

Norwegian Islamism

Analyzing the Ideology of the Prophet's Ummah

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Summary

This thesis sets out to analyze the different components of the political ideology of the Prophet's Ummah. By analyzing the various texts the group has published online, the videos they have posted, and various other books, research papers and so on, I have explained exactly what the ideological beliefs of the Prophet's Ummah, and see how they fit in with the historical roots of Islamism, as well as other contemporary groups. The first part of the analysis is of the general theoretical beliefs. The groups of ideas are defined as descriptive of the world, normative as to how the world should be, and method for achieving this. The second part is to uncover which concrete recommendations the group has for the state and society based on the ideas.

My main findings are that the Prophet's Ummah is almost a perfect fit when it comes to the theoretical basis of Islamism. They show almost every indicator when compared to the historical consensus of what Islamism is, and are sufficiently related to the other contemporary groups.

The main descriptive beliefs are that they believe that Islam is struck in some form of civilizational struggle with the rest of the world, particularly the West, that this war is both of a physical and ideological nature, and that the influence from outside-sources has weakened and infected the perfect system given to mankind by Allah; Islam. The normative is that all people should follow a specific type of *sharia*, which is a divine set of rules meant guide both social and political life. Their recommendation is an Islamic State, or a Caliphate, based on these rules. This must be achieved by any means necessary. As such, they defend the use of violence, and adhere to an offensive understanding of jihad.

The concrete solutions and recommendations however, are few. My main conclusion is that the Prophet's Ummah is clear on what they perceive to be the problem, but not on how to solve it. The analysis uncovers that apart from the general belief in an Islamic State, there are few coherent proposals on what it would look like, and how it would run.

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1 Introduction

Few emerging ideologies have gathered more attention in the recent years than radical Islamic movements. Especially after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, the rise of Islamism has had a profound effect on both the understanding of Islam in the West and the application of real-life politics in the Arab world. With the subsequent attacks in London and Madrid, the continuing resistance of Taliban in Afghanistan, the beheading of Lee Rigby in the streets of London and other such incidents, the literature on the different strands of what has gotten the —maybe unfortunate— label of “political Islam” has grown substantially and the contemporary relevance of such studies has only increased. In recent times, the founding of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in 2014 has once again brought Islamism into the public discourse, as well as made it the main talking point in current international affairs. Furthermore, as Islamism has risen as a factor in the Middle East so has different groupings of sympathizers emerged in the Western world, particularly in France, the UK, and Denmark.

Though they vary in terms of size, popular support and ideological background, these groups have adopted many common characteristics that distinguish and unite them. Operating in the borders between religion and political ideology, they believe Islam to be something more than a “mere” religion; its teachings should be a part of all aspects in a person’s life (Berman 2003). In most cases they also share resentment not only to the western social system, but also what they perceive as “religious weakness” shown by more moderate Muslims immigrating and integrating into western societies (Tibi 2012: 9). Perhaps most importantly, they believe that influence from the secular and democratic western societies are inherently opposed to the true meaning of Islam as *din wa-dawla* - both religion and state/law (Euben and Zaman 2009: 29-35). This means, among other things, that they see Islam’s *sharia* as a de facto constitution applicable to all societies; a non-debatable collection of divine rules that should constitute the basis for which all other law is based on. It is therefore the role of all Muslims to live by *sharia*, and demand it to be implemented everywhere Muslims live.

It should, however, be noted that it is often assumed that Islamism is simply the political part of Islam, giving it religious legitimacy among some, if not all, Muslims. Terms such as Islamists, Fundamentalist Muslims, Radical Muslims, and Muslim Terrorists as concepts are more often than not used indiscriminately and interchangeably to describe what in reality is a rather large spectrum of political and theological ideas (Hansen and Keinz, 2007: 55) (Goli and Rezaei, 2010: 13). Therefore, for many in the West, the conceptual difference between what Islam is as a religion and what Islamism is as an ideology, is often blurred. For example, comparing Islamists (people who follow the political ideology of Islamism) with fundamentalist Muslims (religious people who adhere to a conservative understanding of their religious texts and traditions) creates a rather fragile basis of comparison. While there are certainly people who overlap in this respect (one must be Muslim to be an Islamist, or at least be accepted as one), one cannot simply take the two to mean the same thing.

This misuse of terminology has led to quite a few misconceptions about the inherent role of politics in Islam, the view of an average Muslim on political matters, and the degree of separation between religion and politics in the Muslim societal sphere. Most of the research done on the topics of Muslims view on democracy, for example, point out that Muslim publics worldwide are supportive of democratic forms of government and the division between religious and governmental institutions, favor free speech, and that a clear majority of Muslims living in the West don't want religious law to be implemented at state level (Pew Research Center 2005; Pew Research Center 2006; Esposito and Mogahed 2007; Pew Research Center 2008; Fish 2011; all cited in Elgvin 2011: 2). On the contrary, as Wiktorowicz (2005) points out, many moderate Muslims, both spiritual leaders and other proponents of a peaceful co-existence and integration of Muslims into other societies, have received death threats from radicals who view them as traitors to the "true" Islam. As these groups reject the more moderate Muslims through *takfir*, which is a custom of declaring another Muslim a non-believer or an apostate, one should be careful to define them within the general accepted context of the religion Islam. Instead, one should focus on the ideological strands of thinking such groups of Islamists promote in their political work, not how

they excuse themselves in their own religious conviction. This thesis will partly serve to define the distinction between Islamism and fundamental Islam, and in essence look at Islamism as a political standpoint, not a religious calling.

To differentiate and put them in an academic context, the Islamist groups seem to adhere to a somewhat crude version of Huntington's (1996) "Clash of Civilization"-theory with regards to the understanding of the Islamic *Ummah* (Followers) as being under attack from outsider influence, most importantly the West, both in a practical and theological sense. This, together with a common goal of implementing an Islamic state obeying an extreme form of *sharia*, are what make up the general comparative of such organizations. The more radical elements within the groups are also known to promote the collective action of *jihad*, or what they believe is theological justified "holy war" against various targets deemed enemies of Islam or promoters of a *kuffar* - non-believers - lifestyle. Drawing from Islamist intellectuals and activists like Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, they have defended the various terror attacks carried out on civilian targets as the work of martyrs, and some even going as far as to protest against the incarceration of those responsible, like the Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, or the pair of converts who performed the public killing of Lee Rigby, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale. In the last few decades, thousands of members associated with various groups from all over Europe have been reported traveling to conflict areas around the world, such as Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, etc. to fight in the name of Islam, Allah, and *sharia* (Wiktorowicz 2005: 3-4).

1.1 How Islamism came to Norway

In the world today, there are quite a few organizations that falls under the umbrella of Islamism. Perhaps the most well-known is Hizb ut-Tahrir, Hizbollah, Al-Qaida, Taliban, and ISIS/ISIL. As these organizations have grown exponentially in the last century, so has different political activists founded likeminded groups in Europe, either non-affiliated like Islam4UK in the United Kingdom, or as local representations

of the larger organization, like Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Germany (Vidino 2015). While groups like these have existed for some time in other European countries, the Norwegian local chapter of Islamists is quite a recent political phenomenon.

In September 2012, 3.500 people showed at Youngstorget in Oslo up to protest against the movie “Innocence of Muslims”, an American-made movie depicting the “real” life of the prophet Muhammad (Akerhaug 2012). However, this peaceful gathering where overshadowed in the media by another group gathering outside the American embassy a few blocks away. Around 50 people had gathered not only to show their opposition to the movie, but also in order to express their support for Al-Qaida and its members, and their hatred for America, NATO, and its western allies. Declaring the other demonstration and the Islamic Council of Norway as “hypocrites” who “...only work to appease the Norwegian government and people” and therefore were in “contradiction to the true Islam”, they announced themselves as the only true Muslims (Akerhaug 2012). While they used to operate under the name Ansar al-Sunna, this group would soon be known as Profetens Ummah, or The Prophet’s Ummah in English, and has in the later years become the first public Islamist group in Norway.

Directly translated the name means “The Prophet’s followers”, or “The Community of the Prophet”. Though the group is relatively new in the Norwegian political landscape, they have had an interesting and somewhat rocky beginning. Their spokesman, Ubaydullah Hussain, has been taken to court for allegedly making death threats against the now Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg. The ideological leader Arfan Bhatti, who previously has been imprisoned for gang-related criminal activities, has just come back to Norway as he was only recently released from being held captive by the Pakistani Police. Other members of the group have also been charged with making threats against various other public political actors in the Norwegian political scene, mainly Jens Stoltenberg, now the General Secretary of NATO. In a video published on YouTube, they declared him an “enemy of Allah”, claimed that Allah would “punish him for his actions”, and that he should “burn in hell for all eternity” (Akerhaug 2013: 93). Through Facebook, their leaders have admitted to attending radicalization

meetings in the UK with the founder of the British radical Islamist group Islam4UK and Al-Muhajiroun, Anjem Chaudry, and have taken his words into practice by establishing different networks around Norway who both arrange meetings and invite potential new initiates (Akerhaug 2013: 130, NRK 2012a). The group itself has made different claims of having around 500-1000 active members and more than 2.000 sympathizers, though the numbers confirmed and used by the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) and other independent researchers are more in the range of 200-300 in total (PST 2013). Around 50-70 members of the group have been reported traveling to IS to support the fighting and their appointed leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—who now has announced himself as Amir al-Mu'minin Caliph Ibrahim, the Caliph of the Islamic State. Out of these, 7 are reported as dead or missing, among them one of Prophet's Ummah's former spokesmen, Egzon Avdyli.

Even though the Prophet's Ummah is a relatively new organization, it is surprising how little academic attention it has gathered from Norwegian scholars. Most seem content to either write the group of as “just another extreme or radical anti-establishment youth group”, or simply denounce them as a loose band of young men and women who find the different traditions of Islamism enticing. Not until recently, with the rise of IS as a de facto sovereign power in the Middle East, has the group been deemed worthy of more scrutiny in order to understand the role of political Islamism in Norway. However, most of this attention has been with regards to either (a) the sociological aspect, such as how they recruit youth to their cause, who their potential recruits are, and so on in order to stop the “radicalization of youth”, such as Holmer (2014), or (b) the threat assessment of the group's members to the Norwegian society or against certain individuals (PST¹ 2013) (PST 2014) (Sunde 2013). While these are important matters, it is still surprising how little research has been done on the group itself.

Before one can classify, compare and categorize, one has to simply observe and study. In contrast to the literature on other fringe political ideologies like communism, nazism, fascism, or liberalism, the analyses of Islamism as a political factor in Norway

¹ The Norwegian Police Security Services (PST)

is almost non-existent. The attention has been on the individual members of the group, rather than what the general consensus among its members is. While it is true that Prophet's Ummah is neither a large ideological movement nor do they seem to be of influential political relevance anytime soon, they're still a local representation of a larger transnational political ideology. Instead of scrutinizing this local chapter, most just apply the group different labels that seem to be based solely on their impressions or personal understanding. To not know what motivates Prophet's Ummah, what their convictions are, how they will implement them and so on gives us a disadvantage not only in understanding the evolution of Islamism in different countries, but also gives us the opportunity to study how they themselves relate to other groups of like-minded individuals. For example, one of the political goals expressed by Ubaydullah Hussein is to change Norway in accordance with *sharia* and Islamic traditions (Kleivan et. al 2014). This is a general statement which I believe require a greater scrutiny, and should not simply be accepted on a face-value. First of all, what does he mean by *sharia*? *Sharia* has many different meanings and understandings in the Islamic theological tradition. Which traditions is it that he wants implemented? And if it is a specific type of *sharia*, how will this fit in with the current framework of law that exists? This also implies that he believes that the Norwegian state and its laws are not operating in accordance with the laws of Allah. How might he then respond to the fact that Norway has made the list of top ten countries that are most Islamic in the political, economic, and social sense, coming in 9th in 2010 and 6th in 2014 (Askari and Scheherazade 2010/2014)? These are some of the questions I hope to give an answer to. By properly analyzing and defining the different ideas held by the Prophet's Ummah, we can further try and fit them in a larger ideological spectrum. By examining both the expressed political ideas and the discourse and arguments behind them, we can come to a greater understanding of the group.

Therefore, this paper simply wants to illuminate the broader range of opinions and beliefs held by Prophet's Ummah, defined as "ideas", in order to serve as a reference for future studies of the group, of political Islam in Norway, and maybe even different strands of political Islam in Europe. It is the authors' hope that the findings and

conclusions presented in this thesis will serve as a stepping stone for further and deeper analysis of the different aspects and groupings of Islamism in Norway.

1.2 Research question

It is with the previous mentioned goals in mind that I will try to examine and explain the core, fundamental and integral political ideas of the Prophet's Ummah's ideology. The main research question of this paper will be:

“How do the political ideas of the Prophet's Ummah reflect the political ideology of Islamism, and what are their practical recommendations within this ideology?”

This research question has two parts: first, I will explore how the Prophet's Ummah's ideas and beliefs fit in with the contemporary definition of Islamism. This is the ideology analysis as it is primarily defined in the context of political theory. This means that I will identify what “Islamism” is, through how it is understood in the general context and the history of its proponents, and the arguments presented as to why this is true. The analysis will be both on what ideas they represent, but also on how they argue and present their beliefs. The second part is more descriptive. Here, the main part is to include what practical policies the Prophet's Ummah wants to implement. I hope to create base of comparison of their political stances given what we know about the group today. This will, for example, include how they believe economy will function in an Islamic state, what social rights the inhabitants of the state would have or not have, and so on. These two parts will be presented interchangeably, as it is difficult to exclude them when analyzing the overarching ideas themselves. So when I analyze how the Prophet's Ummah view the Islamic state, all expressed practical components will be presented. This is so that all related beliefs are presented coherently.

These questions will be answered through a case study of the group itself and its members. As there is little to no previous research done on Prophet's Ummah, this will

be a primarily descriptive and interpretative paper. I see my thesis as one which seeks to illuminate and evaluate the assumptions many researchers seem to have when dealing both with groups like these, and with Islamists in particular, that they are, frankly, all the same. This is necessary because no other descriptive analysis have been done. It should therefore be noted that some of the sources here will be in Norwegian, both from the literature, and the text examined in this thesis. I have translated them all myself, so any faults with regards to this are my own.

To put it in an academic context, I hope to continue on the work of Homer (2014), and Lia and Nesser (2014), in order for us to understand Islamism in a Norwegian context, and try to explain what kind of ideological views that might influence young men and women to join such groups. My contribution is an analysis of what the group represents, so that future researchers can build and improve upon it. This has not really been done before. It is for a reason that the Norwegian Police University College (PHS) research paper on “Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism on the Web” (Lia 2013) chapter on the Prophet’s Ummah as a case study of political extremism is without cited sources. There simply is none. Lia (2013: 108) even states that

“[the PU] does not appear to have a unitarily developed ideology, and neither does it have an ideological guiding star that creates the agenda and course of the group”.

Mind that this was written at the time Bhatti was missing and Hussain had stepped down as the official spokesperson. Now that Bhatti is back in Norway awaiting a trial, Hussain has resumed his position as spokesman, and they have officially, as a group, declared themselves as supporters of the Islamic State, I believe that such an ideological consensus might finally be discernable.

1.3 Core concepts

In order to avoid confusion when using different terminology, I would like to outline the different key concepts and how I define and understand them. While some of these concepts are contested, like *jihad*, *sharia*, et cetera, and one would be hard pressed to

find any single definition that caters to all readers, I find it is necessary to provide the definitions of how these terms will be used in this paper. The majority of these are taken from Olav Elgvin's Master Thesis "Secularists, Democratic Islamists and Utopian Dreamers. How Muslim Religious Leaders in Norway fit Islam into the Norwegian Political System", a thesis exploring how Norwegian Imams view democracy and the political system. Elgvin is both thorough and explicit in his definitions, and by using them here, I aim to keep this thesis somewhat coherent to other studies on adjacent subjects of interest. I have also included Islamism itself in this list, though chapter 3 will inspect and expand on its definition, as a starting point for readers new to the subject. Both here, and in the remainder of this thesis, I have also chosen to italicize

Islam: The common usage of the word "Islam" is a simple reference to the monotheistic religion. However, as Elgvin (2011: 6) points out: "some researchers have stopped talking of «Islam» as a single concept, and instead speak of «Islams» – a way of speaking that emphasizes the diversity among Muslims when it comes to how they interpret and live the religion of Islam". This is to differentiate between the multiple ways Islam is expressed by Muslims of different backgrounds and traditions. I choose to use the same understanding of the term Islam as Elgvin (2011: 6), who refers to the definition of the social anthropologist Talal Asad - to think of Islam as a discursive tradition. He defines a tradition as «discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history» (Asad 1986: 14, cited in Elgvin 2011: 6). This means that for a discourse to be regarded as Islamic, it must relate to the Islamic past or history – to claim that something is right because Buddha did it is not Islamic, but to claim that something is right because Muhammad did it, is Islamic (Elgvin 2011: 6).

Muslim: The basic definition of a "Muslim" is a person who is a member of the religion Islam. Though this definition seems fairly straightforward, there are a few objections to be made in this understanding of the term. First, it can sometimes be difficult to define the distinction between an individual who practices Islam, and one who is Muslim in the sociological context (Elgvin 2011: 6). In the public discourse

one may talk about Muslim immigrants as the immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries, whether or not the person identifies himself as Muslim. Second, some people have defined themselves as “cultural” Muslims, which mean that while they see themselves in affiliation with the civilization of Islam or Muslim culture, they do not believe in or participate in the Islamic theological dogma (Hvidsteen 2007; cited in Elgvin 2011: 6). This thesis will try to differentiate between these three groups by simply keeping to the original definition presented here. All references to Muslims will mean the people who personally, and both actively or passively, accept the faith of Islam in the theological sense as defined above. This will include Shia- and Sunni Muslims, as well as converts from other ethnicities, and local sects or theological traditions.

Islamism: The term “Islamism” might be defined in the words of Sheri Berman (2013: 257) as “the belief that Islam should guide social and political as well as personal life”. This is a rather broad definition which can mean a whole range of things, and will probably include a larger part of those who only consider themselves moderately Muslim, and political parties who are based on conservative values taken from Islamic traditions. Still, this is the basic definition that will be used as a starting point for the literary review on Islamism as an ideology, which will be given in chapter 3.

Sharia and fiqh: *Sharia* is generally considered to be guidelines as to how a Muslim should live; indeed the very name translates to “the path” or “the way”. It includes both rules and practices for marriage, economics and criminal law, and instructions on how a Muslim should behave in matters of spiritual and moral nature, such as praying (Marshall 2005:1). *Sharia* can be understood as the total will of God for mankind (or Muslims) - that can be interpreted in different ways. But for most Islamic scholars, the will of God for mankind has also entailed certain ways of regulating society. Islamic jurists attempted to interpret the *sharia* and the result were concrete rulings, most often referred to as *fiqh*. So when I refer to the Islamists perceived tradition, what I mean is that they want to implement rulings from traditional *fiqh* (Elgvin 2011: 6).

Jihad/jihadism: *Jihad* is an Arabic term which directly translated means “to struggle”. In the Islamic historic traditions, it has had two main meanings, one of internal self-exertion, which is mainly about refusing to do sin, to fight ones negative urges and so on, and the other is physical fighting (Tibi 2012: 135). This duality in its definition is one of the key differences in how the term is understood in an academic discourse versus the in the general. To most Muslims, the term is used interchangeably, its meaning defined by the context in which it is used. In this thesis, I will concentrate more on the latter understanding, of which jihadism is the term primarily used. Jihadism is a term meant to cover the actions that are external and violent carried out in the name of Islam. When referring to Jihadism, I refer to the use of force against defined targets, both military and civilian, in order to promote one or more concepts of Islam, *Sharia* or Islamism. *Jihad* is here considered to be the method of fighting against the perceived threats against Islam or an Islamic way of living (Tibi 2012: 134-135). A thorough explanation of the term and its usage will follow in chapter 3.

As a final note, I must insist that the reader does not mix up the terminology used in this paper to be exact when it comes to the meaning of certain words or phrases as used in a theological tradition. For example, when I mention *sharia* with regards to Islamism, it is simply what Islamists mean when they talk about *sharia*, not necessarily what the consensus among Muslims is with regards to exactly which laws are followed, and how they are applied and so on. This is not a thesis with the aim of comparing Islamists ideology to Islam to find out who interprets it right or wrong, it is simply a description of Islamist ideology and how they understand certain concepts.

1.4 Outline

The outline of this paper is a simple one. First, I will present the methods and materials that are to be used. The empirical parts of this paper will be gathered through text (content) analysis, more precisely ideology-analysis. The majority of the existing data concerning the Prophets’ Ummah are found in written form, either through their website, their writings and interviews with different newspapers, their online

discussion forum, or other forms of media. Also, the Prophet's Ummah has an extensive presence online, where they produce their own videos, stream lectures from around the world, and invite people to their meetings or seminars. All data found that can be traced back to the Prophet's Ummah will be viewed as having potential empiric relevance to this paper, and will thusly be examined.

Second, I will present a thorough literary review of Islamism as a political ideology, with a short historic introduction of the term, and how it has been incorporated into the various political fields in the Arabian world, followed by the current leading theoretical consensus. This will include how Islamism is defined, how it compares to other ideologies, what its main theological arguments are and how these ties in with the religion Islam. In order to put this thesis and its findings in a context, I will briefly go through the research that has been done both quantitative and qualitative on the general view Muslims have on Islamism and politics, and some case studies of different western Islamist groups and ideological leaders. This will also be where I conduct a clean-up on the different terms used in describing these groups, in order to separate the different theological and political understandings of Islamism.

Third, I will present my findings and analysis. This part will be split in two. The first part will be an analysis on how the Prophet's Ummah relates to the general ideology of Islamism. Using the defined ideas from chapter 3, I see both whether or not they adhere to the same general ideas, but also how they relate to the presented concepts. Here, both the conclusions and the argumentation used are what are being analyzed. The second part of the analysis will be what other political ideas, solutions and so on the Prophet's Ummah convey in their text and speeches that are important to the understanding of the group, but does not fit into the larger theoretical picture. Here, I have gathered all their views on both practical and normative matters, in order to examine them more closely.

Lastly, I will continue on the argumentation from the previous chapter and have a short discussion about how the Prophet's Ummah fit in with the general ideology, and convey my concluding remarks.

2 Methods and materials

My main and overarching goal with this thesis is to describe and define the various ideas held by the Prophet's Ummah. It is simply my intention to explore the political ideas of the group by starting with a somewhat blank canvas. In methodological terms, this means that this thesis will be a single-case ideology-study, using ideology-analysis method as described in Bergström and Boreus (2012: 140-149), Bratberg (2014), and Mehta (2010). My case is the Prophet's Ummah itself, and by analyzing their statements, press-releases, blogpost and online publications, I hope to give a detailed explanation as to what political ideas they share as a group.

This goes against the more common way theory is used in political science, which is to start off with a theoretical viewpoint and then look at the data using said theory. This is especially noticeable in the quantitative works. Other studies on similar organizations have used widely different approaches, among them comparative in Høigilt (2014); sociological mobilization theory in McCabe & Pupcenoks (2013); or even cases of grounded theory, for example PISOIU (2013). This thesis, however, will be a little different. First, it is not my intention to analyze the Prophet's Ummah in order to explain some causal effect within the group, or to test a certain theory or its implications. I simply aim to identify what ideas they represent and how these ideas manifest themselves, not, for example, explain why exactly these people came to believe this, or whether or not the Prophets Ummah behaves in accordance to the general literature on fringe groups. This leads us to the second reason: the research in this thesis will first and foremost be descriptive in nature, and is, as far as I know, the first real attempt to structure and analyze what we know about the Prophet's Ummah. When analyzing, I will have no previous empirical data and little theoretical research on the group to compare my findings to. I cannot simply consult a given set of data or a previously done work to see if it might differ from my own in terms of data gathering or understanding. Therefore, the way this thesis is modeled is the way of an exploratory analysis. By defining the group as a simple gathering of like-minded

individuals, I will describe the various ideas that hold them together and are expressed outwards.

2.1 Methods

“Ideas are the cogwheels of politics, and are therefore what we should be examining in order to understand political actors and the decisions they make”

Bratberg (2014: 57)

Choosing how to analyze ones data is perhaps the single most important aspect of any scientific work. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, my thesis will be a case study of the Prophet’s Ummah. A case study should be familiar to most as a type of qualitative work were one seek to explain ones chosen variables in a single (or a few) case(s) (Gerring 2009: 17). Case studies seek to explain a certain phenomenon or data point by going in deep, as opposed to the more generalized approach done in quantitative research in large-N studies. Some believe the term “case-study” to mean choosing a case and examining whether or not a theory is falsified when applied to the case in question. This is not such study. This is a case study in the field of simple observation and definition. In other words, this is a case-study where the aspects and variables of the case itself is important, and in need of a more thorough understanding. According to Robert K. Yin, a case study approach is suitable if one wants to know how and why social phenomena work: “The method is relevant the more your questions require an extensive and 'in-depth' description of some social phenomenon” (Yin 2009: 4; cited in Elgvin 2011: 18).

My chosen case is obvious; the Prophet’s Ummah represent the single largest Islamist group in Norway, and a rather unknown ideological entity as far as social research is concerned. Previous studies, like Holmer (2014) and Skoglund (2014) have focused on different aspects of the group’s members, mainly what drives them to join and how they perceive themselves within the context of the group. Additionally, one can read

“Norsk jihad - Muslimske ekstremister blant oss”, a book written by Norwegian journalist Lars Akerhaug (2013), which contains interviews with both members and leading figures about how they operate and how they came to join the PU. While it contains valuable information from various individuals on how the group works, there is little examination done of the ideas themselves. This thesis hope to expand and define the more general framework of ideology the group operates in.

The variables I seek to explain in this thesis are of a somewhat more complex nature than what is usually the case in other case-studies. This thesis is what Gerring (2009: 21) refer to as a case-study done synchronically: a study that aims to observe within-case variation at a single point in, or frame of, time. As the variables of this study are the ideas themselves, and ideas can be commonly understood to be constantly in flux, being reconsidered and redefined as actors communicate and debate among themselves, I will try to mostly keep to those ideas that have been expressed from the moment of the Prophet’s Ummah’s first rally in 2012 and until today. The timeframe of which I have chosen to concentrate on is therefore between when the group was founded and up until January 2015. If I find that one or more of their ideas have changed within this period of time, it will be noted and expand upon in the analysis chapter.

Originally, I intended to split the methodological approach in this thesis in two; one part where I used text analysis on their written work, and one part where I interviewed key members of the group. I contacted the group’s spokesman through his lawyer and set up an interview, but Hussain neither showed up nor responded when the questions were sent by mail. Other members of the group also later declined to answer through mail. This was, of course, an unfortunate turn of events, but I believe the data available through their texts are more than enough to provide the empirical grounds for the examination.

2.2 Analysis of Ideology

An ideology is an often used, but difficult to define term in political science. For a thorough examination on how it has been used in social science and the different ways one might define “ideology”, see John Gerring’s (1997) article “Ideology: A Definitional Analysis”. He explains the term in how it conceptualizes itself in a comprehensive framework with 35 different attributes of the term within 7 different parts of what “ideology” constitutes. According to Gerring (1997: 966-967), these are all different uses the word has had when understood and used in social science. This makes it inherently difficult to operationalize what one means when one use the term, though he tries to rectify this by concluding with how the most important part of an ideology is that it must be coherent. Coherent refers to a set of idea-elements that are bound together, that belong to one another in a non-random fashion (Gerring 1997: 980). Therefore, for this thesis, a sufficient explanation and definition of “ideology” would be that it is a catch-all term to cover a group’s or a collective’s coherent form of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes, and opinions. In order for me to properly analyze the Prophet’s Ummah, I have chosen the approach to ideology and ideology-analysis as presented by Herbert Tingsten in Bergström and Boreus (2012: 140-149) and Øivind Bratberg (2014).

Ideology-analysis is, broadly defined, the systematic study of one or more political messages. It is a qualitative analysis of how ideas are expressed and found in texts, with a mission of going behind the words to uncover its normative or descriptive claims, or understand what the perceived reality of its author is (Bratberg 2014: 57). This kind of textual scrutiny build on the assumption that ideas are the basis of what motivates a person in how he sees and understands the world. Ideas are here understood as a “thought construction which, in comparison with impressions or attitudes, is held with a certain kind of continuity (Bergstrom & Boréus 2005: 149, cited in Bratberg 2014:58; my translation). These ideas can be both of individual and collective nature, and they govern how our attitude towards certain questions or perceived correct political governance (Bratberg 2014: 58).

Ideas can further be divided in two main forms; *normative* and *descriptive*.

Normative ideas summarize different beliefs one hold about what is good or bad in one's society. "Children should be responsible for their own education" is a normative idea. Political normative ideas are general views on what one think is estimable behavior, and are in little ways open to empirical proof or investigation. Examples can include the biblical saying that "one should honor ones parents", or the Marxist principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", both which are normative statements. Normative ideas govern what actions or statements we assign positive or negative values to. These are of particular interest to us because of Islamism's tendency to validate itself with Islamic values and theological traditions.

Descriptive ideas are ideas or beliefs about how the world works, or assumptions of how things are related (Bratberg 2014: 58-59). Descriptive ideas will also often be causal beliefs. To think that "X is because of Y", or "X happens when Y happens", for example, is a product of one's own cognitive thinking. I will stress the part of this definition regarding belief. Descriptive ideas are often assumptions made as a part of ones greater ideological beliefs, and thus vulnerable to be influenced by this more than any empirical findings. For example, if one believes that higher taxes on wealth lead to less incentive for them to work more, it does not really matter if it is proven true or not, it is still the person's descriptive view on a causal relationship. However, these are, compared to normative ideas, possible to test and control, in what is referred to as critical idea-analysis. For more on this, see Bergström and Boreus (2012).

Consider this in relation to the works of Tingsten. He adds another prerequisite to Bratbergs list. His claim is that an ideology contains three parts: (1) a formative premise of values, (2) factual and internally consistent claims of various causalities in society, and (3) concrete recommendations (Bergström and Boreus 2012: 141-142). The two first ones are comparable to normative and descriptive ideas, but the third one is of note. This is why my analysis in reality is two-folded. One where I see how the Prophet's Ummah compares to other Islamist groups and one where I categorize which recommendations they present as to how society should be ran. As such, ideology-

analysis is simply the methodological tool on how to study and explain these ideas within this framework. The analysis itself is done by interpreting the chosen texts in order to uncover the ideas behind them.

This is methodological framework is what I will use in this thesis. In chapter 3, I will define which ideas are needed for a group to be classified as Islamist. Building on this, I will see whether or not the Prophet's Ummah adheres to these ideas, or if they deviate from this in any way. Here, the context of their beliefs will also be considered as of major importance, by which I mean that it is not the conclusion in itself, but the way they arrive at it which is the crux of the analysis.

The latter analysis will therefore be purely descriptive. Here, I simply analyze all the available texts and present the ideas of recommendation as they fit into the categories mentioned above. For example, when examining the Prophet's Ummah's views on *sharia* and society, I will include the suggested practical components that fit into this view, like what they believe *sharia* prescribes for marriage and social relationships, or on the legal status of non-Muslims. I find this to be an easier way of presenting the findings, because it gives me the possibility of first explaining the views and identified problems, and then directly explain what solutions they believe will solve the problem in question.

2.3 Data

The empirical data presented here is in short all the texts, interviews, blogposts, and videos made by or for the Prophet's Ummah. Originally, I had intended two ways to obtain information: the interviews, and to use their official printings and the writing from their Facebook-page. The interviews, as previously mentioned, fell through when Hussain backed out, and their online activities all but ceased in the summer of 2014. I therefore had to seek other avenues of information.

Gathering official and genuine texts proved to be a somewhat difficult ordeal. First of all, the Prophets Ummah does not outwardly work as a coherent and unitary group at all. The PU has no any official legal standing as an organization or as a

religious/political group. While the group seems to have rallied behind charismatic leaders such as Arfan Bhatti and Ubaydullah Hussain, there is no obvious coherent hierarchy within the group structure, no list of members and leaders, or political program other than the website bearing their name. The Prophet's Ummah is, for example, not registered in the Brønnøysund Register Centre, a government-run agency responsible for the management of public registration in Norway, and thereby forfeiting grants the group could receive as a registered interest organization. This not only makes it inherently difficult to prove that a certain document or piece of text actually stems from the Prophet's Ummah, it makes obtaining all possible information almost impossible. One must also remember that the Prophets Ummah did not officially exist prior to 2012, and most of their writings and discussions have taken place on the Internet, either in closed Facebook-groups or on rather unknown discussion boards on various websites, some in Arabic. Most of these have during the last year been removed or changed. Their Facebook-group was deleted sometime during the summer of 2012 after being reported as offensive, which meant that the most open forum available to journalists and researchers were gone.

I have, however, still had some success in finding other venues of information. The texts used here are taken from their official website, profetensummah.com. The website has been up and running since 2012, and consists of different types of posts, from press-releases to guides on how one should behave in accordance to *sharia*, and so on. These texts will be the foundation of my analysis, and are considered to be some of the ideas that most, if not all, of the members agree upon, i.e. coherent. As they are posted on a publically accessible medium, I will also consider these posts to be the PUs "selling points" out to a broader audience. By this, I mean that the topics covered are meant both to capture the attention of potential new members, and to answer some of the different media-coverages of the group. This means that I will see these as a primary source of data, and should other sources contradict a point made in these, then the blog-post will in most cases be given precedence. All in all, the blog posts fill over 50 pages covering multiple subjects of interest. The site is as of now, April 10th 2015,

deleted, but all the texts have been gathered and saved, and are available from the author on demand.

Nevertheless, this blog has not been updated since mid-2013, and it is in the later months that PU has been the most active, both nationally and internationally. It is also not enough information available through this website to reach a conclusion with any degree of certainty regarding the practical application of its contents. Most of the posts are less than 1.500 words long, which is not enough to give a thorough description of the different topics. They also don't offer any in-depth analysis of their preferred solution to the maintenance of society or solution to various questions raised by the texts themselves, such as what they will do to someone who rejects their societal system or ignore their laws. For example, the single largest contribution on the site is the article "44 ways to support Jihad", but this is simply a direct translation of the work with the same name from Al-Qaida theorist Anwar al Awlaki (2009). While it certainly shows us how the Prophet's Ummah might view *jihad*, or how they want their members to act in regards to it, it doesn't answer the questions one might have about how they defend *jihad* from a theoretical standpoint, i.e. gives us an indication as to why they regard it as a necessary tool to further their agenda.

To improve upon this lack of written content by the group itself, I have created a list of interviews their public spokesman, Ubaydullah Hussain, has had with various newspapers, as well with interviews with other previous leaders, and texts that can be traced to the group. Another source of data will be the various videos posted on YouTube by the group's official account "Profetens Ummah", and a book written about radical Islamists in Norway called "Norsk Jihad - Muslimske ekstremister blant oss" by journalist Lars Akerhaug (2013), which has many direct quotes from the previous leaders Bhatti and Mohyldeen. Additionally, I have transcribed the 43 minute long interview Ubaydullah Hussain had with the Norwegian newspaper Verdens Gang (Kleivan et. al 2014) where he responded to questions both about the group itself and how they related to the then newly formed Islamic State. Lastly, I will also draw upon empirical findings and materials presented in other works regarding the Prophet's Ummah. This will primarily include two master-theses written about the group before

this work is published: one from Ida Nord Holmer (2014) “In the name of Islam’. Explaining the appeal of militant Salafism in a Norwegian context” in which she studies what drives the members of Prophet’s Ummah to join, and Peder Skoglund’s (2014) MA study in criminology “Ekstremismens argumentasjon. Et maskulinitetsperspektiv på radikaliserings og hatefulle ytringer på nett”.

The data presented here is by no means all quotes or pieces of texts made by the Prophet’s Ummah or their members; such a collection would be nearly impossible to attain, but it is all the data that is readily available, coupled with data obtained by other researchers in the field. As such, I believe it sufficient to answer my research questions.

2.4 Validity and reliability

All scientific work tries to emulate the ideals of reliability and validity, in order for their findings to be of any significance. This is especially true for many of the social sciences, where one often needs to simplify the world at large in order to explain a possible causal relationship between two factors or sets of variables.

By reliability, one means, of course, how reliable the results are; whether or not they can be reached by a different researcher analyzing the same data in the same way (Bhattacharjee 2012:56). Validity refers to whether or not the researcher is measuring what she wanted to measure and not something else (Bhattacharjee 2012:58).

2.4.1 Reliability

Ideology-analysis is a method of scientific discovery based in reading and interpretation. This means that the method is inherently low on reliability if not done correctly using an open analysis. This includes both the presumptions of the investigator herself, but also a potential bias in what works are chosen to represent the findings. The essence of whether the findings here can be thought of as reliable boils mainly down to a basic question; would another researcher end up at the same conclusions?

I hope to work around this by claiming the following: The material presented here is all the publically available empirical texts, videos, and comments, which can be traced back to the Prophet's Ummah, their leaders, or their members. A thorough investigation of other potential data has been done, and every piece of potential evidence has been analyzed. The findings presented here are therefore not the entirety of the potential sources of data, which might include private e-mails, online discussions no longer accessible and so on, but rather the official ideas of the Prophet's Ummah as they themselves present it. From my own point of view, as long as I take care not to read too much into single sentences or short remarks, I believe that other researchers will arrive at both the same conclusions and findings as I present here.

I am aware that the gathered data, especially in qualitative works such as this, are not innocent or without preconceptions from the author. I have, for example, already applied different terms to the group such as "Islamists" or "radicals" et cetera. This will probably influence how the various data are interpreted. Still, I hope to make my case for and discover different aspects of the Prophet's Ummah's beliefs by examining the data with as little bias as possible. Any error of judgement is purely my own.

2.4.2 Validity

Questions of validity are question of whether or not I have measured what I wanted to measure, and not something else. Case studies are generally thought to have good validity, and I consider this one to have to. All instances of the terminology I seek to analyze are given by the Prophet's Ummah themselves. I consider the internal validity to be high because of this, the amount of direct quotes available, and the fact that the texts used in this analysis is written by them themselves.

As for external validity, which deals with the generalization from these findings to a general universe, it is something I do not really think is of particular relevance. This is not a study on Islamism in general. It is not a study meant to be generalized to explain a larger phenomenon. This is a descriptive ideological study on one group. This seeks

to explain how the Prophet's Ummah believe the world functions, their solutions to their perceived problems, and how they think society should be ran. It is a description of an explicit case of a phenomenon, and does not embody any explanations meant to be considered causal for other likeminded groups or organizations. I limit myself to explaining the group. The argumentation used by the Prophet's Ummah is theirs, and does not mean that I believe this is the case of all other groups who operates within the same framework.

With that said, I hope the results here will provide others with a set of data to expand upon in the future. This is my contribution to the ongoing academic discourse of the study of Islamists groups in the West; to identify and describe the various ideological beliefs held by the Prophet's Ummah, and thus give future researchers a stepping stone to their own research.

3 Islamism

Historically, Islamism is a word used almost exclusively to name the religious belief of Islam. From the late 17th century and until the start of the 20th, it was simply another way of describing Muslims, or a collective term to capture Islamic beliefs and culture (Mozaffari 2007: 17- 20). This changed mainly after ayatollah Khomeini's revolution in Iran. With the formation of an entire political system based on religious laws, a new terminology was needed in order to effectively describe it. At first, this led to many of the words we still use today to describe different strands of Islamism; "Islamic fundamentalism", "radical islam" or "Muslim extremists". However, while they clearly try to emulate the fact that what happened in Iran, and to a lesser extent in Egypt with the Muslim Brotherhood, they each represent a new form of Islam that was clearly distinct from the historical religion, and it proved difficult to say exactly what this new form included (Mozaffari 2007: 18). It was not until the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center towers that the necessity of a coherent understanding of the term became apparent. In the aftermath of 9/11, Western academics needed to explain both the religious and the political background and motivation for the beliefs of Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaida.

This chapter seeks to explain exactly what Islamism is, as well as put it into both a theological and political context. This is not a simple or easy undertaking. As mentioned above, both the public and the academic discourse on the subject are somewhat ambiguous when it comes to who and what they define as predominantly Islamist. I began this thesis by referring to a definition of Islamism put forth by Sheri Berman "the belief that Islam should guide social and political as well as personal life" (Berman 2013: 257). This definition was meant to make an initial statement as to what the term implies using an Occam's Razor-approach to what I believe is the core of the ideology. While Berman's definition is useful as a starting point, it has certain issues when more closely examined. First, it is a rather broad definition which can include whole range of different understandings, and will probably include a larger part of those who only consider themselves moderately Muslim, and parties who are based on

conservative values taken from Islamic traditions, not Islamism. This is why Islamism, if understood as a general term, is so inclusive of groups and movements with widely different aims and means. While they certainly share a comparable approach to the division (or lack of) between religion and state, there is little practical agreement between Iran, Al-Qaida and Saudi-Arabia on, for example, their relation to Sufism, *jihad*, or the finer points of how a society should function (Marshall 2005: 2) (Euben and Zaman 2009: 5-27). As such, while the definition addresses the key, solitary essence of groups and parties who call themselves Islamist, that Islam should regulate all of society, it fails to capture how and why Islamism is different from conservative Islamic tradition, or theological groups within the framework of Islam. If Berman's definition were the only one, we would have to include other, more religious, groups like Islam.net together with the Prophet's Ummah in our conclusion, because of their preference for a conservative Islamic lifestyle. The key to Berman's definition is the use of the words "belief" and "guide". These are simply not concrete or decisive enough to make a clear cut between cases in an ideological world. One might certainly believe *sharia* should guide your social or political life; one could probably presume that most imams or religious conservatives hold such opinions, which indeed they do (Elgvin 2011). But conservative religious clergymen are not necessarily Islamists. What we seek to understand is not the effect of an individual's level of religious fundamentalism on their preferred political outcomes, but what constitutes and differentiates Islamists from other related political ideologies.

In this chapter, I will therefore present my own working definition of Islamism, and what it contains of ideological components. I will build on the work of Bassam Tibi (2012), Mozaffari (2007), Sørensen (2012), and Euben and Zaman (2009) when discussing the ideological framework of Islamism, as well as Marshall (2005) and Schwartz (2005) on radical *sharia*-law. I have chosen to split the chapter in three parts; first the history, definition and how Islamism differs from Islam, followed by what we are looking for when examining the Prophet's Ummah, and at last a concluding remark on contemporary state of Islamism with a short presentation of where other Islamist groups are in the ideological universe. The history section will include a presentation

of three central theorists and two groups in the Islamists world, Hassan al-Banna's and Sayyid Qutb's Muslim Brotherhood, Abu Ala Mawdudi's Jamaat-i-Islami. Then I will identify the four major components of Islamism and see how other groups fit into this.

3.1 What is "Islamism"?

3.1.1 Defining Islamism

So how may one alternatively define Islamism if one wishes to be more precise when dealing with it as an ideology rather than a broader political standpoint? I propose two definitions of Islamism to be examined for the purpose of our analysis of the Prophet's Ummah; one from Euben & Zaman (2009) and another from Mozaffari (2007). The first one is

“... contemporary movements that attempt to return to the scriptural foundations of the Muslim community, excavating and reinterpreting them for application to the present-day social and political world” (Euben & Zaman 2009: 4).

Here, the authors have included a more precise explanation of what exactly an Islamist want to accomplish; a return to a society based on the scriptural foundations of Islamic thought but a “modernized” version for use today. This rectifies many of the shortcomings of Bermans definition by explicitly refer to Islamism as an idea of returning to a mandated state and society as set out in the Koran and as exemplified in the early Muslim community. People, parties or politicians who simply want conservative policies based on their own religious beliefs are only understood to be Islamist if they belong in this category. This will therefore exclude those who simply want modern-day Islamic practices to guide the laws and regulations passed. The choice of words here is also worthy of note. Euben and Zaman uses “excavating” and “reinterpreting” in their definition, which has a particular relevance to Islamist thought. What they refer to is the Islamist belief of political and theological revival of what they perceive as the pure form of Islamic life and customs, often referred to as Salafism. The Quran, *Sunna* and *hadith*, is to be used as sources to implement Allah's

will and guidance of the human race as a state of absolute law. This point will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

The second definition I will examine is the one presented by Mehdi Mozaffari, an exiled Iranian professor living and working in Denmark at the moment. His explanation adds another prerequisite:

“[Islamism] is a religious ideology with a holistic interpretation of Islam whose final aim is the conquest of the world by all means” (Mozaffari 2007: 21).

Here, Mozaffari adds to his definition a whole another dimension of political belief, the intent on world-wide support and domination. Mozaffari explains this with the fact that Islamist groups, especially those who directly oppose both the West and today's Arabic countries, consider the current state of the world as one of failure. He states that:

“To Islamists, the existing world is both wrong and repressive. [...] because the existing world does not correspond to Islamic principles. Islam as a political power is no longer as predominant as it used to be in the past. The world is also considered repressive because non-Muslims occupy what the Islamists consider to be Muslim territory (e.g. Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya) or because Muslims live under severe repression from their own (anti-Islamic) governments” (Mozzafari 2007: 23).

Mozzafari believes that a core understanding of the Islamist mind is that any Muslim living in today's world is living in a world where the heavenly mandate of Islam is being repressed, or in the case of today's Islamic states, expressed incorrectly. Following this, Islamists not only reject non-Muslims, but also the states currently “masquerading” as Islamic states. This ties in with Euben and Zamans understanding of how Islamists view their ideal society; Muslims today no longer live as they should, because they are no longer ruled by the laws and habits expressed by the prophets and his first, second, and third generation of followers.

The second part of his definition is also important. Islamists believe their ideology to be of value to the whole world. The religious dogmas they adopt are one of

completeness: the entire world and all of creation belongs to Allah, and therefore his word most is law for all mankind. Islamism's goal is global.

3.1.2 Islam and Islamism

It should be noted that the definitions above does not include any sort of theological arguments. In the general discourse, one sees far too many who talks about “radical Islam” or “fundamentalist Islam”, and claim they are equal descriptions of the same phenomenon. These are statements that make little sense to the students of the respective disciplines. Islamism is about a political order, while Islam is a spiritual belief. Islamism is “religionized” politics grown out of a specific interpretation of Islam (Tibi 2012:1). Some terms frequently used in relation to Islamism are Salafism and Wahhabism, but these have little to do with what Islamism is as a political ideology. First of all, Salafism and Wahhabism have been around much longer, and are a part of both the judicial tradition and the cultural history of Islam. Second, they constitute religious dogmas, i.e. they are descriptive as to how the religion Islam should be practiced. While it might be true that many, if not most, of the Islamist are Salafists or even Wahhabis religiously speaking, this is a fundamental religious belief, not an ideological issue (Euben and Zaman 2009: 19-20). This is my critique of how some who have studied the Prophet's Ummah, like Sveen and Wigen (2013) and to a lesser extent Holmer (2014), have used the term Salafi-jihadist when speaking about the Prophet's Ummah and people related to them, as well as Caldwell (2009) who seems to be of the mind that Muslims in general believe the same as Islamists do.

Central to the Islamists, as will be expanded upon later in chapter is the issue of believing today's Muslim communities are wrong and un-Islamic. Though they do not usually propose *takfir* on the other Muslims in their communities, they do hold the belief that liberal and secular interpretations of Islam is wrong, as shown in Euben and Zamans definition. Thus, to Islamist, the majority of Muslims, i.e. those who do not belong to the deeply conservative portions of Islam's theology like the Salafists and the Wahhabis, are considered to be enemies of the return of the Islamic State themselves, as well as the “correct” interpretation of *sharia*. Interestingly enough, this

creates a public discourse where there are multiple levels of people talking past each other. On one hand you have the general Muslim populace, who believe *sharia* to be Allah's guidance to a good life, and *jihad*, if even applicable to their daily life, be something internal, and on the other hand, you have both the Islamists and the misinformed general discourse which take *sharia* to be one thing and one thing only, and *jihad* to be of an external character. This chapter will show how clear these differences between these understanding of *sharia* and *jihad* are, by showing exactly what Islamists have taken the two to mean.

Furthermore, the religious state the Islamists seek to return is an invented tradition. The Islamist utopia is a relatively new invention; Islam has never had the kind of state that Islamists want. Their beliefs are characterized by wanting of a return of the sacred; which they believe are the answer to a two-folded crisis experienced in Muslim states; the normative opposition to the advancement of secular modernity, and the structural challenges related to failed development in many of the states (Tibi 2012: 2 and 163-164). Islamists carry the concept of a transnational Muslims *ummah*, and how there should be a *sharia*-ran state where this could flourish. However, this *sharia* they mention is one of their own making. The religionized political agenda thus becomes to create a state which is inherently connected to the dream of a *din-wa-dawla* existing on the premise that the Islamist *sharia* is adopted as the only true set of laws, but this type of state has never existed in Islamic history (Tibi 2012: 30-33). Also, to give most of these Islamists the benefit of being thought of as rightful theological authorities seem to be somewhat untrue (Hasan 2014).

For a more thorough read on the differences between the ideology of Islamism, the theological beliefs of Salafism and Wahhabism, and their relation to the Islamic faith, please see Tibi (2012) and Euben and Zaman (2009).

3.2 The History of Islamism

3.2.1 Hassan al-Banna and The Muslim Brotherhood

The modern version of Islamism is generally considered to have begun with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 (Sørensen 2012; Tibi 2012: 16; Hansen and Kainz 2007: 56). The Ottoman Empire was by many recognized as the last real Caliphate², and when it was dissolved following the First World War, it left a vacuum in both the political and the theological world. The Muslim Brotherhood, *al-Ihkwan al-Muslimum* in Arabic, started with a goal of remaking a “true” Caliphate for all Muslims to live in, a state that would follow the law of Allah to the letter. The Brotherhood’s founder, Hassan al-Banna, was both their leader and their first ideological theorist. Under his leadership, the group started out as activists, with the aim of creating a new and pure caliphate in accordance to Islam, and spread out across the Arabian Peninsula.

Al-Banna, originally a watchmaker and school-teacher, started his political life rather early. In 1919 he was active in strikes against the British rule in Egypt, and during his time as a student he frequently opposed Christian missionary activity in his country (Euben and Zaman 2009: 50). He graduated from Dar al-‘Ulum in 1927, and started working as an Arabic teacher. It was during this time that he started publically preaching about the necessity of reviving the true Islam. He was appalled by what he perceived as a materialistic and secular way of living that the British companies and soldiers living in the area had brought with them. The Muslims living there, he thought, had abandoned their Islamic virtue and adopted the Westerners moral decadence (Euben and Zaman 2009: 50). As such, he founded the Muslim Brotherhood, and worked through two decades until they had spread to almost all of the neighboring countries, both by preaching and by offering humanitarian help to those who suffered under the Egyptian regime. He established schools, brought

² A system of Islamic government led by a Caliph who was considered to be the political and religious successor of Muhammad, and therefore the leader of all Muslims.

electricity to villages, created health clinics and orphanages, and built mosques (Euben and Zaman 2009: 51).

Under his leadership, the Muslim Brotherhood grew to be a major political power in Egypt. By helping the needy, they built up both goodwill and support among the Egyptian populace, and during the Second World War, al-Banna ran for office. After being pressured by Wafdi, the leading nationalist party, he withdrew his candidacy, but managed to pressure the government into easing up on the Brotherhood and restrict prostitution and the distribution of alcohol. However, a few years after the war, the relationship between the brotherhood and the state worsened to the point that the brotherhood established a secret apparatus in order to defend its members from government oppression (Euben and Zaman 2009: 52). From there, things quickly escalated: first the prime minister of Egypt, Nuqrashi Pasha, issued a proclamation in 1948 which dissolved the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization, for which he was assassinated by one of its members shortly thereafter. The next prime minister decided al-Banna was now a threat, and had him shot down and killed on February 12, 1949 (Euben and Zaman 2009: 52).

Through his work as a leader in the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Banna wrote letters and pamphlets where he diagnosed and concluded on many of the leading thoughts of Islamists today. He presented the West and its rise to power as a victory of the materialistic, and the epitome of moral bankruptcy. To oppose this corruption, he envisioned Islam as a way of life or a religio-political imperative to be followed (Euben and Zaman 2009: 52). The reason that Islam and Islamic countries were struggling socially and economically were because of the abovementioned western influence, but also because of the inability and helplessness of the current religious authorities. To him, the Muslim world was split in multiple camps by indifference and sectarianism (Euben and Zaman 2009: 52). He once said about the brotherhood:

“Our mission is one described most comprehensively by the term ‘Islamic’, though this word has a meaning broader than the narrow definition understood by people generally. We believe that Islam is an all-embracing concept which regulates every

aspects of life, adjudicating on every one of its concerns and prescribing for it a solid and rigorous order” (Lia 1998: 75, cited in Sørensen 2012: 28).

Furthermore, he argued that for the Islamic state to be reformed, a different approach than simply accepting the Western hegemony must be used. In his perhaps most famous piece of writing, the pamphlet “Toward the Light”, he wrote:

“The leadership of the world was at one time entirely in the hands of the East, then it fell to the West after the rise of the Greeks and Romans. After that, the Prophetic eras of Moses, Christ , and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all) brought it back to the East for a second time, but then the East fell into its long sleep, and the West enjoyed a new rebirth. It was Allah's Sunnah which does not fail to manifest itself and the West inherited leadership of the world. But lo and behold! It was tyrannical and unjust, insolent, misguided, and stumbling blindly, all it requires is a strong Eastern power to exert itself under the shadow of Allah's banner, with the standard of the Qur'an fluttering at its head, and backed up by the strong soldiers of unyielding faith; then you will see the World living under the tranquility of Islam, and on the lips of everyone will be the following slogan:

“Praise be unto Allah who guided us to this. for truly we would not have been guided if Allah had not guided us”” (Euben and Zaman 2009: 59).

Al-Banna urged the people and the leadership in the East to work together for the revival of the Islamic *ummah*. An allegiance to such an *ummah* would not be defined by territory or ethnic diversities, but by faith (Euben and Zaman 2009: 54). This was, to al-Banna, crucial, and he founded the Brotherhood as an instigating agent of bringing this change about. Perhaps the most interesting is the ending chapter of “Toward the Light”, where the Brotherhood lists their demands of the respective government and royal families. The list is split into three parts labeled “Political, judicial, and administrative”, “Social and Educational”, and “Economic”, and all together contains 50 suggestions of how a society and government should behave and function. The entire list can be viewed in Euben and Zaman (2009: 74-78), but I have chosen to highlight a few of them:

“First: Political, judicial, and administrative:

1. An end to party rivalry, and a channeling of the political forces of the nation into a common front and a single phalanx.
2. A reform of the law, so that it will conform to Islamic legislation in every branch.
3. A strengthening of the armed forces, and an increase in the number of youth groups – the inspiration of the latter with zeal on the bases of Islamic jihad.
4. A strengthening of the bonds between all the Islamic countries, especially the Arab countries, to pave the way for a practical and serious consideration of the matter of the departed Caliphate.
5. The diffusion of the Islamic spirit throughout all departments of the government, so that all its employees will feel responsible for adhering to Islamic teachings.
6. The surveillance of the personal conduct of all its employees, and an end to the dichotomy between the private and professional spheres.

[...]

Second: Social and educational:

1. Conditioning the people to respect public morality and the issuance of directives fortified by the aegis of the law on this subject; the imposition of severe penalties for moral offense.

[...]

14. The confiscation of provocative stories and books that implant the seeds of skepticism in an insidious manner and newspapers that strives to disseminate immorality and capitalize indecently on lustful desires.

[...]

26. Consideration of ways to arrive gradually at a uniform mode of dress for the nation.
27. An end to the foreign spirit in our homes with regard to language, manners, dress, governesses, nurses, etc., with all these to be Egyptianized, especially in upper-class homes.

All these are examples both of what the Brotherhood believed was wrong about society, but also how they wanted to fix it. Along with these, the remaining claims also wanted to forbid dancing and to close “morally undesirable ballrooms and dance halls”, prohibit men and women from sitting together, to “instruct women in what is proper”, and in addition to the listed ban on books deemed unfit for society, examine and exclude songs, movies and lectures with potential immoral messages (Euben and Zaman 2009: 75-77). It was also the Brotherhoods prerogative to demand the complete rebirth of what they perceived was the Islamic way of living. Especially two requests are worthy of discussion: number 3 and 6.

Number 3 states that Egypt should strengthen the military and increase the number of youth groups, and that these inspiration for such youth groups should be “on the bases of Islamic Jihad” (Euben and Zaman 2009: 75). This was not only to minimize the western influence and make it clear that Egypt were capable to run and defend itself, it was also a thorough solution on how to make the young of the nation grow up with the right set of mind. This control over what the young were taught to believe was also one of the main reasons for the Brotherhood’s expansion, as they implemented this in the schools and after-school activities they ran.

Number 6 is another demand that is central in order to understand the Brotherhood’s view on government, Islam and social life. Everyone who worked for the government was to be put under surveillance in order to control and look after their behavior. He called for an “an end to the dichotomy between the private and professional spheres”. This might be a proposed solution to what he believed was corruption in the Egyptian government, but when you look at it with the other demands in mind, the picture changes. While fighting corruption is certainly an important thing to do, especially in a state like Egypt in the early 20th century, it is also clear that this surveillance of employees will also serve a different purpose: to establish control and check for non-Islamic behavior, like the one they are banning in the other points mentioned above.

For al-Banna, the political stance of the Brotherhood was one of completeness. There is no in-between when it came to living in accordance to Allah and Islam. The answer

was what many refer to as a revivalist approach or a fundamental change from the new to the proven and good old (Utvik 2006: 148). The “perfect” way of life was how the Prophet Muhammad had lived, and society had to find back to these roots. These ideas would later be expanded upon by al-Bannas contemporary partner, Sayyid Qutb.

3.2.2 Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb is perhaps the most influential Islamist theorist of the early 20th century, if not of all time. If al-Banna was the political leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb were their main ideological preacher (Euben and Zaman 2009: 129). He is one of two, the other being Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi who will be presented in the next part of this chapter, of which Bassam Tibi (1998: 28) proclaims to be the most prominent Islamists in history. Though he started out as a somewhat secular public worker and educator, his interest in Islam and politics fully developed after he spent two years in the US in order to study. This is where many attribute his change after he witnessed the American society and its frivolous, as he saw it, way of life (Hansen and Kainz 2007: 57). When he returned to Egypt, he became an active member in the Brotherhood.

Qutb wrote many influential texts and books that were read both by his contemporaries and people today. His magnum opus was his commentary on the Quran, “In the Shade of the Quran”, of which eight volumes have been translated into English. He also wrote shorter pieces like “Islam. The Religion of the Future” and “Islam. The True Religion” (Hansen and Kainz 2007: 58). Still, he is mostly famous for another book, published in 1964, which would go on to influence Islamist groups even today.

After being imprisoned by the Nasser-regime in 1954 for his alleged involvement in an attempt to take the life of the president, and where he was systematically tortured, Qutb started writing what would become the book “Ma'alim fi al-Tariq”, or “Signposts Along the Road”, more commonly known as “Signposts” (Euben and Zaman 2009: 130). An alternate translation is “Milestones”, and both are frequently used. When he was finally brought to court in order to answer for his alleged murder-attempt on

Nasser, this book was frequently referred to as a part of the evidence against him, which ultimately made him a martyr to many conservative or fundamentalist Muslims. “Signposts” is split into 13 different chapters where Qutb makes his case both as to why the West and the Soviets are corrupt and is, by their political extension, corrupting the world with its global hegemony, and why Islam is the answer mankind need to avoid complete moral and corporal destruction (Qutb 2004). Indeed, the very first sentence in “Signposts” is “Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice”, and the first paragraph is dedicated to explain how humanity has lost the values one need to prosper, and that this is why they are now in decline (Qutb 2004: 3). He refers to this state of being as *jahiliyya*, meaning living in ignorance of divine guidance. The word *jahiliyya* is taken from Islamic and Quranic traditions and may roughly be translated to “age of ignorance”, which is used to reference to the Arabic world pre-Islam (Hansen and Kainz 2007: 58). “Signposts” is still considered to be one the most important works for Islamists all over the world. Even to such an extent that it is compared to “Mein Kampf” and “The Communist Manifesto” in terms of ideological importance (Sørensen 2012: 182).

Qutb’s greatest contribution was his complete analysis on how the world had gone wrong, and what the remedy for this should be. His beliefs were more or less the same as al-Banna, but Qutb’s talent for writing gave them a much larger impact on the civil society than they had had before (Sørensen 2012: 181). His view on the world was simple. Both the Americans and the Soviets, who he considers the most influential political and social powers at the time, are propagating two wrongful conceptions of society and its functions. Theirs was a world of decadence and material wealth which would only turn humanity to conflict and moral decay. To Qutb, both western liberal democracy and capitalism, and Marx’s communism were in decline because of their focus on material gains and expansion, as well as their godless and modern way of life. According to Qutb, only Allah could make laws, and any man attempting to make laws himself would be guilty of heresy, because he thought he could set himself on the same level as Allah (Qutb 2004: 8).

As such, Qutb envisioned and explained what he believed a society should look like and do. To Qutb, Islam, if interpreted and executed correctly, would usher mankind into a perfect state of being, as they finally would fulfill the divine mandate given to them by Allah through his prophet Muhammad. He upheld the idea that only those who truly commit to Islam in their heart and soul will be honored with an acceptance into paradise after their death. This commitment to Allah would also save mankind by establishing the perfect worldly political system, as designed for man by Allah himself. The most insistent suggestions were to incorporate the set of laws from the Quran straight into the societies of Muslims, and to actively wage both physical and ideological war on the enemies and traitors of Islam (Qutb 2004: 32-38). Especially in his insistence of creating an *ummah* which lived under *sharia* in a purely as-is manner, can one see how his view of man's involvement in lawmaking as one of a purely platonic relationship. There would, and could not, be any interpretation done on the Quran and its content, just acceptance of its laws as Allah's will. This anti-revisionism, or anti-intellectualism, meant that he not only rejected the chosen enemies in Western democracy and the USSR, he also claimed all changes made to the understanding of the Quran, and *fiqh*, made the general Muslim populace and its *ulama* wrong. Any reflection on the correct understanding of the Quran would lead to discussion and thus away from the true objective, which is of a practical nature (Hansen and Kainz 2007: 60). The word of Allah is to be read and carried out, not debated on. Only by accepting this truth, and by extension this as one's role in life, would an individual become truly free.

To Qutb, as is apparent when one reads "Signposts", is that *sharia*, Islam, and Allah are truly perfect, and the basis of his ideology. As Hansen and Kainz (2007: 58) states:

Qutb's political ideology can be summarised [sic] in three steps: The starting point is a fundamental critique of the present conditions as a reversed world order, in which man is rejecting God's laws (*jahiliyya*); the struggle between good (Islam) and evil (*jahiliyya*) is the driving force behind human history; the means to fight the currently prevailing *jahiliyya* is the *jihad*.

In the same vein as al-Banna, he arrived on the conclusion that the non-Muslims of the world should either be converted or destroyed. To him there were only two camps of people, or two states of being, one of the *ummah* which was to be the Muslims living in and for an Islamic state, and that of *jahilyya*, which were both sinners and enemies of the *ummah*. There is no in between. Thus, Qutb advocated a continued *jihad* against the world of *jahilyya*. Another thing Qutb presented was that this conflict with *jahilyya* was a “War of Ideas” between *iman*, which means belief, and *kufur*, which means unbelief (Tibi 2012: 8). He wrote in one of his pamphlets:

“The battle between the believers and their enemies is in its substance a fight over religious dogma and absolutely nothing else. [...] It is not a political or an economic conflict, but in substance a war of ideas: either true belief or infidelity is to prevail” (Qutb, cited in Tibi 2012: 8).

This portrayal is the key to understanding the common ground between his two main descriptive ideas.

Qutb’s views have been of major importance to many of the contemporary Islamist organizations. The reason for this is three folded: Firstly, his texts provided an intellectual justification for an extreme anti-Western sentiment on both a cultural and political level. Secondly, he provides a thorough reasoning for establishing an Islamic society based on *sharia*, and presents this in as a way of liberation for Muslims. And thirdly, he justifies a overthrowing of all of the world’s governments, also those controlled by Muslims, by the means of a holy war or struggle (Zimmerman 2004: 223).

As such, Qutb influenced many groups and organization beyond Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood. One example is Ayman al-Zawahiri, who founded the terror organization Tanzim al-Jihad, also known under the name Egyptian Islamic Jihad, an organization which fought against Nasir’s secular pan-Arabism, before he fled to Pakistan in 1985 (Hansen and Kainz 2007: 57). Another is the infamous leader of Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, who studied at the University of Jedda in Saudi Arabia, where he was a student of Qutb’s brother, Muhammad Qutb (Hansen and Kainz 2007:

57). A third who adopted his world view was Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj. Inspired by the writings and ideas Qutb represented, Faraj published his famous “The Neglected Duty” in 1977, which urged Muslims to privately and individually engage in *jihad* with the ultimate goal of creating a worldwide Caliphate (Baran 2004:8).

3.2.3 Abul Ala Mawdudi

Abul Ala Mawdudi is the other main Islamist theorist, according to Tibi (1998: 28). He was an Islamic scholar, imam, and the founder of the political party Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, a party that is still active today (Sørensen 2012: 176). Mawdudi’s view on Islam and society was one of in which the two was inseparable. He was convinced that the true application of Islam was to incorporate it into a full Islamic State, where the religious laws were the same as the state’s law. Such an Islamic State would show the world how perfect Islam was, and be a pinnacle of “human well-being” (Sørensen 2012: 176). To Mawdudi, this was what the Prophet Muhammad himself had created when he first assembled the first generation of Muslims. He wrote that the goal of Jamaat e-Islami was establishing and witnessing to the totality of Islam (Sørensen 2012:176).

Mawdudi is responsible for many of the main points as to how this Islamic state would be. First, the society would be based on a firm and shared belief among the subjects, and not fragile and random factors such as race, skin color or existing boundaries (Sørensen 2012: 177). The Islamic state would be a state where the residents chose to be, and where they lived following a contract with Allah. Second, this state would follow the Islamic *sharia* in its complete form. This is a central point regarding how Islamists picture their ideal state. Mawdudi claimed that it is man who understands *sharia* wrong when he debates certain points of it on a case by case basis. *Sharia* is a complete set, and must be followed as such. To him, this was the fallacy of other Islamic nations and communities. True *sharia* was all the laws, but also all the responsibilities. For example, if someone steals, *sharia* dictates that the person’s hand is to be cut off. This, however, would only be the case in the fully developed Islamic society where the Islamic State already provided its citizens with the basic necessities

they needed, the wealthy paid the obligatory tax that would go to the poor, and so on. In this society, there would be no need for thievery. A person who still chooses to steal, not to survive, but for greed, must be punished harshly (Sørensen 2012: 178). This would also be true for other crimes, such as adultery. Punishing someone for having sex outside of marriage, or cheating on one's spouse is, according to *sharia*, punishable by a hundred lashes for someone who is not married, and stoning to death for someone who is married. Such punishment would only be applied in a true Islamic State, where public festivities for men and women were illegal, and women were not painted and brought out to the pleasures of the crowd (Sørensen 2012: 178). He continues on this in a very similar vein to al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood, by claiming that his society would not contain any of nude pictures, vulgar books, songs, and movies. When people were not living in what he referred to as "filthy societies where sexual frivolities were flourishing", they would not need to be unfaithful or ruled by lust, and as such, *sharia* would control their behavior (Sørensen 2012: 178-179).

He disagreed, however, with Qutb on how this state should become reality. Mawdudi believed that Muslims should first try to establish an Islamic state within their own territories, by peaceful persuasion. He stressed that the implementation of the political principles laid down in the Quran required a state structure, and that this Islamic state will be a precursor to the Caliphate (Osman 2010: 602). Nonetheless, he also defended the use of violence and physical struggle through *jihad*, but only in regards to situations of "oppression" and where there were identified "true enemies of Islam (Sørensen 2012: 180). The primary way of achieving the Islamic State must be through creating it from inside.

One last thing that differentiated Mawdudi from Qutb, was that he accepted the existence of other minorities within the Islamic State. Where Qutb saw the world of *jahiliyya* as one who could never exist alongside the true Muslims, Mawdudi reluctantly proclaimed that minorities would be both accepted and permitted to live by their own customs. It is, however, debatable how much freedom they would have, and exactly how they would be allowed to coexist in his Islamic State. They would have to

follow the law of *sharia* if this was the law of the state, and they would have no power over the government of the land if the Muslims were in majority (Sørensen 2012: 180). Still, this acceptance of non-Muslim minorities are in a somewhat opposition to Qutb's total rejection, and shows that even in an Islamist discourse, there is a theoretical tradition for the possibility of a non-Islamic community in the Islamic State.

Where al-Banna problematized the influence of the West and the need for Islamic revival, and Qutb defined the world of *jahiliyya* and Islam as one of pure conflict, Mawdudi were the one to influence Islamism with regards to how the ideal society would be. His ideas of the totality of the state, the responsibilities it has under *sharia*, and so on laid the theoretical foundations for how Islamists today claim their proposed Caliphate will look like. Mawdudi's analysis of *sharia* is also one of the foremost influences as to its inherent perfection, according to Islamists, if it is fully incorporated as a system of law.

3.3 The Ideological Components of Islamism

To understand what Islamism contains is to understand the arguments and proposed solutions of the theorists presented in the last chapter. All of them laid the groundwork for what we today refer to as one ideology. Building on the definitions of Mozaffari, and Euben and Zaman, I propose the following ideas to be the central components of Islamism, and thus the main beliefs I will look for when analyzing the Prophet's Ummah:

(1). The belief that the contemporary Muslim world is decadent and has fallen out of touch with its true religious calling because of a civilizational and ideological war with other cultures, particularly the West.

(2) *Sharia* law, akin to the one the Prophet Muhammad and the first generations of Muslims was presented with, must be the guiding set of rules for both religious, political and social life.

(3) The need for establishing, or re-establishing, a true Islamic State (Caliphate), ruled in accordance to the aforementioned *sharia*, for Muslims to live in and promote Islam as a perfect system.

(4) It is the duty of all Muslims to make this happen, and to implement the will of Allah in their lives. Those who do not promote or struggle for this are not true Muslims.

These four contains all of the previously mention views made apparent by al-Banna, Qutb, Mawdudi, and Faraj. The descriptive parts of the ideology are that of how the world is today, and who is responsible for this state of affairs, both of which I have included in the first component. Here, the central belief is that Muslims themselves have detached themselves from the true spirit of Islam, and adopted traditions and ideas from *kufir*. This is where the blame lies with both the current Islamic theological leadership, which promotes a peaceful partnership with other cultures. Furthermore, the influence from other civilizations are imperialistic in character, whether it has come as a result of lost wars or other physical confrontations against imperialist states, or through a theoretical war of ideas, where Islam is forced to adopt non-Islamic customs and traditions. It is nevertheless the believed case that Islam has turned away from Allah's will and guidance by changing or otherwise not live up to his plan for mankind.

This leads us over to the second component, that which relates to *sharia* and how it is used in modern day society. I will spend some time discussing this aspect, as it is perhaps the single most important component. This is because it is the main normative argument made by Islamists: that to live in accordance with *sharia* is to live in both religious and political perfection. *Sharia* is generally considered to be guidelines as to how a Muslim should live; indeed the very name translates to "the path" or "the way". It includes both rules and practices for marriage, economics and criminal law, and instructions on how a Muslim should behave in matters of spiritual and moral nature, such as praying (Marshall 2005:1). Thus, to Muslims, the way westerns speak of *sharia* as only including the stoning of adulterous women or cutting the hand off

thieves, sound rather strange and faulty. *Sharia* has several different schools, multiple theological understandings, and is not, as many believe, a universally agreed upon set of laws and regulations all Muslims must adhere to (Tibi 2012:160).

Islamist has taken Qutb's stance on the influence of *jahilyyya* to demand a complete return to what they perceive to be a perfect state of Islamic *sharia*; that which the first three generations of Muslims lived by (Euben and Zaman 2009:19). This is where Mozaffari's "holistic interpretation" and Euben and Zaman's "return to the scriptural foundations" are the key words of choice. To Islamists, *sharia* must be taken in full, without alteration or restructuring. They adopt Qutb's words of a totality of perfection, that while it might not all make sense when debated word for word, the completeness of it, and how it works when executed in fullness, is how Allah himself meant it to be used. This "extreme" version of *sharia* rejects all other schools of law who has evolved through the centuries in favor of what they believe is a "pure" version (Tibi 2012: 158-161). Any alteration to *sharia* is an attempt to be better than Allah, and that is one of the highest forms of heresy. This interpretation states that the only *sharia* worth recognizing is the *sharia* defined and used by the first, second and third generation of Muslims (Mozaffari 2007: 22-23). They adhere to a *sharia* they believe is pure and unaltered. Modern day schools of *sharia*, they claim, are influenced by Western philosophers and judicial tradition. Through the centuries, this influence from other cultures and religious practices has warped what was the original intention of the law; being a set of divinely instruction as to how society and human life should function. This is non-negotiable. *Sharia* was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad as a complete and finished set, not something meant to be interpreted and changed by "mere" men (Qutb 2004: 95-101; Marshall 2005: 1-6).

The Islamist version of *sharia* is the one applied by the Muslim Brotherhood, and multiple international Islamist organizations such as Al-Qaida and its supporters, is close to what Marshall (2015) refers to as the Wahhabist-*sharia*. The Wahhabist-*sharia* is to some extent incorporated in Saudi-Arabia, as the royal family has been closely allied with the Wahhabist movements. Although they have, in the more recent years, liberalized some of their policies, especially regarding women, they still hold

true to the interpretation of *sharia* as absolute. Stoning of adulterers and gays, for example, is a common occurrence, often publically (Schwartz 2005: 95-101). While Saudi-Arabia is rejected as a true Islamic State by Islamists because of their close cooperation with the West, they do represent a version of law that Islamists want to implement. This type of *sharia* is more or less the case of how the law has been practiced in the newly formed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. IS has posted both videos and pictures of themselves online where they carry out this type of justice, often citing the Quran and *sharia* directly while carrying out their judgement. So when Islamist talks about *sharia*, it is this *sharia* they are the closest to talking about.

The third component is the proposed solution to the problems mentioned in 1, which is necessary in order to execute and maintain the perfected *sharia*, no.2. This is also what Tibi (2012: 31) believe is the *conditio sine qua non* of Islamism. The return of the Caliphate is to Islamists of crucial importance, as it serves both as a revival of Allah's perfect system for mankind, and the instrument to show the world the entirety and perceived perfection of Islam (Tibi: 31-33). This state is also where the Islamists show their approach to the world dominion of their ideology, since the state here is not one of mere boundaries as states are usually defined. This is the state of the *Ummah*, which transcends race, nationalities, and other such human inventions (Tibi 2012: 32-36 and 39-45). The Islamic state will happen the way Islamists want it to happen, follow the law they want to implement and so on. It is the epitome of Islamist achievement.

The fourth is the struggling, of which is generally referred to as *jihad* or jihadism. However, I have chosen to use the word struggling rather than fighting. This is because temporary Islamism is split when it comes to the understanding of the place of *jihad*. Some agree with Qutb, that *jihad* is in essence a necessary violent struggle, while others still claim that as long as one can achieve one's goal, the struggling can both be peaceful and within the current system. How a group views this is not the deciding factor of whether they ought to be called an Islamist group or not, but it is an interesting variable to note, not only because of its practical importance when dealing with such groups, but also because it shows the different incarnations of Islamists

theory in practice. As the next part of this chapter will show, this is the source of the major disagreement between contemporary Islamist groups.

To conclude on this, Islamism is in essence a gathering of the following beliefs: The main descriptive ideas of Islamists are that the world, and especially the Islamic parts of it, is suffering because they have turned away from Allah and his *sharia*. They have done this because there is an ongoing war, both physical and ideological, between Muslims and *kuffar*. This, together with the normative idea that people should live by *sharia* as it was presented and preached by Muhammad and his first generation of Muslims, leads to their practical solution of reviving and recreating an Islamic state. This state will follow *sharia* to the letter, and therefore be a perfect utopian for mankind. Different types of struggle, or *jihad*, i.e. both violent and non-violent, are acceptable in order to bring this state about.

3.4 Islamism today

In the last decades, groups, organizations, and political parties that fall under the umbrella of Islamism have continued to thrive, though they have become more diffused in how they operate. Islamism is today used to explain and define everything from pure terrorist-organizations like Boko Haram in Nigeria to the leading political party in Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (AKP). These Islamists have more or less used Qutb, al-Banna and Mawdudi as ideological forbearers. Mawdudi's vision of an Islamic state, together with al-Banna's insistence that both the poor conditions of Muslim states and the infidelity he witnessed were brought to them by the West and other foreign influences, have been the stepping stones of which they accepted Qutb's argumentation that the solution was to be found in a religionization of politics, and the fulfillment of a true *din-wa-dawla* free from the influence of *jahilyya*. From this, hundreds of groupings, organizations and parties have emerged building on these ideas as a set of common denominators.

This part is meant to give a short introduction to some of the current Islamist groups that exist today. This is to give the reader a basis for comparison when we look at the Prophet's Ummah.

However, what Qutb, Mawdudi and al-Banna represents is the background for what we today call Islamism, not everything it entails. As Sørensen (2012: 174) points out: ideologies and political organizations are not static. They change, adopt different priorities, reacts to whatever internal or external stimuli they face, or go through other such alterations. What the aforementioned theorists put into place was the grand ideas of Islamism: al-Banna with his analysis of the Muslim world as decadent and westernized, and as such had left the path of Islam of which they ought to follow; Mawdudi's wanting of a true Islamic State where Islam and *sharia* was given both its rightful place and followed to the letter; and Qutb with his portrayal of an ongoing conflict between jahilyya and the believers, a conflict of both a physical and ideological character which could, and most, be won through the collective action of *jihad* and the fulfillment of the Muslim dogma. Before we move on to the Prophet's Ummah, I want to present a few other incarnations of Islamist groups and organizations, to serve as both a point of reference, and as examples of different diverges within the ideological family.

Most of the various incarnations of contemporary Islamism can roughly be divided into three divisions, dependent on how they organize themselves, and how they view the appropriate use of *sharia* and *jihad*. Some, like AKP in Turkey, the international Islamist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, or the current Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, are mostly operating in political parties or interest groups within democratic or semi-democratic systems, trying to influence the general populace through official public channels. To them, *sharia* law can be imported into legislation more or less through the current system of political structure. They usually adopt a conservative stance on societal manners, but generally abide by governmental rules and procedures. They reject *jihad* through terrorist attacks and other violent forms, but support to some degree or another civil disobedience (Vidino 2015: 7-11).

On the other end of the scale we have the various terrorist-groups operating around the globe. These can be violent insurgents like Boko Haram in Nigeria, or a larger network of both large and small groupings with a central leadership like Al-Qaida. To them, the founding of an Islamic State, one completely without non-islamic influence, can only be a reality if the current political system in the country or part of the world of which the group operates is completely re-written. This is the group that has taken Qutb's views on the separation of the *ummah* and *kuffar* to be of crucial importance. In order to rid the Muslims of foreign interference, one has to defeat and remove any constellation of what they perceive is non-Islamic. They might be doing this because of purely ideological reasons, or because of some external action that has forced the group into physical confrontations.

The third, and final, type of are pure non-governmental organizations, such as Islam4UK or Sharia4Belgium in Europe, which present themselves as interest groups on behalf of a religious view, or sometimes even as self-proclaimed religious entities. Though they are all referred to as Islamist, there are many differences between both the divisions mentioned here, and within-group variations. Such groups are what Vidino (2015) tries to explain in regards to their relationship with the two other classifications mentioned here. These groups are often treated as a springboard for people wanting to join the more extreme organizations, such as al-Qaida or the Islamic State. This is also the type of group the Prophet's Ummah is claimed to be a part of, being neither a registered political party nor an NGO (Vidino 2015: 5). There are quite a few similarities between the how these groups operate and how they fit in with the ideology of Islamism, and the divisions between them are not always clear-cut. For example, Islam4UK and the different Sharia4 groups have meetings with each other and invite guest speakers and lecturers from both each other and from third party organizations.

I have taken the liberty of including a short overview (Table 1) of how different Islamist groups and parties relate to the abovementioned ideological components. The data here is a summarized version of various studies done on the particular groups. The sources of the various groups are as follows: the Muslim Brotherhood's views are

from Tibi (2012: 16-18 and 205-209) and Trager (2011); al-Qaida from Sørensen (2012: 211-219); Hizb ut-Tahrir from Sørensen (2012: 211-219), Osman (2010) and Karagiannis (2013); Islam4UK from Vidino (2015); AKP from Tibi (2012); ISIS/ISIL is from Cronin (2015).

Table 1: Ideological components in Islamist groups today

| Group | Islam under pressure War/Ideological | Islamic State | Sharia | Violent Jihad |
|--------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Muslim Brotherhood | Yes, ideological | Yes | Direct | No |
| AKP (Turkey) | Yes, ideological | Yes | Inspired ¹ | No |
| Hizb ut-Tahrir | Yes, ideological | Yes | Direct | Partially ² |
| Islam4UK | Yes, both | Yes | Direct | Partially |
| Al-Qaida | Yes, both | Yes | Direct | Yes |
| ISIS/ISIL | Yes, both | Yes | Direct | Yes |

¹ Sharia as theoretical basis for all other law, but not a literal adoption

² Partially refer to those who defend the use of violence as sometimes necessary in *jihad*, without doing it themselves

What is particularly interesting is how these different Islamist parties and organizations view the use of *jihad* in order to achieve their goals. This is because of the inherent ambiguity of the term, and how it can be used to describe both an internal and external form of struggling or fighting, as described in 3.3. Parties who otherwise have accepted Qutb's visions and arguments about the necessity of actively opposing *jahilyyya* are more often than not opposed to include actual warfare or physical confrontations. Let us take, for example, the cases of Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Qaida. Both reject the secularity and modernity of the West, both work for a political state with *sharia* as a de facto constitution, and yet, they have a complete opposite view on the legitimate use of violence in order to further such aim. While al-Qaida has become

perhaps the most infamous terrorist-organization in history, and has declared even civilian targets as part of the conflict, Hizb ut-Tahrir operates more or less peacefully within Western societies, even going as far as condoning the violent actions of other Islamist groups, even though they share many of the sentiments. Even more difficult to pinpoint with regards to how they perceive violence as a part of *jihad* are groups like Islam4UK or Sharia4Belgium (Vidino 2015). Before they were banned in 2012, Islam4UK were led by Chaudry, an anti-western preacher who has defended the use of terror against the western military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, and even defended the murder of Bill Bygsby in London. Still, they never committed anything more extreme than the burning of the American flag themselves. Their support to violent *jihad* was purely vocal, though this vocal support seems to be more than enough to gather young men and women to their organization (Husain 2009).

These differences between parties, organizations, and NGOs, however, must not be mistaken for the groups or collectives wrongful placement by others under the umbrella of Islamism. While Al-Qaida and AKP are very different organizations, they are still Islamist, because their goal is an Islamic State ruled by the aforementioned *Sharia*. Now, it is time to see how the Prophet's Ummah fits into all of this.

4 The Ideas of the Prophet's Ummah

In order to answer my thesis, I have decided to divide this analysis in a few different parts. First, I will answer whether or not the Prophet's Ummah contain the core beliefs of an Islamist ideology at all, and how they are presented by the group. These are the ideas identified in chapter 3 "Islamism". It is somewhat difficult to establish these major overarching ideas in a correct chronological order, because they are so intertwined with each other, but here, they will be analyzed in the order they appear in the previous chapter.

In addition, I have included some of the more specific views of the group. I do this because most of these overarching normative and descriptive ideas will have a great influence on other underlying views and opinions the group holds, and it makes for an easier reading if these are mentioned in relation to its greater context, rather than as a single piece of information. This analysis will have little discussion about the points and what they mean, this will be covered in the next chapter. When citing a text or comment, I have chosen to highlight the important parts in order to make it easier to see the points of interests. All text presented here are of my own translation.

4.1 On Islam and the World

This first belief is split into two parts, one where we deal with the idea of a physical and ideological war on Islam from the non-believers, and the second one that other Muslims have removed themselves from true Islam they are supposed to follow.

1. The Islamic world is under siege from non-believers

This is the core identifiable belief held by Islamist groups, and the Prophet's Ummah is no different. This is a descriptive idea which identifies how the group believes the world of today works. In most of their press releases, the group explicitly states that they regard the non-Muslim world as enemies of Allah and the true Muslims. I mention this first because it is crucial to remember it when examining the other parts

of their ideology. It is because of this belief that they see the need to change the world (to follow *sharia*), and why they have chosen the method (*jihad*/jihadism) of doing so.

This idea of Islam being under attack is something Ubaydullah Hussain talks about in his interview with VG (Kleivan et. al 2014). Here, he is asked questions primarily about the Islamic state and the group formerly known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The interviewer wants to know what Hussain thinks about all the people fleeing the then newly formed state being peoples of other religions, such as the Yezidis, Shia-Muslims, and Christians, when Hussain explicitly has stated that such people would be under the protection of a true Islamic State. Hussain answers:

“I will tell you one thing: In the world today, there are two groups of people. We have the Muslims, who submit themselves to Allah, and believe that authority/sovereignty belongs only to Allah, and we have the infidels, be they Yezidis, or whatever religion they have; who believes that authority/sovereignty belongs to man and man-made laws. Of course, **there is an ongoing global fight against Islam and Muslims, a global war, ideologically and military.** It is not something new that the West use propaganda such as this... that women are being killed, that children are being killed [by ISIS]”.

After being pushed on the point by the journalist, he continues for a while talking about how Yezidis, Christians and Jews are allowed to live in the Islamic state as long as they pay *jizya*, a form of tax imposed on non-Muslim residents in an Islamic state, according to old Muslims customs. However, when asked about whether or not the Prophet’s Ummah was responsible for a car driving around in Oslo shouting pro-Islamic State slogans, Hussain continues on his views of the world today:

“It ought to be said that we Muslims are a peaceful people. We do not wish murders, we do not wish war, but we must defend ourselves if we are attacked. If you look at the world today, as it is today, then **Muslim lands are occupied, Muslims are being massacred, being jailed, and tortured without judgement or trial in various countries.** There is a global war against Muslims. We see in China where the Chinese are fighting Muslims. We see in Chechenia how communists are fighting Muslims.

We see in Burma where Buddhists are fighting Muslims, we see in Palestine where Jews are fighting Muslims, we see in Iraq and Kashmir where Hindus are fighting Muslims, and we see too this crusade against Islam and Muslims in among others Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, not to mention the drone-attacks who happens daily in North-Pakistan, Yemen and other Muslim Countries” (Kleivan et. al 2014).

To Hussain, this war of cultures seems to be one in which Muslims are on the receiving end of a great injustice. While he, and the rest of the Prophet’s Ummah, usually reserve their direct animosity for the West, it is clearly a more global phenomenon of Islam vs the rest than something solely between Western and Arabic nations. His references to various other conflicts indicate that he believes that an anti-Muslim attitude is transcendent of other inter-cultural conflicts, i.e., while other nations or cultures might disagree on a many features of international politics, they agree that Islam and Muslims are to be made victims or scapegoats. Thus, Islam exists under pressure from all sides, in a world bent on destroying them. Hussain also upholds that other cultures treat Muslims inherently different than others, and that they do not extend to them the same rights they do other peoples; they are exempt from basic human rights, for example, in being denied a trial when charged of criminal activities. When writing about foreign policies, the group states that:

“The Prophet Muhammad established in his time basic rights for prisoners of war, which are what one would call real human rights in contrast to today’s so-called human rights or the Geneva Convention **which does not apply to Muslims** as has been revealed in Abu Graib, and which continues today in among other Guantanamo Bay”

Furthermore, in another press release the group calls out to the American president Barack Obama to:

“give up on the despicable war they are waging on Muslims and Islam. [The Muslims] wants their land back so that the flag carrying their creed can once again fly **without the meddling of the heathen pigs**”(Profetens Ummah 2013A).

Especially the last part here is of note. In most other texts, the Prophet's Ummah refers to their portrayed enemies as either "infidels" or "imperialist". Other times, they simply speak of *kuffar* which lives in the world of *jahilyya*. While this is the only example of a pure dehumanization of their perceived enemies, it is interesting when combined with how Hussain, in his interview, are very keen on explaining that they pose no threat to people of other religions, as long as they accept the law of *sharia* and pay their *jizya*. More on this later, in the chapter: "On Sharia".

Another point the Prophet's Ummah is adamant about is that the Norwegian general populace, through their government and media, is a part of this war on Islam.

This belief of a war against Islam is not one made simply about the general affair of international politics, but also something that is applicable to a more local level. The Prophet's Ummah expands upon this war to be something that everyone takes part in, because of the governments they elect. In my examples, they mostly refer to the Norwegian populace, but the criticism in question is also applicable to other non-Muslim societies. For example, during the time when some of the Norwegian media speculated about internal problems and fighting within the group, the Prophet's Ummah released the following statement:

"The Prophet's Ummah will with this press release refute the lies that the Norwegian media has published in the later weeks about the group's disbandment. We do not expect anything else, as **they are a part of the crusade against Islam and Muslims**. Media, the Police, and the government will do their outmost in order to split the Muslim population" (Profetens Ummah 2013C)

In yet another titled "Our dear brother – Arfan Bhatti", they refer to the American intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 as an "assault", and states that the prime minister at the time, Kjell Magne Bondevik, "Waved enthusiastically when the Norwegian jet fighters took off to bomb refugees, wedding receptions, and funerals" (Profetens Ummah 2013D).

The same text also proclaims that the former Minister of Defence, Kristin Khron Devold: "... behaved like a young girl in love when she met Donald Rumsfeld, the

man who approved the use of torture, and let perverts and sadists have their way with prisoners”. Norway is also specifically mentioned, along with the USA and Great Britain, in their text “Utenrikspolitik” (Foreign Policy) as countries behind a brutal modern warfare (Profetens Ummah 2013E).

1b. This siege is also one of foreign ideology and traditions being forced upon Muslims from non-Muslim sources; a “War of Ideas”.

This concept of a siege on the Muslim world by others is also one of theological and theoretical nature, which falls in under what Bassam Tibi (2012: 8-10) refers to as a “War of Ideas” often held by Islamists. The Prophet’s Ummah relates to this especially in two of their texts labeled “Vestlig Utdanningssystem” (The Educational System of the West) and “Islamsk Utdanningssystem” (The Educational System of Islam) (Profetens Ummah 2013F; Profetens Ummah 2013G). In the first text, they state that the way education is handled today is in “direct opposition” to what Allah teaches you with regards to f. ex. evolution or thermodynamics. They also claim that under the Western system, the children will be taught that Islam is unimportant, and believe that:

“Islam will be taught as a **religion which degrades and oppresses innocents**” (Prophet’s Ummah 2013F).

Following this, according to the PU, schools are also guilty of misinformation:

“[in] your child’s religious studies-class, Islam will be considered an equal to Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism etc...” (Prophet’s Ummah 2013F).

From this, we can infer that the Prophet’s Ummah believe that not only will children not be taught what is “right” or in accordance to Allah’s will, but they will be given a false impression, interpretation, and understanding of both the religion of Islam and the importance of other cultures and theological beliefs relative to Islam. Nevertheless, it might be safe to say that they reject any education which does not uphold their own belief of Islam as above other religions.

When explaining how their own system would look like, they voice their opinion on how the current educational system in Muslim countries is controlled by the West, and thus why it needs to change:

“In the future Islamic State, schools, institutions and universities who has been established and ran by the foreign imperialists and their agents, like Aitcheson College, Lahore; St. Joseph’s School, Dhaka; St John’s Institution, Kuala Lumpur etc. will be closed. These are institutions that are deliberately sat up to implement young Muslim with non-Islamic ideas meant to show them the greatness and honor of the Western way of living” (Profetens Ummah 2013G).

To the Prophet’s Ummah, it seems, the educational system, as it works today, is one of imperialist origin with regards to the Islamic world. Young Muslims are believed to be victims of Western propaganda through their education, and thus made subservient of a non-Islamic way of thinking and living. Furthermore, this war of ideas is also intentional:

“And after the collaps of communism and socialism and after the so-called democracy had completely failed, so the only threat against their human-made laws, their human-made ideas, their human-made ideologies, that is sharia” (Profetens Ummah 2014C)

He also, in the same video, claim that the only reason USA intervned in Somalia, was so that they could stop Islam, the only remaining threat to the West and their ideas.

This leads us to the other part of the first component:

2. This influence has led to Muslims no longer living in accordance to Islam

According to the Prophet’s Ummah, there are quite a few ways this ideological and physical war on Islam has led the religion away from its roots. First, consider this passage from a text labeled “Islamic Law”

“The last remnants of the Islamic State were in fact demolished by the British and the French in what is today called Turkey, March 3rd, 1924. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran are in reality far away from full sharia, despite what many believe. **In reality most of these countries, including all the Arabic nations, has**

been strongly influenced by Western terms like democracy and freedom/liberty. This was forced upon them by Western nations like the US and Great Britain. These nations, together with other European nations, entered Muslim countries in a campaign of violence, threats and murders. They have tried hard to eliminate Islamic knowledge through the murders of hundreds of thousands of Muslims and their scholars”

However, when it comes to the denouncing of other Muslims, they are less public about the theological side of the debate than they are about the more practical side. While the group itself claims to be Salafist, they speak mainly about what this means, and seldom attack others, though one example is this, which is a statement from one of the members:

“The ideology of Al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden derives from the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet. (...) A person who differs from these beliefs differs from what the Prophet and the Quran taught him. Every Muslim is obliged to work for the liberation of an occupied territory. If they don’t, they are all sinners.” (Holmer 2014: 22)

This simply implies that all who do not follow the teachings of Al-Qaida, Bin Laden, and, one would assume, Anwar al-Awlaki, as he was the one who wrote most of the theoretical work in Al-Qaida. One of the few instances where they do declare other Muslims who does not agree with them as failures, is in their previous Facebook-group, where they debate IslamNet, another conservative youth group considered Salafist (Akerhaug 2013: 214). The following texts are both posts on that group, as well as e-mails sent to Islam.net, who write a couple of articles about them:

«IslamNet invistes and has invited speakers who **denies the obligation of Jihad**, and who are servants of kuffar in their manahej [an Islamic methodology], unknowing that their manhaj is in servitude to shaytan [Means: the Devil] and the West about separating Islam from the political [parts]. We don’t takfeer [sic] on these “ulama” because they are [...] useful idiots for kuffar, unknowing that they are working [the Wests] agenda.” (IslamNet 2013)

Mohyeldeen Mohammed continues in another post:

“Enthusiasts of IslamNet; What good has your despicable fitna-sect done for Ummat Muhammad [...]? **Your cult destroyed Khalifah, your cult split the Muslims, your cult spreads fitnah and hatred between Muslims, your cult is a messenger for kuffar and wants to see all Muslims subdue themselves for kuffar.** I wonder how the followers of this jadidiyyah-cult will answer for themselves on the Final Day” (IslamNet 2013)

Fitna means trial, and can be used to describe a time of strife or civil war. The implication here is that Islam.net is contributing to an inner conflict in Islam. The interesting choice of words here, though, is how much blame is being put on IslamNet for the status of the Islamic world today. While I won't go into details about the religious views of IslamNet, it is mainly conservative, and yet it seems like that is exactly why Mohyeldeen believes them to be one of the reasons for Islam's decline. Being held accountable for spreading civil strife and hatred between Muslim, and claimed to be messengers for *kuffar* speaks for a complete hostile attitude to what is one of the largest religious youth group in Norway. For more on the debate, the full text is available at Islam.net (2013).

This rejection of other Muslim groups are also apparent in the video “Al Wala wal Bara”, which they published on YouTube (Profetens Ummah 2014C). Here, they claim that the Norwegian government is trying to enforce the war of ideas by corrupting Islam:

“And that is why the Norwegian government has founded so-called Muslims organizations to work against radicalism, against extremism, against a literal interpretation of Islam. Against the full Islam as it is practiced and exposed [...] by Mohammed. And that is why we today have organizations like Minotenk. False organizations that gets a pat on the shoulder from the Norwegian government, [and] bills and coins in their pockets. Why? To change Islam's authenticity from inside. [...] We find so-called wise imams, who work for democracy. Who work in order to promote man-made laws, ideologies and ideas. And we find mosques, who invite members of the government to hold speeches so they can spread their twisted man-made ideologies and ideas”.

Minotenk is a Norwegian think-tank supported by the government to both study and help minorities in Norway. One of their advisors is a previous member of the Prophet's Ummah. Clearly, they are not considered to be representing the true Islam, only a fabricated version in order to get grants, and are also branded as traitors out to change Islam into something else.

One last note on the relationship between the Prophet's Ummah and other Muslims is that they consequently refer to Muslims in general when talking about themselves. Both in their internal and external discourse, they always speak about "What Muslims want", and "We Muslims must". This is especially noticeable in their texts on theprophetsummah.com and VG's interview with Hussain (Kleivan et. al 2014). As for what it means, it is simply a continuing of what Tibi (2012: 7), and to a certain degree Holmer (2014) encounters when dealing with Islamists: They truly believe themselves to be "real" Muslims, and fighting for what all Muslims should be fighting for.

2b. Democracy is a part of this war and a practice of *shirk*.

The proclaimed "War of Ideas" has led countries away from Allah, by influencing them to accept democracy as a type of government. They continue on expanding upon this point of view in another text labeled *shirk*, which is an Islamic term for the sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism, by saying that:

"One of the most manifested and openly used form of *shirk* today is the presence of human made laws, which is a direct insult to Allah's monopoly as the Lawmaker [sic]. Therefore, it has been custom to obey and follow laws and regulations made by humans instead of following Allah's sharia.

The Muslim society has been manipulated to participate in democracy, by implementing laws and regulations that goes against sharia or seeking judgement from arbitrators who does not govern from sharia. As such, they refer their problems to the United Nations and Nato. [...]

It is therefore important that we give the right [to be the only lawmaker] back to Allah by establishing Allah's laws on this earth. **No Muslim shall recognize anyone but**

Allah as the Lawmaker [sic]. [...] As such, we Muslims cannot be manipulated to accept anything that might lead to Shirk”.

Again, the Prophet’s Ummah has identified that Muslims have been systematically taught to turn away from the “true” Islam, and manipulated into accepting human rule. To the Prophet’s Ummah, any Muslim who confers with state officials in democratic countries or obey laws not coming directly from *sharia*, are committing *shirk*. The blame lies with non-Islamic interference with both the schools, but also with the secular traditions adopted from democratic societies. It is interesting to note that PU refers to democracy as manipulating and inherently wrong, and therefore making all Muslims who participate in election, whether they simply vote or run for office, as committers of *shirk*. Even simply living here has been deemed unfit for Muslims according to the Prophet’s Ummah, as they declare Norway as *dar al-kufr*, meaning “the land of the infidels” (Akerhaug 2013: 89).

3. The world is split between the believers and the non-believers

In a video of Mohyeldeen Muhammad published on YouTube by the Prophet’s Ummah on November 12, 2012, allegedly filmed in Syria, he directly addresses the Norwegian people and government:

It is not us Muslims who are the uncivilized barbaric terrorist, but yourselves who are barbarians, unclean, uncivilized and godless creatures, who together with your allies have terrorized and oppress innocent Muslims since the fall of the Islamic Khilafah. You are infidel kuffar, the worst of all creatures who walks this earth. [...] and let it be known, that the Islamic ummah is an ummah of victory and honor. An ummah of jihad and martyrdom, who will never bow or given in to your evil, unfairness, and falseness. **There are no compromises between us and you.** Your barbarian civilization and democracy has no place on this earth.

To conclude this part, I have summarized the most important ideological components:
a) The true Islamic State and the original Muslim beliefs, have been demolished by the West and its war on Islam, b) contemporary Arabic nations are not working in accordance to Islam because this influence, and c) opposing true *sharia* has been one

of the main goal of the West in their crusades against the Muslims. This leads us to the second component, *sharia*.

4.2 On Sharia

1. Sharia must be the guiding set of rules for religious, political, and social life.

This is the second major identifier of an Islamist group, and again, the Prophet's Ummah are adamant in their conviction that this is true. This belief is more or less split into three: the descriptive view of today's society as one of failure, the normative view that living in accordance to *sharia* would rectify this failure, and the proposed solution of applying *sharia* directly into society for all to follow. Let us begin with how the Prophet's Ummah view the current world:

“We see men who struggle to find and earn enough for their daily bread. We see that the suicide rate is rising, criminal activity rises as the prisons are overcrowded. Rapes and drunken fighting happens every weekend and crimes related to drugs are happening daily. Women are abused by being treated as objects or sold as merchandise. Children grow up in unstable homes because of adultery in the family or as witnesses to divorces between parents. These are only a few of the problems befallen the western societies.”

This view of the world is something they mention in quite a few of their other texts. As pointed out on their view of “Islam and the World”, this is what they believe democracy and human influence on the laws of Allah lead to. Because of *shirk* and the failure of today's societies to adopt Islam as presented by Mohammad. This is a statement the Prophet's Ummah makes when explaining why they believe the world has gone awry. To the Prophet's Ummah, the solution to this is clear:

“The Western governments are struggling with finding solutions to their societal problems, but these problems will always be there because the solutions to human made problems comes from the humans <...> Allah (SWT) has through the Prophet

Muhammad (fvhm) given us the perfect solution to all our problems and this is a mercy for mankind”

The basic belief here is that *sharia* is a divine contraption given to Muhammad by God, and thus both infallible and unchangeable. This is shown most explicitly in one of their texts on their website named “Sharia”, where the Prophet’s Ummah accounts for what the laws are, what they are meant to be, and how they should be carried out in practice (Profetens Ummah 2013B). It should still be noted that Sharia here will be treated as what the Prophet’s Ummah believe it to be.

“[Sharia means] oasis or the way to the water; a place in the dessert where one would find water to survive. In Islam it means a divine way of living, a way of living that Allah wants us to live by. **Man needs sharia in his life to function and survive** just as one needs an oasis in the dessert to survive.”

<...>

“As Muslims we are obliged to follow and live as decided by Allah. Sharia is the law of which every single Muslim must follow in all aspects of life. **Sharia must regulate the public and the private aspects of all Muslims lives.**”

For the Prophet’s Ummah, *sharia* is both the path itself, and a reason for the completeness of their political beliefs.

“Sharia is not only beheadings and cutting off hands, it is a lifestyle, it is how an individual person should be in life, how a family should be in life, how a society should be”

The crucial part here is that to them, *sharia* is the perfect answers to all possible criticism of their ideology. If only it were to be incorporated into human life completely, its perfection would be shown. Therefore, when asked about specifics regarding their ideal society, the answer is in itself that all problems would be solved by *sharia*. They write:

“Sharia is the only solution for the unfairness that has struck the world because this system would remove the problems by their roots. Allah (SWT) *sharia* fulfills your

basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing. <...> *Sharia* offers free healthcare, gives you free gas and electricity, forbid infidelity, forbid alcohol, forbid the practice of homosexuality, and forbids everything that might end in corruption or create corruption. Loans are allowed, but not interest. ***Sharia has an alternative and a solution to all problems.*** These are only a few examples of what *sharia* can offer the West.” (Profetens Ummah 2013B)

As such, they adopt the same approach to the fulfillment of *sharia* as Mawdudi does. This leads us to the second view on *sharia*:

2. Sharia must be applied in full for it to be perfect.

This is the portrayed reason for *sharia*'s failure in other Islamic states, according to the Prophet's Ummah. They claim that *sharia* does not punish thieves harshly when they demand to cut off their hands, because *sharia*'s fulfillment of their basic needs. This will be further examined under the part about the Islamic State, but he says this during his interview with VG:

“... and you will not be punished [if the] Islamic state [cannot] see to your basic needs. Your basic needs are food, healthcare, shelter, gass, electricity and so on. [...] but when it comes to cutting, that is, cutting of the hands when someone steals, then there are guidelines. It has to be above a certain value, a certain sum. Food, if you steal food you are not punished, and so on. So there are guidelines for this. It is not like a person in the street can start stoning a homosexual or start cutting the hands off someone who steals. There is a court, a *sharia* court, and the case must be brought before it”. (Kleivan et. al 2014).

This belief in *sharia* as both Allah's will and command runs deep, and thus, it is unquestionable. Akerhaug (2012: 78) asks a member of the group, “Samir”, how he feels about the stoning of adulterers:

“Sex outside of marriage is punishable by a hundred lashes. But, if the person who has sex is married, the punishment is death by stoning. [...] What I want, that is something else. **It is about what *sharia* and Allah wants.** Islam is not about what I think. It is

not about whether I really want anybody stoned [to death]. It is what Allah wants that count.”

As an extension on this, the Prophet’s Ummah also claim the following:

3. Governance under Sharia should be applied for all of humanity

That is to say, they believe sharia to be the true solution to everyone, everywhere, for all time. This builds into their belief of sharia not as a simple collection of rules, but something of the sort of a new world order. While this is also mentioned in a previous cited paragraph, they mention it a couple of times more. As they put it in “Sharia – Islamsk Lovgivning”:

“It should be noted, however, that Sharia is not limited to Muslims, but the laws and regulations given to us by Allah was sent to **the whole of mankind**” (Profetens Ummah 2013B)

This is expanded upon when Ubaydullah Hussain (cited in Skoglund 2014: 49) himself posts on his facebook-page:

“Our goal is to live in **a world ruled by sharia-law**, and where the black flag with [our] creed flutter above Stortinget [the Norwegian Parliament], Buckingham Palace, The White House and all other places. Every Muslim is obligated to want to live under Islamic law, and let the laws of Allah be the only ones. [...] Islam has come. **To rule from east to west, and north to south**. And we will not stop until our goal is reached. My generation, the next or the one after that. With the help of Allah!”.

With this, they set the stage for the coming of the Islamic State.

4.3 On the Islamic State

The affirmed goal of the organization is the creation of a world-wide Islamic state. This state will be both the sanctuary Muslims must have to live their lives in full accordance with Allah, but it is also important for all of mankind as a perfect system of societal and religious endeavor. Prior to the summer of 2014, this was an expressed

goal of the Prophet's Ummah, but with the founding of the Islamic State by the former ISIS/ISIL, the group rallied their support behind this instead. However, we are not going to treat the Islamic State of ISIS as concrete Islamic state the Prophet's Ummah envisioned, that will be a point for the discussion to follow. Let us first see how they themselves perceive this imagined ideal state.

1. The creation of an Islamic state is necessary

It has briefly been implied above that the Prophet's Ummah believe a state or multiple states using the aforementioned *sharia* as a basis for all law, must be established. This is an expressed goal of the organization. From Hussains facebook-page (cited in Skoglund 2014: 49):

“Khilafah [the Caliphate] will be established today or tomorrow. [...] For this generation has awakened. We are not greedy for materialism or [the Wests] other goods like some of the Muslims in the generations before us have been. **We are greedy for the establishing of Khilafah**”.

This is also apparent with their acknowledgement of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq as the Caliphate they were waiting for. When the news of its founding became known, the Prophet's Ummah celebrated. This is from his interview with VG, and is his answer when asked whether or not the Prophet's Ummah supports the new Islamic State:

“I think **most Muslims in Norway and around the world support and Islamic State**. It is obligatory for a Muslim to work for an establishing of Islamic law wherever we are. And now that we have finally gotten an Islamic State after 90 years, then it is the best place for us to live, where we can practice our religion in full, where our honor and safety is protected by the state” (Kleivan et. al 2014).

They have also published a video on Youtube with the title “Gledelige Nyheter”, (Happy news), which is a few seconds of a young girl citing the Quran, followed by a song celebrating the Islamic State and proclaiming that the “Infidels will lose”, “the

glory of religion will return” and “This is a Caliphate and an honest promise from Allah” (Profetens Ummah 2014B). The movie ends with a young boy saying that:

“The Islamic State is making victories in Iraq, Syria, and everywhere. [...] We’ll destroy the enemies of the religion, all who fought the Islamic State and the Caliphate. **The Caliphate will remain until the end of the world**, and God willing, we will fight for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi”.

The last panel is a message in blue and white on a black background: “The Prophet’s Ummah congratulates all Muslims with the reestablishing of the Islamic State”.

2. The Islamic State will be ruled in accordance to Allah and his Sharia

This has already been briefly mentioned in the two previous chapters, so here, I will only express what the Prophet’s Ummah believe the State should be providing and how it would work if the aforementioned *sharia* were in place. According to the group, the state has multiple obligations to the public, if it is to be considered in accordance with their *sharia*. From the text “Det Islamske Sosial Systemet [sic]” (The Social System of Islam):

“[The Caliphate] **is comprised of divine laws (sharia)** which have been unaltered for 1400 years after their revelation. It is a guide to how we should behave, not only in public, but in the private sphere as well”

Ubaydullah Hussain expands upon this in a video posted on Youtube labeled “Gyldigheten av Khilafah” (The Validity of the Caliphate), where he explains why the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria is a legitimate Caliphate (Profetens Ummah 2014D). He lists five necessary points for a state to be considered a proper Caliphate:

The first is that sovereignty, adoration, and lawmaking is for Allah alone, and the state must accept this.

The second is that all law must have their source in *sharia*. They must all be from the Quran or Sunnah. This, he says, is why they do not accept Saudi Arabia as a legitimate

Islamic State; they have laws regarding interest on loans, which is forbidden. A leader of the Caliphate must only rule by *sharia*, not decide things himself.

The third is that the authority and control of force and borders are under the control of Muslims. One cannot have a true Islamic State if the police or military are including or under the control of kuffar. Allah will never allow kuffar to have authority over Muslims.

The fourth is that there can only be one Caliphate. Here, he refers to a saying from Muhammed, available in the video, and said that there cannot be two states who call themselves the Caliphate, and if another is appointed or elected, one must be killed or destroyed. The Caliphate must be the only one for the *Ummah*.

The fifth and final point is, according to Hussain, that the leader of such a state must be absolute. When he decides, one must follow. There will always be differences in opinion, but what the Caliphate decides must be accepted. The only time one could refuse this, is if the Caliphate orders something that goes against *sharia*, the Quran, or *Sunnah*. Thus, I would like to add this point:

2a. The Caliphate is ruled as a non-democratic, authoritarian regime.

Though neither the group, nor Hussain explicitly refers to the Islamic State as an authoritarian regime, it is heavily implied both in the text referred to above, how they talk about the democratic system of government, and in how they have accepted Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the legitimate Islamic Caliph of the Ummah (Profetens Ummah 2014D; Kleivan et al. 2014). Discovering more on this point should be a priority for the further research on the group.

2b. The Islamic State must provide basic necessities for all its residents.

Furthermore, under «Sannheten om Islam», they express an addition to the relationship between *sharia* and the state: that the Islamic state would fulfill all of the inhabitants needs, by directly make the basic necessities available to all. As mentioned in one of the quotes under “On Sharia”, it is mandatory for a State operating by *sharia* to

provide its residents with free healthcare, free gas and electricity, as well as their basic needs of food, shelter and clothing (Profetens UmmahX 2013). Because of this, their belief that this is for the good of all mankind is absolute. From “Sannheten om Islam” (Profetens Ummah 2013I):

“[Islam] is the only system which fulfills and honors the basic necessities of its citizens (**food, shelter and clothing**), **offers free healthcare, free gas and electricity**, forbids narcotics and punishes criminals justly, and gives out loans but forbids interest.”

And in “Utenrikspolitikk” (Foreign Policy): “Only the Islamic State can create true peace on earth and stop the world’s economic and social problems” (Profetens Ummah 2013E). The state would also provide free education for both men and women (Profetens Ummah 2013G).

The Prophet’s Ummah’s stance on *sharia* and the founding of an Islamic state is of course the most important aspect on how they believe society should function. Nevertheless, they also do proclaim some direct views and beliefs about what exactly this would entail. Here, I have listed all suggestions made by the Prophet’s Ummah with regards to the running of the state and the application of governmental matters.

3. The economy of the Islamic state is a market economy with Islamic Fiqh

The Prophet’s Ummah has dedicated an entire site on their webpage, in order to explain how the economy would work in their Islamic state. These beliefs are taken from their text “Økonomisk system” (Economical System).

The overarching idea is that all resources that mankind need is created by Allah, and he alone has given humans permission to use these (Profetens Ummah 2013H). They list four points of reasoning about how the economy should function:

- Individual work is of the most importance, and Islam accepts this in its ethics.

- Everyone is expected to earn their keep through their own work. A person's own work is the only legitimate foundation of obtaining material goods and wealth.
- Neither an individual's skills nor natural resources should be unused, and it is forbidden to waste or squander resources given to mankind by Allah.
- Even so, money obtain through *halal* (permissible) methods should not be used to only maximize a person's wealth; luxury is frowned upon. To give back to one's community is encouraged.

The Prophet's Ummah seem to be leaning towards an individualistic system of economy, where one's wealth will be the results of one's work. To quote them once more: "There is no doubt that one of the obligations a Muslim must live with, is that he earns for himself and his family in a pure and halal business" (Profetens Ummah 2013H). In addition to these, they adopt the usual Islamic tradition of making interest on loans haram (forbidden) (Profetens Ummah 2013H).

If we compare this to their view on an Islamic States responsibilities, the economic system they seem to adopt is one not unlike the various welfare states featuring mixed economy throughout the world, with some additions as to what the state is responsible for.

3a. Jizya must be paid by non-Muslims in order for them to live in the Islamic State, and this will grant those who do rights and protection

This is one of the actual Islamic rules that are founded in Islamic traditions, but have been more or less abolished by Islamic countries today. It has, however, been reinstated in the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. According to the Prophet's Ummah, any Christian or Jew who pays this tax will be able to live in the Islamic State. Hussain says:

“[The non-Muslims] are given three choices: [convert to Islam], or **they have to pay jizya**, a type of tax. This tax is very low, [...] this tax is 0.5%. We Muslims pay 2.5% of

our wealth to the poor, so this is only a symbolic sum, and it makes it so that Christians and Jews and other religions, they gain the protection of their lives, their honor, their religion and their wealth from the Islamic State. [...] women, children, the elderly, those who are of bad health are exempt from paying this tax”. (Kleivan et. al 2014).

4. Slavery, if it follows an Islamic code of conduct, is permitted

This is perhaps the single most interesting practical suggestion the Prophet’s Ummah has proposed. In two videos posted on Youtube through their official channel, Hussain appears and speaks about slavery in Islam (Profetens Ummah 2014A; Profetens Ummah 2014B). Here, he argues that slavery, when implemented correctly, is perfectly in accordance to Islam, and thus a way of obtaining a service. He claims that one must not compare this to the slavery that the West conducted during the colonial times and in the pre-civil war US. Slavery in Islam would be the result of two things: either a man sold himself into slavery to clear a debt, or the slaves were the women and children of the enemies of Islam that were left after the war was over. These women and children would be taken in and cared for by a Muslim man, who could not, under *sharia*, treat them in a bad manner. Hussain says:

“... when you add the people who wage war against muslims, who war against Islam, those who do not want peace, those who do not pay jizya, those who want to kill Muslims, those who ally themselves with enemies of Islam, then the Prophet has given permission to take them as slaves after the war.”

He continues to state that Mohammad originally had three ways of making someone a slave, but only one of them was legitimate today: to take the surviving women and children after the Muslims had won the war against *kuffar*.

“The only way you can make someone a slave in Islam is if you defeat an enemy in war. What do we do with the women and children? For it is not like they are not participants/accessories in the war.”

The taking of slaves thus becomes a solution to the problem of having wives and children of their previous enemies in the Islamic State. It, according to the Prophet’s

Ummah, both keep them starving or otherwise have to live in poverty, and gives the conquerors a mean of controlling any potential uprising in the future. Hussain says nothing about what type of slavery this would be. He does, however, continue with explaining why this form of slavery is different from what one would normally think when someone says slavery. Islam and *sharia* will care for the survivors, and will live as “full members of the family”. It is prohibited to strike or otherwise hurt a slave, or to give them too much work. It is permissible to take a female slave as one’s wife, but not a male.

“And this is what the concept of slavery in Islam is about, that you treat slaves as your family. **They are in the category of slaves**, but they are treated like your own family. That you have authority over them, but also see to their necessities”

While I have not seen this point or idea being expressed by any other Islamist group in Europe, it has been reported that this kind of slavery is common in the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

5. Teaching subjects that goes against the teachings and practices of Islam is forbidden

On schools, as was mentioned under the “War of Ideas” previously in this chapter, the Prophet’s Ummah holds that all subjects taught in school must follow the teachings of the Quran. More precise, they claim that when a Muslim delivers his child to a school in a non-Islamic state they are taught:

“... many of these ideas which are taught in [science class] is in direct opposition to the Islamic faith. The theory of evolution say man evolved from monkeys. The principle of conservation of energy states that energy is eternal (cannot be destroyed or created, only change). Man is put in the same category as animals (only a more advanced). The circulation of water is presented as a self-sufficient system”

All these ideas are false, the Prophet’s Ummah claims, because they go against the belief that Allah created men and the earth, and that he appointed men to rule it.

In an Islamic state, however, education would be both different and better, they believe:

“While science in the West see [itself] as in opposition to God, it will in the Islamic State **be a confirmation of the existence of Allah**. The Child will come home and explain that he/she has learned everything about the circulation of water. How Allah makes water rise as steam from the oceans and become clouds, then Allah will make these clouds rain on land, and Allah will collect the rainwater and lead it back to the sea to begin the cycle anew. **Nothing that is taught will be in contradiction to Islam**” (Profetens Ummah 2013G)

They also provide examples of what classes would be taught. Among them is “Humans from the apes, or from Allah?”, “An exposure of the fallacies in evolution”, and “the Big Bang theory vs Islamic reality”. The Islamic State has a mission of teaching what Allah is, and how the world works in accordance to the Islamist consensus on scientific facts and theories.

5a. Homosexuality and blasphemy is punishable by death.

These are the two main expressions of what would constitute a defined punishment presented by the Prophet’s Ummah, though there are certainly many more that the group has not been questioned about. I mention these especially because they represent two separate occasions in which the Prophet’s Ummah has openly declared their point of view on anything other than the primary aspects of Islamism. The first happened under the preparations for Gay Parade in Oslo (Barth-Heyerdahl et.al. 2014), the other after the attacks on Charlie Hebdo, a satirical magazine who printed drawings of the Prophet Muhammed (Byrkjedal and Hopperstad 2015).

6. The state has strict rules on marriage and the roles of men and women

Again, this might be mostly because of a religious stance on the matter, but it is still a big part of how the Prophet’s Ummah believe the daily life in the Islamic State should be. This is their answer to the perceived social problems, as mentioned in the

beginning of this chapter, that of teen pregnancy, failure to help the young and the elderly and so on (Profetens ummah 2013I)

They do have a special way of presenting their views, though. In their rhetoric, there is little focus on concrete individual rights, and more of what is expected of their citizens. The way they speak about marriage and gender is interesting because there is no women's "rights", only "roles". From one of their texts (Profetens Ummah 2013J):

"Islam has **defined roles** that men and women should follow in life, and has given them detailed guidelines for the relationship between the two. The social system in Islam is compatible with human nature, and there is no room for men or women to abuse or discriminate each other. Therefore, instead of a war between the sexes, there is peace and harmony. Both fulfill their roles, he as a man and she as a woman".

The purpose of an Islamic state is in this regard to help men and women behave and live in accordance to what Allah meant for them. To go against what Allah said is heresy.

4.4 On Jihad

The last part will be a quick review of how the Prophet's Ummah sees the necessity of *jihad*. *Jihad* here is translated to struggling in order to avoid any confusion, but as will be clear in the paragraphs to follow, the Prophet's Ummah use the word to mean predominantly an active and physical struggle. The Prophet's Ummah view on *jihad* is more or less summarized by Ubaydullah Hussain in the following citation:

"**It is compulsory for every Muslim to support jihad.** The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said that a Muslim who dies without the intention of carrying out jihad, dies in a state of hypocrisy. Therefore, every Muslim is obliged to support jihad, whether it is militarily, whether it is verbal; by speaking against those who suppress Muslims, or economically; through welfare, strategy, and so on." (Ubaydullah Hussain, cited in Holmer 2014: 4)

This means that we confirm that the Prophet's Ummah believes *jihad* to be an external form of activism, and a mandatory one. This tie in with the first part of the fourth component of Islamism:

1. It is the duty of Muslims to struggle for the establishing of the Islamic State

This is further emphasized in the single largest contribution to the Prophet's Ummah website prior to its deletion; the translated pamphlet of Anwar al-Awlaki (2009) "44 Ways to Support Jihad". As the title implies, the text is 44 points of recommendation from Awlaki on how to properly support *mujahedeen*, which is an Islamic term for "holy warrior", in the fight against *kuffar*. It covers anything from praying for the warriors, to taking care of their family, or to learning Arabic. While I will not go into the entirety of the list, I have selected a few of the points he make:

- Praying to Allah to award you with martyrdom
- Finance a Mujahedin
- Fighting the lies of the Western Media
- Raising our children on the love of *Jihad* and the mujahedeen
- Learning skills that would benefit the mujahedeen
- Boycotting the economy of the enemy
- Translating *Jihad* literature into other language

The list thus includes practices which all people from all social statuses can be a part of. The weak or old, for example, may pray for them or translate their literature, while the rich and resourceful must contribute to the campaign, with money, medical aid, work against the propaganda of their enemies etc.

This is a part of Awlaki's introduction that the Prophet's Ummah has translated to Norwegian:

"Jihad is the greatest deed in Islam and the salvation of the ummah is in practicing it. In times like these, when Muslim lands are occupied by the kuffar, when the jails of tyrants are full of Muslim POWs, when the rule of the law of Allah is absent from this world and when Islam is being attacked in order to uproot it, Jihad becomes obligatory

on every Muslim. Jihad must be practiced by the child even if the parents refuse, by the wife even if the husband objects and by the one in debt even if the lender disagrees. [...]Again, the point needs to be stressed: Jihad today is obligatory on every capable Muslim. So as a Muslim who wants to please Allah it is your duty to find ways to practice it and support it”.

Though this is the direct translation of another person’s work, it is not the only source that this view is held by the group. When asked if he supported terror against the US, he answered that “I support the Muslims right to defend themselves” and “in war, there are two parties [who wars], and they [the US] must expect retribution when they war against Muslims” (Kleivan et.al 2014). The group also states in one of their press releases that:

“Afghans should be given control, a choice of government and sovereignty. If they do not, our holy jihad will intensify and continue, even if foreign soldiers are in our country, and this fight will continue until our people’s ambitions are fulfilled.”

Furthermore, the Prophet’s Ummah have defended all of the most recent attacks in Europe as a part of the ongoing war between Islam and the West. He has also declared that:

“All countries that participates in war, aggravation, and insults towards Islam is in a precarious position [...]. That is why we have encouraged Norway to pull out their armies from Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as to stop the sale of weapons, ammunitions, bombs and drones to countries who are in war against Muslims” (Byrkjedal and Hopperstad 2015).

From their website, they have a couple of press releases celebrating the actions of various mujahedeen. One in which they call a terrorist attack killing 20 policemen for executed by “a fearless, martyrdom-seeking mujahid [...] May Allah accept his martyrdom and reward him”, another where they write a “heroic mujahid [...] executed a martyrdom attack” in which 14 people were killed (Profetens Ummah 2013K; Profetens Ummah 2013L).

There is little doubt that the Prophet's Ummah believes *jihad* to be both necessary and required. The *jihad* they preach is also primarily offensive and external. They believe the fight for the Islamic State warrants this type of violence, since it is all done in the name of Allah. Their support for groups like Al-Qaida and ISIS further confirms this.

5 Discussion

Through the previous chapter I identified the various beliefs held by the Prophet's Ummah with concern to the greater ideological specter of Islamist thinking and tradition. Through this theoretical framework, and by comparing the group to other likeminded organizations and parties, I have arrived at a couple of point I believe are worthy of discussion. This chapter should be read as a complementary commentary to the previous; as a summary in which the various findings are put into a more thorough discussion. By drawing upon the analysis, we can come to some conclusions regarding the bigger picture of what the Prophet's Ummah really represents.

First, the Prophet's Ummah adopts a Qutbian understanding of both the current world and the necessity for change. They believe that the world we live in is thoroughly corrupt, and must change. To the Prophet's Ummah, Islam and the Muslim community is currently under siege from the non-Islamic world, especially the West, in both a physical and a theoretical way. Muslims are being threatened because of their beliefs all over the world, denied human rights, and generally repressed. This is particularly apparent in his interview with VG, and in the video "Al Wala wal Bara". To the Prophet's Ummah, there is also no question about how this war on Islam is both intentional and total. These are two key terms when we define their descriptive ideas of the world.

The war is intentional simply because they believe all the ills that have befallen the Islamic community are of non-Muslim origin, or the work of traitorous Muslim in accordance to non-Muslim wishes. This is somewhat based on their religious belief of an almighty god who has given his final instructions through his prophet: If the instructions are here, the believers are certain, and the path is determined, then how is it still an un-perfect world? The Prophet's Ummah believes that the answer is that Muslims have failed to incorporate the full system of *sharia*, the dream of *din wa-dawla*, because of this ongoing war on Muslims. The intention of other civilizations is to oppose the Islamic. The rejection of the truth of the Prophet is directly linked with conflicts between the Muslim world and the other parts. The true intention of the other

civilizations is either the direct destruction of the Islamic truth, or the indirect changing and subjugating of Allah's message. This is why, according to Ubaydullah Hussain, *sharia* has been targeted for destruction, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

The totality of the war is the other key term in this respect. "Totality" here is taken to mean that to the Prophet's Ummah, there is only the conflict between Islam and the others. The world is divided in two; one of the believers, and one of *jahiliyya*. The physical war on Muslims is simple and observable, and should therefore be clear to all to see. The theoretical application of *jahiliyya* is something more sinister. The Prophet's Ummah believes that almost everything that the Muslim community is taught in school, see on TV, and practice with regards to a Westphalian understanding of nation-states is a lie, or a cover-up for the ideological attack on the *ummah*. From a theological perspective, they believe this war has changed the way Islam is understood and practiced. This is where they cross beliefs with Salafists and Wahhabis: The wanting of a return to the sacred foundations of *sharia* and Islam as practiced by the pious forbearers. A return of a true *ummah* is impossible unless one disregard the different evolutions that Islam has gone through, evolutions that have often been orchestrated by the West and other enemies. From a political perspective, this boils down to the rejection of pretty much all ideologies and views of governmental practices. The rejection of a separation of religion and state is absolute.

For example: through western influence, the Muslim public has been exposed to, and forced to live with, *shirk* through non-Islamic beliefs and practices. Particularly offensive to the group are democracy and the acceptance of other religions and traditions. Democracy is *shirk* because it takes the power to make laws away from Allah, and puts it in the hands of humans. Man-made laws are an affront to the divine. Only Allah's laws must be implemented. Ideologies like socialism or communism are also wrong, simply because they are inferior to the guidance of Allah. The point of the war, however, is to convince the Muslims otherwise. It is in this regard he follows up when presenting the groups rejection of other Muslim organizations, which have fallen in the trap of their enemies by accepting their way of thinking and doing. IslamNet and

Minotenk accept the governmental grants of *kuffar*. Imams preach against the use of *jihad* against their enemies. Muslims accept democratic conventions. This is, to the Prophet's Ummah, a direct affront to what Islam and the Caliphate truly is.

To the group, the contemporary world is also seen as evidence of this. Hussain refers to the state of the world today as one of failure. As one that is morally despicable, unjust, with poverty and hunger, and so on. This dystopian view only reaffirms the group's beliefs in the necessity for a remake of the world order.

This leads us over to the normative views of the group, as well as the practical solutions to the abovementioned problems. These are intertwined in the group's discourse: the normative is simply the statement that all people should live in accordance to Islam and *sharia*, and the answer to these moral and practical problems lies in the establishment of an Islamic State, ruled through a particular interpretation of *sharia*, the Quran, and Sunnah. Working towards this goal, i.e. any form of *jihad*, is acceptable within the framework of these three sources of Islamic law.

Let us start with the group's normative idea of *sharia*. Here, they also comply with the general theory as presented by Qutb. The basic belief here is that *sharia* is a divine contraption given to Muhammad by God, and thus both infallible and unchangeable. Man needs *sharia* to survive. In this, it is also implied a concept of freedom, where a person would be truly living in full because the laws are a representation of his, and the rest of humanity's, true self. The Prophet's Ummah takes the concept of *sharia* as a de facto instruction manual on how to live. However, it is a particular brand of *sharia*, thanks to the war of ideas that have taken root in the Muslim communities. The group frequently refers to *sharia* as something unaltered through the times, which means they reject almost all of the different interpretations that are prominent in the Islamic world. This would necessarily lead to them having an alternative. However, apart from the obvious reference to the Quran, they do not promote exactly what they define *sharia*

to be. Not one place in all their texts and videos to they explain the finer points of this system of law and moral code. Their text "sharia" is one third a discussion of how the

world is wrong, one third a rejection about how the rest of the world define *sharia*, and one third of praise for what *sharia* would bring to mankind. The implication here is that it is simply believed to be perfect. Though I would not want to make this last part of my thesis one of criticism, it is a mere observation that when it comes to *sharia*, the Prophet's Ummah takes much for granted, and only touch upon what such a system would truly be and look like. They clearly want *sharia* to instruct religious as well as political and social life, but they do not give any indication as what this might mean. Adding to this is their previously mentioned rejection of the different schools of *sharia*. If it is not according to these, then which *sharia* are we following? If the answer to this is the *sharia* as mentioned in the Quran, then why does not the Prophet's Ummah expand and publish these ideas? Is it because of a missing consensus among the members? These are questions that would need to be answered in further research. Though the normative part of their ideology does not suffer much because of this, their practical solutions do, and therefore their whole argumentation of an ideal type of state would need to hinge on more than an undefined theological belief. Because of this, I find that while the Prophet's Ummah does fit with the component of *sharia* as a normative idea of Islamism, it is at the same time an unknown when it comes to its practical application within society.

This takes us to the third component of Islamism, the wanting to establish an Islamic State. Again, this is a perfect fit for the Prophet's Ummah with regards to the theoretical background. The Caliphate must be reestablished, and it must be ruled according to *sharia*, the Quran, and Sunnah. It must work as an authoritarian state, with the aims of spreading and in the end controlling, the entire world. Again, however, the Prophet's Ummah is unclear on how, exactly, this would come about.

Here, I would like to bring in the second question of my thesis; what their preferred practical solutions are within their ideological beliefs. The short answer is that there are surprisingly few. Apart from the more obvious beliefs related to the religion of Islam if understood deeply conservative, such as death penalty for homosexuals and blasphemers, which have been a part of both the cultural and theological traditions of not only Islamic countries, but other nations and religions across the world, there is

little to go on if one want to truly envision a “Prophet’s Ummah”-ran state. Additionally, the way they present *sharia* with regards to how a state should look and run makes it a “catch-all”-argument. That is, when asked about specifics, they just answer with “in accordance to sharia”, or some version of this, as if simply using the term is an answer to the question. This is mainly visible in three of the ideas presented in the previous chapter: that the Islamic state should provide all the basic necessities of its inhabitants, the economy should be in accordance to Islamic customs and *fiqh*, and the rules for social roles and marriage. The few of the concrete laws of *sharia* they use in these three does not really answer a whole lot of practical questions. Take, for example, the stated requirement of the Islamic State to provide all basic necessities for its inhabitants. To the Prophet’s Ummah, this is where the state has the potential to end conflict and poverty. It is also a requirement before the full application of *sharia*’s criminal law come into effect, as it dictates that a starving man who steals cannot be tried under this law (Kleivan et.al. 2014). How will this come about? The only mention of a tax system is in Hussain’s interview, where he states that Muslims pay 2.5% tax to the poor, and *jizya* is about 0.5%. This is obviously not enough to cover the expenses of such a welfare-heavy state that they imagine, yet other proposals for the running of the state are non-existent. While this might be somewhat my own fault for not being knowledgeable enough about Islamic practices, it might be worth to remember that this *sharia* they speak of is one of their own invention, and thus largely undefined until they present their policies on the matter. Their ideological spectrum of *din wa-dawla* is left largely undefined.

More to the point, the economic system itself is a huge unknown. It is more individual than collectivistic, and is controlled by moral rules as well as a judicial system meant to cover fraud or other forms of corruption. It is not, however, expanded upon any more than this. It is treated as something unimportant, compared to other areas. I point this out as a symbol of what I believe to be an inherent uncertainty with the Prophet’s Ummah, namely that while they do have a clear picture of what is wrong, who is to blame, and what must happen, they do not have any precise suggestions. What this implies is debatable, but I am inclined to see this as a result of the group’s

organizational origin. They are not an NGO or a political party, but more or less an ideological collective. This is in line with other Islamist organizations like Islam4UK and Sharia4Belgium, as pointed out by Vidino (2015), and this seems to have impact on what exactly is possible for them to agree upon. This might also explain their choice of officially support the Islamic State. They saw an actor who actively opposed their perceived enemies, who founded a “nation” which they called the Islamic state and related it to the “lost” Caliphate, and based their newfounded society on the same general approach to lawmaking. The key argument in favor of such an implication is how the Prophet’s Ummah responded to the founding. Not only did they accept it on what is probably a face-value, they started actively creating videos in support of the state. Consider the two videos about slaves which are referred to in the previous chapter that surfaced after it became known that the Islamic state accepted and promoted such a practice. In addition, the video “Gyldigheten av Khilafah”, where Ubaydullah Hussain presented his points on what constitutes an Islamic State, was produced solely to explain why the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq fulfilled all these requirements (Profetens Ummah 2014D). It would be probable to assume that the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria will continue to inspire the Prophet’s Ummah and their belief in the Islamic State.

On the last component, the acceptance and need for all Muslims to wage *jihad*, they are clear that it is a requirement, and yet somewhat ambiguous as to what it includes. When talking to reporters or in court, they simply refer to the ongoing war in Islam, and preach that the Muslims have the right to defend themselves. In addition, while the group has declared various attacks as beautiful and right when these have had civilian casualties, they still claim to be only accepting of violent *jihad* against military targets. While Hussain rejects that the Islamic State are killing civilians, only targeting those who work against the regime, he has on numerous occasions defended those who have killed innocent bystanders while carrying out different *jihad*-attacks. All in all, the group once again fit into the theoretical framework of *jihad* as something active, and they also claim that it is the duty of all “true” Muslims, just as al-Banna and Qutb described. Furthermore, they do defend the use of violence against those who are

deemed enemies of Islam, as is apparent in their defense of Al-Qaida and other such groups. It would, however, be more precise to say that they glorify *jihad* more than they defend it. To die as *mujahedeen* is “beautiful”, and one becomes a martyr to the rest of the *ummah*. To travel to the Islamic State to fight is also encouraged, perhaps even supported (Kleivan et.al. 2014). Yet, they are very careful with distancing those who do active *jihad* from the group itself. This is probably because of the possible legal ramifications for other members of the group should they be defined as a terrorist-group or something similar. This is another point of which more research would be needed on the purely practical parts of their role in having people leave the country to join the Islamic State. It is, however, sufficient to say that *jihad* is both an active and central part of the Prophet’s Ummah ideological beliefs. This puts them, if one compares them to other Islamists group, firmly within the same traditions as Islam4UK, which is not surprising given their ties to them, but it also makes them more prone to and apologetic of violence, than what is usually the case of such groups operating in Europe.

6 Conclusion

To summarize, the Prophet's Ummah does indeed have a coherent ideological foundations of which they base their beliefs. Within the context of Islamism, they represent an almost direct interpretation of Hassan al-Banna's, Sayyid Qutb's and Sayyid Mawdudi's ideas. They view the contemporary world as one who is corrupt, in social ruin, and ruled by infidels who are intent on destroying Islam both physically through war, and ideologically by externally changing the Islamic faith so that Muslims accept other interpretations of their text influenced by non-Islamic philosophies. Furthermore, they believe in the creation of an Islamic State which follows a particular set of *sharia* which is both taken from the first generations of Muslims. In order to fulfill this dream and to withstand the enemies of Islam, both internal and external struggling, *jihad* is permitted. The founding of such a Caliphate is the ultimate object of the organization.

Though they are following these ideological beliefs, and are adamant in their conviction, these are ideas they follow on a purely theoretical level. They show few clear and practical proposed solutions to societal problems, other than simply referring to the greater ideological belief. That is, while their descriptive and normative ideas are well defined within their ideological spectrum, the practical solutions are not. They provide little information about what type of *sharia* they want, what type of government structure the state should have, and so on. Their decision to acknowledge the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, for example, is based on the need for an Islamic State, not necessarily how the state operates.

In conclusion, the Prophet's Ummah are ideologically stable and consistent, but lack almost any kind of practical components when it comes to the actual practical sides of their proposed solutions. Future research on the Prophet's Ummah should seek to uncover exactly how the group would recommend that the society they want should run, look like, and function.

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