the refugees. He also explored the possibility of travelling to Kosovo to join the UCK militia in the fight against the Serbians: “My plan was to go there on my own and meet some people. But I didn’t do more than search through some web-pages” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:37, my translation). The conflict was resolved before he could realize his plans but Abderrahmane explains his motivation for going:

“There was no other reason for me wanting to go than the violations I saw on TV. I hadn’t listened to any tapes or seen some video with some Sheikh urging people to go to Kosovo and kill Serbs. It was the acts of the Serbian military that enraged me” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:37, my translation)

About his views on Jihad he explains: “It is a means you are supposed to employ if a Muslim people is attacked and their land is taken from them. Jihad is a way to defend yourself, your faith and your brothers” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:36, my translation). Abderrahmane also explains that: “In the back of my head I’ve always known that one day I would follow my faith” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:36, my translation).

In late 1999 Abderrahmane was once again enraged by footage from a conflict in which Muslims were victimized – the conflict in Chechnya and: “Something just snapped in me. I asked: ‘What are we? Are we just someone who others can kill? First Bosnia and Kosovo and now this’. I said to myself enough is enough” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:37-38, my translation).

To gain access to the battlefields in Chechnya he decided to seek out Arab mosques in Aarhus to find persons with the relevant contacts. As he explains: “It’s only Arabs who have that type of

contacts. That is why I didn't go to the Turkish mosque in the centre of the city. There's no way Turks would know anything about these matters" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:38, my translation).

In early 2000 Abderrahmane went to an Arab mosque in Aarhus and attended Friday sermon and quickly presented his wish to travel to Chechnya to fight expecting to find help. The imams were not helpful but an unnamed man advised Abderrahmane to spend more time in the mosque: "I got to talk to another man. I told him a little about myself and said that I wanted to go to Chechnya [...] 'Come to the mosque a little more often' was his advice" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:39, my translation). Abderrahmane took the advice, attended the mosque regularly and eventually became focussed on reading the Quran living "by its rules" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:39, my translation). Abderrahmane consequently dropped out of university, abandoned his music and took a cleaning job.

In time Abderrahmane met a group of Algerian refugees in the mosque and on the internet he found material from *GSPC (Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat)* which "explained the group's ideology and goals and there were descriptions of its battles against the army in Algeria" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:46, my translation).

Abderrahmane explains that GSPC is a splinter group from GIA which was founded in 1998:

"Off course I didn't support the ones who attacked villages and said that all infidels should be eradicated. They had some strange ideas. That's why GIA was divided and a lot of people put down their arms while others founded GSPC" (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:46, my translation)

Abderrahmane also indicates that he interpreted his context and what he was witnessing in a somewhat unusual way:

"Slimane saw signs that Judgement Day was approaching: 'The Prophet said that some of the signs are caretakers of cows without any taste who build tall buildings. We see that from cowboys in USA – they have

build skyscrapers. Most Europeans sort of agree that they have no taste – the Americans’.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:49-50, my translation)

Abderrahmane describes how he found some of his inspiration on the internet – especially on *azzam.com*. Abderrahmane emphasises a definition of areas where Jihad is allowed which he found on this site: “Jihad may only be performed in areas where there is battle. Killing outside the so-called jihad-areas is not allowed.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:42-43, my translation)

In mid 2000 Abderrahmane visited Algeria for the first time since he had left: “[...] the Algerian government had granted amnesty to everyone who had fled the military” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:50, my translation). With him he brought money collected for FIS in Denmark which he handed over to a man in Algiers (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:51, my translation).

He enjoyed his stay but he also seized the opportunity to continue his search: “It felt good to be back. My father was really happy that I had come home. I also visited the family and some old friends and attempted to find some contacts I could use” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:50, my translation). Abderrahmane explains how he attempted to find such contacts:

“I didn’t speak directly to people about it because that would be dangerous. It was more a matter of sizing people in my neighbourhood up and being aware if they began making hints. They knew I had always been a devout Muslim.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:51, my translation)

But it was not an easy task for Abderrahmane:

“First and foremost there is a big risk you are caught by the government’s soldiers. It is all about getting into a group the right way. You have to be sort of approved and they must trust you” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:52, my translation).

According to Abderrahmane he did not succeed in gaining access to anyone in GSPC and after the Ramadan in early 2001 he returned to Denmark (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:52-53, my translation).

Abderrahmane travelled to Algeria again shortly hereafter, bringing with him more money. Some were handed over in London where he stopped on the way and some were brought to Algeria. While Abderrahmane was in London he sought up the Finsbury Park Mosque but

“You need to have your contacts in place. It’s not like you can just go into Finsbury Park and say ‘I want to go fight in Jihad’ and then they say ‘Well, do come in’”  
(Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:56, my translation).

Abderrahmane claims that prior to his departure from Denmark he had been contacted by the Danish Security and Intelligence Service who warned him against continuing his path and that during his stay in Algeria he was picked up and tortured by the Algerian police (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:56-60, my translation).

Around April 2001 Abderrahmane returned to London where he stayed at a friend’s house while continuing his search for access to a battlefield. During this stay his efforts finally paid off and Abderrahmane was accepted by a group willing to grant him access to the battlefields: “They saw to it that I got ‘inside’ in London. They spoke several times but I wasn’t present. It wasn’t till afterwards that I was informed” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:64, my translation).

Contrary to his expectations, however, Abderrahmane was not to be sent directly to Algeria or Chechnya. He was to travel to Afghanistan to receive training and from there he could be sent to Chechnya:

“He told me that he came from a group which sent people to Afghanistan to be trained in handling weapons. The man also said that when I got to Afghanistan I would get to know what I needed to know. Finally, he told me that when I returned from Afghanistan I would be sent to Chechnya [...] I didn’t know that you had to go to Afghanistan. At that point in time I thought you would

receive the necessary training in handling weapons in Chechnya or Algeria if I was going there. I was surprised but thought: ‘well, OK’. Now it was for real and I wasn’t about to regret. Not at all” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:64-65, my translation).

Abderrahmane was finally close to fulfilling his dreams. In July 2001 he left London headed for Tayyebad in Iran from where he was to continue to Afghanistan. His contact had provided him with a plan: “He told me that when I entered Afghanistan I should just provide the soldiers the name of my contact in Kabul, then they would help me” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:65, my translation)

Abderrahmane was given the name of his contact to whom he refers as ‘the Algerian’:

“He was the one in charge of the training camp in Afghanistan. He was the one I was to ask for when I met Taliban. They would also take me to Kabul where I would meet the Algerian and other Arabs” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:65, my translation)

The flight to Teheran was uneventful but Teheran was a disappointment to Abderrahmane:

“There was music all over Teheran. The way I see it the Iranians are trying to fit religion into the developments in society and the contemporary way of life – like the Christians. My view is that people are to adapt to Islam. It isn’t Islam that should adapt to people” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:69, my translation)

Abderrahmane took the train from Teheran to Mashhad from where he was to take a taxi to Tayyebad. He explains: “They knew what it was about when you wanted to go to that town. People only go there to cross the border” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:70, my translation)

At the border Abderrahmane was told: “you cannot cross the border. Closed for Europeans!” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:71, my translation). After this disappointment Abderrahmane returned to Tayyebad where he explains that he asked a bartender “isn’t there any place where I can cross the border?” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:72, my translation). The bartender found a map and pointed to the town Zabol and explained that Abderrahmane would be able to cross the border approximately 10 km from it (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:72, my translation). Finally, Abderrahmane made it.

In Afghanistan Abderrahmane easily found representatives of Taliban to whom he gave the name of his contact in Kabul. They sent him off to Kabul with some Iranians who were there for the same reason. The group travelled through Afghanistan together but in Kabul they were separated. The Iranians continued their journey whereas Abderrahmane was taken to a neighbourhood where the Arabs resided:

“I told them a little about Europe and they told me about their countries. Everybody was concerned with security and not revealing secrets. But it was a given that they had come to receive training. Perhaps they had been to training camp but needed more courses” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:80, my translation)

After a few days ‘the Algerian’ turned up:

“He knew my name and we talked about the purpose of my journey. He asked why I had come to Afghanistan and what I expected to gain during my stay. I explained I wished to receive military training so that I could go to Chechnya but also religious training if possible. The Algerian suggested we planned a programme” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:81, my translation)

The plan the two men made was that Abderrahmane would attend religious training while he waited for a new course to begin in the military training camps and he travelled to Jalalabad together with a

group of Afghans. There he joined a group of Arabs and received religious and ideological training. According to Abderrahmane he was at this school on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001:

“It was after dinner when we usually listened to the radio. Suddenly they told the news and everybody was quiet. I don’t know what the others were thinking but I was just hoping that it wasn’t Muslims who had done it”  
(Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:83, my translation)

In response to speculations that he in fact was in London on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and only travelled to Afghanistan at a later point in time Abderrahmane says:

“If the Americans had had evidence that I had travelled to Afghanistan after September 11<sup>th</sup> they would never have let me go. Then they would have had good reasons to believe that I only travelled there to fight USA [...] But the atmosphere in the house, off course, changed. Three days after September 11<sup>th</sup> the Algerian came from Kabul and explained the situation. At that point they were beginning to suspect Osama bin Laden was behind and as a consequence USA might attack Afghanistan he said. The Algerian believed the Americans would bomb a lot of training camps, frontlines and Taleban’s bases. They would probably also receive assistance from the Northern Alliance” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:84, my translation)

Shortly after the men decided to flee and Abderrahmane explains he received basic weapons training to enable him to defend himself: “Otherwise I would have been a liability if we were to be attacked.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:85, my translation). About learning to use a Kalashnikov Abderrahmane simply says “It was fun” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:85, my translation).

From then on Abderrahmane always had his weapon with him: “You got this feeling that you had strength” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:87, my translation)

The group left Jalalabad and headed for the Pakistani border. In a village they met with other Arabs. “We prepared for fighting in case something were to happen but we didn’t contemplate joining the fighting against the Northern Alliance” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:88, my translation)

The group continued towards the Pakistani border and made it to the mountains where they had to abandon the cars and continue on foot. Abderrahmane says he did not know which mountains it was but that they met more Arabs who were hiding in caves. According to Abderrahmane “It appeared to have been planned” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:89, my translation).

They spent some time in the caves and continued to make their way through the mountains which he later came to realize were the Tora Bora (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:90, my translation). The group was joined by more and more men along the way and when they finally found shelter in some stables Abderrahmane was exhausted: “By that time I hadn’t eaten for a day and a half and I was in trouble” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:91, my translation).

Abderrahmane fell asleep but was awoken by some Pakistani men who lead the group to a house:

“We had tea and bread there. We were extremely hungry. When we were resting some Pakistanis and Arabs came in. They told us to hand over our weapons. [...] I was in doubt. Some of the other Arabs were also sceptical but then some of the others began handing over their weapons. The Pakistanis promised that they would help us” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:91-92, my translation).

The Pakistanis took them to Pakistan and lodged them but the following night Pakistani soldiers arrived to arrest them. “There were some who thought that we should try to run. But we were too tired and our astuteness had disappeared.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:93, my translation).

Abderrahmane was arrested in Pakistan and was later transferred to Guantanamo Bay where he spent two years before he was transferred to Denmark in 2004 where he was eventually released without being prosecuted.

## **Trends in the three narratives**

In Khurshid's, Breininger's as well as Abderrahmane's narratives enragement over conflicts and oppression was indicated as a motivating factor for wanting to engage in combat. But none of the narrators indicated having been enraged by one specific conflict and then determined attempting to gain access to it. Rather they all indicated wishing to engage in combat and being willing to settle for whatever conflict area they could reach. In all three narratives the narrators were quite open-minded with regards to whom they would support and team up with.

The three narratives indicate three men who had a distinct desire to act and who ventured out into the world to satisfy this desire. On the way plans were adapted to circumstances and shaped by the opportunities which presented themselves. They were clearly willing to make many changes to gain access to what they really wanted: combat. And they went through many ordeals to reach their goals.

The three narratives also illustrate how the three men to a large degree mirrored widely held prejudices: Abderrahmane was convinced that Arabs had contact to terrorists – and that he could be granted access to them by attending an Arab mosque. Khurshid went to Hizb ut-Tahrir and later to two mosques in Pakistan in his search for access to a battlefield and both Breininger and Abderrahmane considered Algeria to be a place to initiate their search for access to combat.

Both Abderrahmane and Khurshid indicate that they had been attracted to action, weapons and violence from an early age whereas Breininger did not indicate such inclinations preceding his decision to engage in Jihad.

All three narratives also indicated a preference for conflict areas and for Territorialized Jihadism whereas none of them indicated a preference for Global Jihadism, Al-Qaida, Osama bin Ladin or for launching attacks in their respective homelands.

### **The role of conflicts and conflict areas and ideology**

Global Jihadism always has had – and probably always will have – severe problems justifying its interpretation of Jihad. This is not the least because it breaks with classical Islamic jurisprudence on

such crucial points as the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. The lack of territorialisation is also a problem for Global Jihadism since it makes it difficult to identify exactly *what* the aim is and *when* the battle can be seen as won.

These circumstances make Global Jihadism even more marginal than Territorialized Jihadism and they make it less attractive. It is not easy to attract followers to a cause which is hard to define and where the prospects of victory are hard to see.

Why then did Global Jihadism surface and why does it still exist and attract followers? Because there are individuals and groups who need to justify their methods and goals and who find Global Jihadism fit for these purposes.

This implies that ideology is something which is applied *post festum*. Or in the words of Roy "It is a political decision, formulated (after the decision to use lethal action has been made) in religious terms" (Roy, 2004: 257). This appears to have been the case in Chechnya:

"According to Taifur Eldakhanov, a leading ideologue of the Dagestani Wahhabis, Basaev and Khattab had requested him and other Wahhabi leaders of Dagestan to issue a *fatwa* (an opinion on a point of law) that would "legalise" the *jihād* into Dagestan. When they refused, Basaev and Khattab got this *fatwa* issued from a Sheikh Abdullah in Pakistan and a Saudi named Abdul Omar." (Wilhelmsen, 2004:34)

Besaev and Khattab first went to their local ideologue and asked for a *fatwa* legitimizing their plans. When the local ideologue refused Besaev and Khattab turned their back on him and looked elsewhere for the needed justification which they apparently found in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This implies that ideology does not cause actions or decisions rather it is drawn upon when it appears useful.

The three accounts offered in this chapter all indicate enragement over the victimization of Muslims and the desire to actively engage in fighting this as triggering – and therefore preceding – an actual ideological awareness. None of the three individuals were very conscious or selective about where or with whom to engage in this fighting and they all considered several alternative arenas before settling for the one which was made available.

This highlights the role of conflicts and conflict areas. Conflicts undoubtedly fuel Jihadism and the conflict areas attract enraged individuals. The conflict areas also represent locations in which Global Jihadis can meet Territorialized Jihadis and convince them to switch sides. All three men's accounts of long and windy roads to the coveted battlefields, however, illustrate how difficult it is to gain access to combat even if the will is there. Based on this, my hypothesis would be that an aspiring Jihadi who travels to a conflict area to engage in combat and find it difficult to gain access will be ready to go a long way for a group which promises access. If it is a Global Jihadist group promises access to the battlefields but demands that the individual returns to his or her homeland and carries out an attack first then aspiring Jihadi will do so.

## Conclusions

In this chapter the question "Is contemporary Jihadism in the West one phenomenon?" was explored by focussing on the narratives of one individual who has been convicted of planning terrorism and two individuals who claim to have actively engaged in what they perceive as Jihad.

Jihadism in the West is generally viewed as one phenomenon which is linked to Al-Qaida either by association or by inspiration. Since Al-Qaida is based on a Global Jihadism framework this implies that all Jihadis are assumed to be Global Jihadis and as a consequence a threat to security in their homelands. The narratives presented in this chapter, however, indicated that this conceptualization is not accurate.

Hammad Khurshid, Eric Breininger and Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane all perceived themselves as Jihadis and as having attempted – or managed – to engage in combat which they perceived as Jihad. But none of them referred to Al-Qaida as their source of inspiration – in fact Hammad Khurshid expressed a great deal of scepticism towards Al-Qaida.

All three men also indicated they made a distinction between combat in areas where there was a violent conflict and in areas where there was not – and they only supported the former. As shown with Hegghammer's and Lacroix's theory on Territorialized<sup>38</sup> Jihadism versus Global Jihadism the distinction rests on two different interpretations of sources, tradition and context. It is a distinction between two worldviews. One worldview can, however, be replaced by the other for various

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<sup>38</sup> Hegghammer's and Lacroix's term Classical Jihadism was replaced by the term Territorialized Jihadism

reasons – most prominently the need to acquire justification for what an individual or a group wishes or needs to do.

The three narratives also illustrate how the three men to a large degree mirrored widely held prejudices: Abderrahmane was convinced that Arabs had contact to terrorists – and that he could be granted access to them by attending an Arab mosque. Khurshid went to Hizb ut-Tahrir and later to two mosques in Pakistan in his search for access to a battlefield and both Breininger and Abderrahmane considered Algeria to be a place to initiate their search for access to combat. The fact that Abderrahmane's narrative resembled Khurshid's and Breininger although nearly ten years separated them indicated that not much has necessarily changed over the years.

The three narratives illustrate that the three men had a distinct desire to act and that they ventured out into the world to satisfy this desire. Both Abderrahmane and Khurshid indicated that they had been attracted to action, weapons and violence from an early age whereas Breininger did not indicate such inclinations preceding his decision to engage in Jihad. The three men therefore appear to have been attracted by the prospects of action which is one of the archetypes of individual attractions to the Jihadism counterculture identified in chapter 5 *Counterculture*. In this chapter it was argued that although not all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action will necessarily end up in conflict with authorities or the law individuals who manage to make it as far as e.g. Afghanistan are necessarily very determined and driven by something which cannot be satisfied by anything other than action.

All three narratives indicated the engagement over conflicts and the decision to engage in them preceded an actual ideological awareness. This illustrates that it would be more accurate to refer to ideology as an *effect* rather than a *cause*. In the three men's search for access to action their plans were adapted to circumstances and shaped by the opportunities which presented themselves. The three men were obviously willing to make many changes to gain access and they went through many ordeals to reach their goals.

The narratives therefore also serve as illustrations of the fluidity of these phenomena. Or in the words of Hammad Khurshid:

”You speak as if I was very conscious and had thought everything through and planned a long time ahead. It wasn't like that. Things just happened” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Having focussed on the violence and terrorism aspects of contemporary Jihadism in the West I will now return to the broader Jihadism counterculture and to the attractions of it.



# Chapter 7: Eschatology

In this chapter I explore the question “What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?” by analyzing a series of narratives drawing on the combination of Jenkins (1997), Baumann & Gingrich (2004), Jackson (2002), and Honneth (1995) introduced in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods*.

In chapter 5 *Eschatology* the two first types of attractions of the Jihadism counterculture were identified and explored. The first type was the *individual attractions* of which there are four archetypes:

- Action
- Social belonging
- Intellectual challenges
- Being counter

The second type was the *context dependent attractions* which are provided by the context in which the counterculture exists.

In this chapter I shed light on the third type of attractions of the Jihadism counterculture: the *specific attractions* which are unique to the Jihadism counterculture.

I first encountered the narrative about the End of Days through fragments here and there from one single informant. Every now and then he would introduce me to a surprising statement about the impending return of *al-Mahdi*<sup>39</sup>, a time when there would be “no weapons other than swords left in the world”, the appearance of “an army of women” and the fact that “this is the best time for Jihad” (2, Copenhagen, August – September 2008, my translation). For a while I suspected this was the product of this one informant’s own philosophizing but over time I realized that his views were shared by others.

In the following I present the narrative as it was provided by this one informant on an occasion where three other informants were present. I include the comments made by the other informants during the narration. After this I draw attention to a series of accompanying narratives. I then direct attention to the sources of these narratives and to their potential roles in the construction of identity

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<sup>39</sup> For more on al-Mahdi see e.g. Bosworth, van Donzel, Lewis & Pellat, 1986:1230-1238

and as attractions. Finally, I reflect upon the narratives' potential role in relation to the use of violence.

## **The narrative about the End of Days**

### **Khorasan**

One of the signs that The End of Days is near is that the area Khorasan is under an overwhelming, foreign, infidel occupation but is liberated by a small army:

“A small group of men in Khorasan will defeat the occupying army with the assistance of Muslims from all over the world who are obliged to join the battle when they realize that it is time – even if they have to crawl on their hands and knees. The group will consist of men carrying black banners with the *Shahada* [the Islamic creed] in white writing and white banners with the *Shahada* in black writing; they will have long hair and long beards and will be wearing white clothes. They will be easily recognisable. This will occur at a point in time when Muslims all over the World are oppressed, when injustice rules and when money and materialism have taken centre stage. In this situation there will suddenly be a lack of money and famine will erupt.

The whole world will turn against Muslims but only a small group will fight these injustices. They will be the only ones who see that this is the time for Jihad. This is the best time for Jihad. The vast majority of Muslims will oppose this small group. This small group will be strangers wherever they turn to, even among Muslims, and they will not be welcomed or feel at home anywhere. The whole world will

unite against the small group which is saying that this is the time for Jihad.

There will be great division among Muslims – different groups will be unwilling to pray in each other’s mosques. In an important kingdom the King will die and the family will disagree on who is to inherit the throne. These are all among the signs that the End of Days is approaching.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

There is more to the narrative about Khorasan than what the narrator explains – he is in no way the first one to refer to it. References can be found as early as in the history of the Abbasid revolution<sup>40</sup>.

This revolution came as the result of a division among Muslims over who were to be regarded as the righteous leaders of Muslims – a division which emerged after the Prophet’s death because the prophet did not leave clear instructions for how the Caliphate – the political and religious authority ruling over Muslims – was to continue.

Before the Abbasid revolution the Ummayyads ruled the Caliphate. This was the second Caliphate and succeeded the first which was ruled by the Rashiduns. Under the Ummayyads the territory of the Caliphate was considerably expanded but the Ummayyads’ legitimacy was disputed – among the reasons was the fact that the Ummayyads were unable to document a direct kinship to the Prophet.

The Abbasid dynasty was related to the prophet’s uncle Abbas Ibn Abd al-Muttalib and because of this direct link to the Prophet the Abbasids claimed to be the righteous leaders of all Muslims. This was an important aspect of the Abbasids’ propaganda against the Ummayyads who the Abbasids overthrew around 750. Propaganda was, however, not the only means the Abbasids employed to overthrow the Ummayyads – they also had to engage in confrontations and one very important confrontation took place in Khorasan.

In 747 the Abbasids mobilized in Khorasan to confront the Ummayyads and promote the Abbasid revolution. The historian al-Tabari writes that:

“On Wednesday night, the twenty-fifth of Ramadan (June 9, 747), he unfurled the banner, sent to him by the Imam

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<sup>40</sup> For much more on the Abbasid Revolution see e.g. Sharon, 1983

and called “The Shadow,” on a lance fourteen cubits high, and he fastened the flag, sent by the Imam and called “The Clouds,” on a lance thirteen cubits high, reciting the verse, “Permission is given to those who fight because they have been wronged; surely God is able to assist them.” [...] Then he and Sulayman b. Kathir and Sulayman’s brothers and mawlas and those among the people of the Safidhanj who responded put on black garments. [...] All the Shi’ah from the district of Kharqan lit fires that night, which was the prearranged signal, and they began to gather to Abu Muslim the next morning. The interpretation of the two names “The Shadow” and “The Clouds” was: as the clouds cover the earth, so would the ‘Abbasid preaching, and as the earth is never without a shadow, so it would never be without an ‘Abbasid caliph to the end of time” (al-Tabari, 1985:65-66)

The narrative about a group of men unfurling a banner over Khorasan to mark the beginning of a revolution and the men who responded to the call putting on black garments was used for political purposes in 747. It was used to coordinate an uprising against the Ummayyads who were in power and thereby pave the way for the Abbasids taking over power.

The date when the banner was unfurled was in no way accidental – the twenty-fifth of Ramadan is the *Laylat ul-Qadr*<sup>41</sup> (the night of decree) which was the night the Quran was sent down:

“1. Verily, We have sent it (this Qu’ân) down in the night of *al-Qadr* (Decree). 2. And what will make you know what the night of *Al-Qadr* (Decree) is? 3. The night of *Al-Qadr* (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allâh in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83 years and 4 months). 4.

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<sup>41</sup> For more on *Laylat ul-Qadr* see e.g. Bosworth, Donzel, Heinrichs & Lecomte, 1995:417-418

Therein descend the angels and the *Rûh* [Jibrîl (Gabriel)] by Allâh's Permission with all decrees, 5. (All that night), there is Peace (and Goodness from Allâh to his believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn" (Surah 97, The Noble Qur'an)

This night is commemorated every year by Muslims all over the world. The *Laylat ul-Qadr* is in other words a powerful night – worshipping on this night is thousands of times more valuable than on any other night and Allah sends down the angels. The Abbasids chose this night to lend even further legitimacy to their claim to power which was based on the fact that they could trace a direct kinship to the Prophet. They wished to signal that they had God on their side. They were the legitimate rulers replacing the unjust rulers.

When my informants employ their version of the narrative they are attempting to do the same. They are analysing their situation – the status quo – as being comparable to that of the first generations of Muslims – and they are framing themselves as the chosen few who have God on their side.

During the narration the narrator explained who the few who resist injustice and understand that this is the time when the End of Days is approaching are:

“The Jews will be divided into 72 sects, the Christians into 73 and the Muslims into 74. They will all burn in Hell except for one – the chosen sect. The chosen ones are the ones who live exactly like the Prophet and his companions did.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

## **Al-Mahdi**

The narration then turns to another aspect of the narrative about the End of Days:

“The appearance of al-Mahdi is the first of the final, great signs on the end of days. This will be followed by the appearance of *Dajjal* [false Messiah] and *Issa* [Jesus]. Issa

will defeat and kill Dajjal.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

At an earlier occasion the narrator explained that ‘Issa’ is the correct name of the Prophet whom Christians refers to as ‘Jesus’. “When they changed ‘Issa’ to ‘Jesus’ they strayed from Allah’s book to their own – they changed logic into their own meaning. People who are ignorant write the book but when they begin to add their own opinions things go very wrong.” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). The narration continues:

“During *Dhul-Hijjah* [the period when Muslims go to Mecca on Hajj] al-Mahdi will be found at the *Kaaba* [sacred building in Mecca] at *Rukni al-Yamani* [corner of the Kaaba]. Al-Mahdi will have spent some of his life as a bad and non-practising Muslim but will have turned around his life and improved. Al-Mahdi will be recognised because he will carry the name ‘Abdallah’ like the Prophet and his father will carry the name of the Prophet’s father, ‘Ahmad’ or ‘Mohamad’. He will have a long nose, a broad forehead, and a gap between his front teeth. He will be tall and slender and have long arms. On his right cheek he will have a birthmark. He will be around 30 years old.

Al-Mahdi will be recognized but he does not want to be al-Mahdi and take on the responsibilities so he runs away but is caught and cannot lie because he is the Caliph.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

Here a remark is made that this means that “a person claiming to be al-Mahdi cannot be him – al-Mahdi can only be recognized by others” (3, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation).

It is worth noting that al-Mahdi is described as a man who has wasted some years as a bad and non-practicing Muslim but then has repented. This background would be recognized by most born-again Muslims and converts and it is therefore likely to be an attractive feature of al-Mahdi. Al-

Mahdi is an indispensable part of Allah's plan and he is a man like themselves – he is a man with whom they can identify. The remark that individuals claiming to be al-Mahdi cannot be him seems to indicate that some individuals may have taken this identification too far. The narration is resumed:

“Everybody present will give *Bay'at* [pledge of allegiance] to al-Mahdi by placing their hand under him. Most will stay with him but some will return to where they come from to spread the word and bring back all Muslims. All Muslims will then be assembled and the army from Khorasan – which has won – along with armies from all over the world will join al-Mahdi and accept him as Caliph. Al-Mahdi will also gather an army of only women who will fight alongside the men.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

The fact that al-Mahdi will assemble armies from all over the world – and even an army of women – is yet another attracting feature; there is room for everybody in this version of the narrative.

## **Conflicts and battles**

Violent conflicts and confrontations also play a crucial role in the narrative:

“Infidels carrying 83 or 84 banners will gather as one army against al-Mahdi's army. They will collect all weapons in the world but they will be swallowed by a hole appearing in the ground between Damascus and Medina with all their weapons. The only weapons left in the world will then be swords.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

At this point in time one of the others present interrupts to suggest that “perhaps this will be a nuclear war where all weapons are destroyed?” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation). Another adds: “Possibly the current financial crisis is also part of these prophecies” (5, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation). The narration is resumed:

“Only one person – an infidel – will survive this incident and he will inform the entire world what has happened.”  
(2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

Here a remark is made that “it is obvious that at the point in time when this was predicted it was not possible for one individual to tell the whole world anything but at present it is actually possible because we have the internet.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

This type of proof – that predictions are true because no human being living at the point in time when they were made could have imagined what was predicted could happen – is reoccurring. As one informant explained at an earlier occasion:

“There are predictions for every point in time. There are also predictions which have not yet been realized and we are incapable of understanding them because they depend upon developments which will come in the future. But they will make sense to people in the future like some premonitions which did not make sense to people in the past make sense to us today.” (14, Copenhagen, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2009)

It is worth noting that the narrator always carries with him a book containing Nostradamus’ prophecies<sup>42</sup>. He regularly refers to this book as proof that events which have been predicted have actually happened later in history. The narration is resumed:

“This catastrophe will be followed by a huge conflict between non-Muslims in East and West. They will destroy everything and each other and forget all about the Muslims. When they have finished their fighting the Muslims will conquer the world and make everything good. But they will no longer invite non-Muslims to say

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<sup>42</sup> Nostradamus was a doctor in France in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. His prophecies were published in 1555

the Shahada because it is too late. By this time the sun will have risen in the West which marks a point in time when all books are closed – after this it is not possible to change anything, the books containing what will be taken into consideration on Judgement day will be closed when the sun rises in the West.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

During the narration the narrator regularly mentions the Prophet without adding the words ‘*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*’ (may the blessings and the peace of Allah be upon him). Doing this is one of the rituals which are very important to inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture. The omissions are not commented on by any of the others present but one of them is consequently quick to add the words.

On an earlier occasion the narrator has presented me with a gift. A translated and commented Quran which, unlike many other translated and commented versions of the Quran, includes the sentence *Salallahu 'aleyhi wa salam* every time the Prophet is mentioned. This was presented as the only reliable translation<sup>43</sup>.

## Variations

When the narration is completed I ask the narrator: “Is this important Kingdom – where the king dies – Saudi Arabia?” and the answer is: “Some say”. I ask: “Where is this Khorasan?” and the answer is: “It covers today’s Afghanistan but also part of Pakistan.” I then ask: “Is Taliban the army of Khorasan?” and the answer is: “Some say. They do come from Khorasan, they do carry the banners and they do look as described.” Finally, I ask “What do you say?” and the answer is “I say it is up to every person to decide for himself.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

At an earlier occasion when the narrator referred to this narrative – and mentioned the conflict between two competing groups which erupts in an important kingdom when the king dies – I asked

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<sup>43</sup> al-Hilâli, Dr. Muhammad Taqî-ud-Dîn & Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khân (translation), 1426 A. H., *The Noble Qur'an, English Translation of the meanings and commentary*, King Fahd Complex For The Printing Of The Holy Qur'ân, Madinah, K. S. A.

if this was Saudi Arabia and the answer was a clear “Yes.” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

On the day that the defendant in the SÜ-trial had been acquitted – when the narrator and I were alone – I asked the narrator if this was not a joyful occasion. He replied:

”This is part of what was predicted in the book – part of the signs. It was predicted that Islam would be under pressure. There is disagreement but we are a small group who know that this is the best time to fight. We have to fight. Taliban is part of the predicted signs – they must continue to fight because it was predicted. Al-Mahdi has been born and it is only a question of time before he reaches the age of 30 to 35 years – possibly the king in Saudi Arabia will have to die first. Right now it is raining small drops but soon it will rain rockets.” (2, Copenhagen, November 18<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

This indicates that the analyses of the narrative and the level of certainty may vary in different contexts or possibly over time. As Jackson (2002) notes on the inconstancy of narratives:

“The fault is not with the memory *per se*, but an effect of the transformation all experience undergoes as it is replayed, recited, reworked and reconstructed” (Jackson, 2002: 22, italics in original)

It is therefore no surprise the narrative about the Khorasan is inconsistent too.

### **Khorasan expanded?**

According to one informant, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent war is also a sign of the end of days: “What is happening in Iraq is a sign just like the war in Afghanistan. They are signs that al-Mahdi will come very soon” (14, Copenhagen, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Others interpret the situation in Iraq as a continuation of the way geographic areas were classified by the prophet:

“*Sham* [an area covering parts of what today is called Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine] was defined as *Dar al-Salam* [House of Peace] along with the area which today is Yemen – in these areas life will be good and conflicts are destined to be solved. The area which is Iraq today was defined as *Dar al-harb* [House of War] – an area which will never be peaceful or good.” (2, Copenhagen, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

These discrepancies indicate that the narrative is not available in an undisputed and finite version. Rather it is subject to constant negotiations, it accommodates for ever evolving alterations and additions and it is employed in different ways by different adherents who all feel they have the right to question and elaborate on it. The discussion about the possibility of a nuclear war and the financial crisis being signs serve as an illustration of this. Roy (2004) describes comparable phenomena and attributes them to a “crisis of authority and religious knowledge” (Roy, 2004:158):

“ Religious debate everywhere is in everybody’s hands. Even in Iran [...] the debate is now to be found in the public sphere, where it features in numerous journals. The trend is stronger in Sunni countries, where the ‘clergy’ were no more than a cooperation of *ulama* who had graduated from the same kind of *madrasa*. The development of private *madrasas* changed the curriculum and, more precisely, led to its dissemination in a format that could be acquired independently of the *madrasas*, through self-education, pamphlets, informal discussion groups or websites. [...] Religion has been secularised not in the sense that it is under the scrutiny of modern

sciences, but to the extent that it is debated outside any specific institutions or corporations” (Roy, 2004:161-164)

## **Accompanying narratives**

The narrative about the End of Days is accompanied by several other narratives which revolve around the supernatural. These narratives appear to be an integral part of everyday life in the Jihadism counterculture and to be affecting everyday behaviour.

### **Dangers, signs, and miracles**

To several informants the world is full of things that most people are not capable of seeing. In the following I offer some examples from my fieldwork.

#### **Black dogs**

After a long day in court I boarded the train back to Copenhagen in the company of three men. Two of them were very young whereas the third was the man who later provided the narrative about the End of Days presented above. He is a middle-aged man.

The train we entered was divided into large carriages each of which seated approximately 40 passengers. As we entered one such carriage the middle-aged man walked in front of the rest of us and when he found two vacant cubicles he invited us all to sit down. The two young men looked worried and quietly asked him “Here?” (12, Copenhagen September 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) and the middle-aged man replied “Yes. Why not?” (2, Copenhagen, September 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). One of the young men glanced over his shoulder to another part of the carriage and whispered “Why do you think?” (18, Copenhagen, September 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). The middle-aged man then smiled and said “Oh, no. It’s only black dogs with white spots here [he places his two index fingers on his eyebrows] that are dangerous. That one doesn’t have any white”.

I looked to where they were looking and spotted a black seeing-eye dog. The young men breathed a sigh of relief and made themselves comfortable in the seats and so did I.

## **Invisibility**

I explained to an informant I had read about a passage in the Quran which one can recite to become invisible to one's enemies and asked if he knew which passage this was. I received this reply:

“I am so glad you are interested. This is a passage which relates to what the Prophet stated when a woman wanted to harm him. The Prophet and his companion were sitting together and a woman approached them. The Prophet said the words and when the woman reached the two she asked the companion where the Prophet was – she wanted to beat him with a stone because she was angry with him but she could not see him. It is Sura Bani Israel verse 45. But it only works if you are a Muslim.” (2, Copenhagen, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

We then read the verse in question in the Quran which the informant had brought me as a gift:

”And when you (Muhammad, *Salallahu 'aleyhi wa salam*) recite the Qur'ân, We put between you and those who believe not in the Hereafter, an invisible veil (or screen their hearts, so they hear or understand it not.”  
(Surah 17, verse 45, The Noble Qur'an, my transcription of Arabic in Italics)

## **Fasting**

Fasting is an important practice to some. In addition to during the Ramadan one should fast:

“Thursdays, Mondays and three days when there is a full moon. One fasts from one and a half hour prior to sunset. Then all of one's acts are for Allah alone. Otherwise one's actions – prayer, Dawah, etc. – are always for oneself but when you are fasting Allah judges you. It is

not a duty but a good extra act. When you are fasting it is not just about food and water – you also abstain from desire, jealousy, evil speech, etc. This is very joyful because then you are good. There are two good situations: fasting and the Day of Judgement. The way we understand the Quran you should avoid everything which is questionable and live as the Prophet did – he was a moral man. That is how we understand the Quran. This time is the final time before the Day of Judgement and all the signs are there. The unjust are right and the just are being maltreated. That is also why we act as we do. We are not terrorists, we are the just ones. It is very sad that this is how it is but it is part of the signs.” (2, Copenhagen, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation)

### **Dreams and premonitions**

On the day of the verdict in the Glasvej-case an informant told me that a friend of his “dreamt that Abdulghani and Hammad will be sentenced to five and ten years. So we know what the day will bring” (11, Copenhagen, October 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

On the day of the verdict in the second trial in the Glostrup-case the same man narrated an epiphany he had had when he was waiting for his own verdict:

“When the jury had ruled that we were guilty the judges withdrew to discuss and there was a break. During the break I left the courtroom and sat on a bench out in the courtyard. All of a sudden I felt very calm. I got this distinct feeling someone sent me the message that everything would be OK. I don’t know if any of you saw me when I re-entered the courtroom – I was smiling” (11, Copenhagen, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

## Earthquakes

Earthquakes come up now and then and are interpreted as signs of God's anger or Judgement Day approaching. One informant told me:

“There were horrible earthquakes in Turkey. The places where they happened were known for promiscuity, homosexuality and prostitution. They were worse than Sodoma and Gomora.” (2, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

“Every time there is an earthquake you can take the number on the Richter scale and look up the Surah and verse which have these numbers and you will find that they predict earthquakes.” (2, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

To support his argument there are indispensable signs all around indicating the End of Days is near one informant showed me a video on his mobile phone. It featured what appeared to be an intersection of motorways which included bridges with roads underneath them. Suddenly a big hole emerged on part of a road and a car disappeared into it. I asked where this was from and the answer was “I don't know but I am sure it is in America” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

These accompanying narratives revolve around a ‘privileged access’ to knowledge. As one informant put it: “I see things and hear things that others do not. There are three groups who can hear Allah: Satan, Angels and the chosen few” (2, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

As is clearly visible in the quotes above, this is a crucial part of the attraction of these narratives – they offer an empowering self-image. Being able to see, hear and understand things others do not see, hear and understand creates a sense of being special – of being better than the others. When this self-image is shared by several individuals it has the potential to create a strong sense of belonging and of being a group. The loyalty towards peers who share such special gifts is likely to be strong. This implies two potential attractions: the narratives can offer a self-image as being endowed with special gifts and they can offer a strong sense of belonging to a loyal group.

## **Dawah**

Dawah is another crucial aspect of many informants' self-image. "Dawah means to invite others into Islam. We do that all the time" (Abdulghani Tokhi, SÜ-trial, August 27<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The obligation to do Dawah is often explained in terms of a personal and individual obligation upon which salvation depends. For Muslims living in a non-Muslim area the obligation is considerable:

"When I am living here it is my duty. On judgement day I will be asked what I did to spread the truth so people had a chance of being saved." (2, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

"There are only three acceptable justifications for living in a non-Muslim land. That you are sick and receiving treatment, that you are under education, curing others or doing business, or that you are doing Dawah. This [the latter] is the only justification which allows you to take permanent residence" (2, Copenhagen, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

One informant provided a narrative about Dawah which revealed another aspect of the individuals' rewards for engaging in it:

"I've heard a story about this Muslim who handed out pamphlets about Islam. One day he passed a ladies bicycle and he placed a pamphlet in the handlebar basket. When the owner came she noticed the pamphlet and she brought it home and read it. It made her curious and she visited a mosque to get to know more. In time she converted to Islam and the pamphlet was the decisive factor which sparked it all. So the man who left the pamphlet in her handlebar basket will be rewarded. But

he doesn't know because she doesn't know who he is –he just left the pamphlet. But on Judgement Day it will be decided if this was what made her convert and then he will be rewarded. That is how it works” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

Engaging in Dawah therefore appears to be a task which individuals do not only embark on for purely altruistic purposes – it is not solely to save others. Dawah is also a way for an individual to justify continuing to reside in a country where he wishes to reside even though his ideals tell him to leave. And Dawah is a source of rewards. The rewards mentioned in the narrative are part of an elaborate ‘point system’ which will be settled on the Day of Judgement and determine whether the individual soul will be destined to Paradise or to Hell: “Everything has an amount attached to it – a reward” (3, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation).

Some acts can lead to continuous rewards:

“If you have donated money to a mosque you will be rewarded for all prayers performed in it” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

“The herald [who convinced an individual to convert] and the convert receive the same reward. And the convert's good deeds bring both rewards. If the convert does a wrong deed the one who convinced him will still get his rewards. Someone who leads another person into doing wrong will also be punished” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

The system also includes very accurate calculations and rules:

“One prayer in Mecca equals 100.000 prayers. One prayer in Masjid al-Aqsa [the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem] equals 500 prayers. One prayer performed in

solitude equals one prayer and one prayer performed with others equals 27 prayers” (3, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

“Abu Laban [a deceased Danish Imam] and Michael Jackson [the pop star] both died on a Thursday. Michael Jackson converted six months before he died. If you die on a Thursday you are going to Paradise.” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

It is primarily concrete acts – rather than intentions – that are included in the system. There are, however, exceptions to this rule:

“Intentions to do harm do not count but intentions to do good are rewarded. Abstaining from doing harm is also rewarded” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

The essence of the latter quote – that bad intentions are not punished but abstaining from acting on such intentions is rewarded<sup>44</sup> – illustrates yet another attraction of the narratives: they allow room for human error and in them there are more paths leading to rewards than to punishment.

## **The narratives and identity – Defiant pride**

The individuals who operate with the narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives surely do not perceive them as sources of identity or as attractions – they perceive them as the truth. But this does not mean the narratives cannot contribute to identity or be attractions nor that they cannot be analyzed as such.

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<sup>44</sup> This understanding differs from classical understandings of intentions. As Abu Zayd (Abu Zayd in McAuliffe, 2002) writes: “The Qur’an strongly emphasizes that pretentious behaviour counts for nothing because God is always watching the internal belief of everyone’s heart” (Abu Zayd in McAuliffe, 2002:550)

## Sources of the narratives

The sources of these narratives are not easy to identify. Although I have continuously probed to find the sources of these narratives I have not had much success:

“You shouldn’t be so preoccupied with written sources. It is about being sincere and having an open heart and searching for information wherever you can. If your heart is open Allah will guide you. You should attend every time any Sheikh is speaking” (9, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

“You cannot learn by reading by yourself. You should come to the mosque and observe others when they *do*” (10, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The reluctance to provide sources is a general tendency which will be discussed in chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility*. But the reluctance to reveal the sources of knowledge about the End of Days deserves specific attention here because it appears to be related to the self-image of being the ‘chosen few’ – the ones who know because they have been chosen.

“The whole world will turn against Muslims but only a small group will fight these injustices. They will be the only ones who see that this is the time for Jihad. This is the best time for Jihad. The vast majority of Muslims will oppose this small group. This small group will be strangers wherever they turn to, among Muslims too, and they will not be welcomed or feel at home anywhere. The whole world will unite against the small group which is saying that this is the time for Jihad.” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

The understanding indicated here implies that the very fact that an individual knows and sees is proof he or she is among the chosen ones. This means the individual's knowledge is very valuable and if the sources of it were available to anyone the exclusiveness of the knowledge would be diminished. There is therefore an incentive to overlook the sources.

The reluctance to reveal the sources of the narratives does, however, also appear to be related to the 'point system' which was described above. According to this system convincing a non-Muslim to convert brings along rewards – not only the direct reward for delivering the decisive argument but also subsequent rewards every time the convert does a good deed.

Since only Allah knows which arguments are decisive in convincing a given individual to convert any occasion where an individual can spread his or her message is potentially an opportunity to deliver the decisive argument convincing someone to convert – and grant access to a source of points which will eventually contribute to personal salvation.

This system may cause indirect competition and even attempts to obstruct or intervene in another individual's efforts to do Dawah. One informant provided an example:

“Some years ago a young man came to the mosque because he was interested in Islam and I involved myself in explaining Islam and inviting the young man” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). As time passed the young man “was close to being convinced” but there were some other young men who also engaged themselves in inviting him. “When he came close to converting it was like the young ones kept him away from me.” I asked why the young men did this and he answered “I don't like to talk about that – you shouldn't think ill of others” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). The young man ultimately converted and the informant was convinced he had delivered the decisive arguments and would therefore receive the rewards.

Shortly after this account had been provided the young convert playing the lead in the account happened to drop by to say hello. The informant who provided the account – in my presence – asked the young man: “What convinced you?” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation) and the young man replied “You did – you know that” (19, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

This indicates that whenever the informants speak with me they may also be aware that they could potentially be delivering the decisive argument which will convince someone – possibly me – to convert. If they provided me with a source which I could study myself they might become dispensable and their chances of delivering the decisive argument would therefore be minimized.

## **‘Us’ and ‘them’...**

The part of the narrative about the End of Days which revolves around the return of al-Mahdi is not new or unknown. An entire body of literature about al-Mahdi exists and according to Furnish (2005) there is a debate in this literature about the role of Jesus and Christians:

“One school of interpretation holds that Jesus will be the senior partner and the Mahdi his loyal lieutenant as *wazir muqarrab*, or “intimate advisor”[note]; furthermore, this view maintains that Jesus will be the more powerful because he alone will kill the Dajjal, possibly in Lydda (or Lod), not in Jerusalem.[...] Another mahdist apologist perspective is that, to the contrary, the Mahdi will outrank Jesus because the latter will need the former’s help to kill the Dajjal.[...] When they pray together afterward, Jesus will prostrate himself in the mosque behind the Mahdi.[...] A more ecumenical view is that the Mahdi and Jesus will be coarchitects and corulers of the “godly state,” which will represent the “kingdom of God” on earth, [...] and can be seen as the same “kingdom of God” of which Jesus spoke in the Gospels.[...] Thus, the Mahdist Muslim state will be the same one for which Christians are yearning and will allow the two historically opposed religious communities to live together peacefully at long last,[...] although this irenic view flies in the face of most Muslim eschatological exegesis, which seems to mandate conversion to Islam of all in the coming Mahdist state, including or perhaps especially Christians”  
(Furnish, 2005:97-98)

This debate is surely related to the classical distinction between *Ahl al-Kitaab* (people of the book) – which includes Jews, Christians and Muslims – as the people who have received the true revelations in a book from their Prophets whom God has sent and then other people – the savages

who are not monolithic. Judaism and Christianity – in this framework – are misinterpretations of God’s message but since they are misinterpretations of the truth and do acknowledge the oneness of God they are closer to Islam – or at least less repulsive – than other religions. In the narrative about the End of Days reproduced above we encountered a somewhat stricter framing of Christians and Jesus than the ones Furnish refers to.

Jesus was referred to as ‘Issa’. ‘Issa’, it was explained, is a true Prophet sent by Allah but his name was turned into ‘Jesus’ in the process when human beings misinterpreted the message:

“When they changed ‘Issa’ to ‘Jesus’ they strayed from Allah’s book to their own – they changed logic into their own meaning. People who are ignorant write the book but when they begin to add their own opinions things go very wrong” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

Issa is one of several prophets whom God sent to all human beings to reveal the truth which is Islam. “Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all the same *aqida* [creed]” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation). But human beings misinterpreted the message and this became Christianity. The same happened when God sent Moses to reveal the truth – the human beings misinterpreted the message and created Judaism. So the message from God has always been Islam – the message has just been misinterpreted and Judaism and Christianity have been constructed. Consequently, Issa is a Muslim and when he defeats Dajjal it has little to do with Christians or Christianity.

The narrative about the End of Days reproduced above ended with a period in time when all Muslims live together peacefully after the non-Muslims have practically wiped each other out. It also included a point in time after which Muslims would no longer invite non-Muslims to convert – after the sun had risen in the West as this represented the ‘point of no return’ when the books were closed.

In the narrative reproduced above non-Muslims were therefore assigned the role as opponents and as destructive forces fighting Muslims and each other. They were invited to join Islam and seek salvation but there was also a point in time when this ended – when the sun had risen in the West.

The role which Jesus will play in fighting Dajjal – which according to Furnish’s material can attribute Christians a special role – was effectively removed from Christianity by removing Jesus from Christianity.

No positive roles or traits were attributed to non-Muslims but they were offered a chance to distance themselves from their past and join the ones who will be saved – for a limited period of time. This is crucial in relation to the narratives’ potential to serve as a source of identity and as an attraction.

### **Turning the tables**

If one takes a starting point in the situation in which my informants find themselves it is quite clear they are part of a minority – or actually several minorities. They are part of a Muslim minority in a country where – they find – Muslims are not being appreciated:

“The young people grow up in a society which says that there is equality, justice, pride and tolerance but there isn’t. There is racism. And then they don’t know what to do and they react the way society has taught them” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

They are also part of a minority within the Muslim minority because they practice Islam in a different way than most. They are very aware of this and actively distance themselves from the majority of Muslims:

“Muslims today read the Quran but they practice something else. They imitate the infidels instead of calling them to the right path” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation)

“Extremists are the ones who stray from *Sunnah* [practices of the Prophet]. We are the *Ahl us-Sunnah* [people of the Sunnah]” (2 and 9, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The reproduced narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives represent a potent way for an individual to turn the tables on a majority which does not fully accept the individual.

There should be no doubt that many of the informants do not feel welcome and that they perceive themselves as being subject to discrimination, prejudice and racism:

“When we walk in the streets people look at us like we are terrorists, people are afraid of us” (20, Copenhagen, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

“I was afraid that I would be labelled as an extremist. That is why I shaved my beard off” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, August 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

“I experienced a lot of discrimination” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008, my translation)

The experience of being rejected and feared can be humiliating and ostracizing and most individuals would withdraw from situations where they are most likely to experience humiliation but there are other ways to deal with the experiences.

Interpreting the experiences as something other than a rejection is one way – the experiences can be narrated (Jackson, 2002) as something other than rejection. If an individual walking down the street is being looked at with fear and loath this experience can be narrated as an experience of being misunderstood and rejected but it can also be narrated as an experience of being an important and awesome individual whom others fear and would never dare challenge. The former narrative is one of victimization whereas the latter is one of power and pride which turns the tables on those who rejected.

Such narration can be done by single individuals but the narration becomes more convincing and powerful if it is shared by a group. If such a group can also agree on a shared cause which it perceives itself as part of the narrative can become even virtually empowering. Honneth has described these mechanisms:

“For the victims of disrespect [...] engaging in political action also has the direct function of tearing them out of the crippling situation of passively enduring humiliation and helping them, in turn, on their way to a new, positive relation-to-self. The basis for this secondary motivation for struggle is connected to the structure of the experience of disrespect itself. As we have seen, social shame is a moral emotion that expresses the diminished self-respect typically accompanying the passive endurance of humiliation and degradation. If such inhibitions on action are overcome through involvement in collective resistance, individuals uncover a form of expression with which they can indirectly convince themselves of their moral or social worth. For, given the anticipation that a *future* [...] community will recognize them for their *present* abilities, they find themselves *socially respected as the persons that they cannot, under present circumstances, be recognized for being*. In this sense, because engaging in political struggle publicly demonstrates the ability that was hurtfully disrespected, this participation restores a bit of the individual’s lost self-respect” (Honneth, 1996:164. My emphasis in Italics)

What Honneth describes is how individuals can relieve the tension of their own individual lacks of recognition by becoming part of groups and engaging in conflict. By doing this they unite under a ‘shared language’ through which they can gain recognition from the group and from the group’s surroundings – because they are now a group causing conflict – and narrate themselves as living in a future in which they are recognised for what they are. This represents a way to create a positive self-image.

## **Public transportation**

One example of narrating experiences to turn the tables can be found in narratives about how one is received in the public space.

During the Glasvej-trial a taped conversation between the two defendants was produced as evidence. Hammad Khurshid is telling Abdulghani about how he took the bus and no other passengers wanted to sit next to him. Abdulghani replies “They were afraid of you” (conversation August 27<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented during Glasvej-trial, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In court the prosecutor asked if this meant that the other passengers were afraid of Khurshid because he was dangerous. Tokhi insisted that it was because Khurshid was wearing his working clothes which were stained by paint (Abdulghani Tokhi, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

During the SÜ-trial a chat between SÜ and his wife was produced as evidence. In the chat SÜ tells his wife that “When some of my friends get on the bus the *kuffars* [infidels] get off [...] They must be able to see that we are Muslims and they will flee in awe” (SÜ in chat 4 November 2007, documented during SÜ-trial, August 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

By quite simple steps the experiences of being ostracized or even disrespected have been narrated as experiences of being the party in control who ostracizes and disrespects others. By doing this the individual regains a sense of agency and simultaneously moves from the present situation in which he or she is not respected – when some of my friends *get* on the bus the *kuffars get off* – to a future situation in which he or she will be respected – they *will* flee in awe. Generally, the narratives all offer a sense of being in control – by being able to see and hear what others cannot see and hear, by fasting, by living by strict rules and by inviting others through *dawah*.

## **Misery loves company**

As indicated there is a shared perception of being victimized because of being Muslims, a minority or looking differently.

When such victimization is an individual experience it is often humiliating and even paralyzing but when the individual meets others who share the same experiences it becomes less of an individual experience and the feeling of guilt and shame is reduced:

“[...] storytelling transforms our lives by enabling us to reshape diffuse, diverse and difficult personal experiences in ways that can be shared.” (Jackson, 2002:267)

When the experience is further interpreted into a general meta-conflict – between competing ideologies, societies or even competing civilizations or good versus evil – the individual experiences can become virtually empowering. The fact that an individual has had a given experience is evidence that he or she is part of something greater – the individual suffering is proof that the individual has been chosen to be part of this meta-conflict. The individual's painful experiences are thereby turned into patents of nobility.

Emphasizing ones 'otherness' by adhering to strict dress codes, growing beards and using a different language – e.g. infused with Arabic words – may appear to be an illogic choice as this only further increases the risk of being subjected to prejudice and discrimination. But this choice can actually be empowering: If an individual is subjected to discrimination when he is emphasizing his otherness it is an experience which is within his control because he has chosen to emphasize his otherness – it is the otherness which causes the discrimination. If the same individual was subjected to discrimination on an occasion when he was not emphasizing his otherness the discrimination would be against his person and therefore be much more hurtful.

Additionally, emphasizing the otherness grants the individual access to a community in which this otherness is appreciated – a group which shares this specific otherness and takes pride in it.

### **Being the chosen ones**

The accompanying narratives reproduced above support the self-image of being the chosen ones which is offered by the narrative about the End of Days. All these accompanying narratives hold the potential to place individuals in a position in which they regain power and control – the chosen ones have a special mission and they have been chosen for this mission. They are not only among the few who will be saved – they also hold the power to save others. Being able to see and hear dangers, signs and miracles are important parts of this self-image and so is the obligation to engage in Dawah.

The part of the narrative which narrates the chosen ones as eternal strangers who will never feel at home or welcome anywhere makes it perfect for individuals living in diaspora but also for converts who leave behind everything familiar and for any other individual who feel out of place, misunderstood and alone. The fact that 'we' feel like strangers and are not welcomed anywhere is yet another sign that 'we' are the chosen ones. This means that the experience of being ostracized is not an experience of victimization but rather a patent of nobility. That which is most hurtful is turned into an affirmation.

Since the chosen ones are the only ones who realize we are rapidly approaching the End of Days and who know what human beings have to do to avoid spending eternity in Hell they have an important role. The chosen ones have the ability to save everybody else – not least the ones who have disrespected them be they Muslim or non-Muslim since:

“All human beings are born as Muslims. It is a natural instinct to worship Allah. It is a natural instinct in animals as well as children to be ashamed of things that Allah does not want.” (9, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

In Baumann & Gingrich’s framework of ‘Grammars of Identity/Alterity’ the narrative about the End of Days is drawing on the grammar of Encompassment which “defines the other by an act of hierarchical subsumption” (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004:47).

In other words, individuals who employ it are responding to the majorities who reject them and label them as something negative by subsuming the majorities. They construct the majorities as unknowing ‘others’ who are in fact the same as ‘us’ – ‘the others’ just don’t realize it. ‘The others’ can only be saved if they realize that they are the same as ‘us’ and become like ‘us’. The only way ‘they’ can come to realize this is that ‘we’ inform and invite ‘them’. This manoeuvre deprives the majorities of their power because although ‘the others’ are at present in majority and appear to hold the power they are in fact headed for annihilation unless ‘we’ save them. The tables are effectively turned on the majorities who do not respect ‘us’.

The narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives are framed within religious terms – they draw on references to Islam. But the narration of oneself and of one’s own group as the privileged few who see what is really going on and realize what has to be done is in no way restricted to groups referring to religion. It is a classical trade of groups who draw on a strict ‘us versus them’ rhetoric and claim to hold the truth and who therefore are willing to employ extreme measures to push their own agenda. As della Porta writes:

”The observations and commentaries in the memoirs of the various radicals suggest that, in some historical periods, movement countercultures tend to foster a

mentality of embattlement, to create a vision of the world as divided between “us” and “them” [...] The militants further justified their activities by invoking quasi-existentialist explanations that emphasized the “extraordinary” role of a small minority. Like other political sects, the underground groups idealized the value of living outside normal standards, the idea of courage as a duty of the true believer, and the idea of sacrifice as shared suffering (Kanter 1968, 1972). The more isolated the militants felt from the external world, the more firmly they came to see themselves as a few embattled heroes” (della Porta, 1995:161-172)

## **The narratives’ potential for justifying violence**

When comparing the narratives reproduced above to the distinction between Territorialized Jihadism and Global Jihadism introduced in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms* it is quite clear that they fit into a Territorialized Jihadism framework and not into a Global one.

There are references to the need to realize this is “the best time for Jihad” and as a consequence to join al-Mahdi’s army in Khorasan – and according to some also in other places in which predicted battles preceding al-Mahdi’s return are fought.

There are also references to the need to be deeply engaged in Dawah to make sure that all non-Muslims have been made aware of the “true path” and thereby been offered a chance of salvation.

There are no references to e.g. fighting in areas where al-Mahdi’s army is not already fighting and there are no references to ‘paving the way’ for the End of Days by creating chaos in areas where there is not already chaos.

But the narratives would require only minor adjustments to include e.g. an obligation to fighting in areas where al-Mahdi’s army is not fighting or to paving the way for the End of Days and thereby enabling them to fit into a Global Jihadism framework.

Nothing indicates such adjustments would be difficult to make. As has been documented the narratives are not available in undisputed and finite versions and they are consequently open to constant negotiations, they accommodate for ever evolving alterations and additions and they are

employed in different ways by different individuals. The discussion about the possibility of a nuclear war and the financial crisis being signs serves as an illustration of this. This of course implies the narratives could lend themselves to violent interpretations. Apocalypticism in general can theoretically be combined with anything and the narratives reproduced above are no exceptions.

Does this then mean the narratives can cause individuals or groups adhering to them to turn to violence? The existence of apocalypticism and the prospects of it merging with Jihadism have previously caused speculations and concerns. Recent research indicates Islamic Apocalypticism has been on the rise since the 1970's (Cook: 2005; Furnish: 2005b and Filiu: 2008). These works all touch upon the issue of whether Islamic apocalypticism has, can or will merge with Global Jihadism in general and Al-Qaida specifically. Whereas some hold Apocalypticists are far too removed from this world to ever pose a real threat others are less certain.

Timothy R. Furnish painted a grim picture of 'Mahdism' – which is his conceptualization of Islamic apocalypticism – merging with Global Jihadism in 2005 and according to Shahzad (2008) this actually occurred in the tribal areas in Pakistan (FATA) when Jihadis from Al-Qaida and Afghan Taliban mingled with veterans from the Kashmir-conflict and formed what Shahzad refers to as 'Neo-Taliban'.

In his review of Filiu's *L'Apocalypse dans l'Islam* Hegghammer, however, writes about apocalypticism:

“[...] there is an incentive for passivity: why change the world if it is going to end any way? And finally, apocalyptic doctrines have an expiration date: if the world does not end at the time promised by the sect's leader (and it usually does not) the legitimacy of the movement evaporates.” (Hegghammer, 2009b, p. 2 of 3)

The narratives reproduced above appear to hold solutions to the challenges Hegghammer identifies.

With regards to the latter challenge – the fact that apocalypticism has an expiration date set by the date that it promises the world will end – it is solved very effectively by having no such date. It is an important part of the narrative that human beings will never know when the End of Days and consequently Judgement Day will come.

This is in no way unique to these specific narratives. There are several references to the questions about ‘the Hour’ – of Judgement Day – in the Quran. The clearest is found in Surah 79:

“42. They ask you (O Muhammad, *Salallahu ‘aleyhi wa salam*) about the Hour – when will be its appointed time?  
43. You have no knowledge to say anything about it.  
44. To your Lord belongs (the knowledge of) the term thereof?  
45. You (O Muhammad, *Salallahu ‘aleyhi wa salam*) are only a warner for those who fear it,  
46. The Day they see it, (it will be) as if they had not tarried (in this world) except an afternoon or a morning.”  
(Sura 79, verses 42-46, The Noble Qur’an, my transcription of Arabic in Italics)

About the contents of this Sura, Leemhuis (Leemhuis in McAuliffe, 2001) writes:

“The fact that the Qur’ān mentions that even the prophet cannot foretell the coming of the hour is probably one of the reasons why the exegetical works generally do not elaborate on the apocalyptic phenomena or try to determine when the end of the world will come”  
(Leemhuis in McAuliffe, 2001:113)

The former challenge identified by Hegghammer – that apocalypticists have an incentive for passivity – has also been solved although in a slightly more complicated way than the issue of an expiration date.

Part of the narrative is that the chosen ones have an obligation to engage in Dawah to make sure they have offered everybody else information that there is salvation. If an individual does not do this the price may be his or her seat in Paradise on Judgement Day:

“When I am living here it is my duty. On judgement day I will be asked what I did to spread the truth so people had a chance of being saved.” (2, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The narrative also places the obligation to join al-Mahdi’s army in Khorasan upon every individual: “Muslims from all over the world [...] are obliged to join the battle when they realize that it is time – even if they have to crawl on their hands and knees” (2, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation).

Every single individual is obliged to participate in the events preceding the End of Days and neglecting this duty may in fact cost the individual his or her place in Paradise. This implies passivity is not an integral part of this specific apocalypticism.

In recent history, at least one Sunni apocalyptic group has acted violently. In 1979 a group of Sunni-Muslims led by Juhayman al-Utaybi took over the Grand Mosque (Masjid al-Haram) in Mecca and took hundreds of pilgrims as hostages. The siege lasted two weeks and ended in a bloody battle where more than two hundred lives were lost but the Mosque was reclaimed.

Do the narratives reproduced above then have the potential to cause the use of violence? Do individuals who adhere to them have a predisposition to turning to violence?

Returning to the argument presented in chapter 5 *Counterculture* ideas and ideologies do not cause anything in themselves – individuals and groups *practicing* ideas and ideologies can use them to *justify* and *frame* violence as well as any other acts as referred to by Roy:

”Thus the choice of whether to use or reject violence is not linked with the basic tenets of neofundamentalism. It is a political decision, formulated (after the decision to use lethal action has been made) in religious terms, [...] There is not necessarily a ‘theology of violence’. When *ulama* take a position on violence, it is usually for political reasons, even if they cast their choice in terms of a religious discourse” (Roy, 2004:257)

Whether an idea or an ideology is used to justify and frame violence is in other words a matter of whether an individual or a group needs it. The same is the case with a narrative. If an individual or a group who practices these narratives realizes a need to act violently or if an individual or a group who need to act violently realizes these narratives may help them to legitimize such needs or to mobilize resources then the narratives can be used to frame and justify violence. Just as well as they can be used to frame and justify any other type of acts.

Returning to the typology of individual attractions of the Jihadism counterculture the narratives can serve different purposes. To individuals attracted by the prospects of action the narratives can obviously serve the purpose of justifying action. Individuals attracted by the prospects of social belonging find in the narratives a strong group – the chosen ones – to which they can belong. To individuals attracted by the prospects of intellectual challenges the narratives offer opportunity for many discussions and for thorough studies of the many sources. To individuals attracted by the prospects of being counter the narratives can serve the purpose of distancing themselves even further from those who are not part of the Jihadism counterculture.

## How widespread are these narratives

The generated data does not allow for an assessment of how widespread the narratives reproduced above are. It is an open question whether they are unique to the Danish context or even to the context of Copenhagen and I would caution against attempting to assess whether an individual or a group adheres to these narratives on the basis of independent references to single aspects of the narratives.

Two of the narratives reproduced in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms* both included references which could be interpreted as signs of adherence to the narrative about the End of Days.

In Eric Breininger's *Mein Weg nach Jannah* there was a reference to the obligation to join the army of Khorasan which was quoted in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms*:

“Now the first step had been taken. After four months in Egypt a path to Jihad in Afghanistan presented itself. There were fighters coming from Khorasan (i.e. Afghanistan etc.) with black flags. The Prophet (*Salallahu ‘aleyhi wa salam*) instructed us to go there

even when we had to crawl on our hands and feet over ice  
because under them Al-Mahdi will be” (El-Almani,  
2010:83, my transcription in Italics, my translation).

But the reference was offered as one of Breininger’s justifications for travelling to Afghanistan to join Jihad and there were no other references in the document to other aspects of the narrative about the End of Days. This is not sufficient evidence to conclude that Breininger was an adherent to the entire narrative.

There was also a reference to Judgement Day in Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane’s account in *Danskeren på Guantánamo – den personlige beretning* (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004):

“Slimane saw signs that Judgement Day was approaching: ‘The Prophet said that some of the signs are caretakers of cows without any taste who build tall buildings. We see that from cowboys in USA – they have build skyscrapers. Most Europeans sort of agree that they have no taste – the Americans’.” (Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004:49-50)

But there were no references to other aspects of the narrative about the End of Days and from this limited reference it is not possible to determine whether Abderrahmane adhered to the entire narrative. Both references could have been taken out of context and in order to determine whether an individual or a group adheres to the entire narrative it would be necessary to probe about all aspects of it.

## **Conclusions**

The narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives offer a self-image in which the individual is one of the chosen ones. This is a very empowering self-image through which an individual’s challenges and humiliations can be turned into patents of nobility. When the experiences are further interpreted into a general meta-conflict – between competing ideologies, societies or even competing civilizations or good versus evil – the individual’s experiences can become virtually empowering. The fact that an individual has had a given experience is evidence

that he or she is part of something greater – the individual’s suffering is proof that he or she has been chosen to be part of this meta-conflict.

The narratives also enable the individual to view him- or herself as the key to others’ salvation. The individual is the only chance which the majority will have of escaping eternal damnation. This is the same majority which does not respect the individual. When the individual narrates him- or herself as key to this majority’s salvation he or she is able to transform the majority’s rejection into an affirmation of his or her special role. If the individual was not disrespected by the majority he or she would not be the key to its salvation.

The part of the narratives which narrates the chosen ones as eternal strangers who will never feel at home or welcome anywhere is perfect for individuals living in diaspora but also for converts who leave behind everything familiar and for any other individual who feel out of place, misunderstood and alone.

The narratives also offer a way for the individual to analyze his or her context in which unbearable injustices against civilians – civilians with whom the individual identifies and perhaps is related – in conflicts around the world can be transformed into signs of a predicted point in time when everything will be solved and life will be good. In this way the narratives offer a transformation from being powerless and inadequate to being chosen to be part of something which will eventually have a happy ending.

These narratives offered in this chapter are framed within religious terms – they draw on references to Islam. But the narration of oneself and of one’s own group as the privileged few who see what is really going on and realize what has to be done is in no way restricted to groups referring to religion. It is a classical trade of groups who draw on a strict ‘us versus them’ rhetoric and claim to hold the truth and who as a consequence are willing to employ extreme measures to push their own agenda. As della Porta writes about left-wing militants:

”The observations and commentaries in the memoirs of the various radicals suggest that, in some historical periods, movement countercultures tend to foster a mentality of embattlement, to create a vision of the world as divided between “us” and “them” [...] The militants further justified their activities by invoking quasi-existentialist explanations that emphasized the

“extraordinary” role of a small minority. Like other political sects, the underground groups idealized the value of living outside normal standards, the idea of courage as a duty of the true believer, and the idea of sacrifice as shared suffering (Kanter 1968, 1972). The more isolated the militants felt from the external world, the more firmly they came to see themselves as a few embattled heroes” (della Porta, 1995:161-172)

It was quite obvious that the narratives could easily lend themselves to violent interpretations but the narratives in themselves do not hold the potential to cause anything. What they do hold is the potential to be adopted as a framework which can be used to justify virtually anything – including violence.

On the basis of the data generated it is not possible to determine how widespread the narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives are but further inquiries into this could be an agenda for future research.

## Chapter 8: Sources and Credibility

In this chapter I further explore the question “What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?” by analyzing the way in which credibility is attributed to sources, to others and to oneself. Again I draw on the combination of Jenkins (1997), Baumann & Gingrich (2004), Jackson (2002), and Honneth (1995) introduced in chapter 2 *Theories and Methods*. Through this I shed further light on the *specific attractions* of the Jihadism counterculture.

As indicated in chapter 7 *Eschatology* many informants hesitated to reveal the sources of their knowledge. In that chapter I explored the potential roles of the self-image as the chosen ones and the point-system related to personal salvation in this reluctance. There is, however, potentially a third explanation: that the informants pick and sample arguments, information and analyses wherever they come by something which makes sense to them. This necessarily makes it difficult to provide sources – either because the informants do not remember the sources or because they do not wish to reveal them.

In chapter 7 *Eschatology* there were indications of such a tendency. The narrative about the End of Days was reproduced as it was provided by one informant in the company of three others. During the narration the other informants interrupted the narrator to suggest that a nuclear war would wipe out all weapons other than swords and that the contemporary financial crisis was a sign that the End of Days was approaching. The narrator himself referred to Nostradamus’ prophecies as evidence that events predicted in prophecies have come true later in history. Another informant presented a video featuring a car disappearing into a big hole emerging at an intersection of motorways and when asked where the footage was from replied: “I don’t know but I am sure it is in America” (4, Copenhagen, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, my translation). In the present chapter further examples of this tendency will be examined.

The reluctance to reveal the sources of knowledge makes it difficult for an outsider to gain insight into whom and what is regarded as credible. If asking directly for sources the replies usually revolve around ‘authentic sources’. One should of course rely on the Quran and read it very literally. One should also rely on original and strong *Hadith* from the classical *Hadith*-collections. Bukhari’s and Muslim’s *Hadith*-collections are often mentioned as the primary. These references are surely relevant but they are also very general. Many Muslim who are not part of the Jihadism counterculture rely on these sources. As a consequence reading these sources will not shed light on

why some individuals interpret these sources in ways which differ greatly from the majority of Muslims.

Other references which have been indicated by informants include: Abdullah Azzam, Abu Qatada, Muhammad Bouyeri, Omar Abdel Rahman, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Omar Bakri Muhammad, Sheikh Mohammad bin-Saleh al-Uthaymin, Ibn Taymiyya, Abdul Aziz Bin Baz and Ibn Kathir (EH, Glostrup-trial, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008), Abdullah Hakim Quick, Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Yahya Ibrahim, the sites *islamway.com* and *islaam.com* (9 and 10, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009) and the site *kalamullah.com* (14, Copenhagen, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2009).

To shed light on why and how these and other sources are regarded as credible it appears helpful to attempt to shed further light on *how* credibility is assigned.

In the following I present material which relates to credibility without direct references to individuals, institutions, publications or the like to shed light on *how* credibility is assigned.

## Assigning credibility to others

There is a clear tendency towards credibility being linked to being in opposition to the establishment and to the ones who are in power, to being willing to run personal risks and make sacrifices and to being excluded and even persecuted – in essence, to being ‘counter’:

“There are three groups in Saudi Arabia that have been imprisoned. [...] They speak up about the royal family’s flaws without fearing anything. [...] One group was thrown out of the country. Another was released but not allowed to leave the country. A third group cannot leave their town. They are good” (2, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

The theme of this quote came up again at a later occasion where the same informant expanded on it:

“Sheikhs who are in opposition to the rulers are trustworthy – if they have been imprisoned and are still speaking up they are more trustworthy. There are some

sheikhs in Saudi Arabia who have been imprisoned and are persecuted and still they speak up against the rulers – they are very good.” (2, Copenhagen, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

During the Glasvej-trial Hammad Khurshid indicated a similar line of reasoning when explaining why he decided to support the Red Mosque in Pakistan which was in conflict with the authorities:

“The Red Mosque is against the state and dares say things that others do not” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

One informant put it perhaps even more clearly:

”You know, you should be extremely careful who you listen to. You cannot trust Sheikhs who are related to those in power anywhere – they are loyal to other things” (14, Copenhagen, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The fact that an individual or a group dares to speak up against those in power in itself appears to be a source of credibility. Individuals and groups who have put something on the line are seen as having proven their worth and as a consequence such individuals and groups are attributed credible – whatever they say or do will as point of departure be regarded as credible and worth listening to. The more they are against the authorities, the more they have put on the line and the more they have been punished the more credible and worthy they are. Individuals and groups who are somehow related to someone in power are – on the other hand – regarded as suspicious.

This way of attributing credibility and worth indicates individuals who act and as a consequence find themselves in conflict with the authorities and possibly end up in a courtroom as defendants will also be attributed credibility and status. If not because others admire *what* they do then at least because they admire *that* they do.

An incident during the Glasvej-trial indicated this is in fact the case. During this trial security measures were extreme and spectators were required to identify themselves by providing the guards

a document which contained their social security number as well as a photo. The only Danish documents which include both are driver's licences and passports.

One day a young man – who had previously been trialled and acquitted under terrorism legislation – brought with him his passport and provided it as identification to the guards. I was standing behind him in the line and noticed that his passport was not Danish. When we had both been allowed to enter the courtroom I commented on the fact that he was not a Danish citizen – to make polite conversation. He smiled and showed me his passport explaining where he was a citizen. Next to him was another young man who looked very surprised when I commented on the first young man's passport. He called upon the attention of the others present to tell them that: “She doesn't know who 11 is. She didn't know that he is not a Danish citizen – can you imagine. Everybody knows who 11 is” (21, Copenhagen, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In the situation it was obvious the young man making the comment saw the other man as a celebrity.

## **Assigning credibility to oneself**

The importance of being in opposition and of paying a price for one's commitment is also reflected in individual behaviour. Most informants are quite conscious about their own appearances and the responses which are associated with them. Being against the establishment is not enough – it is also important to be recognized as such.

### **Being 'counter'**

In chapter 5 *Counterculture* an interaction with an informant was reproduced to illustrate how the opportunity to be 'counter' – and being recognized as such – served as an attraction of the Jihadism counterculture. In the following this reproduction is repeated and further treated as well as supplemented by another example.

At the end of a long day of a trial I stumbled into a somewhat surprising event. I was leaving the court building which was heavily populated with more than 50 policemen in full gear and machineguns. The area was cordoned off by concrete barriers and in front of these barriers were heavily armed policemen. As I passed through to one of the exits I noticed two of the young men who were following the trial standing in front of the barrier and one of them was taking off his jacket under which he was wearing a *Jellabiya* (a traditional long, loose-fitting robe with long sleeves and

buttons at the front). He greeted me wishing me a safe trip home and explained that he had “missed prayers and will perform one now to compensate” (11, Copenhagen, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). I asked him if he intended to perform prayer in this place. He replied, laughing, that he was indeed going to perform his prayer here and added that “I am the safest I have ever been – they are all taking such good care of me.” At this point in time, a baffled policeman - with his machinegun in his hand - had taken notice and began approaching us, with a very bewildered look on his face and the other policemen present were looking to each other clearly as unsure of how to handle the situation. We said our goodbyes agreeing that we would meet again the next day – the policemen still looking bewildered. As I left the scene I heard the young man calling “Allahu akhbar” (11, Copenhagen, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) and as I turned around I saw him kneeling on the ground. The policemen were not looking any less bewildered.

The following days the performing of prayers in and around the court house increased. Rather than being postponed till the end of the day the prayers were performed during the breaks and inside the court house in the corridors by an increasing number of young men but none was as blatantly spectacular as the first.

In chapter 5 *Counterculture* the informant who always wore a *dishdasha*, white trousers which did not cover the ankles, a multi-pockets vest, a white *shora* around his shoulders and his beard and hair long was introduced. On an occasion when he was explaining how he and his peers were treated in public this informant got up from his chair and asked me “What do you think people in the street think I am when they see me?” When I asked if they perhaps thought that he was an extremist he replied: “Yes, but what more?” and pulled his *shora* up so that it covered his head. When I asked if people in the streets perhaps thought he was a terrorist he enthusiastically replied: “Yes!! They think I am a terrorist” (2, Copenhagen, March 18<sup>th</sup> 2010, my translation).

As will be indicated by the following examples this use of the concept ‘terrorist’ is far from the only one employed. During the SÜ-trial the prosecutor produced a telephone conversation in which SÜ said: “a small group can conquer a large group” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). In court the prosecutor asked what he was talking about on the telephone – if he was perhaps talking about a small group of terrorists who can conquer a large group of people. SÜ refused and one of the spectators in the galleries whispered: “No, a small group of people against a large group of terrorists” (15, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Via the Internet one of the defendants in the Glostrup-trial had been in contact with a man calling himself ‘Irhabi007’ – which translates into Terrorist007. According to the prosecutor in the

Glostrup-trial, Irhabi007's real name was Younes Tsouli. Tsouli was the administrator of the site al-ansar.net and was sentenced to ten years imprisonment in the United Kingdom in July 2007 for having incited to terrorism<sup>45</sup>. (Documented by the prosecutor, Glostrup-trial, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2008)

In searches leading to the arrest of Said Mansour<sup>46</sup> in Denmark in 2005 numerous CDs were found in his home. Some of these contained tributes to the man who killed the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and on the CDs was written: "We are terrorists. Terror is our obligation. East and West must see that we are terrorists. We are awe-inspiring." (Ellegaard, Pinholt & Ammitzboll, 2005, my translation)

During the Glasvej-trial the prosecutor produced as evidence a telephone conversation between Abdulghani Tokhi and a friend in which they discussed writing a letter:

"We must write our histories about why we became Muslims and explain why people become terrorists or fundamentalists. People need to know that we are not terrorists we just have obligations in relation to our maker. Explaining why people become terrorists is a difficult task" (2 to Abdulghani Tokhi, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented by prosecutor, Glasvej-trial, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

During the Glasvej-trial Abdulghani Tokhi explained that: "I have called Hammad 'you terrorist' because he was watching those videos. I've also called him 'you alcoholic' because he had a lot of empty soft drink bottles lying around" (Abdulghani Tokhi, Glasvej-trial, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Finally, one informant explained to me that: "We are not terrorists, we are the just ones" (2, Copenhagen, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation)

The fact that the concepts 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' are used in such diverse ways indicates the concepts are significant to the individuals who use it. It also indicates the individuals who use them are engaging in the constant negotiations over who and what are to be defined as 'terrorists' and

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<sup>45</sup> The sentence was changed to 16 years in December 2007

<sup>46</sup> Said Mansour was sentenced to three years and six months imprisonment April 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 in Denmark. He was convicted of having incited to terrorism.

‘terrorism’ and over the meaning of the concept. Is terrorism illegitimate violence or is it another word for freedom fighter?

At times informants claim the majority in the world is in fact terrorists – this majority is the illegitimate opponent. At other times the concept is internalized – some individuals take it upon themselves but surely attribute another meaning to the concept than illegitimacy. And at times the concept is used with humour – when one friend calls another friend a terrorist.

## **Religious immunity**

During a conversation about the importance of attending as many speeches, lessons and other events where one can educate oneself as possible – especially when they feature guests from abroad – we touched upon the subject of how one can manoeuvre between the many diverging interpretations which are offered at such events. It is clear that many competing interpretations and practices are available and that the informants’ interpretations and practices are not among the most mainstream or commonly accepted. I therefore asked how they decided whom – among the many speakers they listened to – to rely on. The answer came as a dialogue:

“As a Muslim you are obliged to seek knowledge everywhere and therefore to listen to anybody who may possess knowledge” (9, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

“This means that you cannot exclude a speaker just because others say that he is uninteresting – you should always go, listen and form your own opinion” (10, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

“When you listen your heart should be completely open. If you are a Muslim on the right path, Allah will guide you at all times and if you keep your heart open, Allah will let you know what is right” (9, Copenhagen, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

This implies that when something sounds right to the individual it is not interpreted as a result of the individual's own subjective analysis or opinion – it is interpreted as a result of Allah guiding the individual. The individual's perception is thereby attributed great significance.

This way of assigning credibility to oneself and the understanding of decisions made on the basis of it was expanded on in a later conversation with one of the informants. He explained that:

“A sister was having problems with her husband and had left him – he was treating her very poorly. Now she is having doubts and considers returning to him and she has asked me how to decide. We discussed the situation and the wife decided to pass the responsibility for the marriage on to me – this was cleared with the husband and in cooperation with him we decided that I would create a plan for how to proceed.” (2, Copenhagen, November 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

The informant took this responsibility seriously and after careful consideration came up with a plan:

“The woman will do *dua* [prayer] on returning to her husband – she will do *dua* and then observe how she feels about the idea of returning to her husband and if she feels good she will return because how she feels is Allah's guidance. [...] But this will be the husband's last chance and I will hold him accountable. If he fails to live up to the expectations and to his obligations the wife will leave him for good and nobody can ever blame her” (2, Copenhagen, November 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

These quotes further illustrate how the individual's experiences and perceptions are interpreted as being guidance from Allah. As a consequence of this significance attributed to the individual's perception and interpretation sources – be they the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah or ideas or ideologies – are in fact not what is credible or authoritative. What is significant is the individual's reading of

them. This implies that the sources do not determine the individual's analyses of them neither do they influence how the individual acts on the sources. The individual's reading and the analyses of the sources are what guide the individual's actions.

In terms of attractions it is obvious that this is as substantial an attraction as the narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives. Since credibility is attributed to oneself a circular line of reasoning appears: what feels right to the individual is right because the individual is right.

## **Flexibility**

During a conversation with two informants they were explaining the importance of strictly following *Sunnah* – strictly imitating the prophet. They explained:

“The world is full of choices and only five percent of them are *halal* [permitted] and five percent are *haram* [prohibited] – the remaining 90 percent is doubtful. It is important to only choose the five percent which is *halal* and leave the rest – even if this is boring because only by living this way can one be certain” (2, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

One of the informants expanded on this by using a drawing of a meadow full of flowers – which was hanging on the wall in the office where we were sitting. With his finger he divided the drawing into a small corner which is *halal*, a small corner which is *haram* and then the big part in middle which is doubtful. He then narrated the image of a person who found himself in this meadow and wanted to eat from it:

“Imagine a man who comes to this meadow. He is very hungry. He knows that this little corner is *halal* – and therefore safe – but it has no taste and is very boring. He also knows that the other corner is *haram* – and therefore harmful – so he knows to stay away from this. But the big majority of the meadow can be anything. If he eats from it he may find food which tastes wonderfully and is very

good for him but he may also find food which is horrible  
– and there is no way of knowing before it is too late” (2,  
Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

On an earlier occasion the same informant had explained:

“This life is only a dream but in it you seal your fate and  
determine which life you will wake up to after you die.  
You choose if you want a short sweet dream where  
everything tastes wonderfully and is beautiful and full of  
colours – the price of this is that when you wake up the  
rest of your life will be pain and punishment beyond your  
imagination. Or if you want a short dream where  
everything is grey and there are no sweet smells or tastes  
and then you wake up to a life in beauty and blissfulness  
beyond your imagination” (2, Copenhagen, August 28<sup>th</sup>  
2008, my translation)

The message was clear: it is better to stay on the safe side and only do what you know is  
safe. This is best done by “strictly imitating the prophet and rejecting everything which he  
did not sanction – everything which has been invented since is bad and doubtful” (2,  
Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

During this explanation I noted the other informant was checking his mobile phone and  
I asked the two how they actually viewed and handled items such as mobile phones and the  
Internet – to my knowledge these did not exist when the prophet lived. The informant with  
the mobile phone promptly replied that: “This is not a problem – you simply use such  
things in the same manner that the prophet would have” (6, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup>  
2008, my translation). I then asked how one is to know how the prophet would have used  
them? The answer was as prompt as the former: “You simply refrains from using these  
technologies for bad purposes – such as viewing porno and child abuse – and only use them  
for good purposes” (6, Copenhagen, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, my translation)

This reasoning illustrates a flexibility which allows the individual to manoeuvre in his or her context and make use of e.g. the technology which is available in it without perceiving him or herself as compromising. The informant saw himself as being fully capable of judging how to use such innovations in a good way – because he had good intentions. This again reflects the previously mentioned circular line of reasoning: what feels right to the individual is right because the individual is right.

## Dreams

As indicated in chapter 7 *Eschatology* dreams and premonitions play an important role. The examples provided in that chapter included the informant who explained that a friend had: “dreamt that Abdulghani and Hammad will be sentenced to five and ten years. So we know what the day will bring” (11, Copenhagen October 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) and narrated an epiphany he had had when he was waiting for his own verdict:

“When the jury had ruled that we were guilty the judges withdrew to discuss and there was a break. During the break I left the courtroom and sat on a bench out in the courtyard. All of a sudden I felt very calm. I got this distinct feeling that someone sent me the message that everything would be OK. I don’t know if any of you saw me when I re-entered the courtroom – I was smiling” (11, Copenhagen, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

In chapter 7 *Eschatology* it was discussed how these narratives are part of the self-image as ‘the chosen ones’. They do, however, also illustrate the distinct individualization which is characteristic of contemporary Jihadism in the West. The individual’s own experiences and interpretations are attributed a great deal of importance. This resonates with the individualization found in the understanding of the participation in Jihad as *fard ‘ayn* (individual obligation) which is crucial to the entire identity in the Jihadism counterculture. As described in chapter 6 *Jihadism or Jihadisms* Breininger argued “Neglecting Jihad is Like neglecting to fast and to pray. More than that, neglecting Jihad these days is worse” (El Almani, 2010:63). Because Jihad is an individual obligation the individual is attributed significance. Each individual is responsible – and necessary –

for the protection of the community. And each individual will be held accountable by Allah. If the individual has not fulfilled his or her obligations it will be held against him or her on Judgement Day.

Dreams and premonitions appear to also be parts of the individual's guidance from Allah as the ability to see and hear things that others cannot see or hear and to become invisible which was described in chapter 7 *Eschatology*.

## **Creativity**

Some of the informants exhibited a great deal of creativity. Roy writes: "Conspicuous by their absence are the neofundamentalist novelists, poets, musicians, filmmakers or comedians" (Roy, 2004:265). Even though it may not constitute actual filmmaking, Hammad Khurshid was in fact involved in two video-projects which were never widely distributed. The movies were entitled "Avoid from Children" and "The Making".

### **Avoid from Children**

In October 2005 Hammad Khurshid, his older brother and SÜ created a movie which they shot with a mobile phone. During the Glasvej-trial as well as the SÜ-trial two takes were screened. The first take features two of the men wearing what appear to be *gameezes* (long and long-sleeved shirt) and scarves covering their heads and lower faces. One is also wearing a dark winter coat. One of the men is holding a big knife. The two are standing behind the third man who is sitting down. This man is covered by a blanket. The two men standing are speaking at the same time and saying – among other things – "He is a traitor, he worked for the Americans", "Now he must pay" and "They think they are so smart but they're not". The three men burst out laughing and argue about who is to say what and what each of them is to do. The take ends.

The next take features the same arrangement and they make the same explanations but now in what appears to be a more rehearsed way – they do not all speak at the same time. After a few minutes of speech the man holding the knife grabs the man who is sitting down and is covered by a blanket. The man standing up takes the knife to his throat and the man sitting down screams and screams. The man with the knife pretends to be cutting off his victim's head and pulls up a plastic-mask with long hair and a twisted face. He holds up the mask in one hand and the knife in the other and all three man laugh. The take ends.

## **The Making**

When Hammad Khurshid manufactured approximately 10 grams TATP he recorded the process with his mobile phone. Later, when he and Abdulghani Tokhi detonated the TATP in the staircase where Khurshid lived Tokhi recorded this with his mobile phone. The two young men then edited the recordings, added music and created a short movie which they named “The Making”. They planned to upload this movie to YouTube but never got around to it because they could not figure out how to hide their faces on the movie.

The fact that these individuals created movies featuring themselves and intended to upload them to YouTube indicates they – like so many others in their generation – felt a need to stage their identity in public. This is yet an illustration of the previously mentioned need to not only be something but to be recognized for being it. Being against the establishment is not enough, one must also be recognized as such.

## **Breaking with traditions by returning to tradition**

The ways in which credibility is assigned in the Jihadism counterculture – and the significance attributed to the individual’s own experiences and interpretations – are symptomatic of a breakaway from established authorities. On this Roy (2004) writes:

“The weakening religion’s social authority also entails a growing individualization of religious practices. The definition of what it means to be a Muslim and the reconstruction of a Muslim community rest on the individual. The relevant dimension is that of religiosity – how believers *experience and formulate their relationship to religion*. [...] Passage to the West changes the nature of religiosity because it entails:

1. the dilution of the pristine culture, where religion was embedded in a given culture and society;
2. the absence of *legitimate religious authorities who could define the norms of Islam*, coupled with a crisis of the transmission of knowledge; and

3. the impossibility of any form of legal, social or cultural coercion” (Roy, 2004:148-, my emphasis in italics)

In the Jihadism counterculture credibility is not attributed to individuals or groups because they are affiliated with traditionally authoritative institutions or because they have traditional educations – it is attributed to individuals and groups who have proven their worth by breaking away from those. It can therefore also serve the purpose of facilitating a breakaway from the control from parents and family, and from the irksome fetters of expectations, customs and traditions. As Ranstorp notes:

“Radicals often embrace *takfiri* [deeming other Muslims infidels] Islam as a rebellion against family members and as a justification for rejecting various norms. As such, we need to pay attention to the counter-cultural aspects of the radical belief-system” (Ranstorp, 2010:7)

One day during the Glasvej-trial I spent the lunch break in the company of two men and a young woman. When we had finished eating the young woman made herself comfortable by lying down on the lawn to enjoy the sun. After a short while another young woman joined us. She was wearing an ordinary *hijab* and pants but apparently took offence by the other young woman’s behaviour. The young woman lying on the lawn in front of the courthouse was wearing a bright red Somali-style garment (a traditional women’s garment which covers everything except face and hands). The second woman politely asked the woman lying to behave: “in a respectable manner when you are dressed this way” (21, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation). The second woman went on to explain: “The way a woman behaves when she is wearing a bikini is her own business but when a woman is dressed in this way she should behave in certain respectable and appropriate ways” (21, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation).

The woman lying down politely asked the other woman what she meant by ‘respectable’ and ‘appropriate’ and the second woman attempted to explain by showing how the former woman should not lie down but sit up straight with her legs to one side. The woman lying down sat up and asked the second woman: “Where did you find those rules? Is it in Islam or in culture?” (14, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation). The second woman – now obviously uncomfortable – held her

ground and explained that there are certain ways in which a lady should behave and “this is a way of showing respect” (21, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation).

The woman wearing the Somali-style garment replied by stating: “I don’t mean any disrespect but I only abide by the rules of Islam not culture or tradition” (14, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation). She added that if the second woman could provide her with appropriate sources for her commands she would greatly appreciate it and off course abide. The discussion ended peacefully and later the woman wearing the Somali-style garment explained to me what it had been all about in her view:

“Most Muslims follow traditions which have nothing to do with Islam and this is most harmful. Only rules and commands which can be found in the Quran, Hadith or Sunnah are to be followed and if a person commands another person to behave in a certain way it is the duty of this person to provide such sources – the other person is not obliged to abide until such sources have been provided, neither is he or she obliged to investigate if the sources exist” (14, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation)

She later expanded on the dimensions of this subject by explaining how many women from Somalia have been subjected to genital mutilation because their parents believe this is commanded in Islam - but it is not:

“Many Somali girls begin to study Islam and they find out this is not allowed in Islam. In the Prophet’s days some women came to him and asked if they were allowed to circumcise their daughters. The Prophet said no and they left. The women came back a second time and asked if they were allowed to circumcise their daughters. The Prophet said no again and they left. The women came back a third time and asked the Prophet if they were

allowed to circumcise their daughters and the Prophet then answered that they could do like this:” She takes my right hand and pinches the skin on the back of my hand between two fingernails. I comment that this is a clever way for the Somali girls to break away from their parents’ control and from a crippling tradition. She replies: “It is. But that is not why they study Islam – they do it for Allah’s sake” (14, Copenhagen, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, my translation)

From this it appears that the attempts to negotiate traditions can have a very direct impact on everyday life. The woman wearing the Somali-style garment was challenging traditional gender roles and expectations of women by outbidding culture and tradition with ‘authentic Islam’. She apparently regarded her own efforts at challenging traditions as part of a larger battle with traditions which have very concrete – and destructive – consequences for other women.

## **Beards**

Beards are undoubtedly an issue and they appear to be symbols of quite a variation of challenges. Beards occasionally appear to be the men’s equivalent to women’s headscarves as indicated by one informant’s comment: “You cannot shave off your beard just because it gives you problems. Imagine if women took off their veils” (Abdulghani Tokhi, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvejtial, May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Beards are often a cause for problems. As one informant argued: “If Danes grow a beard people think they have no shaver. If Muslims grow a beard they are labelled as extremists” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). But beards can also be a source of power, a way to distance oneself from childhood and a way to escape the family’s control. As one informant explained: “I wanted to have a beard like the Prophet – I didn’t want to be a child who is controlled by his family anymore” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation) During a chat with his wife SÜ explained to her that: “I am tired of being a ‘keeping-quiet-child’” (SÜ, chat November 1<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in SÜ-trial, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

During one of SÜ's visits in Turkey he and Abdulghani Tokhi spoke on the telephone. During the conversation SÜ mentioned to Tokhi that his family had ordered him to shave off his beard and Tokhi replied by saying: "Just wait till you get to Denmark – *Inshallah* – they cannot do anything" (Abdulghani Tokhi, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in SÜ-trial, August 27<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

In this conversation Denmark was regarded as something of a 'safe haven' compared to SÜ's parents' country of origin. The two men apparently felt that in Denmark they were free from their families' control. The breakaway from the family's control SÜ was attempting to force through would not have been possible if he had been living in his parents' country of origin. It was something which was only possible because he was a Dane and Tokhi's reply indicates he understood the situation in which SÜ found himself.

## Marriage

When it comes to marriage there is also a tendency towards the individuals claiming the right to make decisions vis-à-vis the family. By claiming to be returning to *authentic* tradition as opposed to the family's traditions the individual can claim to 'trumps' the authority of the family and its traditions and customs and thereby the individual can become able to break with these traditions and customs – but they need each other. As one informant explained: "We give advice to each other in situations – like marriage and Ramadan" (Abdulghani Tokhi, Glasvej-trial, August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation)

A witness giving testimony during the Glasvej-trial was asked if it was correct that he had attempted to help Abdulghani Tokhi with finding a wife and in the process had exchanged a series of text messages about what such a wife should be like. In the text messages they wrote that she should:

"wear at least Somali-style clothes but preferably *burka*  
[...] no high heels, no music, no friends in Hizb ut-Tahrir  
[...] must love Jihadi Mujahideen" (Abdulghani Tokhi and  
11, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial, June  
15<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

The witness explained he had indeed attempted to help Tokhi to find a wife. The witness was himself married to a Danish girl who had converted to Islam and Tokhi was interested in finding

such a wife too: “I think he would feel most comfortable with a Danish or a European girl – even though his parents would like to see him marry an Afghan girl” (11, Glasvej-trial, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

This was not the first time the witness had engaged himself in helping a friend to find a wife, he explained. When giving testimony he pointed to the gallery and said: “The man sitting in the back there got married through my wife’s and my assistance” (11, Glasvej-trial, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

Hammad Khurshid also expressed a wish to break with traditions and expectations:

“Punjabis [Khurshid is Punjabi] always oppress others – they oppress Pashtos for example. This division is ridiculous [...] It is ridiculous that you are only supposed to be friends with Pakistanis and marry Pakistanis”  
(Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation)

These attempts to break away from traditions appear to be linked to the fact that the traditions do not make much sense to individuals living in Denmark. Such breakaways are, however, not without problems.

During his trial SÜ explained he had married his wife in an Islamic wedding July 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> 2007 in Turkey but the wife’s brother demanded they also be “married on paper [...] because other brothers have tricked girls in the past” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). SÜ further explained: “Since Turkey is not governed by Sharia an Islamic wedding is not regarded as legally valid and the women are not protected” (SÜ, SÜ-trial, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). The fact that SÜ was attempting to live in his future Utopia – in which there is a Caliphate which is governed by Sharia – and live by the rules of this future Utopia which are not accepted in the present led to challenges. He was required to be flexible and conform to the rules of his context as well as the rules of his Utopia.

The breakaways from established authorities and traditions obviously give room for individuality and for distancing oneself from the restrictions of family, traditions, customs and other authorities but they come at a price. Not only are the breakaway demanding and causes for conflicts with

outsiders – they also give room for disagreements and discussions between the individuals engaged in them because there are no final answers available.

## **Refusing one restricting set of rules only to find another**

In a telephone conversation with a woman Hammad Khurshid stated: “I am on the right path even though I do not have a beard – that is something else – even though I wear ordinary clothes” (Hammad Khurshid, September 19<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

The subject of beards and clothes was apparently one which Khurshid had often debated with Abdulghani Tokhi as well as with others and his views on it had apparently given him problems. In court Khurshid explained he had had discussions – with a friend who he did not wish to name – about “Islam and actions versus clothes” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation). This friend had then spoken ill of Khurshid and this “disappointed and hurt me more than anything else ever has [...] It was the worst disappointment in my life” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

Khurshid’s view on beards and clothes did not match the views of his peers. As he explained in court he found beards to be “[...] good but if they cause problems with your job or your marriage you should remove them” (Hammad Khurshid, Glasvej-trial, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, my translation).

In early June 2007 Abdulghani Tokhi had shaved off his beard because he needed to find a job believing a beard would be in the way. This decision caused numerous questions and critical remarks from his friends. During a conversation between Abdulghani Tokhi and Hammad Khurshid the latter made jokes about the subject and suggested Tokhi could “hit the next person who asks on the head with your shoe – or write the reason on a T-shirt” (Hammad Khurshid, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial, May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). But Tokhi apparently did not take it as lightly as Khurshid.

Shortly after, another friend had shaved his beard off because he needed to have a photo taken for his passport and Tokhi scolded him on the telephone “Imagine if women took off their veils” (Abdulghani Tokhi, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial, May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation). Tokhi also warned the friend he would “tell on you to Mahmoud” (Abdulghani Tokhi, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2007, documented in Glasvej-trial, May 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, my translation).

These incidents indicate that straying from the ‘code of conduct’ and the normality of the counterculture is not readily accepted. Abdulghani Tokhi was corrected when straying and apparently aligned since he later corrected another friend for the same offence. He did so even though Khurshid supported him in his choices.

Tokhi was apparently not as self-confident as Khurshid and gave in to the pressure of the majority. That Tokhi was dependent on his friends and needed social belonging was documented in chapter 7 *Eschatology*. This was in fact what attracted him to the Jihadism counterculture.

Khurshid, on the other hand, had entirely different motivations for looking up the counterculture – he used it to gain access to action. This explains why Hammad Khurshid continuously offended the counterculture’s ‘shared culture’ and claimed the right to decide whether particular clothes or beards were necessary for him – even though the ‘dress code’ and the ‘beard code’ are important parts of the counterculture’s normality and are crucial in tying it together. Khurshid was attracted to the Jihadism counterculture because it appeared to hold potential for granting him access to action and he had little interest in adjusting to rules which did not serve any purpose in relation to action.

For individuals attracted by the prospects of intellectual challenges the rules and codes are fascinating. They can debate them, study different positions on them, and contribute to the negotiation of them by providing additional arguments.

For individuals attracted by the prospects of being counter the rules and codes are crucial. By abiding to them such individuals can demonstrate that they are counter and be recognized as such by other inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture and by the surrounding society.

Even though the inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture are breaking with some types of with some types of majority-defined culture and normality, and with some sets of traditions the inhabitants are required to submit to another type of culture and normality and another set of traditions – those of the counterculture. That is the price of being part of the counterculture. The inhabitants are therefore not free to pick and choose whatever components of an identity they may wish.

Within the counterculture a majority appears to have the power to define the counterculture’s normality and individuals who question this normality or the majority’s right to define it are corrected. There are even certain individuals who have the task of exercising the majority’s rules and who can be called upon to reprimand individuals who stray.

Even in this counterculture which claims to be rejecting authorities and to be attributing authority only to Allah there is in fact a majority which claims the right to define what is acceptable and normal.

## Conclusions

In this chapter I further explored the question “What are the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West?” by analyzing the way in which credibility is attributed to sources, to others and to oneself. This shed further light on the *specific attractions* of the Jihadism counterculture.

In the Jihadism counterculture credibility is not attributed to individuals or groups because they are affiliated with traditionally authoritative institutions or because they have traditional educations. Credibility is attributed to individuals or groups who dare to speak out against the establishment and authorities and who are willing to make sacrifices. Individuals and groups who have put something on the line are seen as having proven their worth and as a consequence such individuals and groups are attributed credible – whatever they say or do will as point of departure be regarded as credible and worth listening to. The more they are against the authorities, the more they have put on the line and the more they have been punished the more credible and worthy they are. Individuals and groups who are somehow related to someone in power – on the other hand – are as a point of departure regarded as suspicious.

The importance of being in opposition and of paying a price for one’s commitment is also reflected in individual behaviour. Most informants are quite conscious about their own appearances and the responses which are associated with them. Being against the establishment is not enough – it is also important to be recognized as such. This is also a reason for attending terrorism trials. The trials represent an opportunity for inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture to display their identity and prove that they have the courage to insist on it in the face of representatives of the press as well as of the authorities.

Credibility is to a great extent attributed to oneself. Individuals trust their own ‘better judgement’ more than tradition – in fact some mistrust tradition and go to great lengths to break with it. Individual experiences and conceptions are interpreted as being guidance from Allah and therefore more credible than anything else. This implies that when something sounds right to the individual it is not interpreted as a result of the individual’s own subjective analysis or opinion.

As a consequence of this significance attributed to the individual's perception and interpretation sources – be they the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah or ideas or ideologies – are in fact not what is credible or authoritative. What is significant is the individual's reading of them. This implies that the sources do not determine the individual's analyses of them neither do they influence how the individual acts on the sources. The individual's reading and the analyses of the sources are what guide the individual's actions.

The ways in which credibility is assigned – and the significance attributed to the individual's own experiences and interpretations – are symptomatic of a breakaway from established authorities and facilitates a breakaway from the control of parents and family, and from the irksome fetters of expectations, customs and traditions.

The attribution of credibility to oneself is a substantial attraction because of the circular line of reasoning which appears from it: what feels right to the individual is right because the individual is right and has Allah on his or her side.

There were signs of a flexibility which allows individuals to manoeuvre in their context and make use of e.g. the technology which is available in it without perceiving themselves as compromising. The informants saw themselves as being fully capable of judging how to use such innovations in a good way – because of the circular line of reasoning.

The fact that some individuals created movies of themselves and intended to upload them to YouTube illustrates how they – like so many others in their generation – need to stage themselves as individuals and expose their identity in public. It also illustrates the previously mentioned need to not only be something but to be recognized for being it. Being against the establishment is not enough it is also important to be recognized as such.

The efforts to negotiate credibility and the right to determine what is right can have a very direct impact on everyday life. The woman wearing the Somali-style garment was challenging traditional gender roles and expectations of women by outbidding culture and tradition with 'authentic Islam' – and she apparently regarded her own efforts at challenging traditions as part of a larger battle with traditions which have very concrete – and destructive – consequences for other women.

The breakaways from established authorities and traditions obviously give room for individuality and for distancing oneself from the restricting control of family, traditions, customs and expectations but they come at a price. Not only is it demanding to engage in the negotiations and conflicts with

outsiders, the breakaways also give room for disagreements and discussions between the inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture because there is no final answers available.

Even though the inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture are breaking with some types of majority-defined culture and normality, and with some sets of traditions they are required to adopt another type of culture and normality and another set of traditions – those of the Jihadism counterculture. This is the price of being part of the counterculture. The inhabitants are therefore not free to pick and choose whatever components of an identity they may wish.

Within the Jihadism counterculture a majority appears to have the power to define the counterculture's normality and individuals who question this normality or the majority's right to define it are corrected. There are even certain individuals who have the task of exercising the majority's rules and who can be called upon to reprimand individuals who stray.

Even in this counterculture which claims to be rejecting authorities and to be attributing authority only to Allah there is in fact a majority which claims the right to define what is acceptable and normal.



# Chapter 9: Conclusions

Contemporary Jihadism in the West is more than one phenomenon. Firstly, there are two *types* of contemporary Jihadism in the West – *Global Jihadism* and *Territorialized Jihadism*. These two types both differ from classical Islamic jurisprudence on Jihad because they define engagement in the lesser Jihad – defence of Muslim land by violent means – as an individual duty for every able bodied Muslim. The primary difference between the two lies in the definition of where this Jihad can be waged. In Global Jihadism Jihad can be waged anywhere – the whole world is *Jihad-land*. In Territorialized Jihadism Jihad can only be waged on Muslim land under occupation – only areas where there is already violent conflict is *Jihad-land*.

Secondly, contemporary Jihadism in the West is not only about *violent conflict* – it is also about *identity* and *social mechanisms*. This is reflected in the *three types of attractions* of contemporary Jihadism in the West which have been identified.

The first type of attractions is the *individual attractions*. Contemporary Jihadism in the West can be understood as a counterculture to which different individuals are attracted for different reasons. Four archetypical individual attractions which motivate individuals to look up the Jihadism counterculture were identified:

- *Action* Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action can only be satisfied by being active. Talking, demonstrating, educating, studying, collecting money, supporting prisoners or the like can neither satisfy the need for action and adventure nor the need to take action. The three individuals who indicated being attracted by the prospects of action have either been convicted of planning terrorism or claim to have been engaged in what they perceive as Jihad. This does not imply all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action will necessarily end up in conflict with authorities or the law. It does, however, indicate that individuals who manage to make it as far as e.g. Afghanistan are very determined and driven by something which cannot be satisfied by anything other than action. When it comes to violence or terrorism individuals who are attracted by the prospects of action are crucial because they are the only ones who can only be satisfied by action. Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging, intellectual challenges or being counter can be satisfied in other ways.

- *Social belonging* Individuals attracted by the prospects of social belonging are satisfied by inclusion, recognition and friendship. Provided they involve these rewards talking, demonstrating, educating, studying, collecting money, supporting prisoners or the like can satisfy such individuals. The individuals who indicated being attracted by the prospects of being included and finding a place to belong found themselves in trouble with authorities. One was acquitted and the other was convicted of having planned terrorism. This does not imply all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging will necessarily end up in trouble with authorities. It does, however, indicate they are available to anybody who will include them – also if this inclusion requires illegal activities.
- *Intellectual challenges* Individuals who are attracted by the prospects of intellectual challenges are satisfied by intellectual discussions, ideological debates, studies and dissemination of the results of those to a broader audience. Provided they revolve around intellectual and ideological aspects talking, demonstrating, collecting money, supporting prisoners or the like can easily satisfy such individuals. The individual who indicated being attracted by intellectual challenges found himself in trouble with authorities. He was accused of having planned terrorism but was acquitted. This does not imply all individuals who are attracted by the prospects of intellectual challenges will find themselves in trouble with authorities but they are indispensable to the counterculture and to the individuals who engage in violence or terrorism. Such individuals provide the glue that holds together the counterculture and they provide the framework which transforms individual needs into collective needs and a greater cause.
- *Being counter* Individuals attracted by the prospects of being against the establishment and those in power in a way which is easily recognized and which is taken seriously can be satisfied simply by being part of the counterculture. They can be satisfied by talking, demonstrating, educating, studying, collecting money, supporting prisoners or just by being associated with individuals who are involved in illegal activity. The individuals who indicated this as the attraction of contemporary Jihadism in the West had not been in conflict with authorities. This does not imply no individuals who are attracted by the prospects of being counter will end up in trouble with authorities. It does, however, indicate they are less likely to do so. Unlike individuals who are attracted by the

prospects of action these individuals are not longing for action or adventure. As a consequence they do not need direct confrontations which can lead to conflicts with authorities. Unlike individuals who are attracted by the prospects of social belonging and friendship these individuals are not yearning for inclusion. As a consequence they are less likely to be available for illegal activities because they are not easily tempted by the prospects of being included into something exclusive.

Since different individuals look up the Jihadism counterculture in search for different rewards the counterculture serves different purposes. Consequently, different individuals *act* differently within the counterculture not because of the counterculture or its ideology but because of what the individuals are searching for and what they are using the counterculture for.

The Jihadism counterculture provides a framework which the individuals who look it up need – a framework which can transform individual motivations and needs into collective needs and a greater cause. The counterculture also provides a network where individuals can find resources – financial, intellectual, social or material. The counterculture in itself does not *cause* anything but it does make things *possible*.

The second type of attractions of the Jihadism counterculture is the *context dependent attractions* which are provided by the context in which the counterculture exists. Any counterculture could hold the four individual attractions but, at present, the Jihadism counterculture has a comparative advantage because of how it is being perceived and received by its context: it is high-profiled and treated as a threat to security.

Many of the individuals inhabiting the Jihadism counterculture would probably have inhabited other countercultures at other points in time – and some have. Examples of individuals who had a past in radical left-wing and right-wing countercultures as well as in criminal settings were provided in chapter 5 *Counterculture*. At present the Jihadism counterculture is, however, the most high-profiled counterculture available and an individual who signals that he or she is part of this counterculture will not only be recognized as being against the established, find social belonging, find access to action or find intellectual challenges – he or she will also be recognized as a threat to security and be taken seriously.

The third type of attractions of the Jihadism counterculture is the *specific attractions* which are specific to this counterculture. The narrative about the End of Days and the accompanying narratives provide any individual engaging in the Jihadism counterculture with a self-image as one of the

‘chosen ones’. This is an extremely empowering self-image through which an individual’s challenges and humiliations can be turned into patents of nobility. Because the challenges and humiliations are interpreted into a meta-conflict – between civilizations and good versus evil – the challenges and humiliations become virtually empowering. The fact that an individual has suffered a given humiliation is evidence that he or she has been chosen to be part of this meta-conflict.

The part of the narratives which position the ‘chosen ones’ as eternal strangers who will never feel at home or welcome anywhere makes the narratives perfect for individuals living in diaspora but also for converts who leave behind everything familiar and for any other individual who feels out of place, misunderstood and alone.

In the Jihadism counterculture these narratives are framed within religious terms – they draw on references to Islam. The narration of oneself and of one’s own group as the privileged few who realize what is at stake and what must be done is, however, in no way restricted to the Jihadism counterculture. As della Porta writes:

”The observations and commentaries in the memoirs of the various radicals suggest that, in some historical periods, movement countercultures tend to foster a mentality of embattlement, to create a vision of the world as divided between “us” and “them” [...] The militants further justified their activities by invoking quasi-existentialist explanations that emphasized the “extraordinary” role of a small minority. Like other political sects, the underground groups idealized the value of living outside normal standards, the idea of courage as a duty of the true believer, and the idea of sacrifice as shared suffering (Kanter 1968, 1972). The more isolated the militants felt from the external world, the more firmly they came to see themselves as a few embattled heroes” (della Porta, 1995:161-172)

Another specific attraction of the Jihadism counterculture is the way in which credibility is attributed. Credibility is not attributed to individuals or groups because they are affiliated with

traditionally authoritative institutions or because they have traditional educations. Rather credibility is attributed to individuals or groups who dare to speak out against the establishment and authorities and who are willing to make sacrifices. Individuals and groups who have put something on the line are considered to have proven their worth and as a consequence such individuals and groups are attributed credibility – whatever they say or do will as point of departure be regarded as credible and worth listening to. Individuals and groups who are somehow related to the establishment or to authorities are – on the other hand – regarded as suspicious.

This way of attributing credibility is also reflected in individual behaviour in the Jihadism counterculture. Since being in opposition and paying a price for one's commitment is a source of credibility the individual has an interest in proving that he or she is in opposition and does pay a price. Being against the establishment is not enough, it is important to also be recognized as such. This is a motivation for attending terrorism trials. The trials represent an opportunity for inhabitants of the Jihadism counterculture to display their identity and prove that they have the courage to insist on it in the face of representatives of the press as well as of the authorities.

In the Jihadism counterculture individual experiences and conceptions are interpreted as being guidance from Allah and therefore more credible than anything else. This implies that when something sounds right to the individual it is not interpreted as a result of the individual's own subjective analysis or opinion.

As a consequence of this significance attributed to the individual's perception and interpretation sources – be they the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah or ideas or ideologies – are in fact not what is credible or authoritative. What is significant is the individual's reading of them. This implies that the sources do not determine the individual's analyses of them neither do they influence how the individual acts on the sources. The individual's reading and the analyses of the sources are what guide the individual's actions.

This attribution of credibility to the individual is a substantial attraction because of the circular line of reasoning which appears from it: what feels right to the individual is right because the individual is right and has Allah on his or her side.

The ways in which credibility is assigned and the significance attributed to the individual's own experiences and interpretations are symptomatic of a breakaway from established authorities and facilitates a breakaway from the control of parents and family, and from the irksome fetters of expectations, customs and traditions. This breakaway can have very direct effects. The informant in chapter 8 *Sources and Credibility* who was challenging traditional gender roles and expectations of

women by outbidding culture and tradition with 'authentic Islam' regarded her own efforts at challenging traditions as part of a larger battle with traditions such as genital mutilation of women.

This dissertation's focus on the attractions of contemporary Jihadism in the West in no way implies that the individuals who inhabit the counterculture are not genuinely enraged about the injustices they see in the world nor does it imply that they are not genuinely passionate about their religion, their ideologies, or their narratives. It implies that the way in which the individuals decide to *act* on the enragement and the passion is neither dictated by the enragement nor by the passion but by the individuals' analyses of what has to be done and by the individuals' motivations for looking up the counterculture in the first place.

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# Abstracts



## Abstract in English

Contemporary Jihadism in the West is more than one phenomenon. Firstly, there are two *types* of contemporary Jihadism in the West:

- Global Jihadism
- Territorialized Jihadism.

Both of these differ from classical Islamic jurisprudence on Jihad because they define engagement in the lesser Jihad – defence of Muslim land by violent means – as an individual duty for every able bodied Muslim. The primary difference between the two lies in the definition of where this Jihad can be waged. In Global Jihadism Jihad can be waged anywhere – the whole world is *Jihad-land*. In Territorialized Jihadism Jihad can only be waged on Muslim land under occupation – only areas where there is already violent conflict is *Jihad-land*.

Secondly, contemporary Jihadism in the West is not only about *violent conflict*. It is also about *identity* and about *social mechanisms*. This is reflected in the *three types of attractions* of contemporary Jihadism in the West which can be identified.

The first type of attractions is the *individual attractions*. Contemporary Jihadism in the West can be understood as a counterculture to which different individuals are attracted for different reasons. Four archetypical individual attractions which motivate individuals to look up the counterculture were identified:

- Action
- Social belonging
- Intellectual challenges
- Being counter

The second type of attractions is the *context dependent attractions* which are provided by the context in which the counterculture exists. Any counterculture could hold the individual attractions but, at present, the Jihadism counterculture has a comparative advantage because of how it is being perceived and received: it is high-profiled and treated as a threat to security.

The third type of attractions is the *specific attractions* which are specific to the Jihadism counterculture. Certain narratives offer an attractive self-image, a way to break away from the irksome fetters of expectations, customs and traditions and a way to regain a sense of agency – in short they offer an attractive identity.



# Resumé på dansk

Jihadisme i vesten er på nuværende tidspunkt mere end ét fænomen. For det første er der to *typer* Jihadisme i vesten:

- Global Jihadisme
- Territorialisert Jihadisme

Begge adskiller sig fra klassisk islamisk retspraksis vedrørende Jihad ved at definere deltagelse i den lille Jihad – forsvar af muslimsk territorium ved militære midler – som en individuel forpligtelse, som påhviler enhver muslim. Det som primært adskiller de to typer fra hinanden er definitionen af hvor Jihad kan føres. Ifølge global Jihadisme kan Jihad føres hvor som helst – hele verden er 'Jihad-land'. Ifølge territorialiseret Jihadisme kan Jihad kun føres på muslimsk territorium, som er under besættelse – kun områder, hvor der allerede er voldelig konflikt er 'Jihad-land'.

For det andet er Jihadisme i vesten på nuværende tidspunkt også mere end et spørgsmål om *voldelig konflikt*. Det er også et fænomen, som handler om *identitet* og om *socialle mekanismer*. Dette ses tydeligt i de *tre typer attraktioner* som kendetegner Jihadisme i vesten på nuværende tidspunkt. Den første type attraktioner er de *individuelle attraktioner*. Jihadisme i vesten kan på nuværende tidspunkt forstås som en modkultur, som tiltrækker forskellige individer af forskellige årsager. Fire arketyperiske individuelle attraktioner kan identificeres:

- Handling og spænding
- Socialt tilhørsforhold
- Intellektuelle udfordringer
- En ramme for modstand imod det etablerede

Den anden type attraktioner er de *kontekstafhængige attraktioner*, som tilvejebringes af den kontekst modkulturen eksisterer i. I teorien kunne enhver modkultur tilbyde de individuelle attraktioner, men på nuværende tidspunkt har Jihadisme modkulturen en komparative fordel i den måde, den bliver modtaget og opfattet – den er højt profileret og betragtes som en sikkerhedstrussel. Den tredje type attraktioner er de *specifikke attraktioner*, som er unikke for Jihadisme modkulturen. Bestemte narrativer tilbyder en attraktiv selvopfattelse, en måde at bryde med forventninger, skikke og traditioner og en måde at tilegne sig en følelse af kontrol – de tilbyder kort sagt en attraktiv identitet.