Stories, Style & Radicalization

A Cultural and Narrative Criminological Study of Jihadi Propaganda Magazines

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ii

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ABSTRACT

Title: Stories, Style & Radicalization**:** A Cultural and Narrative Criminological Study of Jihadi Propaganda Magazines

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Stories, style and radicalization are all tired together in an intricate and complex relationship constructed within the jihadi terrorist subculture. This study is an in-depth inquiry into the jihadi propaganda magazines *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* that aim to highlight this relationship. The full catalogue of magazines produced, at the time, have been analysed under the scope of cultural and narrative criminology. In total 2001 pages distributed over 32 editions have been analysed using qualitative document analysis.

By drawing upon frameworks of narrative and cultural criminology, this study aims to identify and present what is characteristic for jihadi narratives and subcultural style, and how they can function in radicalization. Narrative criminological research operates with stories as their main data, and view them as constitutive of crime. The stories people tell, shape their lives and constitute future behaviour. The narratives told can instigate, sustain or leave crime behind. Cultural criminology pays specific attention to foreground factors, and draws heavily upon phenomenological research. Emotions connected with crime are the key points of focus, and these emotions are constructed and performed by the subcultural style. Within culture lies the meaning of crime, and it is through the culture that 'the criminal', as both person and perception, comes alive.

In the analysis, I show how the propaganda magazines of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State provide their readers with a wide array of narratives to draw upon when they give meaning to their lives, narrate their lives and indeed, live their lives. What characterizes the jihadi narratives, from the master narrative, through the complex maze of collective stories, life-stories, event-stories and tropes, is that the propaganda magazines attempt to construct a

narrative coherent frame for their readers, in which West is deliberately attacking Islam. Within this maze, is located a plethora of different stories, all with their constructions and meanings. Al-Qaeda, on the one hand, proclaims that the West must be beaten before the *Khilafah* can be established, whereas the Islamic State wants to expand outwards instead, starting by crushing their local enemies. Likewise, Al-Qaeda narrates itself as a highly professionalized insurgency, but the Islamic State wants to be seen as legitimate state. In terms of violence, narratives differ from being strictly defensive (AQ) to emotional intrinsic value (IS). Further, the propaganda magazines constructs a badass image and cool style, where being bad is good. This is done through the use of militarized clothing, music and by emphasising bravery, togetherness and masculinity. Further, it is a case of cultural *bricolage* in which products from the West, Salafism, Islam more broadly, youth cultures and war is used. The style can instigate violence, and is enacted through the desire for excitement and resistance towards their enemies. By constructing a dangerous and exciting lifestyle, they become attractive for thrill seekers and edgeworkers, who crave the adrenaline partaking in the jihadi subculture provides. Similarly, frames of resistance are constructed through satire and ridicule, as well as the destruction of cultural artefacts. This relationship may seem chaotic on the outside – except it is not. I show how there is a clear and strictly order homology between the subcultural style, edgework, resistance, and ideology that ties the subculture together. This relationship is pivotal in understanding how utilizing the subcultural style turns into explosive and violent terrorism.

Throughout the analysis, it became evident that narratives and subcultural style, products and expressions weren't always so different. In fact, they are inseparable in many respects. I attempt to show this in the analysis of how the propaganda magazines broadcast stories and feelings of death. Death narratives combined with the immediate feelings connected with them, construct the tripartite of "death frenzy". The way they construct and broadcast the deaths of their own civilians, any and all non-jihadists as well as their own *mujahideen* is presented through tragic, celebratory and heroic deaths. "Stories, Style & Radicalization" then moves into a philosophical discussion where some of the radicalization theories are scrutinized by using the concepts found in the analysis. Indeed, the study attempt to see how stories, style and radicalization links together by assessing the attractive solutions offered by the style as well as the coherency of the narratives. In doing so, it simultaneously moves on to discuss and promote a common ground where narrative and cultural criminologists come together and strengthen their frameworks by drawing upon each other.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Jihadi terrorism is perhaps the greatest fear of contemporary society. Since the late 1980s, Islamic, Salafist and jihadi movements have grown in size and numbers, and moved into our own backyard (Wiktorowitz 2001). An increasing portion of these potential mass-murderers are born and raised in the West (Sageman 2008), and they are products of their own times. Political involvement, deep Quranic devotion and PhDs in Islamic Studies are rare amongst today's jihadis. Instead, they are posing with decapitated heads, bragging in social media of their murderous adventures, and tell stories where the climax is the slaughter of their victims. In their backpacks, as they make their way to the theatre of war, they carry with them editions of "Islam for dummies" (McCants 2015). They may not know when and how to pray properly and when questioned about the Qur'an, they might stutter. On the other hand, they possess extensive knowledge of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, where they find the information and propaganda they need about Islam. They readily find and access slick videos featuring well-renowned executioners, pictures that emphasise the challenge of jihadi training, and idyllic presentations of how wonderful the jihadi life is. In the maze of these propaganda tools they can find officially produced magazines that are so neatly and professionally designed they could blend into magazine stands in London, Paris or Oslo. It is with these, and the countless cultural products and expressions within them, this study is concerned. A specific way to dress, music, exciting lifestyle, fame, opposition, stories, and a perverse fascination of death are some of the elements readers of *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* are exposed to. All of these – and many more – characterizes the contemporary jihadi culture, and they all play their role in how jihadists make sense to their actions, and provide meaning to their lives through the creative constructions and utilizations of the jihadi subcultural style and jihadi narratives.

September 11th changed the world, and marked the start of an area of jihadi attacks, with large-scale operations following in its wake. Madrid (2005), London (2007), Paris (2015 & 2016), Brussels (2016) and Nice (2016) are amongst the most lethal examples on a gruesome and growing list (for an overview, see Nesser 2016). In the US, terror struck again in the Fort Hood shooting (2009), the Boston Marathon bombings (2013), the San Bernardino attack (2015) and the Orlando nightclub shooting (2016). Even though most plots are uncovered and stopped in time, several other smaller operations have also been successful, and the numbers are steadily rising (for an overview, see Nesser, Stenersen & Oftedal 2016). As a result,

immigration, integration and radicalization are all hot topics of the day. Despite this growing focus in media, academia and public, the field of criminology has paid little attention to terrorism, and been reluctant to view terrorism as crime. Thus, criminologists seem to underestimate their possible fruitful and important contributions to the field (Decker & Pyrooz 2015; Freilich & LaFree 2015).

The aforementioned attacks all have one striking commonality – they all have the same explanations and justifications. The terrorists all have the same demands, and the same kind of rhetoric is used by the perpetrators and/or their supporters in the wake to tell the world why this happened – they all draw upon the same *narrative* and employ the same cultural *style.* Drawing upon insights from cultural and narrative criminology, this study intends to contribute to the novel, criminological focus of radicalization, jihadism and terrorism. Likewise, prominent researchers has stressed the importance of cultural perspectives on jihadism (e.g. Hegghammer 2015a), and this study will also pursue this goal.

1.1. Terms and Definitions

Terms like Islamism, Salafism, jihadism, radicalization and extremism will occur frequently throughout the thesis, both in their original forms, and others (e.g. "jihadi"). Although I do not claim the definitions presented here to be universally accepted, it is prudent to start by defining how the terms will be interpreted and used in this thesis.

The concepts are related, and the starting point is the term "Islamism". According to Mozaffari (2007), Islamism is characterized by four elements – it is a "*religious ideology* with a *holistic interpretation* of Islam whose final aim is the *conquest of the world* by *all means*" (p. 21, my emphasis). Contrary to other totalitarian ideologies like Nazism, Fascism and Communism, Islamism has a *religious ground pillar,* providing the ideology with religious reasoning, judicial rules, and historical context. Its *holistic interpretation* promotes that the Islamist version of Islam is the true and whole interpretation, based on an indivisible triad of "Dîn [Religion], Dunya [Way of life] and Dawla [Government]" (*ibid.:* 22). Further, the ideology aims to unite the entire world under Allah's guard. To achieve this, the ideology proclaims that any means necessary is legitimate. Ranging from "propagation, peaceful indoctrination and political struggle to violent methods" (*ibid.:* 24), Islamists seek to impose their totalitarian regime on the world with terrorism as their preferred, but not exclusive, strategic method.

Within this religious ideology is the ultra-conservative Sunni-wing called Salafism. The Arabic word "*salaf*" means "precede" or "predecessor", and is used to describe the companions of Mohammed, whom

"learned about Islam directly from the messenger of God […] [and] the term "Salafi" is thus used to connote "proper" religious adherence and moral legitimacy, implying that alternative understandings are corrupt deviations from the straight path of Islam"(Wiktorowicz & Kaltner 2003: 78).

Salafists are united by religious concepts that revolve around "strict adherence to the concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) and ardent rejection of a role for human reason, logic, and desire" (Wiktorowitz 2005: 207). They believe that living by the words and doings of the Prophet, as written in the Quran and Sunnah, is the only way to live their lives properly. Salafism can roughly be divided into three major fractions; *purists*, who are non-violent and proclaim propagation, purification and education; *politicos*, who proclaim an application of Salafism in politics; and *jihadists* (*ibid.*). Not all Islamists or Salafists are inherently violent – but jihadists are. Jihadism, the most extreme wing within Islam, builds on the word *jihad* ("struggle"), and people within the movement believe that violence is a legitimate way to re-establish the Caliphate and impose *Sharia* law. In fact, they proclaim that it is "an Islamic duty to use violence to remove leaders who do not properly follow or enforce Islam" (Wiktorowitz & Kaltner 2003: 78).

Radicalization is a vague and disputed term, and the research and intelligence communities do not have a universally accepted definition. To simplify it, the term describes "what goes on before the bomb goes off" (Sedgwick 2010: 479). There are a plethora of differing definitions, and McCauley & Moskalenko (2008), for example, has defined it as the "change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup" (p. 416). Others have seen it as "a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations […] [that] justifies the use of indiscriminate violence" (Wilner & Dubouloz 2010: 38), or as "the process by which an individual, group, or mass of people undergo a transformation from participating in the political process via legal means to the use or support of violence for political purposes" (Crosset & Spitaletta 2010: 10). Others conceptualize it as a "pathway" (e.g. Horgan 2008) or "staircase" (e.g. Moghaddam 2005) into terrorism.

Descriptively for this conceptual ambiguity, prominent terrorism scholar Quintan Wiktorowicz (2005) does not even use the term radicalization explicitly when analysing "root causes" of terrorism.

Within the intelligence community, Danish PET defines it as "a process, by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective" (Schmid 2013: 12). Norwegian PST has adopted this definition (PST 2015), and US Department of Homeland Security views it as the "process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect social change" (Schmid 2013: 12).

The core of the concept is a change, process, staircase or pathway – whichever version one prefers – from a state in which violence is *not* viewed and justified as a legitimate means, into a state in which it *is*, impacted by several intra- and interconnected factors. Because of the dispute over definitions within the relevant communities, and conceptual ambiguity, I will not attempt to fully and precisely define what radicalization is, as this could be an entire master's thesis on its own. However, the term radicalization will be used to describe what happens when a person's beliefs changes from a perception of reality where violence is not a legitimate means, to a perception where it is. Extremism, or radicalism, can be defined as the stage where violence is justified, legitimized and readily used and supported as a political tool.

The terms terrorism and terrorist are also used. Although "everyone" knows what terrorism is, scholars constantly argue over its conceptualization. Indeed, Schmid (2011) identifies several hundred different definitions of the concept. Importantly, this thesis *does not* directly study what terrorism is or who the terrorists are. The terms are merely descriptive, and rather unimportant for the bigger picture of this study. For the purpose of thoroughness, however, one definition of terrorism is as a political tactic designed to strike fear to a society (from Latin *terrere* – "to scare"), through the use and/or threat of symbolic violence towards innocent people (Neumann 2009). It could also be argued that an act is only truly terrorism if it *uses people as means* to an end (i.e. if a murder's intention is another person's death, it is murder, not terrorism. If a murder's intention, however, is achieving political change, the murder is a means to an end, and *de facto* terrorism), and if it *receives attention* from the

public and/or media. Again, I will not begin to attempt to clear up the research community's ambiguous use of the term. However, I chose to view terrorism as the tactical and strategic use and/or threat of violence upon an innocent person or people, whose fear, damage or death is used as the means to achieve a goal. A terrorist, then, is the performer of such (threats of) violence.

1.2. Research Aim & Research Question

The aim of this study is to analytically examine jihadism through two key movements – Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. More precisely, I aim to identify, analyse and discuss the jihadi narratives and subcultural style that are distributed through the groups' propaganda magazines *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. The study will identify and describe what the narratives and style consists of, how they are presented in the dataset and analyse how they are constructed, used and function within the subculture to give meaning to, and constitute, behavior. Further, the study will put the stories and style in context of radicalization, to discuss how they influence how people are recruited and radicalize. Importantly, this thesis will not assess whether or not a jihadi subculture exists (this premise is taken for granted), nor how it was created. Rather, the focus lies on the subcultural products and constructions of style and narrative. As such, the research question at hand is;

"What characterizes jihadi narratives and subcultural style, and what is their role in radicalization?"

This research question is twofold; the first part requires a descriptive and exploratory study, intending to identify and theorize the narrative and style. The second part opens up for a philosophical and theoretical discussion of the findings in relation to already established insights on radicalization. The data taken into consideration, this is a logical approach.

1.3. Thesis Composition

The thesis consists of seven chapters. In chapter 2, I will present the theoretical frameworks and concepts utilized for this study. For the purpose of the thesis, I have chosen to draw upon narrative and cultural criminology. Narrative criminology has a constitutive view of narrative (Presser 2009), whereas cultural criminology handles the meaning located within culture and crime (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015). Central concepts within narrative criminology are the narrative structural elements, characters, genre and types. Cultural criminology focuses on, for example, style, edgework and resistance. I will also outline some

relevant research of theoretical familiarity and relevance for my study. In chapter 3 I will present how the study was conducted methodologically. By utilizing documents as data, this study is a qualitative document analysis, focusing on narrative and cultural analytical approaches. I have presented ethical and philosophical considerations related to such research, as well as potential and limitations. The concrete analytical approach is also found in this part.

Chapter 4 consist of the narrative criminological analysis. Here, I present the master narrative of jihadism, and analyse it through its structural elements, characters, as well as genre and type influences. The same is done to find and analyse the narratives specifically connected to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Four concrete stories are analysed in this narrative framework to exemplify and highlight how the groups narrate, and the different constructions this implies. Chapter 5 presents the cultural approach, where I have identified and analysed how the magazines construct and give meaning to cultural elements and expressions, through the notions of style, edgework and resistance. Uniforms, weapons, symbols, music and talk are used to construct a cool appearance that is constitutive of violence. Closely connected to this cool appearance is the presentation of a dangerous lifestyle, where the edges are worked through voluntary seeking danger. Lastly, the magazines construct resistance through presenting symbolic ridicule, and ritualistic destruction of cultural artefacts.

Chapter 6 will present a "hybridized" analysis. Throughout the analysis it became clear that the frameworks of narrative and culture are not two separate entities, but rather should be used intertwined to grasp the full content of the subject at hand. This is shown when I introduce and analyse the "jihadi death frenzy", where the role of broadcasting death is highlighted. Chapter 7 consists of a concluding discussion on how the concepts can relate to radicalization. Radicalization is a complex phenomenon that researchers constantly battle with. Here, I propose the need to understand the appealing nature of the subcultural style, and the homologous relationship between style, excitement, resistance, values and practice. The productive and constitutive power of narratives is also understood as factors of radicalization. This chapter also includes a theoretical debate on how to properly acknowledge the tightly knit relationship in the intersection of culture-narrative that chapter 6 introduced. Without contextualising one with the other, I argue that they lose some of their credibility and scientific innovation and potential. If we, however, present a broader, interdisciplinary and intertextual blend of culture *and* narrative, the cultural products make sense through their role

in stories, and the stories have a credible, cultural foundation. Towards the end, I will sum up the main impressions made during the process of this study, and the concluding remarks to the thesis.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

It is often assumed that jihadists are mentally insane, uneducated, poor or have twisted religious beliefs indoctrinated from childhood, and that they substantially differ from "us". Nevertheless, research has revealed that most terrorists do not suffer from debilitating psychological diagnoses. The "poverty thesis" has largely been rejected as a necessary causal link into terrorism, and highly educated converts travel to the theatre of war to support terrorist groups (e.g. Kreuger & Malečková 2003; Lia & Skjølberg 2004; Bakker 2006; Veldhuis & Staun 2009; Rabasa & Bernad 2014). To acknowledge and develop these insights, this study draws upon frameworks of cultural and narrative criminology. These perspectives offer an alternative plausible frame of reference, and show how people may be attracted to terrorism by its distinctive and grandiose stories, seductive lifestyle of excitement, cool looks, and resistance without rejecting marginalization, psychology, religion or strain from the explanatory spectrum. As such, it seeks to humanize emotions, uncover hidden meaning and investigate social realities connected with the gruesome and brutal jihadi ideology and groupings.

2.1. Narrative Criminology

"Narrative criminology is any inquiry based on the view of stories as instigating, sustaining, or effecting desistance from harmful action. We study how narratives inspire and motivate harmful action, and they are used to make sense of harm. […] Narrative criminology also hews to a critical perspective on power and agency as constituted discursively" (Presser & Sandberg 2015a: 1).

The narrative turn in criminology happened recently, and draws upon decades of broader, sociological traditions using stories and talk as data (Polletta *et al.* 2011). In one of the most cited articles in sociology and criminology, Sykes & Matza (1957) show how offenders explain, justify and neutralize their crimes through five "techniques of neutralization". These explanations and stories, they argue, do not just explain past crimes, but also enable future crimes. A decade later, Scott & Lyman (1968) developed a sociology of talk, when they showed how accounts can "explain untoward behaviour and bridge the gap between actions and expectations" (p. 46). Maruna (2001) later analysed how offenders use stories to turn their lives around and desist from crime. Throughout the 2000s, a growing number of researchers within criminology started to pay attention to the potential of stories (for an overview, see Sandberg & Ugelvik 2016a), and Lois Presser's *The narrative of*

offenders (2009) was the first, explicit framework for narrative criminology. Hereafter, researchers have applied these insights when researching phenomena such as violence, substance abuse and drug dealing, eventually cumulating in the aforementioned anthology, marking narrative criminology's "consolidation […] as a criminological sub-discipline in its own right" (Sandberg & Ugelvik 2016a: 131). This study will take the tradition into the realm of jihadism and radicalization.

The word "narrative" in itself means "story". However, in criminology, narrative is more than just the story told. Narrative is one discursive forms (Presser & Sandberg 2015a), defined as "[…] a temporally ordered statement concerning events experienced by and/or actions of one or more protagonists" (Presser 2009: 178). Criminology conceptualizes narratives in three different ways; as a record of what happened, as a subjective interpretation of what happened, or as narrative criminology more specifically prefers, with a "constitutive view of narrative" (*ibid.:* 184). This means that narratives function to establish and organize lived experiences of the narrator, and that the narrator constructs his life through these narratives. The stories we tell are shaped by the experiences we make, and the experiences we make are understood through the way we narrate. Narratives can both "inspire and motivate harmful action, and […] make sense of harm" (Presser & Sandberg 2015a: 1). They are not important because "they are true records of what happened, but because they influence behaviour in the future" (Sandberg, 2010: 452).

Table 2: Key Concepts in Narrative Criminology

Narrative Structural Elements	Abstract; Orientation; Complicating Action; Evaluation; Resolution; Coda
Narrative Characters	Standard characters Archetype characters
Narrative Genres	Redemptive; Condemnatory Low-Memetic; Tragic; Romantic; Apocalyptic
Narrative Types	Trope; Event-Story; Life-Story Master Narrative

Structural elements

These narratives usually involve a set of key characteristics. They are usually temporal and causal, meaning that they follow events over time, where one event causes the next (Polletta *et al.* 2011). Further, they tend to follow a certain structure. Labov (1972) argues that well-formed narratives include six elements: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution and coda. The abstract introduces the theme, and the orientation defines the contextual setting. Further, the events are presented in the complicating action, and the evaluation makes the point, before the resolution is revealed, and the coda is given as a signal that the narrative is over (see also Labov & Waletzky 1967). However, not all narratives follow this structure. Some exclude several of the elements, and the abstract and coda oftentimes are omitted (Linde 1993), and some narratives have several, even contradictory, evaluations (Sandberg 2009). Nevertheless, Presser (2016) points out that the evaluation (i.e. the point) is what criminologists value the highest, and is as such the key of the story. In this study, most narratives do not follow the Labovian structure completely. Being printed in propaganda magazines, the narratives do not have the same natural, 'smooth' structure as talk and interview data, and frequently exclude abstract and coda. This itself is unimportant.

Characters

Further, narratives also have a set of easy recognizable characters, each with their own connotations, inherent backstories and meanings. Most notably, narratives have a protagonist and an antagonist – the classical "hero and villain" setup, battling each other in a continuous narrative tandem. The hero character is the driving force of the story, usually on a quest to achieve something or win a prize, and the villain attempts to stand in his way. This prize can manifest as the princess character. Other bi-roles are the helper, the false hero, the dispatcher, and the donor (Propp 1968). As (2015b) notes, these characters are not only people; objects can also be characterized. Intertwined, archetype characters are "standard characters one might expect to find in a story" (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011: 21). Whereas the characters of Propp (1968) are general for all narratives, the archetype characters are more specific. They too "unlock motives and operate as 'shorthand terms for situations'" (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011: 21), but are more oriented towards the story, rather than the storytelling. An archetype character that might be found in jihadi narrative but not in, for example, drug stories, is the crusader. He comes with the general connotations of the villain character, as well as the storied specifics of jihadism. Imbedded in this characterization is a narrative work of symbolic boundaries. These boundaries are constantly created in

storytelling, constructing self- or group-identity by opposition to other people or groups (Lamont & Molnár 2002). This boundary work can dehumanize said out-group, and legitimize violence towards them.

Genre

Narratives also take different genres, usually defined by its content and form (Presser & Sandberg 2015b). Maruna (2001) compares redemption and condemnation scripts in their effects on offender's desistance, which resemble narrative genres. He finds that those who utilize the condemnatory genre rarely take responsibility for their crime and rehabilitation, and often narrate their crimes as determined, whereas those who draw upon the redemptive genre are more likely to desist from crime. McAdams (2006) replicates this and argues that redemptive narratives can be positive in offender rehabilitation. However, he adds that they may also justify violence by drawing upon religious discourses of cleansing and salvation. Smith (2005) uses four genres to analyse how storytelling can decide declaring war or not. These four genres – low-mimesis, tragedy, romance and apocalypse – have their own connotations and implications. The low-mimetic genre generally does not infer violent potential and war, as actions are "held to be pragmatic and constrained" (Smith 2005: 24). Tragic stories emphasise suffering and despair, and the romance shows how "crisis can be resolved without the recourse to large-scale and systematic violence" (p. 26). The most dramatic genre is the apocalyptic genre, in which evil looms large, and the only solution is violence. By narrating within this genre, violence and war is legitimized, as President Bush did after 9/11 when he spoke of a war on Al-Qaeda that would not stop until every terrorist was brought to justice.

Type

Narratives also take different forms, mainly defined by what kind of event it follows, and Sandberg (2016) identifies three main forms of narrative. Life-stories are characterized by their ability to "integrate past with present, provide direction and purpose and integrate different aspects and events of life" (p. 7). They include coherent, but also contradictory, stories that make up the main storyline of storyteller's life. This coherency is what helps us "know ourselves as one person over time" (Presser & Sandberg 2015b: 94), and is "important for storytellers and, therefore, also important for researchers" (Sandberg 2016: 9). Event-stories are more concise, and accounts for an episode or event. It is less time-spanning than a life-story, but still has integral elements, and can for example revolve around the

"narrative turning points in the life-stories" (*ibid.:* 9) of the storyteller. These often follow the Labovian structure, and make a clear evaluation of the event. This can help to understand the "stories that influence crime in particular situations" (*ibid.:* 15).

Tropes, or untold stories, are single words or short phrases that "hint at familiar stories" (*ibid.:* 12). These are "located" within both life- and event-stories, and make infer cultural hegemony, subcultural affiliation, identity etc. The full narrative is "not in text, but produced by the listener in dialogical process of meaning-making" (*ibid.:* 15), and a single word – like "crusader" – itself can be an entire narrative and narration. The largest type of narrative, however, is the master (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011) or grand narrative (Lyotard 1979). These are culturally dominant stories that are relatively stable through time, and deeply imbedded into the culture, defining it at its core (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011). All of these are separate narrative forms, yet closely connected. For example, tropes can hint at master narratives or simple event-stories. Event-stories, in turn, are found within the life-story of a person, which oftentimes draws upon the master narrative of the narrator's culture.

As such, narrative is the story, and the storytelling. The story can follow a certain structure, but may also be fluid in its form. It usually involves a set of standard characters, and the more specific archetypes. They are told within different genres depending on its content and form. Also, they are thematically different in what sort of event they revolves around. Ranging from simple tropes to stories of isolated events, coherent and complex life-stories to master narratives "everyone" knows about; narrative is everywhere in talk, text and culture.

2.1.1. Narrative Criminology & Criticism

Criticism of narrative criminology is, as of yet, scarcely presented. This does not mean that the perspective is perfect, nor so insignificant that nobody cares. It simply confirms the discipline's novelty, and critics of if have yet to be published. Bucerius & Haggerty (2017), however, has posed two critical questions towards the authors of *Narrative Criminology* (Presser & Sandberg 2015a) in their book review. First, they comment on the explicit claim that "discerning the "truth" is not always important" (Sandberg 2010: 448) in narrative criminology. To this, they ask "how might our research participants react if they knew we were indifferent to the reality of their accounts of injustice, suffering and victimization?" (Bucerius & Haggerty 2017: 2). Narrative criminology's claim is, as I see it, not that the facts do not matter, nor that truth itself is insignificant. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that lies

can be equally important in understanding crime, as truth. It goes beyond the "ethnographic rationale" grounded in a positivist notion of truth that argues that truths and facts are better sources of data than lies (Sandberg 2010), to instead emphasis why and how something is told.

Secondly, they ask if narrative criminology is, in fact, the "radical departure that the editors, and Shadd Maruna in his brief introduction, portray it to be or whether it is more accurately an interesting and fruitful gloss on what has come before" (Bucerius & Haggerty 2017: 3). Surely, stories and narratives have, as noted above, been a focal point of social sciences for decades, and their claim do as such require some scrutiny. Yet, what differentiates narrative criminology 'from the bunch' is its *constitutive view of crime.*

2.1.2. Jihadi Narratives

An extensive literature review shows that criminologists pay little attention to the stories of jihadism. However, narratologists, terrorism researchers and other social scientists are more invested in researching the jihadi narratives. It is argued that jihadi narratives often revolve around a perceived war against Islam. In this story, Muslims and their countries are under attack from the West, led by the United States. The *mujahideen* (holy warriors) are battling the crusaders in their defence of the *ummah* (community). Since Islam is being attacked, all retaliatory are actions justified, and of defensive nature (these acts are often what the West conceptualizes as terrorism). Furthermore, all "good Muslims" ought to support the jihad in appropriate ways (Leuprecht *et al.* 2009).

Page, Challita & Harris (2011) analyse Al-Qaeda's narrative using framing theory. They argue that Al-Qaeda tries to narrate the situation by offering diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames, by informing the reader about the problem, how it can be solved, and why each individual should participate in this solution. Roy (2008) concurs when he argues that Al-Qaeda provides a single narrative, in which they narrate the sufferings of the *ummah*, highlights the role of the hero whom sacrifices himself to "avenge the suffering of the community" (p. 7), and the personal obligation to fight the jihad to bring down the evil West.

Halverson, Corman & Goodall (2011) presents what they call the master narratives of Islamist extremism (see also Al-Raffie 2012). Here, they analytically examine how and why radical Islamic stories and their messages are so compelling. Amongst other narratives, they list the "infidel invaders" narrative, the "grand caliphate" narrative and the "seventy-two

virgins" narrative. These narratives all derive from various *malhamah* (Armageddon) related jihadi discourses, in which the *kuffar* (infidels) are beaten in the finale battle in order to once and for all establish the worldwide *Khilafah* (Caliphate). Those who give their lives to this cause will forever live in the heavens with their seventy-two virgins at their service.

2.2. Cultural Criminology

> *"Cultural criminology […] incorporates perspectives from social theory, urban studies, media studies, existential philosophy, cultural and human geography, anthropology, social movements theory – even from the historical praxis of earlier political agitators like the Wobblies and the Situationists […] turning the kaleidoscope, looking for new ways to see crime and the social response to it"* (Ferrell, Hayward &Young 2015: 8).

The new ways in which crime is seen constitute "the placing of crime and its control in the context of culture […] viewing both crime and the agencies of control as cultural products—as creative constructs" (Hayward & Young 2004: 259). It also focuses on media's role within crime and control (e.g. Hayward & Presdee 2010). Emerging in the 90s, cultural criminology is heavily influenced by the delinquency studies of the Birmingham School (CCCS), symbolic interactionism, labelling theory and the phenomenological approach of Katz (1988) and Lyng (1990) (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015). In integrating these perspectives, cultural criminologists found common themes like "[…] a thoroughgoing relocation of criminality away from the individual and individual attributes, and into the ongoing swirl of human symbolic interaction" (Ferrell 2015: 294). Drawing upon this, the foundation for cultural criminology was discovered; "critical, holistic inquiry into the many social and cultural dynamics by which the meaning of crime and crime control is contested within a framework of unequal power" (*ibid.:* 295). Cultural dynamics, then, "carry within them the meaning of crime" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 2).

As distinctly stated by the sub-discipline's name, "culture" is the main focus of cultural criminology. Culture is seen as a symbolic form that people use to express meaning, such as "art and ceremonies but also less formal social phenomena such as gossip and everyday rituals" (Swidler 1986: 273). Crime is also one of these symbolic forms. Pedersen & Sandberg (2010) use a similar interpretation when they conceptualize a subculture as a "tool kit", from

which a person can use specific elements in "creative staging of the self" [1](p. 33). Crime, then, becomes a way to perform and express your (sub-) culture – a cultural product and creative construction (Hayward & Young 2004). It is through the culture that "'the criminal', as both person and perception, comes alive" (Ferrell 1999: 2).

Table 3: Key Concepts in Cultural Criminology

Style: Products, Objects	*Bricolage*; Communicating Difference; Revolt; Homology
Edgework: Voluntary Risk-taking	A dangerous activity; Survival skills; Individual sensation.
Resistance: Politicized Acts	Intentional Action; Opposition; Recreation of doxa

When analysing crime as cultural expressions, several concepts are emphasised. Heavily influencing the 'new' cultural criminology, the culture and delinquency studies of the CCCS are closely interconnected with it. Unlike the Chicago School's focus on strain and marginalization (see Plummer 1997 for an overview), the CCCS focuses on intentional resistance to the mainstream, and subcultural style is a key concept that is pivotal in understand how people construct their lives and give meaning to their actions.

Style

In his classical *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), Dick Hebdige argues that "the meaning of subculture is, then, always in dispute, and style is the area in which the opposing definitions clash with most dramatic force" (p. 3). The concept references the objects that are "made to mean and mean again" (*ibid.*) within the subculture, and he metaphorically terms it "'noise' (as opposed to sound)" (p. 90), indicating that sound is mainstream, accepted forms of style, whereas subcultural style is in fact 'noise' – unaccepted and unwanted. This 'noise' is what reveals the subculture's "'secret' identity and communicates its forbidden meanings" (p. 103). Whereas Hebdige (1979) sees style as mainly consistent of clothing, music, dance, speech and drugs, Ferrell (1995a) has later refined the concept. He argues that style is not just a form, a look or a fashion. Rather, it is

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[1] My translation

"a concrete element of personal and group identity, grounded in everyday practices of social life. Style is in this sense embedded in haircuts, posture, clothing, automobiles, music, and the many other avenues through which people present themselves publicly. But it also located between people, and among groups; it constitutes an essential element in collective behavior, an element whose meaning is constructed through the nuances of social interaction. When this interaction emerges within a criminalized subculture, or between its members and legal authorities, personal and collective style emerges as an essential link between cultural meaning and cultural identity" (Ferrell 1995a: 169-170, emphasis original).

Subcultural style is constructed through cultural *bricolage*, which literally translated means "tinker with something" (Hamm 1994: 131). Drawing upon Levi-Strauss (1966), Hebdige (1979) shows how a subculture alters and applies meaning to certain aesthetic and stylistic products in order to give them 'new life'. The subcultural *bricoleurs* (that is; the aesthetic and stylistic actors) "typically juxtaposes two apparently incompatible realities" (p. 106) to reconstruct and convert items into something new. As Clarke (2006) clarifies, it is "not the creation of objects and meanings from nothing, but rather the transformation and rearrangement of what is given (and 'borrowed') into a pattern which carries a new meaning, its translation to a new context, and its adaption" (p. 150). As such, the bricolage in a subculture "recreates group identity and promotes mutual recognition for members" (Brake 1980: 15) in their style.

The subcultural style serves several functions. First, the point behind the style is the "communication of a significant difference, […] and the parallel communication of a group identity" (Hebdige 1979: 102). By using style, the members engage in collective communication to make "oneself *stylistically visible*, to those both inside and outside" (Ferrell 1995a: 176, emphasis original). Simultaneously, they define their own group identity by the "development of the group in relation to its situation" (Clarke 2006: 151-152).This constant flow of communication between collectives (both subcultural and mainstream) negotiates and redefines what the subcultural style means at each point in time. Style can also be a revolt against the mainstream, usually by valuing the "perverse and the abnormal" (Hebdige 1979: 107). This resembles what others have termed resistance, to which I shall return shortly.

16

However chaotic a subculture can appear, style is also an expression of strictly defined values and ideology. This relationship is seen through the concept of homology, introduced by Willis (1978). It describes the "fit between the values and lifestyles of a group, its subjective experience and the musical forms it uses to express or reinforce its focal concerns" (Hebdige 1979: 113), or in other words the structural resonance between practice, ideology and style. It is this homologous relationship that explains how and why an item, object, or expression that seems bizarre or banal from the outside, can be pivotal within the subculture. What may seem chaotic indicates coherence and meaningfulness in certain subcultures; like for the hippies. It was "the homology between an *alternative value system* ('Tune in, turn on, drop out'), hallucogenic *drugs* and *acid rock* which made the hippy culture cohere as a 'whole way of life'" (Hebdige 1979: 113, my emphasis). Certain objects (in the hippie example; hallucinogenic drugs and acid rock) are valued and used to express style, because they support the values ("tune in, turn on, drop out"), and hold internal meaning. It is with these objects subcultural members see their central values held and reflected (Hall *et al.* 1976). This homologous relationship is important to grasp how something seemingly trivial as the social-constructivist notion of 'style' indeed holds power over behavior and crime within subcultures.

Whereas the insights of the Birmingham School are mainly drawn from British, post-war subcultures, like punks, skinheads and mods, they are also applicable to the jihadi subculture. Recall Hegghammer's (2015a; 2015b) appeal for studying the importance of clothing, songs, rituals, art, poetry etc. By drawing upon the insights of the CCCS, analysing the role of these products as style can offer a promising scope to look into the jihadi cultural architecture.

Edgework

Most criminologies and criminologists focus either on background factors, like the Chicago School (e.g. Plummer 1997), individual characteristics, like trait theories (e.g. Caspi *et al.* 1994) and life-course criminology (e.g. Moffitt 1993), or on rationality in crime (e.g. Cornish & Clarke 1986). Cultural criminology, however, emphasise the importance of incorporating phenomenological and foreground factors when explaining crime. This is done by investigating the individual motivations of deviant acts through, for example, the notion of edgework. Most notably developed by Lyng (1990), the edgework perspective focuses on the

sensational immediacy of crime, mainly through the voluntary participating in high risk activities that "involve a clearly observable threat to one's physical or mental well-being or one's sense of an ordered existence" (p. 857). The three primary aspects of edgework is the activity itself, the skillset required to perform it and the individual subjective sensations in the performance of it. In these acts of "extreme voluntary risk taking" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 74), individuals negotiates the threat of damage or death by using their skills and individual abilities (Lyng 1990).

In order to do so, the actor needs to be able to "maintain control over a situation that verges on complete chaos, a situation most people would regard as entirely uncontrollable" (*ibid.:* 859). Because of their inherent survival skills, they are able to control the risk and transcend over 'most people'. This makes edgework subcultures almost elitist in nature, and is why edgeworkers typically do not like activities in which their fate is at the hands of someone else; they thrive upon having to rely on their own skillset. This amplifies the impression that the risk is voluntarily taken, and that skill decides the outcome, not fate. Further, edgework considers the subjective sensations involves with risk taking. Lyng (1990) suggests a list of feelings the edgeworkers may experience, including self-realization, self-actualization, self-determination, fear, immortality, alterations in perceptions and consciousness, oneness with the object and environment and "hyperreality" (pp. 860-861).

In Lyng's (1990) research, the edgework perspective was used to analyse skydiving (a legal activity). Others have applied it to criminal acts like drug taking (e.g. McGovern & McGovern 2011; Wilson 2012), anarchy (e.g. Ferrell 2001), graffiti (e.g. Ferrell 1996a), and gang violence (e.g. Garot 2015). In criminal acts, one of the edges to be worked can be the legal edges, like CCTV cameras, anti-terrorism legislations or criminalization of new offenses. In such view, "crime is not mundane but the revolt against the mundane, rules are transgressed because they are there, risk is a challenge not a deterrent" (Young 2004: 391).

The edgework perspective is applicable to jihadism because it is inherently dangerous, and individuals within the subculture likely face the challenges like Lyng (1990) describes. *Khilafah* warriors voluntarily engaging in battle with Coalition forces, Al-Qaeda terrorists living in the AFPAK-mountains, and home-grown radicals making bombs and planning attacks all negotiate risk from day to day, relying on their own skill to stay alive, stay safe and stay hidden, only to suddenly and voluntarily re-engage in risky activities to kill Westerners,

re-take territory or perform the *hirjah*. As such, theories of edgework and foreground factors shed light on some of the sensations related with part-taking in, planning of, and voluntarily attractions to the jihadi subculture, groups and the dangerous activities.

Resistance

Furthermore, resistance is a concept that is highlighted within cultural criminology, in the discipline's attempts to understand the "connections between crime, activism and political resistance" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 17). Subcultures are readily seen as "symbolic universes in which crime takes on political meaning as a form of resistance" (Bevier 2015: 42). However, the concept is vaguely defined – both in cultural criminology and social sciences more generally. Because of this relative conceptual ambiguity, some have claimed that "resistance is always there" (Young 2007: 77), and the concept has been deployed to a wide array of criminal acts and criminalized subcultures. Commonly seen as "nonconformist behavior that questions the legitimacy of the current social order" (McFarland 2004: 1251), it revolves around some kind of "active behavior, whether verbal, cognitive, or physical" (Hollander & Einwohner 2004: 538) performed in "opposition to someone or something else" (*ibid.:* 539). This 'something else' refers to power and institutions of power. This is in line with Foucauldian scholarship, which claims that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 1978: 95). The two concepts work as a pair, and resistance cannot occur without power – "domination leads to resistance, which leads to the further exercise of power, provoking further resistance, and so on" (Hollander & Einwohner 2004: 548). It is this social interaction that helps the powers to define what the discursive truth is (Foucault 1971). As such, social order is "never fixed but rather is always being negotiated or contested" (Williams 2011: 89) through resistance.

Hollander & Einwohner (2004) try to clarify the conceptual confusion, by focusing on the analytical qualities of resistance. They propose a typological view on resistance, in which they include overt, covert, unwitting, target-defined, externally-defined, missed, attempted, and not resistance. Especially the overt resistance, they argue, has a solid foundation within research, including, for example, collective social movements and revolutions, and individuals fighting back against sexual assault – acts that "virtually all scholars would agree […] should classified as resistance" (p. 545). Overt resistance are intentional acts that are recognized by targets and observers. On other forms, like covert, attempted and externally-defined resistance, researchers are more ambiguous in their definitions, they conclude.

Williams (2011), on the other hand, criticizes this typology for its simplicity, and vouches for understanding resistance as dimensional, not categorical. He introduces "passive to active", "micro to macro" and "covert to overt" as fitting continuums. On the passive end of the scale, one can find most of the stylistic resistance from CCCS' research, characterized as "symbolic, rather than socio-economic" (Williams 2011: 95). The active end, on the other hand, is characterized by its "power to shock" (p. 97), like "highly theatrical modes of street protest enacted by young anti-corporate globalization activists (Juris & Sitrin 2016: 33). The micro-to-macro scale considers, like in other contexts, whether it's an individual, small-group, large scale or collective act. On the cover-to-overt scale, he notes that whereas the covert resistance is acts that go unnoticed, and the overt ones are "hard to miss" (p. 103).

Hayward & Schuilenburg (2014) provide the cultural criminological touch upon the concept, and argue that an act cannot be resistant if it "goes unnoticed or does not threaten the observer or the surrounding environment" (p.25). As such, the "covert", "externally-defined" and "attempted" resistances of Hollander & Einwohner (2004) would not be criminological resistance *per se*. Hayward has noted elsewhere (2016) that "this tendency to over ascribe political resistance to a range of cultural forms does not, as our critics point out, help CC's cause." (p. 305). Furthermore, Hayward & Schuilenburg (2014) argue for an understanding of the concept involving a three-staged process. In stage 1, inventive forms of resistance emerge. These forms are, in stage 2, "adopted by the public and the marketing/advertising industries, and then developed into the default position of a post-political late modern consumer society" (Hayward 2016: 310), before they finally are developed into routines and habits on a societal level. Resistance is 'complete' when it constitutes a "cultural invention" that is "quickly *imitated*" and transformed "into the default position" (Hayward & Schuilenburg 2014: 32, emphasis in original). Conceptualizing resistance as creative acts, the insights of Hayward & Schuilenburg (2014) are intriguing and innovative. However, they too are ambiguous on what acts really constitute resistance – and their model targets "resistance in the context of Western liberal democracies" (p. 23), where stage 3 in resistance is increasingly rare. Nevertheless, many resistant acts within subcultures hold strong meaning and local creative potential, but never "reach" stage 2. Regrettably, Hayward makes no attempt to adjust these shortcomings, or develop the creative potential of these insights when revisiting the topic (2016). Notwithstanding, resistance as a creative act is a conceptualization I will bring forward in the analysis.

Resistance can, when conceptualized properly, enrich the cultural criminological focus with agentic features. Resistance towards the mainstream is not understood to necessarily be explained by strain and failure to achieve, but rather by dissatisfactions with, for example, values, ideology, or lifestyle. This implies that people do not perform resistance because they fail to assimilate, but rather because they do not agree with the mainstream and *want* to oppose it. Crime is resistance when its meaning is "transcending dogmatic images of thought" so that it "brings about the 'new' in a situation […] and resists the norms of a certain situation" (Hayward & Schuilenburg 2014: 30). It is by resistance they create a sense of control over a situation, by breaking with the mediated control mechanisms of the regulated world around them.

The concept of resistance is clearly an analytical tool that fits the jihadi subculture, seeing as how the propaganda magazines constantly strive towards constructing opposing realities, resistance and indeed hatred for its (countless) enemies – that is; more of less every non-jihadist (and sometimes even other jihadists). They do not "support the structures of domination" (Hollander & Einwohner*:* 549), nor is their resistance "impotent" (Williams 2011: 95) or "engaged in within the relative privacy of the subcultural space" (*ibid.:* 104). In fact, their subcultural repertoire of resistance is pure, potent, active and overtly opposing of nature, which makes the concept especially interesting for analysing the jihadi culture. Notably, terrorist acts are clearly resistance of nature. However, as stated elsewhere, the terrorist acts themselves are not the focus area for this study; instead, it aims to investigate the cultural architecture and products. In the case of resistance, then, the thesis will present other forms of resistance performed in the culture and presented through the magazines.

Between Style, Edgework & Resistance
Importantly, these concepts are closely related. The subcultural style is the broadest of the three, and the two others can be seen as enactment of style. For example, subcultural can resist through style (Hebdige 1979). Some have argued to analyse resistance as edgework (Rajah 2007), and violence can be seen as edgework and resistance, as well as a product of, and related to, style. However, they also differ in their core. Whereas the subcultural style is mostly a social construction, both resistance and edgework are more clearly refined as behavioural acts, that is; something one can 'do'. In this thesis, I will see style as the main element within the subculture, constructed through the use of products (like clothing, music).

The style gives meaning to certain acts, and is as such expressed and enacted through edgework experiences and politicised through resistance.

2.2.1. Cultural Criminology & Criticism

Cultural criminology has faced criticism concerning the ambiguity of the concept of culture (e.g. O'Brien 2005; Webber 2007). O'Brien (2005) investigates how Jeff Ferrell uses culture as a "practical activity or interactional concoction in which the conceptual devil lies in the concrete detail" (p. 600) in his study of graffiti in Denver (Ferrell 1996). However, the critique notes that "culture", when applied to the control apparatus, changes from "an indexical concept […] [to] a sentimental concept" (O'Brien 2005: 600). The agents of control become "one-dimensional ciphers" (p. 603) rather than creative agents. In fact, most central works in criminology can be characterized by this "important conceptual contradictions around precisely what is meant by culture", he argues (p. 605). However, as Hayward (2016) clearly shows to rebuke the un-nuanced, 11 year old critique of O'Brien (2005), cultural criminologists do indeed focus on agents of control as well, and that the study of state crime and state agents have come a long way since 2005.

Others (e.g. Downes & Rock 2007; Carlen 2011; the aforementioned O'Brien (2005) also touches upon it) have criticised cultural criminology for merely being "new wine in an old bottle" (Hayward 2016: 301), in the sense that they present old perspectives as innovate. Much like the criticism of narrative criminology, this is largely true, but also unproblematic, seeing as how most cultural criminologists never argued that they do *not* draw upon older traditions in their works. Indeed, cultural criminologists' goals are bringing "interdisciplinarity and intellectual pluralism to the study of crime" (*ibid.:* 301) to integrate the best of classical criminological works with developments both outside and inside the field to drive the research on crime further.

Further, it is argued that cultural criminology ignores gender by mainly focusing on masculine activities (Naegler & Salman 2016), and Rafter (2004) termed it a "kind of bad boy criminology" (p. 410). Whereas the gender critics are mostly right in their view that cultural criminologists *do* focus mostly on men and masculine activities and phenomenology, this is not due to a lack of interest in gender or feminism – simply because men offend more. Cultural criminologists do not want to "making either the sex of the researcher or the researcher's subject a special virtue" (Hayward, Ferrell & Young 2015: 24), and many

22

cultural criminological works are influenced by prominent feminist scholars, like Kathleen Daly and Meda Chensey-Lind (Hayward 2016). Indeed, Ferrell & Sanders (1995) early on coined cultural criminological research methods to be "'feminist' in their epistemological assumptions" (p. 323), emphasising the lived experiences related to crime, not the gender of those experience them.

Cultural criminology is also criticised for romanticising resistance, through the "tendency to embrace marginalized groups and to find among them an indefatigable dignity in the face of domination" (Hayward, Ferrell & Young 2015: 21). As Ferrell (1995b) notes, researchers must avoid "employing the concept of resistance so broadly and vaguely that it becomes a sort of fuzzy accolade applicable to almost anything kids do" (p. 75), by attempting to situate themselves "inside the particular experiences of everyday life" (*ibid.:* 76).

2.2.2. Jihadi Culture

Cultural criminology and research on subcultures has paid more than attention to terrorism and jihadism than narrative criminology, with Mark Hamm as the leading figure. In a study on a right-wing extremist group in the US he identifies three key characteristics with any terrorist subculture. Their apocalyptic nature, he argues, is seductive through its "[…] specific *ideology*, […] supported and sustained by a specific paramilitary *style* […] and *musical expressions* of ideology and style" (Hamm 2004: 326, emphasis in original). Subcultures are closely knit networks where "symbols, language and knowledge […] gives meaning" (p. 327) to the individuals. Research on terrorist subcultures, he goes on, needs to consider in-group feelings of hatred for an out-group (the "traditional" emphasis in sociology and social movement theory), but also the cultural criminological inspired cool and seductive elements of it. Conclusively, he notes that subcultures indeed matter because they contain "powerful dimensions of style and meaning that *defines* the landscape of religious and political violence" (p. 337, my emphasis). These insights are also valuable when analysing jihadi subcultures.

Pisoiu (2015) applies the theses of the Chicago and Birmingham Schools on select cases within German jihadi and right-wing groups. Her findings suggest that not all jihadists are from marginalized and strained families and lives – and as such, the CCCS' insights are more applicable. She claims that these individuals do not necessarily "*want* to assimilate to

mainstream culture, indeed they *resist* middle-class dominance" (p. 12, emphasis in original), and that the jihadi subcultural style is a means to this end. She goes on to say that status frustration "did *not occur because individuals had failed* to achieve or integrate in the standard context" (p. 16, emphasis in original) but rather because the jihadists were unhappy with the cultural values. As such, radicalization and jihadism can be seen as resistance to the cultural paradigms. The cultural style becomes the best way to redefine one's self, and to reconstruct one's identity into something more preferable.

Cottee & Hayward (2011) examines the emotional motives for engaging in terrorism. They argue that terrorism should be understood as more than politically motivated violence, and that the feeling of adrenaline, and the "rush" associated with doing violence and wreaking havoc can be seductive. This "desire for excitement" (p. 966) is not unlike some professional soldier's motivations, and has to be analysed in context of the culture. To most people it may not make sense to *want* to risk your life in jihad (or to put your life on the line to battle it) just for the sake of excitement. Yet, many conformist people seek the edgework experiences (Lyng 1990). Their desire for excitement is, however, expressed through legal and non-deviant means that still allow them to be attentive of the potential for self-destruction they desire. Furthermore, Cottee & Hayward (2011) also shed light on the desire for an ultimate meaning (p. 973), and the desire for glory (p. 975) as other important attractions that might seduce and tempt people into joining jihadi groups.

Other theoretically adjacent studies have been conducted on the cultural architecture of jihadism, like Hemmingsen (2014). She finds, much like Pisoiu (2015), that Danish jihadists construct a counter-cultural togetherness resisting and opposing Danish values. The culture centres on the narrative of *Sharia* and godly superiority, as well as the apocalyptic narrative of the all-ending war. She also examines rituals and cultural expression, and their possible seductiveness.

Thomas Hegghammer at FFI is currently editing an anthology on jihadi culture, tentatively named *Jihadi culture: What militant Islamists do when they're not fighting*[2]. Outlining his intentions in a speech (Hegghammer 2015a), he examines the socio-cultural practices of jihadists. He stresses the importance of everyday life activities in the jihadi

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[2] Hegghammer's CV, http://hegghammer.com/_files/CV_-_June_2015.pdf, 02/03/17

subculture. After all, he argues, they are not fighting more than a fraction of their time. Videos, pictures, rituals, clothes, cooking and jokes are all part of these non-combat activities (see also Hegghammer 2015b). These can be coined under one term – cultural style. It is also important to analyse and discuss what the jihadi subcultural style consists of, and how it can function as tempting, exciting and even radicalizing.

2.3. The Narrative-Subcultural Connection

Cultural and narrative criminology are closely related as sub-disciplines and talking about narrative without culture – or vice versa – neglects their important interconnected relationship. Narratives are "both products of and contributors to the nature of existent cultures" (Al-Raffie 2012: 13), and Sandberg (2016) argues that "cultures and subcultures are created, upheld and crumble through the telling of stories" (p. 1). Indeed, Katz (2016) contend that narrative criminology could "seen as a sub-type of the latter, depending on how phenomenological one is inclined to go" and that "cultural fragments are not necessarily separable from narratives" (p. 247). Therefore, the cultural setting within which the narratives are constructed are pivotal in order to give the narratives meaning, and the narratives within a culture equally important to understand said culture. Following this, two stories that are seemingly alike or similar, can have different, even opposing, narrative meanings depending on cultural context. Further, it is highlighted that individuals only utilize a certain set of narratives, made available through socio-cultural affiliation. Consequently, narratives are both individual and collective. Drawing upon this, narratives can shed light on the narrator's life, behaviour, identity, values, cultural affiliation, and "[…] reflect, and help us understand, the complex nature of values, identities, cultures and communities" (Sandberg 2010: 448), of the people within. This important relationship will come into play in the later chapter of the thesis, and a hybridized analysis in the intersection between cultural and narrative criminology will be conducted to add this important tandem to the narrative and cultural criminological scholarship.

2.4.   Why a Narrative-Subcultural Focus on Jihadism?

Why should we look at jihadism through the lens of cultural and narrative criminology? Most studies on the topics focus on the psychological (e.g. Horgan 2005, 2008), sociological (e.g. Khosrokhavar 2005, 2009), or social movement related (e.g. Sageman 2004, 2008) factors of radicalization processes. Alternatively, they analyse the ideological and political aspects of jihadism (e.g. Euben 2002; Kepel 2002). As important and insightful these studies are – in fact, several of them are used extensively in this thesis – there are aspects of jihadism

and radicalization they do not grasp to the fullest extent. Hemmingsen (2014) claims that jihadism is "something that attracts individuals for various reasons and is used for various purposes" (p. 1), and Nesser (2009) notes that individuals are drawn towards jihadism for a variety of reasons. This study agrees.

Analysing the complex narratives and cultural architecture may make some sense of what seems senseless. It can help by "stressing the importance of human experience and agency in the conduct of war, insurgency and counter insurgency" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 128), and show how something (seemingly) trivial as storytelling, clothes, music, rituals and adrenaline in fact are powerful forces within a subculture. By focusing on capturing the immediacy, feelings, expressions and resistance connected with *being jihadi*, a cultural and narrative criminological focus can move beyond background factors, individual explanations, religion and ideology, and introduce a phenomenological analysis of why some people becomes jihadists.

2.5. Epistemology

Epistemologically, narrative criminology draws upon narrative psychology, ethnomethodology, cultural structuralism, postmodernism (Presser & Sandberg 2015a), and cultural criminology on subcultural criminology and interactionism (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015). They are parts of the larger social-constructivist tradition of the social sciences, in which knowledge is always defined as something socially mediated and constructed, and interpretation is key achieve knowledge about the phenomena at hand. Philosopher Charles Taylor (1971) sees interpretation as "an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study […] which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory in one way or another, unclear" (p. 3). Truth, in social-constructivism, is no definite or objective thing that a researcher can magically unlock (Smith & Hodkinson 2005), but rather something the researcher needs to interpret. The knowledge this study attempts to achieve, is about the jihadi narratives and subcultural styles, as they are constructed in the propaganda magazines *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah.* As Hacking (1999) suggests, the point of constructivism is to highlight that "X need not have existed, or need not be at all as it is. X, or X as it is at present, is not determined by the nature of things; it is not inevitable" (p. 6). Thus, jihadism, jihadi narratives or jihadi subcultural style are not inevitable and stable units, but rather "contingent upon human culture and human decisions – contingent upon the theories, texts, conventions,

practices, and conceptual schemes of particular individuals and groups of people in particular places and times" (Mallon 2006: 94). They are, in their nature, social constructions.

As such, the findings, analyses and insights gained from this thesis are not *the* truth, but rather *a* truth, in the ever-changing continuum of knowledge.

3.   METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative analysis of officially published propaganda magazines produced by the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. In the following chapter, I will present the data and provide background information (3.1.), explain how and why this approach is used, and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses (3.2.), discuss ethical and philosophical considerations around the thesis (3.3.) before the concrete analytical approach will be outlined (3.4.).

3.1.   Dataset

The dataset consists of 32 magazines, 15 produced by Al-Qaeda and 17 by the Islamic State, which to date[3] is the full catalogue of the three magazines *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah.* The magazines are all easily accessible on the internet and are, for the purpose of this thesis, all downloaded from Aaron Zelin's www.jihadology.net.[4]. The entire dataset is presented in Table 1. In total, the dataset consists of 2001 pages. The dataset is inconsistent in terms of paging outlay, and some editions operate with 1 numeric page per PDF page, while others operate with 2 numeric pages per PDF page. This thesis will reference the magazines exclusively using the actual numeric page (e.g. "*Inspire* #7: 38", even though *Inspire* #7 only has 20 PDF pages). Any and all reference regarding paging from here on out will follow this logic. Importantly, the study is not a content analysis *per se*. The emphasis is the structural presentations of narrative and cultural constructions, and there will as such not be a breakdown of each magazine's content, and some magazines may be excluded and not referenced in the finish version of the thesis.

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[3] "To date" refers to October 2016. Other magazines have been released after this study was conducted

[4] www.jihadology.net is an academic website, described as a "clearinghouse of jihadist primary sources".

Table 3: Dataset

Al-Qaeda's *Inspire* Magazine	Published date (as supplied by www.jihadology.net)
Inspire # 1	30 June 2010
Inspire # 2	11 October 2010
Inspire # 3: "$4,2000"	20 November 2010
Inspire # 4: "The Ruling on Dispossessing the Disbelievers Wealth in Dar al-Harb"	10 January 2011
Inspire # 5: "The Tsunami of Change"	29 March 2011
Inspire # 6: "Sadness, Contentment & Aspiration"	19 July 2011
Inspire # 7: "The Greatest Special Operation of All Time"	27 September 2011
Inspire # 8: "Targeting Dar al-Harb Populations"	2 May 2012
Inspire # 9: "Winning on the Ground"	2 May 2012
Inspire # 10: "We Are All Usama"	1 March 2013
Inspire # 11: "Who & Why"	30 May 2013
Inspire # 12: "Shattered: A Story About Change"	14 March 2014
Inspire # 13 : "Neurotmesis: Cutting the Nerves and Isolating the Head"	24 December 2014
Inspire # 14: "Assassination Operations"	9 September 2015
Inspire # 15: "Professional Assassinations"	24 May 2016
Islamic State's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines	
Dabiq #1: "The Return of the Khilafah"	5 July 2014
Dabiq #2: "The Flood"	27 July 2014
Dabiq #3: "A Call to Hirjah"	31 August 2014
Dabiq #4: "The Failed Crusade"	12 October 2014
Dabiq #5: "Remaining and Expanding"	22 November 2014
Dabiq #6: "Al-Qa'idah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within"	30 December 2014
Dabiq #7: "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Extinction of the Greyzone"	12 February 2015
Dabiq #8: "Shari'ah Alone Will Rule Africa"	30 March 2015
Dabiq #9: "They Ploy and Allah Plots"	21 May 2015
Dabiq #10: "The Law of Allah or the Laws of Men"	13 July 2015
Dabiq #11: "From the Battle of al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions"	9 September 2015
Dabiq #12: "Just Terror"	18 November 2015
Dabiq# 13: "The Rafidah: From Ibn Saba' to the Dajjal"	19 January 2016
Dabiq #14: "The Murtadd Brotherhood"	13 April 2016
Dabiq #15: "Break the Cross"	31 July 2016
Rumiyah #1	5 September 2016
Rumiyah #2	4 October 2016

3.1.1. Al-Qaeda's *Inspire*

Inspire is Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's official internet magazine, made by the group's *al-Malahem* media foundation. As the first English publication associated with the group, its first edition hit the internet during the summer of 2010. Since then, it has been published in 15 editions, the last of which was released in May 2016. The purpose of the magazine is defined during the first few pages, where they quote a verse from the Qur'an: "Allah says: 'And inspire the believers to fight' [al Anfal: 65]. It is from this verse that we derive the name of our new magazine" (*Inspire* #1: 2). *Inspire* is Al-Qaeda's top thinker, American Anwar Al-Awlaki's masterpiece whom, together with fellow (Pakistani-)American jihadist Samir Khan, wanted to reach out to a broader audience. The magazines are slick in production, and look strikingly Western. As Picart (2015) notes, they are the "the *Sports Illustrated* of jihad" (p. 361, emphasis in original). After Al-Awlaki and Khan were killed by an American drone strike in September 2011, several unknown editors has picked up the pace

and produced the magazines from there on out (Huey 2015a). Thematically, the magazines focus on encouraging attacks on the West, reliving and celebrating 9/11, hailing Osama Bin Landen in life and death, and feature distinct, reoccurring columns like "Open Source Jihad" and "What to Expect in Jihad". Descriptively for its impact in jihadism, a copy of *Inspire* was found in the backpack of the Tsarnaev brothers after the Boston Marathon bombings (Picart 2015). As the first of its kind, *Inspire* was an innovative way for jihadists to spread their propaganda, and the magazine is known as the inspiration for other likeminded groups' magazines, such as Taliban's *Azan, Al Risalah* of the Mujahideen of Shaam group and later, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* (Ingram 2016). The magazines vary from 23 pages (edition 3) to 112 pages (edition 13). In total, *Inspire* 1-15 has 983 pages.

3.1.2. Islamic State's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*

Dabiq is the officially publicized magazine of the Islamic State, and is produced by the group's *al-Hayat* Media Center. It is published in French, German, English, Russian and Arabic (Christien 2016). The first edition was published July 5th 2014, and the last July 31st 2016. *Dabiq* is named after a northern Syrian town. Although being small in sense of inhabitants and areal, *Dabiq* town is of massive importance for the jihadists. In Salafi-jihadism, *Dabiq* is the place where the finale battle will occur. A *hadith* states that "The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq" (Sahih Muslim 2897: Book 41, Hadith 6924)[5]. The purpose Dabiq magazine is presented in its first edition as creating a "periodical magazine focusing on issues of tawhid, manhaj, hijrah, jihad, and jama'ah" (*Dabiq* #1: 3). The release of the first edition of the magazine concurred with IS (then; ISIL/ISIS) leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi officially declaring the establishment of the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq and renaming the group to the Islamic State. Varying from 42 (edition 3) to 83 (edition 7) pages, *Dabiq* spans over a total of 942 pages.

Rumiyah is the second official magazine of the IS, and is also produced by the *al-Hayat* Media Center. It has been published in 2 editions to date, the first being released September 6th, and the second October 4th 2016. The name means Rome in ancient Arabic, and is a reference to the entire "Christian" West, not just Italy and its capital. *Rumiyah* is *Dabiq's* successor, and has the same creative and thematic layout. Both of *Rumiyah*'s editions are 38 pages long, making them 76 pages in total.

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[5] See http://sunnah.com/muslim/54/44 for the entire hadith.

3.2.   Propaganda Magazines as Data

This study uses propaganda magazines as the source of data, and draws upon qualitative method, more specifically document analysis. In the following, I will outline the methodological steps taken, and which criteria these follow. I will discuss potential strengths and weaknesses with the approach, and comment on ethical and philosophical considerations that affected the process of the research project at hand. Lastly, I will explain shortly how the theories have been concretized into analytical tools and steps.

3.2.1.   Qualitative Criteria

Qualitative research is usually judged through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. These are modified criteria, drawn from the quantitative validity, reliability and objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln 1998), and are suited for constructivist social research. Like Bryman (2012) notes, if there can be several interpretations about a phenomenon, "it is the feasibility or credibility of the account that a researcher arrives at that is going to determine its acceptability to others" (p. 390). This can be achieved by ensuring that the study is carried out in account with good practice, and by member validation. The latter is impossible for this study, as there are no *direct* objects of study, and sending the thesis to the authors of *Dabiq, Rumiyah* or *Inspire* is quite clearly impossible. The former, however, is strived towards by being as epistemologically, theoretically, methodologically and analytically pragmatic and sound as possible.

Transferability is achieved by creating as thick descriptions of the phenomenon as possible (Geertz 1973), and by developing and utilizing 'cultureless' frameworks of analysis. This allows for both internal (i.e. from Al-Qaeda and IS, to jihadism in general) and external (i.e. from jihadism to other forms of extremisms and subcultures) transferability. Dependability is achieving by grounding the research in formerly conducted and accepted works and concepts.

Objective conformability is impossible to achieve when following social-constructivist episteme. However, as Bryman (2012) notes, the researcher should "act in good faith; in other words, it should be apparent that he or she has not overtly allowed personal or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of researcher and the finding deriving from it" (pp. 392-393). Although this study does indeed follow theoretical frameworks, the data are

not 'forced' upon them. Not everything can be narrative or cultural style, and this has to be acknowledged.

3.2.2. Document Analysis

Following the choice of data, this study is a document analysis. Bowen (2009) notes that such analysis "involves skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation" (p. 32), and this study has followed these steps. Step one was done to organize and code the data into main segments, and is as such descriptive of nature. Reading *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* was, initially, a time consuming and tough process – taken its content and length into to consideration. However, I tried to maintain an analytical approach throughout the blood, severed heads and extravagant descriptions of murder and terrorism. First, I noted all the magazines' release dates and lengths (e.g. "*Inspire* edition 1, published summer 2010, 67 pages*"). Thereafter, I read the table of contents in each edition, in order to get an overview of each individual magazine. Doing so enabled the coding of the data in detail for later analyses. I have noted what each section is named, a summarizing sentence, and its page span (e.g. "*What to expect in Jihad [1],* pp. 45-48*, describes what people participating in the jihad may expect, like living outdoors"). Using "[1]" indicates that this column will reoccur in later editions. I have also translated and noted the Arabic words, phrases, and jargon that typically reoccur in the magazines. After reading the table of contents and briefly reading the sub-sections, I have noted down my thoughts about each magazine as a whole.

In step two, I have read the magazines in detail, involving "a careful, more focused re-reading and review of the data" (Bowen 2009: 32). Following Presser's (2010) notes, I have "generate[d] themes of interest based on intuition as well as past research on the topics with which I am concerned" (p. 439) when I coded the data, in order to reflect on what one may spot when reading the jihadi propaganda under the scopes of narrative and cultural criminology. As such, the data have been coded into the two main segments "narratives" and "cultural style & expressions".

Step three has been done by interpreting the data in light of cultural and narrative criminology. This study, being one of social-constructivist nature, relies heavily on this part, and the analytical approached used is described in detail below.

3.2.3. Why Magazines

I have chosen to this methodological approach for several reasons. First and foremost, this approach allows for a readily available dataset. As Silke (2008) notes, nearly all studies of jihadists have been conducted using second hand material. Exceptionally few studies have used actual first-hand, qualitative data (for examples, see Della Porta 1995; Oliver & Steinberg 2005; Speckard 2012; Hamm 2013), and media reports, court and police document as well as movies, pictures and sound clips published by jihadists themselves are the most common approaches. Using propaganda magazines as data follows in these methodological footsteps, and the data collection itself is efficient and relatively non-time-consuming. As Bowen (2009) notes, such approach is indeed more a case of data *selection,* rather than collection.

Secondly, the dataset is not obtrusive or reactive. As such, they are unaffected by the research process. Whereas ethnographic research often meets concerns of researcher intrusion and influence, document data are stable and neutral (Bowen 2009). Third, the magazines provide a sizeable pool of data that is manageable within the time frame of the study. The total of 2001 pages used gives a wide and broad picture of the jihadi culture and narratives.

Fourth, the choice of propaganda magazines allows for incorporating both the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the study. IS, being the most prominent jihadi group in the contemporary world, is the most researched group within jihadism today. As such, using *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* allows the research to be relevant. Further, adding *Inspire* to the dataset provides insight into the IS' predecessors and former kings of jihad – Al-Qaeda. Few years ago they had monopoly on defining the jihadi culture and narratives, but they are now challenged by a new actor. Therefore, using *Inspire* allows the research to not only focus on the Islamic State, but also looks into Al-Qaeda, giving it both comparative and historical value.

Fifth, propaganda magazines are especially interesting when analysing narratives and cultural style, despite receiving little attention from researchers on terrorism (Huey 2015a). As Cottee (2011a) notes, the lack of available ethnographic data does not infer a lack of data all together, and second hand material – propaganda magazines in particular – can provide unique and valuable insights when asking the "what", "how" and "why" of the social-constructivist realm of jihadi narrative and subculture, as these magazines are created by the

constructors and discursive powers of the narrative and subcultural realities. This fact provides solid data and insight into subcultural constructions like styles and narratives. As such, the subcultural expressions found in the dataset can be seen as either inherent in the subculture (i.e. the magazines' editors draw upon them 'unconsciously' because they use them in their everyday lives) or strategically used in the magazines (i.e. because said editors knows they 'work' for individuals). Either case gives credibility to claim that the expressions used in the magazines also are used 'on the ground' in everyday situations.

3.2.4. Limitations

Bowen (2009) notes that document analysis may be limited by insufficient detail, low irretrievability and biased selectivity. However, all of these possible concerns are accounted for in this study. As mentioned, propaganda analyses hold immense potential in understanding the narratives and cultural styles used in jihadism, because the propaganda magazines are officially produced by what is arguably the constructor and distributor of the concepts. The irretrievability issue is non-existent, as these documents are spread widely on the internet, and collected by several research websites like www.jihadology.net and others. Lastly, the problem with biased selectivity is more complex. Choosing Al-Qaeda and Islamic State propaganda may neglect other jihadist groups and their narratives and styles, and the findings may as such be insufficient when considering what the *jihadi* narratives and styles are – however, these groups are indubitably the two leading groups within jihadism. Whereas other jihadist groups may have differing narratives and styles, they are likely to be inspired by the "big two", and draw heavily upon them when they narrate and style their subculture.

On a more theoretical level, one may ask how it is possible to conduct phenomenological inspired analyses on these kinds of data. After all, they are not produced through the fields' preferred methodological approaches – interviews and ethnographies (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015; Presser & Sandberg 2015b). As Cottee (2011a) notes, in order to "fully grasp the culture of any group it is necessary to view it up close and indeed from ''the inside'': from the subjective perspective of those who receive and remake it" (p. 743). Although this may lead to a lack of immediacy and relations between the researcher and the researched, it is, as noted, extremely difficult to conduct such up-close studies of jihadists. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the expressions used in the magazines also are used on the ground, making this study phenomenological by proxy.

3.3. Ethical & Philosophical Considerations

There are relatively few ethical and philosophical pitfalls when using these documents as data. However, some come to mind. Research on jihadism in general can also raise a few questions that are worthy a discussion. First, the large body of work done on radical Islam may give the impression that these ideologies and groups are more representative for Islam than they in fact are. As such, this focus may stigmatize Muslims who do not support the Salafi-Jihadism movements, and label them as terrorists. Following this, the jihadi focus from academia and media may participate in creating a moral panic about regular, non-jihadi Muslims. Even though some studies suggests that relatively large portions of the Muslim population see the "War on Terror" as a "War on Islam" – like jihadists do – there is only a small percentage that see the jihadi means as justified, and even fewer would commit them themselves (Leuprecht *et al.* 2009).The focus on jihadism may, paradoxically, split communities and amplify Islamophobia if people misread the research or media publications. Future studies ought to focus on, for example, the active narrative, discursive and ideological resistance to jihadism within Muslim groups, communities and cultures, or on how moderate Muslims frame their narratives in the Western cultures. Studies on counter-narratives are being done (see e.g. Leuprecht *et al.* 2009, 2010; Al-Raffie 2012; Holtmann 2013), and is a good place to start.

The role of the researcher is typically a theme for ethnographic and interview based research. However, I wish to shed light on it for this thesis as well. As noted above, reading the magazines were at times a demanding task, granted the graphical pictures and descriptions of severed heads, people shot through their forehead etc. As such, it was important to admit that these images may influence the researcher, in for example his or her view on Islam, own wellbeing, or cloud the analytical judgment through frustration, anger or sadness. As such, it has been beneficial for me to have off-days, where I didn't read the magazines at all or even touched upon the thesis. These valuable breaks has refreshed the mind and allowed for an analytical view on the carnage throughout the thesis.

Lastly, and intertwined, the way in which this thesis utilize the frequent presentations of death needs to be discussed. Dealing with death is – sadly, but also importantly – a major part of researching jihadism. Death as a core value of the ideology will be discussed at length, but the thesis will *not* use pictures of dead people, even though visual representations may be analysed and utilized, for several reasons. Firstly, most of the dead people are often mutilated

in some way (gunshot to the head, severed head, open gut etc.). This makes it extremely sensitive material, and I take reservation against putting these pictures on print. Further, many of dead are children, which make it even worse. In the thesis, I have described the *manner* in which they have died as "of less importance". This is in no way to infer that dead children are of less importance, nor that it is not tragic or brutal. However, death itself is not analysed; the meanings, constructions and functions of *broadcasting* death are.

3.4. Doing a Narrative Criminology of Jihadism

Narrative criminologists value what is narrated, and how it is narrated (Presser & Sandberg 2015a), and narrative analysis should incorporate several factors when using text as narrative data. The goal is to draw the essence out of the narrated, and to understand "what is the logic or plot that is being developed? What has propelled the various actions being described? Who is the protagonist in relation to people and institutions?" (Presser 2010: 439). Drawing upon the theoretical insights described, the concrete analytical steps done in this study is:

- Analyse how narratives are constructed and structured
- Analyse how characters are constructed and used
- Analyse what types and genres the narrative draws upon

These steps can be done one-by-one, or in a more intertwined manner as deemed necessary.

3.5. Doing a Cultural Criminology of Jihadism

Doing cultural criminology is "the documentation, decipherment and deployment of the interpretative frames, logics, images and senses through and in which crime is apprehended and performed" (Kane 2004: 303). "The many subcultures concerned with crime", such as the jihadi subculture, can "produce complex circuits of communication, and within this circuitry all manner of images and symbols" (Ferrell 1999: 401), and the cultural analysis of jihadism should aim to "expose the dynamic cultural situations out of which crime […] is constructed" (*ibid.*: 402). As such, it is an "inquiry into the many social and cultural dynamics by which the meaning of crime" (Ferrell 2015: 295) is created. Therefore, it is important to view the data critically "to develop a thickly descriptive account of the text [and visuals] in all its complexities" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 226), to fully grasp the meaning of each cultural style and concept, such as the expressions, emotions, symbols, and behaviors that are documented and visualized in the magazines. To do so, the analysis must attempt to combine macro, meso and micro levels of analysis and "synthesize structural factors with an analysis

of group dynamics, ideological influence, and individual incentives and personal motivations"
(Gunning 2009: 166).

The cultural analytical approach will follow these steps:

- Analyse how the subcultural style is constructed
- Analyse how the subcultural style is performed through edgework experiences
- Analyse how the subcultural style is politicized through resistance
- Analyse the homologous relationship between style, values and ideology

4.   JIHADI NARRATIVES

In this part of the analysis, the study will employ the analytical steps outlined (3.5.) to identify, examine and analyse some of the narratives found in the propaganda magazines *Inspire, Dabiq* and *Rumiyah.* First, I have identified and analysed a narrative that is found in every magazine. It is often described as the master narrative of jihadism, and revolves around the perceived war on Islam. Further, I have found that narratives also differ across the groups. These narratives revolve around perceptions of organization, enemy and violence. By analysing the organization-, enemy- and violence-narratives of each group, I will show how they construct their respective narratives. I will then present event-story and one life-story from each group to exemplify how this is done in isolated entities.

Table 4: Venn diagram, showing an overview of some of the narratives of
Inspire and *Dabiq* (Fink & Sugg 2015)

4.1. The Master Narrative: "War against Islam"

As shown in Table 4, a narrative about "western aggression against Muslims" is found to be a commonality between both groups (Fink & Sugg 2015). This study confirms this when identifying the narrative in *every single* magazine in the dataset. This narrative, better known as the "War against Islam" narrative (e.g. Sageman 2008; Leuprecht *et al.* 2009; Al-Raffie 2012; Holtmann 2013) is often conceptualized as the master narrative of jihadism, that is "deeply imbedded in [the] culture, provides a pattern for cultural life and social structure, and creates a framework for communication about what people are expected to do in certain situations" (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011: 7). Every jihadist draws upon the core of this narrative in some way when constructing, experiencing and narrating their lives. Interestingly, Leuprecht and colleagues (2010) find that as many as 80 % of all U.K. Muslims may to some extent approve of, or draw upon this narrative's main message (pp. 44-45). This indicates that the narrative goes beyond the realm of jihadism, into the lives of moderate, Western and other non-extremist Muslims alike. The jihadi version, however, does not end by claiming that Islam is under attack – it goes further, as I will show in the following analysis.

Storyline

This master narrative is present in all of the propaganda magazines in some way. For the purpose of this study, I have gathered quotes from a variety of the magazines, in order to present the story as streamlined as possible. Despite not being presented in its entirety in one single column, article or even magazine, the narrative is very consistent, and follows the same logic in most manifestations – most notably the same temporality and causality (Polletta *et al.* 2011).

> *"The Western governments today are waging war against Islam. They brought together a coalition and have the support of their population in invading and destroying Muslim land." (Inspire #1: 33).*

> *"Amirul-Mu'minin said: "O Ummah of Islam, indeed the world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: The camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy – the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the jews." (Dabiq #1: 10).*

The overview and context of the narrative is revealed in these two quotations, in what resembles the abstract and orientation (Labov 1972). The main message is that the West is waging war against Islam, and that they are intentionally destroying Muslim lands and killing Muslim people. As a result, the world is split into two opposing sides – Islam vs. non-Muslims; Jews, Americans, Russians and "their allies" (i.e. the rest of the non-Muslim world) plotting against Islamic countries. Indeed, *Inspire* #2 asks if Obama, by waging war on Al-Qaeda isn't "calling every Muslim who follows the principles of Islam – which includes establishing the Global Islamic Caliphate through jihad – a supporter of Al Qaeda?" (p. 8). By doing so, Al-Qaeda juxtapose themselves with all Muslims, and jihadism with Islam. Further, the same magazines states that "America is arrogantly corrupting on earth and has killed innocent women and children in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen through their bombings" (p. 23). In the master narrative, several event-stories are used as examples to provide evidence of this war, such as Russia's invasion of Afghanistan (1979-89), the Gulf War (90-91), the Srebrenica genocide (1995), and most notably the Afghanistan (2001-2014), and the Iraqi (2003-11) invasions. Roy (2008) notes that whereas the events used vary, "the ummah is presented as an undifferentiated whole" (p. 7), which is the key here. Any Muslim government supporting (i.e. not fighting against) the West are named and shamed as "apostate regimes" or "*murtadd* governments". Lastly, the Israeli occupation of Palestine is highlighted, and Jews play a central role in the narrative as one of the main antagonists. It is also stated that this war has been going on since "the time of the messenger of Allah" (*Inspire* #7: 3), and is still going on today with the Muslim world as its main theatre.

"The grayzone is critically endangered, rather on the brink of extinction. Its endangerment began with the blessed operations of September 11th, as these operations manifested two camps before the world for mankind to choose between, a camp of Islam – without the body of Khilāfah to represent it at the time – and a camp of kufr – the crusader coalition. Or as Shaykh Usāmah Ibn Lādin (rahimahullāh) said, "The world today is divided into two camps. Bush spoke the truth when he said, 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.' Meaning, either you are with the crusade or you are with Islam" [Interview – 4 Sha'bān 1422H]. The operations quickly exposed the different deviant "Islamic" movements, the palace "scholars," and the deviant du'āt, not to mention the apostate tawāghīt, as all of them rushed to serve the crusaders led by Bush in the war against Islam. And so, the grayzone began to wither..." (Dabiq #7: 54).

This featured article from *Dabiq* #7 captures the central, contemporary events of the narrative. Starting out at the time of Mohammed, the narrative has continued into the present

day. After 9/11, the conflict has intensified, closing in to its climax where the world we know is at "the brink of extinction". Jihad is revealed to be the force behind this continuous "withering of the greyzone", and is the means that drives the narrative forward, and "should be undertaken against all enemies of Islam. This includes infidels, polytheists, as well as those who support them" (Quiggin 2009: 21). Here, the "obligation to jihad" (Fink & Sugg 2015) comes into play. As such, they construct a situation where "you are with us, or you are against us", and every Muslim is urged to "be with us". It is pointed out by *Inspire* #2 that "it is an obligation!" and that "unless you go forth, He will punish you" (p. 65). Most Muslims do no longer agree with the storyline of this narrative at the point where violence and violent jihad is introduced as a legitimate means (Leuprecht *et al.* 2009).

The narrative ends with an apocalyptic battle between the West and Islam at the town Dabiq in Syria. The small town is more than the name of IS' first propaganda magazine – it also a place of upmost importance in jihadism. The narrative reaches its typical climax with something in the lines of *Dabiq* #1's short, but fitting slogan "until it burns the crusaders armies in Dabiq" (pp. 2-3), more precisely with "*al-Malhama,* the epic battle mentioned in the *hadith*" (*Inspire* #7: 3). *Al-Malhama* is the Arabic word for "Armageddon", and the *hadith* in question is *hadith* number 6924[6]. The exact time for *al-Malhama* is not clear in the narrative, nor in Islamic writings in general. However, it is mentioned that the fight will start when the crusaders' armies has consists of 80 flags (McCants 2015). Towards the very end,

"one third of them will flee; Allah will never forgive them. One third will be killed; they will be the best martyrs with Allah. And one third will conquer them; they will never be afflicted with fitnah. Then they will conquer Constantinople" (Dabiq #1: 4).

And then the Caliphate is established, and a new era of time will begin.

The purpose of this master narrative is the legitimization and continuance of the subculture and its ideology (Al-Raffie 2012), and it provides coherence to the members, and instructs them how to run their lives and teaches them values. Just like Halverson, Corman & Goodall (2011) notes, master narratives are expected to create a "framework for communication about what people are expected to do in certain situations" (p. 7), and this can only be achieved through coherence. The unifying work within this narrative is constant, and

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[6]See pp. In this thesis for the entire hadith, meaning & reference

it aims to tie together many aspects of life, and construct coherence between collective ideology and values, and individual lives and experiences. As Presser & Sandberg (2015b) argues, collective narratives, hereunder master narratives, "brackets individual differences in favour of collective experiences and values" (p. 94).). It structures the day-to-day social life within the subculture, and is very productive in its narrative works, by constructing a collective frame of reference all jihadists can relate to, and most importantly, draw upon.

Characters & symbolic boundaries

Narratives feature characters (Presser & Sandberg 2015b) and this narrative is no exception. Early on in the narrative, the main characters are revealed to be the "crusaders" and the "*mujahideen*". The *mujahid* is the performer of the jihad, and is the hero character of this narrative. He is constructed as the 'good guy' who sacrifices his body and soul for the greater good, and fights for all of Islam, and the glory of Allah. He is completely fearless and altruistic, and tries to avenge the sufferings of the *ummah* (Roy 2008). The main proliferation of this character is "Sheikh" Osama bin Laden, whom through decades of jihad paid the ultimate price in 2011. Standing as his opposition, the crusader is the main antagonist in the narrative. The crusader is framed in a way that "[…] calls forth [impressions of] a foreign Christian occupier who unjustly invades and occupies Muslim lands for profit, plunder and the imposition of his religion or ideology" (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011: 21-22). Here, George W. Bush is 'cast' as the main role. Barack Obama, succeeding Bush as President, also succeeds Bush in this role. Soldiers of the US led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan are also steadily described and visualised as the crusader throughout the dataset.

These characters are what Propp (1968) describes as prototypical characters, being the hero and the villain. More specifically, they are archetypes for jihadi stories – characters "*one might expect to find in a story*" (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011: 21, emphasis in original). The hero character "embarks on a transcendent quest and wins a prize" (Presser & Sandberg 2015: 91), and the villain battles this hero. They are co-dependant, and work in a narrative tandem, constantly constructing themselves in opposition to the other.
The "deviant *du'at*" and "apostate *tawaghit*" are also introduced, and constructed as fake Muslims who rushed to "serve the crusade" (*Dabiq* #7: 54). These characters are examples of false heroes that "seems to be a good character early on but later emerges as evil" (Presser & Sandberg 2015b: 91). Consequently, they also become targets for the narrative struggle of the *mujahideen,* and military targets for the jihadists. Towards the end of the narrative, another

character is introduced in a rather unorthodox form; the Caliphate can be seen as an equivalent to the princess character – the prize and ultimate end that the hero is striving towards throughout the narrative (*ibid.*). A character not described by Propp (1968), nor Halverson, Corman & Goodall (2011), is the victim character. This analysis has found that such character also plays an important part within the master narrative. The victim, it can be argued, is constructed in a way that in many respects resemble Nils Christie's ideal victim (e.g. Christie 1986; see also Loseke (2003) and Jägervi (2013) for analytical applications of the ideal victim in narrative analysis), and in this narrative the entire *ummah* is cast as this ideal victim. This, in line with Christie (1986), is done to gain sympathy for the victim and legitimize its victim status.

Characterization is important because "intentional harm to others – the paradigmatic construction of crime – appears to require a story populated, at a minimum, by a hero and a villain" (Presser & Sandberg 2015b: 92). Using similar rhetorical means as the speeches of Adolf Hitler during WW2, and George W. Bush after 9/11, the propaganda magazines' narrations create symbolic boundaries between an in-group and an out-group; between us and them. By applying the crusader role, the propaganda magazines "does not make narrative space for the good work being done by those troops and contractors in rebuilding infrastructure, schools and mosques" (Halverson, Corman & Goodall 2011*: 22*), only the (perceived or real) harm they bring upon Islam and Muslims. This serves to dehumanize whoever is characterized as villains, and makes it "easier to tolerate and support the killing, suffering and harsh treatment" (Silke 2004: 189) against them, and even glorify the violence and attempted eradication towards them. Characterization is important for the symbolic boundaries between the West and Islam that this narrative desperately needs to construct and maintain. When casting Westerners into the role of the crusaders, Sunni Muslims and other non-jihadists as deviant *du'at or* apostate *tawaghit,* the propaganda magazines attempts to construct Islam as the one true religion and jihadi-Salafism as the one true interpretation, and consequently legitimize violence towards both the *kuffar* and apostates. The "80 flags" metaphor indicates that the jihadists will battle enemies of 80 nations at Dabiq. As such, they need to find 80 nations willing to fight them, hereby legitimizing provocations against (at least) 80 countries of the world. This can explain the wide variety of countries the jihadists are launching attacks against.

Narrative Type & Genre

According to Smith (2005), narratives are constructed within certain genres, with different functions. It becomes evident that this narrative is a hybrid, cross-genre narrative involving both tragic and apocalyptic elements. The tragic part – Muslim suffering, invasion and destruction of Muslim lands – provides a scene where "emotions run high and much is at stake" (Presser & Sandberg 2015b: 94). These elements are crucial to gain sympathy – both within and outside the Muslim world – in order to recruit and expand. They are marked by "a strong sense of character movement and plot development that can be described in terms of themes of descent, along with motivations for action that can be more clearly defined by the parameters of good and evil" (Smith 2005: 25). This element is found frequently, like in the common statement that the West is intentionally and unjustly murdering innocent civilians.

Tragic narratives *by themselves* do however not spark violent behaviour, but rather a sense of hopelessness and despair. They can, however, function as enablers for apocalyptic narratives. These, on the other hand, are the ones that can trigger war, violence and terrorism. They construct a scene in which "radical evil is afoot in the world there can be no compromise, no negotiated solution, no prudent efforts to effect sanctions or to maintain a balance of power" (Smith 2005: 27). This narrative is a prime example of such scenes, where the radical evil looms large, and no compromise seems possible, as stated repeatedly in the data. By drawing upon both tragic and apocalyptic elements, the master narrative of jihadism creates a reality in which their frames of reference is applicable to both the suffering of the *ummah*, and the suffering caused by *ummah* members.

4.2. Competing Narratives

The main message in the master narrative of jihadism is that the West is waging an unjust war on Islam, led by US crusaders and supported Muslim apostate *tawaghit* regimes, against whom the mighty *mujahideen* fight to establish the worldwide *Khilafah*. This message is consistent across both groups. However, this study finds that their narratives and narrations also differ considerably. This is in line with Fink & Sugg (2015), who found that whereas Al-Qaeda focus on terrorism and militant activities, weapon fabrication, Israel/Palestine and defensive jihad, the Islamic State mostly focus on returning dignitary to Sunni Muslims, appealing to professionals, social service and governance, appeal of violence and return to medieval punishment and rituals (see also Table 4). The differences in narratives are pivotal in understanding, how the groups function in terms of ideology, religious practice, organization,

framing the enemy, territorial focus, and military operations and tactics. They also give deep insight into the groups' self-perception. Based on this, I have analysed three narratives of each group found in the data for comparison.

First, organizational narratives; Al-Qaeda narrates itself as an insurgency group and Islamic State as a legitimate nation-state. Second, operational narratives; Al-Qaeda narrates its central area of focus to be external and in the West, whereas the Islamic State mostly focus on local areas in their close vicinity. Third, violence narratives; Al-Qaeda narrates its violence to be defensive and pragmatic, whereas the Islamic State's violence is emotional and offensive.

4.3. Al-Qaeda Narratives

Al-Qaeda's organizational, operational and violence narratives are collective narratives within the group. They constructed through of a plethora of event- and life-stories, some of which are presented in the propaganda magazines. Yet, most of them are not located here, but rather within the talk and social life of Al-Qaeda members and cells. However, the main massage in each narrative is found scattered around the dataset. Instead of presenting each manifestation from the dataset, I have chosen to provide concrete examples of how life- and event-stories flexibly and creatively draw upon the narratives, through the life-story of Samir Khan, and the event-story "The Good, the Lamb and the Ugly".

In *Inspire* narration of this narrative, they construct themselves as a highly professionalized, almost special forces-like, insurgency group. Roy (2008) notes that whereas Al-Qaeda outspoken goal, following Salafism, is to recreate the Caliphate, the narrative message suggests otherwise. He argues that the contemporary narratives instead imply a main focus towards a jihad campaign in the West. He entitles this to the "failure to establish an Islamic state in a given country (whatever the reason) […] as long as the distant enemy was not checked or destroyed" (p. 4), or because they simply "don't care" anymore, and rather wants to "go for jihad and martyrdom" instead (p. 5). The Caliphate is more a metaphorical goal, and since Al-Qaeda does not have significant territorial control, it is unsurprising that they construct themselves as a fluid, "shadowy" organization working almost as a special operations' unit.

Al-Qaeda's master narrative also tells a story of a global jihad campaign towards the West. The solution to the "war against Islam" is the defeat of the external enemies. In Inspire #14, Al-Qaeda states that "America's Defeat + Da'awah + Defense = Khilafa" (p. 43),

providing it with temporal logic. The Caliphate cannot be established before the far enemy is defeated, and driven out of the Arabic world. Only then can the dawah be performed to reach out to the people of the world, and establishing the Caliphate. Defeating the West can only be done through "jihadi deterrence operations" (Inspire #7, p. 24). Therefore, Inspire frequently asks its readers to not perform the hirjah, but rather stay in their current location, to prepare and conduct operations there. With step-by-step guides on "how to make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom" (Inspire #1), "destroying buildings" or "training with the AK" (Inspire #4), Al-Qaeda aims to train their wannabe-mujahideen externally. It also launched the mowing machine tactic – "not to mow grass, but to mow down the enemies of Allah" (Inspire #2, p. 54) – used in the Nice 2016 and Berlin 2016 attacks. The column, in which all of these stories are told ("Open Source Jihad"), is explicitly there to "allow[s] Muslims to train at home instead of risking dangerous travel abroad: look no further, the open source jihad is now at hands reach" (e.g. Inspire #4, p. 38, emphasis original). As such, they define their enemy and their focal point as external.

Lastly, Al-Qaeda constructs a pragmatic and defensive frame their violence. As seen in several editions, the status of non-combatants is discussed, and throughout they conclude that children, women, the elderly and other non-combatants should be spared when possible. They do not condone the killing of other Muslims either, and describe no kind of punishment, violence or terrorism towards non-crusaders. As such, their violence is framed as pragmatic in the sense that it is not done because of lust, emotion or rage, but rather in a strictly, controlled form. It is also framed as defensive violence, not offensive, as it is never aimed at those who have not aggressed directly towards them first.

4.3.1. "The Good, the Lamb and the Ugly": An Event-Story of Al-Qaeda

An event-story in the dataset is the story "The Good, the Lamb and the Ugly" (*Inspire* #12: 41). It has the classic temporality and causality format (Polletta *et al.* 2011), with one event causing the next. It is a conglomeration of metaphors and strategically cast characters, which makes the narrative interesting to analyse.

Structure of "The Good, the Lamb and the Ugly" (researcher's note)

Orientation: "There lived an ugly wolf […] he [was] alpha male in his pack"

Complication: "One day […] he saw a young lamb" that he wanted to eat

Complication 2: "He addressed him" with several accusations to justify "his right to eat him"

Resolution: He ate the lamb, and the mother retaliates by butting him, an action that he was "not affected [by] at all". Then he "howled with a long, smooth sound, "This is a terrorist! This is a terrorist!" All other wolves howled, repeating Wolfdog's words, creating an illusion that there were many condemning the act of the ewe".

Evaluation: "It is not strange that these howls were heard from 10 miles away, but the strange thing is how these howls echoed throughout the forest. Whereby the parrots joined in and repeated what Wolfdog said, saying, "We condemn the ewe's butt against the wolf, all the animals are against this barbaric act!".

"Not so long ago, in the mysterious land of survival of the fittest, there lived an ugly wolf hybrid known as Wolfdog. Among his peers, he was distinguished by his big head, a long tongue and a loud howl. Hence, he became the alpha male in his pack."

In this introduction, the context is revealed to be "the mysterious land of survival of the fittest". This description is in line with jihadi views on the world, being in a state of total war where only the fittest can survive. The main character, and antagonist of the narrative, "Wolfdog", is introduced. He is described as being ugly with his "big head", "long tongue" and "loud howl". Yet, he is the pack-leader of the wolf pack. By describing him as ugly, the narrative connects negative connotations to the character. It is clear that this character is a metaphor for the United States. The big head, long tongue and loud howl is a way to metaphorically infer a need to be geo-politically dominant in the world – a need to make their howls heard worldwide. Describing the character as a wolf-dog hybrid is clearly strategically, and it draws upon familiar connotations used elsewhere. "Dog" is oftentimes a negative adjective that accompanies the crusader character that is applied towards Western soldiers. Casting Wolfdog as the pack-leader, *Inspire* is drawing upon their impression of the US as the leader in the campaign of war against Islam, and is characteristic and consistent throughout the data material.

"One day, as Wolfdog was on a hilltop searching for a refill for his rumbling stomach, he saw a young lamb with fluffy wool playing in a grassy glade. Wolfdog climbed down the hill to 'meet' the charming little lamb, resolved not to lay violent hands on him, but to find some plea to justify to the Lamb his right to eat him."

The wolfdog character then seeks out new pray to "refill his rumbling stomach". This can be seen as a metaphor for the US' alleged bloodlust that is frequently described in the propaganda magazines. Wolfdog finding a "young lamb with fluffy wool playing" is typical for a jihadi narrative, clearly drawing upon victim narratives. The lamb character is here a manifestation of innocent Muslims, constructed in a way to render them harmless, and without any guilt. As the story goes on, the wolfdog tries to find justification for his imminent devouring of the lamb. This represents the jihadists' impression of America constantly looking for an excuse to bomb, invade and conquer their land, hinting at other familiar event-stories used, such as the Iraq invasions, Afghanistan wars and other military operations conducted on "Muslim lands".

He thus addressed him: "Kid, last year you grossly insulted me." "Indeed," bleated the Lamb in a mournful tone of voice, "I was not then born." Then said Wolfdog, "You feed in my pasture." "No, good sir," replied the Lamb, "I have not yet tasted grass." Again said the Wolf, "You drink of my well." "No!" Exclaimed the Lamb, "I never yet drank water, for as yet my mother's milk is both food and drink to me.

In this dialogue between the wolfdog and the lamb, Wolfdog makes accusations against the lamb, which the lamb contradicts, substantiated by strong circumstantial evidence. Throughout the dialogue, Wolfdog accuse the lamb for insulting him, feeding on his land and lastly drinking his water. In the narrative, this is constantly the US' attempts to find a reason to invade and kill Muslims, but there is in fact, according to this narrative, no such reason.

"Well! I won't remain supperless," thought he. He seized him and ate him up, saying, "So it must have been your mother!" The Mother powerlessly followed the dialogue. What could this poor mother do when she saw her beloved son being torn into pieces between the teeth of the wolf? She knew she could not reclaim her right, but in the passion of motherhood, this good mother butted Wolfdog. Of course the wolf was not affected at all. But he became very furious, his pupils dilated. He raised the base of his tail. "How dare this ewe touch me!" Thought he.

Finally, the Wolfdog gives in to his primal needs, and eats the lamb, claiming "it must have been your mother". This marks the entrance of the good "mother" character. She is the hero of this event-story, standing up for her child and butting the Wolfdog in an act of passion and desperation. This, "of course", did not hurt the Wolfdog, yet he reacts with fury asking how the mother dares touch him. Clearly, being the adult sheep, parent and guardian for the

younger sheep, the mother character is a reflection of Al-Qaeda's self-understanding as a guardian of Islam. The fact that the attack on the Wolfdog did not affect it at all, is an indication to suggest that what the US does to Islam, is way worse than what Al-Qaeda could ever do to retaliate. Despite this, it triggered a reaction from the Wolfdog.

He howled with a long, smooth sound, "This is a terrorist! This is a terrorist!" All other wolves howled, repeating Wolfdog's words, creating an illusion that there were many condemning the act of the ewe. It is not strange that these howls were heard from 10 miles away, but the strange thing is how these howls echoed throughout the forest. Whereby the parrots joined in and repeated what Wolfdog said, saying, "We condemn the ewe's butt against the wolf, all the animals are against this barbaric act!"

The last part of the event reveals the true meaning behind the narrative. The wolfdog, albeit being the evil villain character, screams out to his pack that "this is a terrorist!" and the pack repeats his words. This is a metaphor for the rest of the Western world condemning terrorist attacks in the West – "creating an illusion that there were many condemning the act". Following, the "parrots joined in", which implies that other countries blindly, nearly on reflex, repeat every word that is spoken by the superpower that is the US.

The event-story has several tragic elements (Smith 2005). As such, it is told to awaken feelings of sadness towards the "innocent and largely passive victim who has been sadly let down by the […] evil doing of others" (*ibid*.: 25), which this event-story clearly achieves. One cannot but feel for the innocent young sheep being practically ripped into pieces by the big, bad wolf, just like Al-Qaeda wants their audience to feel for innocent Muslims, murdered by the alleged American death culture.

It also draws upon the Al-Qaeda's narratives when it plays on the external focus, and the pragmatic violence. As we can see in this story, the external enemy – the Wolfdog – is the main focus. He's the one that draws the attention, the descriptions lean on, and he is the one that drives the narrative forward. Being the metaphorical character that manifests the United States in this event-story confirms the overall impression of Al-Qaeda's focus and framing of the enemy. Further, the event-story draws heavily upon the pragmatic-defensive violence of Al-Qaeda. It is emphasized that the mother sheep does not aggress in any way towards the Wolfdog, and neither does the child. The aggression is purely defensive, and a result of the opposition's violence. This is typical for the Al-Qaeda narrative; their violence is not one of

aggression, not one of pointless murder – the violence is constructed defensive and pragmatic, with a clear purpose.

4.3.2. Samir Khan's "Life as a Traitor"

An example of a life-story found in *Inspire,* is the article called "I am proud to be a traitor to America" (*Inspire* #2, pp. 45-49) with editor Samir Khan. Albeit clearly being staged in the propaganda setting, interviews and article like these are amongst the best and most readily available substitute sources for first hand interview-data a magazine study will acquire.

Structure of Samir Khan's story (researcher's note)

Orientation: "After my faith took a 180-degree turn, I knew I could no longer reside in America as a compliant citizen. My faith and convictions gave me strength to lambast the greatest tyrant of our time. What they were doing and continue to do in the Muslim lands is what I felt, totally unacceptable to my religion."

Complication: "I proceeded to travel to Yemen, the land of faith and wisdom. "

Complication 2:" I remember when I traveled from Sana'a, for what seemed like years, in a car to one of the bases of the mujahidin, the driver played this one nashid repeatedly. At that moment, I realized that my entire life would be changed by this one decision of mines."

Complication 3: "After some time passed in the company of the mujahidin I quickly acknowledged that success does not rely upon […] a selection of symbolic boundaries drawn between jihadism and America.

Evaluation: "From our Islamic traditions, if the heart is tainted with greed, arrogance, haughtiness, niggardliness, and such, then entering Paradise will be a difficult task. So being in jihad makes me focus on my soul's wellbeing for the purpose of being accepted by the Lord of the Worlds […]"

Resolution: "How could I become a traitor to myself by throwing away this holy odyssey? […] I have become a traitor for chasing after my love [jihad]"

Coda: "Therefore, I am proud to be a traitor in America's eyes just as much as I am proud to be a Muslim; and I take this opportunity to accentuate my oath of allegiance (bai`yah)" "[…] And how reputable, adventurous and pleasurable is such a life compared to those who remain sitting, working from nine to five?"

Khan's life-story follows the characteristic temporality and causality logic (Polletta *et al.* 2010), and starts with what is described as a turning-point ("my faith took a 180-degree turn"), leading to the subsequent events ("I proceeded to travel to Yemen", then "travelled from Sana'a […] to one of the bases of the *mujahidin*" and finally departing completely from American values).

It draws upon the characteristic symbolic boundaries between the West and Islam. By drawing several symbolic boundaries between his religious beliefs and how he perceives the American lifestyle (characterized by "greed, arrogance, haughtiness, niggardliness, and such"), he is able to construct his life by drawing upon both a hero character, as well as a villain role. This dualistic hero-traitor implies that recognizes his role as a hero with the *mujahideen*, but traitor in American. Or maybe even as a hero with the mujahideen *by* being a traitor in America. This betrayal is an implicit way for Khan to narrate his past self as a more conformist American, his present self as a traitor/hero, and it provides direction and purpose for the way forward (Sandberg 2016); the way of jihad. The potential and motivation for crime and violence is revealed in this life-story when he states that he *needs* to fight America to fulfil his identity role as *mujahideen*.

The story draws upon narrative elements from tragic, romantic and apocalyptic genres. As most other jihadi narratives, the story reflects the impression that the West is murdering innocent Muslims ("what they were doing and continue to do in the Muslim lands"). Yet, it is also romantic, in how Khan views his newly born jihadi beliefs ("As my eyes passed over the mysterious twirls of the sand dunes […]" and "It only brought me gleeful tears and great joy to hear that America labels me a terrorist due to my love for correcting and straightening my soul out for the better"). But, like most other jihadi narratives, it is inherently apocalyptic. Khan puts emphasis on the jihadi interpretation of jihad as "individually obligatory (*fard `ayn*) upon all the Muslims of the world until all of our lands are recaptured from the occupier", and that he "pledge[s] to wage jihad for the rest of our lives until either we implant Islam all over the world or meet our Lord as bearers of Islam".

As a life-story, it is presented to be very coherent. Life-stories help people bring together bits and pieces of lived lives and put them together into a larger unity" and "integrate the past with the present, prove direction and purpose" (Sandberg 2016: 7). Several event-stories tend to appear within life-stories in order to make up an impression of what is important for the narrator. This narration helps us "know ourselves as one person over time" (Presser & Sandberg 2015b: 94). When analysing life-stories, it is common to look for coherence (and in some cases, plurivocality (e.g. Riessman 2008), in which several voices narrate, and make up a fluid and shifting story) to support the idea that every person has one story, or at least can be triggered into telling about their life in the form of a story" (Sandberg 2016: 8). Khan's life-story is presented coherently, in terms of his identity and life, and mainly revolves around him resolving some sort of identity crisis. However, coherence can be

hard to achieve, and several 'voices' oftentimes conflict within the life-story. Taking Khan's coherence for granted is problematic, because the life-story is presented in (and importantly, *as*) propaganda, and not through interview data. Nevertheless, it is the presentation itself that matters the most, and by presenting his life and story as coherent, the magazine strategically exclude doubt and plurivocality, possibly in order to strengthen the group narratives.

This is seen when the life-story draws upon the external focus, and uses elements from the insurgency narration. Khan is focused on declaring himself as a traitor to America, and to draw up the symbolic boundaries between living in the US, and living with the *mujahideen.* Further, Khan states that "It's just absolutely enthralling to know that guerrilla's can fight off global superpowers with the bare minimum", drawing upon the professionalized insurgency-element of the narrative. He explicitly defines Al-Qaeda as a guerrilla force, before implicitly praising their skill level and heroism, when he claims they are able to brawl against the superpowers of the world "with the bare minimum".

4.4. Islamic State Narratives

Just like the collective narratives of Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State has central stories revolving their organization, their main focus of operations and their violence. *Dabiq* narrates Islamic State as a highly organized, successful and legitimate nation-state in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Their narration is strategically constructed to legitimize and confirm their self-proclaimed Caliphate, and the magazine details the Caliphate's street cleaning services, nursing home locations, bridge repair operations and electrical amenities. This is especially seen in *Dabiq* #9, in a report called "healthcare in the Khilafah" (pp. 24-26), where the magazine shows how the healthcare system works, and how many it helps. It also emphasises how good it is for kids to live under the *Khilafah* (*Dabiq* #9).

Further, it emphasizes a local operational focus. Even though the West is the 'big bad enemy', the Islamic State narrations tend to focus on the enemies within close vicinity – most notably Syrian and Iraqi governments. The West cannot be conquered before the apostate regimes in the region are removed – a direct opposition of the Al-Qaeda narrative. Importantly, this is not to say that IS does not want, plan or have the capability to attack the West; they most certainly do (see also Hegghammer & Nesser 2015). However, it is merely to provide some background context to the narrative, bearing in mind, for example, that IS kill considerably more Muslims than Westerners. As seen in *Dabiq* #9, Islamic State appeals to

their audience to perform *hirjah*, or attack within their home country only "if he is unable to do so" (p. 54), clearly constructing a local focus.

Lastly, the violence in the Islamic State is constructed and narrated as emotional and offensive (Rumiyah #1: 34). Whereas Al-Qaeda's violence is narrated as defensive, and with a clear purpose, the Islamic State appears to kill for the sake of the killing – and the more brutal, the better. In several editions of *Dabiq* they depict and describe heinous executions like burning, throwing people off buildings and beheading. The violence itself is a goal, and is seen in

4.4.1. The Birth of Two New Wilāyat: An IS Event-Story

This event-story is a short, one-page report from the Islamic State, accompanied by 4 pages of pictures documenting the elements of the story. The story revolves around the establishment of two *wilāyahs* (provinces) in the areas of al-Furāt (Euphrates) and al-Fallujah (Fallujah).

Structure of "*The Birth of Two New Wilāyat*" (researcher's note)

Orientation: "After demolishing the Syrian/Iraqi border set up by the crusaders to divide and disunite the Muslims and carve up their lands in order to consolidate their control of the region"

Complication: "The mujahidin of the Khilāfah delivered yet another blow to nationalism and the Sykes-Picot-inspired borders that define it. The establishment of a new wilāyah, Wilāyat al-Furāt, was announced this month by the Islamic State in an effort to eliminate any remaining traces of the kufri, nationalistic borders from the hearts of the Muslims"

Complication 2: "Just days after the announcement of Wilāyat al-Furāt, the Islamic State announced the establishment of a new wilāyah in Iraq: Wilāyat al-Fallūjah. "

Evaluation: "The establishment of the wilāyah in order to reinforce the region and strengthen the safety and security of the Muslims" and […] "enhance and repair the region's infrastructure with projects aimed at restoring electricity, building irrigation networks in agricultural areas, and cleaning and repairing roads and highways.

Coda: "May Allah continue to strengthen the Islamic State, and bring joy to the Muslims through its victories."

The story's context and time is revealed early – it occurred "after demolishing the Syrian/Iraqi border". Events presented as "reports" from the Islamic State are often fresh. As such, the events narrated, and its narrations, hit their audience immediately, and are both sources of information and narrative resources. The Caliphate was declared in mid July 2014 (as presented in *Dabiq* #1) and the "demolition" of the borders is a metaphor for this. Already in this short introduction one can see clear resemblances to the master narrative and its

characters. The short sentence "[…] by the crusaders to divide and disunite the Muslims" serves as a trope that explicitly hints towards this narrative (Sandberg 2016) by drawing upon the crusader character, as well as the main message of the narrative.

The first action in the story is the Caliphate establishing a new province in the area of the al-Furāt. This province was created a part of the rise and expansion of the Caliphate during 2014. The province is located on the Syrian-Iraqi border, with Western Iraq as its centre, close to the Euphrates River[7]. From this province, the Islamic State has continued to produce propaganda material, mainly through reports and extremely graphic videos[8]. Shortly after, they announced a new province in Fallujah in Iraq. The complicated actions themselves are fairly downplayed and descriptive. The interesting part is the symbolic boundaries and metaphors used in the first event.

The point in the story – and *wilāyahs'* purpose – is to "reinforce the region and strengthen the safety and security of the Muslims" and "enhance and repair the region's infrastructure with projects aimed at restoring electricity, building irrigation networks in agricultural areas, and cleaning and repairing roads and highways". This is the most interesting part of this narrative, and shows how characters, metaphors and symbolic boundaries within the master narrative of jihadism, and the Islamic State narratives are used very flexibly, in a relatively short presentation. Using the romantic elements of social welfare and infrastructure, the Islamic State's nation state-narrative is used in practice. Romantic-apocalyptic narratives are rarely connected elsewhere, but these often work in tandem in Islamic State narrations. This interplay will come in use in the next narrative presented as well.

4.4.2. Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah's Life-Story

This narrative is the life-story of Finnish woman named Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah on how she "came to Islam" presented in *Dabiq* #15 (pp. 36-39).

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[7] See, e.g. http://www.aymennjawad.org/2014/09/islamic-state-euphrates-province-statement for more on the al-Furāt province

[8] http://jihadology.net/?s=al-Fur%C4%81t . Viewer discretion highly advised.

Structure of *Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah's* life-story (researcher's note)

Orientation: "I come from Finland […] I was pretty much the same as everyone else." She went to Christian school, but Christianity "really didn't make sense to [her]".

Complication: (Turning point): "I first heard about Islam when we were doing religious studies at school. […] So she [a Muslim neighbour] let me borrow a copy of the Quran that was translated into my own language [Finnish]"

Complication 2: "Not long afterwards, I knew that this religion really was the truth. I started learning to pray on my own. I pronounced the *shahadah* in their [neighbours'] home. I started wearing hijab. I got married" […] and "my husband started telling me about jihad and about having the sound creed" (Turning point 2)

Complication 3: "I wasn't really thinking about *hijrah*, but that would soon change. What finally woke me up was when the disbelieving authorities arrested my husband for terrorism. They arrested him on the street (turning point 3). He was trying hard to find a way to come to the Caliphate and, *alhamdulillah*, when Allah wills to open the path for someone, nobody can close it."

Resolution: Performing the Hirjah (this event-story is not expressed in her life-story, but implicitly appears as the result of the complicating events)

Evaluation: "I can't even describe the feeling of when you finally cross that border and enter the lands of the Caliphate. Life in the Islamic State is such a blessing. Unless you're living here you don't realize what kind of life you had before. The life here is so much more pure."

Coda: "Finally, I wish to advise the Christians in Finland and elsewhere: […] open your heart and find out about the religion of Islam."

In terms of structure, it follows the Labovian structure, and has the characteristic temporal and causal logic. The story starts out with a short orientation, where the narrator outlines the context; it is a woman narrator, native of Finland, raised as a typical Nordic Christian child, where religion is more abstract, vague and selective. The gender is revealed by her name; Umm meaning "mother of" and Khalid means eternal or immortal. The Al-Finlandiyyah ("of Finland") name confirms her origin as Finnish, which she also explicitly tells. Already in the orientation, it becomes clear that this narrative is one of religion, when she visits the theme of Christianity, and constantly questions it; it "really didn't make sense to me" (*Dabiq* #15: 36). This doubt is manifests throughout the life-story, and Christianity takes the role as villain – not in the sense that it battles the hero physically, but rather meta-physically standing in her way, hiding the real truth of Islam in its fog of confusion.

In the following, the first turning point in the narrative is presented when she heard about Islam, and figured out she had Muslim neighbours. They were kind enough to lend her

a copy of the Qur'an. As such, the neighbours are presented as the donor character(s), giving the hero "some magical object" (Presser & Sandberg 2015b: 91) to help guide her in her quest. This "magical object" is here the Qur'an. By doing this, it is created clear symbolic boundaries between Islam and Christianity, which will follow the narrative throughout. Whereas Christianity is denounced as "confusing" and senseless, Islam is constructed to be the true path. This corresponds to the Islamic State's religious message in their narrative (Sugg & Fink 2015). Again, this characterization is key in understanding how these narratives are constitutive of violent behaviour towards others.

She converted and later remarried, which accounts for the second turning point in her story. Her second husband was, seemingly, more radical than her, and started teaching her jihad. He is cast as the helper character, joining in to help the hero (Propp 1968). In her account, the last, and most crucial, turning point is the arrest of this husband for planning terrorism. This "opened [her] eyes to the importance of *hijrah*, but the whole ordeal made things difficult" (*Dabiq* #15: 38). The events of the resolution are untold, but implicitly addressed through the storytelling and context; the *hijrah.* This is archetypical for Islamic State narratives, and has direct links to the master narrative, and the *hijrah* is very important in IS' self-understanding as a legitimate state. Again, the Caliphate takes the "princess" character that the hero strives toward throughout the narrative.

To evaluate the narrative, that is explaining its point, Umm Khalid describes how living in the Islamic State is "such a blessing" (p. 38). The hero "wins" his princess (or in this case, her prince), and the narrative goal is fulfilled. The narrative also becomes more aggressive in its tone, using Satan and *kuffar* for the first time to describe non-Islamic lifestyle, and the apocalyptic elements that are so common in jihadism are introduced. The entire point of the story is to construct the perfect Caliphate, and she draws heavily upon the IS' narrative to do so. She does not go in detail, like other stories do. Instead, she leaves the reader with mystical and utopian impressions when she states that she "I can't even describe the feeling", and that "Unless you're living here you don't realize what kind of life you had before. The life here is so much more pure." Leaving the reader to imagine what lies in the *Khilafah*, is clearly a propagandist and narrative 'trick'. They are drawing upon the utopian, epic fantasy of the Caliphate, and let it be up to the reader to decide and image how beautiful it is. The coda is insignificant, but she advises "Christians in Finland and elsewhere: […] open your heart and find out about the religion of Islam." (p. 39).

The narrative mainly draws upon romantic elements, and there are a few, mostly implicit, apocalyptic and tragic elements as well (Smith 2005). The narrative romanticizes Islam and the Caliphate, and even though Smith (2005) argues that romance usually does not spur violence, this is not found to be the case here. Because of the intricate relationship and interplay between the characters in the narrative (a Muslim as the hero, Christianity as the metaphysical villain and Caliphate as the princess) and the construction of these, the romance is pivotal in understanding how this narrative can constitute violent, jihadi behaviour. Like McAdams (2006) notes, redemptive stories can spur violence if they imply purity and cleansing – and this is found to be the case for the romantic elements of this narrative as well. Especially combined with the latter part of the narrative where the tone gets more apocalyptic and she explicitly constructs the Caliphate life as pure, the impression is that this romance is one of an underlying thought of purity, superiority and to go more extreme; cleansing. As such, this kind of romantic genre-use can indeed spur violence, in order to upheld the romance and "cleanness" that is oftentimes described as extremely dangerous (e.g. Hagtvet, Brandal & Thorsen 2014).

These insights into Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah's life-story shows how crucial it is to account for several aspects of the narrative – not just structure, characters, genre or type. They are all part of what makes up the complex meaning and construction of a person's life.

4.4.3. Notes on Narrative and Behavioural Change

The robustness and replicability of social-constructive analyses are especially open to scrutiny, development and potential criticism. It should be noted that the magazines in the dataset are from mid-2014 to late-2016, a period characterized mostly by the rise of Caliphate. As such, the ongoing (and largely successful) coalition efforts against the Caliphate had just begun when the data selection ended. The fall of the Caliphate that arguably is happening at the time of writing is not touched upon in the data. However, *Rumiyah* will have to recognize this at some point, much like it did when Dabiq town was lost and the following termination of *Dabiq* magazine production. Therefore, it is imaginable that the Islamic State's narratives may be altered to fit contemporary development, in which IS constantly lose territory. As such, the narratives they use in propaganda magazines published after the data selection may construct differing meanings. For example, they may resemble Al-Qaeda's narratives to a larger extent, and make the Islamic State be more deadly in the West than ever before, as they intake a more traditional insurgency role with external foci narratives. If their narratives

develop similarities, it may enable an up-until-now unlikely cooperation, hybridization or even merging between the groups.

If nothing else this, yet again, confirms the importance of narrative understanding – the change in narrative also constitutes a change of behavior, violence and terrorist operations.

5. JIHADI SUBCULTURAL STYLE

Cultural criminology combines analyses on macro-, meso- and micro-levels to investigate the complex productions of communication within a subculture in order to "make sense of the senseless" (Presdee 2003: 16), and to understand the meaning of crime. Applying the insights to jihadists, cultural criminologists combine analyses of a macro-level imposed "problem", meso-level subcultural reactions, with micro-level emotions to ask "how do terrorists *feel*" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 141, my emphasis). The key lies in analysing "how Muslim men respond to personal feelings of failure over who they are" (Cottee 2009: 1127). As this study looks into propaganda magazines, the question of "how do terrorist *feel*?" is hard to answer. However, the data gives insight into the cultural styles the individuals can use to express meaning, and indeed, how they feel.

First, I have drawn upon and further developed Mark Sageman's concept of the jihadi cool. By understanding the concept through a sound theoretical framework from cultural criminology, the "jihadi cool" is conceptualized as a subcultural style, in which a variety of cultural products are used to construct meaning. This meaning is expressed through a badass look and masculine ideals, and rhetoric and music constructs and sustains the foundation. Second, I have analysed the propaganda magazines' constant emphasis on danger and combat. By using Stephen Lyng's notion of edgework, I have analysed how the subcultural style is performed to make sense of the seemingly irrational search for danger. Voluntarily seeking risk can be conceptualized as part of the subcultural style, and combat, travels and 'undercover' lifestyle are activities the jihadists participate in, to experience excitement and express meaning. Third, I have analysed how the propaganda magazines construct a frame of resistance for their readers. By opposing their enemies, resistance is a political performance of the subcultural style. By ridiculing their enemies and destroying their cultural artefacts and historical pieces, the jihadi propaganda magazines construct their oppositional frame of reference in the subcultural style by symbolically and ritualistically negotiating established truths. Critically, the subcultural style is not just cool looks, thrilling experiences or oppositional symbolism and rituals – it can also be criminal behavior, and violence and terrorism are constructed through style.

5.1. The Jihadi Cool

"Jihadis look cool – like ninjas or video game warriors – gangstah and thuggish even. […] Jihadis have cool weapons. And cool nasheeds" (Cottee 2014).

This statement is taken from an article by Simon Cottee in *The Atlantic,* in which he attempts to conceptualize a blog post from alleged ISIS fan girl Bint Emergent. Perceptions like these are symptomatic of what Sageman (2008) terms a ""jihadi cool" and "jihadi talk" in Europe where it is fashionable to emulate terrorists" (p. 159). This is part of what "makes jihad fun and interesting […] because it's cool and thrilling to be part of clandestine undertaking" (p. 160). The concept originated from Sageman's attempt to describe Al-Qaeda's newfound focus on the internet and online relations, but has proven to be versatile, and adaptable to other forms of communication, both online and offline. The jihadi cool is now widely recognized as one of the appealing elements of jihadi groups, neatly defined by Huey (2015b) as "the rebranding of Jihadist forms of terrorism into an appealingly 'hip' subculture" through the use of social media, rap videos, counter culture magazines, clothing and other forms of propaganda "(p. 1). However, the jihadi cool lacks a sound theoretical framework for understanding. Even though everyone knows what "cool" means, coolness has proven elusive to conceptualize. Thompson (1973) explored its African-American roots, and viewed is as a "metaphor of moral aesthetic accomplishment" (p. 41), and Poutain & Robins (2000) pondered whether it is "a philosophy, a sensibility, a religion, an ideology, a personality type, a behaviour pattern, an attitude, a zeitgeist, a worldview?" (pp. 17-18). Crucially, it is all of these things, and none of them. This is perhaps why terrorism scholars refer to it as "*a* jihadi cool" when using the concept. 'The cool' consists of a variety of utilizations of cultural products – like weapons, nasheeds and clothing (Cottee 2014), talk (Sageman 2008), rhetoric (Picart 2015, 2017), social media, propaganda and rap (Huey 2015b) – with their own, unique meaning. Yet, without a theoretical framework, it is not made clear how one can understand what it is, how it comes to be, or how it functions. Hence, I propose to look at the jihadi cool through Hebdige's (1979) notion of subcultural style. In doing so, the study intends to conceptualize 'the cool' through products as they are "made to mean and mean again as 'style' in subculture" (Hebdige 1979: 3), and become a way to stylistically express meaning.

5.1.1. Jihadi Cool: When Being Bad is Cool

Heavily militarized clothing and weapons appear frequently in the magazines. *Dabiq* #13 shows the terrorists behind the Bataclan attacks posing with uniforms and weapons (p. 55), and *Dabiq* #7 has an article called "advice for the leaders of the Islamic State" (pp. 9-16) featuring several pictures of uniformed *mujahideen*. *Inspire* #15 depicts iconic Anwar Al-Awlaki in this style (p. 90). The same edition depicts a jihadist posing with his AK47 on his back, wearing a bullet proof west (p. 33), whereas an article in #11 (pp. 12-15) shows jihadists posing with a range of different weapons. *Inspire* #7 shows the "unified ranks" of Al-Qaeda affiliates al-Shabab and Ĥizb al-Islâmî posing in military uniforms and with RPGs (p. 29), and #9 shows celebrating, militarized *mujahideen* in an article called "winning on the ground" (p. 54).

The same is found in a more Salafi-inspired costume, as *Dabiq* #1 shows when depicting a masked *mujahideen* on a horse, carrying the IS flag in a featured article called "from *Hijrah* to *Khilafah*" (pp. 34-35). The picture itself is quite majestic, and the jihadist looks like he has conquered land, and is symbolically about to plant his flag to seize it. The article ends with a picture showing countless jihadists on their horses led by a single leader (p. 40) – strikingly similar to the Braveheart movie. In their 7th edition, several groups from the Khorasan region reportedly swore their allegiance to the Caliphate, and the jihadists are depicted riding horses, wearing turbans and balaclavas (pp. 33-37). Infamous Jihadi John proliferate the jihadi cool style. Perversely immortalized in the Caliphate and the West for the executions of James Foley (*Dabiq* #3) and Steven Sotloff (*Dabiq* #4), the British jihadist always use his balaclava and knife when performing the beheadings. Well-articulated, cool

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[9]"Jihadi cool", from *Inspire* #14, p. 88 (left) and *Rumiyah* #1, p. 8 (right)

looking and *Sharia*-enforcing, he is a true jihadi celebrity, known across the globe – of which the jihadi propaganda magazines are well aware.

As seen in the pictures above, and countless others throughout the dataset, most jihadists have long beards, most of them seemingly unattended and 'wild'. Most moustaches, however, are shaved off or trimmed, which is in accordance with ISIS' reportedly strict beard regulations[10]. *Dabiq* touches upon the theme when they note that *fitrah* ("natural state") involves "trimming the mustache [sic], growing the beard" (*Dabiq* #15: 22). It is also, however, part of the cool style they construct in order to look badass masculine. Most notoriously, the subcultural style shows "men in long robes and shemaghs roam the desert with swords in sheathe. Sand swirls in the air as riders atop of black horses charge into the distance carrying the Black Standard" (Vallee 2015: 20).

[11]

In many respects, the jihadis revive Katz' (1988) concept of the badass – except now "he doesn't have a gangster face; now he has a jihadi face. […] The ultimate badasses in jihadism are the caliphate-invoking, kafir-hating, sword-wielding men in black of Islamic State" (Cottee 2014). The badass, Katz (1988) argues, must be tough and morally impermeable, appear alien and hostile towards any form of civilization, and be able to commit spontaneous acts of violence. The jihadi cool indeed communicates a badass ideal, where being bad and tough is constructed as cool. Like Hamm (2004) found, militarized clothing can be a central part of the attractions of violent subcultures, and a militarized style can be a way to express masculinity, where authority, control, independence and potential for violence are

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[10] See http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/isis/1.750391 for an example. "*ISIS' Secret Rulebook Revealed: Beards, Concubines and Satellites*"
[11]"Jihadi cool", *Dabiq* #10, p. 26.

important factors (Messerschmidt 1993). Expressing this badassery through style can make *looking* like a warrior, be equally important as actually *being* one. Just like Decker & Pyrooz (2015) finds, "there is a great deal more "talk" about gang violence than actual violence and a lot more talk about "being hard" and riding "missions' for the gang than occur (i.e., "I'm down for a Jihad")" (p. 106). Likewise, it is highlighted that jihadists, after all, do not fight more than a fraction of their time (Hegghammer 2015a). Utilizing the subcultural cool is a way to appear badass, and the violent potential need only be symbolic and hypothetical for the jihadist to express that he is indeed "down for jihad". Thus, dressing like warriors indicates a capability of fighting and performing acts of violence, as well as authority. Fulfilling the role of the badass, jihadis creatively use "symbols and practical devices that suggest an impenetrable self […] [and] signs that unusual physical risks have been suffered" (Katz 1988: 81). This can provoke feelings of "excitement and a spike in adrenaline due to the "badness" of the faceless soldier" (Vallee 2015: 20) – both by those who employ this style, as well as bystanders and propaganda magazine readers. By dressing like a warrior, the jihadist looks badass, and the love for heavy weaponry suggests that he is readily available to go to war. Following Ferrell's (1995a) findings, the love for guns and militarized clothing may be "built as much on the sensual aesthetics of weaponry and violence as on some raw desire to assault others" (p. 177).

Throughout the dataset, the magazines consistently describe their warriors in ways that accommodate their bravery and courage. *Dabiq* tends to describe their warriors as "lions". In fact, they even address child soldiers as "cubs" (*Dabiq #*8, pp. 18-20). Amedy Coulibaly, one of the 2015 Paris attackers, is worshipped at length in *Dabiq* #7 (pp. 68-71). He was, they claim, a lion and "no one doubted his courage" – and his actions stands as proof of this. Courage, bravery and positive attention is characteristic for the way in which the jihadi propaganda magazines rhetorically describe the *mujahideen*. As Sageman (2010) argues, these descriptions are part of what make these jihadists "the rock stars of young Muslim militants" (p. 130).

The badassery is further amplified through jihadi *nasheeds.* Despite this study not analysing *nasheeds per se,* they are being referenced in the magazines, which in itself makes them interesting. The field of study on *nasheeds* is very limited, but Said (2012) found that they can be, roughly, characterized as "(1) Battle hymns, (2) Martyr hymns, (3) Mourning hymns, and (4) Praising hymns" (p. 864). Osama Bin Landen is known to have performed

nasheeds (*Inspire* #2). The Islamic State has produced a plethora of these, the most infamous being "My Ummah, Dawn Has Appeared"[12]. *Dabiq* reference *nasheeds* like the German "For The Sake of Allah Fisabilillah"[13] (*Dabiq #*9: 5) and French "Extend Your Hand to Pledge Allegiance" (*ibid.:* 37)[14]. Heavily militarized, these songs are neatly produced and performed a Capella (instruments are *haram*). Hamm (2004) finds that music is an important stylistic expression, in which meaning is constructed. In jihadism, these *nasheeds* are part of the cool style, referencing and glorifying jihad, war and badassery. In fact, "jihadis can't seem to get enough anashid" (Hegghammer 2015b), and they are integrated parts of both ideology and style. The *munshids* (performer of *nasheeds*) may

> *"transform themselves from ordinary musicians to extraordinary ones through the expression of forbidden messages and symbols that are part of a larger consciousness. Consumers of this music, in turn, seek to reconstruct themselves from their ordinary realities to something wider, something that enlarges them as people"* (Hamm 2004: 327).

Analysing 17 Islamic State *nasheeds,* Gråtrud (2016) found that 15 proclaimed that "fighters are role models" and thematically touched upon "war and brutality" (p. 1055). This, he argues, constructs jihadi acts as "worthy of emulation" (p. 1058) – much like Sageman (2008) described the jihadi cool 8 years earlier. These *nasheeds* draw upon similar rhetorical means as highlighted above, describing the warriors as brave lions, characterized by "their heroism, strength and valor" (Gråtrud 2016: 1058). Musically expressing the jihadi cool, jihadists sing along to a Capella *nasheeds* about implementing *Khilafah* and killing the *kuffar* in order to feel badass. Aside from serving as a stylistic expression of the jihadi cool, they also frequently draw upon the narratives of jihadism already described in the thesis (Gråtrud 2016).

Style, Hebdige (1979) argues, is a case of intentionally communicating subcultural difference and meaning, and this communication "is the 'point' behind the style of all spectacular subcultures" (p. 102)". Style stands out – like "a visible construction, a loaded choice" (*ibid.:* 101). Through the jihadi subcultural style it is communicated what the subculture constructs as cool. As such, meaning is given to the subculture; its members can

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[12] Can be accessed at, e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ln6cZ21heo
[13] Can be accessed at, e.g., https://www.liveleak.com/view?i=323_1429066834E
[14] Can be accessed at, e.g., http://jihadology.net/2015/05/18/al-%E1%B8%A5ayat-media-center-presents-a-new-video-nashid-from-the-islamic-state-extend-your-hand-to-pledge-allegiance/

make sense of it. The jihadi subcultural style lets its members define their values, and what they perceive to be cool, appealing and meaningful within the frame of reference that is their subculture. By utilizing this subcultural style (that is the cool creative mix of clothing, symbols, *nasheeds* and rhetoric), jihadists can construct and communicate themselves as masculine badasses, who are tough and ready to fight.

### 5.1.2. Jihadi Cool: Influence from Street Culture

Bint Emergent also captures a rather curious and paradoxical part of the jihadi cool – jihadis also look "gangstah or thuggish even" (Cottee 2014). When looking 'gangstah' and 'thuggish', jihadis resembles street looks from tradition street cultures, rather than religiously devoted radicals. Instead of military clothes, balaclavas and horses, jihadists are also shown posing with hoodies, 'bling' and Western brands, in a paradoxically Westernized look. Albeit not being particularly prominent in the dataset, the look appears from time to time, as in the pictures below. Likewise, *Inspire* #15 features a man with a caps and a hoodie on their front page. Big watches, necklaces and other accessories are commonalities. It is the core difference to the jihadi subculture in general that makes this so interesting – most of the things they usually despise and oppose for its Western origin, are found in this 'street cool'.
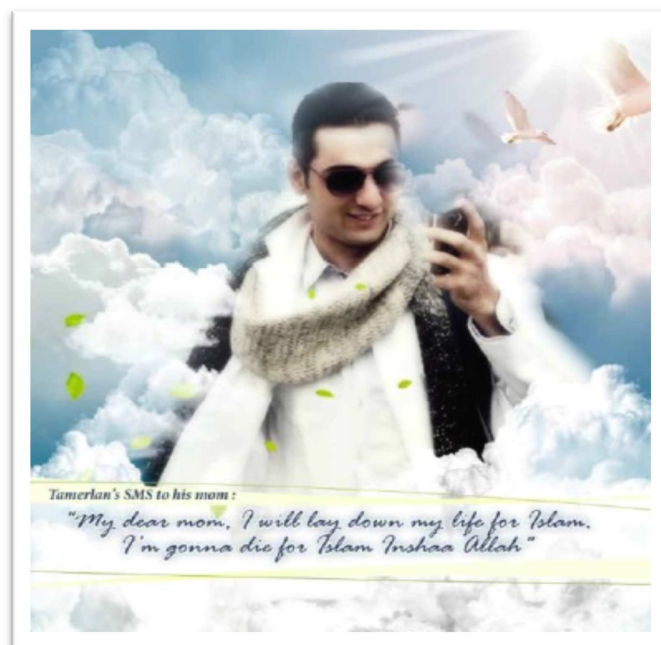
15

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[15]Jihadi 'Street Cool' *Inspire* #11, p. 26. The text on the picture shows an apparent SMS sent to his mother, stating "My dear mom, I will lay down my life for Islam. I'm gonna die for Islam Inshaa Allah"

They also show an interesting ability and willingness to use internet jargon in their magazines. As seen in an *Inspire* (#11, p. 22) production called "Lone Mujahideen Pocketbook"[16], English internet slur is heavily drawn upon when posing questions like "R u dreamin' of wagin' jihadi attacks against kuffar?". Further, they ask if readers "Wanna know how? Just read 'n' apply the contents of this guide which had practical 'n' creative ways to please Allah by killing his enemies 'n' healing the believers' chests" (p. 2). *Inspire* #12 (p. 4) use a variant of LOL (laughing out loud) in their magazine, and replace the words "to" and "for" with their phonetic number equivalents 2 and 4. The word "and" is shortened to "n" – also typical for internet slur. This is what Vergani & Bliuc (2014) call "netspeak", and consists of abbreviations that are commonplace on the internet. This can be interpreted as an effort to reach out to internet savvy crowds, and to stay relevant and cool in order to "establish[ing] a communication with the youngest generations of potential recruits" (p. 16). Part of this street cool is also jihadi themed raps. Albeit not being represented in the dataset at hand, they play a part of the understanding of the jihadi street cool. As shown by others (e.g. Stern 2010; Aidi 2014; Pisoiu 2015), rappers like Denis Cupert (formerly Deso Dogg) and Sheikh Terra & the Soul Salah Crew make jihadi raps.
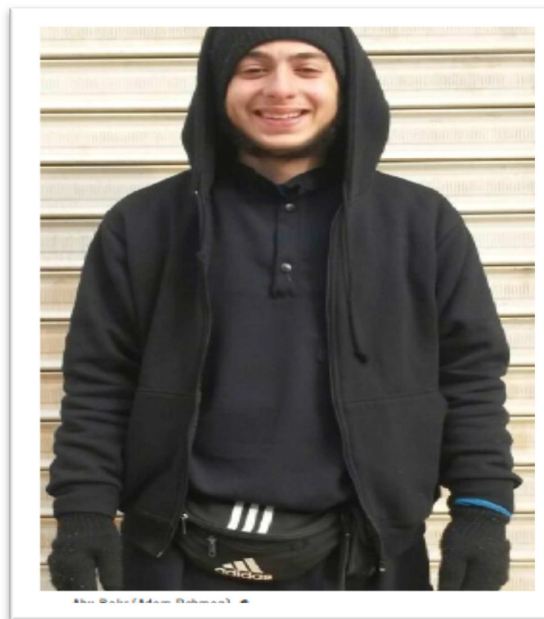
This street cool shows a paradoxical dimension in how the propaganda magazines construct a subcultural cool. Possibly, street culture's nature of resistance and opposition is

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[16] Lone Mujahideen Pocketbook is available at https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/al-qc481_idah-in-the-arabian-peninsula-22the-lone-mujc481hid-pocketbook22.pdf
[17] Jihadi Street Cool", *Rumiyah* #1, p. 17

what appeals the jihadi subculture to draw upon it. Rap, in its core and raw form, is one of these elements, oftentimes revolving around revolt, resistance and difference to the mainstream. Alternatively, it may be the violent repertoires of street culture that make jihadism use it in their own constructions. If nothing else, it shows that the jihadi propaganda magazines are aware of their audience, and strategically wants to "adapt itself to the internet environment" (Vergani & Bliuc 2014: 18) and street influenced readers, to uphold their outward street cool, even for those who aren't as indoctrinated as the standard jihadist. As Stern (2010) notes, these raps, and the street cool, are part of the products that makes some "Muslim children […] in the Netherlands seemed to think that talking about jihad was cool" (p. 100). Whereas the Western rap may refer to graffiti, gang wars, 'bitches and hoes', the jihadi rap refers to killing kuffar and praising Allah. This may become normalized as parts of the vocabulary of those who draw upon the jihadi cool style.

5.1.3. Jihadi Cool: Membership & Fame

The clothes, symbols, weapons, music and descriptions analysed above are all part of what constitutes the badass and cool aesthetics of the jihadi subcultural style. However, the style is not just used to appear cool; it can also be used to construct behavioral patterns, and indeed, violence as part of the signature of the subcultural style

Reflecting upon this relationship is important, because it links style with violence and crime, and shows how creative constructions of clothing, music, rhetoric and symbols can inspire and, indeed, constitute the behavioral foundations for engaging in violent, criminal and terrorist acts. Whereas the style is not criminal *per se*, some of the acts they lay foundation for, are. Consider the words of Hamm (2004); "all of this – ideology, music, weaponry and white male bonding—comes together to trigger the vitality, the emotions and the excitement necessary for skinheads to 'go beserk' on their perceived enemies" (p. 327). The same is inherently true for the jihadists. When the ideology comes together with expressions of style, narratives supporting in-group bonding and symbolic boundary work and neutralizations, it may indeed – to respectfully adjust Hamm's words – trigger the jihadi vitality and sensations necessary to behead, burn or stone crusaders, commit suicide terrorism and perform other violent, jihadi acts.

The celebrities of jihadism are the badass murderers like Jihadi John, and the religious scholars and terrorist "godfathers" like Anwar Al-Awlaki and Osama Bin Laden. They all

employ and define the subcultural style in their creative use of cultural products. They are cool and violent – religious jihadists and badass guys that every young jihadi will admire, when they express their hyper-masculine badassery. They are described with grand descriptions, and constantly framed as brave lions in the propaganda magazines. By doing so, they are able to "define or remake themselves as heroic figures, belonging to an exalted elite" (Cottee & Hayward 2011: 976) – an elite only the coolest of the jihadis can join. These heroic figures are aestheticized and even eroticized, and the use of violence and weapons are glorified "into a glamorous appendage essential to the identities of action heroes, tough guys" (Ferrell 1995a: 177). By drawing upon the subcultural cool, everyone and anyone can emulate, imitate and even becomes a superstar.

Equally important as superstardom, is the easier accessible 'membership' factor. Wearing the same clothes, loving the same music, using the same symbols and performing the same rituals signifies, aside of badassery and glamour, membership and togetherness. The jihadi cool is almost like a sports jersey, showing your belonging and affiliation. As Ferrell (1995a) argues, using the style is a way to confirm this. The jihadi subculture may fulfil the desire to belong "largely by proving a sense of *aesthetic* belonging, of membership in an *aesthetic or stylistic community*" (p. 176, emphasis original). In such view, membership and togetherness is crucial in understand how and why people commit to subcultures, their styles and the interconnected subcultural repertoire of (violent) behavior.

5.1.4. The *Bricolage* in Jihadi Subcultural Style

The jihadi subcultural style is not a "cool of old" – it is a cross-cultural *bricolage* of the contemporary world. They rap about murdering crusaders, and they make *nasheeds* about the return of the Caliphate. Still, they use the internet extensively in their propagation, and pose with modern day guns, uniforms and cars. Conceptualizing the jihadi cool style as a result of bricolage offers a complex understanding how it came to be, by highlighting the "wide variety of cultural influences" (Sandberg 2014: 179). As Matusitz (2015) notes, bricolage "happens a lot within terrorist groups or movements" (p. 94). This is especially evident when the subculture "juxtaposes two apparently incompatible realities" (Hebdige 1979: 106), such as rap and religion, and modern technology and Salafism. Pisoiu (2015) has pointed this out, exemplifying the creative use of "camouflage, Pashtun hats, cartridge belts and Kalashnikovs" as well as the role of *nasheeds* within the so-called "Pop-jihad" (p. 18). This hybridization between Western street culture and jihadi products shows how the subculture is able to create

expressions and styles that fit for a large audience. Seeing the jihadi subcultural style as *bricolage* provides a thorough and sound framework for understanding the constant fluidity and change that occur in the jihadi subculture and subcultural style.

5.2. Jihadi Edgework

The jihadi subculture can also be conceptualized an illicit edgework subculture, and edgework experiences are a central part of the subcultural style. Like Silke (2008) found, "the propaganda material developed by jihadi groups often attempts to portray the jihadi lifestyle as an exciting, dangerous and meaningful one "(p. 116), and the magazines in the dataset are filled with articles, pictures and columns that shows the risky, violent and thrilling elements of the jihadi life. Although partaking in a terrorist subculture is indisputably a political act, one should not overlook the fact that it also involves violence and emotions (Cottee & Hayward 2011). As such, some of the motivation may lie in "various emotional experiences and sensual attractions associated with doing violent acts. Preeminent among these is excitement" (*ibid.*: 996). The excitement is not only associated with performing violence, but also simply "taking on the guerrilla or insurgent identity and the way of life associated with it" (*ibid.:* 969). Drawing upon the notion of edgework recognizes these motivational and sensational elements.

Lyng's (1990) research on edgework experiences aims to capture the sensations and immediate feelings associated with an act, and explain the motivations by looking into "its adrenaline, its pleasure and panic, its excitement, and its anger, rage and humiliation, its desperation and its edgework" (Young 2004: 13). The edgework experiences can be achieved from a range of activities, like skydiving, cheating on exams, shoplifting of low value items to violence, murder and participation of terrorist subcultures. The "threat of death or injury is ever-present in such activities, although participants often claim that only those "who don't know what they're doing" are at risk" (Lyng 1990: 857). Neither of these acts seem particularly rational from the outside – how is it rational to jump out of a plane, with a parachute as your only lifeline? Why do shoplifters sometimes steal "worthless" items? And, perhaps most inexplicably, why do people join terrorist and jihadist subcultures – groups affiliated with murder, self-destruction and a lifestyle of dangerous activities? By looking into how the jihadi lifestyle is constructed as dangerous and exciting, the concept of edgework starts to explain some of this appeal.

5.2.1. Lifestyle Challenges & Edgework

In an interview with *Inspire* #1, Abu Basir, a leader of AQAP, describes the *mujahideen* as dangerous. He states that wherever a *mujahideen* goes, "you would find fear and terror spreading in that place" (p. 14). In the earliest editions (1, 2, 4 & 5) of *Inspire*, they publish a column called "What to Expect in Jihad", that gives concrete descriptions of how it is to live the jihadi lifestyle. For example, a thing you need to expect in jihad is to hide within plain sight, through blending into the enemy's culture (*Inspire* #1). The same is the need to be secretive, to live outdoors (#2), and to deal with aerial attacks and injuries (#4).

The lifestyle and identity promised and provided by jihadism is one of risky adventures. This itself may be a way to experience the edgework. Performing an act of terrorism may be the ultimate goal and ultimate attraction, but merely being part of such clandestine undertaking is constructed as edgy, as shown when *Inspire* explains what to expect in the jihad. The need to blend into the enemy's culture (*Inspire* #1), may at times be depressing and difficult. However, overcoming this depression is of importance to complete the mission. Resembling an undercover agent's lifestyle is a way to walk the line between "one's physical or mental well-being or one's sense of an ordered existence" (Lyng 1990: 857). If caught, the jihadist may face a long prison sentence. Likewise, falling into a depression may severely handicap his mental health. As such, blending into the enemy's culture as an undercover jihadi is an edgework experience, where he is constantly walking the line between "life and death, full functionality and permanent disability, consciousness and unconsciousness, or sanity and insanity" (Lyng 2014: 449).

Similarly, living outdoors, moving on foot from base to base (*Inspire* #2) is also described as difficult and challenging – but it is a struggle the adventurer must overcome to perform his jihad. Again one can identify the emphasis on walking the line between safety and success, and danger and failure, when they state that one needs to take good care of one's feet, take precautions about the weather and to remain anonymous to people "except for those details that the Amir has allowed" (p. 26). Further, the magazine use 3 pictures of different, exotic landscapes as examples to places one may be expected to live and travel for an extended period of time as a jihadist. Combining these factors, the jihadi lifestyle is constructed as one of challenge and adventure, harsh weather and great landscapes, and can as such seem exciting, refreshing and even beautiful. As Cottee & Hayward (2011) notes, "terrorists live underground, outside the community of the law-abiding. Theirs is an isolated

and lonely existence, but one also punctuated by moments of great drama and adventure" (p. 969). The adventures, as they are described in the magazines, are mixed with the possibility of failure, always lurking in the shadows, constantly reminding the jihadist about the thrilling danger and edgeworking experiences of his life.

As Lyng (1990) notes, edgework usually involves some sort of skill that allows the edgeworkers to "maintain control over a situation that verges on complete chaos" (p. 859). He argues that the performers "regard this special "survival capacity" as an *innate* ability" (*ibid.*). The lifestyle challenges connected with jihadism indeed requires the individual to possess certain skills to ensure the success of his goal. However, once the challenges involved are overcome, the jihadists may feel "capable of dealing with any threatening situation", and produce feelings of "self-realization, self-actualization or self-determination" (Lyng 1990: 860).

5.2.2. Seeking Combat & Edgework

However thrilling undertaking the jihadi identity and lifestyle may be; the most prominent form of excitement manifests through violence and voluntary combat. A frequent theme from the magazines is photos and stories from "operations" (e.g. Inspire #2). One picture is showing "the mujahidin walking a very long distance in search of terrifying the enemies of Allah", whereas the following show the moment of attack and the subsequent, successful retreat after "tearing apart the base of the murtadin" (p. 28). They are all flanked by sensationalistic titles, such as "intense explosions", "cleaning the streets" and "base ambush". All of these reports and visuals describe how the mujahideen are travelling from combat to combat, one dangerous situation to another, and, indeed, from one edge to another.

Likewise, *Dabiq* has many articles, interviews and columns about the dangerous jihadi lifestyle of the *Khilafah*, and every edition in the dataset contains examples of this.

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[18] Unarmed, lightly dressed jihadist taunting enemies in their tanks. *Inspire* #3, p. 9.

Dabiq #5 shows pictures from the "fight from wilāyah al-anbar" (pp. 10-11), where jihadists are depicted "blowing up" enemy infrastructure, "hunting the *murtadd*" and "pounding the *sahwat* [Muslims fighting against IS]". Further, the magazine shows *mujahideen* "advancing against the *Sahwah* factions in Yarmük" (#9, p. 35). They also frequently give updates and reports from their "operations", describing the events (e.g. #12, pp. 26-29; #13, pp 26-29; #15, pp. 40-45) of their various terrorist attacks around the world (including Europe) in detail. Again, it becomes evident that describing these situations is of key importance to the propaganda magazines. They are not merely recollections and informative articles about the operations, but also constructions of the lifestyle where the edges are constantly worked.

These constructions all circle around risk, combat, danger, and challenge – in short; the jihadists are constantly living on the edge between life and death. Hamm (2004) suggests that terrorism can be an exercise in edgework, and a way to "push the edges of conventional behavior in order to achieve moral transcendence over it" (p. 335). Lyng (1990) postulated that the edgework experience is about walking the line between safe and unsafe, control and loss of control and in some cases, life and death, and this is very much the impression the propaganda magazines leave their readers with. In jihadism, the edgework one may seek to experience is often extreme, and death is usually involved in some way. This, Cottee & Hayward (2011) notes, is common in any kind of warfare – regular, insurgent and terrorist. "Terrorism is bloody, destructive and brutal" (p. 966) and this carnage may be "pleasurable, arousing, stimulating, exciting and novel" (Zimbardo & Boyd 2009: 106) to some people. When the propaganda magazines frequently use pictures, descriptions and stories about combat, they construct a certain lifestyle in which violence is used to "reawaken[s] and arouse[s] the senses, delivering that convulsion of adrenaline which makes it so compellingly attractive, even addictive" (Cottee & Hayward 2011: 969).

5.2.3. Edgework & Death

Stephen Lyng's (1990) original research on edgework was done on skydivers. What he found, in regards of death, was that it was not linked to "risks in the sport" but rather that "not everyone involved […] possesses the innate survival capacity" (p .859). In jihadism, suicide terrorism is also within the edgework paradigm. They do not just live challenging lives, or partake in voluntary combat to experience the thrill – they also actively seek death through carrying out suicide missions, where their demise is the most likely outcome. Here, the skill set is not a survival capacity, but rather a murderous capacity. The edge is not between life

and death *per se*, but rather between life and afterlife. In fact, falling off the edge into the afterlife, is what motivates the actor, and the thrill of knowing he will soon meet Allah again drives the actor. Lyng (1990) differentiates edgework to thrills and gambling through the control paradigm. As long as the actors are in control of the factors – and those are not left for chance – he is interested. This amplifies the skill perception, and it puts the responsibility on the actor; he is the only determinant of the outcome. This is precisely what suicide terrorism is. The successful jihadi has the murderous capacity as an innate ability, rather than the survival capacity. He is in control of the situation, and does not die as a result of change or accident – self-determining his fate as he steadily drives himself over the edge.

5.3. Resistance in Jihadism

However aesthetic and sensational jihadism can be, many of the acts presented in the propaganda magazines can also be conceptualized as resistance. In cultural criminology, the concept is traditionally applied to criminalized subcultures' resistance to *legal* control (Ferrell 1999). However, it can also be used on any subcultural resistance towards other social order-defining institutions – legal, cultural, religious, political etc., and all subcultures have their own ways of expressing and performing resistance. In cultural criminology, acts are seen as resistance when the meaning is to 'strike upwards', in a collision between constructions downwards and upwards (Bevier 2015). Hebdige (1979) contends that resistance in the subcultures is weak, and problems are only "magically resolved" (Pisoiu 2015: 13) – that is, expressed through style. However, the notion of only 'magical' resistance falls short when applied to the jihadi subculture. Here, resistance is not just "expressed "obliquely'' in style, but [also performed] through purposive political action" (Pisoiu 2015: 17). These performances are intended to question the legitimacy of the social order (McFarland 2006), and appear to be destructive, pure and active of nature. Aside from being destructive, they are also creative acts in the sense that they bring "about the 'new' in a situation […] and resists the norms of a certain situation" (Hayward & Schuilenburg 2014: 30).

The jihadi subculture offers many frames of resistance, and many acts are seen as oppositional towards the non-jihadi. The resistance is strongly integrated in the subcultural style, not necessarily caused by failure to achieve, but rather as an existential rejection of values. This understanding is crucial in order to see the performers as independent and creative agents, and not just as pre-determined 'robots' acting upon strain. Resistance, then, becomes a way to express and perform the subcultural style. Many of the acts within the

magazines – and the magazines themselves – can arguably be conceptualized as resistance. Terrorism, for example, is resistant of nature. However, my focus, as stated and explained, leans mostly toward the non-combat related activities. In the following, I analyse how the jihadi propaganda magazines construct frames of resistance through symbolic ridicule, and ritualistic destruction of cultural products, and shown how they are integrated in the subcultural style. Crucial to this analysis is to identify the power against which the jihadists resist, as well as the core elements of active action and opposition (Hollander & Einwohner 2004). To determine 'what kind' of resistance the acts are, the analysis considers the degree of overtness and activeness (Williams 2011). However, it is also necessary to see them as creative acts of transformation in order to give them subcultural and stylistic meaning (Hayward & Schuilenburg 2014).

5.3.1. Ridicule as Symbolic Resistance

Interestingly, Al-Qaeda use ridicule and satire in their propaganda magazines. This phenomenon does not appear in Islamic State magazines to the same extent, and can be seen as a form of resistance. *Inspire* has designated pages signed with "This ad is brought to you by A Cold Diss" in most of the magazines of the dataset (*Inspire* editions 3, 5, 6 & 8 through 13). This is intriguing for an analysis of resistance, since these propaganda magazines mostly strive towards appearing serious, ideologically and religiously sound, and the ridiculing practice is a clear break with this norm.

For example, *Inspire* #5 shows a picture of President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, saying "Hey Ali, Mubarak[19] just fell. Guess who's joining the party next?" *Inspire* #6 depicts former US congressman Anthony Weiner. Weiner had previously criticized Anwar Al-Awlaki as a killer, and *Inspire* is ridiculing him by making a penis-pun on his name, calling him "an angry Weiner head" (p. 46). In the same tone, *Inspire* #9 turns Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's name against him, translating it to "Rottenyahu", because "the pronunciation of the word NETAN means ROTTEN which describes and fits him very well" (*Inspire* #9: 25). In this "Cold Diss"-ad, *Inspire* creatively constructs Netanyahu's "*Qareen*", and the conversation between them. This *Qareen,* which can be described as an inner voice or spiritual double, comments on one of Netanyahu's speeches. For example, when Netanyahu says "Israel wants peace, I want peace", his *Qareen* comments "Lol, are you kidding me???" Further, *Inspire* editions #12 & #13 ridicule Barack Obama, printing a fake interview with

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[19] Hosni Mubarak, former President of Egypt who fell to a military-coup in the Arab Spring of 2011

him (#12) and calling him "Humpty Dumpty" (#13). The interview is, obviously, taken out of context, and it is made to appear as if *Inspire* is asking Obama questions, to which he replies in a way that fronts the jihadi impression of him as a cold-blooded murderer.

Being printed in official propaganda magazines, these satirical displays clearly encompass both a sense of action, and a sense of opposition (Hollander & Einwohner 2004), and it is both active and overt (Williams 2011). To place it definitely within the scales is a difficult task, as several elements need to be considered. As these acts are performed by the magazines themselves – rather than recollection and representations of individual acts of resistance – they are clearly both active, and aim to be overt. This itself can be enough to characterize them as active, overt resistance. However, it can be argued that this constitutes a case of attempted resistance (Hollander & Einwohner 2004), as it is not very likely to have direct impact on the people it ridicules. In a sense, it is 'just' symbolically directed towards enemy governments and government officials, here proliferated by the American and Israeli. These are typical targets for jihadism. The Yemeni government is also ridiculed, which is more specifically relevant for Al-Qaeda, since *Inspire* is produced by the Al-Qaeda wing in Yemen.

Otherwise dismissed as simple jokes or stupidity, this symbolic resistance functions to recreate the truth and subvert the legitimacy of the ridiculed. As a creative act, these ridiculing efforts are effectively delegitimizing the ridiculed and recreating their words into jihadi 'truths'. In a Chinese study of online resistance, Tang & Bhattacharya (2011) found that ridicule and satire indeed spread subversive and resistant ideas, and Connery & Combe (1995) argues that ridicule can function to subvert cultural and political hegemonies. As seen in Obama's fake interview (*Inspire* #12) and Netanyahu's 'conversation' with his *Qareen* (*Inspire* #9), the propaganda magazines are destroying the legitimacy of the subject *and* recreating truth through their own words. Whereas these acts may not hold significant actual political power – especially not *towards* the ridiculed – they may hold some symbolic power within the jihadi subculture. By constantly resisting the truth of the enemy, the propaganda magazines challenge and shape the way in which the jihadists view the ridiculed, and most importantly what they represent. This makes it *de facto* resistance.

There are several truths to which the propaganda magazines resist, dismantle and recreate. In the case of the ridicule of Yemeni president Saleh, it draws upon the Arab Spring,

where Hosni Mubarak fell to an Egyptian uprising. Vallee (2015) notes that Al-Qaeda has a very positive outlook on the uprising, and the 5th edition of *Inspire* writes that the spring is a manifestation that confirms that "Al Qaeda's rage is shared by the millions of Muslims across the world whether they are in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Yemen or elsewhere" (p. 43). These governments are heavily criticized for being closely connected with America in several editions (e.g. *Inspire* #1). As such, the symbolic resistance of ridicule can be seen as a resistance towards the alleged secularization of Islamic countries. By telling him that he's "joining the party next" (*Inspire* #5), they are constructing a frame of resistance where secularization is symbolically opposed, and "the Arab Spring is a present day manifestation of the prophet's test. The answer: Islam" (Vallee 2015: 27). In other cases, Israeli and Americans are ridiculed, which resonates well with the master narrative, in which they are cast as the main enemies of the Islam Al-Qaeda profess to represent. In their satirical presentation of both Netanyahu's (*Inspire* #9) and Obama's (*Inspire* #12) speeches, they are creatively using their own words against them in order to oppose them, and confirm their own impression of their bloodlust and intentions of their involvement in Islamic countries.

This symbolic power is also what makes the satirical and ridiculing acts important. Aside from satirically expressing their resistance towards secularization and Muslim partnership with the West, it can also be a "facilitator of violence" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 60) towards them. As such, the resistance may not have direct impact on its targets, but it can enable more active, overt acts, by delegitimizing their words and ideals. The propaganda magazines attempt, through their ridiculing resistance, to construct a frame of resistance in which violent resistance can be justified as self-defense towards a brutal regime. This resonates well with the defensive violence narrative of Al-Qaeda presented earlier.

5.3.3. Resistance through Iconoclasm

Jihadists do not just ridicule their enemies, or destroy their bodies – they also destroy their cultural products. This is another form of resistance constructed in the dataset. So-called "iconoclasm" is characterized by the destruction of "statues, places of worship, and books as well" (Roy 2017: 3). This form of resistance is typically seen in Islamic State propaganda, and does not appear in *Inspire*. In the 8th edition of *Dabiq*, this is covered in-depth in a report called "Erasing the legacy of a ruined nation", where the destruction of "statues, sculptures, and engravings of idols and kings" is described (p. 22). *Dabiq* #2 shows different forms of iconoclasm, like the demolition of "'grave of the girl' in Mosul" (p. 15), "shrine and tomb of

Ahmad Ar-Rifai in the district of Al-Mahlabiyyah" (p. 16) and "Husayaniyyat Jawwad temple in Tal'Afar" (p. 16). *Dabiq* #11 provides a "photo report" of their destruction of the "Shirk [idolatry] temple of Baalshamin" (pp. 32-33). Western media-outlets have given wide attention to this destructive activity, and Denis MacEoin at the Gatestone Institute provides an overview[20] of all antiquities destroyed by the group.

[21]

Just like with Al-Qaeda's ridicule, the elements of senses of action and opposition are found in the iconoclasm (Hollander & Einwohner 2004), and this form is even more overt and active, especially on individual levels and in terms of actual visibility (Williams 2011). A crushed temple or statue is clearly a more overt and active representation than satire. Visualizing through the destructed ruins and charred remains of blown-to-pieces statues and burnt temples, the depiction and circulation from IS and their propaganda machinery amplifies the overtness of the resistance. They crave the attention from the world, and to show off their own reconstruction of reality.

The act of iconoclasm is not a jihadi innovation. The jihadists, however, adopt it into their perception of reality (Roy 2017). When the acts are seen as resistance, it is understood as

[20] https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4973/destruction-middle-east-antiquities
[21] Iconoclasm, from *Dabiq* # 8 (p. 22).

creative acts to recreate the *doxa*. Following Hayward & Schuilenburg (2014), the acts are attempting to transform truth into something else. *Dabiq* describes their actions as "erasing the legacy of a ruined nation". It becomes clear that these are not merely spontaneous acts of excitement, edgework or destructive rebellion – they hold symbolic meaning, and that meaning is to oppose the original state's legacy, and indeed remove it. By crushing the statues, graves, shrines and tombs, the jihadists are removing objects, but most crucially their symbolic powers and significance. In the case of the picture above, from *Dabiq* #8, for example, the jihadists had "entered the ruins of the ancient Assyrians in Wilāyat Ninawa" (p. 22) and destroyed several objects. Iconoclasm, Roy (2017) argues, is driven by a desire "to wipe the slate clean, erase memory, and become masters of the truth" (p. 68), and the jihadists use it as a destructive *and* creative force – both destroying pieces of history *and* rewriting it.

Iconoclasm can be seen as a religious resistance (Bantjes 1994). In such view, iconoclasm is a means to "eliminate and symbols of one legitimating system and replace them with new ones" (p. 268).This is grounded in the belief that "damaging the symbols of power […] damages the power itself" (Freedberg 1985: 25). The statues and symbols destroyed in *Dabiq* are most notably Christian places of worship, or artefacts belonging to the Iraqi and Syrian regimes. Like the Al-Qaedan ridicule resistance, the Islamic State is also very critical towards the '*murtadd* governments' that practice false Islam and support the West. By tearing down the symbols, they attempt to remove the old hegemony and 'reinstate' true Islam. This is done by drawing upon religious discourse to legitimize their perception of reality. For example, *Dabiq* references Ibrahim's (Abraham) apparent practice of iconoclasm and cleansing of idols (Flood 2016). They, in their own word, "revived the Sunnah of their father Ibrahim" (*Dabiq* #8: 22). As such, they attempt to transform the truth of which the symbols they destroy into their own truth and to claim possession of the *doxa.*

Iconoclasm can also be an expression of generational resistance (Roy 2017). In this view, the resistance is not performed towards one specific religion or ideology *per se*, but rather against their predecessors. Roy (2017) argues that iconoclasm is the logical turn for generational hatred directed towards their forefathers. The jihadists despise their parents' "lapsed memory, their silence or cowardice" (p. 68). In fact, he goes on to add that jihadists never align themselves with previous political and religious movements, and instead resist them in virtually every way possible.

5.4. The Homology of the Jihadi Subcultural Style

The jihadi subcultural style is a mix of military costumes, weaponry, horses, Salafist-inspired dresses, nasheeds, rhetoric and Westernized products like raps and internet jargon. It is performed through edgework activities, and politicized through differing acts of resistance. The jihadi propaganda magazines creatively use looks, talks and arts from a variety of cultures to construct their own style. They aestheticize badassery, where being bad is good. They express masculinity and toughness through both the style and the way they act to achieve fame, in which they actively seek excitement and oppositional frames. Their stylistic icons are the infamous Jihadi John and Osama Bin Laden. Although the jihadists, and as such, the jihadi cool style, of today explicitly tries to draw on Salafism' wish to return to the days of the Prophet, they are evidently products of their own times, and their subculture's evolution. This is shown in practice when they employ their style in their resistance. Completely breaking with the norm that is seriousness, they utilize the style's 'netspeak' dimension to make a penis-joke, and print "LOL, are you kidding me???" in their magazines. This shows how the jihadi propaganda magazines show a flexible and inter-discursive willingness to adapt, reconstruct and create their realities to fit as many purposes as possible, while still holding onto the "jihadi".

This chaotic *bricolage* of cultural elements is only possible because of the internal homologous relationship between style, edgework, resistance and their values. Through this relationship, the subculture can stylistically communicate the desired qualities of the subculture, and as such form a unity between the group's relations, situation and experience (Hall & Jefferson 2006). Just like the skinheads wore boots, braces and had cropped hair because it signalized "hardness, masculinity and working-classness" (Hebdige 1979: 114), the jihadi subcultural style appears to be characterized by the same ideals. As shown, the jihadi cool style emphasises masculinity, badassery, excitement and resistance as the jihadi style. Each part of the subculture is "organically related to other parts and it is through the fit between them that the subcultural member makes sense of the world." (*ibid.:* 113). The symbolic orderliness between style, action and values is clear, and they signify their values and differences through their style. The homology between their values (badassery, excitement, opposition) and the constantly visualized, aestheticized and performed style, is what constructs a meaningful and coherent frame of reference for the jihadists.

It is this complex and intricate relationship between homology and *bricolage* that explains how and why the jihadi cool style can be an appealing and, indeed, dangerous force in recruitment and radicalization. The jihadi cool style is a style constructed specifically towards a broad and diverse audience, appealing to both the devoted Salafist who believe that the 7th century Caliphate is the best solution, the frustrated and emasculated guy who wants to be a badass, and the marginalized and deprived street kids in the West.

6. JIHADI DEATH FRENZY: BROADCASTING DEATH

"When we strike the kuffar's necks,

Killing them with every opportunity,

For bringing them death is prosperity!" (Inspire #10, p.13).

Khosrokhavar (2009) argues that death plays a central role in the jihadi "subculture of death", characterized by its four perceptions of death; First, for Islam to surpass the West, jihadists should not only volunteer, but aspire to die. Second, since the West "monopolizes" the values of life, jihadists see the value of death as greater. Third, death is in fact the ideal solution in dire situations, and as such a goal in itself. Fourth, death is a means to (re-)construct self-identity (p. 65). Further, he suggests that the manifestations of death can be categorized as death "towards the self and towards the other" (p. 64), the former focused upon the martyrdom, and the latter upon killing "bad Muslims" (p. 65).

Unsurprisingly, death also plays a crucial role in the propaganda magazines. Dead Yemeni children will meet readers within the first pages of *Inspire* #1. The body of Norwegian Ole Johan Grimsgaard-Ofstad is shown in *Dabiq* #12. Five beheaded captives are depicted in *Rumiyah* #2, and casualties of terrorism are frequently mentioned with positive connotations throughout the material. Killed *mujahideen* are represented in most of the data, accompanied by pictures and descriptions of their demise. Suicide bombers make appearances frequently, and their martyrdom is celebrated. In short – the fascination of death permeates the jihadi propaganda, subcultural style and its narratives, in what I call the "jihadi death frenzy". In its core, it revolves around the way the propaganda magazines *broadcast* their emotions and narrations of death.

This concept is suited to be analysed by both frameworks for narrative and cultural criminology, and can show how they can be utilized together to analyse how a cultural product is constructed and functions. In broadcasting their death frenzy, the jihadi propaganda magazines both provide narrative *and* cultural stylistic expressions on how they think, feel and express themselves about death. Crucially, by integrating the frameworks, the analysis allows insight into both the feelings *and* the functions connected to broadcasting death. The death frenzy is presented and constructed in three ways – tragically, celebratory and heroically. These manifestations of death frenzy can be characterized by the death of innocent Muslims, "preferably" children (tragic); death of crusaders and apostates (celebratory); and death of *mujahideen* (heroic). They all feature each other in a constant tandem. In the

following, I will outline how they are presented, framed, given meaning to and function within the subculture.

6.1. Tragic Death: Constructing the Death of Civilians Believers

> *"The American culture is that of killing other people. How many have the Americans killed from the Vietnamese, the Japanese, the Iraqi people, the Afghani people, and the Somali people, and how many have the Zionist allies killed from the sons of Palestine with the support of these bloodthirsty beasts?"*

The first representation of death in the jihadi propaganda is the "tragic death". Khosrokhavar (2009) emphasizes a dualistic understanding of jihadi violence; towards the *self*, and towards *others*. However, the propaganda magazines also focus on violence towards them *by others*, primarily their children and other innocent *ummah* members. It serves important purposes in the death frenzy, and stylistic and narrative constructions of it.

The introductory quote is from *Inspire #1* (pp. 16-17)*,* and encapsulates jihadi characterization of Western cultures, and the perceived intentional murder of other people. *Inspire* claims that Americans has killed "women and children and lied by saying that these were preemptive strikes against al-Qa`idah in order to justify to their people that they have killed the leaders of al-Qa`idah". They visualize and amplify tragedies by depicting dead children, some apparently fallen to the "American hate and lust for killing others" (*Inspire #1*: 17). Dabiq #6 claims that "They [Americans] then imposed crippling sanctions on the Iraqi people themselves that, through poverty, resulted in the deaths of over 500,000 children alone" (p. 60), and that the killings of "hundreds of thousand people" was done to protect the dollar (p. 61). *Dabiq #1* shows pictures of dead children, reportedly after a Syrian regime attack in Raqqah (pp. 42-43). These deaths are unfortunate – and undisputedly – realities of war. Jihadi propaganda may present them truthfully (i.e. the children may in fact be killed by Americans), but the facts are of less importance (Sandberg 2009). The interpretations and constructions of guilt and intentionality, however, are. What is thought of as unfortunate but unavoidable collateral damage in the West is by jihadi propaganda used as tragic and brutal proof of the American regime's hate for, and war against, Islam.

Framing

First, it is important to understand the cultural context within which the tragic death is constructed. This gives it meaning, and helps to explain its functions and emotional effects.

The tragic death is constructed and sustained by the belief that the West is at war with Islam; the master narrative. It implies that there is a discriminatory victimization of Muslims, and each innocent casualty constructed as tragic death in the propaganda magazines serves as a proliferation and amplifier of this narrative victimization. Indeed, Winter (2015) argues that "collateral damage is the Islamic State propagandist's friend; dead babies and maimed children are instrumentalised, routinely integrated into a catalogue of crimes that have been perpetrated by the 'enemy'" (p. 25). It practically employs the victim character of the master narrative in the cultural broadcast of death. This is a way to "diagnose what issues or problems it [the culture] seeks to address and identify the source of these problems" (Page, Challita & Harris 2011: 154).

Cultural meaning & emotions

It is important to explain how it the tragic death is constructed to understand what it means. The death frenzy, in its tragic form, is an intentional communication of subcultural difference (Hebdige 1979) between the harmonic ummah, and the murderous West. The difference communicated emphasizes how the cultures treat civilian believers – the jihadi ummah takes care of them, whereas the West is intentionally killing them. However, it is also known that Hamas has used civilians and children as human shields in order to increase civilian death toll in the conflict of Palestine and Israel[22], and there is little reason to believe that other, more extreme groups would have reservations against similar actions. In assigning a narratively inescapable guilt to the West, the jihadi propaganda is able to reconstruct any death want under the tragic death and their truth is constructed as the only legitimate truth.

This, in turn, means that they are actively dehumanizing the West and Western culture as brutal and barbaric. Whereas the other findings in this thesis largely points towards a jihadi wish to completely differentiate and invert its cultural styles from the Western, the construction of tragic death points towards an interesting form of interdiscursivity between Western discourses of sorrow and death, and the jihadi perceptions of death (Sandberg 2009). Other manifestations of the death frenzy construct death as something positive. The tragic one, however, draws upon sorrow and grief. The propaganda magazine is able to drift between their perceptions of death and their counterculture's perceptions of death (Matza

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[22]See
http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2015/06/22/u_n_report_accuses_both_israel_and_hamas_of_war_crimes.html for an example and for a direct URL to the UN report.

1964). Drawing flexibly upon both discourses in constructing the style of death frenzy may be a strategic step to broaden their reach, and to affect not only those who thrive upon, but also loathe and feel sorrow from, murder, terrorism and death. Further, the tragic death is also a construction of religious and ideological superiority and hierarchy. Further, it is shown how jihadists construct every non-believer as a legitimate target for the jihad. Coinciding with this, they attempt to construct Muslim children and women as illegitimate targets. Comparing the two groups, they have no clear difference other than their religion, ideology and sometimes ethnicity – and thus, this construction implies that they are pure, and superior to others because of these qualities.

Narrative function

The tragic death is arguably the most strategically constructed broadcast of the death frenzy, and its functional aim is to create uproars and sensations within the local and global ummah. Depicting dead children, and constructing them in the ways described, serves this purpose neatly. This is done to win the "hearts and minds"– a struggle which is interwoven into both terrorist, and counter-terrorism tactics. As Al-Raffie (2012) notes, one misconception of terrorist groups and ideologies is that destroying their physical presence, such as training camps, infrastructure and kill their members would eradicate them. There is also a narrative battle going on – one that cannot be won by bombs. The tragic death serves as the jihadists' main weapon, and the West struggle to counter it. Oftentimes in the theatre of war, the locals are split between living under the wings of *Khilafah* – and thus, by default conforming to their anti-Western narratives and culture – or to abandon their homes and risk their lives. Counter-terrorist acts for the hearts and minds are often targeted at preventing radicalization and jihadism – and are as such aimed at the moderates (Mockaitis 2003). The tragic death does the same, and indicates that the West is attacking all Muslims, and that their culture is indeed one of death frenzy, and that no place is safe for the innocent Muslims. In doing so, the tragic death is creating a moral panic within the *ummah*. As shown in classical sociological works, the moral panic does not have to be grounded in facts or reality (e.g. Cohen 1972; Young 2009). It may, however, recruit and/or convince the locals and moderates to support jihadism – if not with weapons, at least with narrative, social or economic means – and, de facto, legitimizing the groups As such, it may morally panic Muslims, locals and foreigners alike, towards acceptance, legitimization, support or even radicalization.

Further, it may function to neutralize crime and opposition against the Western civilians and soldiers. As we will see in the coming paragraphs, crimes against Westerners are celebrated, and one way to explain this, is through this function of the tragic death. In their classical work, Sykes & Matza (1957) analyses crime by looking into how delinquents neutralize their deviance. Arguably, the jihadists do the same in constructing the tragic death. When they broadcast and narrate that their own children are being murdered, they dehumanize the attackers and thus constructs themselves as "an avenger and the victim is transformed into a wrong-doer" (p. 668). As such, the tragic death is a way to deny that victims of jihadi terrorism or killings are in fact victims. The injury, "it may be claimed, is not really an injury; rather, it is a form of rightful retaliation or punishment" (*ibid.*). This denial of the victim may consequently enable the "celebratory death".

6.2. Celebratory Death: Constructing the Death of the Enemy

The celebratory death is a form of broadcasting and narratively celebrating "absolute violence towards the other", where the goal is to "kill bad Muslims" or non-believers (Khosrokhavar 2009: 65-71). Conventional interpretations of the Qur'an forbid Muslims from killing non-combatants. The holy book writes that "[…] whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely"[23]. Especially the elderly, women and children are forbidden targets. Notwithstanding, death of Western civilians and soldiers is virtually ever-present in the magazines, and mostly produces happiness and descriptions of justice, and is as such a celebratory death. Such rhetoric is used in Dabiq and Rumiyah when they describe terrorist attacks, such as the San Bernardino (Rumiyah #2) and Paris attacks (Dabiq #12), the latter being described as a "blessed assault" that […] succeeded in killing hundreds of crusaders and wounding even more" (p. 28). The overall connotations in celebratory deaths are positive about the fashion, location, death toll and impact regarding the murder of tens, or sometimes hundreds, of innocent people

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[23](Qur'an 5:32) See https://quran.com/5/32 for the entire *surah*

The celebratory death also manifests through presentations of killed enemy combatants. Here, the celebrations are often more explicit, and jihadists can be seen celebrating with their victims, or with seized land. Decapitated captives and killed enemy soldiers are frequently used in the magazines. In *Dabiq* #6, the reader is informed about the "successfully liberation" of the town Bījī where "the soldiers of the Khilāfah celebrate and give thanks to Allah, they anticipate more battles […] and more opportunities – bi idhnillāh – to take revenge for Ahlus-Sunnah from the filthy Safawīs and their allies" (pp. 32-33) after purging (i.e. killing) their enemies. The following picture, for example, is accompanied by a picture of a dead enemy soldier with a gunshot wound to the head.

25

Framing

The context of the celebratory death is similar to that of the tragic death. They both operate under the master narrative of global war on Islam – the tragic death as the problem and the celebratory death as the solution used to "proffer 'specific remedies or solutions and the general means or tactics for achieving these objectives'" (Page, Challita & Harris 2011: 158). As such, they are working in tandem, often being substantially the same (death of innocents), and simultaneously direct counterparts of each other (happy, not sad). Following the tragic death's logic of "winning the hearts and minds", the celebratory death should, theoretically, counteract, deter and disgust the locals and the *ummah.*

Notwithstanding, jihadi propaganda is full of celebrations of Western death. In Salafi-Jihadi discourse "the fight against the disbelievers and "fake Muslims"" (Khosrokhavar 2009: 73) is central, and Hafez (2010) notes that the context of war "permits the killing of civilians" (p. 373) – both "fake Muslims" and *kuffar.* They are using this context of war, through certain jihadi *fatwas* (theological rulings), to reconstruct Western civilians as crusaders, justified by their involvement "directly or indirectly, […] with powers that repress Muslims" (Khosrokhavar 2005: 68). Contextually, then, the death of enemies are worthy of celebration – civilian and soldier alike, and the death of innocent Muslims are perceive as much worse than the death of civilian crusaders. Notably, the Islamic State draws more heavily upon this broadcasted death than Al-Qaeda. This derives from the difference in how they frame their own violence

Cultural meaning and emotions

Whereas the use of death in the tragic form is a way of intentionally communicating a difference, the celebratory death serves narrative and stylistic revolt against other cultures – both moderate Islam and the West – through valuing "the perverse and abnormal" (Hebdige 1979: 107). The act of killing others, and then broadcasting it as something positive, is a very explicit way to revolt. The abnormal killings strikes fear into the enemy, and the celebrations within the jihadi subculture of death makes it even more perverse. This implies a hierarchical difference between the values of life and death, with death values as the most importance ones (Khosrokhavar 2009). The celebratory death is also ever so important in the narrative archetypes of crusaders and apostates. Celebrating death implies that every living crusader or

apostate will awaken feelings of sorrow (e.g. because of their infidelity, apostasy or simply because of their existence), and thus make jihadists lust for their blood.
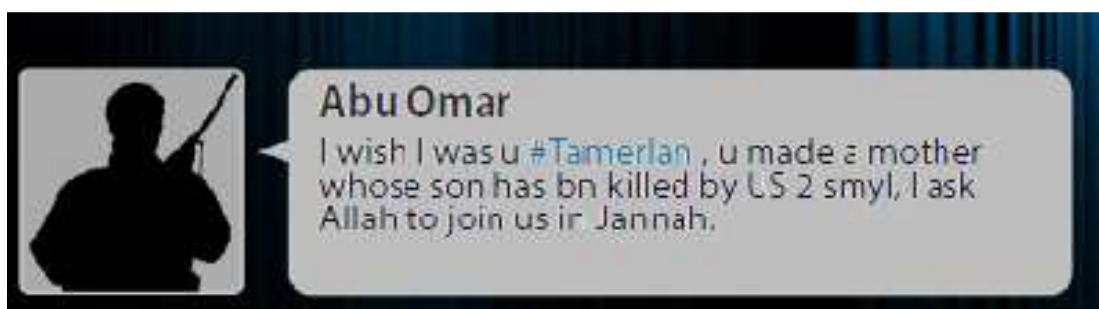
Narrative function

Construction and broadcasting celebrations of the death of your enemies is a form of neutralization. As mentioned, the tragic death functions neutralize injury done the victim as just retribution, and enabling the celebratory death. The celebratory death is, then, the result of this neutralization, as well as a further neutralization. Following Sykes & Matza (1957), the celebratory death can function as a "condemnation of the condemner". Drawing upon the narrative archetypes of the crusader, and the death celebration of the death frenzy style, the jihadists refuse the Western truths and their values of life, and "change[d] the subject of the conversation in the dialogue between his own deviant impulses and the reactions of others; and by attacking others, the wrongfulness of his own behaviour is more easily repressed or lost to view" (p. 668). As such, the tragic death has neutralized the victim, and enabled the celebratory death, which again condemns the Western society through terrorist acts.

Drawing the distinctions between the West and the *ummah* serves to create and amplify the feelings of "us vs them", that is central in the master narrative of jihadism. Expressing happy feelings regarding death through the celebratory death may also function to demoralize the enemy. Using the celebratory death is a way to "let it [the West] see that Muslims not only die voluntarily but also aspire to die" (Khosrokhavar 2009: 65). Indeed, jihadists do not only celebrate the killing of others – they also celebrate *getting* killed and killing themselves. This is done through the concept of the heroic death.

6.3. Heroic Death: Constructing Heroic Martyrs

The most prominent focus on death in the propaganda magazines is the focus on martyred *mujahideen*. Characteristic of this "heroic death" is their martyrdom, and is manifested through two different death scenarios – death through suicide missions, and death at the hand on the enemy through combat and military operations. This is what Khosrokhavar (2009) conceptualize as "violence turned against the self" (p. 65), and goes hand in hand with the celebratory death, usually appearing together in descriptions of an operation. Suicide bomber and jihadists killed in close combat, or by drone attacks and tactical operations are frequently described, depicted and hailed for their heroism in the magazines. This is the most honourable death in jihadism, and the more "crusaders" they take with them to stand before Allah, the better. In some of the cases, the heroic death involves a post-mortem posing of the

body – not unlike the way some serial killers pose their victim's bodies (Vronsky 2004).
Dead, smiling jihadists with gunshot wounds to their foreheads is for example shown in
Inspire #6. Upon dying, a shot jihadist "laughed and left this world". His death was mourned
briefly, but his family and friends were soon "extremely happy for him" (p. 25). Osama bin
Laden's death is a heroic death, being described in Inspire #6, and is featured as "not an
embarrassment or shame", and they pose the question "Do chivalrous men and heroes die in
situations other than battles?" (p. 8). They also write that he, in death, will be a spirit through
whom the jihadi culture will thrive upon for generations to come. The heroism is also
visualized through, for example, Florida terrorist Omar Mateen, and the death of "Jihadi
John" in Dabiq #13. Furthermore, Inspire frequently recollects the martyrdom of the terrorists
behind 9/11. Recent suicide missions are described in virtually every magazine in the data
material, for example the Paris attacks in Dabiq #12 and the Belgian suicide bombings in
Dabiq #14. After the Boston marathon bombing, "Abu Omar" tweeted that "I wish I was u
#Tamerlan" – Tamerlan being the brothers behind the bombings.

Abu Omar
I wish I was u #Tamerlan , u made a mother
whose son has bn killed by US 2 smyl, I ask
Allah to join us in Jannah.

[26]

Framing

The construction of the heroic death needs to be understood within the context of
suicide and honour, in the realm of the Islamic concept istishhad ("martyrdom", or loosely
translated; heroic death). Suicide is, paradoxically at first sight, a sin in Islam, even in Salafi-
Jihadi interpretations of it. A hadith states that "The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever purposely
throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, will be in the (Hell) Fire falling down into
it and abiding therein perpetually forever."[27] Drawing upon this, jihadism needs to reconstruct
the whole concept of purposefully ending one's own life, to circumvent the shame related to
suicide.

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[26] "Heroic death" p. 32 in *Inspire* #11
[27] (Sahih al-Bukhari 5778: Book 76, Hadith 90) See http://sunnah.com/bukhari/76/90 for the entire *hadith*

Further, the heroic death should also be contextualized in relation to the tragic and celebratory. In this interplay, the death frenzy proliferate the problem in the *ummah* (tragic), a solution to the problem (celebratory), and dying heroically to save the *ummah* serves as the motivation for solving it (Page, Challita & Harris 2011).

Cultural meaning and emotions

In the West, dying is usually something sad, feared and an unwanted ending of the self. In the jihadi subculture, however, death can also be a positive thing. This is necessary to work around the suicide paradox. This is done by constructing suicide terrorism as a case of altruism, where the "[…] attacker does not kill himself for personal reasons, but sacrifices himself for God" (Moghadam 2009: 60). They also sacrifice themselves for the *ummah.* As Oliver & Steinberg (2005) notes, jihadists often think of their forthcoming death with positive connotations and positive feelings, because they are about to "die alone in order that a million might life" (p. 122). Therefore, it is not suicide *per se*. his selfless act of sacrifice also has a more selfish side as well. Indeed, suicide terrorism is an "[…] act of self-destruction *and* an act of self-recreation" (Cottee & Hayward 2011: 976, emphasis in original). The martyr dies to protect the *ummah,* but also to reconstruct himself as "the heroic and awe-inspiring figure" (Cottee 2014: 991), and the heroic death is "[…] a manifestation of a desire to be a self" (Khosrokhavar 2005: 66), and can be used to liberate the self from this life, and recreate it into something better in the afterlife.

Additionally, the fact that jihadists seemingly pose the bodies of their killed comrades implies a constructivist focus within the subculture. As seen, jihadists strategically, narratively and culturally construct suicide as heroic and as something positive. As Moghadam (2009) notes, fallen *mujahideen* are oftentimes congratulated by alive fighters, whom would "weep because they were not also slain in battle" (p. 59). By posing a fallen friend to make it look like he is smiling while crying because you yourself had to stay behind in this life, death is structured and constructed as something beautiful. To utilize another metaphor from serial killer scholarship, this is part of the 'signature' of the death frenzy. Death producing happy feelings is characteristic for jihadists, and fear of dying is seen as "the vice of unbelievers" (Khosrokhavar 2009: 64). Achieving martyrdom, and the cultural need to communicate the wish for it, works as a pair. It is equally important to show that you do not fear death through style, as it is to actually become *shahid* (martyr). Playing with death through crying over life, posing your fallen friend and through discourse and narrative can serve as a means to prove

oneself as a real jihadist. This, in turn, makes you an even bigger hero when the martyrdom is fulfilled. Often, the *shahid* are praised with connotations like "he was the one who feared death the least". It's important to die, but also to show that you want to die in order to be a real jihadist, and not a *kuffar*.

Narrative function

The heroic death is a way to achieve superstardom. As a key component in the subcultural style, the heroic death is the 'end game' within jihadi cool. By broadcasting the heroic death in their magazines, they utilize the jihadi subcultural style narratively to create the ultimate superstar badass – the heroic martyr. As seen, suicide terrorism and martyrdom is constructed as an act of self-recreation, where the individual leaves the now behind to become a hero in the afterlife. As such, the jihadi subculture the individual an opportunity (the heroic death) to "define or remake themselves as heroic figures" (Cottee & Hayward 2011: 976) and thus function as attractive, both to outsiders (converts, moderate Muslims) through radicalization and to insiders (jihadists almost always volunteer to perform suicide missions). In a sense, the heroic death can hardwire the jihadists to self-destruct.

The heroic death can serve as a neutralization technique. As with any subculture, there are certain "in-group" feelings and internal loyalty. The rhetorical logic and reasoning behind the heroic death – where the individual gives his own life for the *ummah* – is a way to neutralize suicide terrorism through an appeal to higher loyalty (Sykes & Matza 1957). Within the jihadi subculture, suicide terrorism may in fact be conformity and internally expected. As such, the situational rationality constructed through the heroic death may be all the neutralization needed for individuals to commit atrocities – in the end, they can argue, "I didn't do it for myself" (*ibid.:* 669).

6.4. Death Frenzy: In the Intersection between Cultural Style and Narrative

Jihadis show a great interest in death, both in narrating and broadcasting it as a cultural product. In the propaganda magazines, they constantly do both. "The jihadi death frenzy", as I have called it, is constructed in three ways; tragically, celebratory and heroically. It revolves around, at its core, how jihadists *think, feel* and *express* themselves about death. This tripartite concept is "arch-jihadi" and, I would argue, unique and absent from other subcultures in all of its complexity. The three manifestations are closely intertwined and connected, but still quite different. The tragic death is the stylistic and narrative way jihadism constructs and narrates

the death of its own civilians. Its face is the dead children depicted in several magazines, reportedly killed by the murderous West. It is constructed to awaken feelings of sadness within the *ummah*, and rage against the West. It uses a paradoxical interdiscursivity as it draws upon Western discourses of sorrow and death in order to intentionally differentiate its own values and morale from the West. Hand in hand with the emotional meanings goes its strategy. It is used to win the hearts and minds in both the local as well as the global communities. Further, it dehumanizes Westerners and neutralizes crimes against them. In doing so, it enables the celebratory death.

As a stylistic expression and narrative, the celebratory is about celebrating the death of others. By depicting the "clean-up" after terrorist attacks and describing them positively, the jihadi propaganda shows a perverse and abnormal fascination of death. As such, it revolts against other cultures, mainly the West. *Murtadds* and *apostates* are not spared either. By doing this, they are able to construct every casualty of non-believers as something positive – albeit being substantially the same as the tragic death. By juxtaposing Muslim and non-Muslim civilians, they effectively condemn the West in its entirety, and continuously neutralize their own crimes by referring to Western brutality against the *ummah*. By expressing their values of death, they also manage to construct themselves as fearless, and thus demoralize their enemy. The celebratory death manifests a lust for death and hate of life, and hierarchically puts death values as predominant within the subculture. Following this, jihadists do not only love to kill – they also love to die.

The last part of death frenzy is how jihadists think, feel and express themselves about martyrdom – predominantly through suicide missions; the heroic death. The anti-Islamic act of suicide is re-narrated into an altruistic act of heroism, where the jihadists give his body for God. In fact, it is not suicide at all. Rather, it is a way in which the jihadists can recreate the self, and become something better in the afterlife by committing your body and soul to "the cause". This may function as an attraction to newcomers and outsider, and as amplifiers of homology to the in-group. It also, effectively, serves as neutralization, as the suicide act in which they die (and kill) is done because of the love for the group, and the love for God. The glory and loyalty they die for, makes the martyr immortal. Jihadists who die in battle or kill themselves in acts of suicide terrorism never truly die – they live on through their legends, through the magazines, through YouTube and Twitter, and through subcultural narratives and narrations.

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This study has conducted a qualitative analysis of 2001 pages of jihadi propaganda material, spread over 32 editions of 3 magazines, published by 2 major jihadi groups. Theoretically drawing upon cultural and narrative criminology, it has identified the master narrative of jihadism and analysed through its structural elements, characters and different genre and type influences. It has looked into Al-Qaeda and Islamic State group specific narratives, and shown how they are used in creative life- and even-story narrations. Further, it has identified and analysed what the jihadi subcultural style consists of, and how it is constructed. By doing so, the study has attempted to develop the notion of "jihadi cool", and move the concept energize and amplify its theoretical foundation. It has also, by drawing upon cultural criminological theories, shown how the subcultural style is used to construct behavior, in which jihadists seek to achieve togetherness, fame, excitement and resistance. It is within this homologous relationship between style, edgework, resistance and ideology that behavior such as terrorism and crime is constructed.

These narratives and subcultural style are important parts of what constitute the vast and complex jihadi subculture. By analysing these concepts, this thesis has acknowledged the importance of integrating micro-, meso- and macro-level explanations to fully grasp the complex immediacy of the subculture. It has combined all these levels in trying to understand the range of emotions, experiences and meaning jihadists use to construct their lives, and why they do what they do and how they become what they are.

However, narrative and style are never completely separated and analysing one, but not the other, neglects the complex interplay between them, and hampers the ability to fully understand the nature of the subculture. The analysis of how propaganda magazines broadcast constructions of death emphasise the importance of understanding the narrative and stylistic aspects with certain cultural aspects. In this death frenzy, they narrate and express sadness over the loss of their own civilians, but happiness over killing civilian westerners. At the same note, they reconstruct suicide from being taboo into being the desired ending. Importantly, these death constructions cannot be understood without looking into the narrative reality of the subculture *and* how it produces meaning and feelings through style.

Thus, the first part of the research question, "*What characterizes jihadi narratives and subcultural style*", has been answered by identifying and analysing the descriptive characteristics, constructions and implications of the narrative and the subcultural style. Next, the research question asks "*and what is their role in radicalization?*" As such, I will in this conclusive chapter offer some thoughts on the links between subcultural styles, narratives and radicalization, as well as some thoughts on the intricate relationship between cultural and narrative criminology, and recommend some ways forward in research.

7.1. Cultural Criminology and Radicalization

Cultural criminology integrates micro-, meso-, and macro-level explanations in their analyses of crime. These gain insight into the emotions and meaning within the subculture. As Hamm (2013) found on prisoner radicalization, social and subcultural settings "provide both an underlying structure and a grammar for extremists to connect with one another" (p. 103). This structure and 'grammar' is constructed and expressed through style. It provides a frame of reference for the would-be jihadis that express an idealization of a badass look and a glorification of a militarized image; it promises excitement; and provides oppositional symbolism. Radicalization can, through the lens of cultural criminology, be seen as a *solution* constructed through the creative utilizations of style.

Theories of radicalization offer complex and ambiguous answers to why people radicalize. Taking into account how diverse the group 'radicals' is (e.g. Bakker 2006; Sageman 2008; Veldhuis & Staun 2009; Cottee 2011a), this is unsurprising. However, most theories agree upon that it involves some sort frustration – material, social, moral, political, religious and otherwise (King & Taylor 2011; Borum 2011a, 2011b). The concept of subcultural style can add energy to these theories through its foreground focus. It is not the marginalization, stigmatization, frustration *per se* that drives radicalization. Cultural criminologists, in asking "how do terrorists *feel*" (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2015: 141) would search for a tri-level answer, looking into a) perceived macro-level imposed problem, b) micro-level emotions connected with said stigma ("existential frustration", cf. Hayward & Cottee 2011) and c) the meso-level 'grammar' that proscribes solutions to it. By investigating how the jihadi subcultural style can construct radicalization, then, the explanatory landscape starts to illuminate.

The propaganda magazines creates the coolness of subcultural style through the use of a badass imagery, involving masculine weapons and militarization, catchy raps and *nasheeds,* and grand descriptions of their 'lions'. Its uniform promises membership and togetherness, and fame and superstardom seem easily accessible. It also aestheticizes and even eroticizes the violent imagery. To understand how style can construct radicalization, it is feasibly to discuss how it can be perceived as an attractive solution. As Cottee (2009) argued, the subculture provides its individuals with a "powerful sense of identity, and an unambiguous and infallible guide for negotiating their lives in the face of the vertiginous array of choices and possibilities and temptations" (p. 1127). This is done through style. Especially to young people, being cool and hip may seem and sound seductive, and the cool style offers just that.

Importantly, they don't need to *be* socially deprived (Borum 2003), victimized or alienated (Silber & Batt 2007) – and Roy (2017) even argues that most of them are in fact not. Simply the subjective "*perception* of deprivation […] will motivate a person to action" (King & Taylor 2011: 610, emphasis original), and the jihadi subcultural style provides the frame of reference and solution to the perceived problem. Nesser (2009) characterizes these people as misfits, who "typically join the militants to cope with personal problems or out of loyalty to their friends, or some combination of the two" (p. 94). Similarly, Bakker & de Bont (2016) show how these people can be attracted by "a sense of belonging, fraternity and comradeship, respect, recognition, acceptance by a group, identity, adventure, heroism" (p. 846); all central within the subcultural style that has been identified and analysed in this thesis.

By applying the subcultural style to his own body and mind, the misfit and frustrated 'loser' can socialize himself with other (cool) people, and even reconstruct himself as badass. By singing along to *nasheeds* about cutting the heads off *kuffar* and wielding the AK47-Balaclava combination, no one can ever think he is a 'loner', 'loser' or 'emasculated' again. The jihadi subcultural style immediately opens up membership to the group in which he can socialize and meet like-minded. The existential frustration of being un-cool and alone is solved through style (Hebdige 1979; Pisoiu 2015).

However, the subcultural style does not only appeal to people who feel deprived, looking for a solution by employing the badass image and cool style of jihadism. Another existential frustration that participating in the jihad can solve is something as mundane as boredom. Cottee (2011b) suggests that partaking in terrorist subcultures, terrorist lifestyle and

indeed terrorism itself "is attractive, and exerts a strong gravitational pull on many young men" (p. 456). The propaganda magazines constantly construct a reality in which jihadis are involved in thrilling combat, undercover operations and being 'the hunted'. This excitement and danger has been analysed under the scope of edgework theory. The concept shows how and why some individuals actively seek risky situations to escape the mundane (Lyng 1990), and these thrilling emotional experiences can be what drives certain people towards radicalism and jihadism. In the analysis, I have highlighted how jihadists are challenged by living outdoors, constantly on the run, and engage in dangerous battle by their own will. Lyng (1990) also emphasise the importance of a skillset that the edgeworkers draw upon to survive – "the innate survival capacity" (p .859). However, they can also use this skillset to determine how they die; through suicide terrorism, which manifests as the ultimate form of edgework in the dataset.

Silke (2008) sums up that everything about "becoming a jihadi is a dangerous, high-risk decision" (p. 116), and the construction of an exciting lifestyle can appeals to "potential recruits, especially on those who are otherwise living an ordinary but dull existence" (p. 117). For these people, radicalization is a case of seeking excitement and being drawn towards dangerous frames. They are expecting "to engage in the glamorous and dangerous life of a terrorist" (Borum 2011a: 27) when they join. The factor of excitement and danger is, opposed to "ordinary life, with its banal routines and civilized constraints" (Cottee & Hayward 2011: 967), almost like a drug for "those whose lives are experienced as dull, unexciting, unfulfilling, meaningless and solitary" (Cottee 2011b: 456).

The jihadi subcultural style is also politicized and enacted as resistance, which is constantly constructed in the propaganda magazines. Of the many forms, I have analysed and showed how they construct resistance through symbolic ridicule and ritualistic iconoclasm. These acts are part of the subcultural style, and are performed to manipulate the truth. In their satirical ridicule of Barack Obama, Anthony Weiner and Yemeni president Saleh, the jihadists manipulate their own words against them, and ridicule them. They employ the subcultural style in the propaganda magazines by using 'netspeak' – a twofold way of ridiculing their enemies and simultaneously construct themselves as hip and cool. Likewise, *Dabiq* shows their readers how they demolish places of worship, statues and symbols in a ritualistic iconoclasm. By doing so, they are effectively removing the symbols of their oppressors (both

their forefathers and religious opponents), in an attempt to remove their powers at the same time.

All of these manifestations of style – the badass image, street culture influence, musical expressions, edgework and symbolic and ritualistic resistance – are linked to, and can construct, violence in some way. Hence, to properly discuss radicalization, as is this projects ending goal, one cannot end at these, by some unflatteringly described as 'magical', stylistic solutions. The homologous relationship between style, values and ideology is what turns the desire for a solution into radicalization. By applying the style, individuals access, accept and eventually express radical ideologies. Through their badass look, they aestheticize violence and weaponry. Weapons, far from being only used in combat, become "faddish symbols of status, as stylistic devices for constructing their evolving identities" (Ferrell 1995a: 177) to confirm their new-found status and identity as 'cool badasses'. The violence itself becomes "a ritualized mark of membership and belonging" (*ibid.:* 177). Constantly familiarizing themselves with weaponry, their radicalization into violence has its foundation. In turn, the music exposes them to themes of murder and bloodshed in which virtually every non-jihadi is legitimized and (musically) killed. The emotions these *nasheeds* and raps convey can be so powerful that "youths began to link musical messages to their focal concerns" (Hamm 2004: 327). But being cool and badass is not necessarily enough – they are also entering a subculture that heavily emphasise the values of seeking danger. Some are drawn towards just this quality; others are introduced to them after joining. In this edgework aspect of the subculture, jihadists are constantly living the risk and seeking excitement. The aesthetic and erotic violence provides one way of living experiencing and sensing this excitement. When, again, combined with clear frames of resistance towards their enemies – which, frankly, seem to be everyone – they are able to target their violence towards an entity, and justify using it. Even something seemingly 'stupid' as satire does this.

Radicalization is, obviously, a matter of many factors – from the macro-level imposed marginalization, via the meso-level group dynamics to the micro-level individual characteristics. It is also a matter of style. In the end,

"*Some of these young people experience the effects of weakened social institutions (disadvantaged communities and schools); and some do not. Some experience profound humiliation (resulting from childhood abandonment, sexual abuse, etc.); and some do not. Some engage in delinquency; but most do not*" (Hamm 2004: 326).

Whatever their problem – real or perceived; bored kids or legitimately marginalized; wannabe-superstars or religiously discriminated against – their radicalization is indeed constructed through their use of the jihadi subcultural style. The jihadi subcultural style constructs a collective frame, or 'grammar', in the words of Hamm (2013), that people can draw flexibly upon to construct a meaningful life, and solve existential frustrations. When this style is homologous with violence, murder, bloodshed and indeed, terrorism, this is what

"*provide the pathway for moving from individual grievances to identification with radical political agendas to the abandonment of politics for violence exclusively. […] It provides a portal thought which we may understand how people evolve into terrorists*" (Hamm 2013: 103).

7.2. Narrative Criminology and Radicalization

Narrative criminology, on the other hand, can give insight into the radicalizing power of stories. As narrative criminologists have stressed, narratives can constitute behaviour – drug use, drug smuggling, street fighting and mass violence alike. Why not radicalization? Stories are not just *ad hoc* explanations of why people acted or radicalized. They are also enablers for future actions. They influence how people live their lives, understand their actions and radicalization, and it is when the jihadi narratives are able to establish and give organized existence to the life of the storyteller, that radicalization occurs.

The master narrative of jihadism professes that there is a "War against Islam" ongoing, led by the American government. This war requires any and all true Muslim to rise against their oppressors and wage jihad. Within this master narrative, there is a range of archetype and prototypical narrative characters that one expects to locate. The archetypes are thematically specific for the jihad narratives – most notably the crusader and the *mujahideen.* They battle within many jihadi narratives, taking the role as the prototypical hero and villain. Jihadi narratives also draw upon several genres, showing reflexivity and ability to change between, mainly, apocalypse, romance and tragedy. The narrative is very coherent, and constructs life in many ways, deeply imbedded into the subculture's core.

Radicalization is commonly thought of as a change, process, staircase or pathway to terrorism. However, the role of narratives is almost completely excluded from explaining radicalism and radicalization. This, I believe, is a fallacy that neglects the constitutive power

of narratives. Sociological, psychological, ideological, and religious explanations try to explain *why* people *radicalized*. The point of inquiry for a narrative criminology of radicalization, however, should be *how* they *radicalize*. One way to view it, is to understand radicalization as a change in self-narrative and life-story, where radical narratives that support terrorism to increasing extent constitute radical behavioural patterns. Indeed, Braddock (2015) finds that narratives "comprised of thematic elements that promote extremist ideologies can affect radicalization" (p. 41). Amongst these narrative influences is the "encouragement of identification with story characters, the arousal of emotional responses, and the definition of boundaries that distinguish in-groups and out-groups." (p. 50).The master narrative of jihadism does all of these things, and more.

As a radicalizer, the master narrative then can help draw together and configure events in one's life. The future "is projected as a continuation of the story, as yet unfinished" (Polkinghorne 1988: 107), and when individuals construct the continuation of the story in the light of radical narratives, they radicalize. As such, it "seems to follow logically that radicalisation is linked to the coherence of the unified Jihadi narrative" (Michelsen 2009: 457). This is confirmed by a larger study of 117 home-grown jihadists in England and US, where Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman (2009) finds that all of them at some point, and to some extent, had "come to perceive an inherent schism between Islam and the West" (p. 13), which confirms that of adaption to the master narrative is important in radicalization (Weimann 2015).

With the constitutive view of narrative, this implies that the jihadists "make[s] choices on the basis of a self that is conjured as the protagonist of an evolving story". (Presser 2009: 184). Introducing a new and coherent narrative, can produce a change of self-narrative, in which the radical jihadi narratives to an increasing extent dominate their discursive and narrative repertoire. At the points of radicalization, they draw upon it more and more, until the master narrative, in which violence is constructed as a legitimate means, is the biggest narrative factor when actors narrate and construct their lives, behaviours, thoughts, values and ideals.

It is an established truth that not all jihadists are from socio-economically deprived areas, that not all jihadists are psychologically prone to violence, and that not all jihadists are suffering from relative deprivation through loss, frustration, marginalization or

discrimination. All of the background factors traditional research on radicalization focus on, are part of this. Yet, they are not what determinate radicalization. However, they all incorporate jihadi themed narratives in their own life-story – most notably, the master narrative. By learning, believing and retelling "the West is waging war on Islam" storyline, it becomes a constitutive and, indeed, radicalizing force in their lives. The master narrative is coherent, and it provides tropes and event-stories for the individual and collective groups to draw upon. In this maze of stories, the main message that the jihadi subculture conveys is that jihadi is the *only right way to live.*

7.3. In the Intersection between Narrative and Style, Cultural and Narrative Criminologies

Throughout the work of producing this thesis – the literature review, outlining theoretical perspectives and the analysis itself – it has become increasingly clear that speaking about narrative or culture as isolated units, is insufficient. The theoretical, methodological and epistemic origins, frameworks and foundations for narrative and cultural criminology resemble each other in many respects. They both draw upon social-constructivist traditions, to the extent that Jack Katz (2016) pondered whether narrative criminology should be **"**seen as a sub-type of the latter, depending on how phenomenological one is inclined to go" (p. 247). Explaining and analysing how the story goes; which characters it entails and how they are used; what genres and types it is cast in and draws upon are all very valuable reflections on how stories and storytelling constitute behaviour. Stories and storytelling are arguably important. On the same side of the coins, is the sensational aspect highlighted in cultural criminology and the subcultural style that constructs them. Badassery, edgework and resistance – like in the jihadi subculture – are expressions of style that construct certain behaviours. However, they are "are not necessarily separable from narratives" (*ibid.*). In the intersection between narrative and cultural criminology lies the biggest theoretical potential for criminologists within both fields.

"Offenders invoke narratives in order to commit crimes. Offenders also draw on and are taken by cultural tropes, images and aesthetic styles that are pregnant with meanings" (Katz 2016: 247) – and arguably also pregnant with pre-determined and expected emotions. To fully understand narratives, one has to consider the style and emotions connected with the narrated act and the act of narration. Stories are not just told; they are also lived and experienced. And likewise, actions are not just lived; they are also structured through stories and storytelling.

What knits them together and provide the individuals with these tools, is their culture. Just like others (e.g. Presser 2009; Al-Raffie 2012; Sandberg 2016) have noted, cultures are created and sustained by narratives, and narratives are culturally dependant to hold meaning. The cultural repertoire of storied action is extensive, yet limited. By investigating this cultural repertoire and style, researchers can attempt to understand the emotions connected with stories, and also the stories that enable emotion. Understanding emotion without a story is illogical. One cannot explain why the jihadi narratives are attractive without considering the subcultural style. Likewise, a story cannot be understood without insight into the emotions the narrated acts produce. Therefore, the subcultural style seems illogical without insight into the subcultural narratives. By highlighting this conjunction between narrative and subcultural style, one can avoid the "bear trap" that is being "concerned only with *stories about reality* and *not reality itself*" (Aspden & Hayward 2015: 245, my emphasis). Equally important, it is to view behaviour as enactment of predisposed stories to avoid being concerned only with reality itself and not the storied enactment of reality. It is then – and only then – we can fully "make sense of the senseless" (Presdee 2003: 16).

This is attempted in the analysis of broadcasting death, through introducing the concept of 'death frenzy'. Here, the analysis shows how the propaganda magazines distribute pictures and stories of dead kids, murdered Westerners and suicide bombers, as an enacted story *and* an emotional reality. It draws heavily upon the master narrative's characters, but it is also energized with the emotional aspect of sorrow, celebration and heroism that is constructed through style. To consider, for example, why it is narrated as heroic to die, one needs to consider the subcultural style, where being bad is good. Dying the martyr death is both an enactment of the master narrative, in which jihad is called upon through suicide terrorism, *and* an employment of the 'jihadi cool', where one craves to be a superstar by seeming brutal and violent. Likewise, to consider why terrorism attacks are celebrated, one has to consider the narrative crusader character. By casting every enemy as a crusader, they legitimize violence toward them. Combine this with the style that constantly construct frames of resistance towards them, killing crusaders suddenly become both legitimate resistance *and* an emotional outlet of happiness.

Aspden & Hayward (2015), in their conclusion of the narrative-cultural criminological relationship, promotes a wish to "mix of cultural, narrative and psychosocial approaches" (p.

255) that acknowledges and combines the respective strengths of the frameworks into a "critical, humanistic criminology that we can all get behind" (*ibid.*).

7.4. Ways Forward

Research in the future can draw upon and use the frameworks highlighted and developed in this study to better grasp the complex realities of the jihadi subculture and its narratives. It can also explore the possibilities to use it on other subcultures – primarily other extremist and terrorist subcultures. Other qualitative data could be acquired to test and develop the concepts, such as interview data, ethnography or netnography. Such data would be vital for analysing what impact and importance that these concepts actually have on *individual* radicals and their lives. Drawing upon this, researchers could ask questions that does not revolve around today's focus on "how was your childhood" or "what kind of education do you have", but rather look into how radicals prefer to dress, what kind of music they like, how they feel about joining their respective groups, how they perceive the world and so forth.

Moving forward, research should also consider what Ferrell (1996b) noted long ago – we must "examine not only criminal subcultures, but the legal and political authorities who construct these subcultures as criminal" (p. 26). This is important in order to best develop policies of dealing with radicalization: How are – or rather, how *should* – radicals be criminalized, in order to maximize the state's capability to successfully control, predict, prevent and reverse radicalization into jihadism. By examining legal and political apparatuses, researchers can also provide crucial insights on how these state actors differentiates between Muslims and jihadists – a differentiation that is extremely important in today's contemporary political landscape. This cannot be stressed enough; if you mistake these two groups for each other – like Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders seemingly have – you are heading in the wrong direction, and you are only furthering their narrative of apocalyptic battle.

Word count: 38 474

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