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„Islam Tweets:
Challenging Ideas and Notions
due to Social Media"

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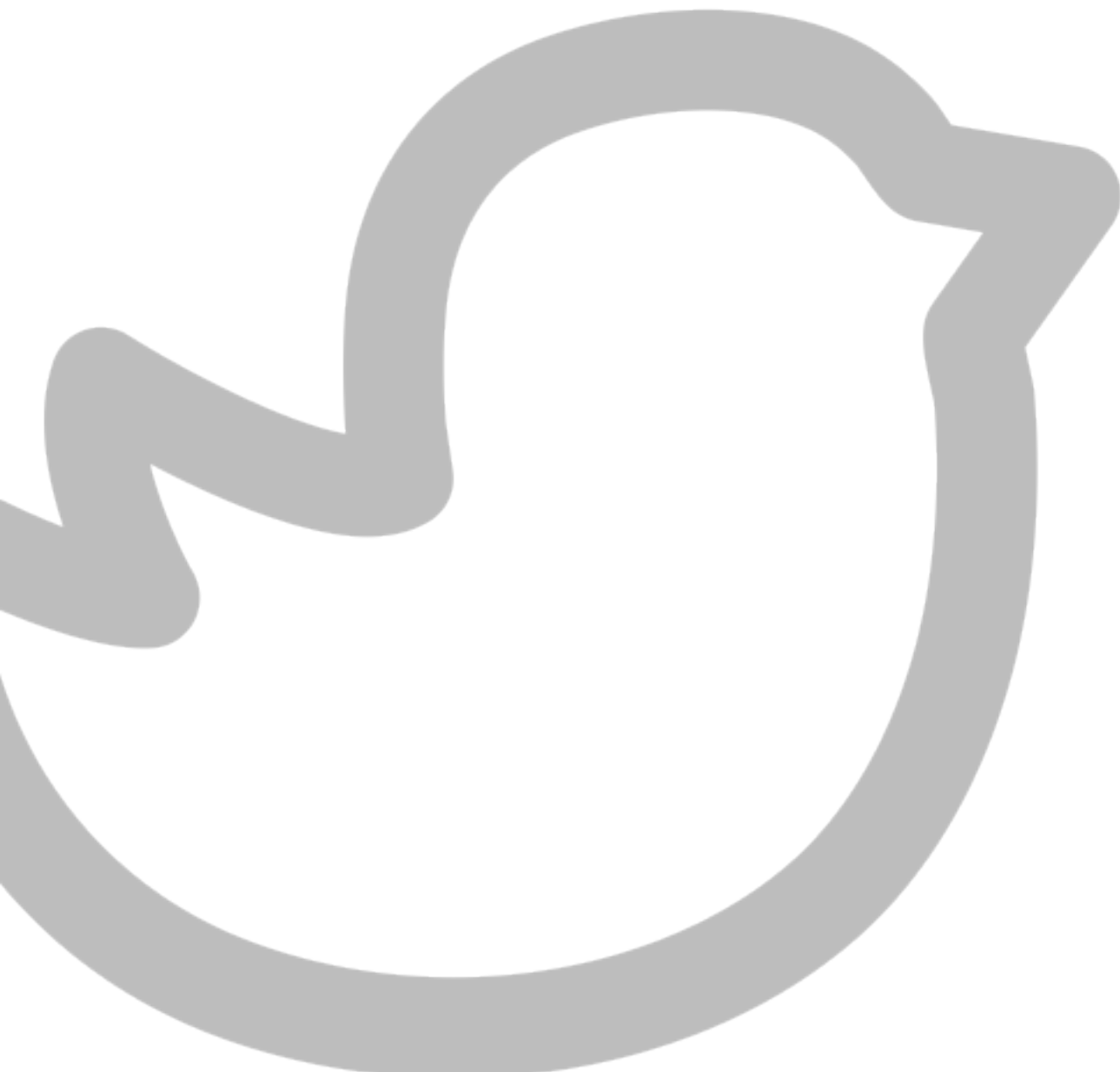|	
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To everyone

privileged enough having access

to free Internet

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"Today, the average African with a cell phone has access to more information than

President Clinton did in the 1990s ..."

– Bregman: Utopia for Realists, 2016, page 193.

Introduction

Around the world in 3,74 degrees

"We exist at the intersection of technology and social issues."
- Mark Zuckerberg.1

Yesterday was May 9, 2016. The first thing I did in the morning was checking my social media accounts, as I do on a quotidian basis. Immediately, Facebook told me that May 9th was "*Europe Day*", which celebrates peace and unity in Europe.2 At the same time my Russian friends posted pictures of their grandparents on Instagram and on Facebook to show their pride, as Russia celebrates "*Victory Day*" on May 9th, which commemorates the capitulation of Nazi Germany to the former Soviet Union and the end of the second World War.3 On Twitter, I read that "*Obama Weighs Visiting Hiroshima or Nagasak*i"4 and that three Spanish journalists who were kidnapped in Syria have returned home.5 Around noon, my Austrian friends on Facebook and Twitter went completely crazy over the resignation of the Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann.6 In the evening my, Philippine friends posted the first results of the Philippine elections.

All this I got to know while being in Helsinki. Long story, short we, as humans, have now reached a point of connectivity and information sharing unprecedented in human history, undoubtedly influencing all spheres of society. Or as Hank Green put it in his vblog "*Crash Course Big History*": "*The Cambrian explosion went on for millions of years, the agricultural revolution proceeded for thousands of years, we are still right in the middle of the modern revolution. [...] Now at the tremendous height of technological progress humanity is in terms of networks and building blocks the most complex system*

1Lee: Facebook Nation: Total Information Awareness, 2014.

2 European Union: Europe Day. Retrieved from: http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/index_en.htm. [last accessed on May 10, 2016], Webpage.

3 Wikipedia: Victory Day. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_Day_(9_May). [last accessed on May 10, 2016], Webpage.

4 Harris: Obama Weighs Visiting Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/09/world/asia/obama-weighs-visiting-hiroshima-or-nagasaki.html. New York Times. May 8, 2016. Webpage.

5 Sanchez: Three Spanish Journalists kidnapped in Syria return home. Retrieved from: http://edition.cnn.com/2016/05/07/middleeast/syria-spanish-journalists-released/, CNN, May 9, 2016. Webpage.

6 BBC: Shock as Austrian Chancellor Faymann quits. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36245316 [last accessed on May, 10, 2016]. BBC. May 9, 2016. Webpage.

that we know of in the universe."[7]

Since the introduction of the web 2.0 and with it the rise of social media platforms, human connectivity has steadily continued increasing. In 2012, Backstrom et al. conducted the largest Milgram-like experiment ever performed using the entire Facebook graph.[8] Their findings continued the works of Travers and Milgram, who in the 1960s were the first ones contributing to the shrinking-world phenomenon.[9] Backstrom et al. came to the conclusion that on an average the number of intermediaries, meaning "*degrees of separation*", between any two individuals on Facebook is 3,74. This means that 3,74 degrees separate one human being from every other human being on Facebook.

Even though we as humans are constantly confronted with the ever smaller becoming world, "*the point behind Milgram's experiment was that pairs of people were surprised when they learned they share a contact, remarking on what a small world it is."*[10] A decreasing number of intermediaries also means having access to a larger social network and having access to an increased social capital. Social Capital is "*the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances or recognition*".[11] Having a better access to social capital meaning to a larger network of relationships was largely caused by technology. Since the advent of the internet, academia has been arguing about the influx of technology onto society (and vice versa). In "*Bowling Alone*" the political scientist Robert Putnam coalesced the functions of social capital with civic engagement in 2000. In his work, he claims that "*civic virtue*" is "*most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations*".[12] At the same time the Spanish sociologist and digital determinist Manuel Castells[13] proclaimed in a series of books that the post-industrial society currently enters the stage of networked societies. Castells' work highlights the importance of networking opportunities brought by contemporary technologies and how this new chance shapes current societies by helping people to engage in networks rather than vertical, hierarchical, systems or organizations.[14] Castells points out both aspects: liberation facilitated by technology and oppressive responses to this liberation. Many scholars followed this trend of discussion.

Others, have noticed that organizational and economic structures of the newly emerging society although affecting everybody, are not inclusive towards everybody.

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7 Crash Course Big History: The Modern Revolution. 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4Zdmd4J7TI. [last accessed on May, 10 2016]
8 Backstrom et al.: Four degrees of Separation, 2012.
9 Travers/Milgram: An experimental study of the small world problem, 1969.
10 Boyd/Golder/Lotan: Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting, 2010, page 7.
11 Bourdieu: The Forms of Capital, 1986, page 248.
12 Putnam: Bowling Alone, 2000, page 19.
13 Castells: Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society, 2000.
14 Castells: The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, 2005, page 3.

In 2006, Gerloff added that this inequality spreads form the society to the networked economy to the networked access to knowledge and information.15 Access to information and the distribution of information became interwoven into today's society, and for most of recent history this access has been very limited. With the advent of social media platforms and applications, information gets distributed more evenly and shared in an unprecedented speed, established institutions, concepts and organizations struggle to adapt to this new environment.

> "*The so called network society that we live in contains a threat of appearing as a dematerialised [sic!] reality without any substance and without firm reference points. Therefore, this society fosters a strong wish for safety and new points of reference in replacement of the ones that disappeared.*"16

Another issue linked to the Network Society was pointed out by Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai in 2005, namely the de-culturing of societies, which is a fostered effect of technologization. Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai argue that de-culturing leads to radicalization of subgroups as the identity of the individual is questioned by de-culturing, leading the individual to turn to radicalization.17 Currently we are witnessing such a trend on several fronts globally, be it the rise of extreme nationalist values and ideas in particular European countries, or the radicalization of certain religious groups as the networked society challenges religion's supposedly communal unified system set of beliefs.18

Being connected with any other Facebook user via 3,74 degrees indeed indicates that social media platforms flatten hierarchies. By doing so they, however, also challenge and call into question certain established ideas and concepts, as more and more individuals can now participate into discussions and the distribution of knowledge. Within cyberspace, social media channels enable us to build networks and at the same time networks enable us to pursue intellectual exchange and debates around almost every imaginable topic.19

Even historically marginalized groups, such as women, have now more easily the possibility to engage in discussions.20 Although, the access to information is not inclusive to everybody, nonetheless it affects everybody.21 Certain people in this networked society play crucial roles as gatekeepers to knowledge distribution. These key accounts may represent authorities using social media platforms to distribute knowledge, but they can also be other alternative networks challenging established

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15 Gerloff: Access to Knowledge in a Network Society, 2006.
16 Bjerre/Laustsen: The subject of politics: Slavoj Zizek's political philosophy, 2010, page 61.
17 Barzilai-Nahon/Barzilai: Cultured technology, 2005.
18 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.
19 According to internetlivestats.com the number of websites is rising one per second. In September of 2014 the total amount of webpages has succeeded one billion the first time. Retrieved from: https://www.internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/. [last accessed May 27, 2016.] Webpage.
20 Jury: Muslima Rising, 2016, page 22.
21 Gerloff: Access to Knowledge in a Network Society, 2006, page 14.

concepts by the ways they distribute knowledge. Especially systems that claim to be universal, such as religions22, are being challenged by alternative networks. This is particularly relevant for systems and concepts claiming to be universal systems, such as Islam.23 Islamic Law per se only describes the duties and obligations of the community, the interpretations of the content had been done by human methodology and have led to controversial interpretations since the death of the prophet.24

Today, alternative networks have the ability to communicate to a vast number of individuals via social media networks. Alternative networks can use controversial interpretations to challenge established notions and systems. Webpages run by associates of extremist political parties question the established party system and public media, by distributing dubious online content to their network of followers.25 Radical Islamist groups have used social media channels from the beginning on, but particularly the Islamic State (IS), formerly known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante (ISIL), or simply called Daesh, has used social media to challenge not just Muslim religious leaders, but also the whole Muslim community of believers, by declaring the creation of the Caliphate and by calling for a global jihad.26 On their social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Kik, YouTube, Ask.fm, Skype, and Google Play they propagate their ideas to a global cyber community, while recruiting for their jihadist purpose, calling for the Muslim community to join their call for their combative and cyber jihad.

At the same time there are numerous Muslim preachers online using social media channels shaping their narratives by communicating to their believers. None, however, creating a similar resonance as ISIS.

This thesis tries to look at the different ways of social media usage. Scholars of various disciplines have already examined ISIS' social media strategies, which are going to be used as precedent later, to see how ISIS uses social media. Further, the thesis tries to contribute to the ways how social media usage challenges established notions and how social media is used for jihadi purposes. How do the selected scholars use social media in order to engage with their followers? Are they calling for debates regarding established notions? How are Muslim scholars using the available tools offered by Twitter, such as hashtags? Are there similarities between ISIS' use of social media and the selected preachers of the analysis?

Scholars of various disciplines have already shown how our daily lives have been influenced and are constantly influenced by new technologies. Others have contributed

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22 An-Na'Im: Complementary, Not Competing, Claims of Law and Religion, 2013, page 1232.
23 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 8.
24 Mayer: Law and Religion in Middle East, 1988, page 131.
25 Politicians from the far right have already used social media channels and the possibilities coming with mobile access to the internet to question mainstream media and events reported by mainstream media, such as https://www.unzensuriert.at/. [last accessed May 27, 2016.]
26 Durden: ISIS Head Calls For Global Jihad; Here Are Some Muslim Responses, 2015.

to this narrative by adding how the new possibilities emerging from the Internet and new media, such as forums and blogs, have shaped our environment. Though, academia tends to react slowly towards technological and societal trends.27 For the purpose of this thesis, I would kindly ask you to distance yourself from your disciplinary settings, fixed systems and concepts, such as religion or society, because what we are blessed to witness currently is how technology shapes society and if applied conciously could solve many unresolved issues.

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27 Gerloff: Access to Knowledge in a Network Society, 2006.

Chapter one

I. I. Structure

Within a larger frame this thesis adds to the ongoing discussion of religious online behavior, and particularly to religion online. Further, it contributes to the lacking debate on religion and Network Society and New Media Communication. By analyzing the Twitter behavior of three Muslim scholars and juxtaposing their social media behavior with the ways ISIS uses its Twitter accounts, the author hopes to conducive to the ongoing debate of netwar. Both ISIS and the three scholars represent gatekeeper of information as they have access to a vast network of users, which in the end might be as well believers. Thereby, controlling the distribution and information path. ISIS' call for a global jihad exemplifies how a key figure can start questioning well established notions and ideas such as the notions on violence and jihad by having access to networks sharing propaganda material for combative reasons. By doing so ISIS calls into question established Muslim authorities, but also offers new possibilities for contemporary believers to be virtually part of a larger community of believers ergo creating a virtually accessible *"ummah"*.

In order to address this complex issue sufficiently, this thesis is divided into six chapters: the first part is going to outline the historical making of Muslim religious authorities; in this part first and foremost, concepts are presented and outlined which shaped the authoritative character of Muslim entities; this first part is followed by a chapter centered around the question whether Muslim communities can be seen as part of the Network Society. By introducing the concept of the networked society, which had been coined by Manuel Castells28, the dominating points of the foregoing chapter, namely the authoritative status of jurist-theologians and law, are going to be embedded within a technological frame. In short, it shall be argued that religious communities are embedded in the Network Society by showing that extremist Muslim groups fulfill criteria outlined by Castells. At the same time these groups challenge well established notions, such as Islam's notion of jihad. Therefore, the third chapter is going to briefly show how ISIS and the examined scholars are all part of a larger conservative movement, namely Salafism and Wahhabism. Particular attention is going to be paid to Salafism and to the various Salafi approaches, which also demand jihad to fulfill their ideology and by doing so question already established ideas on jihad and Islam's notion of violence.

28 Castells: The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, 2005.

Moreoever, by paying particular attention to Salafism this chapter argues in favor of treating ISIS' social media usage as a continuation of the classic jihadi doctrine, being part of netwar.

The next chapter includes a manual content analysis of the Twitter accounts of three contemporary Muslim Salafi preachers, namely Abdur Raheem Green,[29] Abdur-Raheem McCarthy[30] and Bilal Philips.[31] This analysis gives insight into the social media usage of officially recognized religious authorities, allowing to juxtapose their social media behavior with ISIS' approach. In the final chapter a visualization of Twitter usage of the three selected scholars and the most common hashtags should further strengthen the conclusions of the analysis of the foregoing chapter. Lastly, final remarks try to juxtapose the results of the conducted content analysis with the results of research conducted on ISIS' Twitter usage of other scholars, and outlines what further work could be done.

The research questions which the author tries to answer throughout this paper:

RQ1: Do official Twitter channels of Islamic preachers engage with their followers in similar ways ISIS does?

RQ2: Are Muslim authorities and Islamic notions like jihad being challenged by the social media usage of Muslim preachers?

RQ3: Has technologization fostered the embedment of religions within the societal concept of the Network Society? Does ISIS fulfill criteria to be seen as an alternative network?

RQ4: Can online activity (e.g. Twitter usage) be it by ISIS or the selected scholars account as a continuation of jihad adopted to the 21st century?

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29 https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen
30 https://twitter.com/shmccarthy
31 https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips

I. II. Methodology

The methods applied in this thesis corresond to the research questions. While the thesis uses discourse analysis, special attention needs to be paid when dealing with the internet as it requires particular discourses. As parts of this paper primarily deal with religion online opposed to online religion, and partially focus on the perception and presentation of religious authority online, it is necessary to apply particular forms of methodology and discourse for these online purposes. Therefore, choosing Heidi Campbell seems suitable, who has identified four common discourses which are employed by religious users conceptualizing the Internet for their uses. She argues that these discourses prove the "*spiritualising of the Internet*". Spiritualising the Internet merely refers to the means in which the internet is seen as a technology or space which nurtures engagement. In Campbell's particular case religious engagement. Religious shaping of technology is a combination of linguistic legitimation and pro-active culturing by religious groups. "*Spiritualising technology involves creating and maintaining certain rhetoric about the technology that presents it as a space suitable for religious use and engagement.*"[32] Moreover, it allows users to include Internet-based issues into the rhythm of their spiritual lives.[33]

The study of the social shaping of technology (SST) considers how religious users shape technology towards their goals and desires. Additionally, users often redesign new technologies to incorporate them easier into their human life practices.[34] SST also enables us to see technology as the product of the interplay between technical and social factors in both design and use. It views technology as a social process. This results in various social groups of users shaping technologies towards their own ends as it is usual to use or modify a particular technology. In other words, contrasting groups employ a given technology in unique ways meaning that they keep or re-introduce patterns of group life.[35] Another concept relevant for this paper, is the "*domestication*" of technologies, which was pioneered by Roger Silverstone, Eric Hirsch and David Morley.[36] The *"domestication"* of technology argues how choices of technology of communities are based on their values, and examines the reasons and ways how communities include technology into their daily lives. "*Domestication*" of technologies basically refers to the phenomenon how technology has been adopted

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32 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 8.

33 The study of Social shaping of technology is a research area connected to science and technology studies, sociology of technology, and media studies- examining technological change and user innovation as a social process.

34 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 2.

35 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 3.

36 Silverstone/Hirsch/Morley: Information and communication technologies and the moral economy of the household, 1992.

and is adopting into the social sphere, becoming en-cultured or embedded into every day life. In her work on Amish people and their telephone use, Diane Zimmerman-Umble[37] argues that the telephone becomes a communal thing rather than an individual one. The community thereby rejects the privatization of communication and tames technology, in the same sense as Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley had argued.

Markham[38] had described the Internet as a tool, a space and a state of mind. Jones[39] called it a social network, in similar ways to Castells. It also had been referred to as a public discourse[40] urging communities to explain and manage this technology. Similarly, Campbell's religious discourses about the Internet are needed in order to define acceptable use and shape emerging online activities such as rituals and practices. Moreover those discourses offer an apologetic for religious online engagement. The four discourses are commonly used to "*describing the internet as a spiritual medium facilitating religious experience, a sacramental space suitable for religious use, a tool promoting religion or religious practice and a technology for affirming religious life.*"[41]

Two discourses are for further purposes crucial: the first one treating the Internet as a tool to promote religion and religious practice; secondly and more importantly the discourse treating the internet as a technology for affirming religious life. The former describes the Internet as a technological tool promoting a given religion or religious practices. Thus its use is dependent on the motives and desires of the users and its designers. Therefore, the Internet can be used to seek religious pursuit, information, spiritual relationships or simply to move classical religious activities online. "*This discourse describes the Internet as a tool for promoting religious practices, or in some cases, presents the image of the Internet as a new terrain for proselytizing endeavors.*"[42]

Walter Wilson[43] claims in his work "*The Internet Church*" that due to the Internet everybody is able to reach their religion, stressing its ubiquity and in the end highlights the ability to cross borders.The latter discourse frames the Internet as a social technology affirming one's beliefs or religious lifestyle. Moreover, it helps people to gather together and creates new images on a "*global community of the faithful*".[44]

Brenda Brasher[45] showed how the Internet helped members of Jewish communities to re-connect with their faith. The Internet encouraged them to explore

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37 Zimmerman-Umble: The Amish and the Telephone: Resistance and Reconstruction, 1992.
38 Markham: Life Online, 1998.
39 Jones: The Internet and its Social Landscape, 1997.
40 Agre: The Internet and Public Discourse, 1998.
41 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 9.
42 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 12.
43 Wilson: The Internet Church, 2000.
44 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 13.
45 Brasher: Give Me That Online Religion, 2001.

and participate in religion, therefore the Internet is framed as a place for practice, but also as a resource to connect. If the Internet is framed as a technology affirming specific beliefs or religious lifestyles then this discourse highlights how the Internet is a social technology supporting the communal aspect meaning that it offers a tool for people of shared faith or convictions to gather together. This latter discourse is especially crucial as this thesis treats Twitter as a technical tool offering connectedness and engagement helping to cultivate a virtual umma which would normally be separated by geography, time or other obstacles.[46]

As the Internet is used through the lens of specific discourses certain ideas emerge on how the Internet is shaped and employed by religious users. Therefore, Campbell has connected these discourses with four narratives of use, *"showing how the framing of the Internet creates opportunities for religious groups to use the technology in order to fulfil (sic!) certain goals or support the beliefs of their religious culture."*[47]

The Internet can be seen as a spiritual medium thereby, being a connecting point for users, seeing it as a tool to encounter God. Perceiving the Internet as a worship place makes the Internet a sacramental space, or forum, which can be used to conduct rituals. For the purposes of this thesis two narratives are essential as Campbell connected them with the discourses explained above. The narrative connecting the Internet's purpose of promoting religion and religious practice makes the Internet a missionary tool. "*The Internet becomes a dynamic resource for encouraging certain practices among religious followers or seeking to convert spiritual seekers to a particular religious belief or tradition*".[48] One example of this narrative was the "*Online Missionaries Project*", which was a collaborative partnership of three youth-oriented Christian organizations in the United Kingdom in 2002. According to the project team, they described the Internet as a catalyst and tool for missioning.[49] This narrative encourages users to include the Internet into their proselytizing strategies. However, when seeing the Internet as a technological tool affirming religious lifestyle it empowers "*users to see the Internet as a place to also affirm their religious identity*".[50] This second narrative argues that a common motivation for religious Internet use is to connect with people due to their religious backgrounds, tradition or theology. By sharing a religious identity believers subscribe to common beliefs based on traditions which are normally lived out in public, thereby the Internet affirms and builds a communal identity. "*Identity comes from reinforcing a particular set of convictions or values that are transported*

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46 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, pages 11 – 13.
47 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 14.
48 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 17.
49 Campbell: The Internet as Social-Spiritual Space, 2004.
50 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 18.

online."[51] Alf Linderman and Mia Lövheim[52] explored the idea of religious identity in their work considering how religious identity is built by discourse with Swedish youth discussion boards. In their paper they argue that the Internet can play a crucial role in forming youth's identity and especially religious identity.

The discourses for Internet use are going to be combined with a straight content analysis and with the use of keys categorizing the analytic frame of the religious-social shaping of technology approach by Heidi Campbell, and content analysis based on methodological procedures of grounded theory.

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51 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 18.
52 Linderman/Lövheim: Internet and Religion, 2003.

I. III.I Why Twitter?

"Whether participants are actively commenting or simply acknowledging that they're listening, they're placing themselves inside a conversation. Even when they are simply trying to spread a tweet to a broader audience, they are bringing people into a conversation."[53]

As almost half of this thesis deals with Twitter, this part briefly outlines reasons for choosing Twitter, using its data and explains particular methodology used for Twitter data analysis. The author uses Twitter as a precedent social media platform as it currently comes the closest to a publicly accessible global virtual discussion network. Even though, Twitter underlies the capitalist market system, making it difficult to assert it independency and user-orientation rather than market oriented. However, one should simply consider the tools Twitter offers, e.g. hashtags, as benchmarks, which have been added to many other social media platforms already, such as Facebook. There are several reasons which speak for Twitter as a data serving webpage. Studies[54] have indicated that Twitter users mostly tweet to inform others and express their opinion about a particular topic, accumulating easily accessible data. Other studies have shown[55] that Twitter users are not just more likely to interact with people sharing their own points of view, but are also more likely to engage with users disagreeing, questioning established concepts and notions. As Damian Guzek has pointed out when he was examining the Twitter activity of the pope: "*Twitter considered as a tool of communicating devotional content, while not as a tool of papal daily affairs, strengthens the misunderstanding of the nature of Twitter.*"[56] Another reason why the author chose Twitter is that it offers direct pragmatic insight into style and wording of tweets.[57] The tweets can be treated as the result of a reasoning process. This helps to understand how Twitter's tools can produce an active participation into reasoning on the interpretation of the Qur'an, community shaping and re-negotiating established notions such as jihad.[58]

The emphasis of this thesis is on the notion of conversationality in Twitter. That

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53 Boyd/Golder/Lotan: Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter, 2010, page 7.
54 Naaman et al.: Is it really about me? Message content in social awareness streams, 2010.
55 Conover et al.: Political polarization on twitter, 2011.
56 Guzek: Discovering the Digital Authority - Twitter as Reporting Tool for Papal Activities, 2015, page 76.
57 Guzek: Discovering the Digital Authority - Twitter as Reporting Tool for Papal Activities, 2015, page 76.
58 Guzek: Discovering the Digital Authority – Twitter as Reporting Tool for Papal Activities, 2015, page 65.

is, why a large part of this thesis focuses particularly on the analyses of content and engagements, and their visualization.

I. III. II. About Twitter

Generally speaking, Twitter is a microblogging service founded in 2006. Twitter enables users to share short status updates called "*tweets*" with other users of the service.59 Contrasting other social media platt forms, Twitter does not have any complex definitions of degrees of connections between followers, e.g. family, friends, friends of friends.60 The company currently holds more than 320 million active users and according to their official numbers 80% of their users use the social networking site from mobile devices.61 Originally designed to be shared via text messages the length is limited to 140 characters per tweet. For the general user the service provides combined elements of social network sites and blogs. The main feature of Twitter, however, is providing a stream of posts by those who are linked to one and another. The linking of users on Twitter is called to "*follow*". Following another user allows one to see one's tweets, though "*the act of following is not automatically reciprocal*".62 On the contrary to other social media channels, there is no option to comment on posts, thus liking. In order to address certain topics participants use the combination of a hashtag (#) and a particular keyword. This practice allows users to categorize web content.63 By default the globally public nature of tweets offers itself to organizing conversations around particular topics.64

As Twitter users began using the "@user" syntax referring to specific users, Twitter reacted and incorporated the feature into its services by adding the users hyperlink. Additionally, Twitter included a button for retweeting, which is best comparable to an email-list. Retweeting became a way of engaging into conversations among Twitter users.

Boyd, Golder and Lotan pointed out that the reasons for retweeting range from spreading particular topics to new audiences or commenting and adding new content

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59 Boyd/Golder/Lotan: Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter, 2010, page 2.
60 Bruns: How long is a Tweet?, 2011, page 1324.
61 Twitter: Retrieved from: https://about.twitter.com/company [last accessed on April 30, 2016] Webpage.
62 Dang-Xuan/Stieglitz: Emotions and Information Diffusion in Social Media—Sentiment of Microblogs and Sharing Behavior, 2013, page 220.
63 Boyd/Golder/Lotan: Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter, 2010, page 2.
64 Bruns: How long is a Tweet?, 2011, page 1324.

to a particular topic, to saving tweets for future personal use, as retweets are saved on one's profile page.65 When content is retweeted tweets are bound together and provide a conversational infrastructure, ideal for discussing, archiving and in general engaging with the community. The current tools that Twitter provides to its users allow conversations taking turns, referencing to previous statements and therefore creating a cohesive conversation in a non-cohesive network.

All in all, roughly 6,000 tweets are sent out per second, accumulating more than 500 million 140-character posts per day.66 With its easy and fast way of publishing content the site has played a crucial role in recent socio-political events and also in the aftermath of natural disasters.67 Moreover, with the return of the company's former CEO Jack Dorsey and speculations around a possible end of the 140-character limit, and its promise to undergo tremendous change opening its real-life communication tool possibly to a greater extent towards a more conversational framework. Twitter derives its value from its real-time nature of conversations.68 So summing up Twitter's ability to share, post and reference are crucial for a community dispersed around the globe, which needs tools such as Twitter offers for engagement.

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65 For a non-exhaustive list of motivations consult Boyd/Golder/Lotan (2010) who used responses to the user @zephoria.
66 Retrieved from: http://www.internetlivestats.com/twitter-statistics/ [last accessed on April 30, 2016] Webpage.
67 Twitter famously was used to communicate among the protesters of the Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Its popularity as an information source led to the development of applications regarding Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Kumar/Morstatter/Liu: Twitter Data Analytics, 2013 page 3.
68 Retrieved from: http://fortune.com/2016/03/18/twitter-ceo-brief-tweets/ [last accessed on April 30, 2016] Webpage.

I. III. III. Twitter Methodology

Besides offering Twitter users tools to engage with each other, Twitter hashtags provide scholars insight into real-time feeds of conversations coordinated around them. General Twitter hashtag tracking across a large user base over a longer time is cost- and resource-intensive.[69] However, using open source tools, which researchers subscribe to offer the tracking of large hashtagged tweets across a more manageable amount of users. Open source tools capture Twitter data for hashtags and keywords.[70] Depending on the tools used one of the two Twitter API components is going to be captured.[71] However, research based on the Twitter API is heavily reliable on the API's ability to monitor all tweets in time according to the criteria, which is not at all guaranteed.

The most common research methods dealing with Twitter data are:

Social Network Analysis, which is an approach describing the communicative network structure of ones network through visualization. By doing so it generates a static snapshot of the network. Though, social network mapping ignores the network's dynamics.[72] Social network visualization allows researchers to pinpoint key participants and clusters within the network in order to point out those users whose activities seem to be most interesting to study.[73]

Manual Content Analysis and Genre Analysis are two methods used to offer insights into the actual content of tweets. This is done by manually categorizing and clustering the messages based on a coding scheme enabling researchers to conclude findings in the overall data-set.

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69 Bruns & Liang: Tools and methods for capturing Twitter data during natural disasters, 2012.
70 A full discussion of capturing data from Twitter surrounding specific hashtags is not possible here, however a brief overview shall be given: Twitter offers two relevant API components: the search API, used to retrieve past tweets matching the criteria, which cover the time period ranging form a few days to several weeks; and the streaming API, which is used to subscribe to a continuous stream of new tweets.
71 Bruns/Stieglitz: Towards more systematic Twitter analysis: metrics for tweeting activities, 2013.
72 Bruns: How long is a Tweet?, 2011, page 1329.
73 Bruns: How long is a Tweet?, 2011, page 1331.

Sentiment Analysis is a systematic computer-based analysis of the written text extracting the attitude of the author. It labels tweets regarding their emotionality. Its mere concern is identifying new sets of features to add to the already existing models, which can be hashtags, emoticons and some kind of intensifiers, e.g. all-caps and character repetitions.74 Sentiment Analysis for Twitter is rather difficult due to the previously mentioned sets of features and the short lengths of tweets.

As for the purpose of the analytical chapters of this thesis, which examines the Twitter activities of three selected preachers, the author is going to use the aforementioned most common Twitter methods. First of all, a manual content analysis categorizes and analysizes all Twitter posts from December 2015 and March 2016. This goes hand in hand with a genre analysis categorizing and clustering the tweets. After this has been done, a visualization of the network analysis concludes the final chapter, describing the communicative network structure of ones network through visualization of the most common hashtags used and of assumptions based on the conclusion of the foregoing chapter.

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74 Saif/He/Alani: Semantic Sentiment Analysis of Twitter, 2012, page 508.

Chapter two

II.I One Community of Believers - One Islam?

Today, there are more than seven billion people living on this planet[75]. Islam constitutes the religion for roughly 1.6 billion of them[76], being the clear majority of population in 44 states.[77] As with other belief sets one cannot say that these 1.6 billion Muslim believers belong to one homogenous group of people. Even though, today roughly 90 percent of Muslims are considered to belong to the Sunni-sect, within this sect there are several competing perspectives. All seeing their version of Islam as the true one. The remaining 10% are considered to be Shi'a Muslims, which themselves again split into several groups.

The sectarian division goes back to the founding period of Islam. When in 632 C.E. the Prophet Muhammad passed away, the "*once-unified Islamic umma was fragmented [...], all disputing over who was the rightful leader of the umma*".[78] The question of succession dramatically dispersed the unity of believers for centuries. However, this was not a sudden point of change, rather than a progressing process over several decades. The Sunni-Shi'ite sectarian division resides not just in the question of succession, but more specifically in the question of rights of the "*imamate*".[79] The Sunni sect declared the caliph to be purely an administer and enforcer of the divine law, while reducing his judicial function to a mere interpretative one, rather "*than to make new law. [...] the caliph's powers were derived from and limited by the divine law; only his appointment was made by the people*".[80]

The heterodox group of the Shi'a believe that Ali, Muhammad's cousin (601 - 661), who was designated by the prophet himself, passes on the "*esoteric knowledge on to his male descendents from generation to generation*"[81]. Ali's decedents were,

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75 Worldometers: Retrieved from: http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/, [last accessed on April 25, 2016], Webpage.
76 Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country [last accessed April 25, 2016] Webpage.
77 Retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html [last accessed on April 25, 2016]. Webpage.
78 Mayer: Law and Religion in Middle East, 1988, page 131.
79 The term imam is the Shi'ite term for caliphate, though as the imam's were descendents of Ali, they were attributed some secret knowledge allowing him to interpret the Qur'an and make law. They formed a caste of infallible and impeccable imams.
80 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 10.
81 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 38.

therefore, chosen by God.

According to Khadduri, Ali's successors were considered ruling by divine right making the Shi'ites rule more authoritarian and more detached from social reality than the Sunni sect. Within the Shi'i group the question of succession led to further sub-divisions, most notably the "*Twelvers*", which supported the claim of the younger son (Musa al-Kazim, 745 – 799 C.E.) of the sixth imam (Ja'far al-Sadiq, 702 – 765 C.E.), and the minority group, the "*Seveners*", which supported his elder son, Isma'il (721 – 755 C.E.).82 "*The revolutionary character of Shi'i opposition tended to accentuate the Sunni-Shi'i schism and rendered the recognition of their doctrines as Orthodox exceedingly difficult.*"83 In the opinion of the legal historian Mayer the Shi'is choice of solving the question of succession only led to more disputes regarding the same question, leaving Shi-branches without an imam.84 Nonetheless, all sectarian divisions have in common that they are demanding unconditional loyalty from the "*umma*", the community of believers making the question of the correct authoritative interpretation clearly difficult to answer.

II.II One Source, many Meanings - who is right?

In early Islam the organized authority belonged to God. The society was only necessary to constitute and fulfill certain aspects of social functions. Allah, meaning God, as the supreme, of the society does not rule the state directly but acts merely as a titular head of state and as the governing source of authority. Muhammad was the head of government.85 Therefore, the relationship between authority and society was not one of equals rather than a compact of submission. Even though, Muhammad did not provide his community with specific regulations about his succession, he nevertheless left his community with a legal order which compromised the Islamic natural law and the Arabian jus gentium86. The key players in interpreting the laws governing this "*communitas islamica*"87 were the jurists, who by doing so enjoyed an authoritative nature as they were in charge of distributing knowledge about the laws governing the community.

Muslim jurist-theologians derived their authority directly from God as they were the ones interpreting the God given signs.88 The scholar Waardenburg calls the sources being interpreted by the jurist-theologians "*signs*". He puts them into two groups

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82 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 38 - 41.
83 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 41.
84 Mayer: Law and Religion in Middle East, 1988, page 131.
85 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 38 - 41.
86 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955.
87Ali/Rehman: The Concept of Jihad in Islamic International Law, 2005, page 323.
88 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 63.

primary and secondary signs or sources. The former referring to the Qur'an, the latter describing tradition, Sunna. "*Most of the primary signs of normative Islam are connected with behavior, in particular ritual action. They constitute the prominent features of the Muslim community*".89 Comparatively speaking, the Sunna received its authoritative status later than the Qur'an and includes reports on the life of Muhammad (hadiths). The obligations and duties of normative Islam became to be known as Islamic religious law or Shar'ia.90

As the Muslim territories continued expanding the legal system became more complex and diverse. This was primarily caused by jurist-theologians coming from newly acquired territories and being incorporated into the already existing legal system. Thereby, bringing new ways of interpreting law into the already established system of thought. The contradicting interpretations of law slowly led to the establishment of law schools in the eighth and ninth centuries C.E.. Within a wider scope this institutionalization led to the gathering and verification "*of what came to be accepted as authoritative records of Sunna*".91

By the eighth century C.E. four schools had been acknowledged, namely the Hanafi, Māliki, Shāfi'i and Hanbali.92 Though, all of them belonged to the Sunni sect. The religious scholars dealing with the interpretation of the Shari'a came to be known as the "*ulama*". The Islamic "*ulama*" is based on religious communal hierarchies based on the subordination of large parts to an elite religious authority, which itself bases its authority on a divine authority.93 The "*ulama*" devoted a whole theory of respect for established authority guaranteeing that the Muslim society would survive, whilst avoiding the division of the community.94 The "*ulama*" was responsible for developing normative Islam.95 Before proceeding this chapter, it seems reasonable to provide a clear definition of what is normative and practiced Islam, as these two terms are going to re-appearing throughout this chapter.

"Normative Islam develops the truths and norms that are accepted as valid for the whole Muslim community irrespective of place and time. It does this by interpreting and elaborating texts that are considered to have absolute authority. Normative Islam tends to stress the sign character of religious things, that is to say the orientation they give towards objective truths and realities that stand for themselves. This remains so even if the sign may be interpreted differently by different people in different situations. Practiced Islam can be subdivided into literate and non-literate (usually called 'popular') Islam. As lived in different cultures and societies, it is rich in social symbolism that in

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89 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 64.
90 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 65.
91 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 6.
92 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 34-38.
93 Barzilai-Nahon/Barzilai: Cultured Technology, 2005, page 27.
94 Roy: Secularism confronts Islam, 2007, page 50.
95 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 65.

*many respects conveys explicit or implied religious norms and meanings."*96

Besides the "*ulama*" another group of religious leaders evolved, namely the "*sheykhs*". Their task was and still is "*to care for the religious or other needs of the people, including offering solutions through religious experience.*"97 "*Sheykhs*" have often established themselves as counterparts to the "*ulama*" as the "*sheykhs*" had given advice in social and political matters.98

Although, there have been several law schools and interpretations being established, it should be pointed out that one interpretation of the Shari'a has only religious meaning for the people belonging to the same given group or persons. What should be noted here is the fact that within the various different groups of the Islamic "*umma*" the same thing may be "*recognized as having religious meaning (as normative Islam describes it), but in practice different Muslim groups as well as individuals will give to these data different interpretations, often leading to different practices.*"99

The principle uniting all these different legal schools was the principle of consensus ("*ijma*"), which re-placed the role of creative juridical thinking ("*ijtihad*"). With the establishment of the four law schools large measures of independent reasoning ("*ijtihad*") disappeared. This drastic change in basic structure and methodology of Islamic Law discredited "*ijtihad*" until today.100 The law books of the four schools became the standard-text books and any departure from them was considered to be an innovation and was rather uncommon. For instance the scholar Ibn Taymiyya (1263 – 1328 C.E.) rejected the ideas of innovations, as they were an outside influence over what he assumed to be true Islam. He methodologically argued that popular religion was incompatible with the Qur'an and the Sunna, therefore antithetical to Islam.101 According to Taymiyya the normative and official religion is true "*tawhid*" and even though, Islam does not have an official authoritative organization this true "*tawhid*" has been opposed to the forms of popular Islam. The 20th century scholar, Khadduri, generally referred to the early Muslim state as a universal nomocracy assuming that a supra-national community was led by one law and governed by one ruler, who was constituted by mankind.102 In his words, "*Islam [...] has the character of a rural order which regulates the life and thoughts of the believer according to an ideal set of revelations communicated to Muhammad*".103 The present-day jurist Ann Elizabeth Mayer more specifically assessed a divine nomocratic character only to the Sunni-sect's government. 104

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96 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 61.
97 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 65.
98 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 67.
99 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 73.
100 An-Na'Im: Islam and the Secular State, 2008.
101 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 85.
102 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, pages 16-18.
103 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 22.
104 Mayer: Law and Religion in Middle East, 1988.

Over the span of history, popular Islam has often established itself as an alternative religion, having had crucial impacts on the "*cultural and social structural function within the total life pattern of the societies concerned.*"105 Waardenburg describes popular Islam as "*responsive in various ways, mostly difficult to perceive, to external events and changes that occur in society*."106 Popular Islam adds to the shaping of the communal moral consciousness, however, certain groups look down on it, for instance modernists or enlightened Muslims. Nevertheless, it continues existing in all Muslim communities.

The contemporary scholar Waardenburg correctly points out, that there had been many different variations of religious experience and spirituality, worldviews and ideologies, social modes of coexistence over the centuries of Muslim history. "*In particular, the notion of a divine law, the idea of a just social order, and the longing for a true community of the faithful have had practical consequences up to the present time for Muslim social and political behavior.*"107

The term "*Islamic Law*" is often used synonymously with Islam itself, mistakenly juxtaposing the totality "*of Muslim obligations in both the private, personal religious sense, and […] social, political, and legal norms and institutions.*"108 By its religious nature there is no person or institution authorized to decide Islamic Law on any issue representative for the whole community.

"*True Representation*" has, therefore, always been problematic within Islam.109 In other words, every member of the community is responsible for their own reasoning in the matter.110 "*Usually believers see their own understanding of the religion as the authentic and pure one [...].*"111 Even though, the "*ulama*" constructed the content of the Shari'a, they did not impose it. "*It was left to the believers individually – as well as to the Muslim community as a whole – to follow its injunctions.*"112

Unanimity, which the erudite Muhammad Asad had argued as the basis of all happiness of the Islamic community, is only achievable if the community of Muslims agrees on a moral obligation arising from a permanent absolute moral law.113 In the case of a more positive notion of the "*umma*" these obligations are the virtues shaping the community together. The concept of one "*umma*" becomes problematic

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105 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 88.
106 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 91.
107 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 77.
108 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 7.
109 Shams: Ummah, 2015, page 55.
110 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 8.
111 Shams: Ummah, 2015, page 55.
112 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 95.
113 Asad: State and Government in Islam, 1980, page 6.

when its political and religious aspects are simultaneously addressed. Academics[114] point out that this is a quite recent phenomenon highlighting the "*otherness*" routes in traditional Islamic literature. As in the past only one of the two elements was described. Waardenburg even goes so far to question whether regarding Islam one can even talk about an official religion and one official "*umma*". Regarding the juridical character of an official religion specific authorities fulfill the actions which are then religiously binding and juridically valid. In this sense, Waardenburg points to the "*ulama*" as an authority, when establishing criteria for jihad. From a theological point of view, Waardenburg continues saying that "*opinions on religious subjects […] are officially valid only under certain conditions. Such opinions need to go back to the Qur'anic text and ancient Sunna, thus being connected with revelation, and be supported by the ijma' (consensus) of the faithful […].*"[115]

Consensus ("*ijma*") among Muslim jurists (or the wider Muslim community according to some juristsI[116]) is deemed to be binding on subsequent generations of Muslims. The contemporary scholar, An-Na'Im, retrospectively attributes the founding jurists of Islamic Law a high level of awareness regarding the nature of Islamic Law. According to his interpretation, the statements and interpretations of classical jurists were neither absolute nor definite in comparision to current tendencies of Islamic Law demanding complete submission.[117]

He comes to this conclusion, as early Muslim jurist-theologians did not risk to impose any rules which might represent an erroneous view by pointing out a diversity of opinions and trying to find a consensus among themselves, but also among the community. However, with the abandonment of "*ijtihad*" in favor of "*taqlid*", which roughly describes the acceptance of a rule based on the authority of the jurists, the authoritative status of jurists was further consolidated. "*Shari'a law is the product of legislation (Shari), of which God is the ultimate subject (shari). Fiqh law consists of legal understanding, of which the human jurist is the subject (faqih)*"[118]. The academic An-Na'Im rightfully addresses the fact that, every judicial interpretation is in the end "*a matter of human judgement and cannot constitute transcendental or divine authority.*"[119] Jurists, never mind their authoritative character or respect they might have gained, in the end only presented their own version of what God had decreed. Religion, same as law, seeks to regulate human behavior, therefore the two systems normatively overlap. Islam, with its dual approach of giving religious guidance and regulating the communal life, shows how the one influences the other and vice-versa. Therefore, "*Islamic Law is always the product of the 'human agency' of believers*

114 Shams: Ummah, 2015, page 57.
115 Waardenburg: Islam, 2002, page 94.
116 An-Na'Im: Complementary, Not Competing, Claims of Law and Religion, 2013.
117 Weiss: Interpretation in Islamic Law, 1977, page 203.
118 Weiss: The Spirit of Islamic Law, 1998, page 120.
119 An-Na'Im: Complementary, Not Competing, Claims of Law and Religion, 2013, page 1243.

because it is a system of meaning that is constructed out of human experience and reflection that evolves over time into a more systematic development according to an established methodology".120 In order to explain the making of the human agency of believers, An-Na'Im proposes a concept called the "*inter-generation consensus*"121, arguing that all accepted principles today were successively regarded as valid as they bound generation after generation together, making it almost impossible for Muslims to have one "*legislative authority that can enact a single principle of Islamic Law*"122. The "*inter-generation consensus*" argues that only "*if the total Muslim population of the world were to meet in a single time and place and vote to adopt a principle as part of Islamic Law, it would remain binding neither for those who voted for it, because they are entitled to change their mind nor for subsequent generations unless they accept it for themselves.*"123

120 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 8.
121 This is a term coined by An-Na'Im.
122 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 20.
123 An-Na'Im: The Compatibility Dialectic: Mediating the Legitimate Coexistence of Islamic Law and State Law, 2010, page 8.

II.III. A Game of Revelations

Even though, we tend to treat religious and legal systems as static, because they change slowly, let us assume for a moment that they were dynamic and transformative. In short, law and religion are unquestionably social as laid out in this chapter.[124] The religious system is connected with the social system, making society a reality sui generis.[125] As society is able to revivify itself by assembling anew, so is religion.[126] Although, it is not constantly able to do so. "*As clearly indicated by the historical evolution of legal systems and religious traditions, these institutions are always changing, though not always in predictable or predetermined ways.*"[127] Both systems are carried out by the human agency. Therefore, it is the human agency, which is the premier cause and reason for this mobile character of law and religion, making it flexible and changeable. Religious representation is the expression of collective realities, collective sentiments can themselves become conscious of themselves and therefore fixing themselves.[128] Being socially embedded into a social network has a crucial impact, as social embeddedness can pressurize members of the community[129], but it can also influence the ways information is distributed and shared within the network. Force can be used to visibly or invisibly create hierarchies and classes, projected onto by the community,[130] which are by themselves constructed by people.[131]

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124 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.
125 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.
126 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.
127 An-Na'Im: Complementary, Not Competing, Claims of Law and Religion, 2013, page 1232.
128 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.
129 Stroope: Social Networks and Religion, 2011, page 275.
130 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.
131 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915.

Chapter three

III. I. The Advent of a New Society

"We know that technology does not determine society: it is society. Society shapes technology according to the needs, values, and interests of people who use the technology."[132]

In a series of books and works the Spanish sociologist and digital determinist Manuel Castells, argues that the nature of the post-industrial society is currently undergoing a fundamental change, entering the stage of so-called network-societies. He bases his concept on the increasing importance of information and knowledge, as both have become central within society. Castells defines the network-society as people being engaged in networks rather than vertical, hierarchical, systems or organizations. Thereby he suggests, that throughout history networks besides other social organizations were advantageous due to their flexibility and their ability to adapt. However, they were not able to completely "*master and coordinate*" their full potential in the past, whereas in the present they are capable to fully accomplish their complexity of the required organization due to technological achievements.[133] "*For the first time in history, the basic unit of economic organisation is not a subject, be it individual [...] or collective [...] the unit is the network, made up of a variety of subjects and organizations, relentlessly modified as networks adapt to supportive environments and market structures.*"[134] Therefore, Castells assumes that digital networking technologies help networks to overcome their historical obstacles as being part of the private sphere. He further argues that the network society is global as it is based on global communication networks, thereby transcending boundaries.

Even though, the network society does not embrace all territories of this globe yet, it still affects all people. Power is not manifested in a particular class anymore, but rather in the flows of information. The transformation of sociability is according to Castells one of the manifestations of the network society. Meaning that Internet users are becoming

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132 Castells: The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, 2005, page 3.
133 Castells: The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, 2005, page 4.
134 Castells: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society, 2000, page 214.

increasingly engaged with various technological forms of communication.135

Webster, who136 refers to the term "*information society*" as being too vague. Instead Webster distinguishes altogether five definitions of the *"information society"*: a technological one emphasizing the breakthroughs in information processing, storage, and transmission in all corners of society, thus making it integrally social; an economic definition assessing the size and growth of the information industries; an occupational one describing a society which predominantly works in information work; a spatial conception of the information society, which Castells uses; and a cultural testifying that "*there has been an extraordinary increase in the information in social circulation*".137

III. II. Entering the Network Society

"A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community […]"138

Castells argues that every age is defined by its fundamental element "*fostering productivity in the production process.*"139 Today, we live in the informational mode of development, therefore the fundamental issue is information processing: "*informationalism is oriented towards technological development, that is toward the accumulation of knowledge and higher levels of complexity in information processing.*"140

For Castells the *"informational society"* gets its power and productivity from the generation, procession and transmission of information. He explains the connection between network society and informational society by drawing a comparison with the "*industrial society*": "*an industrial society is not just a society where there is industry, but a society where the social and technological forms of industrial organizations permeate all spheres of activity [. . .]*".141 The key feature of the "*informational society*" is its network following structure.

In such a network-society social change is only possible through the network and

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135 Castells: The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, 2005, page 11.
136 Webster: Information Society, 2003.
137 Webster: Information Society, 2003, page 1347.
138 Durkheim: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1915, location 1190.
139 Castells: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society, 2000, page 17.
140 Castells: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society, 2000, page 17.
141 Castells: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society, 2000, page 31.

what Castells calls "*communes*" and "*alternative networks*".142 External mechanisms can enforce change. Some recurring elements of this network are: the uneven distribution of nodes included in the network; the unequal power and size of nodes; and the fact that not a singular node can gain absolute control of the network.

Even though, Castells claims that our economy, politics and culture are organized around networks, he still takes an "*an avowedly secular approach*"143, because he does not include any religions in this societal concept. Frankly, Castells excludes any kind of controversial ideas such as religious, national, ethnic and territorial groups from his concept144. Although, he argues that "*the network has become the basic structural characteristic of our society.*"145 By doing so he has been reserved asserting religious communities a "*secularized*" position in the network society. However, I argue in favor of including religious groups as they can be described as alternative networks, that is particularly due to the contiuous technologisation of all spheres, which calls for a re-definition.

Lets have a closer look at religious communities for instance, if considered as alternative networks they subsume a large network of links gathered around size varying nodes.146 Another indicator for religious communities being part of the networked society is the religious agency, which acts and lives within society, which is described by Castells as again: the networked society. The religious agency as it is defined as "*a personal and collective claiming and enacting of dynamic religious identity*"147 should definitely be considered as being part of the networked society. It should therefore be seen as "*a shifting collection of persons, engaged in a complex set of actions and rhetorics, actions that are supported by and indeed define the collectivity they inhabit.*"148 In other words, the religious agency is a group of people, being influenced by their environment. As communities and cultures modify technologies endowing them with a communal context, communities, which are themselves networks, assert technology a set of cultural contexts. "*Human agents*" work within existing structures of society, but are also the ones initiating action and change within those structures149, ergo they have power derived from their access to information. As these structures have been changing, so has its community.

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142 Castells: Materials for an exploratory theory of the cnetwork society, 2000, page 22.
143 Chitwood: Islam in a Networked Society, 2015, page 2.
144 Chitwood: Islam in a Networked Society, 2015, page 3.
145 Gerloff: Access to Knowledge in a Network Society, 2006, page 17.
146 Chitwood: Islam in a Networked Society, 2015.
147 Leming: What is Religious Agency, 2007, page 74.
148 Ammerman: Organized Religion in a Voluntaristic Society, 1997, page 208.
149 Sewell (1992) refers to this as the duality of structure.

III. III. Virtual Islam 2.0

"Digital information is really just people in disguise."[150]

The advent of the Internet gave believers and non-believers alike the possibility to access information, while at the same time users could avoid traditional channels of information distribution. Particularly in the beginning of mainstream internet use, a young, mostly educated audience was targeted with millions of pages, documentation, news, analysis, images and much more.[151] It is true to say, that Islam is currently reshaped as the Internet and in particular the World Wide Web offers various applications to the community of believers accessing and distributing information. These advancements especially combined with websites, multimedia, chat rooms, e-mail listings, and applications with different degrees of interactivity[152] inevitably led to a "*conjunction with shifting frameworks associated with religious authority, including concepts associated with decentralization from the traditional locations of ,ulama' power.*"[153]

Even before the introduction of the internet, other forms of media have already caused a shift in the nature of religious authority, such as satellite television, as they provided access to a broader scope of information.[154]

With the rise of the cyberspace new grounds for the contentious issue of the differing interpretations of various Muslim doctrines alike have opened up.[155] The Internet gives believers a space where they can interpret and re-interpret sources by gaining access to information.[156] Formerly marginalized groups, for instance Muslim women have now the possibility to more easily access and engage in discussions and find themselves with tools expressing themselves.[157] "*There is a realization that the benefits can enhance religious identity, community cohesion, and the promotion of*

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150 Prucha: The Use of the Internet by Islamic State in Syria, 2015.
151 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 2.
152 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 13.
153 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 278.
154 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 278.
155 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 115. For instance, do many Saudis access their moderate religious sources from other parts of the Arabic world via cable TV and the Internet, thereby avoiding the "House of Wahab's crib grab".
156 Bunt: Islam in the Digital Age, 2003, page 124.
157 Jury: Muslima Rising, 2016, page 22.

specific lifestyle choices."158

The "*ulama*" has perceived its authoritative power threatened from the very beginning on159 as these new online possibilities offer participation in and contributions to religious information

Among the first scholars who have extensively dealt with Muslim communities online, was the Islamic scholar Gary Bunt. In his book "*Virtually Islamic*", Bunt argues that although Muslim religious elites have become concerned160 about Muslim believers questioning their authoritative status, there had not yet been a cyber Islamic community or identity being established, which would actually have the authoritative power to question certain sets of beliefs.161 With this being said, Bunt continues treating certain online tendencies as if they had the prospect to connect each other, to accept certain notions of "*authority*", rituals and in the end endangering established power hierarchies.162 Even though, Bunt asserts the Internet certain positives aspects, he at all times neglects the existence of a virtual "*umma*", as it does not come from one single "*server*", without further specifying what this "*server*" might be.163

Regarding the appearance of one single "*umma*", I would rather disagree with Bunt. At the times "*Virtually Islamic*" had been written, he acknowledges that there had been a certain degree of "*consecutiveness*" in information sharing already existing. When Bunt refers to the "*umma*" as shared concepts, values and language, it already implies that on the surface there is an "*umma*" already existing, because those sets of values and language had been shared in forums online, although not coming from one server. In his conclusion of the book, Bunt states that "*with the Internet, networks of communication may have become quicker. Levels of interactivity have been enhanced, and notions of identity transformed for many.*"164 All the aforementioned increases the feasibility of a networked concept of an "*umma*".165 Nonetheless, he skeptically adds that the more diverse the Internet becomes the less likely is the probability of one "umma" emerging, which makes sense when assuming that the "*umma*" needs to come from one server. Though "*in terms of networking, the concept of an umma may have increased in feasibility.*"166 Regarding the structural character, Bunt sees no real

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158 Jury: Muslima Rising, 2016, page 30.
159 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 286.
160 Larsson: The Death of a Virtual Muslim Discussion Group - Issues and methods in analyzing religion on the Net, 2005, page 8.
161 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 2.
162 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 133.
163 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 133: "These perspectives may or may not choose to connect with each other, or accept the notions of ‚authority' presented by those sites representing Islam on the web. They may or may not accept approaches to ritual, claiming to represent the Muslim world online. They may or may not represent the ‚success' of their perspective or their website by the number of hits or visitors to their site, or the number of times a search-engine places them at the top of the Internet ‚hierarchy' for a particular subject. They may or may not care whether other Muslim perspectives agree with them or ‚digitally' ostracize them."
164 Bunt: Virtually Islamic 2000, page 105.
165 Bunt: Virtually Islamic 2000, page 142.
166 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 130

challenges, thus cyberspace being mere informative rather than possibly changing the system or eroding it.167   In his later work, "*iMuslims*" from 2009, Bunt continues his argumentation from "*Virtually Islamic*". Moreover, he keeps denying the existence of a global "*umma*". Yet, Bunt adds annotations about his observations on the "Islamic blogosphere". "*Blogging was […] seen as an opportunity to promote 'democracy' within Islamic contexts by some external interests.*"168 In "*Virtually Islamic*" Bunt describes the blogging technology as a tool for the Muslim community to network about issues directly or indirectly related to religious information, life and values. Understandably, within the nine years between "*Virtually Islamic*" and "*iMuslim*" a lot of technological aspects had changed. In particular with the introduction of the Web 2.0 and with it going hand in hand its incorporated podcasts, video blogs and in specifically social-networking sites and the extension of Internet-technology access allowing it to offer specific forms of religious authority to more and more believers worldwide. As the Internet continues developing it is no longer a text-only medium, as it mostly was in 2000. By the time "*iMuslims*" had been written, the Internet already offered news feeds, video clips, live broadcasts, downloadable tracts, forums, blogs, podcasts, flash teaching tools, and full media channels.169 In "*iMuslims*" Bunt assesses blogs a special role, as they are the most visible and wide-used tool for individuals to discuss and respond to contemporary issues, "*while enhancing and developing new forms of Muslim networks.*"170 With the continuous development of new applications, blogging was at the time Bunt wrote his latter piece, still at a very early stage of development. Comparatively speaking, especially language and software tools became more embedded into the web and Internet access had been steadily growing. In the end of "*iMuslim*" Bunt stuck to a similar conclusion as in "*Virtually Islamic*", saying that a global "*umma*" is still open to question as Bunt sees one "*umma*" coming from one server. Although "*many political platforms are interlinked, but the concept of a free-flowing dialogue and shared agendas between all shades of opinion remains an aspiration rather than a reality*".171

With this being said, I want to add that over the course of Bunt's elaborations, Bunt continuously points out that Cyber Islamic Environments (CIE) are a mere place and medium for seeking or receiving guidance ranging from religious, political or ideological guidance rather than attributing to the creation of one single community. This might have been true at the time before the introduction of 2.0. However, with the introduction of the Web 2.0 and connected with it the advent of social media, the possible tools to connect, discuss and exchange opinions and information in

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167 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 130
168 Bunt: Virtually Islamic, 2000, page 143: As a system of knowledge provision and dissemination, it can erode certain traditional networks, but also has the potential to enhance or increase the power and influence of platforms and individuals.
169 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 137.
170 Bunt: iMuslims, 2009, page 286.
171 Bunt: "iMuslims", 2009, page 175.

real life time have tremendously increased. Social media has dispersed geographic constraints, it enables bounded groups of participants to share information. Following the introduction of web 2.0. the opportunities utilized by various groups have grown themselves. Cyber Islamic Environments are now not just a place for seeking guidance, but have developed into a place challenging presumed ideas and authorities, although still not coming from one server.

Research suggests that the information providing character of the Internet encourages communities to involve and engage.[172] [173] Prior to the introduction of the web 2.0 scholars have already provided proof that there has been a relationship between blogging and higher levels of network diversity.[174] However, the introduction of web 2.0 technologies has had an unprecedented direct effect on network diversity, e.g. social networking services, which now allow interaction between large numbers of unspecialized others.[175] The flexible character of social media channels can promote various kinds of engagement.[176] Especially the communicative potential of the Internet permits to share perspectives and engage in discussions with a global audience. Thus it should be seen as a counterpart to small face-to-face groups.[177] Now, "*almost all forms of online media allow, enable and empower users to generate their own content and interact by posting comments, questions or responses.*"[178]

What had been suggested by Bunt in particular and by scholars of other fields in general, has now been professionally mastered by radical Islamic groupings in practice: most notably ISIS. Correlating with the introduction of new online webpages and social media platforms, radical groups expanded their media presence. Historically speaking, al-Qaeda was the first radical Islamist group which understood the potential of the Internet as early as the 1990s. In July 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri[179] wrote in a letter to the late leader of al-Qaeda in Iraw Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: "*We are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Ummah*".[180] As already pointed out by Bunt the main arena of engagement for Muslims were forums. Similarly to Bunt's examination, al-Qaeda's main channel of communication and sharing information prior to web 2.0 were forums. These were mostly dedicated to discussing Qur'anic verses and different interpretations rather than discussing operational issues.[181] The

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172 Norris: Virtual democracy, 1998.
173 Shah et al.: Communication, context and community, 2001.
174 Marlow: The Structural Determinants of Media Contagion, 2005.
175 Hampton/Lee/Her: How new media affords network diversity, 2011, page 6.
176 Shah/Cho/Eveland/Kwak: Information and Expression in a Digital Age, 2005, page 535.
177 Shah/Cho/Eveland/Kwak: Information and Expression in a Digital Age, 2005, page 536
178 Fisher/Prucha: Tweeting for the Caliphate: Twitter as the New Frontier for Jihadist Propaganda, 2015, page 19.
179 Ayman al-Zawahiri is the current leader of al-Qaeda, and a former member of other Islamist organizations. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayman_al-Zawahiri . [last accessed on May 2, 2016]
180 Combating Terrorist Center: Letter to Abu Musab al-Zaraqawi from Ayman a Zawahiri, 2005.
181 Klausen: Tweeting the Jihad, 2015, page 2.

direct connectedness also fosters the mission of new believers and offers grounds for questioning unresolved religious questions. With the advent of social media al-Quaeda's dependency on mainstream media, namely mostly Al-Jazeera, became less and less prominent. "*Most groups' media outlets still post their content to jihadi forums but will simultaneously create sponsored Twitter accounts where they release new statements or videos.*"182 From that point onwards, control over content and information became horizontally spread via "*hubs*" and by people voluntarily participating via mainstream interactions and connections on social media platforms and blogs. In his analysis on the propaganda activities of one branch of al-Qaeda, namely al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Manuel Torres-Soriano concluded that AQIM "*has shown itself […] to have performed most poorly in terms of propaganda actions.*"183 Another scholar, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, argued in a testimony on May 7, 2015, that al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) had followed a way better outreach strategy than AQIM making it the "*most prominent jihadist organization in the world*"184 between 2005 until 2007.

Today, AQI's successor ISIS185 is probably the best example when it comes to the usage of a broad scope of digital networks challenging established authorities and ideas by distributing information. These networks include Facebook186, YouTube187, Tumblr188, ask.fm, WhatsApp, PalTalk, kik, viper, JustPaste.it and Twitter.189 The example of al-Qaeda has already shown that propaganda distribution has always been an essential part of terrorism. Terrorist groups lack direct control over information distribution on mass media, social media networks allow them to spread their content via the aforementioned "*hubs*" and networks horizontally. As will be showed later in the visual representation of the network the term "*hub*" is sort of misleading as it should rather be called a distributed network, where one "*central node facilitates communication between the others.*"190 By maintaining coherent jihadist online content, ISIS' online presence has itself become a subculture, framed as authoritative rulings and determinations.191The created content speaks to the mainstream audience in appearance shaping a narrative appealing to anyone who feels left out from the mainstream aiming to persuade all Muslims that battling, jihad, is a religious duty. This assumption is also strengthened by the fact that ISIS offers social services to

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182 Klausen: Tweeting the Jihad, 2015, page 3.
183 Torres-Soriano: The Caliphate is not a Tweet Away, 2016.
184 Gartenstein-Ross: Jihad 2.0, 2015, page 3.
185 ISIS is currently led by its emir/caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, who was a former US prisoner in Iraq. He is also known as Abu Du'a and Shimon Eilot. In: Leggiero,: Countering ISIS Recruitment in Western Nations, 2015.
186 www.facebook.com
187 www.youtube.com
188 www.twitter.com
189 Fisher/Prucha: Tweeting for the Caliphate: Twitter as the New Frontier for Jihadist Propaganda, 2015, page 19.
190 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 7.
191 Fisher/Prucha: Tweeting for the Caliphate: Twitter as the New Frontier for Jihadist Propaganda, 2015, page 19.

its community making becoming a member more attractive and in a way offering a kind of social security net.192 "*The group's narrative portrays ISIS as an agent of change, the true apostle of a sovereign faith, a champion of its own perverse notions of social justice, and a collection of avengers bent on se ling accounts for the perceived sufferings of others.*".193 ISIS fully exploits all kinds of social media tools as missionary tools. Thereby, ISIS treats the Internet as a public space, which they occupy by offline produced content uploaded via mobile devices.194 For instance during the World Cup in 2014, ISIS hijacked hashtags such as #Brazil2014, #ENG, #France and #WC2014. By doing so they gained access to everyone who was following World Cup Twitter searches and raised their overall visibility.195

Although, previous content analyses on sources of online discussions e.g. chat rooms, instant messengers196 came to the conclusion that the examined debates were mostly sequential monologues rather than discussions.197 It seems to be the opposite for content produced by ISIS. ISIS' way of using social media, weakens those findings and further disproves Bunt's statements of a virtual "*umma*" necessarily coming from one server. As smartphones do not require any particular knowledge in order to view, engage, share and "*like*" content, they became the ideal tool for recruitment and sharing ISIS' message. Moreover, this mobile way of participation allows potential followers to feel part of a community, namely ISIS.198

As mentioned above, prior to ISIS, al-Qaeida already paved the grounds for spreading its propaganda material online, but it was ISIS, which has professionalized the way they engage with their followers. Among the used social media websites none is as popular as Twitter. According to Weimann Twitter has even surpassed self-designed websites, and Facebook to disseminate propaganda and for internal communication.199 ISIS called to action via Youtube and their magazine "*Dabiq*" in June 2014. In their message they addressed English-speaking, skilled professionals to help its social media campaign and management. In order to spread and generate a shared identity ISIS uses the internet slogan: "*Every person can contribute something to the Islamic State*".200 This broad network of social media channels and nodes has become the clearest indicator for Netwar. The concept of Netwar is an *"emerging mode of conflict in which the protagonists—ranging from terrorist and criminal organizations on the dark side, to militant social activists on the bright side—use network forms of*

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192 Leggiero,: Countering ISIS Recruitment in Western Nations, 2015.
193 Farwell: The Media Strategy of ISIS, 2014, page 49-50.
194 Prucha: The Use of the Internet by Islamic State in Syria, 2015.
195 Milmo: Isis Jihadists Using World Cup and Premier League Hashtags to Promote Extremist Propaganda on Twitter, 2014.
196 Hill/Hughes: Cyberpolitics, 1998.
197 Gregson: Conversation and community or sequential monologues, 1998.
198 Watts: ISIS Runs a Dark Media Campaign on Social Media, 2014.
199 Weimann: New Terrorism and New Media, 2014, page 10.
200 Leggiero: Countering ISIS Recruitment in Western Nations, 2015.

organization, doctrine, strategy, and technology attuned to the information age".201 "*Netwar*" involves non-state, paramilitary irregular forces, as opposed to the concept of "*cyberwar*", which "*focuses on the use of information-age technology in high intensity conflicts where formal military forces are pitted against each other*".202

As ISIS propaganda material is being broadcast publicly or shared on Twitter, the audience is questioned or the followers are asked to review the shared content afterwards. This is done in order to spark discussions and debates about the produced material, thereby actively seeking discussions and participation. On social media networks followers can actively engage in the debate and also edit content as uploaded material is treated as common good.203 By following these principles, ISIS managed to create a network of participating followers. According to Nico Prucha this network was sought by from ISIS and its partaking and connection challenges established authorities. By participating these individuals voluntarily form a loose network of "*hubs*" which can best be described as "*media mujahideen*".

"*The Media Mujahedeen – the supporters of jihadist groups who disseminate propaganda content online – operate through a dispersed network of accounts which constantly reorganizes much like the way a swarm of bees or lock of birds constantly reorganizes in mid-light. his marks a shift away from the broadcast models of mass communication (often referred to as 'one-to-many') which characterizes radio- and television broadcasting, to a new dispersed and resilient form (inspired by 'peer-to-peer' sharing); the user-curated 'Swarmcast'.*"204

In this model, audience and content producer are no longer separated. By applying this kind of approach to the production, distribution and dispersal of digital content in specifically regarding propaganda and Jihadist digital content "*Swarmcast*" combines an emphasis on information-age technology and on the connection between physical and Internet based battlefields.205   The purpose of relying on a network to spread the produced content creates and fosters group cohesion and leads their behavior in all aspects of life. The communication strategy of jihadist groups and the activity of the networks increase general public awareness aiming for mobilization. Moreover, the Media Mujahideen can rapidly reach a large audience.206 "*This emphasis on the strategic use of information, irregularisation, alternate operational structures, and the connection between physical battlefield and information based (or digital) forms of conflict, makes netwar an important conceptual tool for the understanding of Jihadist social media, and the Swarmcast.*"207 The dispersed character of the "*swarmcast*" structure is not solely limited to the relationship between follower and following, but can also be witnessed

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201 Ronfeldt/Arquilla: Networks, netwars and the fight for the Future, 2001.
202 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 5.
203 Prucha: The Use of the Internet by Islamic State in Syria, 2015.
204 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 4.
205 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 5.
206 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 6.
207 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 6.

Figure 3.1.: Life-style Tweet from "Abu Fulan al-Muhajir" showing "Band of Brothers" spirit. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/Fulan2weet/status/374579796858404865.

in the "*content sharing behavior of social media users.*"208 The dispersed form of network structure adapted itself to the information age, in which a mode of conflict is rooted on netwar, meaning that knowing someone, who knows something about what, when, where and why, is crucially important to secure e.g. a society or any other actor.

In this system, Twitter acts as a platform to share shortlinks and content to scattered communities across networks. Over a period of three months, from January 2014 to March 2014, Klausen collected information from a total of 59 Western ISIS fighters. These 59 accounts posted a total of 154,119 tweets, making an average of 2,612 tweets per account. After having analyzed the 59 nodes Klausen and his team categorized the collected content, coming to the conclusion that "*four out of every five tweets reported from the war zone made references to jihadist dogma. […] Twitter feeds […] contain a great deal of content that distills jihadist dogma in very simple terms, sometimes by means of a pictures of the account holder pointing his index finger to the sky, alone or in the company of fellow fighters.*"209 In another step, Klausen and his team categorized the total amount of tweets into the following categories: religious instructions, these mey include references to fatwas, religious edicts, scholars, religious figures, other jihadists, quotes from the scripture or religious advice; reporting from the battle via pictures, text or providing information about recruitment; interpersonal communication, which included regular conversations and discussions; tourism and everyday life, such as their meals (figure 3.1. and figure 3.2. show two examples of every day content; and threats against the West). Klausen concluded that ISIS' Twitter usage is very much comparable to the way other Jihadist groups have used tools of the web 1.0 such as online forums. "*Proselytizing and instruction in the proper understanding of the jihadist belief system are priority themes. The continuity of the messaging is striking, even as the technology has changed […].*"210

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208 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015, page 7.
209 Klausen: Tweeting the Jihad, 2015, page 10.
210 Klausen: Tweeting the Jihad, 2015, page 10.

Figure 3.2.: "Abu Muthanna" holding a jar of Nutella pictured in a store in Syria (from @GuyVan-Vlierden). Retrieved from: Klausen: Tweeting the Jihad, 2015, page 10.

Farwell points to the ubiquitous downside of ISIS' social media strategy regarding smartphones. On the one hand mobile devices have empowered individual fighters to spread content more easily. However, at the same time this horizontal way of participation also enables ISIS' opponents to discredit the credibility, as ISIS fighters tweet bragging posts about their experiences or graphic material. "*During an earlier phase of conflict in Iraq, al-Qaeda realised [sic!] that images of Muslims killing Muslims were counterproductive, and became critical of ISIS for carrying out such actions. Likewise, Egyptian cleric Yusuf al- Qaradawi and the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq have spoken out against ISIS beheadings.*"211 As a reaction ISIS started posting warm and fuzzy images of ISIS fighters and their pets depicting the emotional human side of them.

Ultimately, social media allowed ISIS to spread their content quicker, without requiring many vertical hierarchies. Thus, ISIS' call for jihad and for their ideology are embedded into a broader narrative they have created. However, at the same time the social network also enables its adversaries to shape a counter-narrative questioning the religious legitimacy of ISIS.

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211 Farwell: The Media Strategy of ISIS, 2014, page 52.

III. IV. Re-thinking the Network Society?

"A common motivation for religious Internet use often is to connect with members of a particular religious background, tradition or theology."[212]

At the beginning of this chapter Manuel Castells' concept of the "*Networked Society*" has been introduced. Although, Castells does not include any forms of religious societies into his concept[213], I would argue that this could be a fallacy, based on the assumption that religious communities are static. However, as technology is clearly part of society, it therefore cannot be static. Even though, the community localizes and modifies the Internet assuming that it is not influenced by it. Thus, the community itself is reshaped by its influence, becoming part of a globalized world, which in other terms is called "*cultured technology*".[214]

Many observers, especially before the introduction of web 2.0 saw the virtual space as a tool offering socioeconomic mobility, egalitarianism and freedom.[215] Despite their hopes, the Internet did not bring a utopia of global communication and democracy.[216] However, through mobile technologies the "*perpetual contact*" among human beings has been further deepened, reshaping the physical borders of the community[217], thereby allowing more plurality, though at the same time opening the doors for internal dissident and controversies.[218] The seemingly less important becoming role of distance caused by modern media leads to an increased de-linking between place-bound social situations and face-to-face interactions and face-to-face interaction required tools.[219] Some scholars might refer to this process as de-linking others call it deterritorialization[220] or de-culturing. Whatever one wants to call it, all these terms have in common the same core namely that their connectivity leads to a

212 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 18.
213 Chitwood: Islam in a Networked Society, 2015
214 Barzilai-Nahon/Barzilai: Cultured Technology, 2005, page 26.
215 Castels, 2000; DiMaggio et al., 2001; Kling, 2000; Fischer/Wright, 2001.
216 Putnam: Bowling Alone, 2000.
217 Barzilai-Nahon/Barzilai: Cultured Technology, 2005, page 26.
218 Adamu: Islam and the Internet, 2002.
219 Hjarvard: The Mediatization of Society – A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change, 2008, page 125.
220 Chitwood: Islam in a Networked Society, 2015, page 5.

virtualization of social institutions. This virtualization of social institutions goes hand in hand with their domestication. Therefore, institutional contexts are not defined by their locus anymore, rather they become a matter of individual choice.221

Cultured technology, de-linking and the with it connected processes are requirements for religious fundamentalist communities222 as a way to differentiate from each other. Therefore, difference becomes the basis of resistance and creates a form of defensive community.223 Deterritorialization and deculturing shape both neofundamentalist and liberal Muslim communicates alike.224 Besides nurturing the grounds for Islamist ideas, the emergence of the information technology led to a reimagining of a Muslim "*umma*", which is envisioned to be translocal and non-statist.225 The Internet's translocal character provides the ideal environment for a re-imagination process and already led to a mere widening of the Muslim public sphere including Islamic discourses, critical engagement and alternative articulations. Today, social online interactions may be framed in a language that equates them with a public space226 or a spiritual space,227 thereby softening the lines in between the public and private, and the community of believers itself. As Roy had assumed in 2004, the deterritorialization and deculturing did indeed shape the Muslim community, allowing it to give rise to alternative networks of radical Islam, such as al-Qaeda or ISIS. These alternative, although radical, networks such as Salafism, align with Castell's concept of "*alternative networks*", which are an element of a "*network society*".

With this being said, judging from the ways how radical Islamist groups have used social media channels such as al-Qaeda, and are using social media channels, such as ISIS, provide evidence that Islam and in a broader sense religions might indeed be part of the networked society, at least according to the features Castells had assessed to the term. Particularly, the "*Media Mujahedeen*" indicates that ISIS can be seen as an alternative network, according to Castells defining elements of the term.228 The reason why the "*Media Mujahedeen*" are able to spread ISIS' content is the fact, that the concept of it is based on networked societies, being able to use communication networks, e.g. social media platforms, to distribute information.229 Moreover, the

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221 Hjarvard: The Mediatization of Society – A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change, 2008, page 129.
222 Barzilai-Nahon/Barzilai: Cultured Technology, 2005, page 26.
223 Göle: Contemporary Islamist Movements and new sources for religious tolerance, 2003, page 19.
224 Roy: Globalized Islam, 2004.
225 Mandaville: Transnational Muslim Politics, 2001.
226 Papacharissi, 2002.
227 Campbell, 2005.
228 Castells: Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society, 2000.
229 Castells: The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, 2005.

way ISIS uses a broad variety of social media channels presenting its content to a global virtual community further strengthens my assumption that Islam and in a wider perspective religion should be considered being part of the "*network society*".230 ISIS averagely produces 90.000 tweets and social media responses per day.231 Studies on political issues have shown that the frequency of talking about a particular topic leads to more participation among the network itself.232 At the same time participation like sharing perspectives electronically challenges established authorities and beliefs.233

Particularly, the ideology of Salafism has been criticized by the community of believers and scholars alike, leading to debates about the notion of jihad on social media platforms. At the same time ISIS itself has furiously challenged the notion of jihad, demanding the whole "*umma*" to fight for the Caliphate, as ISIS claims to represent a pure and unadulterated Islam234. In its declaration ISIS states: "*Lift your heads up high. You now have a state and a caliphate that restores your honor, your might, your rights and your sovereignty. The state forms a tie of brotherhood between Arab and non-Arab, white and black, Easterner and Westerner. The caliphate brings together the Caucasian, Indian, Chinese, Shami, Iraqi, Yemeni, Egyptian, North African, American, French, German and Australian…. They are all in the same trench, defending each other, protecting each other and sacrificing for one another. Their blood mingles together under one flag [with] one goal and in one camp… perform hijra from darul-kufr to darulIslam. There are homes here for you and your families. You can be a major contributor towards the liberation of Makkah, Madinah, and al-Quds. Would you not like to reach Judgment Day with these grand deeds… A life of jihad is impossible until you pack your belongings and move to the caliphate.*"235 The declaration of the Caliphate clearly makes violent jihad an essential part of ISIS' ideolgy. In order to enter paradise and to fulfill true Muslim belief, true Islam can only be established by the sword.236 237 However, as it has been laid out in the previous chapter, there is not one single right path of believing or interpreting the sources, neither is there of jihad. ISIS usage of social media networks is a clear sign for the continuity of ISIS' ideology bringing Islam's jihadi doctrine from real life to virtual life and vice versa. Ultimately, the Caliphate's claim for legitimacy is crucial for ISIS' credibility as its re-investment of a caliph demands the following of the "*umma*", while at the same time the social network opens the doors for challenging ISIS' ideological grounds, namely Salafism.

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230 Fisher: Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence, 2015.
231 Schmitt,: U.S. Intensifies Effort to Blunt ISIS Message, 2015.
232 Kwan et al: Oral health in health-promoting schools, 2005.
233 Shah/Cho/Eveland/Kwak: Information and Expression in a Digital Age, 2005, page 537.
234 Wood: What ISIS Really Wants, 2015.
235 Leggiero: Countering ISIS Recruitment in Western Nations, 2015.
236 Al-Zarqawi: Series of the Life From the Words of the 'Ulamā' on the Project of the Islamic State, 2006.
237 Wood: What ISIS Really Wants, 2015.

Chapter four

IV. Salafism [+] Wahhabism [=] ISIS?

Since the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, and the fight against al-Qaeda the established notions on jihad and violence have been constantly challenged by militant Islamic terrorist groups, but also questioned by scholars alike. Particularly since the rise of the Islamic State (IS), formerly known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante (ISIL), or simply Daesh, and the proclamation of the Caliphate, calling for a global jihad, well established ideas on jihad have been questioned by the Caliphate's call for jihad. This discussion was further strengthened after numerous terrorist attacks in recent years. ISIS claims to be the legitimate authority and Caliph Bakr al-Baghdadi called for a global jihad on December 26, 2015 declaring jihad as an individual duty,: "*Joining (its fight) is a duty on every Muslim. We are calling on you either join or carry weapons (to fight) wherever you are […] there is no excuse for any Muslim not to migrate to the Islamic State.*"238 This chapter is now going to outline some of the ideological backgrounds from which ISIS receives its own ideology from, namely Salafism. As there are several Salafi branches, special attention is paid to the most extreme one, namely jihadi Salafism and with it how the notion of jihad has been interpreted by various scholars.

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238 Durden: ISIS Head Calls For Global Jihad; Here Are Some Muslim Responses, 2015.

IV. I. A Movement of the many Faces

"ISIS's religious belief system is derived from Salafism, which advocates religious extremism."239

Salafism, or also called Salafiyya, can be best described as a Muslim reform movement over the last century. It is part of the Sunni doctrine and can be considered to be part of fundamentalism. It tries to return to the legal and religious understanding of the first generation of Muslims, which are called salaf. In short, Salafists neglect the difference between the historic moment of the sources and the later contexts in which they had been interpreted. They point out the infallibility of the Qur'an and the Sunna, and treat innovations skeptically, meaning that technological innovations are used, though philosophical ones are ignored as they lead away from God.

Salafism and Wahhabism are often used synonymously, because both have influenced and nurtured from each other. Salafism can itself be split into a modern and a classical movement. The latter dating back to the end of the 19th century, beginning of the 20th century, which was a movement within the Ottoman empire. The former describing a global movement "*deren Anhänger sich in Glaubensfragen nach der Urgemeinde des Islams zu orientieren vorgeben.*"240 Wahhabism, also known as Wahhābiya, on the other hand describes a continuous prolongation of the historic reform movement, which is called after Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

From a Salafi point of view it is important that binding rules have to be clearly defined. Although, medieval jurist-theologians accepted differences in legal reasoning as God's mercy, Salafists push forward their ideology treating those differences as departures from the correct interpretation.241 Salafists try to tie their ideology to the salafs, as Salafists believe that the salafs based their decisions on the Qur'an and the Sunna, so need they. However, as Görke and Melchert show Salafists usually ignore the positions developed by the law schools over centuries and base their ideology solely on the two aforementioned sources. Görke and Melchert conclude that the Salafi orientation to the Qur'an and the Sunna have both been narratives shaped retrospectively. As already mentioned before, four law schools had been established by the ninth century, namely the Hanafi, Māliki, Shāfi'i and Hanbali. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (780 - 855) founder of the the latest law school, can be seen as the ideological founder of Islamic traditionalism.

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239 Leggiero: Countering ISIS Recruitment in Western Nations, 2015.
240 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014, page 117.
241 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.

Unsurprisingly, both conservative jurist-theologians Ibn Taymiyya (1263 -1328) and Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703 - 1792) rooted their interpretations on Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. The reason why Hanbal, Taymiyya and al-Wahhab are considered to be extreme conservatives is based on the fact that they solely accept the Qur'an and the Sunna as legal sources.242 *"[...] Hanbal beschränkt den Konsens auf den Kreis der Prophetengenossen. Der Konsens war für ihn keine eigene Rechtsquelle wie Koran und Sunna, sondern Ausdruck des gemeinschaftlichen Verständnisses von Koran und Sunna unter den Prophetengenossen. Schon die Übereinkünfte der nachfolgenden Generation (tabi'un) betrachtet er nicht mehr als bindend."*243 Ibn Hanbal's law school is not just the newest of the four law schools, but also the smallest one regarding the number of followers. The most widespread one is the Hanafi, who are also considered to be the most moderate ones. Today, their followers spread from the Balkans, to Turkey, to Central Asia, all the way to India. The Māliki school is mostly found in Northern Africa, whereas the Shāfi'i are found in Eastern Africa and South-East-Asia. The core lands of the Hanabali school can be found on the Arabian peninsula, Syria and Jordan.244 Besides the founder himself, Ibn Taymiyya is considered to be the most important representative of the Hanabali law school. He praised the precedent role of the first three generations of Muslims, the so called al-salaf al-salli, or salafs. His teachings have experienced a revival due to the rise of Wahhabism, because Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab refers heavily to Ibn Taymiyya.245 The modern Salafi movement roots in the classic Salafi movement and other reform movements from the 20th century, e.g. the Ahl-e Hadith in India and reform movements in Yemen.246 All three argued that the backwardness of their regions was caused by the lack of religiosity. Therefore, believers need to return to the prototype Islam as it was practiced by the predecessors (salaf). This kind of Islam should not simply be revived in the same way, but adapted to contemporary instances. The classic Salafist movement believed that the solution to their problems can be found in morality and religiosity of the salaf, however they thought that a return to those times was not contradictory to the modern era. Modernity simply had to be harmonized.

The classic Salafist movement was fiercely politically oriented, but was less emphasized on dogmatic theology, which was the case for Wahhabism.247 This politicization was further strengthened by the Muslim brotherhood, which has absorbed

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242 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.
243 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014, page 48.
244 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.
245 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.
246 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.
247 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.

parts of Taymiyya's body of thought248 and classic Salafism.249 Due to the symbiosis of the ruling house of Saud and Wahhabism, coined with the intellectual exchange250 which was brought into Saudi-Arabia after the kingdom was established, Salafism adopted central ideas of the theological dogma of Wahhabism. Many religious institutions were newly founded in Saudi-Arabia, such as the Islamic University of Medina (est. 1961), the Umm al-Qura-University in Mekka (est. 1949) and the al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud University in Riad (est. 1053), schools and institutes led to an influx of scholars and teachers into the country leading to a tight teacher-student-relationship between Salafism and Wahhabism. After this exchange reached its climax in the 1960s, the al-Sauds changed their policies from the 1980s onwards, partially because of the more radical branches of the Salafiyya. Although, it would be mistaken to say that modern Salafism is the product of the reciprocal exchange between historical Wahhabism and classic Salafism. Nonetheless, many central figures of the modern Salafiyya have been part or have been the product of the exchange in between the two ideologies.

Today, there are three main branches of modern Salafism existing. The puritan Salafiyya, which mostly deal with religious dogmatic questions, look after the religious dogma, which is more or less identical with traditional Wahhabism. The puritan branch is living their private life the strictest according to the theoretical and theological thought. They are considered to be the most pious and try to base their life as accurately on the guidelines of Muhammad. Everything is subsumed their belief. The second branch is the political Salafiyya, which basically live a similar lifestyle to the puritan branch, but the political Salafiyya also aim to shape the society and the state according to their beliefs. They see "*da'wa*", meaning proselytizing Islam, as a duty and try to convince both Muslims and non-Muslims alike from their agenda. As they are politically active they need to compromise to fit into the political system of most states making them less pious then the puritan Salafiyya in some cases. The final branch is Jihadi Salafism. Their members are also politically active, though they want to achieve social and political change through jihad. They actively call for it and consider it as religious duty.

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248 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.
249 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014.
250 Schneiders et al.: Salafismus in Deutschland, 2014

IV.II. Lesser or Greater ?

"Jihād today is […] best carried out through da'wa, which […] 'is another name for a peaceful struggle for the propagation of Islam.' Muslims are not able 'to join the mainstream in modern times' because of their violent attitudes today. Even if only a small proportion of Muslims resorts to violence, the majority of Muslims by failing to disown their violent co-religionists are indirectly culpable […]."[251]

The doctrine of jihad is a very complex product of various factors offering every individual Muslim believer help spreading Islam. It is a universal element applicable to the whole community. David Cook says in his book "*Understanding Jihad*" that it is almost impossible to understand the real meaning, hence there are different types of interpretations.[252] However, given the centrality of the concept of jihad in its various forms, the author is trying to outline some thoughts on the notion of jihad in the following paragraphs.

The scholar, Khadduri explains the main purpose of any Islamic state is to put God's law into practice.[253] In his book "*War and Peace in the Law of Islam*" he argues that Islam's ultimate aim was to turn the dar al-Harb, the non Muslim territory, into the dar al-Islam, Muslim territory. As Islam and other gods beside God cannot exist side by side in this world, jihad can be seen as "*a sanction against polytheism and must be suffered by all non-Muslims who reject Islam, or […] refuse to pay the poll tax.*"[254] An essential aspect of achieving this is the doctrine of jihad, which Khadduri sees as an instrument "*for both the universalization of religion and the establishment of an imperial state.*"[255] In the time when the early Muslim communities shifted their warfare from intertribal wars to wars against the outside world, Islam ruled out any kinds of war, except jihad. Therefore, jihad became a legal process, warfare became systematized and set.[256] Jihad does not necessarily mean war or fighting. It can also refer to the exertion in God's path, accessible through peaceful, but also violent ways. According to Muslim jurists, four types of jihad fulfillment can be distinguished: by heart, meaning the believer combats the devil and escapes devil's persuasion; by tongue; by hands;

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251 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 261.
252 Cook: Understanding Jihad, 2005.
253 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 51.
254 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 59.
255 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 51.
256 Cook: Understanding Jihad, 2005.

and by sword, which basically refers directly to warfare.257

Regarding the various jihad fulfillments, the contemporary scholar Paul Heck distinguishes between one form of jihad, which serves Islamic hegemony, and another one acting as a tool for the Islamic community. The first one, was an "*imperial construct*", "*framed in political and territorial terms, the latter in religious and communal terms.*"258 The Qur'an offered generalities and encouragement to fight, whereas the hadith literature offers full descriptions of warfare spiritually contextualized, in which jihad presents an ordinance of God.

Reuven Firestone, a scholar of religions, critically traces back the origins of holy war in Islam to pre-Islamic Arabia, the lifetime of Muhammad and the short time after his death, when the community had not yet been divided. Firestone tries to apply a new way of reading the different Qur'anic chapters dealing with jihad; treating them as various factional opinions based on available oral sources and "*yet unedited and uncanonized compendium of revelation.*"259 By doing so, Firestone comes to the conclusion that in pre-Islamic Arabia fighting was merely non-ideological; in the Islamic system, however, fighting was an ideological issue forcing new Muslims to fight against their own kinship groups and in this way social ties became obsolete.260 Cook's book "*Understanding Jihad*" offers more insight into the historical development of the doctrine of jihad, as Cook points out that especially in the first centuries of Islam jihad's interpretation was "*unabashedly aggressive and expansive*"261 making the Qur'anic perception a crucial instrument in the Muslim conquests.

According to John Kelsay, the ultimate goal was the establishment and governance of a political-territorial association governed by Islam262, it is not surprising that there is nothing good or bad about war. Thereby, he concludes that fighting was seen as a tool for bringing back peace. However, as conquests became less prominent in the middle of the eighth century and defending Islam's frontiers was less favorable another aspect of jihad appeared, one emphasizing spiritual prestige rather than aggressiveness. Henceforward, this led to the expansion of jihad's definition resulting in the distinction between "*greater*" and "*lesser*" jihad. As the internal jihad is absent in the earliest hadith books, Cook concludes that the "*greater*" jihad is merely a derivative form of the "*lesser*" jihad.

In this regard, Asma Afsaruddin points out that the contrasting views among the examined scholars in her book "*Striving in the Path of God*", about the pure military character of jihad were caused by their dangerous world, in which they had lived in,

257 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955.
258 Paul L. Heck: Jihad Revisited, 2004, page 96.
259 Firestone: Jihad – The Origin of Holy War in Islam, 1999, page 65.
260 Firestone: Jihad – The Origin of Holy War in Islam, 1999, page 91
261 Cook: Understanding Jihad, 2005, page 30.
262 Kelsay: Arguing the Just War in Islam, 2004, page 100.

whilst others wrote "*edifying literature in which they gave prominence to the cultivation of patient forbearance as an essential ingredient of human striving [...].*"263 The discussion offered in Afsaruddin's book first and foremost aims to exhume early and lesser attested inflections of jihad and shahid and their derivatives and therefore showing the changing meanings of the terms through a comparison of early (ninth century) and late (tenth century onwards) literature. By contrasting exegetes's opinions on the Qur'an from the first until the third century of Islam, Afsaruddin concludes that the assumption of a steady linear progression towards a combative meaning regarding sabr264 and its derivatives to jihad can simply not be proved, as there had been a frequent shifting between combative and non-combative interpretations.

The material found in the prophetic Sunna deals with actual warfare and informs about the value of warring in the path of God. In this sense it provides a hierarchy of value regarding certain activities, including jihad. "*This jihad invariably means fighting in the path of God.*"265 The spiritual significance of jihad becomes clearer when taken into account that in the early Islamic era there was a strong eschatological fear, meaning the fear of death, judgement, heaven and hell at the end of time. Making the ties bound people and soldiers to this world rather obsolete. Jihad combined in a way messianic, apocalyptic and imperial goals.266 Ibn Taymiyya (1263 - 1328), considered jihad as the height of virtue, "*calling it better than any other religious duty, including prayer and pilgrimage.*"267 His writings emphasize on cohesion and unity rather than difference and division in order to protect social and moral formations of the public order. Taymiyya is also reported to have said, that anyone should legitimately be fought when a single religious obligation had been abandoned, referring to jihad.268 Islam differs in its communal sense from Christianity and Judaism, because state, religion and the law build a unity, the scholar Khadduri calls jihad a "*state instrument*" as some regard it as a religious duty and its employment allows the whole community to participate.269 However, if no one is able to fulfill the duty, the whole community fails, that is why some Sunni jurists limited its concept by recognizing jihad only as operations undertaken by the caliph, who is obliged to undertake it once a year at least.270

263 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 178.
264 "sabr" is the Islamic virtue of "patience" or "endurance", which can be seen as one of the two elements of faith.
265 Firestone: Jihad – The Origin of Holy War in Islam,1999, page 100.
266 Cook: Understanding Jihad, 2005, page 24 – 25. From the early beginning of Islam its whole existence was heavily influenced by fighting and conquest. Apocalyptic traditions focus on the wars against Byzantine and the Muslim messianic tradition just reflects those realities.
267 Heck: Jihad Revisited, 2004, page 116.
268 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, pages 223.
269 Khadduri: War and Peace in the Law of Islam, 1955, page 61.
270 Lambton: State and Government in Medieval Islam, 1981, pages 209-211: This was necessary, because the Islamic world became more fragmented within and Muslim jurists came up with a compromise. They saw them as "rebels" and therefore the object was not their extermination, but their full restoration to Islam. However, if they were outnumbered or were too strong to be reduced, a peace treaty recognized them as constituted body, holding sovereignty. If the "rebels" however, were outnumbered and were considered as "bandits" then they had to be exterminated.

As stated at the beginning of this part it is almost impossible to fully articulate all possible meanings of jihad. However, all the aforementioned scholars have made a distinction between two general notions of jihad, which Heck most explicitly mentioned: the imperial and the communal one. Even though, not all authors call them the same way as Heck does, still all talk about one of the two kinds. Khadduri describes the Islamic state to be in a permanent state of war, though not continuously fighting. Lambton sees peace or war depending on the will of the Islamic state and its intentions, calling jihad de-activated. Both of the authors refer to the imperial element of jihad as a state tool. In my opinion, Firestone's book connects both elements. He shows that warring had been part of the pre-Islamic time, so the imperial element was foregoing the slowly, but not smoothly constructing community of Muslims, therefore being older than the communal element of jihad. The communal element was only crucial once the community had established itself and it became an ideological element. In this sense the ideological element made it possible for all Muslim believers to spread their belief asserting them the imperial element. One of the reasons why the imperial element was overshadowing other interpretations of jihad was the fierce militarily influence especially in the founding period. However, once religion was consolidated other ways of interpretation were possible leading to the distinction between "*lesser*" and "*greater*" jihad. Cook sees the period of consolidation as the time when the non-violent interpretations of jihad evolved thereby referring to its original meaning "*to strive*", manifesting into a principle. However, this was not the original concept of jihad. Therefore, contemporary scholars should not use this to stress forward the peaceful intentions of jihad. As the original core element was the imperial one, calling for a universalist Islamic state. Here Afsaruddin offers an interesting reading of sources; as her way of juxtaposing various exegetes' opinions shows that indeed depending on the origin and life of the exegetes their views on the notion of jihad contradict with each other. Her analysis paints an image of a less fixed notion of jihad ergo constructing a more fluid set of elements regarding jihad.

IV. III. An Ephemeral Movement?

Even though, the lines between the three branches of Salafism are very thin and fluid, and hybrid forms are predominant, their propaganda first and foremost targets Muslims, and secondarily aims at the "*da'wa*" of others and non-Muslims. In real life they organize rallies, missions, or seminars, and virtually they use social media platforms to spread their message. According to the viewpoint of Alex Schmid, Research Fellow at International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, and Director of the Terrorism Research Initiative, "*Salafis are supremacists who regard other 'People of the Book' as second class citizens in Muslim societies.*"271 He continues saying that Jihadi Salafists consider "*People of the Book*" and unbelievers, who do not subordinate to the rules set by them, to be subjugated, enslaved, expelled or even killed. As it is the Caliph's duty to proclaim jihad, militant Salafism treats jihad as a personal duty of every Muslim.272 However, not until Ibn Taymiyya was jihad considered a personal duty, more recently Sayyid Qutb revived this point of view.

When contemporary militant groups refer to their jihad as a holy war, scholars agree that they should not do so, because in its sense jihad was holy regarding rituals, but not regarding its justification. In this regards, Kelsay mentions contemporary jihadists and critical voices within the Muslim community in his book "*Arguing the Just War in Islam*". Kelsay uses Ayman al-Zawahiri's 273 speech from August 4, 2005 commenting on the July 7 bombings in London, in order to talk about the emergence of Muslim militancy in the 20th century, which links the militant vision of politics to historical Islam-tradition and continuity. He also analyzes "*The Neglected Duty*" published in 1981 and the "*Charter of the Hammas*" published in 1988. The later one defends armed resistance actions with the notion of imposed war, which is justified by the taking of Muslim entrusted lands. Therefore it is the duty to defend the lives of all Muslims. In the "*Declarations of the World Islamic Front*" published in 1998 a similar argument is found.274 It lifts the Islamic struggle to an international level, encouraging Muslims to fulfill their military duty and fight, although none of the signatories of the Declaration were actually members of the "*ulama*". Nonetheless, they considered themselves as qualified enough to impose an issue on all Muslims.275

Afsaruddin also included viewpoints of the 20th century and post-9/11 scholars regarding the notion of jihad. Among them is Hasan al-Banna276 (1906 - 1949) whom

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271 Schmid: Challenging the Narrative of the "Islamic State", 2015, page 6.
272 ISIS: Portrait of a Jihadi Terrorist Organisation, 2014, page 3.
273 Ayman al-Zawahiri is the current leader of al-Qaeda, and a former member of other Islamist organizations. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayman_al-Zawahiri . [last accessed on May 2, 2016]
274 Its signatories included Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.
275 Kelsay: Arguing the Just War in Islam, 2004, page 137.
276 Sheikh Hassan Ahmed Abdel Rahman Muhammed al-Banna known as Hassan al-Banna, was a teacher and imam and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, one of the largest and most influential 20th

she cites when turning to the difference between jihad as a collective and individual duty. "*[...] The military jihad is a collective duty for the Islamic community for propagating the faith; it becomes and individual obligation when it is necessary to repel the direct attack of unbelievers on it.*"277 When al-Banna turns to the issue of the "*greater*" and "*lesser*" jihad, he points out that the "*greater*" jihad should never diminish the "*lesser*" jihad and its preparations. However, he downgrades extremist claims, saying that "*fighting [...] is an individual duty*"278, because it represents a dramatic departure form the classical juridical approach. According to Abul A'la Mawdudi's279 (1903 - 1979) worldview, Islam is a revolutionary ideology and jihad refers to this revolutionary struggle, which should be waged by all means. As the community of believers is transnational and not gathered around territorial variables the concepts of "*attacking*" and "*defending*" jihad are not applicable anymore, thus making jihad offensive and defensive at the same time.280 A similar approach has been undertaken by Sayyid Qutb281 (1906 - 1966) who sees the waging of jihad as relentless and unending, and views the greater jihad only applicable among people living under a "*righteous government upholding the laws of God.*"282 More recently, Ayatullah Khomeini283 (1901 - 1989) conceptualized jihad as an essential social and political struggle against unjust and oppressive systems leading to political liberation.284

Regarding contemporary militant ideologies such as jihadist suicide bombings Afsaruddin states Abu Muhammad 'Asim al-Maqdisi285 (born 1959), who "*has legitimized suicide bombings as a proper manifestation of military jihad in specific*

century Muslim reform organizations. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hassan_al-Banna. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

277 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 208.

278 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 243.

279 Abul A'la Mawdudi was an Indian-Pakistani scholar, philosopher and imam. He has had a strong influences on the Islamic extremist groupings such as al-Qaeda and Boko Haram. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abul_A%27la_Maududi. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

280 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, pages 209-211.

281 Sayyid Qutb was an Egyptian author, poet and Islamic theorist and a leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

282 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 213.

283 Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Mūsavi Khomeini was an Iranian Shia Muslim religious leader, revolutionary and politician. He was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruhollah_Khomeini. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

284 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 218.

285 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi or Abu Muhammad 'Asim al-Maqdis, is a Salafi jihadi Islamist Jordanian-Palestinian writer, and was the spiritual mentor of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the initial leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Muhammad_al-Maqdisi. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

circumstances"286 and becomes obligatory when it happens in an occupied Muslim land referring to the lands of Palestinian people.287

Makram Abbès describes the "*jihadist*" as someone "*who is elusive and belongs to no fixed territory*".288 According to him contemporary jihad is the opposite of just war as there is no distinction made between combatants and non-combatants.289

The Qur'an, according to Abbès, is full of the just and unjust themes. Orientalist tradition identifies "*jihad*" with "*holy war*", which becomes apparent in the rituals surrounding ancient wars. This clearly contrasts with the reality of jihad, in which God's will is fulfilled, impiety combated and no particular ritual behavior privileged. War against Islam is imminent and therefore, launching attacks is pre-emptive. The criterion of legitimate authority shows the clear distinction between ancient and modern jihad. Henceforward the 1950s Islamist thinking on war took a new turn. It is based on the assumption that the founding period was a creative and mobilizing utopia, and the Prophet's society was ideal in comparison to today's barbaric society. Islam would have to be founded anew.290 However, the relation between violence and politics is not the same. For classical authors "*war is the prerogative of the State, for Islamists it is the instrument of the State's destruction.*"291 For Islamists jihad is used to overthrow impious regimes, whereas classical authors considered it a state tool and its monopoly. In the end, Abbès concludes that war is not only obeying moral or political imperatives, but also legal ones, which finally are understood as "*obedience to the law […] guardian, the sovereign power.*"292

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286 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 234.
287 Afsaruddin: Striving in the Path of God, 2013, page 235.
288 Makram Abbès: Can we speak of Just War in Islam, 2014, page 234.
289 Abbès: Can we speak of Just War in Islam, 2014, pages 234 – 236: These may depend on the authors, doctrines, texts and historical periods.
290 Abbès: Can we speak of Just War in Islam, 2014, page 247.
291 Abbès: Can we speak of Just War in Islam, 2014, pages 247.
292 Abbès: Can we speak of Just War in Islam, 2014, pages 261.

IV. IV. Jihad, quo vadis?

ISIS has received much of its ideology from jihadi Salafism. Even though the lines between the three primary branches of Salafism can be very blurry, hybrid forms are predominant. Similarly, Salafism resembles parts of Wahhabi ideology, which was mostly caused by the influx of Salafi preachers and scholars to Saudi-Arabia's newly founded Wahhabi institutions until the 1980s. The connection between jihadi Salafism and ISIS is nowhere more obvious than when examining the notion of jihad, which nonetheless is the primary tool for jihadi Salafism to change the political and societal system.

A closer look at the various meanings of jihad reveals that the interpretation of jihad, whether it should be understood as combative or non-combative, "*lesser*" or "*greater*" is not clearly indictable. However, as in recent years scholars paid more attention to the "*greater*" jihad a clear trend is visible in dealing with the question of just war and in particular, the justification of contemporary jihadist movements. As militant groups arose scholars paid more attention to the dual interpretation of jihad saying that in peaceful times a non-violent notion of jihad was possible as well. Particularly, scholars who wrote their works after 9/11 tend to link them with and criticize the contemporary jihadist interpretation of jihad. In particular the question of just and unjust wars in relation to today's jihadism seems crucial to address. For Kelsay, it is clear that the terror and immense violence done by militant groups bring themselves a lot of criticism within the Muslim community. Militant groups try to justify their war of terror as revenge for US attacks and the Iraq wars.293 Though, Afsaruddin dedicates most of her monograph to the era prior to the 20th century, in the end she turns to contemporary scholars analyzing that jihad can not be defined as holy war, and neither can today's militancy. A similar approach can be seen in Abbés writings, as he stresses that radical Islamists want to re-adjust their religion, because it has moved away from its original meanings towards ignorance and impiety.294 As the modern world is seen to be impious itself and as it is God's plan for his people to fight the impious and polytheists, radicals justify their war as just, because it is led in God's name. Abbés does not see a continuous

293 Kelsay: Arguing the Just War in Islam, page 203 - 204.
294 Abbès: Can we speak of Just War in Islam, page 235.

notion of just war in Islam, this is only visible if some texts are left out of the reading. Cook on the other hand, sees today's jihadism as in line with the classical jihad doctrine, however differing in the disregard of a necessary authorization which legitimizes the battle. Nevertheless, contemporary radical groups tend to take certain exceptions and turn them into the rule, in particular concerning the killing of innocents. Cook proposes that a re-evaluation of the early Islamic conquests is necessary in order to de-justify today's actions. This is, however, very unlikely, because it would lead to a negation of the justness and rightness of the early conquests.[295]

ISIS managed to govern a territory larger than Belgium[296], and moreover proclaimed the re-establishment of the Caliphate, which has both been very unusual for a radical Islamist group. This territorial claim contributes to the legitimacy of ISIS and to the Caliphate's call for a global jihad. *"While controlling substantial areas of land – something unusual for terrorist organisations – ISIS is also very much present in cyberspace, on the Internet where its claims too often go unchallenged. With its propaganda in the social media, and with some of its video footage also broadcast in mainstream media, ISIS has caught the imagination of a considerable number of young rebellious Muslims all over the world who are attracted by its violent messages and catchy slogans. Its apparent success has also led to a number of instant conversions to Islam among mainly marginalized non-Muslim youths in Western countries."*[297]

295 Cook: Understanding Jihad, 2005, pages 163 – 167.
296 Schmid: Challenging the Narrative of the "Islamic State", 2015, page 1.
297 Schmid: Challenging the Narrative of the "Islamic State", 2015, page 1.

Chapter five

V. Looking behind the Wall - Manual Twitter Content Analysis

If the previous chapter has shown one thing, then it is that if one wants to label ISIS' ideological background with one branch of Salafism, then it must be the jihadist one. However, there are also other Salafist Muslim authorities, namely preachers and "*sheykhs"* using social media. By doing so they influence information flows, thus the following part focuses on the ways how three selected contemporary Salafi Muslim preachers use Twitter and the tools it offers to engage with believers, discuss issues and shape information flows.

The examined Twitter accounts are the official Twitter accounts of three Islamic preachers: Abdur Raheem Green, Abdur-Raheem McCarthy and Bilal Philips. Abdur Raheem Green is an Islamic preacher, who is considered to believe in Salafism. He embraced Islam in 1988, although he was brought up as Roman Catholic, and even practiced Buddhism. He regularly appears on TV, for instance on Peace TV, and is giving lectures worldwide. He is also the chairman of Islamic Education & Research Academy (iERA).298

Abdur Raheem McCarthy is an American scholar of Irish origin. He converted to Islam in 1994 and studied Islamic Studies in Sudan and Saudi Arabia, where he was enrolled into the University of Medina. He is giving lectures all over the globe and also appears on TV such as Huda TV and Peace TV. The sheykh is considered to follow the Wahhabi movement.299

According to his official webpage Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips converted to Islam in the early 1970s. He is originally of Jamaican – Canadian descent. He completed his Bachelor's degree in Islamic studies in Madeenah, and continued his education with a Master's degree in Islamic Theology in Riyadh. He gained his PhD in Islamic Theology from the University of Wales, United Kingdom. He founded several Islamic academic institutions, for instance in 2002 the Islamic studies department of Preston University,

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298 Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdur_Raheem_Green [last accessed on April 22, 2016]
299 Retrieved from: http://www.khpedia.com/view/abdur-raheem-mccarthy.html [last accessed on April 22, 2016] Webpage.

Ajman, UAE, or the Islamic Studies Academy in Doha, Qatar in 2007. In the same year he has launched the Islamic Online University, which offers free Islamic courses to over 100.000 registered students from all over the world.300

The reasons why the author chose these three contemporary Muslim scholars for an analysis are shortly outlined in the following: first and foremost, all three of them are considered to be Salafi preachers, therefore falling into the same ideological spectrum as ISIS, though not explicitly being part of ISIS. All three use Twitter on a very regular basis, posting content almost on a daily basis, including images and links to other platforms. At the time when the author started working on this thesis, Abdur Raheem Green had 4,561 tweets301, Abdur-Raheem McCarthy had a total of 8,117 tweets302 and Bilal Philips had 6,728 posts. All three of them represent a very wide ranging number of followers and audience. Comparatively speaking the singer Katy Perry (@katyperry) holds currently the record with most followers on Twitter, accumulating more than 85 million followers.303 Religious leaders of other world religions reach significantly less people on Twitter than pop singer Katy Perry, for instance the current Pope Francis304 (@Pontifex) holds roughly more than eight million followers and the Dalai Lama (@DalaiLama) more than 12 million followers at the time this thesis had been written.305 Out of all three selected accounts, Bilal Philips306 (@DrBilalPhilips), had by far the largest audience namely more than 269.000 people. He is succeeded by Abdur Raheem Green307 (@AbduraheemGreen), who has more than 63.000 followers and finally, Abdur-Raheem McCarthy308 (@shmccarthy) with more than 5.000 followers. 309Lastly, all three of them post the majority of tweets in English.

It is important to note here that regarding their outreach the author considers them to be opinion leaders and opinion authorities, meaning that they encourage communication and social interaction, and control the ways information is communicated. This asserted role is heavily influenced by research on social influence, suggesting that "*leaders are best defined in terms of followers and their ability to direct or coordinate the efforts and behaviors of an entire group*".310 The concept of opinion leadership has been an issue of relevance within communication studies for a while. For instance,

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300 Retrieved from : http://www.bilalphilips.com/about/ [last accessed on April 21, 2016].
301 https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen [last accessed on April 21, 2016].
302 https://twitter.com/shmccarthy [last accessed on April 21, 2016].
303 https://twitter.com/katyperry accessed on April 22, 2016.
304 https://twitter.com/Pontifex accessed on April 22, 2016.
305 https://twitter.com/DalaiLama accessed on April 22, 2016.
306 https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips accessed on April 22, 2016.
307 https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen
308 https://twitter.com/shmccarthy
309 When the final version had been edited the number of followers of all three had grown. On May 28, 2016 Abdur Raheem Green (@AbduraheemGreen) had more than 65.000 followers, Abdur-Raheem McCarthy (@shmccarthy) slightly grew to more than 5.300 followers, and Bilal Philips (@ DrBilalPhilips) audience grew to more than 280.000.
310 Huffaker: Dimensions of Leadership and Social Influence in Online Communities, 2010, page 594.

Table 1: Numerical Results of Tweet Categorization:

	Abdurraheem Green		AbdurRaheem McCarthy		Bilal Philips	
	December 2015	March 2016	December 2015	March 2016	December 2015	March 2016
Controversial	2	5	4	1	0	0
Engagement	2	2	18	8	1	0
Guidance	2	0	4	15	110	107
Private	0	5	17	40	0	0
Promotion	34	20	21	30	32	22
Arabic	0	0	2	12	0	0
Total Number	40	32	66	106	143	129

Lazersfeld and Katz defined[311] an opinion leader as one who can "*relay from mass media to local personal networks*".[312] More recent scholars assess opinion leaders the role as gatekeepers of information[313] or as opinion shapers.[314] Huffaker's analysis on the communicative behavior of online leaders based on more than 632,622 messages from 33,450 participants from Google Groups, came to the conclusion that opinion leaders both give and receive, meaning that they not only post, but also reply to others. In other words, the "*sheer communication activity is central to being influential*".[315] For the purpose of analyzing the authoritative leadership character of the selected Muslim preachers, we define online leaders as the following: people having the ability to set agendas by sparking dialogs or offering a framework for exchange on particular topics.

V.I. Categorization of Tweets

All in all, the author of this thesis has examined the total amount of Twitter posts from December 2015 and March 2016. The reason why I have chosen especially these two months is the fact that in both months ISIS has made the headlines for attacking European cities, therefore presumably the scholars might have felt the urge to react towards ISIS. In November 2015, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks occured in Paris killing 130 people.[316] The Islamic State claimed responsibilty for these attacks.

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311 Katz/Lazersfeld: Personal Leader, 1955.
312 Huffaker: Dimensions of Leadership and Social Influence in Online Communities, 2010, page 594.
313 Burt: The social capital of opinion leaders, 1999.
314 Weimann: The Influentials, 1994.
315 Huffaker: Dimensions of Leadership and Social Influence in Online Communities, 2010, page 610.
316 Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_2015_Paris_attacks. [last accessed May

Although, these attacks happened in November their cruelty made them a re-occuring topic, even in December. Another reasons why I chose to analyze December 2015, was the fact that on December 26, Bakr al-Baghdadi released an audio message. Besides threatening Israel and downplaying the Russian air campaign, the self-proclaimed Caliph called upon Muslims to join the Caliphate and with it join jihad. 317 December therefore seemed very reasonable as the Paris attacks were still overshadowing parts of the first half of the month, and then by the end the Caliph calls for a global jihad. One might ask why I have not selected November 2015, as that was the month of the Paris attacks? By choosing March 2016 to analyze as well, I cover terrorist attacks, namely the attacks in Brussels. Noteworthy, is to mention that by choosing December 2015 and March 2016 I have access to two months, which have both had terrorist attacks close by and access to ISIS calling for jihad.318

Even though, an analysis of a larger dataset or Twitter feed would be desirable, one is due to reasons of length and scope not possible here. However, the data mined from the two examined months still allows drawing conclusions on how the chosen preachers use their accounts to engage with their community, or discuss certain issues, and use them to spread information.

In order to fully grasp the content of tweets, the author has established a list of categories for enumerating the tweets which is verbally outlined here and visually represented in Table 1: Numerical Results of Tweet Categorization above. First and foremost, we have counted the total number of tweets of each and every scholar within the time frame of two months. This number includes both tweets and retweets, which describes content that had been created by them or they simply shared content from others. This content may also include shared photos, or edited photos including textual elements, or shared links leading to other social media channels. Posts which were phrased in Arabic, however, were excluded from the analysis. After all tweets had been counted a further categorization of all tweets had been undertaken differentiating between tweets covering personal content, and tweets engaging with other followers. The later category also includes retweeted posts from other scholars and retweets referring to events of other preachers. Another category contains content for marketing and promotion purposes, e.g. upcoming events or book reviews. But also in the case of Dr. Bilal Philips (@DrBilalPhilps) posts promoting the Islamic Online University (IOU)319 were assigned to this category. Furthermore, the author has discerned between tweets which were supposed to offer guidance, these may include Qur'anic quotes and pieces of wisdom. All posts can be standing alone by themselves or being

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6, 2016]

317 Retrieved from: http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2015-12-27/isis-head-calls-global-jihad-here-are-some-muslim-responses. [last accessed on May 6, 2016].

318 The Brussels attacks are going to be explained later in the chapter, however Information was retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_Brussels_bombings. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

319 Retrieved from: http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com/ [last accessed on April 18th, 2016]. Webpage.

embedded in a photo, graphic or other kinds of visual and textual blocks. The final category includes tweets which were considered to be controversial, meaning that they address issues such as terrorist attacks, or questioning religious behavior.

We begin with Abdur Raheem McCarthy, who has had a total amount of 172 tweets in the two examined months, out of which 66 tweets were posted in December 2015, and 106 were posted in March 2016. Out of the total number of tweets fourteen posts were in Arabic, two posts in December and another twelve in March, all being excluded from further analysis. All the rest were tweeted in English. For December we have categorized four tweets as offering guidance, while another 21 tweets were for marketing and promotional purposes, four posts were considered to be controversial, and another 18 posts were retweets or reactions towards followers ergo being engagements, and last but not least 17 posts were assigned to be of private matters. In March 2016, there were a total number of 40 tweets considered to be private ones, whereas 30 tweets were for marketing and promotion purposes, 15 offering guidance, eight engagements with others, including one retweet originally posted by Dr. Bilal Philips, and one mentioning of Abdur Raheem Green. In March 2016, one tweet can be considered to controversial, which is going to be discussed later in more detail.

Continuing with Abdur Raheem Green who has had a total of 40 postings in December and 32 tweets in March, making a total number of 72 tweets. In neither month was any tweet articulated in Arabic, therefore all 72 tweets have been categorized. For December 2015 only two tweets were assigned to the guidance offering category, whereas no tweet can be considered to offer any form of guidance in March 2016. During December there were a total 32 tweets regarded as having promotional content. Contrastingly, not a single tweet has had any private content, however two posts were considered to be controversial in December. Finally, four tweets can be seen as engagements with his community in December. Considering private tweets there have been altogether five tweets being allocated to this category in March 2016. Another five posts have been counted as controversial tweets and an additional two posts were engagements with others in that particular month. All in all there were a total of 20 tweets with a promotional content in March.

Last but not least, we now turn to the numerical examination and categorization of our final preacher, Dr. Bilal Philips. His Twitter account has by far the largest number of followers and tweets. Adding both examined months together he has had a total of 272 tweets in December 2015 and March 2016. Looking at both months separately, he has posted 143 tweets in December 2015, and 129 posts in March 2016. In neither month have been any tweets being posted in Arabic. In December there was only one post, which can be categorized as engagement with followers and in March there was none which could have been considered to be engaging with others. In neither month Philips' account has shared any private material, nor was he posting any controversial material in any of the two examined months. However he has had 110 posts offering

guidance material in December 2015. In the same month, he has had 33 posts which can be considered to have promotional content. On the other hand in March 2016, Philips has tweeted a total of 107 posts offering guidance and another 22 tweets were for promotional purposes. A tendency observable in both months, however, is the fact that the vast majority of Philips' promotional tweets are about the Isalmic Online University and promote the Islamic Online University in some kind of way.

V. II. Approaching a first Content Analysis

After having numerically outlined the Twitter engagements of all three preachers, I now turn to a more in depth analysis of their tweet content. Even though, the content analysis only includes two months it still gives good insight into the ways the three Muslim preachers use Twitter.

In both examined months, neither Philips, nor Green have shared any considerably substantial amount of private tweets. Although, Green has shared numerous times the same link referring to his official Facebook page linking it to a Youtube video, which had been titled "*Win the heart of your wife*", in which he shows how to cook for his wife.320 At first glance this seems unusual, especially in comparison to the way McCarthy allows his followers insights into his private life as private tweets constituted the majority of his tweets particularly in March 2016. For instance: *"My granddaughter Sarah AbdulRahman McCarthy May Allah preserve her and her parents and make them from the pious... http://fb.me/7Nqi0Av4P"*.321 Another example from March 2016 presenting McCarthy's private life would be: "*On my way to discover the village of my great grandfather 'Michael Eugene O'Connor' in Blackwater County, Kerry Ireland."*322

When juxtaposing the number of private posts with the amount of tweets containing promotional and marketing content from Green and Philips, one sees that Green mainly shares content for promotional purposes rather than private matters. Whereas Philips rather posts guidance-offering content whilst promotional content remains still the second largest category in both examined months, nonetheless excluding private content from his account. This tweeting pattern seems logically understandable when bearing in mind that both, Green and Philips, use Twitter for presumably mere professional reasons. The logic for this might be grounded on the fact that Green is the chairman of the Islamic Education and Research Academy (iERA)323, while Philips is the founder of the Islamic Online University in Qatar.324 Thereby both represent an official

320 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/707653260967071744, March 9, 2016, Tweet.
321 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/709800878086234112, March 15, 2016, Tweet.
322 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/712034604648153089, March 21, 2016, Tweet.
323 The Islamic Education and Research Academy is a UK-based charity organization dedicated to providing a better understanding of Islam aiming to create a more peaceful society. Currently, iERA is supporting more than 80 local communites and volunteer groups around the United Kingdom. iERA aims to encourage Muslim communities to engage with a larger society and communicate more openly about common values and the religion of Islam
Retrieved from: http://www.iera.org/about-us. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]
324 The Islamic Online University was originally established in 2001 by Bilal Philips. However, after

authoritative role, in real life and on Twitter. Therefore, it seems reasonable that both use their official online presence on Twitter to promote professional commercializing content rather than giving insight into their private life. This assumption is further strengthened by a large amount of Green's posts regarding promotional content, which refers directly to iERA or to actions indirectly related to it. For instance: "*In the US? Alhamdulillah, I'm happy to invite you to IERA US! Make sure you like and share the new page now!... http://fb.me/2c15JTYL6*"325

Similarly to Philips, Green connects posts offering guidance with promotional purpose, such as the following one linking his Twitter profile with his official Facebook page stating:" "*Obviously, the Prophet (peace be upon him) succeeded in this conflict with the poets, otherwise #Islam would not... http://fb.me/3EsiBnPBR.*"326

A similar pattern can be seen in the feed of Philips, in which a total of 23 posts refer to the Islamic Online University (IOU) in March 2016, including content encouraging people to enroll into the Islamic Online University or into courses related to the IOU making it the largest non-guidance sub-category overall. Out of those 23 advertising posts, 18 were either fully visual or mixed together with textual elements. (Figure 5.1.) As McCarthy is not yet a very prominent preacher, comparatively speaking, the number of promotional tweets is rather small, when juxtaposing it to Philips or Green. However, one can see that between December 2015 and March 2016 the number of promotion related content has increased from 21 to 30 tweets, so has his audience on Twitter.

At the same time the number of guidance offering tweets rose from four in December 2015 to 15 in March 2016, which can also be seen as an indicator for a slow rise in popularity and fame, therefore leading to a shift in the usage of Twitter's tools. "'*The more*" humble, needy, and subdued you are before Allah, the closer you will be to Him.' - Ibn Taymiyyah.*"327 Interestingly, Green's amount of guidance offering tweets is reasonably small in comparison to Philips and McCarthy, though bearing in mind his chairmanship of iERA. Content containing guiding principles represents the largest category of Dr. Bilal Philips Twitter feed. For instance: "*When you've sinned, quickly repent & get back on track. Don't wait for the right time'. There might not be a next time or second chance.*"328 Or another example from earlier in March 2016: "*Sad? Pray. Over thinking? Pray. Giving up? Pray. Depressed? Pray. Struggling? Pray.*

running into problems it way fully launched in 2007 as Islamic Online University, Qatar. In 2010 the IOU introduced the world's first tuition-free, online Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies. According to its webpage, the IOU has a total student body of 180.000 from over 224 countries. Retrieved from: http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com/aboutus.php. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]. Webpage.
325 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/705471810251460612 , March 3, 2016, Tweet.
326 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/671683225299902464, December 1, 2015, Tweet.
327 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/672852922623987712, December 4, 2015, Tweet.
328 Philips (@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/715303634754519041, March 30, 2016, Tweet.

Worried? Pray. Allah is always there."329 All in all, one can say that guidance offering tweets and Qur'anic quotes are dominating the Twitter feed of Philips, making a total of 217 tweets. However, one can only guess why these are so dominating. Though, what is striking, however, is the fact that a large number of those tweets are directly or indirectly linked Twitter to the IOU through imagery or attached links, such as this one here: "*How does one learn the art of proper communication? Read this article to find out.*

http://blog.islamiconlineuniversity.com/importance-oral-communication-need-express-properly/ …".330 In some cases the guiding answers provided to certain problems, again refer to courses offered at the IOU or to the IOU in general. Another example showing this tendency is shown by figure 5.2. This image basically indicates, that by enrolling into the Islamic Online University one can reach Qur'anic wisdom, which helps oneself to encounter particular quotidian issues. By doing so, these guiding tweets are themselves promotional ones, as they present/sell the IOU as a solution for daily problems at the same time. These posts can be considered to be loosely connected with the promotional content category.

Philips, B.:Figure 5.1.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/708277349746278400. [last accessed on April 18th, 2016], March 11, 2016. Twitter.

Even though Philips' Twitter account is by far the most active one, posting several times per day, hardly any of the posts fall into the category engaging with others, meaning sharing, answering or retweeting content of others. This indicates that his account is not necessarily aiming for engagement with his followers, meaning that he is not actively seeking a conversation with them. The only post which fell into this category (figure 5.3.) clearly picturing Abdur Raheem Green as a convocation participant, does not even link Green's Twitter account with Philips' in the post. Linking accounts is normally

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329 Philips (@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/708714398240645120, March 12, 2016, Tweet.
330 Philips (@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/676323340928335872, December 14, 2015, Tweet.

Philips, B.:Figure 5.2.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/675949044540301313. [last accessed on April 18th, 2016], December 13, 2015. Twitter.

a reasonable and common practice, and in this case would have been logical to do so in order to link both channels and gain more audience and visibility. Although, Abdur Raheem Green's Twitter account does not refer to this event neither, he at least shows some signs of increased engagement with others for instance by retweeting posts such as a post (figure 5.4) retweeted from Yahya Birt (@yBirt) or the following retweet from The Salafi Feminist (@AnonyMousey) indicate: "*If you don't wear/like/believe in hijab/niqab, great. But don't go around telling everyone how it's 'not really Islam' & how it's so evil.*"331 Noteworthy here is the seemingly cautious and careful attitude of both Green and Philips regarding their retweeting behavior. However, this might be related to the already mentioned above fact of their official roles as chairman of iERA, Green, and the representative role of Philips at the Islamic Online University.

We now turn to the last preacher Abdur Raheem McCarthy, who has by far the highest number of engagements in the two examined months. Although, in December 2015 most retweets constituted news content mostly dealing with issues related to the American Presidential campaign, such as figure 5.5 shows.Nevertheless, McCarthy's high figure signals that he is willing to engage with his followers and moreover willing to retweet reactions towards content posted by him. For instance: "*@shmccarthy #quran the #hope the #light great video akhi!*"332 In other words, McCarthy is the only one who actually actively retweets content from his followers, thereby engages with them,

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331 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AnonyMousey/status/679023704207048708, December 21, 2015, Retweet from The Salafi Feminist (@AnonyMousey).
332 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/themuslimnomad1/status/678396045894664194, December 19, 2015, Retweet from The Muslim Nomad (@themuslimnomad1).

Dr. Bilal Philips @DrBilalPhilips · 30 Dec 2015
It is our privilege to welcome you all to our 2nd Online Convocation Ceremony
Session link: bit.ly/IOUConvocation2

Figure 5.3.: Announcment of Second Online Convocation Ceremony, stating the participation of Abdurraheem Green, from December 30th, 2015.[https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/682369099620593665]

raises his visbility and does not simply follow promotional and marketing purposes such as the other two examined preachers. However, it is worth noting that a promotional retweeting pattern appears also in McCarthy's Twitter feed especially in March 2016, e.g. "*My Tagteam partner @shmccarthy arrives this morning, and then, it's off to Cardiff Wales for the beginning of the tour.*"333

The most noticeable difference between all three preachers, though is their tweeting pattern regarding controversial content. Where on the one side there is Philips, who has posted no controversial content whatsoever in neither of the examined months, and Green and McCarthy on the other side, who both have at least posted some content referring to controversial issues. For instance Green discusses Darwinian evolution, followed by tweets raising questions about Islam's relationship to science. "*Darwianin Evolution is taught as a absolute fact in schools, universities and documentaries. In reality can't be... http://fb.me/2Aq4uprqS*".334

"*Brother and Sisters, we as Muslims don't deny science. In fact, we should study science in order to bring us... http://fb.me/7BODBt2K4*".335 Besides Green's controversial posts, a total of four tweets by McCarthy have been categorized as having controversial content in December 2015. However, it should be pointed out that

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333 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/AbuHafsahClare/status/712894739964674048, March 23, 2016, Retweet from AbdulMalik Clare (@AbuHafsahClare).
334 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/674359224990846977, December 8, 2015, Tweet.
335 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/674530304883875840, December 9, 2015, Tweet.

Birt, Y.: Figure 5.4.: https://twitter.com/YBirt/
status/707134731750608896. [last accessed on April 18th,
2016], March 8, 2016. Twitter.

all four tweets have been retweets, such as: "*Extremism does not exist in Islam, it only exists in the hearts of the misguided.*"336 The non-controversial content posting pattern of Philips becomes particularly obvious in March 2016 the days after the Brussels attacks.337 On the day of the Brussels attacks, March 22, 2016, though Philips posted three tweets on that particular day, which are going to be stated beneath. None of them had any content related to the attacks or whatsoever. "*May Allah removes all forms of enmity amongst us and enable us to love each other for His sake alone. Ameen.*"338 This tweet of Philips has received 425 likes and 348 retweets. It was then followed by: "*When you've made a mistake, admit it and correct it. Don't let arrogance magnify your mistakes to the point of destruction.*"339 This post generated 622 people retweeting and 658 people liking this post. The last post tweeted on March 22[n], 2016 was: "*Life doesn't always go the way we want; only Allah knows whats best for us and what our future holds. We just need to have patience & faith.*"340 This final post was

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336 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/MercifulServnt/status/674270773691990016,
December 8, 2015, Tweet.

337 On the morning of March 22, 2016, three coordinated nail bombings happened in Belgium. Two bombs exploded at the Brussels Airport in Zaventem and one at Maalbeek metro station. All in all, 32 victims and three perpetrators were killed and more than 300 people were hurt. A fourth bomb was found during at the airport. The Islamic State claimed resposibility for the attacks. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_Brussels_bombings. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

338 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/712187377519874048, March 22, 2016, Tweet.

339 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/712309284659466241, March 22, 2016, Tweet.

340 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/712444092995772417, March 22, 2016, Tweet.

Figure 6.5.Twitter Post referring to US Presidential primary elections [https://twitter.com/ThahabX/status/674295492818419712]

even shared by more than 1.200 people and generated 879 likes. However, all three contain a comforting or guiding content aiming for likes and shares and generating retweets from his followers.

On the other hand, there are Green and McCarthy, who have both directly reacted to the Brussels attacks by tweeting about them, or indirectly by retweeting content related to them. Abdur Raheem McCarthy directly reacted in one post regarding the Brussels attack on March 22, 2016: "*Brussels under attack! As we were enjoying a beautiful family retreat with other Muslim families in Ireland we...http://fb.me/2zgRpsyAa*".341

Abdur Raheem Green stated the following on the terror attacks:

"*In light of today's terrorist attacks in #Brussels, as well as the recent atrocities in #Turkey, #Nigeria and the... http://fb.me/19lYI7npl*".342 However, what is interesting here are not their direct reactions towards the Brussels attacks, rather what they have shared in the aftermath of the attacks. On the same day of the attacks, March 22, McCarthy retweeted the following: "*If u think that all Terrorism is committed by Muslims then ur a moron. Go and learn the History of Western Civilization*".343 This post was originally posted by Muhammad Robert Heft (@robertheft), who has been retweeted by McCarthy several times on other occasions as well. In the following days

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341 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/712270085545713665, March 22, 2016, Tweet.
342 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/712357404357296128, March 22, 2016, Tweet.
343 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/robertheft/status/712408839677722625, March 22, 2016, Retweet from Muhammad Robert Heft (@robertheft).

Greenwald, G.:
Figure 5.6.:
https://twitter.com/ggreenwald/status/714530660195520512.
[last accessed on April 19th, 2016], March 28, 2016. Twitter.

after the attack, Green had retweeted two more posts being quite the opposite to his usual posting pattern. First on March 27, 2016 Abdur Raheem Green retweeted Dilly Hussain's (@DillyHussain88) post saying: "*Hailing Assad's victory over ISIS in Palmyra is like celebrating the wiping out of a major drug operation, by the cartel via @anasaltikriti.*"344 Followed by another retweet originally posted from Abudllah al Andalusi (@AbdullaAndalusi) stating that, "*this didn't get same coverage as other terror attacks: 'Man yells 'Heil Hitler' after shooting 3 at Jewish centers'*

http://www.kctv5.com/story/25235053/shooting-reported-at-overland-park-jewish-community-center#.VvlaJ3ByiRM.twitter …".345 These two posts were then followed by another two retweets (figure 5.6. and 5.7.). All four posts have been quite difficult to categorize as they were clearly containing critical content, however they were retweeted therefore not necessarily expressing endorsement. Retweets can sometimes mean endorsement, however normally people state in their Twitter bio: RT is not endorsement.346 Still, they fall into the category of controversial content, as they clearly would have the potential to spark a discussion or debate. What can be said about the posting pattern after the Brussels attacks is that both Green and McCarthy fulfilled the duty to react to them. However when looking at their content posted after the attacks, it seems as if Green and McCarthy had fulfilled the minimum by addressing the Brussels attacks, but also criticise the media coverage on the Brussels attacks and point out the significantly less coverage on other attacks. In this regards, this might have been the reason why Green used several hashtags referring to other foregoing attacks, e.g. #Brussels, #Turkey and #Nigeria, thereby raising awareness. Moreover,

344 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/DillyHussain88/status/714294268765085696, March 27, 2016, Retweet.
345 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): ttps://twitter.com/AbdullaAndalusi/status/714488157698392064, March 28, 2016, Retweet.
346 Retrieved from: https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-history-of-journalists-writing-RTs-do-not-endorsements-on-their-Twitter-bios-When-did-that-begin-Who-was-the-first [last accessed on May 2, 2016]

Figure 5.7.: [https://twitter.com/Majstar7/
status/714492492075429888].

by retweeting posts such as figures 5.6. and 5.7. they also refer to possible societal reactions towards Muslim communities and raise consciousness about already existing issues.

V. III. Applied Tools?

After having laid out the content posted by the three selected preachers, I now turn to a more meticulous analysis on the question how certain online tools like hashtags and imagery were used by them. Moreover, certain similarities are going to be pointed out regarding the foregoing question.

One common issue between all three Twitter accounts is the way they try to connect their various social media channels by linking them to each other, or referring to one and another. As already mentioned above, Green commonly links his Twitter account to his official Facebook page.347 In a similar way Abdur Raheem McCarthy tends to post tweets including links, which lead to his Instagram account. *"Before my speech in Kilkenny, Ireland to show solidarity between the local Muslims and the local…*

*https://www.instagram.com/p/_MH0jtBx-Q/."*348 Or he simply posts pictures referring to his Instagram account, for instance figure represents an example for doing so. Another example of this cross-social media linkage would be: "*We're going to go live 8:25-30pm London time for tonight's Fiqh lesson here on our Facebook page from our*

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347 https://www.facebook.com/AbdurraheemGreen
348 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://www.instagram.com/p/_MH0jtBx-Q/

Centre... http://fb.me/19nT6spMD".349 Here McCarthy links his Twitter account with his Facebook account,350 which is done in a quite clever way, as the full message is only readable, when clicking on this link. The same can be said about his post addressing the Brussels attacks. "*Brussels under attack! As we were enjoying a beautiful family retreat with other Muslim families in Ireland we...http://fb.me/2zgRpsyAa*".351 Again we have a cross-social media linking with his Facebook page. When you want to read his full statement you have to go to his official Facebook page. What McCarthy does here is generating audience and making Twitter followers aware of his other social media channels, ergo creating greater visibility. None of the examined preachers, however, masters cross-social media linking quite as professional as Bilal Philips' Twitter account does. Regarding Philips' account it is important to highlight that an enormous amount of his tweets are images, making cross-social media linking very simple for him. Out of his 143 posts in December 2015, a total of 66 posts were images, when looking at his posts in the enumerated categories, 27 of the 32 promotional posts in December 2015 were containing images. The other 39 images fall into the guidance offering category. The numbers for March 2016 consolidate this assumption, in that particular month 56 tweets out of 129 included imagery in some form. Similarly to December 2015, almost all promotional posts contained images, making up 19 image-containing posts out of 22 overall in that category. Figure 5.9. beautifully exemplifies how promotional content is embedded into an image. Although, most of promotional tweets contain imagery, the majority of images can be found in guidance offering posts. These posts follow a similar pattern, textual elements embedded into photos, such as figure 5.10. shows. However, these posts all have in common that they refer to his other social media accounts either via a thin strip at the top or at the bottom of the image listing Philips' various social media channels, or via an icon referring to his other platforms raising awareness for his overall social media activities. (Figure 5.11.) Every single image therefore refers either to the online presence of the Islamic Online University or to his other social media channels, which are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube.com, Google+, Rich Site Summary (RSS), Pinterest and LinkedIn.

Even though, Green and McCarthy use a significant amount of imagery, neither Green nor McCarthy use this mixed form of visibility raising posts as extensively as Philips does. McCarthy, for instance, has only had 12 images in December 2015, though none of them being as professional as Philips'. McCarthy's images are posted solely to give insight into his private life, as mentioned previously. Green on the other hand, has only included four images in December 2015. These have not even been posted directly rather than being the displayed images of the tweeted posts.

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349 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/710197921442967552, March 16, 2016, Tweet.
350 https://www.facebook.com/sheikhmccarthy
351 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/712270085545713665, March 22, 2016, Tweet.

Figure 5.8.: https://www.instagram.com/p/_MH0jtBx-Q/.
[last accessed on April 19th, 2016], December 12, 2015.
Instagram.

Another tool related to the matter of exploiting available online tools is the usage of URL shortening applications, which all three of them have used in various instances as the number of characters at Twitter is limited. "*URL shortening is a technique on the World Wide Web in which a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) may be made substantially shorter in length and still direct to the required page. This is achieved by using a redirect on a domain name that is short, which links to the web page that has a long URL. For example, the URL*

'http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL_shortening' can be shortened to 'http://tinyurl. com/urlwiki'."[352] As sharing became a part of one's social media presence URL shortening became quite popular especially on platforms with a limited amount of characters, e.g. Twitter.[353] On December 9, 2015 McCarthy included a shortened link as part of a longer tweet, linking to his Facebook profile: "*http://fb.me/1Kg72MZIc* "[354]; social media webpages like Facebook offer their own URL shortening applications by now. That is the reason why Green's posts referring to his Facebook presence solely use the *"fb.me"* form of links.[355] Philips on the other hand uses various applications

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352 Wikipedia: Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL_shortening, [last accessed on April 19, 2016] Webpage.

353 New York Times: Retrieved from: http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/14/googl-challenges-bitly-as-king-of-the-short/?_r=0, December 14, 2009. Commentary.

354 McCarthy (@shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/674552558493519872, December 9, 2015. Tweet.

355 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/710882017311907841, March 18, 2016. Tweet.

Fgure 5.9.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/
status/715615089039114240. [last accessed
on April 20th, 2016], March 31, 2016. Twitter.

to shorten URLs, e.g. the one provided by Google356 "*goo.gl/vYaeIl*"357 or bit.ly358, which is one of the most common URL shortening tools on the web: "*http://bit.ly/ IOUWebinar-RemianingSteadfast …*"359. When going through Philips' Twitter feed one can see that he also uses Buffer as another online application to post content, as "*buff.ly*", which is the shortened URL Buffer uses, appears several times360. "*Buffer is a tool that can […] write […] posts at one time, choose which social profiles to send them to, and […] Buffer will spread them out throughout the day or week so that you don't have to be at a computer all the time in order to have a social media presence. You can also attach a photo, video or animated GIF to any of your posts.*"361 Buffer currently connects the following social media accounts: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Pinterest362 making it the ideal tool for professional use. It would not be

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356 Goo.gl: Retrieved from: https://goo.gl/, [last accessed on April 20, 2016] Webpage.
357 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/713641803069657088, March 26, 2016. Tweet.
358 Bit.ly: Retrieved from: https://bitly.com/pages/about, [last accessed on April 20, 2016].
359 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/676824390231805953, December 15, 2015. Tweet.
360 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/712626029567803395, March 23, 2016. Tweet.
361 Buffer: https://buffer.com/faq/top-10-faq/#what-does-buffer-do, [last accessed on April 20, 2016].
362 Buffer: Retrieved from: https://buffer.com/faq/top-10-faq/#which-social-media-accounts-can-i-add-buffer, [last accessed on April 20, 2016].

Figure 5.10.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/
status/706948830936358912. [last accessed on April 19th,
2016], March 7, 2016. Twitter.

completely wrong to assume,that Philips indeed lays out a content plan for the whole week, creating the same content for most of his social media channels. Therefore it is also not surprising that certain content appears more often, repetitively and that his posts refer to his other social media channels. By doing so he can use the same content for all of his platforms.

We now conclude this part with a brief section on the usage of hashtags. Hashtags are considered to be an efficient tool to engage with other users or to categorize posts. We cannot go through all hashtags used, though the ones which have been used more than once are going to be analyzed shortly. However, from analyzing the way the examined preachers have used hashtags, it correlates more with marketing purposes than categorization, or engagement on a larger scale. Let us first examine Bilal Philips' hashtags, who has all in all used 18 different hashtags in December 2015, using four repetitively therefore making it a total use of 26 hashtags. In March 2016, he has only used five hashtags and two of them more than once making it a total of seven hashtags. The hashtags Philips has used more than once are #sujood, #submission, #HalfOurDeen, #heart and #7gems. #sujood and #submission fall into the category of praying-related hashtags, which there have been several: #fajr, #prayer and #dua. Even though, #sujood itself has appeared four times, including the other hashtags related to prayers a total of nine hashtags have been related to this topic. Tweets containing any of those hashtags have, therefore, been categorized as guidance offering posts (see figure 5.12.) The hashtag #HalfOurDeen (figure 5.13.) has occurred twice in December

Figure 5.11.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/707638847237169152. [last accessed on April 19, 2016], March 9, 2016. Twitter.

Figure 5.12.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/672385277596336128 [last accessed on April 19, 2016], December 3, 2015. Twitter.

2015, and was used to promote a healthy marriage. The hashtag #HalfOurDeen is commonly used to refer to marriage related issues by Muslim users. Logically, those tweets fall into guidance offering posts as well. The same is applicable to #heart (figure 5.14.). Solely, #7Gems (figure 5.15.) has been used by Philips to highlight courses offered by the Islamic Online University. These have been combined with hashtags related to parenting such as #Islamicparenting. "*Teach your kids the Qur'an, and the Qur'an will teach them everything. #IslamicParenting*".363 However, #7Gems has also been used to refer to marriage related topics, therefore being related to #HalfOurDeen.

In December 2015, Abdur Raheem Green has used a total of eight different hashtags, using #London twice, both times for promotional purposes. "*TOMORROW in #London, there will be a brand new iERA Workshop 'Failed Hypothesis? Islam, The Qur'an & Science'. If... http://fb.me/7xEWHuyYH.*"364 In December 2015, Green has used hashtags solely for marketing and promotional reasons, for instance #evolution, which refers to a podcast from iERA, but also to a topic he has discussed before: Darwinism. "*Free Podcast from iERA:*

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363 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/677700089524174849, December 17, 2015. Twitter.
364 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/675363540048453632, December 11, 2015. Twitter.

Figure 5.13.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/680976627153657856. [last accessed on April 19, 2016], December 26, 2015. Twitter.

*'Can you be a #Muslim and believe in #evolution?' In this exclusive podcast, Hamza... http://fb.me/5FCpaDkVs."*365

Whereas on the other hand in March 2016 Green has only used five different hashtags, three of which have been #Brussels, #Turkey and #Nigeria, all referring to terrorist attacks. Additionally, he has used #Keepsmiling and #EgyptAir (figure 5.16.) for a retweet, which referred to an insult that then led to similar events happening around the world, basically going viral.366 Similarly to Philips, Green uses hashtags within a sentence, categorizing them, yet not in an engaging way. He thereby merely uses them to refer to certain places, or events, mostly for promotional purposes. A rather similar pattern is visible in his tweet regarding the Brussels attack in March 2016, in which he used three hashtags namely #Brussels, #Turkey and #Nigeria raising awareness, that besides the attacks in Brussels there were other attacks foregoing. Though, using #Brussels which had been used by the Twitter community to refer to the Brussels attacks.367

Finally, we turn to Abdur Raheem McCarthy, who has used 14 hashtags in December 2015, using #familytime twice. "*Salaam alaykum from Basque*

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365 Green (@AbduraheemGreen): https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen/status/673920459797168128, December 7, 2015. Twitter.
366 This particular mock post refers to an insult, which happened after the Brussels attacks. A man, Matthew P Doyle (@MatthewDoyle31) has confronted a Muslim woman asking her what she thought about the Brussels attacks and then posting it on his Twitter page saying: "I confronted a Muslim women yesterday in Croydon. I asked her to explain Brussels. She said 'Noting to do with me'. I mealy mouthed reply." After Doyle had posted this on his Twitter account, people all around the globe started mocking him and his post. Retrieved from: http://mic.com/articles/138803/london-man-who-asked-muslim-woman-to-explain-brussels-terror-attacks-arrested#.PZZVbZCQ5, March 26, 2016, Article.
367 Flynn: #Brussels Hashtag Shows Difficulty In Combating Extremist Messages In Social Media. Retrieved from: http://www.ibtimes.com/brussels-hashtag-shows-difficulty-combating-extremist-messages-social-media-2341108. [last accessed on May 2, 2016]. March 22, 2016.

Figure 5.14.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/
status/713981933462675456 [last accessed on April
19, 2016], March 28, 2016. Twitter.

Figure 5.15.: https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/
status/678077824662642689. [last accessed on April
19, 2016], December 18, 2015. Twitter.

Country Beautiful country great weather MashaAllah! #familytime http://fb.me/6RJnVn4ap".368 As McCarthy engages with his followers, retweeting content, he also retweets their hashtags, for instance #AmirKhanFoundation visible in figure 6.17. Another retweet by McCarthy further exemplifies this: "*@shmccarthy #quran the #hope the #light great video akhi!*".369 Similarly, to December, McCarthy has used hashtags that had been used originally by his followers and then being embedded into his retweets (see figure 5.18.) In March 2016, he has used a total of 20 different hashtags, using #Waterford, #Ireland, #NeighboorhoodCleanUp, #StreamsofParadise, #Islam and #CleanForTheQueen more than once. All in all he has used 27 hashtags. Examining McCarthy's hashtags one can see that his hashtags can be grouped together in four different categories: communal purposes, religious ones, private and promotional hashtags. Having said this, I am going to briefly outline, what I mean by this categorization, before concluding this chapter. First of all, a large number of private posts have been using

368 McCarthy (shmccarthy):
https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/
status/681838302333386753, December 29,
2015. Tweet.
369 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://
twitter.com/themuslimnomad1/
status/678396045894664194, December 19,
2015. Tweet.

Figure 5.16.: https://twitter.com/kayatino/
status/714911285658394624. [last accessed on April 20,
2016], March 29, 2016. Twitter.

hashtags, such as #bjj370, #jiujitsu371, #Luton372, #DontForget373 or #Khartoum.
"*Out of all the airports I've seen around the world I can easily say #Luton is the worst I've
seen yet! Honourable mention to #Khartoum.*"374 Therefore it should not be surprising
that these hashtags refer to a broad variety of issues, having in common private matters.
Communal hashtags were such, referring to activities of his community or worldwide,
e.g. #CleanForTheQueen375 or #NeighboorhoodCleanUp.376 Promotional hashtags
were used to refer indireclty to places where McCarthy had hold events, such as
#Ireland377, or directly to events: "*Live streaming of #StreamsOfParadise tour with
.@shmccarthy .@AbuHafsahClare .@DawahWarrior @Esakhan91 https://youtu.*

370 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/agatsuapparel/status/715150329130708992, March
30, 2016. Tweet.
371 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/agatsuapparel/status/715150329130708992, March
30, 2016. Tweet.
372 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/714726173155139584, March 29,
2016. Tweet.
373 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/iamabdassamad/status/713835468778053632, March
26, 2016. Tweet.
374 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/714726173155139584, March 29,
2016. Tweet.
375 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/Our1Community/status/705840303803072513, March
4, 2016. Tweet.
376 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/Our1Community/status/714155405656588289, March
27, 2016. Tweet.
377 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/710228328129675264, March 16,
2016. Tweet.

Figure 5.17.: https://twitter.com/ZohaOfficial/status/675657383624994816 [last accessed on April 21, 2016], December 12, 2015. Twitter.

be/Y_mWRyrVL9E pls #rt."378 Finally, religious hashtags, obviously are supposed to promote Islam379 or offer guidance: *"An elder man breaks down into tears when he*

finds the Turkish Prime Minister praying next to him #Islam #equality."380

378 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/rudol9h/status/714121367629742081, March 27, 2016. Tweet.
379 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/rudol9h/status/706018197171007490, March 4, 2016.
380 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/708218465304363008, March 11, 2016. Tweet.

Figure 5.18.: https://twitter.
com/Our1Community/
status/705840303803072513
[last accessed on April 21, 2016],
March 4, 2016. Twitter.

V. IV. How engagement is avoided

After having pointed out similarities regarding the usage of Twitter tools between the three different Twitter accounts and how these have been used by the examined scholars, this last part tries to analyze more closely why the posted content does nonetheless represent certain typical social media behaviors, but does not call for any real debate or allows no discussion emerging regarding controversial content.

My underlying assumption for this whole analysis had been that the scholars use Twitter tools also to engage with their followers. This has clearly not been the case. The following section first proves that all three preachers, indeed participate in viral trends, and embrace changes, even though in different ways, and then continues by suggesting reasons why no debate arises.

Let's first turn to Abdur Raheem McCarthy, who out of all examined preachers seems to be the most up-to-date Twitter user, in terms of posting viral content. One of the most prominent re-occurring topics in McCarthy's Twitter feed is the American presidential primary cycle. As already mentioned above, McCarthy posts a large amount of presidential-campaign related content.381 However, besides retweeting posts originally uploaded by news agencies, such as RT and al-Jazeera, McCarthy also posts pictures mocking the candidates, which themselves have gone viral before. Figure 5.19. represents such an image, which was embedded into the following text: "*Lol... I'll probably be banned from entering America for posting it but honestly it was too good… https://www.instagram.com/p/BCgASARhxyi/*".382 Another point strengthening

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381 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/rudol9h/status/674350088475549696, December 8, 2016. Retweet.
382 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/shmccarthy/status/705451980894969856, March 3, 2016, Tweet.

Figure 5.19.: https://
twitter.com/shmccarthy/
status/705451980894969856
[last accessed on April 21,
2016], March 3, 2016. Twitter.

my assumption would be the obvious engagement in communal issues such as the neighborhood cleanup initiative.383

Even though, Green posted comparatively little in comparison to McCarthy and Philips he still shared content related to viral trends. The already aforementioned figure 5.17. shows how Green participates in a viral buzz, by retweeting a post referring to the the "*I confronted a ...*" Twitter discussion, which was a backfired response to a man posting about confronting a Muslim woman in the aftermath of the Brussels attack on March 22, 2016.384

Although, Bilal Philips has not engaged in any viral trends, he nevertheless seems to be aware of technical applications and changes caused by social media. My assumption here is based on the fact that he abbreviates words on Twitter to spare characters, such as "*u*" for "*you*". "*Thinking about some1 u like? Make dua for them! Thinking about someone u don't like? Make dua for them Dua heals all wounds & increases love*".385 Although, there have been very little abbreviations used by Philips, using abbreviations such as "*u*" and "*some1*", nevertheless signals an awareness for

383 McCarthy (shmccarthy): https://twitter.com/Our1Community/status/714155405656588289, March 27, 2016. Tweet.
384 For more information on the "I confronted a ..." shitstorm the following article lists some examples of the backfired tweet by Matthew Doyle (@MatthewDoyle31). Retrieved from: http://www.dailydot. com/politics/brussels-croyden-tweet-backfires/ [last accessed on April 22, 2016]
385 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/674620366954897408, December 9, 2016. Tweet.

viral trends.

Having said this, all three scholars in their roles as online personae with a large number of followers represent religious authorities. According to Heidi Campbell's definition of challenged authorities, they represent first and foremost, religious hierarchies, as they are recognized religious scholars, and secondly in their roles as recognized scholars they furthermore offer religious structures and practices.386 Even though, they offer guidance and occasionally engage with their community, they nevertheless fall in leu with what Campbell said about religious users. "*Religious users may spend a significant portion of their discourse online affirming, rather than challenging traditional religious leaders, structural bodies, theologies and core texts.*"387 Studies have shown that Twitter users normally are more engaging with their followers than users of other social media platforms388 because of using the available tools e.g. hashtags, @ and retweeting.389 In this particular case, the not emerging discussion on crucial topics, might be explained by the fact that none of the examined scholars really offers any possible point of disagreement, neither did they post content questioning Islam as a religion guiding private life, nor have they questioned any Islamic principles in the examined months.

Philips' use of #HalfOurDeen for instance represents such a rather confirming than challenging content of beliefs, because instead of questioning models of marriage, he promotes the one correlating to his belief. Another example would be Philips' specific posts calling for prayers or related to prayers, whereby he clearly promotes religious practices: "*Happiness doesn't come from something you don't have, rather from recognizing and thanking Allah for what you already possess.*"390 Frankly, why would any of the three scholars post challenging content and encourage discussions, when they clearly use Twitter as a tool for promoting ones lifestyle and themselves instead of questioning it. Again Philips' Twitter feed provides proof for this assumption, as the foregoing analysis had already highlighted tendencies such as cross-social media linking and the tremendous amount of content promoting their professional lives rather than the religion, consolidate this suggestion.

Even though, a large number of promotional posts represents yet just another form of devotional content, none of them had caused much of a visible intention to engage or cause controversy among their followers leaving open the question why. Answers regarding the reason for this non-appearance of debates and discussions, might offer the question about the purpose of their online presence. Recalling the study of social shaping of technology, arguing that religious users shape technology

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386 Campbell: Religious Authority and the Blogosphere, 2010, page 253.
387 Campbell: Religious Authority and the Blogosphere, 2010, page 269.
388 Conover et al.: Political polarization on twitter, 2011.
389 Guzek: Discovering the Digital Authority - Twitter as Reporting Tool for Papal Activities, 2015, page 76.
390 Philips(@DrBilalPhilips): https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips/status/709726255126593536, March 15, 2016, Tweet.

Figure 5.20.: https://twitter.com/HillaryClinton/
status/674722739387695105 [last accessed on
April 21, 2016], December 9, 2015. Twitter.

towards their own goals and desires, allows to assume that the conservative way of using the technology leads to a conservative modification of social media channels, which in this particular case is Twitter. Therefore, Twitter is just seen as a space for offering guidance and promotion, thus less as a space for open discussions and mutual engagement. Cross-social media linking and the constant referencing of links, leading to other social media platforms implies that neither of the examined scholars has fully en-cultured or embedded Twitter's technology into their daily lives. Especially, when bearing in mind that producing content once and sharing it via all social media platforms without any adaptations reaches a broad audience, but does not necessarily invite one to engage into a debate, when social media channels are used interchangeable, without bearing their specifics in mind. By doing so all three fall in line with Campbell's established discourses dealing with religion online. As they offer spiritual guidance they use social media platforms as tools to promote religion and religious practices, e.g. praying. By using the Internet as a technological tool promoting Islam, the tools offered by Twitter are nonetheless dependent on the motives and desires of Green, McCarthy and Philips. Therefore, they continue doing what they had been taught before the advent of the Internet or social media. In other words, they use classical media tools, adapted to social media use, thus not exploiting the full potential of Twitter.[391] In this sense their limited use is reminiscing a missionary tool rather than a tool challenging existing authorities or democratizing social institutions, which had gone online, when their virtualization took place.[392]

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391 Campbell: Spiritualizing the Internet - Uncovering Discourses and Narratives of Religious Internet Usage, 2005, page 12.
392 Hjarvard: The Mediatization of Society – A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change, 2008, page 129.

Chapter six

VI. I. Visualization of a Network Analysis

"Simplicity can also be deceptive, however, if online social and communicative interactions are simplistically positioned to represent 'social interaction' as such, without also considering how the specific affordances and limitations of the mediating technologies affect the stye, form, and format of communication […]" 393

After having manually analyzed the tweet content of Bilal Philips394 (@ DrBilalPhilips), Abdur Raheem Green395 (@AbduraheemGreen), and Abdur-Raheem McCarthy396 (@shmccarthy) this following chapter now presents some ways to map and visualize the network of the three selected preachers. "*Social network analysis and visualization is […] an interdisciplinary field drawing inter alia on contributions from mathematics, computer science, social science, media, communication and cultural studies, and design; its theoretical frameworks and methodologies have been applied to the study of social connections and interactions across offline and online contexts […]*"397 According to Bruns the tracking of hashtags can be considered to be a low-cost alternative to gain access to large amounts of data. Hashtags thereby may refer to certain events, issues or topics. By tracking them one can distinguish participating users, major themes, key links to external sources and derive other facts about the exchange.398 The tracking criteria can contain hashtags or keywords. For doing so Twitter offers two Application Programming Interface (API) elements: the search API, and the streaming API. The first one is used to extract past tweets fitting the criteria within the time window. The second one allows to follow to a continuing stream of new

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393 Bruns: How long is a Tweet? Mapping Dynamic Conversation Networks on Twitter Using Gawk and Gephi, 2012, page 1328.
394 https://twitter.com/DrBilalPhilips
395 https://twitter.com/AbduraheemGreen
396 https://twitter.com/shmccarthy
397 Bruns: How long is a Tweet? Mapping Dynamic Conversation Networks on Twitter Using Gawk and Gephi, 2012, page 1328.
398 Bruns/Stieglitz: Towards more systematic Twitter analysis: metrics for tweeting activities, 2013, page 92.

tweets, which match the search criteria. In 2012, Twitter changed its API approach making it more difficult to openly access data about Twitter posts older than a few days.399 Therefore, the visualization in the following part is going to be restricted within a ten days time frame due to these changes.

Before continuing, it should be pointed out that the visualized data here is heavily dependent on the ability to access Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API) in time and without error, however this reliability is not fully guaranteed.400 The reason why mapping Twitter networks seems still reasonable at the end is merely that online social networks provide a large amount of data, easily extractable by researchers. Moreover, it represents sets of similar offline interactions. Any generalizations from one user set to another are to be rejected. Nevertheless, social network visualization simplifies networks and presents key participants and clusters within the network.401

A complete network analysis on three selected preachers would exhaust the limits of this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis, a small-scale Twitter activity visualization of the three selected preachers had been undertaken, in order to corroborate certain points which had been concluded in the previous chapter. In addition, to this general outlining a hashtag visualization of #halfourdeen and #7gems, both used several times by Bilal, should further show how these hashtags connect with other topics and networks. The selected sample of tweets is limited to ten days, due to reasons pointed out above, namely between April 24, 2016 until May 3, 2016. A more meticulous network analysis would only be possible, if Twitter allows access to a larger amount of data dating back further than just ten days. However, this is not possible without an upgraded more expensive account from Social Network analytics webpages or a specific request to Twitter itself.

The tool used for the following visualizations was SocioViz, which is according to their webpage a "*social media analytics platform powered by Social Network Analysis metrics*".402 It offers its services to social media marketers, digital journalists, but also social scientists. SocioViz. then continues listing: "*Distribution of Tweets in the selected time-frame and the top Hashtags used*", "*the Details of Tweets*", "*the most influential and most active Users*", "*the Network of Users interactions*", and "*the Network of Hashtags co-Presences*". The free version of SocioViz. extracts by default the last 100 tweets within a certain frame, normally this frame is supposed to be one week. The Influencer marketing, "*is a form of marketing that has emerged from a variety of recent practices and studies, in which focus is placed on specific key individuals (or*

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399 Retrieved from: https://dev.twitter.com/overview/terms/agreement-and-policy [last accessed June 5, 2016]

400 Bruns: How long is a Tweet? Mapping Dynamic Conversation Networks on Twitter Using Gawk and Gephi, 2012, page 1328.

401 Bruns: How long is a Tweet? Mapping Dynamic Conversation Networks on Twitter Using Gawk and Gephi, 2012, page 1331.

402 SozioViz.: Retrieved from: http://socioviz.net/SNA/eu/sna/login.jsp [last accessed June 5, 2016], 2014.
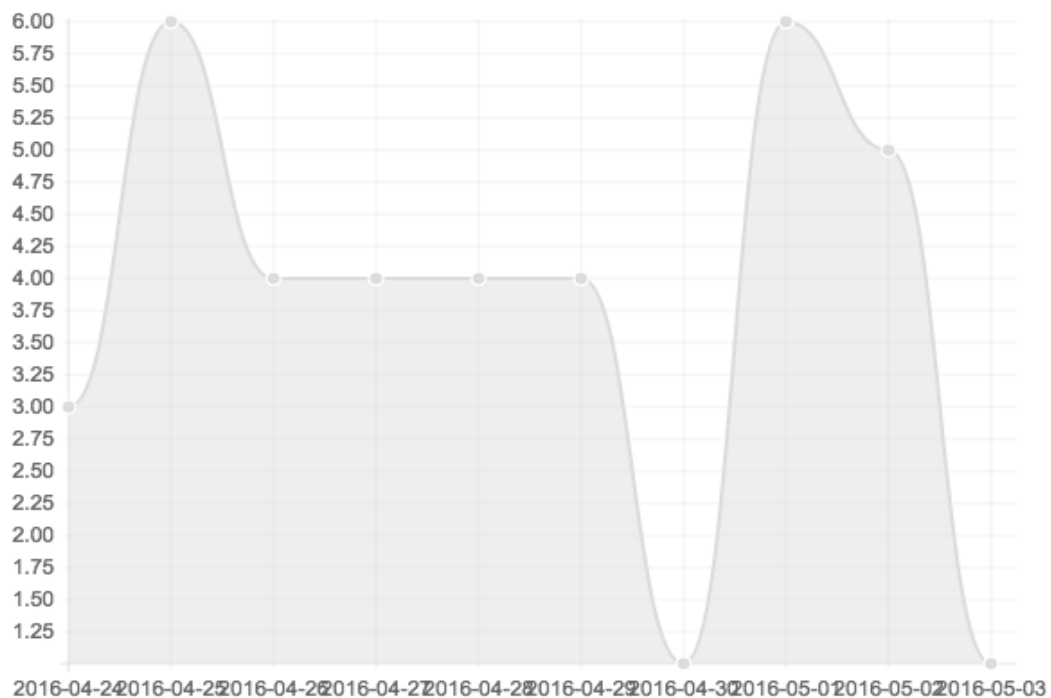
Figure 6.1.: Distribution of Twitter activity of Dr. Bilal Philips. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio. Viz.

types of individual) rather than the target market as a whole".403 The network of users interactions is visualized by a circle, which itself represents one node, and is then connected to another user, if there had been interactions between them, which include retweets or mentions. The size of the nodes proportionally symbolizes the amount of retweets and mentions received, thereby indicating the influence of one circle within a network of conversations. Different colors stand for different communities. The circles representing the network of hashtags co-presences are each connected to another hashtag in case of co-presences with the same tweet. Once more, the different colors represent different clusters of arguments.

The distribution of the total amount of Tweets   within   ten days in between April 24, 2016 and May 3, 2016 gives insight into the Twitter presence of Bilal Philips (@ DrBilalPhilips). Comparatively speaking, we see again that Philips posts a large amount of content, in this sample he posted 38 tweets. However, as table 2 shows he does not frequently use hashtags. The small number of hashtags, namely two (#trustallah twice, and #dua once), (Figure 6.2.) in ten days indicates again that engagement with his followers is not necessarily aimed for. Although, as will be pointed out a bit further down the usage of these specific hashtags actually connects with a very particular audience. All this is symbolized in the network of hashtags co-presences. This assumption is further intensified when looking at the number of mentions or retweets, which were zero in the chosen time frame. These zero engagements also result in the single node, when the network of user interactions (figure 6.3.) is presented.

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403 Wordpress: Retrieved from: https://alessandrozonin.wordpress.com/2015/02/20/socioviz-a-free-social-network-analysis-tool-for-twitter/ [last accessed June 5, 2016], 2016.
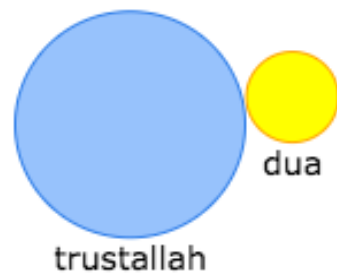
Figure 6.2.: Network of Hashtags co-Presences of Dr. Bilal Philips. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio. Viz.

Figure 6.3.: Network of Users interactions of Dr. Bilal Philips. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.
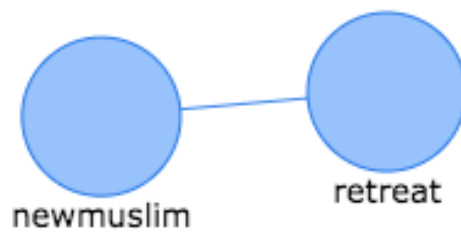
Figure 6.4.: Network of Hashtags co-Presences of Abdur Raheem Green. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.

Figure 6.5.: Network of Users interactions of Abdur Raheem Green. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.

Table 2: Top hashtags used by Philips Bilal (frequency) between (April 24 – May 3, 2016)	
#trustallah	2
#dua	1

Table 3: Top hashtags used by Abdur Raheem Green (frequency) between (April 24 – May 3, 2016)	
#newmuslim	1
#retreat	1

Table 4: Top hashtags used by Ab- dud-Raheem McCarthy (frequency) between (April 24 – May 3, 2016)	
#jaddah	1
#kerry	1
#ireland	1
#sunnahrevival	1
#neighbourhoodcleanup	1
#mondaymotivation	1

Figure 6.6.: Distribution of Twitter activity of Abdur-Raheem McCarthy. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.
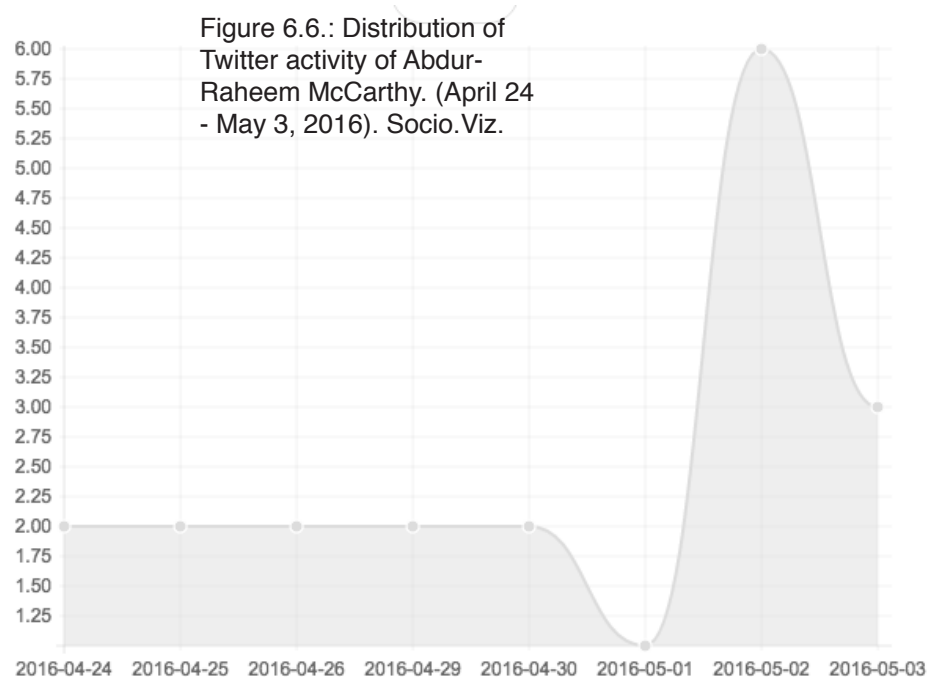
When we now turn to Abdur Raheem Green (@AbduraheemGreen), then we see a similar pattern. All in all he has posted 14 tweets in our sample, using two hashtags in one post (#newmuslim, and #retreat, figure 6.4.). However, none of them have called for any mentions or retweets, nor user interactions (figure 6.5.) The sample of tweets from April 24, 2016 until May 3, 2016 also strengthens the conclusions from the previous manual content analysis on Abdur-Raheem McCarthy (@shmccarthy). Figure 6.6. visualizes the total distribution of his Twitter activity. All in all he has had 20 tweets, using six hashtags, which are listed in table 4. However, as he has used a slightly larger number of hashtags, he has received a significant higher engagement rate with his followers, namely five mentions and retweets (figure 6.7.) The hashtags he has used can be summed up into four differing groups as shown in figure 6.8.

The visualization of the sampled tweets from ten days within April 24 to May 3, 2016, strengthen my assumptions from the end of the previous chapter and show at the same time how the three selected scholars interact or do not engage with their followers.

This last part now shows how the two most used hashtags by Philips have been used in the time frame between April 24, 2016 until May 3, 2016. These two hashtag were #7gems and #HalfOurDeen. However, #7gems has not been used by anyone in the examined time frame, while the visualizing of #HalfOurDeen shows us how it is part of a larger network and how Philips connected his posts with. In the sampled set the hashtag #HalfOurDeen has occurred 99 times (figure 6.9) being combined with three other hashtags (table 5) combining a network of 90 people. The most prominent user of this network is "babaali"[404] (@babaali) having more than 111.000 followers. Figure 6.10. presents how these networks of hashtags co-presences are set together and figure 6.11., 6.12., and 6.13. show the complete network of user interactions surrounding #HalfOurDeen. These figures also show how Dr. Bilal Philips is connected to "babaali" (@babaali), namely via the official account of the Islamic Online University (@mediaiou).[405] "babaali" (@babaali) and the Islamic Online University (@mediaiou)

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404 https://twitter.com/babaali [last accessed June 5, 2016]
405 https://twitter.com/mediaiou [last accessed June 5, 2016]

are precisely the two most influential key accounts as can be seen in figures 6.12 and 6.13. The two networks are connected via one user Adewale Adedokun (@ this_is_yuusuf).406 In short, Adewale Adedokun (@this_is_yuusuf) hereby connects two key individuals both using the same hashtag and probably aiming to reach the same audience. Concluding on this, one can easily understand why Philips uses this particular hashtag. First and foremost, as Philips uses his Twitter account to a large extant to promote the Islamic Online University the hashtag #HalfOurDeen links his account to the same hashtag thread as the IOU. More importantly, by using this hashtag he links his and the IOU's accounts to an even larger network, namely the one of babaali" (@babaali), who had at the time this thesis has being written had more than 111.000 followers.407 By doing so Philips creates more content visibility and visibility for himself. All this indicates that he does indeed know how to run and use social media networks, however solely -as it seems- for promotional purposes.

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406 https://twitter.com/this_is_yuusuf [last accessed June 5, 2016]
407 https://twitter.com/babaali [last accessed June 5, 2016]
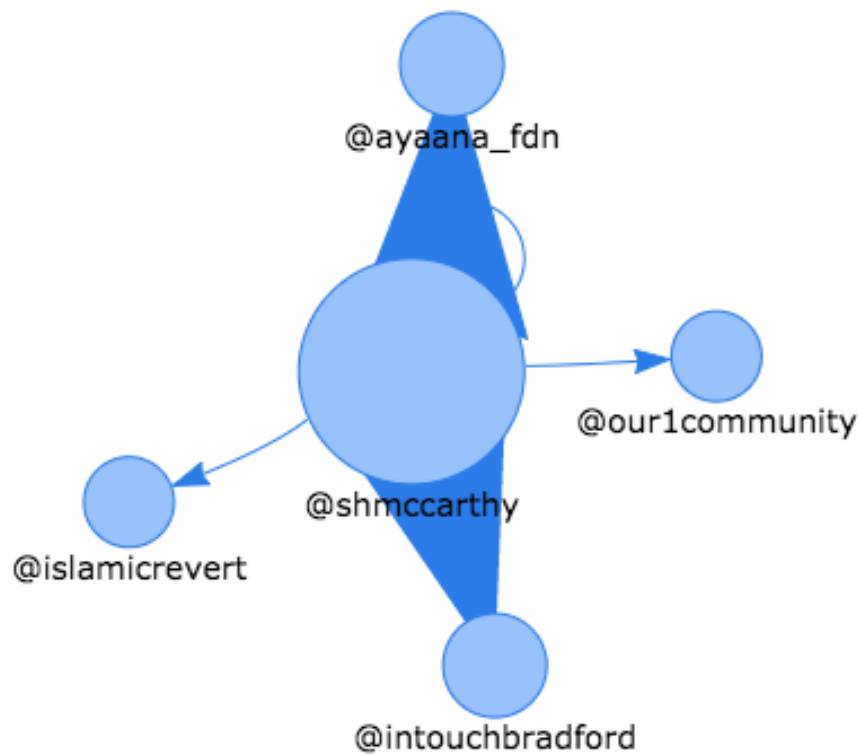
Figure 6.7.: Network of Users interactions of Abdur-Raheem McCarthy. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio. Viz.

Figure 6.8.: Network of Hashtags co-Presences of Abdur-Raheem McCarthy. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.

Figure 6.9.: Distribution of Twitter activity of #HalfOurDeen. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.
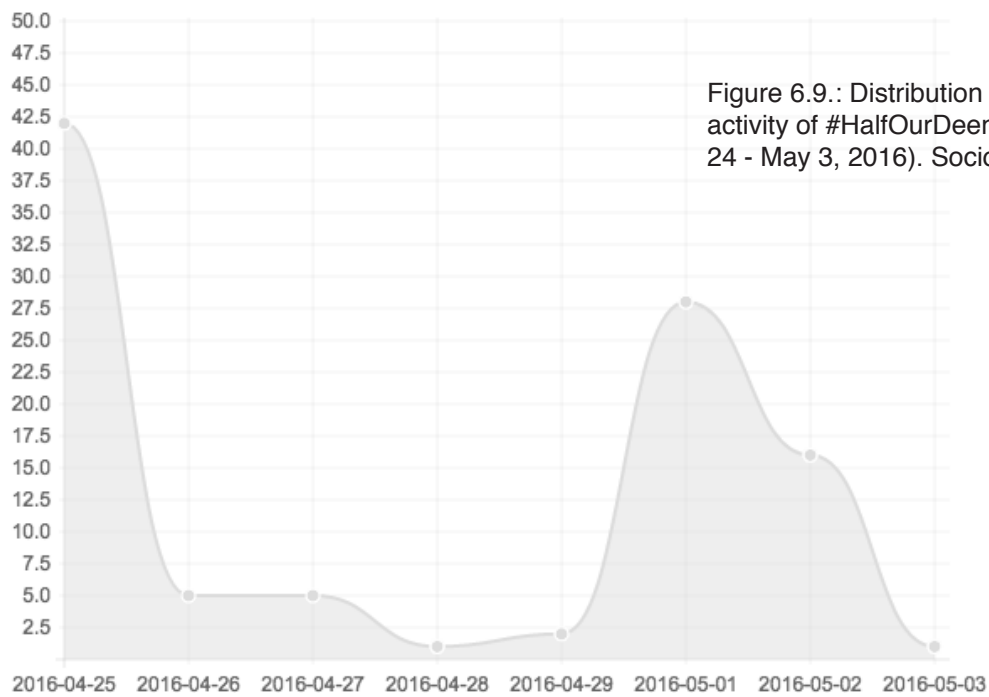
Table 5: Top hashtags (frequency) between (April 24 – May 3, 2016)	
#halfourdeen	99
#hodmarriageadvice	11
#hoddoodle	3
#babaali	1
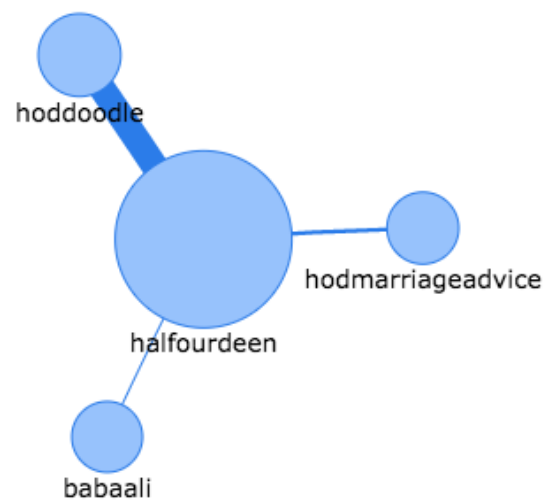
Figure 6.10.: Hashtag Co-Presence of #HalfOurDeen. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.

Figure 6.11.: Complete Network Visualization of #HalfOurDeen. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.

Figure 6.12.: Network Visualization of "babaali" (@ babaali) using the hashtag #HalfOurDeen. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.
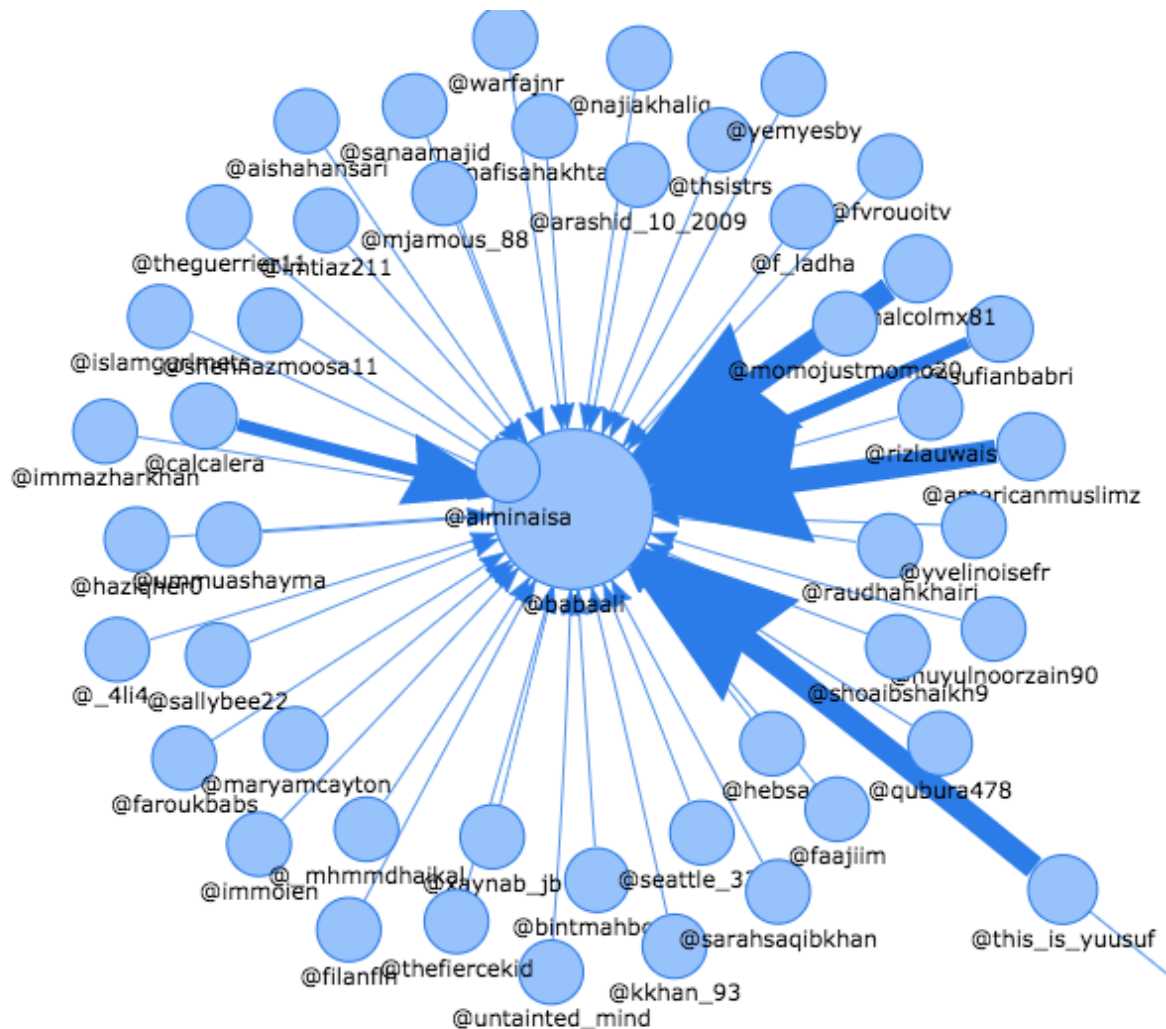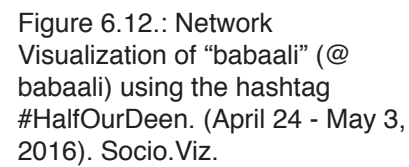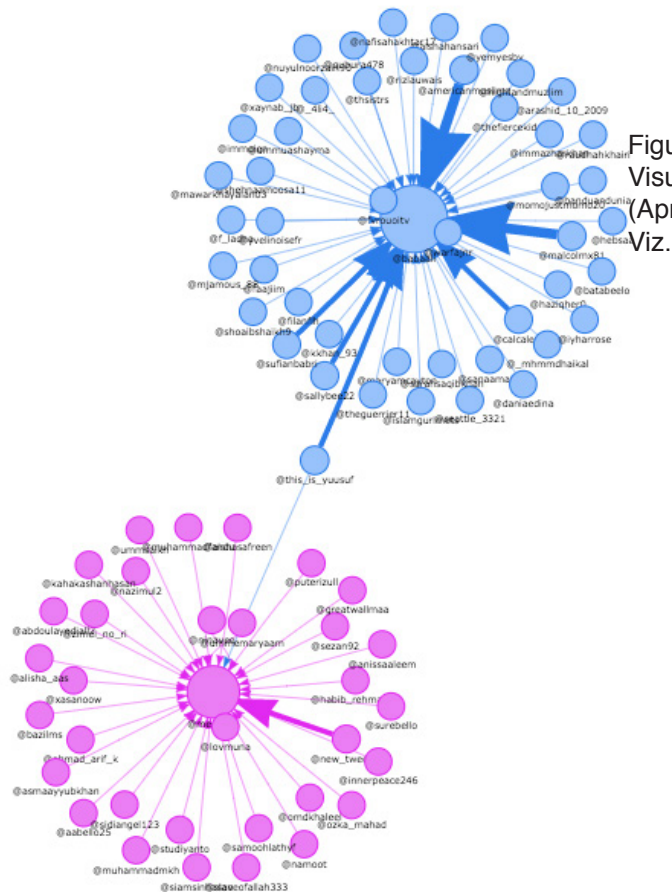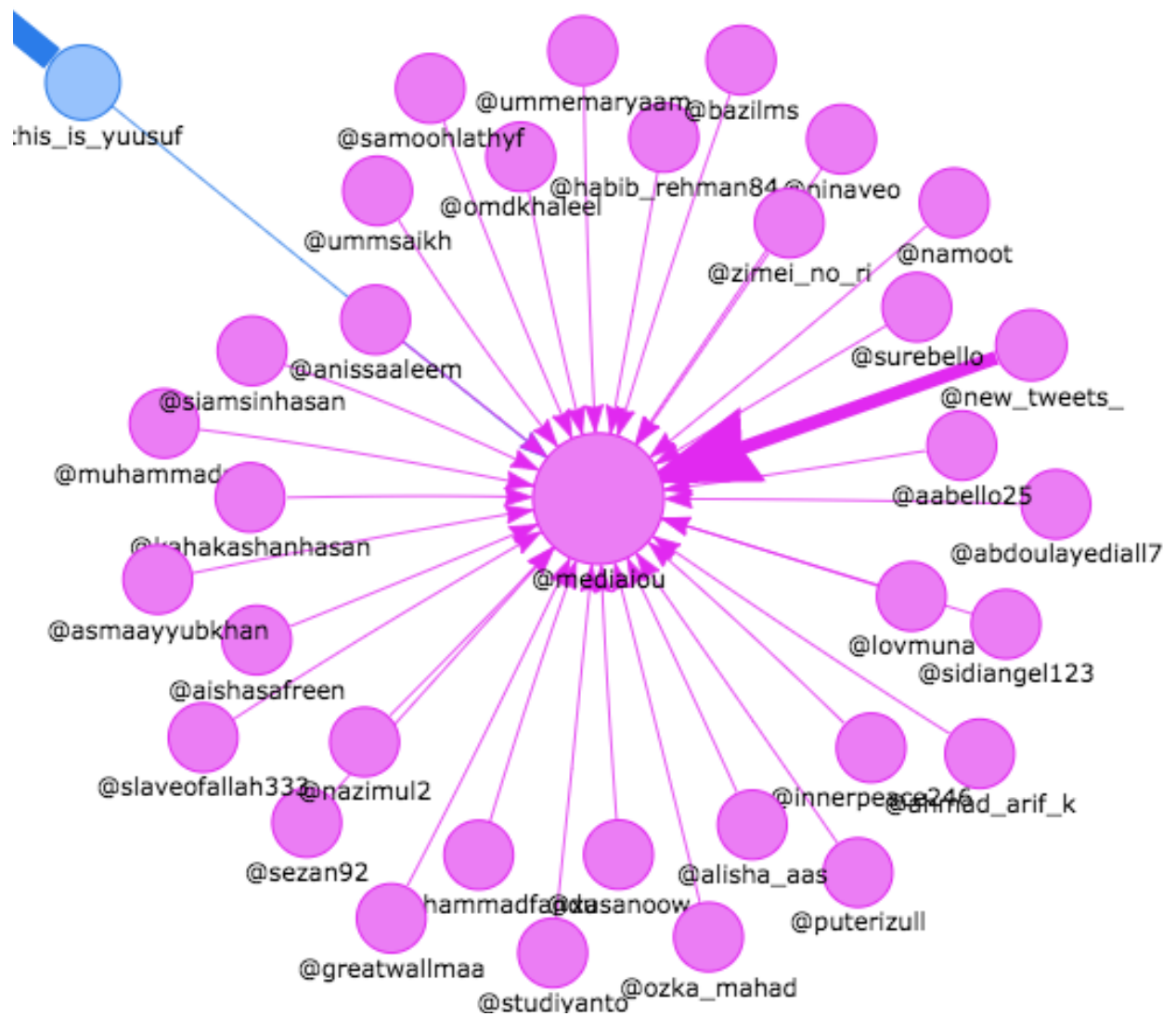
Figure 6.13.: Network Visualization of " Islamic Online University " (@mediaiou) using the hashtag #HalfOurDeen. (April 24 - May 3, 2016). Socio.Viz.

Conclusion & Final Remarks

"Twitter is used for purposes of recruitment and indoctrination, as well as to build a transnational community of violent extremism. […] Twitter is also used to drive traffic to other social media platforms[408]**."**

From the beginning of this thesis on, it seemed important to me to prolong my argumentation step by step, meaning that a reasonable and comprehensible slowly progressing structure was needed to answer all my research questions. When talking about religion and society, it is always crucial to relate to the societal structure, that is why I began this thesis by outlining the background of Muslim history and its sectarian divisions. It appeared relevant to me to clearly show that Islamic sectarian divisions are based on the question of succession and on the interpretation of sources. As the latter had been the reason for jurist-theologians to derive their authority from demanding loyalty and obedience from all of its believers. The second chapter clearly showed that law and religion are both social systems embedded into society. Both, although, slowly are able to revive themselves. This steady change is caused by the human agency. The human agency causes this shift in both Islam as a religion by its community of believers, the "*umma*", and religious law as it is interpreted by jurist-theologians. It is also the religious agency which is in charge of the religious representation. The authoritative character of Muslim jurist-theologians is based on their access to information, aka the interpretation of the sources. However, as the "*umma*" is part of society, which is currently undergoing tremendous change, chapter three introduced the concept of the Network Society and with it how Muslims have used the Internet in the early years of widespread consumer Internet use. The assumption that religious communities were static, was one of the reasons why Manuel Castells had excluded religion from the concept of the Network Society. This seems to be a fallacy, because technology is as much part of society as religion or law is. The tools given by new media lead to a de-linking of members of communities and to a virtualization of social institutions. As technologization continues, the Internet offers a global virtual space with the possibility to connect all people sooner or later, in other words having the chance to create a virtual space for a "*umma*" to exchange and engage with each other. For Islam this means that the community is currently in a process of re-imagining itself, giving rise to alternative networks, challenging the established ideas and concepts. That is the point were extremist groups enter the stage.

Today's Network Society offers extremist groups to disentangle themselves from

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408 Klausen: Tweeting the Jihad, 2015, page 17 – 18.

their dependency on classical media, such as al-Qaeda did when they started using social media rather than al-Jazeera. The success of ISIS, which currently holds a territory of the size of Belgium, is partially based on their combat, but also on their social media usage to attract an influx of fighters from all around the globe. ISIS' use of social media channels and their propaganda network based on a dispersed networks of contributers are an indicator for the Muslim community being embedded into the Network Society. In short, ISIS spreads its ideology through a network of social media channels and nodes challenging authorities. By doing so they form a loose network of "*hubs*" which can best be described as "*media mujahideen*". This way audience and content producer merges, as the production, distribution and dispersal of digital content combines an emphasis on information-age technology and connects physical and Internet combat. Moreover, it helps creating and fostering a community and communal cohesion. ISIS' call for fulfilling the duty to join the Caliphate waging jihad already subtly allows hints about its ideological background. That is why chapter four laid out the ideological basis of ISIS, namely the origins of Salafism and its various branches. As one of the three branches clearly favors jihad as a tool achieving their goal and as Salafism generally treats jihad as one of the duties all Muslims should fulill, according to one of their main ideological source sIbn Taymiyya, one can clearly see where ISIS derives its ideological roots from, namely jihadi Salafism. Although, neither ISIS nor jihadi Salafism represent a significant number of believers in comparison to the total amount of Muslims living on this planet. Moreover, one can argue that neither ISIS nor Salafism present a credible version of Islam, they nevertheless are embedded within a larger framework, namely Islam. As the lines between the three puritan, political and jihadi Salafism are very blurry, they nevertheless have a common tendency with ISIS picking and choosing what sources they do accept to be valid within their worldview and which are not. This becomes particularly relevant for jihadi Salafists, as over the centuries multiple jurist-theologians pointed out the two aspects of jihad, the "*greater*" and "*lesser*" jihad. However, this seems to be ignored by ISIS. The various branches of Salafism are also the connecting dot between ISIS and the examined Muslim scholars in chapter five.

It is difficult to assess any of the three selected preachers a particular Salafi ideology, however, to use jihadi vocabulary: if ISIS represents jihad by the sword, then the three men represent jihad by the tongue. This is merely because the content they tweet does not promote combative jihad, but as their tweets are mostly offering guidance and promotion for seminars and their work, they in the end contribute to mission and to the belief set of Salafism. In chapter six, the conclusions regarding the usage of networks and hashtags were furthered strengthened by the visualization of the foregoing network analysis.

Regarding the answers to my research questions, I come to the following conclusion, although ISIS actively seeks engagement with its followers as this is one

of the sources for its network of hubs. Never mind the fact that scholars attribute ISIS a very one-sided way of using its social media channels and Twitter, daesh does actively engage with its followers and seek engagement for the purpose of conversion and joining jihad, which the selected preachers do not. On the contrary, the examined preachers use Twitter rather one-dimensionally, namely for mostly self-promoting or promoting religious purposes, as indicated by guidance offering posts and tweets marketing their lectures, seminars or the Islamic Online University. In this sense, the selected scholars do fully use the possibilities web 2.0 offers and with it the changes that come to speak to a community: imagery, abbreviations, URL shorteners, cross network linking. All in all, this indicates that they do know and understand how to use social media tools. However, as they are not dependent on the active engagement, commenting and sharing of content from their followers they do not take part in it. As already, pointed out before, the social media presence of the three men resembles jihad by tongue meaning that they use their Twitter accounts as missionary tools.

When looking at research done on the Twitter accounts of ISIS fighters one can see similar results. Although, the names given to the categories in this thesis have been different than Klausen and his team did in their analysis1one can see that both Klausen's and this analysis come to similar results. Both ISIS, as well as the examined preachers use Twitter to offer religious guidance or religious advice. When McCarthy posts about his private life and his leisure preferences, or Green posts videos about cooking for good husbands to surprise their wives, its underlying purpose is not much different from ISIS fighters posting about their daily lives from the Caliphate. Same can be said about ISIS fighters reporting form the battlefield, which is nonetheless their way of "*promotional*" content, which the preachers do by marketing their events. When Philips posts a picture advertising the Islamic Online University it is comparable to ISIS posting graphic pictures from the front, advertising their interpretation of the Qur'an. Both advertising themselves and their ideas, instead of fully exploiting the potential of social media. ISIS fighters then comment on the pictures they have posted and answer questions coming from their community, Philips does not.

However, the main difference lies in the active engagement with their followers. ISIS uses social media channels and specifically Twitter to seek engagement with its community. Creating, editing and sharing content helps shaping a communal sense and a feeling of togetherness, while at the same time questions established authorities as ISIS controls the distribution of information this way. The question of actively seeking engagement with their followers, remains quite vague. What can be said, however, is that yes, both ISIS and the examined scholars do use social media in similar ways, although the scholars do not show many signs of seeking active engagement with their community, but the purpose is the same: promotion of their belief. As the promotion and in a broader sense conversion is the purpose of the Twitter presence, it makes sense that notions such as jihad per se are not challenged or questioned, neither is

the role of marriage, as Philips has promoted the hashtag #HalfOurDean connecting him with an ever larger community via the Network Society . On the contrary by using social media the preachers can connect with and approach other likeminded people without being instantly challenged for their stances. Indeed, when looking at ISIS one should reconsider Manuel Castells exclusion of religions form his concept of the Network Society.

Similarly, to Bunt, who argued against a virtual "umma" already existing, I would disagree with both scholars, because particularly the tools which accompanied web 2.0 and the mobile use of the Internet absorb people into a structure based on networks rather than hierarchies. Following Castells' definition of a networked society, then ISIS should be seen as an alternative network, which cause change within an established system. If considering ISIS as part of the networked society, then question arise whether the examined scholars could be seen part of it as well. Although, they fall in line with Castells' definition of an alternative network, I would distance myself from saying that they have fully acquired the network based society. This is because their lack of engagement with their followers hints that they use social media and the internet rather vertically than horizontally, meaning that they are not completely integrated into the networked society.

To recall the studies of the social shaping of technology, one can say that depending on the motives of the three men, they have shaped the technology towards their usage and purpose, but one can argue against the domestication of Twitter into their lives. Finally, I conclude by highlighting again, although the here examined preachers do not advocate combative jihad, like ISIS does. However, as both ISIS and the three scholars have the same ideological foundation, namely Salafism, the ways the three men use Twitter can be seen as a non-combative form of jihad, which Muslim scholars gave the name "*greater*" jihad, namely by tongue.

Future work

"Liking becomes the new demonstrating. For the users who vote by liking or disliking posts within a topic, the 'liking' becomes a new way of virtually demonstrating and supporting a message they align with, giving it more visibility in the public space."[409]

In this last part, I want to end with some final remarks about possible future works on this topic and some final additions. As two parts of this thesis, namely chapters V. and VI. have solely dealt with the extraction of data on a very small scale, potential future work might include a larger set of data. This can be comprised of datasets from more than three accounts; including preachers who use other languages than English, for instance predominantly Arabic or another language such as French. Such an analysis would give a broader insight into the ways Twitter is used by contemporary preachers of different regions using various languages. For instance could juxtaposing preachers using one language to preachers using another language be also imaginable, giving insight into the ways language is used to frame the purpose of promotion. As this thesis solely dealt with Salafi ideology, one could also look into other fractions of the Muslim community, for instance from the Indo-Pacific region, e.g. Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim country in the world. Another work might also include a more in depth analysis of the audience of selected preachers, offering more information about the network they belong to, such an analysis can also include geographic mapping of the audience. Interestingly would also be how the same content is framed on different social media platforms by preachers, but also by ISIS.

Technology keeps constantly changing and internet based media houses, such as vox.com already use liking and disliking in order to up/down vote content. Facebook, just recently introduced more emojis in addition to the like button, expressing more emotions on the platform. All this adds more data to our already existing virtual footprint, while platforms and technology keeps changing. However, this gives a small glimpse into what could be possible in the near future. What I mean by this is simply that all current large social media platforms underly the market system, meaning that they aim to make some kind of profit. Though, as Internet mobile usage keeps rising connecting more and more people with less and less prerequisites a social media platform for globally dispersed communities such as religious communities seems more plausible. Such a platform should not underly the market rules, thus offering direct communication and engagement by using tools which are already present in

409 Santasalo: Democratizing online political discussion, 2016, page

todays social media networks. This platform could then be used for discussions and debates, actively seeking engagement across the various sectarian lines and in order to make this network appealing for as many believers as possible, it should be designed first and foremost for mobile device usage. Laying out such a platform would only be possible in an interdisciplinary team with time and money.

Social Media has an enormous power, as literally anyone having access to it has the power to distribute information and connect with almost every person on this planet. Especially, with the rising mobile internet use more and more people are becoming part of these networks, creating something unique. As shown in this thesis, ISIS has understood that social media liberates one from the dependency on conventional media, physical borders and institutions. Social Media empowers one to share information, while at the same time being able to share critical thoughts on established ideas and concepts.

To conclude, due to collective learning and the continuous rising connectivity one might argue that we have seen more change in the last century than in the previous 250.000 years. We are still at the very beginning of this new era, in which no one knows how society will change, though unquestionably society and with it all included elements such as religion are somehow going to change.

Acknowledgments

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Figures

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Credits

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Bird Gracelle Mesin

Appendix A

Following the assumption that religion is carried out by the human agency, and is as well part of society as law or technology, this thesis tries to show that the here examined Muslim preachers use their official Twitter accounts similarly to the Islamic State. The missing link connecting both, the selected Muslim scholars and the Islamic State, is their underlying ideology, namely Salafism. Even though, the lines in between the several branches are very fluid, one can distinguish three main arms: the puritan, political and jihadi Salafism. When looking closer at Islam's notion of jihad, one can see that there is jihad by the sword, referring to combative actions, and the jihad by heart, mouth and hand, which some Muslim jurist-theologians have summed up as the "greater" jihad. This work argues that if the Islamic State propagates jihad by sword on social media, then the examined Muslim preachers use their social media presence to pursue jihad by mouth using similar content patterns as Daesh.

Appendix B

Unter der Annahme, dass Religion von der menschlichen „agency" getragen wird und sowohl Technologie, als auch Recht und Religion Teil der Gesellschaft sind, versucht die vorliegende Arbeit zu zeigen, dass muslimische Prediger ihre offiziellen Twitterkanäle in ähnlicher Art und Weise nutzen, wie der Islamische Staat. Das beide verbindende Glied ist ihre ideologische Basis, nämlich der Salafismus, eine im extremen Spektrum des Islams angesiedelte Ideologie. Obwohl die unterschiedlichen Richtungen des Salafismus sehr fließende Trennlinien haben, kann man trotzdem drei Zweige unterscheiden: puristisch, politisch und dschihadistisch.

Eine genauere Betrachtung der islamischen Idee des Dschihads lässt sich erkennen, dass es neben dem Dschihad des Schwertes, welcher die gewaltvolle kriegerische Auseinandersetzung beschreibt, auch jenes des Mundes und der Zunge gibt, welche klassische muslimische Gelehrte als die friedlicheren Alternativen hervorheben. Hier versucht nun die vorliegende Arbeit zu zeigen, dass wenn der Islamische Staat den Dschihad des Schwertes auf sozialen Medien propagiert, so nutzen die ausgewählten Salafistischen Prediger ihren Auftritt auf Twitter, um den Dschihad der Zunge zu betreiben.