Jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands

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Jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands

A description based on closed criminal investigations

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Foreword

Empirical research into jihadi terrorism is extremely scarce. Although significant scientific research into jihadi terrorism has been conducted, and many publications on this subject have appeared in the last few years, the lack of empirical data in this area remains critical. As a result, various theories have been formulated on the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism at different levels, but these have provided very little insight into their explanatory power. As Van der Pligt and Koomen (2009) state in a recent publication: 'This lack of significant research allows a large freedom of conjecture. Unhindered by stubborn empiricism, many approaches and theories can be constructed, which are consequently less convincing.'
The purpose of this report is not to explain the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism. The major purpose of this project is to describe how this phenomenon manifested itself in the Netherlands, during the period between 2001 and 2005, by analysing actual cases that were investigated by the police during this period. To this end, the researchers systematically analysed twelve investigations into jihadi activities carried out during the period studied.

These methods not only produce new insights, but also raise new methodological questions. Is it possible to describe this phenomenon adequately if researchers can only focus on the groups, activities, and persons investigated by the police in the period studied? What are the consequences for the description of this phenomenon if researchers use information that was collected by the police for the purpose of prosecution? In short, how does the perspective of the police influence the picture outlined in this report?
For the time being, we cannot provide the answers to these questions because there is too little *other* empirical material available with which the findings from this report could be compared. This fact emphasises the additional significance of the description presented here. The systematic analysis of information from police files provides a unique view of the world of jihadism and makes a valuable contribution to the development of our empirical knowledge in this area. This empirical knowledge is of crucial importance: not only to formulate and test scientific theories, but also to address the phenomenon concerned.

This report is an integral translation of the report *Jihadistisch terrorisme in Nederland* which was published in the WODC-series Onderzoek en beleid (no. 281) in 2009.

Prof. dr. Frans Leeuw
Director, Research and Documentation Centre (WODC)

Words of gratitude

This study is based on the knowledge gathered by the police and the Public Prosecution Service during criminal investigations into jihadi activities. We would like, at this point, to express our gratitude to the investigating officers and public prosecutors who were willing to share this knowledge with us. They informed us as openly as possible about the selected cases; provided access to investigation files; familiarised us with these files; indicated additional sources of information; tolerated our presence in their offices and at their desks; and commented on our analyses. Without their generous cooperation, this project would not have been possible.

In addition, we are very grateful to the members of the Advisory Board (see Appendix 1) for the stimulating and constructive way in which they advised us during this study. We would like to thank the agency commissioning the research – the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism – for the confidence placed in us.
Finally, we want to thank our colleagues Edward Kleemans, Renée van der Hulst, Casper van Nassau, and Frans Leeuw for their involvement in this research and for the care they took in reviewing the draft texts. With their critical remarks they contributed significantly to this report.

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Abbreviations

AIVD	General Intelligence and Security Service
ANP	Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (Netherlands National News Agency)
CSN	Citizen Service Number
BVD	Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst (National Security Service)
EIJ	Egyptian Islamic Jihad
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom)
EU	European Union
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut
GAI	Al Gama'a al Islamiyya (The Islamic Group)
GIA	Groupe Islamique Armée
GICM	Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain
GICT	Groupe Islamique Combattant Tunesien
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat
HBO	Hoger Beroepsonderwijs (Higher Vocational Education)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IVTS	Informal Value Transfer Systems
KLPD	Korps Landelijke Politiediensten (National Police Services Agency)
MBO	Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (Upper Secondary Vocational Education)
MSN	Microsoft Network
NCTb	Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding (National Coordinator for Counterterrorism)
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
RaRa	Revolutionaire Anti-Racistische Actie (Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action)
ROC	Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum (Regional Training Centre)
VMBO	Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (Pre-vocational Secondary Education)
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
US	United States
WODC	Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek en Documentatiecentrum (Research and Documentation Centre)
WTC	World Trade Center

Summary

What is the nature of jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 21st century, if we base our analysis on information about this phenomenon that has been collected by the police? That is the core question of this study. In order to increase the understanding of jihadi terrorism, the knowledge collected by the police during criminal investigations into jihadi activities has been analysed systematically. When we refer to jihadi activities, we mean activities which are aimed at making a contribution to the armed struggle being conducted by radical islamists against the West and against other perceived enemies of Islam. For the purpose of this project, we analysed a total of twelve (large-scale) criminal investigations conducted in the Netherlands between July 2001 and July 2005. In doing so, we have sketched the portrait of an era. The most recent criminal investigation we analysed was conducted in the spring of 2005. We cannot make any projection about how the phenomenon of jihadism may have since changed under the influence of national or international developments.

We have based our research on police files. This entails considerable restrictions. Firstly, the police are not aware of all jihadi activities nor do they initiate criminal investigations into all jihadi activities of which they are aware. Secondly, we only selected a portion of the cases investigated during the period studied. This selection may have influenced our findings. Thirdly, we have based our research on the information collected by investigation teams who focused on reconstructing terrorist crimes and submitting these to the court, substantiated by evidence. This focus of the investigation teams, their investigation hypotheses and the related selection and interpretation of information have also influenced our perception. The findings presented below must be seen in this light.

In order to obtain an objective analysis of the available investigation material, but also because different criminal investigations into jihadi activities are often interrelated, we considered the selected investigation material *in its entirety*, and chose to rely less on the structures of the separate criminal investigations. The *raw* empirical material was subsequently restructured, so that groups of cooperating persons and joint activities could be examined together. In analysing this material, we focused on three dimensions: (1) jihadi cooperations;[1] (2) the activities carried out within these cooperations, and (3) the jihadi actors.

This summary provides a brief overview of the most important research findings. In the final chapter of this report, the findings are discussed together from a more theoretical perspective.

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1   We use the term cooperation to refer to cooperating actors or cooperating groups of actors.

Jihadi cooperations

The jihadi cooperations, as they emerge from the aggregate of investigation data that we analysed, may be characterised on the basis of *largely similar features*. Persons who are the driving force behind these cooperations are inspired by a Salafist-jihadi body of thought aimed at violence with worldwide pretensions. They propagate this body of thought and implement it through extremely diverse activities. In spite of differences in priority, they generally perform these activities both at home and abroad.

Although there are also persons involved in these cooperations who only make indirect contributions or do so with less ideological enthusiasm, in this report we refer to all persons involved as jihadi *actors*. Without the opportunist or less conscious participation of some of these actors, the cooperations would – after all – function differently. The composition of these groups is mixed, partly because persons with previous criminal convictions, converts, and sympathisers become involved in jihadi cooperations, in addition to persons with very diverse jihadi or other backgrounds. Such heterogeneity also applies to the social and cultural features of these groups. Within all the jihadi cooperations examined, the participating actors have different national and geographical roots. They speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. In addition to this, we found that in all cooperations, persons from different age categories participate together in the activities, and in some groups both men and women are active. The cooperations only appear to be homogeneous in terms of religion: nearly all of the actors base their religious convictions on the Sunni movement within Islam.

The common religion is just one binding factor that explains why specific people are attracted to jihadi cooperations. In particular, the ideology as propagated by the vanguard is an important binding factor. The majority of actors, however, seem to be attracted mainly by one or more *aspects* of this ideology, such as the theme of worldwide injustice against Muslims, rebellion against existing social systems, or rigid guidelines for a pure existence. Some actors also join the jihadi cooperations primarily because these groups include people who may provide essential daily necessities. Other binding factors are joint activities, social advantages, but also role models. After all, role models and other people who give direction to the actors can guarantee social and ideological stability and cohesion within jihadi groups. In this respect, they possess 'binding qualities' as well. The qualities that give these persons a form of power and authority often include religious and ideological expertise, life experience or experience in combat, and the fact that they have the power to both reward and punish other people.

Several structural characteristics of jihadi cooperations ensure solid connections among the actors individually and the groups or clusters of actors as a whole. Because they share long-lasting social foundations (relationships based on mutual trust), real and virtual meeting places, and key figures, these

cooperations not only exhibit solid internal cohesion, but are also dynami-
cally *interrelated*. As a result of this, they – as groups or clusters – are part of a
broader international jihadi movement.

Our analysis reveals that the presence of persons who possess an ideological
or militant frame of reference based on experiences in the Islamic world is
– or was – crucial to the formation or consolidation of all jihadi cooperations
we studied. These '*heartland-oriented*' actors mobilise and/or attract people.
In a Western context, they have a relatively strong ability to 'sell' a coherent
jihadi narrative. Due to their specific qualities, contacts and experiences
– which are beneficial to their credibility and social status – they often serve
as examples or role models to others. Complex interactions between these
persons on the one hand and receptive persons on the other hand – in partic-
ular illegal foreigners and converts, and Muslims who grew up or were educa-
ted locally – give crucial momentum to radicalisation processes.

Interactions of this kind ensure that jihadi groups can function, in spite of the
absence of any formal hierarchical structures. Although one cooperation may
have a greater degree of organisational substance than the other, the rela-
tionships are always informal, fluid and strongly decentralised, whereby
group members enjoy a relatively large degree of freedom to improvise when
conducting various tasks. The cooperations are never strictly organised in a
vertical, hierarchical manner. We found linked series of social connections
created by informal *dependence-receptivity relationships*. Actors who are
dependent on the commitment and capacities of others often give direction
to persons who are receptive to them. Such relationships have a relative
nature, for guiding actors often appear to be receptive themselves to the
direction of other actors at home and abroad who take advantage of their
commitment.

Activities

The criminal investigations we analysed show that actors in the Netherlands
develop extremely various activities. Almost without exception, these activi-
ties show how strongly the jihadi cooperations we studied were interwoven
with international jihadi networks. In this context, it was revealed again and
again that the actors – both at home and abroad – are very mobile, and
appear to prefer face-to-face contacts for coordination and exchange of
information rather than communication at a distance (Internet and tele-
phone). We can classify their activities by type.

With respect to activities aimed at converting, moulding, teaching and train-
ing people, there generally is an interaction between mobilisation and self-
selection. In other words: jihadi role models seek receptive persons, but they
are also often sought out at the same time.

In the groups and networks we studied, the actors who actually intend to commit attacks, and who perform preparatory acts, are often inspired by role models and Al Qaedan views, but they usually act relatively independently and with much improvisation. In this context, they frequently seem to act in an opportunity-based manner, and seem to make no fundamental distinction between national or international targets. If actors we studied utter threats to persons or organisations, these threats are very seldom made in the public domain, and their main objective seems to be to incite provocation and agitation among members of the jihadi clusters.

Many of the numerous acts with which actors support jihadi core activities are criminal in nature: forgery of documents, document fraud, burglary and robbery and – to a lesser degree – drugs trafficking and production, and credit card fraud. They also facilitate activities by raising funds or by providing accommodation to extremist brothers. Money and goods (such as stolen passports) are often exchanged personally or using couriers. To be able to travel, actors frequently use stolen public transport passes and passports. This particularly applies to illegal actors. The facilitation of travel movements appears to be a business in itself within the jihadi movement.

Meanwhile, jihadis are aware that they may be under surveillance. Their activities in the area of shielding and protecting themselves vary. According to the police, these actors are also often well informed of the way in which the investigation services operate. This may complicate police work. As most contacts and appointments between jihadis occur face-to-face, it is difficult for investigation and security services to monitor the activities of these actors at a distance.

Finally, the investigation material can teach us something about the way in which jihadi activities are embedded in the daily lives of the actors. In particular, this material provides an insight into the places where jihadi actors usually manifest themselves and where they meet others. The most characteristic meeting places include call shops, Internet cafes, asylum seekers centres, prisons, and Islamic centres.

Actors

In the twelve criminal investigations we examined, a total of 113 different actors emerge who had been active on Dutch soil during the period studied. In this population of actors we found *people with various life stories and significantly different backgrounds and motives.* Although it is not possible to identify clear terrorist profiles, four conspicuous groups of persons emerged, to which similar circumstances and related motivations may be applicable. Firstly, *illegal immigrants* are amply represented in all jihadi cooperations. Jihadi groups may provide illegal immigrants with essential necessities of life or other needs, such as accommodation, forged or genuine documents,

employment, social assistance, respect, social status and a purpose in life. Secondly, many of the actors participating in the population we analysed were *former or current addicts, and people with criminal records*, who have given their lives a new direction by embracing jihadism and the strong and clear Salafist doctrine which is regarded as pure. Thirdly, the jihadi groups are attractive to the category of individuals who are '*seekers*' with existential or identity questions, because these jihadi groups meet their personal desires to find meaning in life, or provide them with social ties, a sense of structure in daily life, and a positive self-image. And, fourthly, we distinguish *idealists and political activists*, for whom social discontent is the most important motivation for their involvement in the international jihadi movement.

In conclusion

All in all, our findings show the complexity and ambiguity, in particular, in which the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism presented itself in the Netherlands in the period studied. We are dealing with extremely fluid and informal cooperations, which are part of a broader movement by virtue of their mutual and transnational interrelatedness as decentralised groups. In addition, the jihadi cooperations often develop a large variety of activities that are spread over a large area, whereby the target of such activities – and thus the related threat – is sometimes only identified in retrospect. Where direct preparatory acts for attacks may set alarm bells ringing, the broad jihadi movement can be supported and preserved by more subtle activities, such as raising funds, document fraud or other forms of facilitating crimes. Jihadi activities aimed at providing cover are often as varied as the other activities, and are performed systematically.

At an individual level, as well, the situation appears to be complex. The jihadi cooperations we examined derive their capacities from people with extremely divergent backgrounds, origins, ages and motives. Because of their rather mixed and variable socio-cultural compositions, the jihadi communities are hard to characterise. Likewise, it is not possible to provide clear risk profiles of jihadi individuals.

Jihadi terrorism is a complex phenomenon. Researchers who have the relative luxury of analysing this phenomenon in detail and in retrospect have an easier job than authorities and organisations who have to combat terrorism as it takes place. This situation, however, makes the findings described in this report even more valuable. Knowledge and understanding of the nature of jihadi terrorism are, after all, necessary for developing and testing scientific theories in this field, as well as for developing practical ways to tackle this phenomenon.

1 Introduction

In the period between September 2001 and December 2005, more than a hundred people were arrested in the Netherlands because they were suspected of activities related to jihadi terrorism. All these persons were – for a shorter or longer period – the subjects of criminal investigations. So far, our knowledge about who these people are, what they did, and what purpose they wanted to achieve with their activities has mainly been based on reports in the media. Although journalists often have access to valuable information – and in exceptional cases even have access to parts of police files – so far no systematic analysis has been published regarding these suspects and their activities based on the information that was collected during criminal investigations. The purpose of this research is to increase our understanding of the nature of jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands by analysing this information systematically.

Terrorism is a phenomenon that has always existed (see also Duyvesteyn & De Graaf, 2007). It is a tool that has been used by a wide variety of groups to achieve political or social aims. Through the use of violent actions that create chaos, confusion, and fear, these groups have tried to disrupt the existing social life and the existing political stability of societies, and to force the desired change to occur. Since the nineteen seventies, on average ten terrorist or violent political incidents have taken place in the Netherlands in each decade.[2] The politics-driven taking of hostages, hijackings, bomb attacks, assassinations, and threats that occurred in the seventies and at the end of the previous century were claimed by Moluccans, Kurds, the IRA, the ETA, the PLO, the Japanese Red Army, the Red Youth, RaRa, and the Animal Liberation Front, among other groups.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a form of terrorism appeared that was typified primarily by its international character, and the related shock wave brought about by the terrorist threats and attacks throughout the world. According to Rapoport (2001, 2004), the previous century saw several waves of international terrorism, in more or less distinct periods of time. Rapoport distinguished an anarchistic wave that appeared in 1880 and continued until 1920; an anti-colonial wave that began around 1920 and continued until 1960; a new-left wing wave that started at the end of the sixties and continued into the nineties; and a religious wave that began in 1979, and with which we are currently also dealing in the Netherlands.

According to various researchers, this last terrorist wave has the following distinguishing features: (1) the groups involved do not serve any national interests; (2) they are linked with one another across national borders in a network that operates throughout the world; (3) they justify their terrorist acts from a collective revolutionary ideology that exceeds specific and con-

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2   According to definitions used by the AIVD, terrorism is distinguished from violent political activism by the fact that it is striving for the loss of human life – or viewing such loss of life as a calculated probability (BVD, 2001a).

crete domestic requirements; and (4) their acts bring about a shock wave throughout the international community, which consequently feels confronted with an elusive and almost impalpable worldwide conspiracy. These researchers argue that this international jihadi terrorism is more concerned with a religiously inspired ideology than with pure religion, and that the main purpose of the people involved is to 'change the system' (Coolsaet, 2004, 2005; Nesser, 2004).

Many jihadi terrorists claim that they are fighting for a new caliphate. In any case, many of them are fighting against the Muslim regimes that are said to prevent its establishment, against Western protectionist interests that influence these regimes, and, more generally, against the global dominance of the West. The utopian goal of many of these terrorists is to overthrow the democratic constitutional order and to replace it with a radical-Islamic concept: an ideal state in which pure Islam will be in force, in which all existing power structures will be broken, in which only the power of God is accepted, and in which everyone lives in accordance with God's laws.

This is, however, not the whole story. As was the case with anarchistic terrorism at the beginning of the twentieth century, various jihadi terrorist groups appear not to be directly linked with one another, not to co-operate directly with one another, and not always to act with the same motives. They only have indirect contact with one another, or no contact at all. They sometimes draw inspiration from one another, but the different groups and individuals appear to act relatively autonomously. According to Bakker (2006), not every jihadi is actually fighting to establish a caliphate. An individual's frustration with regard to his or her personal social position, fury about international politics, anger about domestic policy and domestic topics, a thirst for sensation, and the need for self-expression may drive these jihadis to perform terrorist activities.

It therefore appears that, at the individual level as well, jihadi activities involve different types of persons with different motives, different backgrounds, and different goals. The fight they are waging is partly the result of religiously inspired ideology. A number of these terrorists, however, appear to use that ideology to legitimise acts which are performed with different motives and in the context of different backgrounds (see also De Graaff, 2007). But whether the ideology is used as a source of inspiration or to legitimise activities, the mutual conviction that a fight must be waged has caused the different groups and individuals to experience one anothers' activities as a joint struggle, and has caused the outside world to categorise their activities under the same heading. The factors that bind these actors, which have caused them to seek and receive support from one another, and which have caused different groups and individuals to experience their fight as a collective worldwide struggle, are mainly their shared hatred of the West and their shared feelings of powerlessness, humiliation, and anger (compare: AIVD, 2004a; Berger, 2001; and Coolsaet, 2004, 2005).

This introductory chapter begins with a description of the purpose of our research. Subsequently, a brief definition of the subject of the research is given, followed by an overview of the research questions, the setup of the research, and the research method. Next, we give a description of how the findings in this report are presented in anonymous form. The chapter ends with a short overview of the structure of this report.

1.1 Purpose of the research

During the past few years, a large number of scientific publications on the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism have appeared (see for overviews of the literature in this area, for instance, Bouhana & Wikström, 2008; Ranstorp, 2006; Silke, 2008; Taylor & Horgan, 2006; and Victoroff, 2005). The phenomenon was studied from different angles and perspectives, but until now all this research has not resulted in any comprehensive theories.[3] This may be due to a number of reasons. In the first place, jihadi terrorism is a complex phenomenon that includes historical, religious, cultural, political, social, and behavioural aspects, with the individual, the group and the environment influencing one another. In the second place, the purpose of the researchers determines which aspects of this phenomenon will be elucidated. Researchers who focus on the formulation of a theory direct their attention on aspects that are different from those studied by researchers who focus on the development or evaluation of counterterrorism policy. In the third place, a part of the scientific world is of the opinion that terrorism must be regarded as a general phenomenon, whereas another part emphasises that various types and forms should be distinguished and studied as separate phenomena. In the fourth place, researchers in this area experience a significant lack of sound empirical data. All this has resulted in the fact that explanations were sought and found for the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism at different levels and from different angles, while – until now – there has been very little insight into the value of these theories.

The purpose of this research is not to explain the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism, or to find a connection between the different theories on this subject. The primary purpose is to provide an insight into the way in which jihadi activities manifested themselves in the Netherlands in the period studied, namely between 2001 and 2005. This knowledge may subsequently be used in investigation practices and in the development of counterterrorism policy, but also in the formulation and testing of scientific theories in this area. We based our research on empirical cases. On the basis of data from actual criminal investigations, we focused on the central question: 'What is the nature of jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands?' In order to answer this question, we focused on the following research questions:

3   For more information on this subject, see also Bakker, 2004; Van der Pligt & Koomen, 2009.

What are the characteristics of jihadi cooperations?[4]
– What is the elementary orientation of jihadi cooperations?
– How is jihadi terrorism embedded internationally?
– Is there evidence of international cooperation?
– How are jihadi cooperations established?
– What is it that binds actors to these groups?
– Which influencing factors play a role in this process?
– Do formal or informal power relationships exist?
– In which ways do these actors work together?
– Is there a clear allocation of roles and tasks?
– How can the organisational structures of the existing cooperations and networks be characterised?

Which activities are performed within jihadi cooperations?
– Which activities are actually performed by the actors?
– What goals do the actors want to achieve with these activities?
– How do they operate?
– How do they cover their activities, and how do they protect themselves against risks?
– How are jihadi activities embedded in the daily lives of the actors?

Who are the jihadi actors?
– What background characteristics do the actors have (including age, gender, country of origin, residence status, educational level, civil status, and criminal records)?
– Is it possible to distinguish different types of actors on the basis of common backgrounds and motives?
– What is the role of women in these cooperations?

By analysing – on the basis of these questions – the information on the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism collected by the investigation teams, we hope to gain insights that may contribute to tackling this phenomenon. In answering the research questions, we will not, however, ignore or avoid discussing any explanations of the phenomena that we may encounter. We will describe these phenomena and link our findings to existing theories. In this way, we hope to make a contribution to the formulation of theories in this area as well.

1.2 Jihadi terrorism and jihadi activities

Before we discuss the way in which this research was conducted, it is helpful to define the term 'jihadi terrorism' – the subject of the research – in further

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4   We use the term cooperation to refer to cooperating actors or cooperating groups of actors.

detail. The term 'jihad' originally means striving for the good and fighting evil in a general sense.[5] In the West, this term is currently often used by Muslims as well as non-Muslims to refer to the 'holy war': the fight against the enemies of Islam, in order to defend and propagate the faith. The AIVD also uses the term 'jihad' to refer to 'the armed fight on behalf of Islam'. In line with this, the term 'jihadism' is used to refer to the movement that considers the armed fight a duty of all Muslims (AIVD, 2008). According to the AIVD, this movement is pre-eminently prepared to use terrorism as a tool to wage the fight against the West. This agency defines the term 'terrorism' as 'actual or threatened violence against human lives, property or the fabric of society, with the aim of bringing about social change or influencing the political decision-making process' (BVD, 2001a).

We use this definition in this report because it clearly distinguishes between terrorism – aimed at human lives – and activism. This distinction also appears to be a leading principle in the Dutch investigation procedures.[6] By *jihadi terrorism* we therefore refer to the preparedness to make a contribution to the armed fight against the West and against other perceived enemies of Islam, by threatening to use or by using violence aimed at human lives, or by committing attacks in which human victims are seen as a calculated probability (compare AIVD, 2008).

In practice, it is not always possible to use this definition to characterise the individuals and activities contained in the files we analysed. With regard to some of the individuals or clusters who play an active role in jihadi cooperations, it is not clear whether they are actually prepared to use violence, to threaten to use violence, or to incite people to do this. It may be established that these individuals performed activities in support of a jihadi network. But does this mean that these activities are terrorist acts? And are these individuals consequently terrorists? It is not always possible to answer this question. This mainly applies to facilitating and ideological activities which are performed in jihadi clusters, and to individuals who are actually involved in such activities, but who are not directly involved in committing or inciting others to commit violent acts and other criminal acts. In this report, we will also pay attention to these individuals, who are often on the periphery of jihadi cooperations, and to their actions. They are after all part of the phenomenon we

5   Islamic scholars distinguish between the 'greater jihad' and the 'lesser jihad'. The greater jihad is the inner struggle of human beings against the evil in oneself. The lesser jihad is the fight against unbelievers and the enemies of Islam.

6   Until now, the Netherlands has not had a statutory definition of terrorism. The *Crimes of Terrorism Act* (Section 83a of the Dutch Criminal Code) does, however, include a description of the concept of 'terrorist purposes'. This definition is as follows: 'the purpose to seriously intimidate the population or part of the population of a country or to compel a government or international organisation unlawfully to perform or abstain from performing an act or to tolerate something, or to seriously disable or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation. The Netherlands furthermore endorsed the EU Framework Decision on combating terrorism of 13 June 2002, summing up terrorist acts, and at the time of our research, the AIVD and the NCTb used the definition cited in the text in the performance of their duties, which was recorded in a public publication of the AIVD in April 2001 (BVD, 2001a). In the meantime, however, this definition was revised (AIVD, 2008; www.nctb.nl).

are describing in this report. We will therefore use the term 'terrorism' carefully.

1.3 Research method and data collection

This research aims to increase the insight into the nature of jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands by systematically analysing the information collected by the police during small- and large-scale criminal investigations into manifestations of jihadi terrorism. For this purpose, we used an adapted version of the method that was developed by the WODC at the end of the nineties to investigate the nature of and the developments in organised crime in the Netherlands (see Kleemans, Van den Berg & Van de Bunt, 1998; Kleemans, Brienen & Van de Bunt, 2002; Van de Bunt & Kleemans, 2007).[7] In this section, we will describe the way in which we selected the closed criminal investigations – which are the basis of this research – and how we proceeded to analyse this source material.

1.3.1 Selection of cases

For the purpose of this research, we selected a total of twelve closed criminal investigations that were conducted in the Netherlands in the period between July 2001 and July 2005. For the selection of the cases, we called in the help of several terrorism experts of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and the National Police Services Agency (KLPD). On the basis of an overview of all criminal investigations into jihadi terrorism that were conducted in the Netherlands in the abovementioned period, these experts selected the most interesting cases for us. This was done on the basis of the following two criteria. In the first place, we wanted to collect data about as many different aspects of the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism as possible, as it manifested itself in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005. For this purpose, we asked the investigation experts to select cases that would have the most added value from that perspective.
In the second place, we wanted to obtain as much concrete data about this phenomenon as possible. For this purpose, we asked the experts to take into account the 'richness' and the 'concreteness' of the investigation material collected. Large-scale criminal investigations, deploying considerable manpower and involving many suspects and other persons, will usually generate richer data than smaller investigations into the activities of only a few individuals. In addition, the nature of the investigation methods used is relevant. In some cases, the investigation teams obtained a more detailed picture of

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7 For the purpose of this research, the questionnaire and the list of items to be addressed, developed by Kleemans and colleagues, was revised and supplemented. The most important research questions are represented in Section 1.1.

the doings and dealings of specific individuals by using special investigative powers (such as observation, telephone and computer communication tapping, and recording confidential communication). In other cases, the suspects were arrested relatively quickly and the investigation teams mainly collected data by searching houses and questioning people. Factors such as the intensity with which the investigation teams are able to conduct an investigation, the extent to which they are permitted to use intrusive investigative powers, and the extent to which they search for additional witnesses all influence the richness and concreteness of the investigation material collected by them. Thus, in general, more value may be attached to information from conversations that were listened in to, reports of observation teams, results of forensic technical investigation, and statements from independent or other witnesses than to statements the suspects themselves made about their own actions to the police.[8] Proceeding from this set of criteria, the experts gave us a list of cases which, in their opinion, provide a good picture of the way in which the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism manifested itself in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005. The experts consulted appeared to agree surprisingly well with one another about the cases that meet the criteria, and were convinced that the twelve cases selected would together form an accurate reflection of the criminal investigations into jihadi terrorism conducted by the police and the judicial authorities in the abovementioned period.

1.3.2   Data collection

For the purpose of studying the criminal investigations and describing the underlying material, we contacted the investigation teams and the public prosecutors who had been responsible for the selected cases. These key figures were interviewed, by means of a questionnaire, about one or more criminal investigations. On the basis of this questionnaire, all research questions were discussed as systematically as possible. During the interviews, there were always two or three researchers present. After an interview, the related police file was analysed and described – again using the questionnaire. In most cases, this was done by one of the researchers. Only the most voluminous files[9] were analysed and described by several researchers.
While studying the investigation files, we focused our attention mainly on activities that had been performed on Dutch territory and on the actors who had been involved in jihadi activities here in the Netherlands. In order to be able to place the phenomena that manifested themselves in our country in their broader contexts, we also included parts of foreign investigation files – which were added to the Dutch files following requests for assistance – in

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8   See on this subject, for instance, Van Koppen (1998) and De Poot, Bokhorst, Van Koppen & Muller (2004) (in particular pp. 301 up to and including 323).
9   This applied to two files, one of which consisted of approximately fifty filled clip files, the other of more than a hundred clip files.

the analyses. The fact is that jihadi activities are often developed within networks of people who are linked with one another across national borders. The twelve criminal investigations revealed a total of 113 different actors who had been active on Dutch territory during the period studied. In this report, we refer to the individuals to whom an investigation team had been directed, and about whom the police had collected information during a criminal investigation, as 'actors' if it became evident from the files that they had been involved in a jihadi cooperation. In this study, as we explained in Section 1.2, we also paid attention to individuals on the periphery of the jihadi cooperations, because they unmistakably form a part of the phenomenon that we sought to analyse and describe.

During the criminal investigations, there were, of course, also individuals or groups who were indirectly involved and who were further ignored by the police. Examples of these individuals are recruits or adherents of jihadis about whom the police did not collect more detailed information. In the chapters dealing with cooperations and activities, we will describe the roles of such groups and individuals – when this is necessary to be able to describe specific phenomena, such as recruitment activities – insofar as the information from the files permits this. In the chapter on the actors, we will only focus on the 113 individuals about whom sufficient background information was included in the police files studied.

1.3.3   Police files as source material

Where criminal investigations into jihadi terrorism are concerned, distinguishing between different investigations or 'cases' is academic, for it often turns out that different criminal investigations into this phenomenon, that were conducted at different places and moments in time by different investigation teams, are interrelated.

In police practice, this interrelatedness is not always dealt with in the same manner. Criminal investigations that progress from one another are sometimes bundled. In that case, one case may sometimes comprise different clusters of individuals who were engaged in entirely different activities, but who were otherwise linked with one another. Conversely, an investigation into a single network may also be broken up into different cases, with separate teams focussing on different individuals and different aspects of the same phenomenon. In addition, it turned out that some individual suspects or persons involved turn up again in different criminal investigations.

Partly due to this interrelatedness between cases, we decided to consider the rough investigation material we had selected by means of the questionnaires in its entirety, and to attach less value to the narrative structures of the separate criminal investigations. This empirical source material was subsequently restructured to make it possible to analyse clusters of cooperating individuals and joint activities together.

A second reason to disregard the structures of the separate criminal investigations that were conducted in the period between 2001 and 2005 is the fact that the prevailing views on jihadi terrorism changed in this period. Immediately after the turn of the millennium, jihadi terrorism was, for instance, still an unknown phenomenon to the police and the judicial authorities in the Netherlands. The perception of this phenomenon was strongly influenced by the historical context in which it took place.[10] Immediately after 11 September 2001, the police more readily referred to 'Al Qaeda cells' that were centrally directed than later on, when the shock effect of the attacks had somewhat ebbed away and the nuances of the organisational reach of Al Qaeda had returned in the social debate (Bakker & Boer, 2006). Such perceptions may have influenced the interpretation of investigative findings, and with that they may also have influenced the way in which a police file was created. For this reason, too, it was advisable to ignore the structures of the rulings on the evidence, and to utilise the rough source material in making the analyses. In this way, we were able to analyse the data investigated as neutrally as possible.

Finally, there is a third reason to disregard the separate criminal investigations and to reanalyse the selected source material with respect to its mutual coherence. The fact is that the narrative structure of a criminal investigation is strongly determined by the legislative framework in which the police and the judicial authorities arrive at a criminal charge. This legislative framework, however, changed in the course of the period studied – and also after this period. Our research is based on files that were built up in a period in which new legislation on terrorism was being implemented.[11]

With the entry into force of the *Crimes of Terrorism Act* (10 August 2004), several types of behaviour that were formerly not punishable – such as recruitment for the armed fight, and conspiracy with the intention to commit serious terrorist crimes – were made punishable. In addition, the sentences for crimes that were committed with a terrorist purpose were increased. This widening of criminal liability also has an effect on criminal procedure: it makes it possible to deploy powers under criminal law at an early stage, and – as a result of this mandate – to intervene at an earlier stage as well. In the months and years following the period studied, new legislation was implemented that was specifically aimed at investigation and prosecution of terrorist crimes. Examples of this are the Witness Identity Protection Act,[12] increasing the possibilities to use AIVD information in criminal proceedings,

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10 Kleemans and colleagues (1998, 2002) described this same problem in the context of networks in organised crime. At the start of the nineties, the perception of organised crime was strongly influenced by our knowledge of Italian and American Mafia organisations. Since then, systematic scientific research has been changed this perception significantly.

11 Act of 24 June 2004, Dutch Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2004, 290, entry into force on 10 August 2004. See also: Borgers (2007); and De Poot, Bokhorst, Smeenk & Kouwenberg (2008, p. 11 et seq).

12 Act of 29 September 2006, Dutch Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2006, 460, entry into force on 1 November 2006.

and the *Investigation and Prosecution of Terrorism (Extended Powers) Act.*[13] The options available to the police and the judicial authorities, the facts they use to furnish proof, as well as the judgment that the court may deliver within the existing legislative framework on the evidence collected, have consequently changed during the past few years.

All this not only implies that it was advisable, in this study, to disregard the structure of rulings on the evidence and to reanalyse the selected source material in its entirety, but also that we could not base our opinion – about the value of the investigation data collected – on the courts' judgments. Within the current legislative framework, these judgments may, after all, be different from the judgements within the legislative framework that was in force during the criminal investigations.[14]

1.4   Restrictions and scope of the research

This study has a number of significant restrictions. On the basis of the investigation material analysed, we can describe the nature of jihadi cooperations that were active in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005; the activities that were performed within these cooperations; and the actors that were involved, *insofar as this is revealed by the closed criminal investigations.* The last part of this sentence reveals a number of restrictions with respect to our research.

Firstly, not all jihadi activities come to the attention of the police, nor do the police conduct investigations into all jihadi activities that come to their attention. Secondly, we based this research on a selection of cases into which a criminal investigation was conducted in the period studied. This selection may have influenced our perception of the phenomenon. Thirdly, we based our research on the information which was collected by investigation teams whose aim was to reconstruct terrorist crimes and submit these reconstructions to the court – substantiated by evidence. This focus of the investigation teams, their investigation hypotheses and the associated selection and interpretation of information also influenced our perception. The findings from our research must be seen in this light.

A fourth restriction is that this investigation gives a picture of jihadi terrorism as it manifested itself in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005. The last criminal investigation we analysed was conducted in the spring of 2005. We cannot make any projection about how the phenomenon

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13   Act of 20 November 2006, Dutch Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2006, 580, entry into force on op 1 February 2007. For more information on this subject, see also: De Poot et al. (2008).
14   In this respect, our research differs from other studies in which police files served as the source of information, such as the research on organised crime (for more information on this subject, see also Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Investigation Methods, 1996; Kleemans et al., 1998, 2002; and Van de Bunt & Kleemans, 2007).

of jihadism has changed under the influence of developments – throughout the world and in our own country – since that time.

On the basis of the source material, we can indicate whether specific jihadi phenomena occurred in the period studied and whether they occurred more than occasionally or, to the contrary, that we were not able to find any examples of specific jihadi phenomena in the source material selected. In addition, we can give an opinion about the relationships that exist between phenomena and about the mechanisms that played a role. We can also discuss the similarities and differences between jihadi cooperations, activities, and actors. In short, on the basis of this research we can provide insight into the way in which jihadi terrorism manifested itself in the Netherlands. We can, however, not provide any insight into the frequency in which specific jihadi phenomena manifested themselves, nor can we provide insight into the scope of the phenomena.

1.5   Anonymous form

Empirical research into jihadi terrorism is scarce. Information about this phenomenon is generally not presented to researchers on a silver platter. Although the investigation and security services collect much valuable information about jihadi terrorism, it is not the custom to analyse such empirical knowledge systematically, let alone to describe this knowledge in public reports. Still, it is essential to report about the phenomenon in public, for such accessible publications make it possible to use the empirical knowledge gained in a debate on this problem and how to tackle it.

In a public report on empirical research about a subject like this, however, the question arises as to the way in which the findings can be described without risking damage to individuals whose identity might be traceable through certain passages in the report, and without risking damage to investigative interests. One way to realise this aim is to abstract the knowledge gained in such a way that the information cannot be traced back to particular individuals. We are, however, of the opinion that details, too, may be illustrative. They can elucidate the context in which the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism occurred, provide insight into the way in which it manifested itself, and provide a basis for tackling it. Details increase the insight into the phenomenon we seek to describe. Details undeniably also make it easier to recognise cases. Investigations into jihadi terrorism often receive a good deal of media coverage. This makes it difficult to describe them without revealing specifics. Within the circles of insiders, specific details will irrevocably result in recognition. In this report, we seek to overcome this problem of recognition in three ways.

In the first place, we will use several cases in which similar phenomena manifested themselves. The more frequently specific phenomena and mecha-

nisms occurred, the smaller the chance of a phenomenon being traceable to concrete cases or individuals. A phenomenon may then be described in a relatively general manner, and we will use details from the case material by way of illustration.

In the second place, we will choose isolated details from different cases, as a result of which it will be difficult to trace back these details to complete cases. We will, consequently, never describe a complete case or the complete life history of a person involved in full detail.[15] We will only describe parts and elements thereof when this is necessary for our argument or to illustrate the mechanism or phenomenon we are describing. Where reference is made to groups, individuals, activities or mechanisms, this will always be one example from a larger number of groups, individual, activities or mechanisms with similar elements or characteristics. In most instances, we could also have used information from another case by way of illustration. If the case concerns an exceptional or atypical phenomenon, we will indicate this explicitly.

In the third place, we will not include an annex with case descriptions in this report, nor will we refer to the cases we analysed. In this way, we may prevent people from being able to link any information they think they recognise to other information – that is less familiar – about the relevant case.

1.6 Structure of the report

The next chapter (Chapter 2) serves as a frame of reference for the empirical findings we will present in the three subsequent chapters. In this second chapter, the international and ideological context of jihadi terrorism is central, and we outline the rise, development, and worldwide propagation of current jihadism. The last three chapters will deal with the investigation material studied. We will describe and analyse successively the following three dimensions of the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands: jihadi cooperations (Chapter 3), the activities performed within these cooperations (Chapter 4), and the actors who play a role in these cooperations and activities (Chapter 5).

Separating the cooperations, activities, and actors is a somewhat artificial action. In practice, these three dimensions of the phenomenon cannot be considered separately. It is, for instance, impossible to elucidate the characteristics of cooperations, and to describe the processes that take place in them, without paying attention to the activities that are performed within these cooperations and the individuals who are active in them. Still, we will – each time – endeavour to shift the attention to another level of analysis when we describe our findings. In the last chapter (Chapter 6), the interrela-

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15 Exceptions to this are the five unique life stories in Section 5.2. In this section, we described the life histories of actors in such a way that they are difficult to recognise for outsiders.

tionship among the findings will be discussed from a more theoretical perspective.

2 International and ideological context

This chapter gives an outline of the international and ideological back-
grounds of jihadi terrorism, and discusses the rise, development and spread
of this phenomenon. At the same time, it provides an interpretation frame-
work for our later findings about the way in which the phenomenon manifest-
ed itself in the Netherlands at the start of the twenty-first century.
It will be evident from this chapter that jihadism gradually evolved from a
political into an internal movement. The main aim of the political activists
Muslim Brothers at the beginning of the twentieth century – and also of the
more violent revolutionary Islamists in the second half of the twentieth cen-
tury – was still primarily the establishment of states ruled by Islamic princi-
ples. In that period, jihadis fought against existing political systems in the
Islamic world and against Arab governments, and later on – from the seven-
ties onwards – also against officials who, from their point of view, were work-
ing for these governments of their own free will, and were therefore also to
blame for the system. Contemporary jihadis, however, usually no longer pur-
sue the establishment of Islamic states, but increasingly focus on Islamic
identity and the worldwide Islamic community (the *umma*). Many of them
want to protect this *umma*, wherever it is in the world. They consider this a
moral and ethical duty (Zemni, 2006). Nowadays, jihadis therefore see the
jihad not so much as a political matter, but above all as a moral matter. For
them, the ideal society – which is ruled by the *sharia* – has deteriorated into
an abstract idea. In this context, Oliver Roy (2004) referred to a 'virtual
umma'.
As a result of this development, the image of the enemy as perceived by many
jihadis became more universal in the course of the previous century. The per-
ception of this enemy has shifted from secular and dictatorial political sys-
tems or governments in the Islamic world to *all* alleged enemies of Islam in
the world, including 'the West'. The most extremist jihadis even consider
nearly everyone who, according to them, does not truly live in accordance
with God's laws to be a legitimate target of the armed struggle. Those who are
considered 'enemies' are therefore not only unbelievers, but also Muslims
whom they consider disloyal.

2.1 International jihadism

As seen in modern times, the concept of the international armed fight in the
name of Islam is a relatively recent ideological innovation, evolving from a
more traditional jihadi ideology that was almost exclusively aimed at rulers
and governments in Muslim countries. Because of its often explicit anti-
Western nature, and its structural propagation within existing jihadi net-
works, this new form of violent Islamism has in recent years developed into a
serious threat to Western societies at a surprisingly rapid pace. Actors and
groups who have taken up arms or plotted attacks against Western powers,

institutions, and citizens in the context of this new form of violent Islamism often refer to an ultra-orthodox religious doctrine: *Salafism*.

With the words and acts of the Prophet Muhammad (the *Hadith*) and the life-style of his contemporary sympathisers (the *Salaf*) as guiding principles, and with the perception of society from the mythical period of Muhammad and the first four rightful caliphs (632-661 AD) in mind, the Salafists have turned their backs on modern and democratic societies. This puritan Salafism is, however, not intrinsically violent. The movement may be regarded as a contemporary social movement, which aims at protecting the identity and integrity of the own group in a world full of temptations and suppression. In this way, the Salafist movement has tried to form a moral community, with consistent views about good and evil (Price, Nonini & Fox Tree, 2008, p. 128; De Koning, 2008, 2009). Salafists have tried to purify Islam by cleansing it of the corruptive influences of, among other things, cultural customs and modern phenomena (Meijer, 2009; De Koning, 2009).

Nevertheless, there are still individuals active within this broader Salafist movement who want to purify Islam, or even the whole world, by means of violence. What makes the issue complicated is the fact that the violent groups often participate in the same networks as the non-violent groups, whereas they only partly adhere to the same ideology. Their moral views on good and evil differ strongly, in particular where condoning the use of violence is concerned. In addition, militant jihadis who are far less inspired by Salafism and who are fighting the establishment for other reasons often use the symbols, customs, and practices of the Salafist movement. As we stated in the introduction to this report, international jihadism is mainly an umbrella term for a broad phenomenon in which individuals participate with different motives, different backgrounds, different aims, and also different ideologies (see also Bakker, 2006; De Graaff, 2007).

Although Salafism is consequently not intrinsically violent, the *ideological chemistry* between Salafism, Islamism (political Islam), and anti-Western jihadism has actually resulted in the violent phenomenon that is currently known among terrorism experts as 'internationally-oriented Salafist jihadism' (see among others Sageman, 2004). To many people, Al Qaeda is the best-known exponent of this form of jihadism. This is not without reason. In the mid-nineties the phenomenon made a remarkable entrance onto the world stage – largely by the efforts of Osama bin Laden and his organisation. That is why the term 'Al Qaeda' – in fact the name of a relatively small jihadi 'network organisation' – has been used more and more frequently in the last few years to refer to the considerably broader phenomenon of internationally-oriented Salafist jihadism.

In an age that – in the mindset of many – was marked by the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it has more than once appeared to be rather tempting to allege that a more or less related branch or 'cell' of the Al Qaeda network has gained a foothold on Dutch territory (Zembla, 2003; ANP,

2007). Such emotionally charged presumptions often do no justice to the complexity of the transnational network of individuals and groups who allow themselves to be inspired by a more or less coordinating and pan-ideological doctrine: an offensive jihad against the wicked West in order to realise a purified worldwide *umma*. In order to be able to properly understand and value the subsequent descriptions in this report that concern possible interactions between jihadis in the Netherlands and the international jihadi movement, it is important to first look at the historical and ideological developments in this international network, including the importance of the core group of Al Qaeda in these developments.

2.1.1   *From political Salafism to Salafist jihadism*

The breeding ground of many contemporary jihadi ideologies and groups was established in Egypt in 1928 with the formation of the – then still – anti-imperialist Muslim Brotherhood. The aim of this fundamentalist political movement is to establish an Islamic state using political means, and in the process it is not unconditionally negative towards modern influences and concepts. In the first decades of its existence, however, more militant and puritan views appeared to take root within its ranks. In 1964, Sayyid Qutb, one of the best-known leaders and ideologists of the Muslim Brotherhood, implemented new criteria for *takfir*: a practice whereby Muslims denounce other Muslims, Muslim communities or Muslim institutions as unbelievers (*kafir*) (Qutb, 1990). According to Qutb's *takfir* principle, anyone who does not fully submit to the absolute sovereignty and oneness of God (tawhid), as set out in the religious ethics, is not truly Islamic. In fact, *Salafists* who adhere to this line of reasoning consider *all* modern societies and governments unsound in the faith. This accusation is becoming additionally charged in respect of Muslim countries. The fact of the matter is that according to the most widely accepted interpretation of the *sharia* (Islamic law), apostasy carries the death penalty, a notion which a limited group of people has used as a pretext for an armed jihad since Qutb's execution in 1966 by the Egyptian nationalist government.

In the period between the sixties and the eighties, intensive persecution of the radicalising Muslim Brothers in Egypt caused an exodus of both moderate and radical adherents. Initially, these people mainly fled to countries in the Middle East, such as Syria and Saudi Arabia, where some of them secured influential positions. The movement of the Muslim Brothers is currently active all over the world, in secret and in public, in a large, diffuse and strongly decentralised network with different agendas, which have been modified to respond to national circumstances. Within its renewed mission of 'gradual Islamisation', *takfir* adherents and members who want to perform violent activities are, however, no longer welcome (Leiken & Brooke, 2007). However, the fact that the Brotherhood continues to idolise Qutb as a martyr

(*shahid*) still causes this global movement to be receptive to people with deviating jihadi views who usually quickly distance themselves from the 'official' movement to become active within other frameworks.

Salafist groups who have actually entered into armed fights since the seventies were often inspired by Qutb's views on *takfir* and jihad.[16] From North Africa to the Middle East, and from Central Asia to South-east Asia, cooperations that are striving – through violent means – for a renaissance of the Islamic Caliphate have appeared to be viable within the most divergent political, cultural, and social constellations. Until the mid-nineties, the targets of such groups, in practice, remained limited to local enemies in two possible forms: (1) secular structures and dictatorial regimes in Muslim countries; or (2) non-Islamic invasion powers in Muslim countries. Well-known groups from this period were the Algerian *Groupe Islamique Armée* (GIA) and the Indonesian *Jemaah Islamiyah*. There were also *takfirist* jihad groups that evolved directly from the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the *Al Gama'a al Islamiyya* (GAI), in 1973, and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) several years later, which focused their attention – for quite some years – only on local governments.

2.1.2   *Internationalisation of the jihad*

A trigger event, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, provided the momentum for the then fragmented jihadi movement to create a more coherent international profile for itself. Within the Islamic world as well as far beyond, extensive logistic, financial, and other forms of supportive networks evolved, which enabled the initiation of the purely 'defensive jihad' against the Russians.[17] An influential and pragmatic key figure in this network was Bin Laden. As a rich and charismatic business man from Wahhabi Saudi Arabia,[18] he was capable – through his own organisation, the so-called Jihad Service Bureau – of mobilising *mujaheddin* (holy fighters), funds, and other resources throughout the world. Initially, these activities were only intended to benefit the defensive jihad.

Although many *mujaheddin* simply fought in Afghanistan to drive away the occupation force, Salafist-jihadi groups who had gone into exile also found a new calling, and a refuge, in that struggle. They often fought together with the local *mujaheddin* against the Russian troops. In the meantime, they

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16 According to Zemni (2006), however, Qutb was one of the most coherent thinkers of modern Islamism and one of the few who formulated a theory on how Islamic awareness should, in practice, result in an Islamic system. According to Zemni, restrictive and selective interpretations of Qutb's views have impoverished his work, and present-day Islamism in the form of mass movements and/or secret organisations have restricted and simplified his ideology.

17 The term 'defensive jihad' means the fight that is waged to protect the faith, for instance, if an Islamic country is attacked by unbelievers. The term 'offensive jihad' is used for the jihad that is aimed at propagating the faith.

18 In essence, there is no distinction between Wahhabism and Salafism. According to Salafists, however, the term 'Wahhabism' puts too much emphasis on the secular role of the eighteenth-century ideologist Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab. In addition, the official Wahhabist movement in Saudi Arabia propagates the support of the royal house, which is not in accordance with the *tawhid* principle, according to Salafists.

forged alliances among these groups for their respective national purposes (Bergen, 2006). At the end of the eighties, a number of these groups, including the EIJ of Ayman al-Zawahiri, could also count on the sympathy, active fighting spirit, and substantial support of Bin Laden. His views had become more extremist during the war. More and more frequently, he placed his organisation in the service of Salafist militants, as a result of which they gained access to and could profit from parts of the transnational system of resources that were drawn upon by the Jihad Service Bureau. This development led to the establishment of Al Qaeda ('the basis').

The umbrella organisation, in which Bin Laden, the EIJ, and other Afghanistan-veterans of different backgrounds joined forces, was created with the goal of keeping together and using the broader worldwide network providing general and technical services *after* the Afghan-Russian war was over, however no longer for the sole purpose of the defensive jihad, but also for the purpose of violent *takfir* activities against Islamic authorities and fellow-Muslims who did not comply with the Salafist idea of utopia.

Although they often disagree on countless points, there is consensus among most terrorism experts about the unique share that this 'network-organisation' has had in the internationalisation of jihadism (see, among others, Sageman, 2004; Gunaratna, 2003; Hoffman, 2008; and Zemni, 2006). With an ideology that was originally based on not much more than 'being helpful to the armed fight in the name of puritan Islam', Al Qaeda started – after the Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan – to give military training to several hundreds of recruits. Benefiting from existing safe houses and training camps in the country, the core group around Bin Laden was able – on the one hand – to strengthen its own ranks in this way. On the other hand, this small, but hierarchic and even somewhat bureaucratically structured network-organisation soon managed to secure a strategic position in a broader worldwide network of loyalists and sympathisers, including former brothers-in-arms and former camp mates.

Even more so than in those earlier times in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda – from within its stronghold in Sudan in the period between 1992 and 1996 – developed into a source of jihadi expertise, and as a catalyst for the growing ideological and social cohesion among militant Islamic groups operating in different countries. Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri brought approximately twenty groups into contact with one another, created a formal medium (*shura*) for international cooperation, raised and donated funds, and distributed detailed tactical and technical instructions. As an outsourcing and training institute of at least a thousand jihadis for the conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, and the Philippines, the Al Qaeda core group also wielded its influence on the way of thinking within the broader Salafist-jihadi movement as a whole (Katzman, 2005).

2.1.3   *The West as a new target of an internationally-oriented movement*

As often happens when new 'grand narratives'[19] arise and attract adherents, the perfection of Qutb's conventional doctrine into the dogma of international Salafist jihadism went hand in hand with worldwide geopolitical developments and *trigger events.*[20] The end of the Cold War after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the continued occupation of Palestine territory by Israel, the interventions in Iraq and Somalia led by the US, *and* the stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia – homeland of Islam – caused the only surviving superpower and its allies to become the target of the evolving ideology of Salafist jihadism. Bin Laden, in other words, had a story to tell, and the only thing he had to do was to sell it. He proved to have the ambition and the means to press home his words with acts.

With a few typically extremist notions – an enemy image, a group of chosen people, a utopia, and the legitimation for purifying violence (Buijs, Demant & Hamdy, 2006) – he used his network-organisation primarily to stir up the fire of the anti-Western jihad. In 1996, based once again in Afghanistan, Bin Laden incited Muslims all over the world to take up arms against the US. By publishing *fatwas,*[21] forming alliances, and – until 2001 – ensuring that between ten to twenty thousand[22] jihadis in training camps were fed the idea that it was particularly the 'far enemy' that was sabotaging a Caliphate in the Islamic world, the core group of Al Qaeda effectively propagated its message through its international jihadi network. The series of large-scale and symbolic attacks that the core group has managed to orchestrate since then, with the help of loyalists and 'alumni' who have fanned out over the world, had – in the first place – an inspirational goal.

It is noteworthy that it was precisely the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 – which turned out to be extremely effective in this respect – that marked the end – or at least the provisional end – of Al Qaeda's capacity to orchestrate such actions itself. But since then, the idea propagated by Bin Laden and others that an international *umma* could only be realised if *all* individual Muslims did their bit

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19   In this context, the concept of 'grand narrative' (Lyotard, 1984) refers to a comprehensive and unambiguous explanation or structure of history, knowledge, and experience. Grand narratives, such as that of Karl Marx (capitalism results in class struggle; class struggle results in socialism and communism) and that of Francis Fukuyama (the ultimate hegemony of Western liberal democracy), are modernistic. They often claim an authentic status, substantiate ideologies, and legitimise human actions.

20   According to De Graaff (2008), these are also circumstances that, in combination with other factors and actors, may increase the probability of political violence, and in particular of terrorism.

21   Officially, a *fatwa* is an opinion of an Islamic scholar on the basis of Islamic law, issued at the request of a believer or a group of believers. This scholar must have sufficient authority to issue a *fatwa*. In the West, however, people often think that a *fatwa* is a death sentence. This is the result of the call from Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 to kill Salman Rushdie – and everyone else who had been engaged in publishing his book *The Satanic Verses* – because the story was said to run counter to Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur'an. This call from Khomeini is an example of the way in which *fatwas* are used by radical and militant movements. Such *fatwas* are also published by Al Qaeda.

22   These figures were mainly based on the findings of the *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (2004).

– preferably by taking up arms – has taken root in various jihadi groups and actors. Because they have started to think increasingly more universally, many contemporary jihadis hold the view that anyone who does not fulfil this duty is obstructing the revival of the *umma*. More and more frequently, they also blame ordinary citizens. This point of view, in turn, results in the fact that jihadis have, to an increasing degree, been using violence that is less 'targeted' than before (Zemni, 2006).

Parallel to this development is the fact that martyrdom has become the ultimate means for jihadis to prove that they are *actually* fulfilling their personal duty. As a result of this, death is currently a pronounced and fervent wish of many of them (Khosrokhaver, 2003). Whereas jihadis had – up to several decades ago – still regarded death primarily as a risk of the armed fight, they currently often appear to consider this the highest attainable goal: a goal in itself. With that, the urge to make sacrifices appears to have become more important than the goal attained by them.

2.1.4   The internationally-oriented jihadi movement as it stands today

Although the core group of Al Qaeda no longer exists as a well-financed and tightly organised cooperation, anti-Western jihadism is now generally accepted by an inspired, growing, and strongly decentralised militant *movement.* The underlying social networks have also attracted followers of organisations that formerly only pursued domestic goals, but which have been, over the course of years, influenced by actors from the Sudanese, Pakistani, and Afghan breeding grounds. Such groups, of which the North African groups, in particular, are active on European territory, now and again feel called upon to also contribute to the international Salafist jihad. Relevant groups in this context are, for example, the Maghreb-based *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC)[23], the Moroccan *Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain* (GICM), and the Tunisian *Groupe Islamique Combattant Tunesien* (GICT), but – to a much lesser extent – also the notorious Algerian *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA).[24] Nowadays, several of their adherents manoeuvre systematically and cleverly within their cross-border networks in order to form *ad hoc* alliances among themselves for international purposes (Vidino, 2006; Rabasa, Chalk, Cragin, Daly, Gregg, Karasik et al., 2006).

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23   In 1998, the GSPC seceded from the nationalist GIA. The group has a more transnational and partly anti-Western jihadi programme. In 2003, the GSPC officially declared itself to be loyal to Al Qaeda, and since 2006, the organisation regards itself as a formal *franchise* of Al Qaeda: '*Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb*' with Bin Laden as symbolic commander (Burke, 2004; *Global Terror Alert*, 2007; Gray & Stockham, 2008).

24   In fact, the GIA performed attacks with national motives as early as 1995, with its attacks on the Paris metro.

2.2   Rise and development of European and Dutch Salafism

At the European level, as well, the internationally-oriented jihadi movement did not evolve in the nineties out of an ideological vacuum. Local Salafist structures, infrastructures, and networks had already been serving as breeding grounds and points of departure for a longer period of time. The fact is that, parallel to the worldwide developments that had made the West a target of the jihad, many Western countries had been the target of Salafist activities that involved preaching and missionary work (*dawa*) as early as the eighties. These activities appealed to Islamic immigrants and exiles as well as to second-generation converts and Muslims. This made it possible for local Muslims activist and transnational jihadi networks to join forces in the Netherlands at a later stage.

Saudi connections
In the eighties, the Saudi authorities and private organisations provided a strong impetus for the encouragement of preaching and missionary work aimed at Islamic minorities in the West. In those days, the first contacts between missionary institutions, which were often supported by Saudi leaders, and Muslims from the Netherlands were made during the pilgrimages to Mecca. In that period, collections were made in Mecca to build mosques in the Netherlands. According to Landman (1992), the growing interest of the Saudis in Dutch Muslims, and the need of Dutch Muslims for funds to build mosques, coincided with the abolition of various government subsidies to finance the building of mosques. The contacts between the Saudi benefactors and Dutch Muslims led to the establishment of centres for the propagation of the Salafist doctrine. In this way, three Islamic cultural centres were established in the Netherlands, and also a number of Islamic schools received financing (for more information on this subject see also AIVD, 2004b; NCTb, 2008).
These financing activities involved two important Saudi anti-establishment groups. The first group was a network of *takfir* adherents with connections to branches in Spain (Barcelona), Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, the United States, and the Netherlands (Amsterdam, The Hague, and Tilburg). The second group was composed of adherents to the Islamic revival movement, which combined the dogmas of Salafism with the political theory of the Muslim Brothers. This group has branches in Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands (Eindhoven, Helmond, and Zwolle).
In the early nineties, the establishment of Salafist mosques and centres led to the development of Salafist networks in the Netherlands, as a result of which Dutch Salafism could continue to grow and could be strengthened. In this period, a Saudi foundation, for instance, bought land to build a Salafist centre which still organises activities that are international in nature. In addition,

Salafist circles were formed in several cities, and since 1995, influential preachers from Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Belgium, Germany, and Denmark have come to the Netherlands for training activities in the context of the *dawa.*

Until approximately 1997, this manifestation of Salafism was mainly something that concerned the first generation of Moroccans, Egyptians, Syrians and older Dutch native converts. In the subsequent period, however, the ideology was made more accessible to young people. This is perhaps also due to the fact that several Dutch young people received scholarships and started to study at Medina University in Saudi Arabia. These scholarships were often financed by private Saudi benefactors or by the university itself. Although only a handful of young Dutch people were educated there, the spread of Salafist ideology among second-generation Muslim youth and native Dutch converts seems partly due to this factor.

2.3   Jihadi actors in Europe

Partly due to international developments, and partly through existing local Salafist infrastructures and networks, the many-branched international jihadi movement has by now gained a foothold in Europe – and with that – also in the Netherlands. The actors who have been active in this movement can be divided into *two broad categories*: 'heartland-oriented' actors and other actors.

2.3.1   *Heartland-oriented actors*

The first category concerns a group of radical Salafists and jihadis in a diaspora, to whom the Islamic world with its radical stimuli is still the ultimate frame of reference for intolerant religious beliefs or militant acts for the purpose of the worldwide jihad. With that background, their specific experiences in and connections with the religious heartland have formed the basis of their current convictions and acts. These actors, defined here as '*heartland-oriented actors*', who are usually immigrants, include people with strongly various life stories and characteristics.

In general, these actors have fled to Europe from Islamic regions such as North Africa, the Middle East, East Africa, and Central Asia. Their development, schooling or training took shape primarily in these Islamic regions of origin. Many of them already had some history of Islamic activism, but sometimes also of violent jihadism. We are referring here to radical Islamist clergymen, Muslim Brothers, jihadis, jihad veterans and former or current adherents to and members of religious political parties that are forbidden in the relevant countries.

Within the European branch of the international Salafist-jihadi movement, the heartland-oriented actors hardly ever form isolated communities or clubs. Although they sometimes seek one another's company, more often, in this context, they are closely interwoven with a mixed majority of other actors – our second 'remaining category'. In this collective environment, in which each association with ideological originality may yield large social advantages, the heartland-oriented actors distinguish themselves by their specific backgrounds and related qualities. These features greatly benefit their status and, in particular, their *credibility*. Someone who speaks fluent Arabic – the language of the Islamic ancestors – and who is able – from experience – to strike the right tone in the radical theological discourse will therefore be able to win respect in European extremist circles. The same applies to war veterans and jihadis with impressive international connections. As our research on the basis of Dutch criminal investigations will reveal in more detail, heartland-oriented actors remarkably often secure dominant and influential positions within jihadi cooperations.

2.3.2   Other actors

As stated above, the international jihadi movement in Europe does not only thrive on heartland-oriented actors. Various other inspired actors who did *not* primarily derive their extremism from experiences in and connections with the Islamic world fulfil a significant function in this movement as well. In concrete terms, we are referring to locally born and/or trained Muslims, converts with or without Muslim backgrounds, and other people who mainly base their conviction on *local* events, role models, and influences. Although this 'remaining category' was already participating in the European jihadi network before the attacks of 11 September 2001, it seems to have grown since then.

In the scientific literature, extensive attention has been paid to the actors we meet in this mixed category. Roy (2004, 2005) gives a description of, among others, the 'uprooted' Muslims of second-generation immigrants who re-Islamise in a radical way in the West. According to him, the global variant of the violent Salafist struggle is appealing to these persons because they have become alienated from their parents' religious countries of origin. Sageman (2008) defines 'home-grown wannabes' as locally radicalised young Muslim people *and* converts who regard Bin Laden as their inspiring Robin Hood (see also Bergen, 2008). In addition, Muslims with only a scanty religious background – whether politically oriented or not – who have emigrated to the West as adults or young adults and who embrace extremism as *reborns* may also be placed in this category. The Islamic world of their youth does not, after all, form a decisive ideological frame of reference for them.

The stereotypes and labels by which these *individual* actors are often referred to in this broad category may influence our perception of the jihadi *social*

cooperations in which they participate. In this report, we ask ourselves whether terms such as 'home-grown networks' and 'groups of radicalised polder boys' are appropriate, or whether the situation – in reality – is rather a question of the interwoven and interdependent relationship between the two categories of actors that we have described above.

With respect to the development of jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands, the abovementioned international and ideological context, the Salafist infra-structures that have arisen in the Netherlands, and the receptivity to the jihadi ideology among the different types of persons residing in the Nether-lands have all played a role. In the next three chapters we will describe the way in which violent and non-violent jihadism have taken shape in the Neth-erlands. All this will, of course, be based on the empirical information we col-lected from the selected criminal investigations.

3 Jihadi cooperations

People who are active in jihadi cooperations travel a lot and have many international contacts (see also AIVD, 2006b). The twelve criminal investigations into the case groups that had been active in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005 frequently mentioned the same names, places, and actors. All 'cases' appear to be directly or indirectly connected with one another. Actors from different cases visited the same mosques, obtained their propaganda material and documents from the same providers, met one another in chat rooms or on MSN sites, visited the same websites, or met one another during lectures or at people's homes. In addition, in nearly all cases there had been international communication and cross-border contacts. None of the case groups can consequently be regarded as an isolated group. The different case groups used one anothers' services and – as a result of this – they appear to form part of a larger jihadi movement as clusters of actors. In this chapter we will describe the nature of this jihadi movement in the Netherlands. In this context, we will focus on a number of aspects of this movement and of the cooperations that form a part of this movement. After a short discussion about the way in which we analysed the empirical source material (Section 3.1), this chapter will first give a description of the elementary orientation (Section 3.2) and the socio-cultural composition of the cooperations identified and studied by us (Section 3.3). Section 3.4 subsequently shows which factors cause people to feel committed to jihadi groups, to want to be part of the movement, and to want to participate actively in it. Section 3.5 deals with the question of why specific people are able to hold important positions and give direction to specific clusters of actors. In short, in this section we will describe the factors of power that play a role in jihadi cooperations.

In Section 3.6, the focus shifts to the broader jihadi movement of which the cooperations form a part. This section provides a description of a number of structural 'building stones' of this social system and it will show how specific long-lasting foundations, meeting places, and key figures ensure cohesion in a dynamic network, both at the national and international level.

The last sections of this chapter will provide a more detailed description of how interactions among individuals contribute to the formation of clusters and to a consolidation of existing clusters (Section 3.7), and how these interactions ensure a natural organisation and allocation of tasks for various jihadi activities (Section 3.8). It turns out that these interactions compensate for the absence of formal hierarchic structures. The chapter concludes with a recapitulation of the most important findings.

3.1 Characteristics of jihadi cooperations

This chapter provides a description of the characteristics of jihadi cooperations and of the broader jihadi movement. An initial cursory examination of

the twelve selected files gave the impression that a number of fundamentally different groups had been active in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005. One part of our case files sketched a picture of a goal-directed worldwide cooperation with relatively hierarchic foreign control, whereas another part sketched a more horizontally organised network, that operated from within the Netherlands and that was engaged in strongly divergent activities with both international and local dimensions. Yet another series of files mainly referred to a smaller and more closed community consisting of young people who incited each other to take action, and who operated relatively autonomously in relation to the outside world.

It often does not take long before such characterisations end up in the public domain, whether or not this occurs via the regular judicial process. Dependent on the criminal investigation in question, journalists, commentators, and prosecutors subsequently quite often use recognisable terms, such as 'Al Qaeda', 'a terrorist organisation', 'imported terrorism', or 'radicalised polder boys'. Some people use specific terms to reach a target group with an uncomplicated story and simple sound bytes; others do so because their task is to arrive at a charge within the existing statutory framework that may result in a conviction. The question remains, however, whether these typifications will hold if we look at all the data in a different way.

As stated in the introduction, we decided – for the benefit of a systematic analysis of the selected files – to ignore the structures of the original criminal investigations and consider the selected *rough* investigation material *in its entirety*. This empirical material was subsequently restructured, so that related clusters of individual and joint activities could actually be examined together. In this way, we essentially elucidated and studied different social constellations in which relevant jihadi activities were performed: *not* isolated cases or groups of cases, but 'cooperations', 'clusters', or 'networks'. We analysed these on the basis of the following characteristics:

– elementary orientation in words and actions;
– socio-cultural composition;
– elementary factors of social binding;
– factors of power;
– structural characteristics and cohesion;
– interaction, formation of clusters, and collective radicalisation;
– organisation and allocation of tasks.

Several of these characteristics have already been used – in a different way – by scientists to categorise and typify *criminal* cooperations.[25] In the subsequent sections, we will describe jihadi cooperations on the basis of these seven characteristics.

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25 These are, for example: orientation and purpose (Schloenhardt, 1999), hierarchy (Fijnaut, Bovenkerk, Bruinsma & Van de Bunt, 1998), allocation of tasks and coordination (Kleemans et al., 1998), and cohesion among group members (Robbins & Judge, 2008).

3.2 Elementary orientation in words and actions

3.2.1 Involvement in international Salafist jihadism

We will start by discussing the essence: the elementary orientation of jihadism in the Netherlands. Involvement in a manifestation of international Salafist jihadism is without doubt the largest common denominator for *all* relevant actors, both in respect of preaching their ideology and performing their activities. Time after time, it appears that guiding extremists and many of their followers support the worldwide jihad, and that they experience this armed struggle as a collective and more or less pan-Islamic matter. By purifying Islam through the jihad, by returning to traditional values, and by realising a unity of *all* Muslims, the glorious past of the Islamic world will revive – this is at least the ideology that they allow themselves to be guided by. The majority of actors attach great value to being a part of a worldwide brotherhood of spiritual friends who are proud to place their lives in the service of this higher goal. This is also exactly in line with the intention by which this form of jihadism was launched by its forerunners in the 1990's. The fact that, in practice, some groups in our case files give more substance to local activities or jihadi actions does not affect the observation that their orientation is international in nature as well.

3.2.2 Information sources as orientation indicators

Communication – for the purpose of propagating an ideology, mobilisation, incitement to action, and recruitment – is an essential part of jihadism. As a result of this, the verbal, written, and audiovisual sources collected by the investigation services are the very first sources that provide a good picture of the orientation of the cooperations that we analysed. The tapped chat conversations, the tapped telephone conversations, the recordings of confidential communication, the wills and testaments, the fragments from various propaganda materials, the witness testimonies, and the official reports of interrogations – in short, multi-faceted primary sources – have provided a unique understanding of the views of the guiding actors. These sources have revealed patterns of extremely fundamentalist sympathies, transnational orientations, and terrorism-related intentions and actions. The central themes are: believers against unbelievers; saviours against suppressers; 'we' against 'them'.

In nearly all groups it is remarkable how easily radical actors utilise Salafist core concepts to reason, using large and over-simplified jumps: from a political-religious starting point to a social context that cannot be reconciled with it; and from a worldwide image of friends and enemies derived from this to a legitimisation for acts of violence. A witness who was a member of a group with a striking representation of locally radicalised young jihadis stated:

'They tell about *tawhid*[26] and then they will talk about the different concepts of *tawhid* […] In their eyes, nearly everyone is a [false] idol: politicians, government leaders, and kings. They will continue to do this until you are convinced of it. […] Once you believe this, they go on to the next form: what you are supposed to do with them, the *taghut*.[27]'

'In that period, they will make sure that you start to love the jihad, so that you reach the moment at which you will be prepared to bomb yourself in a bus or something like that.'

Books, propaganda material and documents that were found by the police during searches of premises also usually served to convey a similar ideological message. These orientation indicators often turned out to be either identical or to originate from the same sources. We may roughly divide them into: (1) writings from radical ideologists from the past; (2) interpretations of and supplements to these writings by currently active Islamist clergymen and leading jihadis; and (3) the audiovisual materials used to strengthen the impact of the message in these sources. Such collections were found to include – with great regularity – the traditions of the mediaeval Islamic philosopher Ibn Taymiyya, the writings of Sayyid Qutb, and more recent – documented – statements and speeches by famous figures such as Bin Laden and Al Zawahiri. The suspects furthermore remarkably often find theological support in the sermons delivered by Al Qaeda's indirect spokesmen in Great Britain, including Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza al-Masri. From his home base in London, the latter propagated the worldwide fight against the enemies of Islam even before the beginning of the new millennium (*Press Association*, 2006):

'We ask Muslims to do that, to be capable to do that, to be capable to bleed the enemies of Allah anywhere, by any means.'

'You can't do it by nuclear weapon, you do it by the kitchen knife, no other solution. You cannot do it by chemical weapons, you have to do it by mice poison. Like you imagine you have one small knife and you have a big animal in front of you.'

'The size of the knife – you cannot slaughter him with this. You have to stab him here and there until he bleeds to death. Then you can cut up the

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26 *Tawhid* – the confession of the oneness of God – is a theological concept, but it is politicised when people state that everyone is only accountable to God and that governments and courts only have authority if they perform their duties in accordance with the divine law (the sharia). Governments who fail to do this (democratic governments such as in the Netherlands) are referred to as *taghut* by jihadis (something or someone that is idolised or obeyed by Muslims at the expense of the devotion or obedience that is due to God). Obeying such governments would allegedly be contrary to the requirements of the *tawhid* and is consequently a matter of polytheism.

27 The 'idols': people who are idolised or obeyed at the expense of the devotion or obedience that is due to God.

meat as you like to, or leave it to the maggots. This is the first stage of jihad.'

A prominent part of the material that was seized usually consisted of video and sound fragments. These fragments regularly appeared to be designed in the 'production rooms' of Al Qaeda and other cooperations that share its doctrine, whether formally or not.[28] Other tapes and files originated from mainstream media, but their contents were often similar. They were mainly composed of scenes of gruesome atrocities and messages from the front, from jihadist missionary regions such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Algeria, and the Palestinian territories. The material offers a more comprehensive understanding of the polarising and violence-glorifying tendencies within the clusters studied, for – considered together – such fragments create the impression that there is a worldwide and existential struggle going on between Muslims and Islam as victims and their aggressive enemies. These images may incite a strong longing for revenge among viewers who identify with the alleged victims (Schmid, Jongman & Stohl, 2005; Silke, 2008). Various witnesses made statements about the effect such film fragments had on them:

'They will send you a great number of short war films about the Americans in Iraq, about Israel, about prisons, about Abu Ghraib, about Bosnia, and the war in Bosnia. And mainly short films showing children who have been killed [...]. I noticed that whenever I saw things about Iraq on TV, I felt an immense hatred against the Americans at those moments […] I also became annoyed about the Dutch government. I became very angry and frustrated […].'

At the same time, recordings of marching Muslim militants and of successful jihadist attacks suggest that an Islamic victory is a realistic prospect, at least for a community of Muslims that is prepared to take up arms and that allow themselves to be united by Salafist-jihadi principles. Many actors are inspired – in particular by the impressive images of the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon – to follow this manner of thinking in terms of 'black and white'. One of them literally stated the following:

'Since the turning point in history, better known as 9/11, a David and Goliath struggle has broken out between the followers of the truth and the followers of deceit.'

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28 Terrorist organisations in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia have distributed audiovisual propaganda material through the Internet on a large scale. For the weakened core group of Al Qaeda, in particular, this has been a way to continue to be relevant, and to continue to fulfil its inspirational function. Investigation services found many multimedia files that were produced by its propaganda organisation *As Sahab* with many actors in the Netherlands.

During the investigation of another suspect, the police found a text file with a poem. This poem is also a good illustration of the elementary orientation of many actors: the struggle of the pure faith against unbelief, against evil, injustice, dishonesty, and suffering. In addition, the recurring theme of an ideologically inspired confidence in final victory is, in our opinion, quite aptly expressed in this poem. The poem was, in fact, also found during investigations of several other suspects in the form of a sound file, and it could also be found on an easily accessible and much-visited public website.

'We are marching under the black flag
We do not fight for power or for bread
But for the word of Allah, no-one can harm us
Longing to die a martyr's death

We shall fight them with our tawhid
Martyrdom or victory; it is all the same to us
We shall purify area after area
We shall show them that we love death more than they love life

We shall create terror in their hearts with our takfir
We shall fight them with our guns and swords
As mujaheddin on the path of Allah, honourable and proud
We shall put an end to injustice and suffering

La ilaha illa Allah[29] is our weapon
Which we shall use to destroy the Taghut
We shall enlighten the earth with the sharia
Dishonesty shall be utterly subdued by the purity of our faith

We shall oust them from Philisteen[30] and Afghanistan
And Iraq and Andalusia[31] and the Philippines
And Bilad al-Harmain[32], do not doubt this
The world of Allah will cause the Kuffar[33] to disappear

The unbelievers make plans against us, attack us, and conspire against us
But don't they know that Allah is the best in devising plans?
Allah will verily turn their cunning schemes against them
And they may curse and swear to idols
But Allah will give the victory to the believers,
Even though the Kuffar will be disconcerted about it

29   'There is no other god but God'
30   'Palestine'
31   'Spain'
32   'Saudi Arabia'
33   'the unbelievers'

Allah will verily only give the victory to a believing people
That will condemn the Taghut and every other thing that is worshipped
He will strengthen them with angels, sakina and His Help
An oath he promised in the Qur'an to the people of perseverance

Live as Muwahid in the service of your Lord
Enlighten your heart with faith in His Oneness
And fight on His path, for you will return to Him
Those who believe and fight will verily be rejoice'

Finally, much visual material is illustrative of the major current jihadist theme of individual sacrifice. Various police teams have together found a substantial quantity of film images of jihad fighters sacrificing themselves. A recruited female actor declared that these films were used to convince people that the martyr's death is one of the highest attainable goals for a good Muslim:

'I also saw a film of a female Muslim in Palestine. She blew herself up. The next thing you saw in this film was her head lying on the ground. You saw a smile on her face and even her headscarf was still entirely in place on her head. They said about this image that she was happy and had died a martyr's death. I finally believed it myself as well.'

3.2.3   Activities and actions as orientation indicators

The concrete activities performed within the cooperations also provide information about the orientation of jihadism in the Netherlands. Terrorist and criminal acts, jihadist preparatory acts and supporting activities, specific trips, conversations, and meetings sketch a picture of clusters of people who shape a militant ideology with worldwide pretensions. This wide range of jihadi activities will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. In this section, we will only briefly mention several activities to the extent that they provide information about the elementary orientation of the cooperations analysed.

Several actors in our case files joined forces in order to enable sympathisers at home and abroad to realise jihadi acts of violence. In short, they *facilitate*.[34] A group of fundamentalist men, for instance, fulfilled a supporting role within a cross-border cooperation that made preparations for assassinations and bomb attacks against American targets and targets that were affiliated to the West. They mainly supported this ambition from the Netherlands by performing punishable acts, such as house burglaries, forgery of passports, and

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34   Earlier literature research of the WODC (Mascini & Verhoeven, 2005) into the support of the violent jihad distinguished facilitating activities for the purpose of (1) *nestling* (arranging access and accommodation for jihadis and recruitment), (2) *financing* (sponsoring and own fund raising), and (3) *communication*.

credit card fraud. Now and then, they also acted as important intermediaries and providers of logistic services. The relevant actors were followers of a charismatic coordinator, who initiated them into puritan religious beliefs and into an international network of *mujaheddin*. They worked together with both this key figure and with a potential perpetrator of attacks. This operational duo claimed to act in the name of the core group of Al Qaeda. In any case, it is certain that this duo maintained close ties with various allies of Al Qaeda in Europe. Moreover, both individuals have in the recent past been to Afghanistan and Pakistan, presumably to jihadi training camps, among other things.

In another cluster, people supported the holy war from the Netherlands by convincing friends and acquaintances within a trusted circle to follow an extremely orthodox Islamic doctrine. They subsequently incited them to use violence against unbelievers and renegades wherever in the world. Some people joined in by preaching or by distributing or translating extremist writings. Some people threatened dissenters, planned attacks, or actually carried them out. And a few people arranged contacts between potential fighters and foreign actors who organised jihad trips. The following fragment illustrates their orientation in this context. It is from a chat conversation between the recruiting actor 'X' and the interested sympathiser 'Y':

> Sympathiser Y:
> 'but I want to go to England. Abou hamza[35] is there and people from alqaeda [sic].'

> Actor X:
> 'I know. But you do not have any freedom there. Come with us to Pakistan. You will be trained fully there. Learn how to use weapons. To make bombs. Just everything. Then you can still come back.'

The driving forces within this cluster displayed their international aspirations through shadowy connections with operational actors from North African jihadi groups; by staying in training camps in Pakistan; *or* by being educated at schools – or Qur'an schools – in the Middle East. Although these individuals now and then tried to put their violent ideology into practice abroad, they mainly aimed their intolerance – sometimes using violence – at Dutch society. The following witness testimony is an illustration of the way in which the armed fight against alleged enemies of Islam may also be waged in the Netherlands.

> 'I asked why he wanted so many weapons. He said that he wanted them to kill those two persons. He also said that [name] and [name] should not

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35   Presumably 'Abu Hamza al-Masri'.

be allowed to go on living, because they were making Islam seem ridiculous. They said things about Islam that were offensive.'

Other groups, on the other hand, avoid behaviour that could draw the attention of investigation services. For instance, a cluster including the most prominent and steering persons from North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula manifests itself within the Netherlands in a mainly *service-oriented* manner with respect to the international jihadi movement. With this intention, spiritual and physical mentors mobilise, teach and train local Muslim youth. It is not only their intention to send these people to various war zones or free ports for militants, they also provide facilities for fighters from elsewhere by providing them with necessities, such as forged or 'look-alike' identity cards,[36] other types of documents, accommodation, or money. They usually obtain the funds for these actions from criminal activities. This cluster, which to a significant extent is composed of followers of the Al Qaeda-affiliated Algerian organisation GSPC now residing outside of Algeria, has produced and has also kept sound recordings of wills of martyrs and other individuals, and declarations of intent. Finally, the police have evidence that at least one of these actors is preparing dozens of men to carry out an innovative terrorist attack abroad.

3.2.4   *Involvement in a movement*

All cooperations studied consequently contribute in various degrees and in various ways to the operationalisation of international Salafist jihadism. Why all the cooperations studied, and all their actors, contribute to a broader movement – and therefore in fact are part of this broader movement – may be explained on the basis of three general factors that are typical of the orientation of these networks.

Ideological flexibility
Firstly, it was found that – within the cooperations studied – contacts were established among jihadis with different group affiliations and ideologies that were sometimes difficult to reconcile. In particular, the most purposively operating extremists appeared to display a certain ideological flexibility if it concerned the establishment of connections with partners that they could use for the fight. If they wanted to achieve something in the context of the highest good – the alleged worldwide struggle between believers and unbelievers – and they had the opportunity to work together with partners who actually operated on the basis of a different doctrine, they tolerated one another remarkably well, and they were prepared to work together as the

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36   A look-alike identity card is an authentic identity card from someone who looks a bit like the person who uses the document illegally to prove his identity.

occasion arose. In doing so, the groups proved to be less fundamentalist than their rigid and at some points contradictory ideologies prescribed.

An example from one of our files is illustrative of this tendency. In this case, a North African immigrant presented himself as a representative of the GSPC. In the capacity of a spiritual leader within a facilitating cooperation, his activities included dealing in drugs. This is the way in which he raised the funds that were partly intended for international jihadi objectives. Irrespective of his loyalty to the GSPC, for this purpose he worked closely together with a coordinator of drug shipments, who – as an exile with a terrorist background – still maintained friendly ties with the leaders of the GIA. Although members of both militant Salafist groups would want to kill one another in Algeria – mainly because they seriously disagree about the violent use of *takfir* on fellow citizens – these individuals joined forces in the Netherlands for the benefit of a shared programme. While the fact of their working together would be deemed betrayal or even apostasy in the motherland of these heartland-oriented actors, it appeared to be just taken for granted in the relatively lenient atmosphere of the jihadi diaspora here in the Netherlands.

This phenomenon of ideological flexibility is fascinating. In many places elsewhere in the world, the very slightest ideological *differences in emphasis* often result in competition among factions of jihadi terrorists. Historical precedents – such as in Algeria at the end of the nineties or currently in Iraq – furthermore show that militant Salafist cooperations are sometimes abruptly divided by internally conflicting views. In some cases, such a situation may even escalate into a violent fratricidal struggle. This picture is, however, not by definition true here in the Netherlands. It is obvious that dogmatic differences between individual actors and cooperations that are active in the Netherlands may blur, and that – in certain cases – actors are prepared to work together for the benefit of common activities that transcend borders and groups. Superordinate goals consequently appear to be able to unite them.[37]

As a result of this ideological flexibility (or inconsistency), actors in the ideological vanguard of jihadi cooperations in practice also involve *non-jihadi* outsiders in international Salafist jihadism. These people do not comply in the least with the superiority myth of their 'in-group'. Although such relationships are contrary to their isolationist doctrine, guiding actors often legitimise their choices by performing ideological balancing acts. They, for instance, refer to external contacts – in nearly all cases Sunni Muslims – as a 'necessary evil'. In this way, jihadi cooperations in the Netherlands frequently used the services of less religiously-minded criminals, including credit card fraudsters and traffickers in human beings, but also a passport forger who was addicted to cocaine. These are Muslims who belonged to an unorthodox and forbidden 'out-group' according to the takfir principles that are preached internally. Jihadi Salafists justify these types of relationships,

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37 See also Sherif (1966) on the phenomenon that superordinate goals, which transcend groups, may reduce intergroup conflict and enable groups that are in conflict to join together.

among other things, by arguing that in a state of a war between themselves and the outside world, anything goes.[38] This does not alter the fact, however, that arguments and ideological differences of opinion also regularly arise within jihadi groups. In other words, flexible attitudes may suddenly change, and this change is not only associated with the presence or absence of attractive higher goals, but also with the broader phenomenon of opportunistic behaviour by actors.

Receptivity

A second factor is that many actors who are active in the cooperations studied actually do *not* have any coherent extremist views, but are *receptive* to them. This is the reason, to a significant degree, that these cooperations can grow in the Netherlands, and that they can make such a significant contribution to the international jihadi movement. It is true that receptive individuals sometimes already have fragmented knowledge (for instance, from the Internet), experiences, and are critical of society even before entering jihadi circles, but they subsequently mainly allow themselves to be guided in this by role models.

Virtually all these receptive actors are converts without Islamic backgrounds, second generation Muslims – or other people who became Muslims in the West – but also Muslims who had only just recently immigrated and who had hardly, if at all, been in contact with radical influences in their – often North African – countries of origin. On the other hand, various heartland-oriented actors also proved to be receptive. The mechanisms by which these individuals from the broad categories described above (see Section 2.3) enter the movement, however, do differ to a certain extent.

We found that actors from North African immigrant communities who grew up here or who derived their perception of the world – to a large extent – from experiences in the West, were just like converts without Islamic backgrounds: usually relatively young, vulnerable, and sometimes also without any real perception of cultural or social roots. The actors concerned include, among others, criminals or addicts who felt attracted to new opportunities, who longed for a pure lifestyle, or who wanted to seize clear goals in life. Others, for instance, longed for a form of re-Islamisation and – from this need – they looked for a structured ideology which could help them in making choices. In any case, for these actors the original lack of an internalised ideological frame of reference repeatedly resulted in their being receptive in specific situations to stimuli from leading, often heartland-oriented role models. In this way, their radicalisation processes, which had sometimes already commenced, received crucial impulses, as a result of which the cooperations acquired new members.

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38   In jihadi jargon there would be a conflict between *Dar al-Islam* (the house of Islam) and *Dar al-Kufr* (the house of disbelief). If a Muslim is threatened by unbelievers, is held prisoner, or if he is at war with them, he may deviate from his religious rules of life. The terms used to refer to this behaviour are *tsafir* or *takiyya*.

Among the heartland-oriented individuals, there were also those who had been ideologically irresolute and open to persuasion. But, contrary to the actors described above, they belonged to various age categories. This group of individuals mainly consisted of asylum seekers, illegal foreigners, and sinners from traditional Muslim countries. They allowed themselves to be guided by actors who knew how to turn their expertise and experience from the Islamic world efficiently into structured notions and controlling activities. Another fact that was sometimes decisive was that these figures met essential needs, such as the need for a passport, housing, sustenance, as well as giving meaning to life and social status.

A 'grey zone'
A third factor that is of importance and by which the cooperations may be characterised is the participation of actors who were more or less *unfamiliar* with the ideological orientation and with the plans of the jihadi vanguard. In short, some actors appeared to be less conscious of their contribution to the international Salafist-jihadi worldwide struggle. Now and then, they were completely unaware of the plans of their extremist brothers. In other cases, they – according to their own statements – did not take the information they received very seriously or they assumed that it was just 'tough talk'.
As a result of this, the 'grey zones' of jihadi cooperations include 'ordinary' criminals, quiet sympathisers, acquaintances, relatives, and institutions that, often without being aware of this, contribute actively to the jihadi movement. Their contribution is often of a communications, logistic, or financial nature. In the light of the ideological flexibility in the jihadi practice described above, this observation is not strange. It is also characteristic of the diffuse and decentralised character of the jihadi movement in and related to the Netherlands (see Section 3.8).

In summary, we may conclude that, within the cooperations studied, the actors aim at super-ordinate goals that exceed their individual ideologies. The generalist orientation of these cooperations, focused on the worldwide struggle between Muslims and enemies of Islam, has made it possible for actors with different ideological backgrounds to unite. As a result of their – in this respect – ideological flexibility, the jihadi cooperations attract people with different ideologies, motives, and goals, who subsequently contribute to the more or less pan-ideological international Salafist-jihadi movement. Contributions by actors who are receptive to jihadi notions, and also by outsiders, have increased the collective capacities of this movement.

3.3 Socio-cultural composition of cooperations

What about the socio-cultural composition of jihadi cooperations? It is clear that the Salafist-jihadi movement attaches great value to one religious movement (Islam) and one language (Arabic). This quickly gives the impression that we are dealing with a homogeneous and closed world. The collective identity experienced by many individuals as partners of an international community of pure brothers supports the assumption that jihadi circles consist of people with corresponding socio-cultural backgrounds. But is this assumption correct? In order to be able to describe the jihadi clusters studied by us as accurately as possible, in this section we will use the following characteristics: country of origin, history and ethnological relationship, language and culture, age, gender, and religion.[39] Information about these characteristics was recorded in the files we studied.

3.3.1 *Origin*

First of all, it is notable that within each cooperation the majority of people had North African backgrounds. Within one cooperation, this majority consisted of people of Algerian origin; in other cooperations this majority mainly consisted of people with Moroccan roots. To some extent, actors with corresponding national or geographical backgrounds (the Maghreb) apparently sought one another's company (clustering). Nevertheless, these groups always included people from other places in the world: often originating from the Middle East and Europe; sporadically from the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Horn of Africa, or Latin America. Actors from Europe, including Dutch and French converts, often fulfil other roles than, for instance, Arabian heartland-oriented actors, such as Syrians and Iraqi. But still, the investigation files revealed that these converts without Muslim backgrounds measure up to their North African actors when it comes to their jihadi participation or acceptance by the Salafist in-group. From statements of actors and witnesses recorded by the police, we concluded that they were full members of a community of brothers that assisted one another and who were there for one another.

Although it is true that the cooperations are relatively mixed, the investigation material did *not* include any actors from countries in Central Asia and Southeast Asia, such as Pakistan or Indonesia, whereas it is known that people from these countries are definitely represented in the international jihadi movement (see, for instance, AIVD, 2006a). We cannot, however, say with

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39 According to Horowitz (2000), it is true that the socio-cultural identity may be measured against indicators such as skin colour, language, religion, and country of origin, but in this context it mainly concerns a sense of relatedness on the basis of a faith in a shared origin. Hooimeijer & Van Vliet (2004) are of the opinion that, in respect of the socio-cultural composition of groups, the issue concerns more than the characteristics analysed by us. They also include political views, lifestyles, and living habits. In this study, we have limited ourselves to the abovementioned aspects, because the files studied by us did not contain sufficient information about other relevant characteristics.

certainty whether individuals from these regions were less active on Dutch
soil during the research period, or whether these findings must be attributed
to the fact that we focused on a selection of closed criminal investigations.

3.3.2   History, language, and culture

The actors in the different cooperations definitely do not originate from the
same continents, nor can they simply be characterised on the basis of a com-
mon history, language or culture. The true fanatics within these groups,
intoxicated by fundamentalism, identify with the history, language, and tra-
ditions of the first Islamic generations. In reality, however, it is more an idea
that binds them than a real collective heritage. And in a more general sense,
even the modern Islamic world is not a source of collective socio-cultural
identity.
Firstly, the traditional Islamic world has become strongly fragmented over
the centuries (Baali, 2005), as a result of which it is not, or no longer, able to
provide an unambiguous frame of reference. As a result of this, individuals of
North African origin can hardly identify with societies in the Middle East –
and vice versa.
Secondly, not all persons concerned actually grew up in, or were familiar
with, Muslim countries. In the Dutch jihadi clusters, for instance, there were
not only migrants, illegal foreigners, and asylum seekers, but also converts
without Islamic backgrounds: Muslim migrants who were largely raised in
the Netherlands and children of Islamic migrant workers who were born
here. These people appear to be hardly or only vaguely aware of their socio-
cultural roots. In addition, they often only have a poor knowledge of Arabic
or no knowledge at all. Partly because of this, this status-elevating language
of communication spoken by Salafist-jihadis is, in practice, fairly often
replaced by Berber languages, English, French, or simply Dutch. These lan-
guages are, however, frequently peppered with status-elevating Arabic slo-
gans.

3.3.3   Age and gender

In each of the jihadi cooperations studied, the ages of the people who were
active in them varied widely. In this respect as well, there is clustering of
older people, or the opposite, of young people, but as far as the ages of the
actors are concerned, the cooperations are never homogeneous, not even
approximately so. Groups with relatively many young people or young adults
were invariably mixed with older actors. And in the groups with relatively
many middle-aged people, there were also younger actors who were active.

Insofar as the ages of the actors were known,[40] the investigation files stated that they varied from 16 to 48 years of age.

In the jihadi clusters, it appeared to be mainly men that were active, but jihadism turned out to be by no means an exclusively male affair. In a few cooperations, women hardly played a role – or at least they did not come into the picture during the criminal investigation. But there were also cooperations in which women fulfilled a supporting role, and in one cooperation certain women actually performed noticeable jihadi activities. We will discuss the role of women in jihadi clusters in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.3.4   Religion

The only aspect in which the cooperations studied were really homogeneous was religion. Apart from some dubious cases, all actors were Sunni Muslims, or had been converted to Sunni Muslims.[41] As far as is known, this also applied to the criminals and service providers who contributed to the jihadi fight without being particularly interested in it or even without knowing that that was what they were doing. With that, the ideological flexibility within the international Salafist-jihadi movement in the Netherlands seems to have rather rough boundaries: opportunistic alliances with non-religious criminals, atheist revolutionaries, and Jewish or Christian militants were not found in the files. But, of course, our data also does not exclude the possibility that such contacts are established now and then after all, through the greyer external zones of jihadi cooperations.

In summary, we conclude that, in the cooperations analysed, there was always a clear over-representation of men with North African backgrounds. Within these cooperations, however, there were always clusters of people with *other* corresponding socio-cultural backgrounds. Within the cooperations, there were, for instance clusters of actors from the Middle East, young people, older people, and women – all of whom were active. But also individual actors with completely different backgrounds were tolerated. All in all, the cooperations found in our case files revealed a relatively wide range of socio-cultural diversity and tolerance. They derived their capacities from people with varied backgrounds and ages, and 'birds of different feathers' (more on this in Chapter 5). He who is a Sunni Muslim, leans to this faith or converts to it *and* who – in that capacity – appears to have jihadi sympathies, fundamentalist zeal, or who – in the eyes of insiders – has something else to offer the

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40   It often happens that actors use false identities and false dates of birth. The investigation services were mostly able to trace the countries of origin of these people, but they were sometimes less certain about their ages.
41   Salafism is a Sunni movement. Shiites attach less value to the uniqueness of the Prophet Muhammad and also attribute prophetic qualities to his twelve descendants (imams). Sunnis, on the other hand, reject the view that Muhammad has divine successors. They only follow the tradition of the Prophet and they consider the four leaders who succeeded him (the rightful caliphs) to be merely earthly guardians of his heritage.

struggle, may be able to establish connections with a jihadi cooperation, and may be included in the internationally-oriented Salafist-jihadi movement.

3.4   Elementary factors of social binding

It is thus apparent that a common socio-cultural background can contribute to a feeling of solidarity with other group members for only some of the actors in jihadi cooperations. In the cooperations studied, a sense of belonging to a group was largely determined by other factors. In this section, we will consider several notable factors that cause people to feel attracted to, to be involved in, or to long to be involved in jihadi clusters, and to be willing to fulfil an active role in them. People may, for instance, have committed themselves to such groups on the basis of shared interests, concerns, needs, convictions, qualities, idols and ideals. The combination of factors that played a part in this commitment varied: by actor, by relationship, and by cluster. The degree to which an actor felt committed to a jihadi group or cluster was also different for each person.

3.4.1   *Religion and religious activities*

As briefly pointed out above, all actors were able to recognise one another in a shared religion. In general religion is an important binding factor, especially for immigrants (Hoekstra, 2009). Religion provides a shared system of key values, a shared religious identity, and – in particular – shared activities. The actors from our case files were able to identify with one another in the performance of their religious activities: saying prayers together, visiting mosques, reading the Qur'an, celebrating religious feasts, fasting, eating, and professing their beliefs. Such corresponding customs and routines promoted relationships among people who otherwise had little in common.
In this way, various Muslims, who – mainly with criminal motives – forged documents or trafficked human beings, seemed to become involved in a network because they – coincidentally – participated in the same religious community with jihadi actors. This often concerned fellow believers who sought contact with one another, for example in asylum seekers centres or in the circle of illegal foreigners. They met one another – sometimes indirectly – at places where religious acts were performed, such as mosques or sanctuaries, or on the routes leading to these places, or at places where people gathered after mosque visits. In this way, they won one anothers' confidence and became aware of one anothers' abilities. A shared religion consequently not only formed a strong basis for establishing further contacts and developing relationships of trust for actors who belonged to the ideological vanguards of

jihadi cooperations, but also for people who moved in their peripheral zones.[42]

To fanatic jihadis who operated in the 'social centres' of the cooperations, the shared religion functioned even more as a dominant binding factor. People who moved in these circles participated in joint prayer sessions or in meetings for in-depth study and discussion.. They studied Islamic writings, debated about religious issues, and listened to the same Islamic clergymen. For some of them, the evening prayer in a Salafist mosque gave enough food for thought to meet one another afterwards for a political-religious discussion session. Others avoided regular spiritual authorities altogether, and shaped an even more radical collective perception of faith in their own way. Many young people in the hard core of one cluster, for instance, embraced the fundamentalist sermons of a heartland-oriented actor who presented himself as an expert. According to a witness, they saw him as their imam, even though the man did not have any theological authority in the eyes of an average mosque-goer.

3.4.2   Ideology

In jihadi clusters, the binding element was not merely the Islamic faith, but mainly the ideology that followed from it. As argued above, the cooperations studied were all focused on the worldwide struggle between Muslims and the alleged enemies of Islam. This orientation is the binding element between actors who became involved in the more or less pan-ideological international Salafist-jihadi movement from different ideological backgrounds, or from an incoherent (copy-paste) ideology. In most cooperations, only a small minority of all actors were fully convinced of the ideology in its pure form preached there. Most actors mainly had affinity with specific *aspects* of that doctrine. Given this fact, it would perhaps be better to regard the transcending internationally-oriented Salafist-jihadi ideology as a source of *several* binding factors. Within all the cooperations the members shared the feeling that Muslims were being wronged all over the world. According to experts, this theme of worldwide injustice to Muslims often resonates with personal experiences (Sageman, 2008). This is, however, much less evident from the source material available to us.[43] Most actors did not necessarily feel wronged as *individuals,* but the idea that the *group* to which they belonged was being wronged

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42   This, of course, makes these religion-related meeting places also suitable for recruitment activities. For more information on this subject, see also Section 3.6.2.

43   This does not surprise us, though. The literature on protest behaviour and collective actions repeatedly shows that militant behaviour, taking action, and supporting all sorts of protests are indeed associated with relative group deprivation, whereas this readiness to take action is not associated with relative individual deprivation. See, for example Kelly Kelly 1994; Koomen & Fränkel, 1992; and De Weerd, 1999. This relationship between group deprivation and the intention to take action becomes stronger as people identify more strongly with the relevant group. See, for example Kelly & Breitlinger, 1995; De Weerd, 1999; and De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999.

was widely supported and was propogated further within the cooperations.[44] It was found that actors also explicitly named the West or Western democracy as the common enemy, which brought them together and intensified the feeling of solidarity. In the cooperations, the West was usually seen as the instigator of the crisis Islam was said to be going through, and as the culprit causing the suffering of Muslims in all corners of the world.

In addition, the collective aim to overthrow the Establishment was also an important ideological element that strengthened solidarity among the group members. The idea that they could actually overthrow 'the system' intrigued many actors from the cooperations studied, and incited them to make great efforts to achieve this goal. Nevertheless, only a few actors appeared to have formed concrete ideas about the new order that was to be established. The Caliphate as a future system continued to be an abstact idea. In that context, opposition against the existing social organisation appeared to link the actors much more than shared views of an alternative system. For some of the actors, the jihadi ideology mainly contained points of departure on the basis of which they hoped to be able to straighten things out for themselves after a stage of life in which they were unhappy or which they experienced as sinful. Others appeared to identify with the rebellious and action-oriented nature of this ideology during an extreme stage of adolescence.

Although the central ideology in the cooperations studied was consequently not shared by all actors in all its facets, many of them actually drew a feeling of solidarity from it, both with acquaintances in shared networks and with 'brothers' in the broader jihadi movement. Everyone who was active in this movement contributed to the holy fight from his own background and with his own motives. And it was exactly this fight that *really* counted to many of them. Actors derived a collective identity from it: the idea of participating in a grand narrative, sharing a common view, and a common enemy. These elements created solidarity and strengthened the ties among the actors. This is, of course, less important in the peripheral zones of jihadi cooperations. In these zones, other binding factors were important.

3.4.3   Role models and guiding individuals

'He is great! Don't you agree?' Just like football supporters and followers of political parties, Salafist-jihadis feel drawn to one another in admiration for or in receptivity to the same role models or guiding actors. Their international idols – including for example Osama bin Laden, Abu Qatada, and Abu Hamza al Masri – as well as key figures in the local groups who have more actual authority contribute to the collective identity within jihadi cooperations in this way. Besides bringing people together physically, they also link

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44   In this context, it is both a matter of indoctrination and of group processes among people who incite one another to action. We will discuss this in more detail in the next chapter.

them because they set trends and teach mores. Their conduct also encourages imitation in the Netherlands – and creates points of common recognition within extremist (youth) cultures. If a world-famous football player is wearing and promoting a new brand of football shoes, other football fanatics will follow his example. If charismatic jihadis avoid any contact with unbelievers *and* advise against it, their most fanatic followers will conform to this. In this way consensus is created on a specific standard. Witness testimonies pointed out that various customs were created in this way, for example with regard to clothing and behaviour, and resulted in the fact that the ties among group members were strengthened and the ties with the outside world actually became weaker.

3.4.4   *Activities*

To many actors, joint activities were the reason for and gave sense to the – jihadi – gatherings. These activities consolidated the existing jihadi ties and promoted the creation of new contacts and relationships of trust. Some terrorism experts have pointed out that acts of violence are often committed by young, rash people who are looking for adventure, risk, and physical expeditions (Atran, 2008). We observed a similar orientation towards action in our case files: as a factor of relationship and – to some actors – as an expression of a culture glorifying violence.
The activities with the largest and broadests capacity of social binding were, however, usually more subtle in nature. These activities also attracted individuals who were less keen on violence or action. Actors carpooled to political-religious meetings, visited lectures, mosques, or prayer sessions together in small groups, and studied the Qur'an or the Arabic language together. Hardened jihadis as well as radicalising individuals glorified their idols together – and they taunted their declared enemies in the same way. But an afternoon of doing odd jobs together also contributed to the sense of belonging to the group. Irrespective of whether the activities were directly, indirectly, or hardly related to the holy war, the various joint activities strengthened the jihadi cooperations anyway. Chapter 4 of this report will give an exclusive and more detailed discussion of the full range of activities within the jihadi movement in and related to the Netherlands.

3.4.5   *Binding needs and motives*

The strong ideological connotation of jihadi cooperations attracts individuals with various binding needs and motives. These actors often do not just join such groups – or at least not *only* – because of a preference for the dominant views and activities of these groups, but sometimes also because of the social advantages they gain by this choice. Most people seek some degree of solidarity, motivated by a need for security, safety, structure (Meertens, Prins &

Doosje, 2006), status, meaning in life, and identity. Militant religious groups are able to satisfy such needs. In our case files, younger members especially appeared to attach importance to these types of advantages. This could be inferred, among other things, from a fragment from the life story of the accused 'X' that was recorded by the researchers:

> X was born in the Netherlands. When he was 4 years old, he moved to Morocco. He went to school and made a lot of friends. At the time, he knew nothing of Islam. When he was 17 years of age, X returned to the Netherlands. His mother remained behind in Morocco with the younger children. He went to live with his father […]. Many Turks and Moroccans live in this area. He had a tough time in […]. He was lonely and he did not know anyone. He had to go to school and he also had to work. He had to take care of himself: do the shopping, cooking, and washing. And he hardly spoke any Dutch.

> In […], X quit school; on the one hand because it was difficult and on the other hand because he became increasingly more interested in Islam. Out of loneliness, he often went to mosque to get to know people and to make friends. Through another mosque-goer, X became acquainted with other boys who had already formed a jihadi cluster.

But older people also turned out to be receptive to the social temptations of jihadi commmunities. In one group, for instance, there were many actors who were staying in the Netherlands illegally. Many of them were left to their own devices in a country where they did not know the language and the customs. Being 'in the same boat', in a corresponding social position, they found relief, a 'warm blanket' of welcome, and a new meaning in life.

3.4.6 Material needs and interests

Material gain did not play a central role, but it presumably did play a secundary role as a binding factor. Illegal foreigners especially, with a chronic lack of financial security, housing, or legally valid documents, were likely to take their primary neccesities of life into consideration when they sought social contact with ideologically-driven clusters (see Section 5.3.1). These clusters regularly include people who can arrange work, housing, contacts, and documents, and in addition to this, they sometimes also provide specific culturally-based services. One authoritative jihadi stated during his interrogation:

> 'If someone has died, for instance, I help them wash and clean the body so that the body can be brought back to the country of origin. I do this for free. One good turn deserves another.'

As a result of these kinds of binding factors, it may also occur that illegal for-eigners – following in other people's tracks – participate in a jihadi network unintentionally, somewhat ignorantly or reluctantly. It is this dependant position that contributes to their being receptive to directional influences – or to requests to do something in return.

It is inevitable that the prospect of financial gain now and then also binds people from conventional criminal circles to jihadi cooperations. It probably concerns sporadic ties here, which largely occur behind the scenes of our case files. By far the majority of terrorism-related criminal activities in the Netherlands were, however, committed by people who act voluntarily and who have ideological, social (friendly gestures), or material motives to do so.

3.5 Factors of power

Following on from other agencies (including AIVD, 2004a), we also found that there were *no* administrative or institutionalised power relationships within the jihadi clusters. Some actors were, however, relatively capable of influenc-ing their social environment. Their power did not so much rest on what Weber (1947) refers to as the ability to force others to do something against their will, for example by applying clear rules, but more on the two other forms of power described by him. The first form of power is charisma, which is based on sympathy and expertise. The second form of power is legitimisa-tion. In applying this form of power, the guiding actors mainly emphasised the *advantages* of the desired behaviours.

On the basis of the classic division into five forms of power by French and Raven (1959), in which the forms of power referred to by Weber are divided even futher, we will outline the most important manifestations of social power in jihadi cooperations. The five forms of power are expert power, refer-ent power, legitimate power, reward power, and coercive power.

3.5.1 *Expert power*

In the studied cooperations, the actors who had most authority derived their influence – without exception – from their knowledge of Islamic religious doctrine and the associated actions. In this context, they effectively used 'expert power'. In a Western context, their expertise was given extra dimen-sion, because authoritative actors were nearly always heartland oriented. Their knowledge of classical Arabic was, for instance, found to command respect from Muslims who had been raised outside the Islamic motherland. In addition, these guiding 'teachers' or 'spiritual leaders' sometimes also relied on a jihadi past, participation in an armed conflict, or other relevant experiences. Those who attach value to their competence *and* their message – and are thus receptive – develop into followers to a greater or lesser extent.

However, guiding individuals did not have any grip derived from expert power on others. It was by no means the case that all jihadis with expert power had theological backgrounds. They invariably compensated for this by traits such as charisma and persuasiveness. A suspect from our case files stated the following during an interrogation:

> 'Actually, I could not refuse [him] anything, for he had such a charisma that he had a certain dominance over the people he interacted with.'

And the investigation team recorded the following about a spiritual leader in another case:

> 'He derives his leadership from his knowledge of the Qur'an. […] He was a spiritual leader. He also preached in the house […] and he approached people with a message like 'I am going to tell you something about the faith' and he frequently did this in, for instance, asylum seekers centres. And you should understand that out of a group of 100 people, there will always be some people of whom he thought: I can use that one, I can manipulate that one, and I can indoctrinate that one.'

The power of players who had social dominance on the basis of their expertise was consequently by no means absolute, but their message was. The ideology they preached was based on the Salafist principle that true Muslims must literally obey the Qur'an and the *hadith*. As a result of this, they pretended to propagate a message that was coming directly from God, without any further interpretation.
Power is and will always be a relative concept. In jihadi cooperations, there were usually several actors with expert power. There was also some kind of hierarchy noticeable in this power. The advanced pupil of a teacher who was considered to be a specialist presented himself as a teacher of a cluster of followers who were less well informed. These followers regarded the pupil as a teacher as well. As a reward for their diligence, the people who attended his lessons were sometimes allowed to also attend the lessons taught by his own, more expert master. This was presented and experienced as a privilege. In this way, fanatical, but less authoritative actors from jihadi clusters influenced others in turn, and they were capable of expanding the network even further. On the other hand, it also occurred that actors were seen as teachers without them presenting themselves as such.

3.5.2   Referent power

Especially in relationships with young people and young adults, certain older individuals regularly reaped the fruits of the 'referent power' that followed from their exemplary role or their being an idol within the jihadi (youth) cul-

ture. Some people identified with them to such an extent that they adopted their behaviour and beliefs, whether entirely or partly. Receptive people often considered it a privilege to be allowed to associate with their seniors and, because of this, they actively attempted to cultivate their favour or continue to be in their favour. One or two young followers even demonstrated an almost unlimited admiration for their role models and literally attempted to become like them in every respect. One of the witnesses stated the following about such a follower:

> 'He wrote in a chat to me 'this is my teacher, my leader'. He then showed me a photo of [actor] […] I think he wanted to be famous for being a terrorist and wanted to belong to [the group of that teacher] […].'

This source of power had hardly any effect, if at all, on many other actors who were either peripherally or fully involved.

3.5.3   Legitimate power

Many individuals in our case files appeared to accept the power relationships and allocations of roles in their respective clusters as they were, because for them they were 'naturally' consistent with specific internalised values. Actors from whom they accepted direction on this basis had a form of 'legitimate power'. In this context, culturally determined values were found to be important factors. Similar to ordinary communities or societies, where it is generally accepted that older people prescribe how young people must behave, influential jihadis in the Netherlands are often older than their followers. An actor from a jihadi groups illustrated this stereotypical picture on the basis of the following personal experience:

> '[X] has many acquaintances here, whom he looks upon as his children. These people look upon him as their father. He can simply call someone to pick him up.'

> '[X] was capable of calling people, for instance, if he wanted to have food or if he had to go somewhere.'

In addition, guiding persons presumably also often drew legitimate power from a range of very specific culturally determined characteristics on the basis of which they derived their status, including the male gender, a relatively high intelligence, and physical or verbal strength. Actors in jihadi circles were furthermore inclined to assign more authority to people with a political-religious background or with a jihadi past.
The legitimacy of the power of guiding actors is often emphasised by their followers, because they address them by the title of *sheik* or because they

accept that these individuals perform rituals which – according to the rules of Islam – may only be performed by Islamic clergymen who *really* possess this legitimate power. The following statement of a witness illustrates this:

> 'Yes, normally, the marriage should be contracted by an imam, but they see him as their imam.'

3.5.4   Reward power

'Paradise, a heavenly garden that is reserved for prophets and martyrs' (Hassan, 2001). Various jihadis derived a form of 'reward power' from propagating messages like this. With such messages, they suggested that they could mediate a place in paradise, at least, for those who conform to their criteria of good jihadism. Trustworthy individuals, who also frequently possessed expert power, were found to take advantage of this myth. A young man, who was taken in by an Algerian recruiter for the jihad, spoke about his intention to die a martyr as follows:

> 'Our Lord professed that, if we can show patience, he will bring us to paradise. For martyrdom is much appreciated by God.'

> 'As a martyr, I will have intercession with our Lord for seventy members of my family. And for you as well. Our Lord will bring all of us to paradise. Dear dad, dear mom, pray for me. All of you, pray for me so that God will accept my martyrdom.'

Guiding actors may also provide their followers with countless other advantages and rewards. We already discussed many of these in the section on social binding factors (3.4). This list of advantages and rewards includes social needs (such as friendships and membership of a close group), structure, meaning in life, and concrete necessities of life (such as work, housing, and documents). But they may also choose to reward their loyal adherents with privileges or positions that increase their status within a network. Below, by way of illustration, are two fragments from witness testimonies and one fragment from an interview with an investigating officer:

> 'He said: I have left my family behind in [country]. In the beginning, I missed them very much, but my brothers are now my new family. And he loved his brothers very much […]'

> 'I think he is in the same boat as [actor X] and that he has let himself be influenced by […] because he was seeking security in some way.'

'They were illegal. He arranged accommodation for them; he arranged documents for them so that they could go to a temporary employment agency; there they registered and they could work […] a great many people we spoke later on said "[actor Y], he is a social worker to us".'

3.5.5 Coercive power

As the opposite of reward power, 'coercive power' is a source of individual dominance that is seen less frequently within jihadi clusters. However, now and then actors complied with requirements, fulfilled wishes, or lived up to expectations of the demanding party for fear of negative consequences. Although there is presumably no group that has a formal or efficient sanctions system, some individuals cleverly took advantage of the god-fearing attitude of others. They preached the wrath of God to anyone who deviated from the right path that they pointed out to them. The partner of a potential attacker testified as follows:

'I remember that, when we were in Afghanistan, we had gathered on the occasion of the feast of the […] in the mosque which [actor X] and I had built. [Jihadist Y] spoke through a microphone of a speaker [sic]; he told us that we should not reveal ourselves to the kafir[45] and the police; if we did not obey, our punishment would be that [we] would become kafir ourselves and that we would be punished even harder by God.'

Occasionally, influential actors threatened to impose penalties and reprisals on people who acted wrongly. A Salafist-jihadi teacher from one cooperation, for instance, demanded financial gifts for the jihad from young people who had missed their lessons. His followers, however, appeared to rarely if ever comply with this demand, probably because of the informal and voluntary atmosphere. In addition, actors who were in the position to expel others from the group against their will could raise fear of banishment and commanded submission as a result. In one of the clusters, this form of coercion was also used to force people to conform to the ideology of the group. In this context, a complicated psychological mechanism was used: on the one hand, actors were cast out of the group if they questioned the ideology propagated in this group; on the other hand, they could not leave the group without consequences because they would then be regarded as renegades with all that that entailed. Any objections in the group were thus nipped in the bud, as a result of which leading actors had considerable control over their closest followers.

'[…] he said to me "if you don't like what I am trying to tell you here, what are you doing here then?" or at least words to that effect […].'

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45   'unbelievers'

> '[…] someone who leaves their group is a renegade and you are allowed to kill this person, at least fight him; that is how they think.'

Once, a spiritual leader from yet another cluster pronounced a death sentence in a *fatwa* against an actor who had embezzled very valuable items from the network. Also, several actors from our case files exercised coercive power simply because they acted in a violent or threatening manner. But to others such explicit threats were not even essential to maintain their position of power. These individuals had such an intimidating *personality* that it was clear to their followers in advance: breach of loyalty would be followed by revenge, physical or otherwise. Even the investigating officers were sometimes impressed by these individuals. One of the officers interviewed spoke about the way in which the physically strong suspect 'X' inspired fear and awe in people:

> 'After the first interview, one of my best police detectives [team member] came back. He said that he had been really afraid of this fellow. This man [X] is really scary, dangerous. If you know [team member]: he is simply a tough detective. And he is the one who said: "I have never seen someone like that before. He saw right through me […]".'

If we consider the way in which power manifests itself, we conclude that all the factors of power and power relationships described above played a role in all the cooperations studied. In this respect, we did not find many differences among the cooperations studied, even though some clusters stood out more for the efforts made to offer advantages and rewards whereas other clusters were found to rely more on the directional capacity of expert power.

Expert power, reward power, and coercive power were the main factors of power that fulfilled significant functions in all cooperations. In most cases, the guiding actors exercised several forms of power over their followers. A spiritual teacher was, for instance, able to influence one actor because this actor attached value to his expertise, whereas he had more 'control' over another actor by rewarding or punishing him. We, however, found that it was more often a combination of power factors that was effective. In particular, the older guiding actors from our case files appeared to be capable of exercising all the above-mentioned forms of power to a greater or lesser extent.

3.6   Structural characteristics and cohesion of a jihadi movement

In the preceding sections, the focus of our analyses was on substantive characteristics of jihadi cooperations and on how these characteristics promoted and shaped the commitments and relationships among the different actors.

In this section, we will elucidate several *structural* characteristics of the jihadi cooperations studied and of the underlying networks that connect them. Although not all clusters of cooperating individuals analysed by us had been subjected to police investigation at the same time, it was strikingly evident that – without exception – they were related to one another by social connections and were thus part of a larger jihadi movement.

Certainly at the transnational level, but also *within* the Netherlands, the actors from different cooperations had contact with one another. Jihadis who were active within various cooperations were found to have connections to each other, whether directly *or* indirectly, and to use each others' services now and then. The jihadi cooperations studied consequently do not seem to consist of isolated and static groups of cooperating individuals. Instead, there seemed to be dynamic and varying social connections within which different activities were performed.

We found, however, that a remarkable degree of interconnectedness existed not only *among* the various jihadi clusters, but also *within* the individual cooperations, where many actors were also in close relation to one another; these relationships among the actors were often remarkably intense.[46]

In this section, we will discuss several factors that were particularly responsible for the fact that *all* actors who were part of the jihadi movement were hardly ever more than a few social connections removed from one another. We will give a description of the factors that both contributed to and developed the remarkable structural cohesion of this broader and cross-border network. In this context, we did not subject the investigation data to an advanced social network analysis (see Van der Hulst, 2008, 2009a, 2009b for more information), but we did use several concepts from the literature on social networks to describe the characteristics of the movement and to understand its cohesive structure.

The section starts with an analysis of the *social foundations*, such as family relationships and relationships of trust, which provide an explanation for the intensity and durability of many connections between actors. We will subsequently describe how geographical and virtual *meeting places* contribute to the connections among actors. Next, we will discuss the *key figures*. These are people who fulfil binding roles on account of their structural and active presence. Finally, we will illustrate how the abovementioned factors also shape cohesion in the larger jihadi network at the international level.

3.6.1 Social Foundations

Jihadi cooperations derive their internal cohesion predominantly from long-lasting social foundations, which are often based on mutual trust. Long-lasting bonds of friendship, shared histories, family relationships, and marriages

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46 This sounds obvious, but it is not. In organised crime, often people who are part of the same organisation hardly know one another, if at all (Kleemans et al., 2002).

create stable social relationships. Various actors in the cooperations analysed had known one another for years, and had already had contact with one another even before they joined a jihadi cluster. They had known one another from places of birth or residence, from schools, from temporary or permanent home addresses, or from asylum seekers centres. While one friendship had been made on the battlefield of a gruesome civil war, the other had originated during games of football on a grassy field. One actor, for instance, recounted the following about his bond with another actor, 'X':

> '[…] Between my house and [X]'s house was a green field which formed the boundary between the houses. And I was invited by the neighbours to play football on that stretch of grass, and [X] joined us. That is when we became acquainted. Due to the fact that we were neighbours, I knew his family, for [X] lived with his parents.'

Some relationships had already had religion as a binding factor for a longer period of time. Such relationships concerned, for instance, individuals who had first met one another in mosques and had visited prayer services together since then. Close and intimate ties often developed in guest houses and transit houses, where illegal foreigners and travelling or transiting jihadis found temporary rented or free accommodation. However, relationships of trust among people who met each other in militant circles also often fulfilled a structural role within jihadi cooperations. Such ties had in particular been developed in asylum seekers centres and prisons. Particularly during detention, sentenced jihadis were found to regularly cultivate new relationships that would be of value after their release. Sometimes actors from our case files appeared to use the circumstances in detention to develop relationships of trust, to enthuse people about jihadi Salafism, and to contact criminals as possible future suppliers of weapons and explosives. We will discuss such activities more extensively in Chapter 4.

Jihadi clusters that are formed, expanded, and consolidated often owe their solid structures and permanent nature to various types of family ties. For instance, in the cooperations studied by us several brothers operated together. Corresponding life experiences and common acquaintances can partly explain why brothers sometimes came into contact with extremist views and cooperations. Nevertheless, a corresponding point of departure for individual radicalisation – being siblings – hardly ever leads to corresponding trajectories of individual development, let alone to an identical final stage. Whereas one brother mainly followed the example of an older brother; the other was not – or not yet – prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, but facilitated his more fanatical sibling in all sorts of ways. And in another case, a brother was known to be an apolitical Salafist who presumably only complied with dubious requests from a jihadi family member out of brotherly loyalty.

Marriages, which generally create relationships of trust between families that used to be divided, also contributed to the close ties of jihadi cooperations and networks. Relationships between actors from different in-laws (fathers-in-law and sons-in-law, or brothers-in-law) had often been tried and trusted for a longer period of time. If such ties are incorporated in a jihadi cluster after a largely innocent history, they can suddenly turn out to be conducive to its structural cohesion. In this way, several important individuals in a terrorist cooperation had been related to each other through brother-in-law relationships for years.

But there were also marriages and relationships of love that actually developed *during* the process of forming jihadi clusters. Whether consciously initiated or promoted by guiding heartland-oriented actors or not, such relationships gave an additional, consolidating dimension to existing relationships within extremist and radicalising groups of friends and acquaintances. Illustrative of this is a cooperation in which several male actors were married within a few years. Their wives subsequently got to know one another and also made contact with one anothers' partners and friends; partly – encouraged by their husbands – to study the jihadi ideology together. During this process, new cross-bonds and double bonds were created to consolidate the relevant cooperation even further. The following account of a witness outlines how actors may become acquainted by marriages. This quotation also illustrates that contracting marriages is promoted by the jihadi ideology which they adhere to.

> '[....] After some time [woman X] became engaged to [man Y], but it soon appeared that this was not the right choice. [Woman X] became acquainted with [man Z] through [man Y]. [Man Z] informed [woman X] that he wanted to marry her. Marriage is an important duty each Muslim man should fulfil before he dies. It struck me that [man Z] was in quite a hurry to get married.'

3.6.2   Meeting places

A second factor that may be conducive to the connectedness of jihadi clusters is the existence of both geographical and virtual ports of call. Jihadis who operate both in the Netherlands and abroad tend to gather at specific geographical locations and virtual forums. Because they feel drawn to such places, where they find adherents of the same faith, they can maintain relationships, make new contacts, and secure social access to previously unknown clusters within the already relatively small and intimate movement of jihadi Salafists in and related to the Netherlands.

Such meeting places are found in semi-public areas in particular, areas which in the Muslim community are known as popular locations to meet friends and to listen to lectures and sermons. In this way, several Salafist centres and

mosques in the large cities function as important places where receptive actors on the one hand and guiding fundamentalists on the other hand meet one another – in particular during the first stages of the formation of jihadi clusters. And even though most Muslims who go there do not want to have anything to do with the violent jihad, these places may become attractive ports of call for radical Muslims, at least at specific moments or in specific – often closed – parts of these places. At a later stage of the formation of jihadi clusters, the actors will, however, hardly ever have sufficient opportunities to develop all their militant core activities. Nevertheless, the mosque will still continue to be the potential source of new actors – and in exceptional cases, the setting of active recruitment and indoctrination. Individuals from different clusters in the Netherlands regularly visited the same Salafist and ultra-Salafist mosques. As a result of this, connections were also established here *among* already existing cooperations.

Irrespective of the exact locations of their initial interactions – including, for instance, call shops and Internet cafés – individuals in the process of radicalisation, as well as those who were already militant, usually sought more private meeting places to carry out concrete collective jihadi activities. Joint ideological education, deliberations, and terrorism-related activities consequently took place in the back rooms of Internet cafés or call shops, in the private houses of individuals who were involved, or at other private places. According to witnesses, actors were incited there by means of political-religious literature and audiovisual material, sometimes during pre-scheduled meetings, on other occasions during impromptu sessions. Individuals who often still spoke tactfully and in veiled terms in mosques, expressed their true views and intentions at these private places.

Although not all members of the jihadi clusters are generally welcome at these 'living-room meetings', or during occassional field activities,[47] those who do get access establish many new connections that in their turn often lead to meetings with other relevant actors. A Dutch Moroccan, for instance, stated how he was introduced in jihadi circles through an invitation from radicalising mosque-goers to eat and drink something together. At the apartment of his hosts, he was shown films about the war in Chechnya. There were also other radical visitors. Such informal meeting places strengthen the connections within and among jihadi cooperations.

Meeting places on the Internet essentially have corresponding binding functions. Chat groups and other closed virtual forums, which often originate and grow as a result of earlier personal meetings, consolidate existing relationships and also bring people together who do not know each other. Our case files also exhibit various examples of this. We will give you one example. When the police had traced a Moroccan male who had uttered *online* death threats against a well-known politician, it soon became clear that he

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47 From our case files, a few places emerged where a number of actors met to carry out physical and spiritual activities together, including a sports centre and a farmyard campsite.

belonged to a small cooperation that was preparing terrorist attacks in the Netherlands. Initially, the police detectives treated this group of cases as a relatively isolated phenomenon. But later on it was found that the suspect uttering the threats was also a member of some MSN-group in which members of another, considerably larger, extremist group also participated in discussions about the anti-Western jihad. The police could not assess whether there were also operational ties between the two groups. But it was certain that, through this virtual junction, both groups were extremely well connected within a joint jihadi cluster. In addition, further investigation revealed that the Moroccan from the first group also maintained real-life contacts with a spiritual source of inspiration and a number of other violent and non-violent actors from the second group.

Sometimes, these virtual meeting places not only encourage the progress of the fundamentalist discourse and cohesion *within* the jihadi movement, but now and then they also serve as a bridge to individuals outside this movement. Several fanatical actors from a jihadi cluster, for instance, made new contacts with Muslim women and non-Islamic girls who bombarded chat rooms and discussion panels with questions. Later on these young women actually met these men, allowed themselves to be converted by them, and subsequently ended up in an ultra-radical world – sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently. Furthermore, some actors from this same network were often online to mobilise people for the holy war. The prospective jihadis they encounter at Internet forums could contact them for information about – and connections to – training camps abroad. A chat conversation between one of the actors, 'X' from this cooperation and the unknown Internet user 'Y' is illustrative of this:

Internet user Y:	'...how did you get in [sic] that camp?'
Actor X:	'contact persons'
Actor X:	'but you will understand that I do not want to say too much about it.'
Internet user Y:	'aha'
Actor X:	'yes'
Actor X:	'but let me put it this way'
Internet user Y:	'I certainly get it'
Actor X:	'I know people there'
Actor X:	'And other people have contacts there'
Actor X:	'if I go there I call them'
Actor X:	'and give them the date and time of arrival and the like'
Actor X:	'then they'll come and pick you up'
Actor X:	'and they will take you [to the next station]'
Actor X:	'you won't take a direct route'
Actor X:	'but via a couple of stations'

3.6.3   Key figures

A third phenomenon that binds jihadi clusters internally and externally, and consequently also facilitates their fluid cohesion, is related to human links or 'key figures'. In every group there are several individuals who have disproportionately more relationships, both within and outside the group. Among these key figures are invariably guiding heartland-oriented actors, who again and again are found at the 'cradle' of growing jihadi cooperations by seeking, uniting, and mobilising receptive actors. They make careful choices when investing in social capital: valuable social contacts they might be able to use to reach their goals and create new opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986; Burt, 2000; Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001). Their efforts will pay off later on in collective jihadi activities. At the same time, these actors often maintain many external, sometimes international, contacts with other heartland-oriented actors. These broad connecting characteristics are pre-eminently suitable for coordinating and guiding roles. Most of the time, however, some of their enthusiastic followers also function as key figures, because they assume coordinating tasks, for example with regard to forgery of documents and financing. Others develop into key figures because they actively engage in propagating an intolerant and violent Islamic message in imitation of their role models.
Key figures and meeting places are, of course, also often connected. The following description, recorded by an investigating officer about a key figure from one of the cooperations, demonstrates this:

> '[Actor X] ensured that people got false identity documents by calling in contacts. He made it possible for people to get accommodation. But he was also involved in drawing up the wills and testaments of people who would go abroad as jihadis, and he established contacts with persons inside and outside of Europe. And he arranged a central meeting place in his house, which served as a kind of sanctuary for adherents of the same faith who wanted to meet each other under his guidance.'

3.6.4   Cohesion at the international level

Social foundations, meeting places, and key figures not only ensure structural cohesion at the *national or cluster level*, these three factors also enable the Dutch clusters to be communicating and active components at the *international level*, within a larger network of worldwide Salafist-jihadis and their assistants. In this context, it is a matter of mutual interdependence. On the one hand, the local groups studied reacted continuously to stimuli from this global movement. Sometimes, concrete instructions were received, but more frequently it concerned informal requests, schooling, global direction, and other forms of communication. Conversely, the same local jihadi groups

invariably supported the international movement – whose reason for existence is intrinsically to continue and expand – both in words and actions.

A consistent observation is first of all that in all clusters identified there were individuals who maintained relationships to various degrees with actors and groups in the *European* branch of international jihadism. These relationships usually concerned connections between energetic key figures from local groups and itinerant key figures from the GICM, the GSPC, the GICT, and the GIA: groups that have partially or entirely adopted the international jihadi ideology. Especially these key figures, who are often North African representatives or veterans of terrorist organisations, function as driving forces within the European branch of the internationally oriented jihad, thereby cooperating in fluid and dynamic networks.

Various members of network (A), which had prepared and committed acts of violence in our country, maintained contact with, for example a coordinator of the GICM. This man, who was presumably also involved in a series of bloody suicide attacks in North Africa, gave instructions to some of them, although the police have not been able to identify the exact nature of those instructions. It is however certain that he referred actors to contact persons in Belgium.

Characteristic of the cross-border cohesion of the jihadi movement is also that an actor from network (A) described above (here referred to as A1) was also acquainted with the Algerian passport forger B1 from an entirely different jihadi cooperation (B) in the Netherlands. In the latter facilitating cluster, both B1 and the Afghan illegal foreigner B2 received money sent from Switzerland by C1, a key figure for the GIA. B1 and B2 probably channelled at least part of these funds to A1. In the mean time, B1 and B2 also turned up as forgers within a Spanish GIA group (C) that was preparing a heavy bomb attack on an important public building in Madrid under the leadership of C1. In the Netherlands, B1 and B2 were experimenting with detonators, as has become apparent from investigations carried out by the Spanish authorities and security services.

Other investigation data emphasised the international cohesion and the cross-border nature of the jihadi movement in the Netherlands. Two apparently separate cooperations, for instance, facilitated the assassination of an Afghan military leader who was reputed to be an ally of the West; both probably acted through the same key figures in a Belgian cluster composed of members of the GICT and the GSPC. The majority of these Tunisian – but also Algerian and Moroccan – actors who were residing in Belgium were under the directional influence of Al Qaeda spokesmen who had forged alliances between Algerian and Tunisian militants in exile since the nineties from an extremist melting pot in London. Also people who had been active in the two Dutch cooperations had visited this British base, had allowed them-

selves to be influenced by various charismatic key figures, and had increased their jihadi circle of acquaintances there.

In addition to numerous social connections that led to international key figures from our case files, we consequently observed that some actors travelled to various geographical meeting places, which functioned as nerve centres for the mixed international network of Salafist-jihadis. The places they visited included radical mosques in large European cities, training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Qur'an schools in the Islamic world, and homes and safe houses abroad.

Conversely, internationally operating jihadis – for the greater part heartland-oriented actors – also mixed with cooperations that were active in the Netherlands through local key figures and meeting places. A notable example of such an indigenous melting pot is a sports centre, where different groups of Arab men gathered regularly. They attended lessons given by a North African immigrant with an Islamic past. At the time of the criminal investigation, he belonged to a cooperation that operated from the Netherlands and supported the international jihad. His students included fanatics from this cooperation, but also notorious jihadis from Morocco and Iraq, various Arabs, and individuals who were raised in the West. Dozens of actors obtained certificates using false names on the basis of which they could obtain materials to facilitate terrorist actions. Later on, Moroccan and French investigation services found a number of these certificates in the possession of people who were probably planning attacks on targets associated with the West.

3.7 Interaction, formation of clusters, and collective radicalisation

3.7.1 The perspective of resemblance

As described above, jihadi cooperations in the Netherlands often consist of heterogeneous groups of people with different backgrounds and profiles. Different binding mechanisms and different social foundations, however, result in one case group having relatively many illegal foreigners active in it, whereas another stands out because it has more young adults with Dutch backgrounds. Such clusters have strongly influenced the perception held by the outside world. They have often provided observers with enough arguments to strongly emphasise the differences between the cooperations. As a result of this, investigation services, public prosecutors, researchers, and

journalists attribute different characteristics to different cooperations, which in turn may result in various characterisations, stereotypes, and labels.[48] Categorisation from such a perspective, however, does not do justice to our finding that the different cooperations, considered in their entire social compositions, strongly resemble one another exactly because of their remarkable human diversity, but particularly also in the way in which they function. In all cooperations, social systems are formed by a similar complex interaction between roughly two groups: on the one hand, guiding heartland-oriented actors and, on the other hand, people in various degrees of receptivity: those who can be characterised as heartland-oriented actors as well as converts without Muslim backgrounds, second-generation Muslims, and other individuals who do not carry a dominant ideological frame of reference from the Islamic world with them. This process of interaction seems to be an essential characteristic of international Salafist jihadism in the Netherlands. All jihadi cooperations studied by us showed a dominating orientation toward the worldwide struggle in the name of Islam; they were active both locally and internationally; they were part of a broader jihadi movement; and they evolved as a result of roughly corresponding interactions within mixed networks.

3.7.2 Formation and consolidation

The mechanism of forming jihadi clusters deserves a detailed explanation. The fact is that the interaction between guiding heartland-oriented actors and receptive individuals that is conducive to the formation of clusters cannot directly be attributed to actions of individual actors with predictable offender profiles. There simply is not *one* profile of somebody who is involved in terrorism, even though this may be an interesting and tempting idea for investigation purposes (cf. Horgan, 2005; Bovenkerk, 2009). Models that attempt to describe and explain the processes of radicalisation and formation of clusters often take the individual as their starting point (Taylor & Horgan, 2006). Personal characteristics, background variables, and the degree to which people are influenced by group pressure play a role in this context. These models, however, disregard the complexity, dynamics, and unpredictability of collective or individual radicalisation processes. That is why it is only natural not to focus on individual actors, but on consistent interactions among the actors. Our case files furthermore revealed that interactions between guiding heartland-oriented actors and the people in their wake are time and time again crucial to the formation of jihadi cooperations.

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48   Researchers and authorities have already suggested different classification models (see, among others, Sageman, 2008). The AIVD (2006a) also classified networks by member profiles and identified the following three types of jihadi networks on the basis of thorough historical analysis of network formation: (1) transnational networks; (2) internationally-oriented local networks; and (3) local autonomous networks. We understand the significance of such categorisations, but in this report we stress the similarities in the way in which these networks function.

In the clusters studied, fundamentalist heartland-oriented actors usually manifested or presented themselves as authoritative representatives of a movement that had revived in the Islamic (Arab) world (see Chapter 2). When these actors, with their clearly articulated ideology and relative credibility, come into contact with individuals or groups of individuals who prove to be receptive to their message or to other advantages these actors have to offer for whatever reason, this may act as decisive stimuli for the processes of radicalisation. These processes may subsequently develop further within groups that have already existed for however long. In this context, there is in fact a form of self-selection. Those who are receptive – and *remain* receptive – to guiding heartland-oriented actors or individuals associated with them – continue to radicalise collectively. Others choose to dissociate themselves. In each case, it is a dynamic process. Those who consider their environment as too radical at a specific moment, leave the group. Other individuals who prove to be receptive – either to the jihadi ideology or to other advantages offered by the actors – join the group. Our source material showed that extremists from the cradle of traditional Islam could also play a stimulating role at later stages of these developments: in some cases, because group members actively sought teachers who could continue to educate them in radical Islam, in other cases, because teachers continued to actively contact them.

Illustrations on the basis of police data
To illustrate this mechanism, we will give several examples of how jihadi clusters originate and function. One of the clusters studied, for instance, changed from a non-committal and loose network of friends and vague acquaintances into a closer jihadi cluster in a short period of time. This process was stimulated by the catalytic presence of an extremist Salafist preacher from the Middle East. From the moment of his arrival, several actors proved to be receptive to his authority. Among these actors was a Dutchman who was in search of his identity, social status or the meaning of life after a difficult and traumatic youth. A second actor may have felt culturally uprooted as a Moroccan with a partially Dutch background. Some witnesses assumed that he harboured a grudge against Dutch society after unsuccessful undertakings and contact with the criminal justice system; others thought that he was trying to straighten things out for himself after a life of sin by exerting himself for his faith. For a third actor, it was the perception of worldwide injustice to Muslims that had taken hold.[49] To him, the group was mainly the place where he could vent his political grievances; he possibly also longed for self-expression and a heroic role in a grand story (see also De Graaff, 2007). Number four mainly wanted to be released from loneliness – that is at least what we concluded from his statements. And a fifth individual was residing in the Netherlands as an illegal foreigner. By following and imi-

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49   Relative group deprivation (Runciman, 1966).

tating the preacher from the Middle East, this man was, among other things, given accommodation among his admirers. Still other individuals had already mastered the Islamic doctrine and, in the changed social context after the attacks of 11 September 2001, had felt the urge to defend their faith with tooth and nail.

In summary: the circumstances that contributed to these actors being receptive to directional influences were numerous and seldom unrelated.[50] Nevertheless, all receptive actors initially had something in common: that they lacked the elements they needed to be able to give concrete and effective substance to jihadism, namely leadership, a mobilised and accessible group, ideological awareness, spiritual expertise, and connections. These were the very elements that were finally provided by the authoritative heartland-oriented actor in various degrees.

Receptive to the intolerant message of this charismatic man, this group of potential actors was thus transformed into real actors. The extremist who was an illegal resident, with many contacts in Islamic circles, gave courses and lectures, organised meetings, contracted marriages, and incited the individuals concerned to take action in the name of the jihad and the intolerant *takfir* doctrine. He consequently revealed himself as a guiding and inciting factor, and brought receptive actors together, both physically and ideologically. His actions strengthened their interrelationships and created informal and dynamic cooperating structures within the group. Several of his pupils acquired such a level of ideological stability and jihadi discipline that they took over tasks from him or started to imitate him. Initiated in an ideology, in the Salafist-jihadi movement, *and* in the art of indoctrination, they developed various parallel and sometimes almost independent activities, adeptly using their jihadi cluster that was ready for it. Not as solitary 'self-igniting extremists' (AIVD, 2006a; Bessems, 2005),[51] but stimulated and given the opportunity by the target-oriented campaign of an heartland-oriented actor, they expanded this group and functioned as energetic guardians of the intolerant group ideology. Actors furthermore established local and international contacts, travelled to training camps or war zones, preached and uttered threats, organised lectures and meetings, collected and distributed propaganda material, and planned or committed violent acts. Whether or not explicit, the group continued to be under the auspices of the guiding initiator from the Middle East.

Although the Dutch jihadi groups that we studied were invariably influenced by actors whose main frame of reference was the Islamic world with its radical stimuli, the actors who *consolidated* these clusters at a later stage were *not*

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50 Individual developmental paths will be described in more detail in Chapter 5.

51 Our case files did not reveal any persons who, although inspired by Internet propaganda and virtual contacts, proceeded to undertake jihadi activities in an entirely independent manner. Even though Internet experiences evidently have a catalytic impact on individual radicalisation, in each case the real-life relationships and meetings were decisive in this process of developing a practical interpretation of religious-extremist ideology. The way we selected the cases may explain why 'self- ignitors' are absent in our case files.

always extremist exiles and immigrants. They did, however, remarkably often exert their influence in this context. Inspiring individuals who act like their role models or even want to surpass them, may develop – with their fanaticism – into fanatical forces and key figures who promote the group cohesion. Some converts and second-generation immigrants who were born in the West even assumed characteristics of heartland-oriented actors in the process, for instance, because they had drawn inspiration from and received additional education and direction in foreign jihadi training camps; or because they had established active international connections in North African networks with international and violent Salafist ambitions.

Other clusters, however, continued – beyond their initial creation – to be strongly dependant on the interaction between the guiding actors from the fundamentalist diaspora and their mixed multitude of receptive followers. Several heartland-oriented actors from our case files who originated from countries in North Africa and the Middle East were, for instance, at the basis of a cooperation that facilitated, recruited, and trained others for the purpose of worldwide jihadi activities. Their lectures and courses were well received by a group of vulnerable Muslim young people who were subsequently assigned supporting – often criminal – roles, who could study the Salafist religious doctrine more closely, or who were allowed to prepare themselves mentally and physically for the fight.[52] Other actors in the cooperation, which was composed of a considerable group of illegal foreigners and asylum seekers, allowed themselves to be influenced and used partially or fully from positions of dependence. The jihadi 'missionaries' frequently provided potential supporters with shelter, forged or look-alike documents, citizen service numbers, and work.[53]

In the formation and consolidation of jihadi clusters in or related to the Netherlands, there is consequently no question of one-way traffic. It is true that radical clergymen, *emirs*[54] or jihad veterans, who pretend to come from the cradle of Islam with a special vocation, are often actively searching for adherents, but they are likewise sought and found by people with various needs.[55] We have already explained that this mutual search – for followers or vice versa for role models – result in dynamic processes of mobilisation as well as self-selection.

In one of the cooperations analysed, several mobilising actors were so persuasive and possessed so much charisma that their supporters even drew inspiration from relatively brief meetings, and remained receptive and loyal

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52 The files do not provide any insight into the exact size and composition of this group. It is clear that it is a mixed company of young people with different backgrounds and nationalities. The investigation services concerned did not, however, focus on this group of followers.

53 The files also partially disregarded this group of followers that are residing illegally in the Netherlands.

54 Originally, the term *emir* is an Arabic noble title meaning 'leader' or 'commander'. Nowadays, this title is also borne by people who have a leadership role in less formal contexts.

55 In addition to primary needs – such as security and safety – social needs often play a role in this context, including friendship, intimacy, respect, and appreciation. Although the hierarchy established in the different necessities of life by the American psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow is controversial, his work provides interesting descriptions of the motivations underlying human actions (Maslow, 1943).

at a distance. The relevant cooperation flourished on long-lasting social contacts among people who had known each other from the old days, or had met each other in mosques. After a few actors had been taken in by important key figures from the cross-border jihadi cooperation, this created some sort of snowball effect in the network. Generally individuals with Western European background as well as North African migrants and illegal foreigners proved to be particularly receptive, for example to the rhetoric of an Algerian extremist and the effective incitement of an extremist British spiritual leader. These contacts managed to motivate a remarkably large number of people to break with their past. As converts to Islam or as reborn Muslims, they put a stop to their life in sin with drug problems, alcohol abuse, or lawlessness. As a result of the social direction provided by this duo, and to a lesser extent by their followers, the actors from the original cooperation established more and more ties with other dominant and ultra-orthodox heartland-oriented actors. This was also conducive to their interrelatedness. And, as they continued to comply with the requests from international jihadi circles to provide facilities, the cluster began – in a more systematic manner – to be of service to this movement.

3.8   Organisation and allocation of tasks

3.8.1   *Dependence-receptivity relationships*

Our case files revealed that actors who performed jihadi activities on Dutch soil and elsewhere were always part of fluid, dynamic, and informal cooperations. In the absence of formal hierarchical relationships, these cooperations principally function on the basis of 'dependence-receptivity relationships'. We are introducing this term to indicate that the social connections within jihadi clusters are all but equal or horizontal without giving the impression that we are dealing with strictly organised vertical relationships here. The relative character of the term furthermore indicates that it is not an established fact in advance who is dependent and who is receptive, as this differs by relationship.

This requires an explanation on the basis of empirical observations. The example of a jihadi who got a Moroccan male from the drugs circuit to do his dirty work is, in our opinion, illustrative of a dependence-receptivity relationship. This violent Algerian veteran had a major coordinating role within a cooperation that – among other things – generated funds for the international jihad. In that capacity, it is obvious that he strongly depended on useful connections and manpower, and the Moroccan proved to fall into this category. After an initial meeting, the war veteran encouraged him to do more for his faith. He also sent him some propaganda material over the Internet. Receptive to the status, the message, and the social dominance of the

war veteran, the experienced drug criminal started to carry cocaine shipments to different European countries. The proceeds of these shipments were used for the holy war. The coordinating Algerian, in his turn, did not act on his own initiative, for he proved to be receptive to the directional influence of the most important key figure within the facilitating cooperation: a spiritual inspirator who was held in high regard as 'sheik'. In this relationship, the charismatic *primus inter pares* was, in his turn, dependent on the commitment of the Algerian to be able to put his jihadi intentions into practice.

How such serially-linked social dependence-receptivity relationships can compensate for the absence of formal hierarchical structures is evident from the same network, though from another chain of connections. These connections originated from two actors who together initiated and coordinated various recruitment activities: an Islamic scholar from Libia and a former *mujahid* from Iraq. Where the one actor derived his authority from his religious knowledge and expertise, the other mainly inspired awe because of his physical qualities and his status as a veteran. For the implementation of their recruitment plans, they relied on others, including the efforts of a loyal follower from Mauritania, who primarily functioned as a spiritual counsellor. This man, for instance, took actors who had been prepared for the jihad under his care and also frequently supplied prospective fighters himself. For this, he was of course dependent on a continuous intake of receptive candidates. But that was no problem to him, for as a counsellor who had connections in the Middle East – even though he had a less prominent position – and a solid religious basis, he projected a certain authority to this target group. He, for instance, convinced a young Egyptian man to offer his services as a martyr and to travel abroad, possibly in the near future. During an introductory interview, the Egyptian had complained to him about the severe conditions he was confronted with as an employee in the horticulture sector. The Mauritanian responded to this by offering him work and accommodation. When the boy subsequently actually moved in with him, he could not escape being indoctrinated by the Mauritanian.

These are examples of how these dependence-receptivity relationships give direction to the collective capacity of jihadi cooperations. Individuals who need others to achieve something in such contexts rely on people who turn out to be receptive to the requests and directions for different reasons. Likewise, they may be receptive themselves to the influences of other actors and key figures in the Netherlands or abroad. With the ideological vanguard of the internationally-oriented Salafist-jihadi movement in the Netherlands as its driving force, the most zealous and authoritative actors are frequently found at the functional bases of such informal chains. From here, they branch off through complex social processes to the more peripheral or 'grey' zones of jihadi clusters, where, for instance, opportunistic criminals, vulnerable young people, or naive acquaintances also do their bit.

3.8.2   Dependence-receptivity relationships at the international level

Within the cooperations studied by us, which functioned on the basis of dependence-receptivity relationships among actors as explained above, there were no fixed relationships, but rather power structures which were continually subject to change. This raises the question as to whether there is any jihadi cooperation in the Netherlands that may be considered an organised or formal operational arm of Al Qaeda. It is clear that various key figures in the clusters maintain dependence-receptivity relationships with the organisations and individuals who originate from the current or earlier sphere of influence of this core group (see also Section 3.5). The influence from this quarter is meaningful, but certainly not hierarchic or rigid.

More generally, the readiness of the local clusters to help the international movement of jihadis usually stems from receptivity or own initiative. Important actors from the international jihadi *scene* appear to command respect by their position in the network of social connections, their record of service, and the contacts they maintain. In brief, they are held in high regard, and to many local fanatics they are role models and trendsetters. Individuals who have ambitions within the dynamic social pecking order of their own group *or* of the broader jihadi movement are glad to associate with them, and readily follow their instructions. A young Dutch man who visited a militant training camp in Pakistan received the non-committal request to make himself useful by 'collecting balloons' in his homeland.[56] During a chat conversation later on, he showed respect and admiration for his principals:

> 'Wallah I have never met people with a better aglaak[57] than they have. Their characters are simply perfect. They know exactly when they must be friendly and gentle. And when to be tough and strict. They just have perfect appreciation of the situation.'

He furthermore indicated that roles that had been elevated artificially or officially established were not the major source of authority for the leaders in the Pakistani camp.

> '[....] It even happened that when a man is pouring tea for others and is serving the rest. That man turns out to be emir. But that he is still so subservient. Really SubhaanAllah you will only come across this there; furthermore they follow the sunnah[58] precisely.'

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56   The police suspect that the term 'balloons' here is code language for 'bombs', but the term may also refer to 'people' to be recruited.
57   'character'
58   The *Sunnah* refers to the 'manner' of the Prophet Muhammad, such as the traditions of his words and deeds which have been recorded in the *Hadith*.

3.8.3 Organisational interpretation

With the dependence-receptivity relationships shaping the allocations of tasks and relationships at different levels of jihadi cooperations, we can theoretically typify the organisational structures of the clusters analysed as informal, fluid, diffuse, and highly decentralised. Incited or encouraged by others, the individuals in these cooperations implemented a wide variety of tasks with great freedom to improvise. They worked together in various social groups; and they also frequently did this on an *ad hoc* basis. The degree to which someone had authority depended on his relative position in relation to the ideological vanguard in his own system of dependence-receptivity relationships. The difference between these cooperations and pyramidal hierarchical organisations is that this system of dependence-receptivity relationships allows *several* individuals to exercise considerable influence on the doings and dealings of part of or the whole collective without necessarily coordinating their actions among themselves. In addition, the different levels of jihadi actions were rarely structurally separated from one another. A prominent key figure planning a jihadi strategy might consequently also be closely involved in the tactical or technical aspects of implementing this strategy.

3.8.4 Organisational nuances

Within the margins of this overall picture, it is obvious that one cooperation may have slightly more or different organisational substance than another. It seems as if the degree and way in which this is developed also depends on the *nature* of the activities organised within these cooperations. Specific activities simply require more coordination and a stricter allocation of tasks than other activities. Because each cooperation usually organises numerous activities, the roles and functions of the individuals change all the time. Furthermore, groups in which relatively many older and experienced jihadis had dominant positions seemed to be able to organise their activities in a more orderly and consistent manner than groups with relatively many young adult actors. Those actors operated in a more impatient, impulsive and capricious manner because their seasoned role models were fewer in number or were more likely to remain in the background. One suspect typified the young majority of such a cluster as 'chaotic, wrought up, and brainwashed'. Although he, as a former member of the Syrian arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, hardly saw any resemblance to organised Islamic groups, he would certainly not suggest that its members proceeded in an uncontrolled manner:

> '[….] [One man] is above the group and nobody else. The rest are just followers.'

Special affiliations and practices also point to subtle organisational differences within the jihadi movement in the Netherlands. Irrespective of the informal atmosphere that prevailed in *all* groups, some clusters clearly had more connections with foreign groups than others. While in one cooperation the most prominent actors occasionally performed semi-solemn rituals and assumed certain titles, the mores of other cooperations did not permit this.[59] One specific cluster, for instance, stood out because various people referred to two prominent Algerian figures by using the titles of 'sjeik' or 'emir'. The police data furthermore showed that this network demonstrated a marked orientation towards the GSPC. At least one subject pledged allegiance to the leader of this organisation on a sound recording. In spite of this, the group presumably does *not* have a *formal* position in the organisation of the GSPC, and it actually performs its activities within a considerably broader jihadi and cross-border context.

3.9 Recapitulation

The jihadi cooperations, as they emerged from the rough investigation data analysed, may be characterised on the basis of *largely similar features*. The individuals who were the driving forces behind the cooperations were inspired by a violence-oriented Salafist-jihadi ideology with worldwide pretentions. They propagated this ideology and implemented it through a great variety of activities. Despite differences in priority, they generally performed activities both in the Netherlands and abroad.

Although there were also people involved in these cooperations who only contributed to the operationalisation of this ideology indirectly, or with less ideological enthusiasm, in this report we refer to all individuals who are actively involved in these cooperations as jihadi 'actors'. Without the opportunist or less deliberate participation of some individuals, the cooperations would after all be functioning differently. Because people with criminal records, converts, and sympathisers have become involved in jihadi cooperations, and in addition the individuals are of very different backgrounds, these groups have a mixed character. Such heterogeneity also applies to their social and cultural characteristics. All cooperations studied include actors with different national and geographical roots. They speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. In addition to this, we found that in all cooperations, persons from different age categories interact with one another, and in some groups both men and women are active. It is only with respect to religion that the cooperations appear to be homogeneous: nearly

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59 Ultra-orthodox Salafists, who want to implement the *tawhid* principle beyond all limits, consider it un-Islamic to put secular figures on a pedestal.

all actors base their religious convictions on the Sunni movement within Islam.

The common religion is just one binding factor that explains why specific people are attracted to jihadi cooperations. In particular, the ideology that follows from this, and which is propagated by the vanguard, is an important binding factor. The majority of actors, however, seem to be attracted mainly by *aspects* of this ideology, such as the theme of worldwide injustice against Muslims, rebellion against the existing social system, and/or rigid guidelines for a pure existence. Some actors also join the jihadi cooperations primarily because these groups include people who are capable of providing essential daily necessities. Other binding factors are joint activities, role models and social advantages. Individuals who give guidance or direction to actors also have binding qualities as a result of this. They can secure social and ideological stability and cohesion within jihadi clusters. The qualities that give these persons a form of power and authority often include religious and ideological expertise, life experience or experience in combat, and the fact that they have the power to both reward and punish other people.

Several structural characteristics of jihadi cooperations ensure solid connections among the actors individually and the clusters of actors as a whole. The presence of long-lasting social foundations (relations of trust), real and virtual meeting places *and* key figures explain why these cooperations do not only show solid internal cohesion, but also dynamic *interrelated* cohesion. As a result of this, they – as clusters – are part of a broader international jihadi movement.

The presence of individuals who carry an ideological or militant frame of reference based on experiences in the Islamic world is – or was – crucial to the formation or consolidation of all jihadi clusters. These 'heartland-oriented' actors mobilise and/or attract people. In a Western context, they have a relatively strong ability to sell a coherent jihadi story. Due to their specific qualities, contacts and experiences – which are beneficial to their credibility and social status – they relatively often serve as examples or role models to others. Complex interactions between these persons on the one hand and receptive persons on the other hand – in particular illegal foreigners, converts and Muslims who grew up or were educated locally – give decisive impetus to radicalisation processes.

Interactions of this kind make jihadi groups function in spite of the absence of any formal hierarchical structures. Although one cooperation may have a greater degree of organisational substance than the other, the relationships are always informal, fluid and strongly decentralised, leaving the group members with freedom to improvise when conducting various tasks. The cooperations are never strictly organised in a vertical, hierarchical manner. We found

serially linked social connections created by informal dependence-receptivity relationships. Actors who relied on the commitment and abilities of others, gave direction to individuals who showed themselves to be receptive to them. Such relationships have a relative nature, for guiding actors often appeared to be receptive themselves to the direction of other actors at home or abroad who in turn took advantage of them.

4 Activities

What activities do the jihadi cooperations actually perform in – or relating to – Dutch society? As argued above, the mixed and informal jihadi clusters consistently prove to be composed of a rich diversity of people. Their actors operate in extremely various degrees of purposefulness and ideological involvement. It is, therefore, only logical that our case files revealed more than purely jihadi activities. All sorts of marginal phenomena and curiosities reminded us of the diffuse social context of the cooperations. It is important to pay attention to them here, all the more because these observations may be useful for judicial purposes. In addition, they will provide a more balanced picture of jihadism in the Netherlands.

This chapter will therefore describe five forms of activities. In Section 4.1, we will first of all pay attention to actions which are related to the conversion, education, and schooling of receptive people, and to the training and dispatch of willing jihadis. A second set of activities includes acts that are directly related to threats, attacks, and the practical preparations involved (Section 4.2). In the third place (Section 4.3), we will discuss all actions (supporting activities) that facilitate the first two types of jihadi core activities. In the fourth place (Section 4.4), we will give a description of all defensive and protective activities by which jihadis interfere with the work of the investigation services. As argued above, however, not only their militant activities are relevant to this report. To show how jihadi activities have been embedded in everyday life, we will also outline the way in which the actors concerned function in their living environment (Section 4.5).

4.1 Conversion, education, schooling, and training

4.1.1 Conversion

Every cooperation included, without exception, individuals with a remarkable ability to convert others to a Salafist political variant of Islam. The most authoritative heartland-oriented actors always proved to take the lead, but their example was often followed by a number of inspired people. They performed their activities jointly or simultaneously within their range of social influence. They manipulated anyone who proved to be receptive, irrespective of age, gender, socio-cultural background, and ideological beliefs. Broadly interpreted, as a consequence of their acts non-Muslims started to profess the politicised puritan Islamic faith *and* Muslims who no longer or hardly ever practised their faith experienced a new spiritual stimulus towards that direction (born-again Muslims). We consequently define the term 'converts' in this context as individuals who have *consciously* chosen to become fundamentalist Muslims at a certain moment in life.

Actors who successfully performed activities to convert others took advantage of the personal circumstances of individuals in their target group. They struck the right chord with criminals, alcoholics, and drug addicts, among others, by convincing them that all their sins would be forgiven by the confession of the Islamic faith, the *shahada*. A suspect, who was of the opinion that he was serving a just religious cause within a jihadi cooperation, stated that he used to do the 'wrong things' in the past. He had stolen and vandalised things, had used soft drugs, and had finally ended up at a correctional boarding school. In the middle of his teens, he converted to Islam, for

> '[...] I would like to go to paradise and to get there Allah told me to do something good.'

The experiences of a militant Tunisian in his thirties are typical of how jihadis who convert others often tend to procede with their activities. A prominent jihadi, who he first met in a mosque, won him over with charisma and verbal power of persuasion. On several occasions, this inspiring heartland-oriented actor familiarised him with the puritan prescriptions, as a result of which the Tunisian – in his own words – swore off his addiction. The man had induced him to turn the two call girls, with whom he lived together, out of the house, and to put a stop to his sinful past. Convinced and swayed by the jihadi, he made his house mainly available to people who came to talk about Islam with him. His mentor, he generalised

> '[…] made sure that people followed him, particularly the inexperienced persons in Islam, the individuals who had just been converted, and whom he had managed to convince in the name of Islam by getting them out of the problems they had, whether it concerned problems of addiction or family problems.'

Under the veil of a new beginning, jihadis who convert others also manage to get through to persons who experience crises for other reasons. They, for instance, address specific young second-generation Moroccan men, who feel uncomfortable and unwelcome both in the Netherlands and in their parents' country. With a globalised Salafist story that crosses borders and cultures, they stimulate the wish of these rootless 'drifters' to become part of something universal (Roy, 2004, 2005). At specific locations and in some districts – especially where the problems of young people with non-Dutch backgrounds, who are in search of their identities, are obvious – their message is received in passing by individuals and within existing circles of friends and acquaintances. Jihadis who actively incite people to accept the radical form of Islam also succeed in inspiring *non-Muslims* of Dutch origin. These converts sometimes seem to convert from a certain recalcitrance: as a dramatic act by which they distinguish themselves from the mass (Benjamin, 2007). To

several others, the *shahada* appears to be a way out in their search for struc-
ture, an ideal or a spiritual meaning in life. A teenage girl from a village in the
country, who had attended college for several years, for instance, decided
that she wanted to lead an Islamic life from then on. From that moment
onwards, she regularly travelled back and forth from her place of residence to
an ultra-Salafist mosque in the urban area of western Holland. She also took
a home course in Arabic. Through her contacts in and around the house of
worship, she developed sympathy for radical views. Finally, she was caught
up in a jihadi cluster. At the time, this young woman considered the violent
plans of her new sympathisers somewhat naively – according to her state-
ment – to be mainly non-serious 'macho behaviour'. She discovered only
later that they were really serious.

Although most conversion activities take place in the everyday social sphere,
some actors – mostly followers of the more authoritative jihadis – also use the
Internet to lead others up the path of extremist Salafism. These efforts are
rarely structured, but usually improvised and changeable. They sometimes
send items, propaganda material, or links to jihadi websites to their online
contacts by e-mail. At least one individual involved tried to launch a website
containing information about Islamic religious doctrine. Several individuals
occasionally searched chat rooms, forums, and other online groups – with
varying success – to propagate radical Islam. A teenager who came into con-
tact with a jihadi on the Internet said the following:

> 'I think I chatted with him for a few months in succession. It was not like
> that every day. In the beginning, the chats mainly related to the basic ele-
> ments of Islam. I was 15 years of age and I was in search for knowledge on
> Islam. There were quite a number of things I did not know about and he
> would often explain it to me […]. I cannot remember what was literally
> chatted. I got the feeling that he was a boy who really thought about the
> things he said […].'

One place used by jihadis to propagate Islam is particularly noticeable: the
penal institutions. Inspired jihadis who have been imprisoned or remanded
in custody by the State are sometimes actively looking for people who are
receptive to a religious message during their stay in their temporary accom-
modation: for example, the message of rehabilitation as a result of religious
devotion. A reliable source, for instance, stated the following about a charis-
matic key figure from a jihadi cluster who managed to create an untenable
situation in a remand centre within two weeks:

> 'He had converted half the corridor of cells. Later on, he was transferred
> and it happened again.'

An investigation file stated the following about a detained extremist from another cooperation:

> 'The young Muslims hang on his lips. During Friday prayer, he stood on a box and his feet were kissed by his fellow detainees.'

Our data does not provide sufficient clarity about the scale and degree to which sentenced jihadis in the Netherlands attempt to convert fellow detainees to a puritan doctrine. It is, however, clear that such practices did occur within our borders during the research period. Internationally, our country is no exception. The special circumstances in detention centres have unavoidably created new needs among detainees. In this way, extremists are able to persuade fellow detainees to convert to Islam, to provide them with a framework to make a new start in life and/or to give them a sense of safety within a religious community (Precht, 2007; Spalek & El-Hassan, 2007).[60]

4.1.2 Education and schooling

Following from – and sometimes closely related to – conversion activities, various jihadis attempted to 'sell' a politicised and militant variant of Islam.[61] For this purpose, they manipulated the Islamic religious principles of others. Reasoning from the convictions of their contact persons, they preached views *and* actions which corresponded with the doctrines of international Salafist jihadism. In a process of interaction, they sought and found an audience among receptive people (process of mobilisation), but they were also sought and found by interested people with activist ambitions. In the latter case, this is a matter of *self-selection.* More so than other activities, education and schooling took place systematically and on a broad scale within all cooperations from our case files.
Initiatives that served to instruct groups of people in Salafist-jihadi dogmas nearly always originated from the ideological vanguard of jihadi clusters. Authoritative actors – and some of their loyalists – organised lectures, guest lectures, prayers, or other meetings for guests aimed at education. In general, this was done consistently, but also in an informal and moderately structured to unstructured way. On the one hand, this means that such sessions were held with some regularity at safe locations in the Netherlands and at specific points in time. Jihadi education and schooling were often given at the homes of the persons involved, in backrooms of call shops and Internet cafes, in other private places, and/or at pre-announced or opportune moments, such

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60 Since February 2006, prisoners with terrorist backgrounds have been imprisoned in a limited number of institutions in the Netherlands to counter recruitment and radicalisation in prisons.

61 It should be noted that the distinction between conversion on the one hand and education and schooling on the other hand is analytical in this argument. In practice, actors often succeed in converting unbelievers to an extremist variant of Islam in one go. As a result of this, conversion activities sometimes coincide with the process of education and schooling.

as at the end of prayer services in Salafist mosques. On the other hand, such meetings were usually characterised by a brotherly atmosphere and erratic dynamics. Witness testimonies revealed that theological discussion evenings could end in long torrents of abuse aimed at the West and Israel – 'the zionist entity' – without any reason, and that fundamentalist teachers sometimes spontaneously left the initiative to others to let these enthusiastic and incited listeners carry out their subversive activities.

Within this broad context, the activities aimed at education differed per jihadi cluster with respect to their setup and intensity. For a cooperation that facilitated the international jihad by motivating young people and dispatching them to conflict zones, the educational sessions were, for instance, also an essential part of a kind of recruitment process. The clergymen and teachers from this cluster therefore also explicitly took both functional and social aspects into consideration when deciding which individuals to admit, invite, or recruit for the jihad. This assumption is substantiated by evidence, such as the following fragment that was found on a note by the police during a search of premises:

> 'It is a boy of about 20 years old, 1.75 tall. He hangs out with young people who were born here in the Netherlands. I have seen this for myself. He says his prayers in the Islamic centre. He is not a firm believer. I learned from my own inquiries that he works and that [he] has a small car. His presence in the Mosque depends on the length of his stay in [place]. I was told that his parents live in this country. He dresses in an ordinary fashion. He is said to have a simple personality.'

The theological meetings within this jihadi cluster that stir up hatred must have had a special awe-inspiring dimension for these young individuals. Their seasoned mentors used statements from influential clergymen from Saudi Arabia to legitimise the jihad. And these mentors were consistently addressed as '*sheik'* or '*imam'*. It is true that this occurred in a jovial and socialising atmosphere, but this is how distinct power relationships developed (for more information on this subject, see also Section 3.5). Guiding actors furthermore gave names to sanctuaries as well as teaching locations and other locations that appeal to the imagination, such as the 'House of Safety and Stability'. Young people who were particularly loyal, skilled, and motivated were given the privilege of visiting these places. This is where they could demonstrate their knowledge by reciting a number of verses from the Qur'an. Some of them also made sound recordings of statements to the effect that they would support the holy war.

Within most cooperations, education and schooling activities were less goal-oriented, but they were held frequently and with more spontaneity; they mainly consolidated social cohesion and the extremist group ideology. On account of their ambiguous nature, these types of sessions may be typified as

'living-room meetings': when actors of different ages and origins meet in an amicable setting, sometimes to listen to the sermons and lectures of an authoritative heartland-oriented actor; other times to participate in a group discussion in which their most enthusiastic and literate followers dominate the conversation. The contents and course of the debates were often not only determined by religious writings and sources, but also by audio-visual contributions. Sometimes they played 'cassette sermons' by clergymen from abroad. More than once, participants showed videos that could heat things up and arouse a longing for retaliation;, for example, as a result of fragments that provided a ghastly illustration of Muslim suffering caused by actions of the West and Israel. Other images, on the contrary, glorified the extreme acts of violence committed by jihadi brothers all over the world. During or after these activities, group members read from the Qur'an or assisted each other in learning the Arabic language. A witness who had been in the company of jihadis several times sketched a picture that seems to be typical of the normal procedure at such meetings:

> 'Usually, there were about four or five men. All of them were Moroccans and they often spoke Arabic or Berber. […] There were also older men. There was also a learned man of about forty years of age who was supposedly teaching. Everyone listened to him, but I did not believe the man. […] There, at [X's] house, they also showed us ghastly pictures on a laptop. Of people who were slaughtered in the Middle East or something like that, or of a Russian soldier whose throat is being cut. They used to say "look what is happening to your brothers". I think those other boys even enjoyed it. [Actor X] also enjoyed it. He also used words such as "fucking bastards who…". A good Muslim should not say these things.'

Although meetings may be of the greatest 'educational' importance within all groups, learning processes at a more individual level are also effective. The investigation services, however, did not notice many of these activities. It is at least clear that guiding actors regularly have private meetings with their most loyal followers to talk to them, teach them, and instruct them. In addition, many individuals approach each other about their doings and dealings in a moralistic way. In everday social interactions, self-proclaimed and established jihadis continue to try to convince others of their points of view, among other things by confronting them with propaganda pictures and newspaper cuttings. In this context, actors continue to judge each other critically.

These kinds of 'educational' practices also occur on the Internet. Especially younger actors appear to consider this medium an easy tool to explain the basic principles of the jihadi doctrine (NCTb, 2006a). They either respond to questions asked by interested persons at forums and in chat rooms, or they debate with real-life acquaintances from their cluster in MSN groups. They

often literally teach people a lesson during these interactions. A jihadi gave the following answer to the question of a chat partner about what the difference was between 'them' – ordinary Salafists – and 'us' – jihadis:

> 'They call us khawarijj[62] because we are engaged in the destructive Islam that harms people and as a result of this we cause chaos and corruption and we are khawarijj who must be beheaded. As a result of this, the king [in Saudi Arabia] has rounded up and beheaded many mujaheddin, sincere ulama.[63] They even issued fatwas that philistia must be given to the jews. And that Americans are permitted to come to jazeerat al Arab.[64] Everything to the satisfaction of the king. They declared that sheich osama [Osama Bin Laden] was khawarijj, and that saddam [Saddam Hussein] was Muslim.[65]'

Finally, various actors sometimes also received all or part of their radical and/or jihadi education and schooling outside the Netherlands. For this purpose, they could turn to key figures and geographical junctions within the broader transnational network of the international Salafist jihad. A number of individuals, for instance, were influenced in Great Britain during the lessons of – and personal consultations with – extremist Muslim clergymen who, according to the local authorities, maintained ties with Al Qaeda. A few people attended services and meetings in notorious mosques abroad. A suspect stated how he committed himself to the holy war in a British house of worship. He was shown various videos and he listened to heroic stories about fighters in Georgia and Afghanistan. Militant visitors challenged him to join the jihad, among other things, by being asked the provoking question of whether he was 'a boy or a girl'.

In by far the majority of the education-oriented activities, teaching and propaganda materials are essential. First of all, jihadis are very selective in choosing verses and passages from the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. As described above, they also ensure that their contact persons come into contact with different media. They are often persuasive and have the ability to politicise. Being aware of this strength, many fanatic and guiding actors build their own collections (whether digital or physical) of videos, images, audio fragments and/or writings. They also distribute this material actively. An Algerian key figure within a specific cooperation even maintained an enormous information library with hundreds of cassette tapes, videos, and writings, including communiqués and press releases of foreign jihadi organisations. He collected

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62 The *Khawarij* (*Kharidjites*) manifested themselves as a rebellious sect during the rule of the last of the first four rightful caliphs. Muslims usually associate them with renegades and criminals. As a result of this, their name has a strongly negative connotation.
63 'religious leaders'
64 'the Arabian Peninsula'
65 Jihadis consider secular heads of state and dictators, such as the former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, as renegades.

some cassette tapes for what he referred to as the 'The Right Path Channel'. Notices such as 'please return' or 'only for inspection' indicated that he also made these media available to others. This is not unique in the Netherlands. A Moroccan in another jihadi cooperation who taught and indoctrinated others by means of Arabic writings, had personally collected, translated and reviewed many of these texts. His digital documents, which at the very least *appeared* to justify violence and homicide, found their way to dozens of interested people and sympathisers through Internet forums and other online media.

A few fundamentalist imams and ultra-Salafist and Salafist mosques also contributed to jihadi learning processes, whether consciously or unconsciously. This occurred more often in the 'grey' periphery of the jihadi cooperations analysed. Although the relevant clergymen and institutions usually kept their distance from jihadi groups, and rarely explicitly propagated violence, radicalising actors sometimes appeared to interpret their radical *dawa*[66] as an incitement to this effect. One suspect explained that the imams of a notoriously puritan house of worship manage to create an emotional distance between young people and their environment. According to him, they 'moulded' the minds of their audience to prepare them for the jihad:

> 'They got special imams from Saudi Arabia to the Netherlands to preach about Islam and the corrupt influences of Western society.'

> 'The imams kept saying God will punish heathens [non-Muslims] to which the mosque-goers said in unison 'amen'.'

Conversely, subjects who had long passed the stage of peaceful Islamic activism often took the initiative to seek recognition in the few mosques – and with the few imams – that met their extremist views. This also shows that radicalisation is a two-way process between being mobilised and self-selection. People rarely just slip – completely defenceless against external influences – into radical behaviour. They always have the freedom – to a greater or lesser degree – to choose, and to assume moral responsibility. Various witnesses that were heard by the police had, at a certain moment, chosen *not* to be involved any longer with intolerant political Salafists or jihadis.[67] Since then, they have avoided specific Islamic centres, ignored specific individuals, or – like the witness who made the following statement – no longer accepted

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66   The report *The radical dawa in transition: The rise of Islamic neoradicalism in the Netherlands* (AIVD, 2007) describes the non-violent variant of radical Islam in the Netherlands. In spite of this, the AIVD stated that intolerant, isolationist and radical voices from this movement constitute a source of inspiration for radicalisation processes that actually end in violent behavior.

67   Individual withdrawal and processes of deradicalisation were examined in more detail, among other things, on the basis of fieldwork (interviews), in the report: *Teruggang en uittreding: processen van deradicalisering ontleed* (Demant, Slootman, Buijs & Tillie, 2008).

invitations for living-room meetings where guiding heartland-oriented actors gave their sermons:

> 'It was especially his manner of speech; I saw the devil in him. […]He tried to stir up hatred and he also said that if you sacrificed yourself, you would immediately go to heaven. By sacrificing, he meant that you had to eliminate the enemy and that you had to give your own life in the act […]. That evening, they tried to sow hatred against the Western world, just like this is done in the […] Mosque. I did not think that the sermons by that teacher affected us in any way.'

4.1.3   Preparing, training, and dispatching fighters

In the majority of the groups studied, there were people who had the ambition to actually participate in the violent jihad on the world stage but did not always succeed in realising these ambitions. In a few clusters, the actors joined forces effectively and purposively to ensure that candidates who participated in the holy war were well prepared. In other clusters, however, jihadis seemed to consider this aspect more as an interesting sideline and a process of 'trial and error'. Some individuals, in practice, operated mainly on an individual basis.

Especially within those cooperations that are clearly oriented towards facilitating the international jihad, the training, preparation and dispatch for the fight abroad usually took place systematically, and in a concrete manner. In one specific cluster, young people and young adults were, for instance, given the opportunity – parallel to their attendence at radical-ideological lessons and meetings – to record wills and testaments and jihadi declarations of intent on audio tapes. They did this under the supervision of clergymen or teachers. Because their intentions had been recorded, it would be less easy to back out at a later stage. In addition, a physically trained jihad veteran took some young people to sports camps several times. During these events, in addition to training activities, such as canoeing and tossing logs, he also organised collective prayer sessions which were clearly dominated by the theme of violent jihad. According to a police source, the key figures of this cooperation were on the point of dispatching a number of people to a conflict zone. At the time of their arrest, these guiding heartland-oriented actors were furthermore known to have supervised the trip of an Algerian to Iran at an earlier date. Although his mission failed in that country for unknown reasons, the boy concerned had explicitly declared in a will and testament – which was held by one of his mentors in the Netherlands – that he was going to Afghanistan for the jihad (probably via Iran). The investigation services furthermore found farewell letters, in which he had written that he had

given himself up into God's hands and that he had decided to fulfil his duty to the jihad in Afghanistan.

Now and then, supposedly preparatory acts of would-be fighters assume remarkable forms. Alarmed by the zeal of some actors within the cluster described above to support the international jihad, the police ran into a Tunisian course leader. The man, with an Islamic activist background, was giving lessons in particular skills to several members of the jihadi cluster, including two experienced fighters of Iraqi nationality. In the home of one of them, a coordinating key figure who in his turn had close ties with the militant clergymen who gave direction to the cooperation, the police found photos and negatives of even more course members.

Investigation by the KLPD revealed that the Tunisian course leader had trained more than a hundred men, mainly of Arabic origin, over a period of five years. The police suspected that he trained people under the supervision of the Iraqi actor, so that they could subsequently participate in terrorist activities somewhere in the world. The most influential player (a 'sheik') within the jihadi cluster was in the company of another course member when he was apprehended. In addition, he was found to have the personal details of a man who had been sentenced abroad for plotting attacks against American and British military targets.

Trips to prominent jihadi key figures or junctions in Pakistan or Afghanistan to receive ideological as well as practical instructions are highly thought of in jihadi circles. Only a few actors from our case files, however, managed to accomplish such an undertaking. Due to the complicated geographical, socio-cultural, and political circumstances in these countries, the Dutch investigation services do not have much detailed information about these kinds of trips.

A number of individuals, who mainly fulfilled important roles in cooperations in other European countries, had presumably received training in the Afghan or Pakistani free ports for Al Qaeda's core group or its affiliated groups even before the attacks of 11 September 2001. One of them, for instance, had allegedly taken lessons in explosives and weapons there. Somebody else had allegedly volunteered to commit an attack in Europe. They also stated to have met with and to have received concrete instructions from the then Al Qaeda leaders, but the truthfulness of these statements is doubted. Through connections in the international Salafist-jihadi network, a few young adults who had been raised in the Netherlands had also managed to reach the terrorist free ports in Pakistan. They did not stay there for longer than a few weeks and often returned full of cock and bull stories and a good dose of inspiration. Various data points out that they were told, during a short crash course, how they could make themselves useful for the jihad from within the Netherlands. When these actors attempted to convince others after their return to also go to such training camps, the more shadowy details

about the nature and the organisation of these trips surfaced. An interested person, who had come into contact with an already trained jihadi, testified as follows:

> 'At some point, he started talking about doing practical things for the jihad. I mean that he started to talk about training camps. He chatted that he had been to a training camp in Pakistan three times. Two of these times he had been caught [by the authorities], and once he had been in training for three weeks. He said that the last time he had been caught, he had received a warning. […] I remember that he once said that society did not only need fighters, but also people who could build bridges and make weapons. That is why he wanted me to take a technical course […].'

> 'He also told me how I could go to a training camp. I would need 1,000 Euros in pocket money, which I would have to arrange myself. I was to go to Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and they would hand over a ticket and so on to me. He was talking about 'they', in plural. As soon as I was on the plane, they would inform my parents by letter. I once asked him which language they spoke there. According to [actor], there were also Dutch boys there and they also spoke English there. He never mentioned any place names, only that you would go to Pakistan to a training camp for six months.'

The statement of this recruiting jihadi, that pocket money would suffice for candidates undertaking a trip to a Pakistani training camp, and that airline tickets and family businesses would be arranged by a third party, confirms the idea that he, together with an accomplice, formed a bridge to other facilitating clusters in the international jihadi cooperation.
Nevertheless, jihad travellers by no means always have helpful international connections and financial or logistic sources at their disposal. This was clearly shown in data from our case files, describing how actors had suddenly decided, at a young age, to visit their militant brothers in faith in hotbeds of conflict. Because their hazardous undertakings ended in failure or in a personal anticlimax, it is tempting to state that these examples concern ill-considered and individualist actions. Before embarking on these expeditions, they had allowed themselves to be encouraged by social interactions in circles of sympathisers and by the influence of guiding heartland-oriented actors. They also often already have a firm ideological basis on which they substantiate their decisions.

4.2 Attacks and threats

In the ideological centres of jihadi networks, the sentiment prevails that the pure ultra-Salafist Islam is being subjected to great pressure all over the world, and that violence is a legitimate tool to defend it *and* to propagate it. In practice, the majority of activists still limit themselves to 'big talk' moral support, or more indirect facilitating acts. Only a few actors are prepared to run major risks by actually and directly plotting and committing acts of violence or terrorism. The majority of persons concerned also showed remarkable restraint when it came to making threats. This does not alter the fact that these types of activities do indeed take place on a regular basis. In addition, they may have a seriously disruptive effect on societies as well as individuals who have fallen victim to them.

4.2.1 Attacks

The jihadis from our case files, who stated that they were willing to carry out or prepare attacks against Western targets, appeared not to make a fundamental distinction between domestic and foreign targets. Reasoning from their universalist ideology, their enemies could be anywhere in the world. Their choice for a specific target is mainly made on an opportunistic basis. Various factors and considerations play a role in these choices, such as personal motives, preferences of other people (whether influential or not), trigger events, time, geographical proximity, available means and connections, chance of success, and – in particular – symbolism. Due to the changeable nature of these factors as well as the informal nature of jihadi cooperations, terrorist projects often proceed with much improvisation and last-minute decision-making.

In this context, terrorist activities are shaped and given substance from a unique point of departure. For instance, two actors, an Algerian and a man of Tunisian origin, focused on American targets in several West European countries. Here, so-called 'high-profile targets' were concerned: mediagenic diplomatic and military targets of great symbolic value. In making these choices, the actors were presumably guided to a great extent by recent experiences in Afghan and Pakistani training camps of Al Qaeda or its associated organisations. Investigation services, however, have so far been unable to establish whether they operated on the basis of concrete instructions. Instead, it seems as if they had been inspired in the jihadi free ports to independently implement an overall strategic body of thought with the knowledge and terrorist skills they had acquired. In order to provide themselves with support, they mobilised a number of individuals in their already existing extremist clusters and cooperations, including ideologists and facilitators from the international jihadi network, and individuals who were residing in the Netherlands. Especially the Algerian, who had acquired a major binding and coordinating

function in this cluster as a charismatic preacher over the course of years, exercised his influence.

According to witness testimonies *and* his own confession, the Tunisian immigrant wanted to execute the final attack, or suicide attack. He was remarkably eager and had prepared for this in a neighbouring country of the Netherlands. While observing possible targets together with another radical man (a restaurant owner), he also searched for dealers or wholesalers who could supply him with explosives. In the restaurant – which also served as a meeting place for jihadis from the broader network of cooperations – the police later found approximately a hundred kilogrammes of components and the chemical formula for an explosive.[68] While searching the residence of the would-be attacker, police officers also came across a firearm, a forged Dutch driving licence, and a forged Pakistani visa. Because this Tunisian had asked two fundamentalists in the Netherlands whether they could provide him with accommodation and fake diplomatic passports, the police suspected that he was considering carrying out an attack on an embassy (possibly an American embassy).

Actors in other clusters also plotted or committed terrorist acts of violence with an international jihadi purpose, sometimes with more opportunism and inconsistency. Police forces abroad, for instance, apprehended three men from the Netherlands who possibly wanted to carry out an attack during an event that could count on substantial worldwide interest and media cover-age. One of them seemed to have been keen on seizing every opportunity to make statements about terrorism aimed at unbelievers and renegades. He was apprehended again in the Netherlands one year later in possession of a firearm. This time, there was strong evidence that he, together with several accomplices, had set his sights on prominent public figures who had criti-cised Islam. The relentlessness with which he plotted terrorist actions and, in particular, incited other members of his jihadi network, including several women, was evident – among other things – from a salient testimony. According to a girl to whom he had been married, he suggested on their wed-ding night that she blow herself up in a truck in a shopping centre.

To jihadi terrorists with international ambitions and connections it some-times simply appeared to be more attractive or easier to put their violence-glorifying body of thought in practice, particularly at the national level. This applied, for instance, to several individuals from the same cluster. All of them were under the substantial influence of a guiding heartland-oriented actor. They visited training camps abroad, proved to be receptive to instructions from key figures in the broader transnational jihadi network, or made jihad trips. As self-declared representatives of the 'Islamic jihad' in the Nether-lands, however, these relatively young extremist considered it also their duty

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68   A detail that illustrates the social context of this cooperation well is that these chemicals were bought from a pharmacist of Turkish origin. Later on, this supplier channelled a letter from the proprietor who had in the meantime been detained. In this letter, he asked a relative to dispose of two incriminating jerry cans.

to deal with local – but sometimes internationally known – critics of Islam (people who also frequently showed up in their own places of residence) in a violent and symbolic way. When one of them had actually carried out an attack, the others went on to look for the home addresses of new potential victims. A few of them presumably also plotted attacks against government buildings or sensitive installations in the Netherlands. The fact that they also focused on authorities, such as the intelligence and security services, may ensue from feelings of revenge stemming from previous confrontations with the judicial authorities and the AIVD (see for interactions between states and rebellious non-state entities, Della Porta, 1995). Various individuals furthermore seem to derive status from their terrorist activities. One actor, for instance, boasted as follows during a chat session:

> '[…] I have been busy lately. Plotting an assassination attempt here, carrying out an attack there, enough to drive you mad […].'

It may be true that actors who intended to carry out attacks in the Netherlands regularly acted in a disorderly and opportunistic manner, but they were by no means unprepared. The police frequently discovered that suspects had collected addresses, maps, and other information of possible targets. They also observed people and objects. The police furthermore sometimes found terrorist manuals, ingredients, chemical formulae, and components for explosives during searches of premises. Testimonies and evidence suggest that jihadis are active in their social environment and – now and then – openly ask about weapons and explosives. Although these materials are often expensive, some of them tell their potential suppliers that they have connections who may be able to provide the required funds. In addition, would-be attackers more than once were in possession of firearms or explosives and accessories such as munition, silencers, and protective vests. As a result of this, police arrest teams have occasionally been confronted with life-threatening situations.

4.2.2 Threats

It may be because the jihadi groups studied were always formed around people who acutally had terrorist intentions that most actors were careful enough not to issue threats in the public domain. This occurred only sporadically in our case files, such as in the case of a young Moroccan who posted intimidating letters to critics of Islam on a public online youth forum. But in general, actors mainly used threatening language among themselves (incitement); usually in closed circles, or on entirely or partly protected Internet forums. In a number of cases, the intelligence and/or investigation services were able to trace or intercept these conversations by tapping telephone or Internet communication. In this way, for instance, the police were able to

reconstruct how an extremist young man, who had been active on a MSN group with other connections from a jihadi cluster, was able to pass on the home address of a prominent Dutchman and describe how he had observed this premises. Several days later, he posted a message, in which threatened the 'renegade' with death. The fact that jihadis also utter such threats privately was evident from various tapped conversations. The police, for instance, possess a fragment of a conversation between two extremists in their home. In this conversation, they praised a recent assassination attempt and swore that they would also take similar actions against critics of Islam. However, our case files also contained examples of individuals uttering threats that addressed the alleged enemies directly. They tended to do this by e-mail and/or on homemade films that were apparently intended to inspire additional fear in the recipient.

4.2.3   *Intolerance and threats*

Now we get to the crux of the matter: the jihadi cooperations studied strive to create an *atmosphere of threat* both inwards and outwards. The theme of intolerance against dissenters, strengthened by the ideological legitimisation of and individual preparedness to commit acts of violence, is a thread that links all activities that have so far passed in review. The mere fact that this intolerance *might* result in major, unpredictable, and seemingly random attacks causes citizens, businesses, and authorities to view the jihadi movement as dangerous (AIVD, 2006a, p. 53 et seq.). The disruptive and polarising effect of this perception of society is often greater than the immediate actual injury and material damage caused by those actors (AIVD, 2009).
Likewise, the systematically intolerant activities of religious extremists have serious repercussions on the ambience *within* their networks. Various suspects and subjects exhibited a combination of admiration for and fear of contact persons who effectively preached hatred and violence, who impressed others by their aggressive language and actions, who were constantly busy with weapons, or who made it otherwise clear that they would not tolerate ideological disloyalty.
Our data showed that internal differences of opinion and conflicts could also result in *actual* threatening and dangerous situations. This particularly applied to people who were branded as traitors, for instance, because they had embezzled 'community' money, or because they had given incriminating evidence. These actors were confronted with *fatwas*, warning letters and telephone calls, or intimidating confrontations. But also people who had joined jihadi groups partly from naivety or opportunism, and who later reconsidered their positions, considered their extremist environment to be threatening. They knew better than anybody else how easily group members could downgrade them to 'renegades', with all possible associated consequences. Finally, zealous actors sometimes used threats as a means of coercion or

weapon against people who operated more in the 'grey zones' of jihadi clusters. One example involves an extremist who put several old acquaintances under pressure to help him. According to a statement made by a witness, he said:

> 'Muslims help each other, if you refuse, you will be punished. With your hands tied behind your back, you will get a bullet through your head.'

4.3 Supporting activities

In order to ensure the continuity of their own jihadi core activities as well as to facilitate those of their brothers elswhere, jihadis perform all sorts of supporting activities and services. Our empirical data revealed that they not only rely on the abilities of sympathisers for this purpose, but also on the abilities of less convinced actors in their broader networks (see more on this subject in Mascini & Verhoeven, 2005). Nearly all subjects in the investigation files analysed by us were Muslims and converts. Their supporting activities were usually of a criminal nature.

4.3.1 Document forgery and fraud

Individuals who produced, bought or traded in forged documents, or people who mediated in these activities, were found to be extremely active within jihadi clusters in and related to the Netherlands. Their efforts often had a multi-functional character. First of all, they provided themselves and jihadis who had stayed here as illegal foreigners with forged or look-alike passports, identity cards, public transport cards, visas, driving licences, and/or citizen service numbers – sometimes for payment. As a result of this, militant customers had more freedom of movement in our country and could get a job or access to facilities in this way. By providing such documents, these 'facilitators' enabled other extremists to make international trips, whether or not for the purpose of jihad, or even to carry out attacks. Actors who responded to a broader demand from the circle of illegal foreigners by providing these services also generated funds for themselves, for the group, or for national or international jihadism. The jihadis occasionally used ordinary criminal forgers who were in it for the money.
Activities related to forged documents clearly show to what extent the 'Dutch' cooperations have been interwoven with the international jihadi network. Extremists, for instance, supplied forged documents to a North African man who coordinated the trip of two foreign fighters who later killed a Western ally in Afghanistan. And an important jihadi who was also a forger in a cluster that was active in the Netherlands, later worked together with jihadis who were preparing a bomb attack elswhere in Europe. In another case, a key fig-

ure from GICM, while in Southern Europe, asked a number of extremists in the Netherlands whether they could arrange a 'notebook' (presumably a passport) for him. Other facilitators in the Netherlands supplied, among other things, forged documents to people who went to Afghanistan, and one forged driving licence to a Spanish terrorist suspect. A would-be suicide bomber also asked them to supply very specific forgeries, possibly to gain access to his foreign target. Among the various examples, the strong international dimension is finally demonstrated by the apprehension of an Algerian. When the police stopped him at the border, they found him in the possesson of some sixty forged documents, and this after he had driven to mosques throughout Europe in a short period of time, including mosques in Hamburg and Milan.[69]

Jihadi actors often use stolen documents, which they subsequently adapt or forge. They sometimes steal these documents themselves, but these documents come into their possession more often through receivers of stolen property. During searches of premises, the investigation services also found – more than once – passports that were part of the loot from large-scale burglaries at government agencies in neighbouring countries. Some actors furthermore had 'mobile forging studios' or equipment with which they could produce relatively high-quality forgeries. Other accessories confiscated by the police included stamps, municipality stamps, needles, markers, folding and cropping equipment for photo processing, and press moulds. However, jihadi forgery practices were sometimes also a matter of trial and error – or simply amateurish. This was shown, among other things, by a forged letter from the Tax Administration with various grammatical mistakes, or when an Algerian fundamentalist complained that a passport had been damaged irreparably when it was altered. Finally, experience has shown that jihadis also use authentic look-alike passports (from other people), for instance, to be able to leave the country quickly.

4.3.2   *House burglary and theft*

Partly for jihadi purposes and partly to support themselves, extremists occasionally steal money and property. A number of actors from one cooperation, for instance, systematically committed burglaries in the Netherlands as well as in bordering countries. In order to support their fraudulent and forgery-related activities, they not only stole passports and payment cards from the houses of the legitimate owners, but also laptops and less valuable items. They usually commited these crimes in groups of about three people, and they always gave false names when arrested. Partly as a result of this, the investigation services were not able to gain insight into terrorism-related

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69   Like the Finsbury Park mosque in London, ultra-Salafist mosques in Milan and Hamburg fulfilled prominent roles in the international jihadi network – at least until recently (see, among others, Vidino, 2006).

motives behind many burglaries in the past until after the final apprehension of the perpetrators.

Jihadis sometimes take advantage of the criminal activities of brothers in faith or fellow-countrymen who are otherwise hardly involved in active jihadism or terrorism. Apparently because of solidarity in the circle of illegal foreigners, or a radical interpretation of *zakat*,[70] burglars or shoplifters may share part of their loot with jihadis. Two men who had been apprehended for burglary stated that they would take items, such as personal documents, to a mosque that served as a local meeting place for jihadis. And several illegal foreigners who committed acts of shoplifting on a large scale, donated the stolen clothes through the same mosque to individuals from Afghanistan and Chechnya.

Because money flows cannot be traced in jihadi circles, the investigation services in the cases analysed by us were only able to state in general terms that jihadis often used the proceeds from criminal acts for various purposes. And in a few cases, it amounted to little more than suspicions. When a young man with jihadi ambitions and a sympathiser were suspected of a joint armed robbery, the police detectives were kept in the dark about their motives. One of the two, who was caught in the act, refused to confirm the identity of his partner and did not make any other incriminating statements.

4.3.3   Drug production and trade

From an international perspective, it is not new that terrorist movements generate income from drug production and/or trade. Groups who have the capacities for this tend to enjoy a degree of financial security, are less dependent on the generosity of third parties, and exist independently of, for instance, any state sponsorship contributions (Cilluffo, 2000).[71] In the cooperations studied, actors were only rarely engaged in drug-related activities. The proceeds of such activities are, however, substantial. In one of the cooperations identified, drug production and trade clearly created a conflict of interest between a jihadi cooperation and circles in organised crime. Several authoritative players in this cooperation managed to indoctrinate a member of a violent drug organisation. They convinced him of his religious duty to transport cocaine to Italy in a car especially converted for the purpose. At least a portion of this cocaine was pressed into blocks by jihadi actors. Two transportations, with a probable value of tens of thousands of Euros, failed. But the proceeds from another transportation helped finance the various facilitating activities of the cooperation for the benefit of international Salafist jihadism.

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70   *Zakat* is one of the five pillars of Islam and obliges Muslims to transfer part of their own prosperity to the deprived and those needing help.

71   This is how the terrorist Hezbollah movement in Lebanon – be it partially – relies on financial support from Iran; parallel to this, the movement has attempted to secure income by producing and exporting drugs.

4.3.4   Credit card fraud

One of the methods with which actors from our case files supported the holy war and which is less easy to reconstruct is credit card fraud. This form of facilitating crime is yet another indication of the considerable interrelatedness between local cooperations and the pan-European movement of jihadis. A typical example is the role of 'X', a Western convert. He acted as an intermediary and as an courier from the Netherlands: on the one hand for extremists who initiated credit card fraud in Great Britain, and on the other hand for clusters, including a cluster in Spain that was oriented towards the GSPC. The British suspects in this case were under the influence of prominent preachers and key figures who created ties among various North African militants in Europe for international jihadi purposes. By producing, using, and selling forged credit cards on a large scale, they generated jihadi funds from England. For these practices, they had dozens of skimming devices that they used, for instance, in shops and restaurants. With the credit card details of unsuspecting citizens copied to homemade duplicate cards they subsequently collected their illegally obtained proceeds.
But they also left this job to their national and international contacts. And this is where X appears on the scene again. While staying in the Netherlands, he received a skimming device from Great Britain that he wanted to have 'placed' at a suitable location by his connections. He subsequently sent back a portion of the skimmed card details to the jihadi group in England for duplication. The same probably applied to a portion of his local proceeds. Telephone taps by the police revealed that X had previously channelled skimming devices to the cluster of Algerian jihadis in Spain. It has been established that he supplied forged credit cards to these actors, who were associated with the GSPC. According to the Spanish authorities, the suspects used the proceeds to buy equipment for the conflicts in Algeria and Afghanistan, including radio equipment, night vision binoculars, satellite telephones, weapons, and munition.

4.3.5   Fund-raising activities

A few groups raised funds not only through criminal activities, but occasionally through charitable activities. Actors skilfully take advantage of the religious convictions, the emotions, and the community spirit of potential donors. Some of them acted rather rashly in this context, such as a Turkish man, 'X', who raised financial contributions for jihadi purposes on the instructions of a guiding heartland-oriented actor. A police source stated the following about him:

> '[X] gets off the train, rushes to you, and tells you that he is collecting money for the jihad and he asks you to donate money as well. This is how

far he goes. He really does the collecting himself. He also approached var-
ious Islamic shopkeepers. He just walks right into the shops. And repeats
this every day.'

Evidence shows that part of the money collected is designated for the *muja-
heddin* in Chechnya. The group presumably wanted to have a trusted courier
bring the proceeds to the conflict area.

As jihadis apply an informal *modus operandi* and use a methodology by
which financial transactions are made in cash (couriers) or primarily through
unregulated channels,[72] many of their fund-raising activities continue to be
difficult to detect or even invisible. For instance, the police obtained informa-
tion from a reliable source about individuals who were said to be collecting
money within an extremist cluster for an attack on a famous critic of Islam.
During the criminal investigation, however, the police detectives were unable
to find any additional evidence. Sometimes it is simply not clear whether the
money collected is to be used for humanitarian or violent activities, for
instance when radical Muslims ask for donations for the Palestinian cause.

4.3.6 Accommodation and residence

However dangerous and intolerant their views may be, within their own radi-
cal community – but often also within their broader circle of relatives, friends
and acquaintances – the actors in the population analysed proved to be
social and willing to help others. For many of these actors, providing hospi-
tality to sympathisers as well as other Islamic or non-Islamic contact persons
is an important religiously and culturally-defined value. At the same time,
jihadis take advantage of this custom to convince dissenters of the worth of
their ultra-Salafist ideology.

Conversely, this custom allows jihadis to regularly call on Muslims who are
not involved in jihadism. This diffuse social context makes it difficult for the
police to assess the degree of involvement of individual actors in a living
environment (home-owners, guests, visitors, and housemates).

Irrespective of these nuances, in our case files the activities in the area of
accommodation and residence regularly had clearly facilitating purposes.
This was, for instance, evident when an extremist key figure, who was also
known as the provider of forged documents, provided accommodation to
travelling Algerian jihadis. In a statement, one of his accomplices also men-
tioned that he wanted to bring wounded fighters from Afghanistan to Europe
for their recovery. In another cluster, a Syrian human-trafficker helped a fel-

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72 It is assumed that jihadis often use *Informal Value Tranfser Systems* (IVTSs), for example *hawala* banking. The
Dutch police files selected by us hardly provided any information about this. This may be due to the relative
untraceability of money flows in IVTS, which are often based on centuries-old cultural traditions and on rela-
tionships of trust in social networks. Although IVTSs are sensitive to abuse by criminals and terrorists as a
result of this (Looney, 2003), there are still many myths and misconceptions about the phenomenon (Passas,
1999).

low-countryman, who was sought by the police, in his flight from the Netherlands. He mobilised, among others, his contacts in Turkey and Syria to ensure that the man, who was a source of inspiration for all sorts of violent and non-violent jihadi acts, would receive safe accommodation in both countries.

4.4   Protection

In the past few years, it has not become easier for radical and militant Salafists. Since 11 September 2001, national and international authorities have paid considerable attention and applied substantial resources to the identification, repression, and prevention of Islamic and other forms of terrorism and radicalisation. To jihadis this means that they must watch their step more than ever. In the Netherlands as well, they have protected their activities against discovery by the police in a variety of ways, and they have proved to be extremely creative in doing so. At the same time, their efforts in this area also have a social binding function. Mysterious behaviour and secret 'coded' language, for instance, appeared to have been able to develop into the 'macho' aspects of an extremist subculture with which – mainly young – actors can identify.

4.4.1   False identities and aliases

A frequently occurring obstruction in investigations is that jihadis often use different names and/or forged identity documents. In jihadi circles, actors with more than two aliases are the rule rather than the exception. Guiding heartland-oriented actors often use a number of aliases.
Various individuals from our case files possessed several forged identity papers with different personal data. Partly for this reason, the police have more than once been unable to trace the true identities of a few important – but uncooperative – persons under arrest. Some facilitating extremists, for instance, appeared to have been apprehended on several occasions for burglaries carried out in the past. At the time, however, they always gave different identities. Forged documents are therefore certainly useful to jihadis for protecting their jihadi activities. But for those among them with an illegal residence status, these documents sometimes also – or even primarily – served to procure work or benefits.
Perhaps less deliberately, the informal use of names also has a protective effect among actors. It is common practice among jihadis to address one another with nicknames or battle names, which often start with *abu* for men. In Arabic this means 'son of'. Sympathisers of Bin Laden, for instance, often call the Al Qaeda leader 'Abu Abdallah'. And the original name of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the deceased leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, was completely different.

He partly derived the battle name, under which he became known, from his place of birth in Jordan: Zarqa. In our Dutch case files, we also came across such customs. Some individuals assumed a battle name to give them a sense of belonging, others had been given this name by mates or in training camps abroad. The actors also often used other nicknames, first names, abbreviated names, or even pet names. The police have also established that suspects regularly spell their own names differently at different points in time and on different occasions. These kinds of practices, including the fact that several actors within a jihadi network sometimes use the same names, have complicated both the identification process and the gathering of judicial evidence.

4.4.2   Limited communication and veiled language

Whatever form of communication is used, jihadis are always aware that investigation and security services could – and moreover *want to* – intercept conversations and messages. For this reason, they are often careful about what they say. In addition, they often do not give trusted contact persons any more information than necessary, if they provide any information at all. This was also clearly evident from our data: for example in statements from people who had promised to not to talk to unbelievers and the police upon their departure from jihadi camps in the Afghan-Pakistan region. Below is an example of a suspect, who attempted to arrange jihad trips for candidates during chat sessions, urged a chat partner to discipline himself:

> 'You now know all you need to know for now. What you know now, is enough for you. Keep tight and do it. […] Those who do not talk much will be respected, so just be silent and discreet, OK.'

On the other hand, actors do not always apply their prescribed procedures consistently themselves. This became evident, among other things, when the same suspect wrote the following to other contact persons in unveiled terms:

> '[…] I have now been instructed to take as many boys as possible with me, that is why I have been searching for extremists in chat rooms on the Internet, and I have already found 1.'

Because actors must be able to communicate for effective coordination among themselves, they often abandon self-censorship and use coded or veiled language instead. This requires additional effort from the police, especially in the case of Berber or Arabic conversations. For instance, individuals in the same groups spoke in terms of 'matches', 'players' and 'winning', sometimes in connection with recruitment activities, and sometimes regarding jihad trips. Other actors used the term 'my aunt' to refer to prison, and they used the terms 'booklets' or 'notebooks' presumably to refer to all sorts

of documents. Although it is not too difficult for investigation services to understand such words in specific contexts, they can hardly ever be used in court without additional evidence. Jihadis make things even more difficult for the police and judicial authorities by talking about 'the man who will be doing this' and the goods 'that will do well'.

4.4.3   Phone use

Jihadis use their protective measures not only in actual communication, but also in the way in which they deploy means of communication. This is first of all evident from their phone use. By applying various methods and constructions, they attempt to prevent the police from tapping their conversations or identifying them. A number of actors, for instance, used a telephone data carrousel, a sort of round-robin transmission scheme, which enables several persons to make use of the same numbers or telephones. Jihadis frequently called unpredictably and anonymously with various prepaid telephones, or alternately from different call shops and telephone booths. One authoritative key figure complicated the tapping of conversations by using dozens of mobile phones. Some of them may also do so for more economic reasons. Another suspect, who was an informal trader, used different telephones because he first used up the relevant pre-paid calltime before selling the telephones. It was furthermore revealed that some jihadis had written down national and international telephone numbers in agendas and phone books in codes. They, for instance, added or deducted a predetermined number to or from the last three figures.

4.4.4   Internet and computer use

Nowadays, jihadism without the Internet is unthinkable. Subjects from our case files were inspired through the Internet and downloaded documents which they could use to protect their activities, including documents such as 'How does a lie detector work?' But above all they frequently *communicated* through the worldwide web and various Internet applications. This complex digital medium provides numerous options to disguise data traffic. Apart from the fact that some were reticent or used veiled language, and others simply did not communicate through the Internet at all (see Section 4.4.2), actors usually used a variety of applications to protect their doings and dealings on the web.

A few extremists used services that made it possible to reserve (server)space on the Internet anonymously. With the aid of a user's name and a password they could subsequently post or read data files or messages wherever they were, anywhere in the world. In a similar way, they occasionally used free webmail accounts. They did not send any messages with the relevant – and often misleadingly innocent – e-mail addresses, but left draft messages in

their so-called 'dead letter boxes' for other users to read, for instance, to make appointments with each other.

In addition, some individuals within the jihadi cooperations studied used Internet communication applications which are difficult to tap, if at all, including 'Voice over IP' (VoIP), 'Skytalk' and 'Paltalk'. Groups in organised crime have been known for a some time to deliberately communicate through VoIP to disguise their activities (KLPD, 2008). Jihadis who use Internet-based chat programmes may also put up barriers for the police in this way. They occasionally attempted to protect their conversations even more by using such applications with the help of encryption programmes.[73] This could be derived, among other things, from the following chat session between two actors:

> Actor X: '... first install this programme'
> Actor Y: 'what is it?'
> Actor X: 'a mashAllah[74]. Encryption programme. So that nobody can read over our shoulders.'
> Actor X: ' ;) '
> Actor X: 'once you have installed it, you can say anything you like
> Actor Y: '????W!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!111. so then we can talk about J'
> Actor X: 'If someone is intercepting this conversation, he will see it encoded.
> Yep'
> […]
> Actor Y: '...can we talk now?'
> Actor X: 'I think so'

More generally, actors enjoy relative anonymity on the Internet. While online, they usually do not leave any evidence behind but their computer 'fingerprints', namely in the form of IP numbers. Investigation services have therefore not always been able to identify – with complete certainly – the actors who had left traces behind while surfing and mailing. The fact is that they often operate from computers of Internet cafes, employers, family members, and acquaintances. This particularly applies to illegal foreigners. Conflicting evidence and statements may add to the confusion. When the police apprehended a Moroccan man for offences, including carrying out preparatory acts, the police detectives were not able to properly identify one of his radical Internet contacts, a supposed accomplice. The older brother of the man who owned the computer, who had initially been apprehended as second suspect, stated that *he* had maintained contacts with the militant Moroc-

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73   Within the jihadi clusters studied, however, the actors appeared to rarely use very sophisticated computer protection software, such as steganography (see for more information: Van der Hulst & Neve, 2008). Although it is not ruled out that such techniques remain hidden for the police, Muslim extremists are presumably mainly creative in using the more ordinary instruments and systems.

74   This means something like: 'what Allah wants'.

can using the PC and the log-in data of his brother. Whether he told the truth or whether he was protecting his blood relation remained unclear.

Finally, less effectively, jihadis also protect themselves at times by using aliases and nicknames on the Internet or Internet forums or by deleting their computer memories from time to time.

4.4.5   *Face-to-face interactions*

A striking point in our case files is that the investigation services only derived their information position from tapping of telephone or digital communication to a very limited extent. Jihadis seemed to prefer to share detailed information about violent and facilitating jihadi activities face-to-face. They did, however, use telephones and the Internet to exchange extremist views and to make appointments for face-to-face meetings and specific consultations. There were, however, also actors who systematically avoided contacts through communication channels that were sensitive to tapping. Existing social interactions and/or standard meeting places provided these actors with suffcent opportunities for coordination and discussion.

4.4.6   *Secret and closed meetings*

In all cooperations studied, actors also frequently organised face-to-face meetings at group level. We have already given a detailed description in this report of living-room meetings or other private meetings, jihad lessons, prayer sessions and/or field activities (see also Section 4.1). It is presumably during these kinds of meetings, in particular, that extremists discuss their views, strategies and plans in plain terms. Due to the – by definition – closed character of these sessions, they have a distinctly protective function for jihadis. When these meetings were not held in private houses, but in public buildings, such as call shops or Internet cafes, the participants often used private rooms. This does not mean, however, that such meetings were always held in all secret. Various people on the social periphery of jihadi clusters – including former or current fellow believers, neighbours, acquaintances, and relatives – frequently appeared to be well informed about the fact that individuals with radical views gathered and held meetings at specific places. Other meetings of action-oriented groups were, however, of a more secret nature.

4.4.7   *Outward behaviour*

Jihadis are fully aware of the stereotype picture that many people have of them: jihadi terrorists supposedly grow beards, wear Islamic clothes (like a *jalaba*), say prayers several times a day, and do not drink any alcohol, to mention just a few of the assumptions regarding external behavioural charac-

teristics.[75] Radicalising individuals, who do not – or not yet – pursue violence, often conform with this picture. These 'wannabes' appear to be proud of their conviction and do not mind being associated with certain violent movements. Their need to create a distinct profile for themselves or to exhibit themselves exceeds any necessity to protect themselves. Individuals who actually breach the national and/or international rule of law, on the other hand, usually behave less conspicuously. During an interrogation, a suspect described how his close partner had shaved off his beard and had started wearing Western clothes after the attacks of 11 September 2001. In different tapped conversations, the police heard how actors encourage one another to dress 'sexy', to put 'some gel' in their hair, or to come to a meeting 'shaven' and 'discrete'. This is also evident from the following digital dialogue between 'X' and 'Y' that was full of spelling errors in the original Dutch language:

X:	'right (Y). O yes, one more thing'
Y:	'yeah?'
X:	'Dress a bit sexy ok?'
Y	'stagviroullah! Haha'
X:	'you know what I mean. Gel in your hair'
Y:	'hahahaha I know'
X:	'tight trousers etc...'
Y:	'tight? I don't have such clothes'
X:	'you have to dress like a clown in this country to not attract attention'
Y	'yeah I understand'
X	'you should just look like some crazy Moroccan. You know'
Y	'haha ok'
X	'Like someone who is only busy with girls all day long'
Y	'yeah ok.,..'
X	'a bit macho'
Y	'and uh something else. Don't tell […] I will see him over there haha'
X	'In any case NOT in sunni clothes or something like that'
Y	'no, ok...'

Authoritative role models do not always take such measures, though. Spiritual guides, in particular, are suposed to honour their status and be ideologically credible to their followers by living (and dressing) according to the example of the Prophet.

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75   In this context, it is, however, essential to point out that also large groups of non-violent Salafists comply with these clothing and behavioural regulations. Such outward appearance consequently does not prove in any way that a Salafist is also a jihadi.

4.4.8   Knowledge of the working procedures of the police

During various investigations, the police found that some actors were well informed of the working procedures of investigation services. The way they drove, for instance, was so that they could check whether they were being followed or so that possible observation teams would be thrown off their tail. The investigation teams also found that actors in some groups consulted with one another in police jargon about the procedures used by the police teams. The police suspected that individuals who had come into contact with investigators would give an extensive account of this to connections to whom this information could be of importance.

4.5   Life style and living environment

It is self-evident that there is also an everyday side to the existence of jihadis. Jihadi Muslims often provide for families, spouses, housemates, or guests. They also visit places, such as shops, call shops, schools, or mosques; they interact within specific communities; and they assert their influences at specific locations. This section will outline how actors from our case files lived and functioned in and with their evironment, and how jihadi activities were embedded in the actors' daily lives.

4.5.1   Family and relatives

Although the criminal investigation files studied did not always provide full information on this subject, it would be incorrect to describe jihadis as being typically single and unattached or as individuals who have been cast out by their families and have nothing to lose. The fact is that many of them were not only committed to their radical religious community, but were also married, had children, and had close ties with relatives.
In this respect, we came across a wide range of lifestyles. Several actors with non-Western roots, both young and old, got married in Western Europe to converted European women, or to Muslim women from North African origin. Others, however, had brought their partner and/or children to the Netherlands from abroad. And still others were unmarried and still lived with their parents. Some of them had functioned in a family – again or for the first time – for just a few years; for instance, after their coming to the Netherlands in the context of family reunification. Islamic cultures generally consider the family to be the most natural building block of society; and Muslim children generally do not leave their parental homes until they get married (which they usually do at a relatively young age). They sometimes continue to live with their parents even after their marriage.

In the social systems in which *radical* players operate, as well, both nuclear and extended families thus often have important and binding functions. These relatives were consequently aware of the doings and dealings of their radical family members to a certain extent. In a number of cases, jihadis clearly felt supported or were even assisted by their relatives, including their wives, brothers, fathers, mothers, or their in-laws. But in the majority of families, even though these families professed the Salafist religious doctrine, jihadi relatives could not count on much sympathy for their actions. Nevertheless, relatives hardly ever made incriminating statements about each other to the police or before the court. They tended to protect their relatives against the outside world.

The involvement of close relatives in radicalism or jihadism was, however, frequently a subject of debate – and sometimes also a source of conflict. On the one hand, actors often engaged in heated political-religious discussions with family members who refused to adopt their strict lifestyle or who resolutely disapproved of their behaviour. In exceptional cases, this even resulted in threats and/or broken relationships. On the other hand, families sometimes tried to intervene personally. When a strongly indoctrinated girl wanted to marry a convinced jihadi, her father and brother-in-law attempted to prevent the marriage. Her sister also advised against it, and for this reason finally contacted the mother of the young man, 'X':

> 'I have been to the mother of [X] to call her to account about what her son has done to my sister. The mother had, in the meantime, acquired the same ideas as her son […].'

4.5.2 Living and hospitatlity

Providing hospitality to others has an important place in the Islamic system of standards and values. In their expressions of warmth and hospitality to travellers, illegal foreigners, and homeless people, strictly religious Muslims are frequently guided by the Qur'an and the *Hadith* (see also Khan, 2005). In fundamentalist and Salafist jihadi circles, it is common that anyone with a house or an appartment opens their doors to visitors and guests. Extremists in the Netherlands often receive travelling sympathisers with open arms. Actors who are staying here illegally, but who do have accommodation, frequently open their doors to acquaintances from the circle of illegal foreigners in need of a roof over their heads. Many of these relationships originate in or around mosques, for instance, when extremists offer new friends or contact persons a place to sleep. Through visitors or connections of the host, the guest is subsequently welcome to stay somewhere else. In this way, nearly everyone has an address of a place to stay. This shows that jihadis mobilise their networks for a variety of purposes.

Houses where a number of actors make stop-overs or find temporary accommodation can sometimes have tense atmospheres. The relationship between a radical Yemenite house owner and his guests was upset when one of his guests lodged two children in the appartment for a long period of time. This example also shows, however, that actors do not always base their hospitality on Muhammadan brotherly love. According to his guests – who later became suspects of terrorism – this man asked an unusually high contribution to the rent.

Finally, all sorts of social manifestations provided insight into the warm and friendly manner in which jihadis received others into their home. Subjects invited people for lectures or living-room meetings, but also for less ideologically charged occasions, such as watching televion with friends and acquaintances, or having a drink or dinner together. On some occasions, they even allowed women to join them, although the women nearly always stayed in other rooms, separate from the men. Even though jihadis usually move in radical circles, most of them also had ordinary visitors, followers, acquaintances, and friends paying them visits.

4.5.3   Daily routines: education or work

Although radical Salfism prescribes aloofness towards modern society, a limited number of actors integrated into our society to participate in – sometimes secular – forms of education and training courses or by participating in the regular labour market in the Netherlands.

Education
The younger men and women, in particular, frequently combined their jihadi existence with attendence at ordinary lessons at secondary schools, training courses, college or university. The reasons for following training courses occasionally appeared to be quite rational. An Eritrean jihadi, for instance, decided to take an evening course after losing his job, and another jihadi was taking a training course for assistent in electro-technical installation at a regional training centre (ROC). The police, nevertheless, believed that some suspects were taking courses specifically for the benefit of their jihadi careers. For most actors, however, education is not – or no longer – an important factor. Several of the older actors had already taken courses in their countries of origin a long time ago. Many young people, on the other hand, had recently broken off their school career or had been sent away from school. In a few cases, such events were clearly related to their radicalisation processes. One individual had dropped out of school several years prior to his arrest. The circumstances at his VMBO school conflicted with the doctrine he professed together with the radical and jihadi companions he had met shortly before he left school. He stated as follows:

'My faith prescribed that I was not allowed to look at girls. I had chosen economics. There were a lot of girls there. There were perhaps four boys in a class of 22 students. I could not just change over to engineering and technology […] there were also Moroccan girls who did not comply with the Islamic clothing regulations. There were also other temptations. I was afraid that I would overstep the limits as a result of this.'

Work

The investigation services conducted relatively little investigation into the professional practices and sources of income of subjects involved in jihadism. It is evident, however, that only *a few* actors had developed a stable professional existence. This applied to a teacher of religion, a plasterer, and a service engineer who was a respectful employee ar an IT company and who had a permanent contract.

Most suspects, however, regularly changed jobs, worked at the market place or traded informally, or lived on some kind of benefit – whether this benefit was lawfully due or not. We more frequently observed these phenomena in combination. Many individuals ended up in jobs that did not require much, if any, education, such as jobs at help desks or at a waste treatment company. They got these jobs through temporary employment agencies mostly. The illegal immigrants among them often registered with malafide employment agencies with forged identity papers. It is estimated that there are between five and six thousand of these temporary employment agencies in the Netherlands,[76] whose business it is to secretly employ illegal foreigners (Research voor Beleid, 2008). It is striking that several of these temporary employment agencies – which often operate illegally – were found to fulfil a modest key role for the jihadi movement in the Netherlands because they served as meeting places. Other illegal actors also found work without the mediation of such agencies, for instance, at an Islamic butcher, a baker, or a contracting firm in the Westland area.

The example of a fundamentalist Syrian, who fulfilled a facilitating function within a jihadi cluster as a human-trafficker, provided insight into the way in which some *legal* migrants also performed daily activities for their livelihood. With the help of his entire family, the man bought large quantities of cheap telephones and telephone cards at a wide variety of places, in order to subsequently sell them at the market place for a higher price.

4.5.4   *Daily routines in and around Islamic centres*

Nearly all jihadi actors visit the mosque frequently. They visit houses of worship that best meet their radical political-religious views. In the Netherlands, there are about ten ultra-Salafist institutions which can mainly be found in the large citites, and each of which have eloquent fundamentalist preachers

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76   These malafide agencies would jointly mediate on behalf of about a hundred thousand people.

(see also AIVD, 2007). Some suspects went to the mosque five times a day and, for instance, kept a list of the times of sunrises for the purpose of saying their morning prayer. The majority of actors, however, went to the mosque if their timetable allowed for this, or social pressure (including from a group) encouraged them to do so. Sporadically, some radicalisation processes took such extreme turns that the actors even considered ultra-orthodox mosques as too liberal for their liking. Although they could occasionally be found in or around these mosques for social reasons – or, for instance, during special occasions, such as the Ramadan – they no longer frequently participated in prayer at the mosques.

While the institutional involvement of ultra-Salafist Islamic centres in jihadism is generally limited, these institutions and their immediate surroundings could become the very places for actors to become acquainted or to continue to meet one another. As meeting places they were found to play a crucial role for the formation of clusters and social consolidation within all jihadi cooperations. Friends and acquaintances found one another there and they tended to experience the local religious community as providing a 'warm blanket' of welcome. In a few mosques, the actors furthermore took lessons in Arabic language and culture.

At the same time, these were also the places where self-taught jihadis sometimes delivered speeches – outside the regular prayer services – often addressing a young audience. Militant religious scholars or other authoritative heartland-oriented actors used these places to gather interested people for forthcoming meetings or lessons there. Specific individuals, including in one case the librarian of a cultural institute affiliated to this mosque, distributed propaganda material there. Apart from this, several strictly Salafist houses of worship included areas where visitors can also buy writings and video and cassette tapes with isolationist or intolerant messages.

4.5.5   Semi-public places: call shops and internet cafes

Besides religious centres, jihadis frequently show up in other semi-public places, in particular certain Internet cafes and call shops. Within the communities in which they move, these semi-public spaces also fulfil an important role. They are often melting pots of illegal foreigners, migrants, second-generation immigrants, and other people who want to make phone calls or send messages to people abroad frequently and relatively cheaply. Jihadi actors become acquainted with sympathisers, meet brothers from abroad, and in this way they are able to protect their phone and Internet use to a certain extent. People without permanent or temporary addresses often visit these places, sometimes out of necessity. An illegal young man who attempted to convince women, in particular, of his jihadi ideas through Internet forums and chat sites used call shops and Internet cafes, among other places. Other subjects found work in such shops, or even a place to stay the night.

As meeting points for extremists, call shops and Internet cafes could develop into alternatives to mosques. This was particularly so for a jihadi network in which several managers of a telephone centre played a role. These managers had adopted a sympathetic and helpful attitude towards a group of radicalising visitors and their guiding key figures. These 'customers' did not come to the shop for the telephone and computer facilities, but for meetings, lectures, and courses in a room screened off from the shop. A few young people among them always greeted the owner on entering the shop with the words 'we are *mujaheddin*'. The same individuals also met in Internet cafes elsewhere in the country for their jihadi activities.

4.5.6 Jihadism and asylum seekers centres

Various suspects were in asylum seekers centres at the time of their jihadi commitment. Awaiting the outcome of asylum procedures, they were assured of food and accommodation. In the meantime, they frequently left their temporary accommodation, for instance, to visit fundamentalist friends or acquaintances. Through them, they were introduced to extremist migrants residing legally in the Netherlands and radicalising young people who had been raised in this country. Conversely, the actors who were staying in asylum seekers centres ocassionally received visitors there. It seems as if guiding jihadis, in particular, sometimes purposefully travelled to various institutions to convert those staying there to their cause.

As frequent meeting places for radical Muslims, the asylum seekers centres may play a role in the jihadi formation of clusters as well as in actual jihadi activities. This is where individuals with a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds and life stories experience the same circumstances and problems, and establish relationships on the basis of common interests and shared perceptions of the world. Preachers of militant Salafism sometimes turned out to be influential players. An employee at an asylum seekers centre stated the following about 'X', a well-known jihadi propagandist:

> 'I furthermore had the impression that [X] was a leading figure in the Muslim community of the asylum seekers centre. I noticed every week that X and a number of inhabitants were in conversation with each other at a table and that he was a kind of discussion leader in it. […] that he tried to make something clear to these men. […] It was tough going sometimes […] he could really get worked up during these discussions and then he would state his views using wide gestures and a loud voice.'

4.5.7 Jihadism and penal institutions

Prisons and detention centres are also places where jihadis are frequently active. We already described above how enthusiastic jihadis all too often

managed to convince fellow detainees in penal institutions of radical and extremist views (see Section 4.1.1). An officer, who was involved in a criminal investigation, stated the following about a charismatic suspect:

> 'Each week, he was transferred from one ward to the other. He was the one who also started to indoctrinate everyone in prison. And recruit everyone. So these [young Moroccans] who were serving sentences for house burglaries, and who had nothing to do with this, completely fell for him. They were wearing dresses, started praying five times a day, and refused to eat pork any longer. That was awkward, so [he] was constantly getting transferred.'

Some actors went even further. They also approached criminal fellow detainees to secure weapons and explosives in the future, whether or not through them. Take, for instance, the actor who systematically attempted to enthuse all Muslim detainees for the jihad during his detention. He recklessly talked about his longing to blow himself up in the middle of a large crowd and attempted in the mean time to get information from various detainees about explosives and suppliers.

From prison, and occasionally also from police cells, jihadis also maintained contacts with family, friends, and associates on the outside. This sometimes revealed intriguing facts, such as in the case of two extremists who were visited by – as it turned out later – another dangerous jihadi and an accompanying sympathiser. The two visitors, who brought some food for the prisoners, behaved in an extremely recalcitrant way towards the prison officers. The communications of a few detained actors with the outside world furthermore showed that jihadis sometimes regard their imprisonment as a part of, or a road to, their martyrdom. When a suspect called his brother from prison, he formulated this attitude as follows:

> '[…] it has been this way for all prophets from the beginning. Those who were with them were always put in gaol and they were always tortured.'

4.6 Recapitulation

The criminal investigations we analysed show that actors in the Netherlands are active in various ways. Almost without exception, these activities show how strongly the jihadi cooperations that formed part of our research were interwoven with international jihadi networks. In this context, it was revealed again and again that the actors – both at home and abroad – are very mobile, and appear to prefer face-to-face contacts for coordination and exchange of information, instead of communication at a distance (Internet and telephone). We can classify their activities by type.

With respect to activities aimed at converting, influencing, teaching and training people, there is generally an interaction between mobilisation and self-selection: jihadi role models seek receptive persons, but they are often sought out at the same time.

Actors who actually intend to commit attacks, and who carry out preparatory acts, are often inspired by role models and Al Qaedan views, but they usually act relatively independently and with much improvisation. In this context, they frequently seem to act in an opportunistic way, and seem to make no fundamental distinction between national or international targets. If actors in the selected investigation files utter threats to persons or organisations, these threats are very seldom made in the public domain, and their main objective seems to be to provoke and agitate members of the jihadi clusters. Many of the numerous acts with which actors support jihadi core activities are criminal in nature: forgery of documents, document fraud, burglary and robbery and – to a lesser degree – drugs trafficking and production, and credit card fraud. They also facilitate activities by raising funds or by providing accommodation to extremist brothers. Money and goods (such as stolen passports) are often exchanged personally or by means of couriers. To be able to travel, actors frequently use stolen public transport passes and passports. This particularly applies to illegal actors. The facilitation of travel appears to be a business in itself within the jihadi movement.

At the same time, jihadis are aware that they may be under surveillance. They cover their tracks in various ways. According to the police, actors are often well informed of the way in which the investigation services operate. This may complicate police work. As most contacts and appointments between jihadis occur face-to-face, it is difficult for investigation and security services to monitor activities of these actors from a distance.

Finally, the investigation material can teach us something about the way in which jihadi activities are embedded in the daily lives of the actors. In particular, this material provides an insight into the places where jihadi actors usually go and where they meet others. Among the most noticeable meeting places are call shops, Internet cafes, asylum seekers centres, penitentiaries, and Islamic centres.

5 Actors

Insight into the nature of jihadi activities and jihadi cooperations is essential for counterterrorism purposes. But ultimately it is the *individual actors,* with their different backgrounds and motivations, who create these phenomena as a result of their interactions. Who are these people? What moves them? In order to provide insight into the nature of the people who were active in the cases studied by us, we will first list several quantitative details about their backgrounds in Section 5.1. In Section 5.2, we will describe anonymously several individuals from this population of actors in more detail, to provide an impression of the different life stories of these actors, and the diversity of the groups in which they moved.

Although no stereotypical terrorist profiles have emerged from the investigation data, such as 'social failures' or 'intelligent starry-eyed idealists', there is *common ground* shared among the different actors. On the basis of corresponding backgrounds and motivations, it is possible to distinguish four groups. We will give a description of each group in Section 5.3. In Section 5.4, we will elaborate on *female* actors. Although women did not emerge as formal suspects from the cases studied, it was clear from the source material that they were often part of jihadi clusters and contributed to jihadi activities, whether consciously or not. We will therefore also shed light on their roles in this chapter.

5.1   Quantitative data on the population of actors

As we already indicated in the first chapter of this report, this research was based on a *selection* of the criminal investigations conducted in the Netherlands in the period between July 2001 and July 2005. It is consequently impossible to sketch an overall picture of the entire population of jihadi actors who were active on Dutch soil in this research period. In this chapter, we will describe the population of actors as it emerged from the twelve criminal investigations selected. The resulting picture might have been different if we had selected different cases. In selecting the cases, however, we also attempted to provide the broadest picture possible of the way in which jihadism has developed in the Netherlands. We consequently did not take a random sample of the criminal investigations conducted in the Netherlands in that period. The figures presented below must be seen in this light.

5.1.1   Age, gender, country of origin, and nationality

The criminal investigations selected revealed a total of 113 different actors that were or had been active on Dutch soil: 93 men and 20 women. Their average age was 28 years, but the range is substantial; their ages ranged from 16 to 48 years of age.

In general, the female actors were younger than the male actors. The average age of the women was 23 years (the median being 21 years of age), whereas the average age of the men was 29 years (the median being 28 years of age). On the basis of their gender, we also observed another difference among the individuals in our case files: the majority of the women had been born in the Netherlands (12 out of 20), whereas, out of 93, only 11 men had been born in the Netherlands.

In total, 27 out of 113 actors spent their youth in the Netherlands: 12 men and 15 women.[77] Thirty-four individuals had the Dutch nationality: 17 men and 17 women. Out of these Dutch nationals, 9 had dual nationalities (8 men and 1 woman). Four actors had other West European nationalities (2 men and 2 women). In addition, 64 men did not have West European nationalities and the nationalities of 10 men and 1 woman remained unknown.

The majority of the male actors had been born in North Africa (see Table 1), whereas only 2 women originated from this area, and only one of them had also spent her youth there.

Table 1   Country of birth of the actors

Country of birth	Men	Women	Total
The Netherlands	11	12	23
Western Europe	4	3	7
Eastern Europe and Northern Caucasus	5	0	5
North Africa	60	2	62
Horn of Africa	2	0	2
Middle East	11	0	11
South America	0	3	3
Total	93	20	113

The majority of the men who had been born in North Africa originated from Algeria (30), and a smaller number originated from Morocco (17). The other 11 men who had spent their youth in North Africa, originated from countries such as Libya, Tunisia, and Mauritania. With regard to the actors who had spent their youth in the Middle East, more than half of them originated from Syria. The actors who had been born in the Middle East, had come to the Netherlands approximately 4.5 years before their arrest;[78] the North Africans approximately 3.6 years before their arrest, and the individuals from Eastern Europe and the Northern Caucasus on average 4 years before their arrest.

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77   One of the male actors had been born in the Netherlands, but had spent his youth outside the Netherlands; another actor had come to live in the Netherlands as a toddler; and yet another actor had lived in the Netherlands since the age of 12. Of 20 men, we could not establish exactly on the basis of the files in what year they had come to the Netherlands, but on the basis of available information, we assume that these men spent their youth outside the Netherlands.

78   A number of the actors have never been apprehended. In their cases, the period of time referred to is the period between the moment they arrived in the Netherlands and the moment at which they came under police observation in the context of the criminal investigations studied by us.

5.1.2 Residence status

The study revealed that, of the actors who had been active in the jihadi clusters studied, 48 were residing legally in the Netherlands, and 10 individuals had legal statuses in other West European countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, or Great Britain. It furthermore emerged that 44 actors were staying in the Netherlands as illegal foreigners, and 7 individuals had temporary residence permits. The residence status of 4 individuals was not known (see Table 2). In this respect as well, there is a striking difference between men and women. None of the women were found to be residing illegally in Western Europe, whereas approximately half the male actors were residing illegally here.

Table 2   Residence status of the actors

Residence status	Men	Women	Total
Legal	30	18	48
Illegal foreigners	44	0	44
Legal in Western Europe	9	1	10
Temporary residence permit	7	0	7
Unknown	3	1	4
Total	93	20	113

The actors who were residing illegally in the Netherlands, had come to live in this country approximately 3.3 years before their apprehension; the individuals with temporary residence permits approximately 5 years before their apprehension.

5.1.3 Marital status

The marital statuses of the actors could not always be deduced from the police files. We could trace the marital statuses of 60 individuals. Out of these 60 individuals, more than half were married (23 men and 11 women), and 5 individuals had steady partners. Six individuals had been divorced, and 15 actors were single (10 men and 5 women). In addition, we know that 24 actors also had children (16 men and 8 women), but information about this was not structurally included in the files either.

5.1.4 Educational level

Another aspect about which we could not retrieve much information in the files was the educational level of the actors. The data we could retrieve (about 33% of the actors total population) sketched a varied picture. Approximately a quarter of these actors had only attended primary school. Another 25% had either attended secondary school or finished it, and approximately a quarter had attended and finished an Upper Secondary Vocational Education course.

The remaining actors had either followed a university programme or Higher Professional Education course for a specific period of time. Hardly any of the actors whose educational level was known had actually finished a university degree or college course. Some actors were still studying, but a considerable number of the actors had broken off their studies prematurely.

5.1.5 Work and study

The police files also did not systematically include any data on the daily activities of the actors. From the information available, we found that approximately half the actors appeared to have work, and the other half were still studying or were unemployed. All actors who attended school or college were residing legally in the Netherlands. Other than that, there were no systematic differences between those with residence permits and illegal actors.

Table 3   Work and study of the actors

Work and study	Men	Women	Total
Schoolgoing	7	4	11
Working	22	3	25
Unemployed with benefit	10	0	10
Without benefit	5	0	5
Disability benefit	1	0	1
Unknown	48	13	60
Total	93	20	113

5.1.6 Criminal records

The police files studied did not systematically include any data on criminal records. This information was often added if individuals had notably attracted the attention of the police or the judicial authorities in the past. On the basis of this data, represented in Table 4, we may cautiously conclude that many male actors from the files studied were – or had been – criminally active. Their criminal records vary. Many actors with criminal records had committed crimes against property, but fraud, forgery, violent offences, drug-related offences, possession of weapons, and disturbance of public order also occurred.

Table 4   Criminal records of the actors

Criminal records	Men	Women	Total
Yes	45	1	46
No	7	16	23
Unknown	41	3	44
Total	93	20	113

5.1.7 *Backgrounds and roles*

Finally, we analysed the roles fulfilled by the actors in their cooperations. On the basis of the data we retrieved regarding the backgrounds of the actors, we could not systematically establish to which extent the role fulfilled by an actor depended on his educational level or his criminal record. We did, however, discover a connection between the immgration status of an actor and the role or function he fulfilled in the jihadi movement. Actors who either fulfilled *executive or guiding roles* in the cooperations were noticeably often found to be residing as illegal foreigners in the Netherlands,[79] whereas individuals who were residing legally in this country were – relatively often – found to be performing the *facilitating activities.*[80] On the one hand, this could point to the fact that some of these actors had come to the Netherlands with a mission, and operated in a far more purposeful and structured manner than people had generally assumed. On the other hand, there were also indications that a few guiding individuals had not come into contact with jihadism until after their arrival in the Netherlands. On the basis of characteristics that enhance one's authority, such as knowledge of Arabic and the Qur'an, these actors may subsequently acquire a guiding position in jihadi clusters within a relatively short time. We will come back to this in Section 5.3.

5.2   Examples of individual life stories and developmental paths

In this section we will outline the life stories of some of the actors to give an impression of the different backgrounds, circumstances, and motives from which the actors got involved in the jihadi movement. We consider it important to emphasise this diversity, because later on in this chapter we will discuss groups of individuals with corresponding characteristics. Although we will do this on the basis of strikingly similar background characteristics, the unique stories below will emphasise once again that there are worlds of difference present within, as well as between, the groups typified.

5.2.1   *The story of 'A'*

Actor 'A' was an unmarried man of Turkish origin in his early thirties. He had been residing legally in the Netherlands for a long time. Investigation services regarded him as an important facilitator within a jihadi cooperation.

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79   Among the twelve leading actors about whom sufficient data was available, two of them were residing legally in Western Europe and nine of them did not have a legal residence status in either the Netherlands or Western Europe. One leading actor had a temporary residence permit at the time that investigations were being conducted into his activities.

80   If we limit ourselves to the actors about whom sufficient information was included in the files to be able to make a statement about their residence statuses *and* about the activities performed by them, we conclude that 22 out of the 44 actors who were residing legally in the Netherlands or in Western Europe performed facilitating activities, whereas this applies to 13 out of the 36 illegal actors. Of of the 7 actors with temporary residence permits, 1 actor performed facilitating activities.

Shortly after his adolescence, 'A', together with others, started to approach Muslims who – in his opinion – were practising Islam inadequately or incorrectly. He did this on behalf of a local branch of a essentially apolitical foundation from Pakistan. Since then, he had applied for – and obtained – new identification papers at least twelve times. What exactly happened to 'A' in that period of roughly ten years remains unclear. For some time, he lived at the address of an actor known to the authorities from an entirely different terrorism case. He furthermore established contacts with a charitable institution that was suspected of supporting foreign jihadi organisations. Because there were also various actors from other jihadi cooperations active in this institution, police sources stated that it was highly plausible that the Turkish man maintained connections that led to various clusters within the broader jihadi movement in the Netherlands.

This and other data points to the importance of social affiliates in the development process of 'A'. This is emphasised by the fact that at the moment that he was apprehended, he lived with a key figure from his cooperation and with a younger man who was making preparations to participate in the holy war abroad. During a search, the criminal investigators found an audio tape. On this tape, he promised that – guided by his authoritative housemate – he would collect money faithfully and strictly confidentially. He specifically addressed these words to the leader of a North African terrorist organisation that was affiliated to Al Qaeda.

'A' proved to be very active as a fund raiser, but occasionally also rather reckless, for example when he was begging for funds for the jihad in public areas, in which he was, in fact, regularly successful. In addition, in a more recruiting role, he accosted Moroccan young people, in particular, in the street or on the tram, in order to arouse interest in them for the armed fight. But above all, the police considered him to be an important money courier. In a period of four years, he was found or apprehended at different places in the world carrying sums of money amounting to tens of thousands of Euros. 'A' was constantly travelling around the world. During a visit to Australia, he had contact with terrorism suspects, and documents in his dwelling suggested that he was on the point of personally handing over amounts of money in Chechnya. The impression he left on the police was that of a foolhardy, yet highly dedicated, man. Several years after the closing of the investigation analysed by us, 'A' appeared to have been brought in again, this time primarily on suspicion of recruiting people for the jihad.

5.2.2   The story of 'B'

The Frenchman 'B', who was residing in the Netherlands, functioned as an important link between a cross-border jihadi cooperation and one of its subclusters composed of facilitating radicals and criminals who partly operated

from the Netherlands. When the police brought him in, he was in his late twenties.

As a Catholic boy from a French provincial town, 'B' initially had a normal upbringing. He played sports, was interested in girls, and enjoyed life. A family rift seems to have put an end to this. Together with his younger brother, he started using drugs habitually, and fell on hard times. The two brothers made friends with a number of extremists. During work for a fruit and vegetables seller at the market, 'B' met an Algerian who had personally maintained contact for some time with a guiding key figure within the international jihadi network. On this man's advice, 'B' put a stop to his past as an addict and converted to an ultra-Salafist variant of Islam.

Travelling through Europe, he visited meetings of radical and militant Muslims from that moment onwards. When, some time later, he visited his brother in England – who was already actively involved in jihadi activities at the time – radical preachers and contact persons introduced him to Al Qaedan circles and views. 'B' then moved to the Netherlands where he, as the *de facto* coordinator, used his local *and* international network of acquaintances particularly to provide financial and logistic support to the anti-Western jihad. It remains debatable whether his commitment resulted from complete submission to this ideology, or whether it was mainly dictated by his sense of self-worth or his social and financial needs. But the fact that the police once observed him having a beer and a helping of pork points to the latter.

5.2.3   The story of 'C'

Actor 'C', who was in his thirties, probably fulfilled a modest, and sometimes possibly unintentional, role within an extensive jihadi cluster of which the ideological vanguard preached and prepared acts of violence against Western targets in the Netherlands and abroad.

As an Islamic refugee from former Yugoslavia, 'C' had been granted permanent residence for the Netherlands four years previously. He took up residence in a Southern province together with his wife and children and received double child allowances in addition to a benefit. During a visit to his brother, who was waiting in vain for a residence permit in an asylum seekers centre, he met an extremist Arab who had, for some time, been giving direction to a growing network of militant and radicalising individuals.

This meeting, in particular, seemed to be crucial in C's development. The Arab presented himself to 'C' as a convincing Islamic clergyman and scholar, and later on the Arab visited him several times in his home, during which he sometime brought some sweets for the children. The families of both men became acquainted as well. They met for example during a maternity visit, and a relationship of trust seemed to develop between them. 'C', in his turn, was clearly sympathetic to the radical Islamic body of thought preached by the Arab. He also became acquainted with several militant confidants.

To the investigation services, the Yugoslav did not emerge as a relevant actor for the broader jihadi cooperation until his influential Arab acquaintance used his passport to avoid being caught by the Dutch police. 'C' himself argued that the man had stolen this passport from his home. But on the basis of a tapped conversation, the police suspected that he had intentionally handed over his identity card to the man, in consultation with others.

5.2.4   The story of 'D'

The jihad dominates the life of the violent Moroccan-Dutch extremist 'D'. In circles of militant Muslims, even at the age of twenty, he presented himself as a driving force. He was admired because of his travels, his knowledge, and his nearly inexhaustible efforts.

'D' was born in the Netherlands into a large Moroccan family. In his teens, he was a difficult child, which his teachers at secondary school noticed. His intolerable behaviour resulted in his expulsion from school. With the blessing of his parents, who may have hoped that a stricter religious curriculum would have a positive effect on 'D', he left for the Middle East to take a two-year course at a Qur'an school. As a result of this, he became well acquainted with the Arab language and Islamic doctrine.

However, on his homecoming at an adult age, his short-tempered and some-times aggressive character appeared to be unchanged. He threatened his sis-ter, and his parents had no – or hardly any – hold over him. He also had regu-lar arguments with his neighbours, which on occasion resulted in an inter-vention by the police. In the meantime, he often changed jobs. According to people in his environment, he became more dominant, and listened – with increasing frequency – only to people with extreme political views about Islam. Presumably with the help of such contacts, he ended up in a jihadi training camp in Pakistan two years later. There, among other international would-be fighters and renowned veterans, he increased his circle of acquain-tances and met another radicalising young man from the Netherlands. In this boy, 'D' found a friend and a sympathiser for the next few years.

Once he had returned to the Netherlands, 'D' acquired status in the growing and merging extremist circle of acquaintances of himself and that of his new comrade. He brought a few extremely fanatic and action-oriented jihadis from this network into contact with his own militant acquaintances, includ-ing an important coordinator of the GICM abroad. He furthermore organised meetings and delivered radical sermons and lectures. With his threatening attitude and authoritarian character he filled others both with admiration and fear, not in the least because he actively participated in preparing and committing terrorist acts.

5.2.5   *The story of 'E'*

By the time investigation services started to focus their attention on 'E', this Algerian immigrant of around forty years of age had been staying in the Netherlands as an illegal foreigner for years. With his intellectual and technical skills, 'E' supported jihadis both nationally and internationally, and he also functioned as an important intermediary.

'E' completed a study in information technology in his country of birth, and finally applied for asylum in this country as an already strictly religious Muslim. In the meantime, he left his wife and children behind in Syria and he presumably had a nomadic existence in different European countries. When his asylum application in the Netherlands was refused, he decided to stay here illegally. He moved to a small room in a house where several other illegal foreigners were lodging. 'E' became acquainted with legal and illegal lodgers from Morocco and Algeria who lived in a few neighbouring premises and elsewhere in the deprived urban area.

Although, according to his own testimony, 'E' earned his living by giving lessons in information technology and repairing computers and telephones in an Islamic centre in the neighbourhood, he was specifically skilled in forging and distributing documents and identity cards. While many of his illegal contact persons supported themselves by theft and other crimes, 'E' kept his head above water through his trade in forged documents, largely within that same circle of illegal foreigners. When the police stopped him together with a few accomplices, he was on the point of handing over dozens of forged documents. The items which the police detectives had found in his room confirmed that he had forged technically high-quality Dutch, Belgian, French, Spanish, and British documents on a large scale.

In the capacity of forger, 'E' facilitated various terrorist cooperations in this country and abroad. He did so deliberately. With his affinity for jihadi views, he seemed to give a somewhat nobler dimension to his – incidentally purely profitable – criminal activities. On the other hand, the fact that jihadis, some of whom were leading figures, also channelled international money flows and communication through him suggest that his involvement even went further. According to several sources, he was said to also have used his engineering expertise to manufacture explosives.

5.3   Common backgrounds and motives

The above life stories illustrate how people with various backgrounds and motives meet under the ideological umbrella of internationally-oriented Salafist jihadism. Although we are fully aware that the precise 'how' and 'why' differ per person, we still observed four characteristic groups in our population of actors that could by identified by the following categories of

corresponding circumstances and motivations: (1) illegal foreigners;
(2) active and/or reformed criminals and addicts; (3) 'seekers'; and (4) ideal-
ists and political activists. In reality, actors fell into more than one category.

5.3.1 Illegal foreigners

The most noticeable fact that systematically emerged from our data is that
individuals who were residing illegally in the Netherlands were amply repre-
sented within all cooperations analysed.[81] This is an interesting fact. Illegal
foreigners find themselves in uncertain situations in various respects. Basic
needs, such as housing, food, legally valid documents, and work are not avail-
able to them as a matter-of-course. They are not familiar with the Dutch
institutes, customs, language, and culture, which are even deliberately avoi-
ded by some illegal foreigners. In addition, illegal foreigners often have to
struggle to make a place for themselves within social structures that are for-
eign to them. The consequence of all this is that they take up an exceptional
position in our society, a position that by definition turns them into a vulner-
able group.

Whether there is a causal connection between the problems experienced
daily by illegal foreigners and their disproportional involvement in jihadism,
is a debatable question. During the criminal investigations, the police
focused more on facts than on subjective background information from and
about the suspects. The majority also remained silent during the interroga-
tions, probably for legal reasons.

We cannot, however, ignore the fact that illegal actors benefit from linking up
with jihadi cooperations. In these extremist networks, it is common practice
to support and take care of one another in daily life. Participants who were
illegal foreigners were therefore able to turn to several people for accommo-
dation, lodging, food, and drink. They often managed to obtain forged iden-
tity papers through facilitating jihadis. By joining in with other supporting
activities, such as financial fraud, fund raising, and theft, some actors also
secured a moderate income and clothing for themselves. And a number of
them found work thanks to militant key figures. Besides physical sustenance,
illegal migrants who sympathise with the cooperations receive a warm wel-
come, a sense of homecoming, a 'pleasant' circle of acquaintances, and a
renewed sense of self-worth. For illegal foreigners, such needs are often less
easy to satisfy in the normal society (see Engbersen, Van der Leun, Staring,
and Kehla, 1999 for more information on this subject).

Although it remains uncertain to what extent extremist illegal foreigners were
guided by such rational considerations, the success of their participation in
jihadi clusters also clearly appeared to increase as they acquired more
authority and respect within these cooperations. More doors were opened to

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81   See Table 2 for the overall picture: at the time of the criminal investigations, nearly half of the male actors
     were residing illegally in the Netherlands.

them, so to speak. To some illegal heartland-oriented actors, this might have been an additional motivation to initiate guiding or recruiting activities in the Netherlands.

This also applies to adolescents who imitated the activities of role models. An young, illegal Moroccan, for instance, who – following the example of a radical Islamic clergyman – inexhaustibly organised meetings and preached militant Islamic views, also used his growing status to get some secular matters done as well. By successfully relying on the principles of solidarity preached by himself, he was able to secure accommodation for himself with at least five cluster members. He furthermore had his car registered and insured by a loyal brother, a formality he could not arrange himself as an illegal foreigner. Salafist jihadism, often labelled as *ideologically* motivated crime (KLPD, 2008), may thus also become a tool for illegal foreigners to acquire social status and power or other social and material advantages.

Actors without residence permits therefore constitute an interesting group on account of their specific needs that may promote radicalisation. But as sources of motivation, these factors are rarely isolated. It is only in conjunction with various other factors that these needs may become a reason why individuals are driven to join jihadi networks.

Then there are, of course, also those illegal foreigners who have already had a relatively long career as a jihadi, and to whom self-preservation is hardly, if at all, a source of motivation. On the basis of various indications, but without having firm evidence, the police suspect that some illegal foreigners have been travelling around the world propagating violence for some time, and/or have fought in their own countries as well as in hotbeds such as Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq. These heartland-oriented actors had presumably been active within Islamic parties and terrorist groups – including the Muslim Brotherhood, the FIS, the GIA, and the GSPC – long before their arrival in the Netherlands, (see also NCTb, 2008, p. 49 et seq. for more information about this). Here in the Netherlands, these actors appear able to facilitate old groups and to form new groups.

5.3.2   Criminals, former criminals, and addicts

The jihadi movement, as it emerged from the selection of criminal investigations, also included a group of extremists with a background of addiction or criminal activities. Initially, these addicts, habitual offenders, and former detainees appeared to be incomparable 'problem cases'. The background variables that were responsible for their deviant behaviour differed per person, and it seemed that these variables must be sought in individual vulnerabilities in the one case and more in environmental factors in the other.

The fact that we mention delinquents and addicts (and former delinquents and addicts) together as notable jihadi actors is because their motivations may correspond, at least partially. Statements and other police data pointed

out that we were dealing with a group of people who had experienced a sense of having been at a crossroads, where they had to choose between continuing on a sinful or damaging path, or starting an unblemished life dedicated to religion. A number of criminals who had taken the latter path, however, continued to be criminally active, for instance, in order to support jihadi activities (Section 4.3). Reasoning from their newly acquired Salafist-jihadi perception of the world, they considered theft on hostile territory legitimate, or even a duty (BVD, 2001b). To put it briefly, former criminals and addicts who used to pursue egocentric desires were now making the necessary effort to profess and defend their new views.

Above all, these people found a possible way out in the puritan principles of jihadi Salafism. The strict and clear guidelines provided by this body of thought, in combination with group pressure and self-discipline, constitute an effective regime that might give delinquents, alcoholics and drug addicts, who were seeking a way out of their problematic situation, something to hold on to. Those who live strictly by following the examples of the Islamic ancestors, also protect themselves against relapse. And actors who subsequently actually carried out activities or supported the jihad seemed to be willing to eliminate any doubt about the success and totality of their transformation of themselves and their environment.

The story of a terrorism suspect, who told someone during a telephone conversation that he 'left the other path five years ago', gives an accurate picture of the way in which criminal records and a background of addiction may lead to radical and militant behaviour. In the past, the man had come into contact with the police several times for shoplifting, burglaries, and aggressiveness. In this context, he had repeatedly indicated that he could not do without drugs and he sometimes appeared to be confused. His introduction into a group of radicalising young adults, after a few meetings in a mosque, gave him an obvious alternative. He currently seems to be proud of his status as a reborn Muslim, as someone who has resolutely put an end to his sinful past, and who now essentially lives for this faith and his brothers.

Remarkably, preachers of international Salafist jihadism were able to get through to individuals who were receptive to a religious-extremist message on account of their delinquency or addiction. One guiding heartland-oriented actor from our case seemed to specifically aiming at people from this 'target group'. Nevertheless, some criminal actors, for instance, also took a puritan path on their own initiative by studying the religious writings more closely or by deliberately seeking alliance with radical groups.

The picture of criminals and addicts who found solace in the jihad is, of course, an abstraction from reality. In practice, their life stories were different. Typical of this is the case of a Moroccan who was probably initially active for a criminal drugs organisation merely for profit. Under the influence of an Algerian jihadi, he converted to the ultra-Salafist doctrine. Convinced of the view that he should exert himself for Islam, he started to carry out interna-

tional cocaine shipments for a jihadi cluster. The proceeds of these shipments were used for the holy war. But it soon emerged that his calculating criminal nature had not been completely changed by his uncompromising jihadi views. After several shipments, he decided to nick a shipment of drugs, as well as a vehicle, and to sell them for personal gain.

5.3.3 'Seekers'

Although – and it is typically human – all subjects from the investigation files were more or less pursuing existential certainty, a meaning in life, a positive self-image, social ties, or structure (in life), in some cases this is or was evident to such a degree that we can safely speak of a group of 'seekers', or former seekers.

The most clearly identifiable seekers lived through a stage in which they were actually at a complete loss with themselves, and totally uncertain of what to do. They were unstable and/or were craving for security. And if at that moment something presented itself that might reduce their uncertainty or to which they may cling, whether ideologically or socially, this could result in or contribute to their committing themselves to the violent jihad or to a cooperation with jihadi intentions. In practice, there are of course different degrees of seekers. Significantly, there is considerable overlap between this group of actors and the other groups identified in this section.

Seekers, too, are more or less attempting to escape problems. But unlike illegal foreigners, criminals or addicts who essentially have *concrete* worries, they are primarily confronted with dilemmas or crises that are more of a psychological, socio-psychological, or philosophical nature. Such a personal crisis may, for instance, arise when someone gets the feeling that they have arrived at a crucial moment in their life, or starts to doubt the meaning of their existence. The time may be right for him or her to seek solace in a clear theorem such as international jihadi Salafism, which may remove existential doubts with its universal message (Buijs et al., 2006). The strict rules of life connected with this doctrine may also satisfy the need for structure and clarity in an increasingly complex society.

These kinds of motives may have played a role in cases such as that of actor 'X', who radicalised in a very short period of time according to witness testimonies. He suddenly started to behave in an increasingly more introverted way, and soon spent most of his time in his apartment. Glued to his computer, 'X' visited extremist websites, collected jihadi writings and videos, and established chat contacts with radicals all over the world. When the police arrested him they found a meticulously positioned firearm with a Qur'an and a balaclava inside a mirror-fronted cabinet. From this it may be deduced that his newly acquired jihadi élan also satisfied his search for a positive self-image, self-expression or heroism (De Graaff, 2007; Richardson, 2006). An investigating officer in this case, who stated that such a ritual arrangement

was seen more frequently in jihadi circles, also suspected this, and stated as follows:

> 'Perhaps that [X] goes down on his knees there and that he sees himself in the mirror with that weapon. Something like those video images they found at [Y].[82]'

> '[On those video images] [Y] also posed somewhat in the manner of Osama bin Laden. There is also a weapon […] and he is also down on his knees while saying that prayer.'

Other actors who are craving for a way out of their loneliness, or for a warm welcome in a intimate community in which they can identify better with others, may also end up in the jihadi movement. In these cases, the attraction of jihadi cooperations is determined rather by 'in-group love' than by 'out-group hate' (Sageman, 2004). The intense feelings of friendship, deep bonds of fate, spirituality, and exclusiveness which often originate in such networks may be particularly appealing to these 'social seekers'.

5.3.4 Idealists and political activists

Finally, we identified various suspects in our case files to whom a deep social dissatisfaction constituted a decisive source of motivation. In this respect, we refer, in particular, to idealists and political activists who are guided overwhelmingly by social, *external*, contexts and who 'join in with' the international jihadi movement in reaction to this. As a result of this, they clearly distinguish themselves from many other individuals. Although it is true that people who radicalise or commit extremist acts are invariably exposed to causal influences at (1) individual; (2) social; and (3) external level (TTSRL, 2008), these three levels may not be equally decisive for all actors. As noted above, it is primarily personal and social circumstances that may be of importance to illegal foreigners, criminals, addicts, and seekers within the jihadi movement.

The small number of subjects to whom we are referring in this subsection is – more than anything else – driven by an intense and genuine indignation about external factors, such as political, geopolitical, economic, cultural, and – not in the least – military inequality and injustice in the world. Whereas many people would go into the nuances of this variety of problems, they – on the contrary – seek recognition in a religiously inspired ideology which intensifies the absoluteness of their perception of society even further (perpetrator and victim, nothing in between) and which legitimises violent reactions to this. The following are two extracts from a farewell letter of a convert who – according to him – went to 'the country of the jihad to help dispel the unbe-

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82   'Y' is another jihadi from our case files.

lievers, and to help erect the Islamic state' are illustrative of the way of thinking common to these idealist and political-activist jihadis:

> 'We are living in an age in which the Muslim community is being attacked from all sides, both physically and ideologically by the army of unbelief and corruption under the command of America and Israel. This has resulted in, among other things, the occupation and mass murders of Muslims in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Iraq, the Philippines, Indonesia, Bosnia, Kosovo, China, Algeria, various parts of Africa, and – of course – Palestine.'

> 'As a Muslim I cannot and may not stand around watching everything that is happening to Muslims. The prophet (may his peace and blessings be on him) said: "Each Muslim is a brother to any other Muslim. He helps them, and does not abandon them".'

It is remarkable that the repeatedly recurring themes which excite the actors in this group from the perspective of their supposedly true Muslim identity appear to be based on indirect *perception and imitation* rather than their own experience. In other words, there was very little evidence in the investigation files to show that they accepted Islamic extremism on account of personal experiences with injustice, discrimination, and relative deprivation. On the contrary, these people usually refer to television images, videos, audio tapes, websites, and sermons or stories of others. Cumulatively, the idea is formed that, worldwide, the *group* they identify with is under pressure through actions by unbelievers and renegades. We consequently cannot substantiate – on the basis of our Dutch data – the hypothesis that the theme of global injustice against Muslims often resonates with personal experiences (Sageman, 2008).

To Muslim 'X', who had spent many hours watching television as a teenager, the following question had become a complete obsession: 'Why always the Muslims?' His window to the world showed him pictures of destruction, genocide, and Islamic citizens of the Balkans who fled. Time and time again, he saw pictures of Palestinian children who had been killed by Israeli fire. 'X' could get angry about the short-sighted media coverage on this subject and about the indifference he thought he could discern among his friends and family. 'Is a murder of a Muslim child not a major crime?' Irritated, he decided to find more in-depth information in books and on the Internet. The stories and the often atrocious pictures 'X' found strengthened his perception of a world full of injustice and hypocrisy, especially at the cost of Muslims and Islam. And they incited his feelings of anger and thirst for revenge even further (Silke, 2008). 'X', however, not only directed his anger against the West, and in particular towards the US, but also against 'ordinary' Salafists and fun-

damentalists who did not share his views and his admiration for violent opposition.

Actors like this young man who developed a desire to take action primarily from idealism and social dissatisfaction may receive crucial impetus from emotional meetings, iconic pictures, or other trigger-events that result in their orientation towards, and participation in, international Salafist jihadism. The attacks of 11 September 2001, for instance, had such a catalytic effect on 'X':

> 'After eleven September, video tapes of Osama bin Laden were shown [on] which he praised the attacks of eleven September, I was proud of him, how a multi-millionaire chose to live in a tent instead of [in] a palace, and only because he has chosen Allah's path.'

After these events, 'X' became intrigued by the Al Qaedan view of the world, presumably in particular on account of the close parallels with his own view. He consciously chose to seek alliance with the international jihadi movement. At the same time, he freed himself from unpleasant isolation. From now on, he could share and give vent to his frustrations and views with several people. Although his actions only escalated into acts of violence at a later stage, it was mainly during this period that the ideological and social context of his political activism took shape.

Following other researchers (including Nesser, 2007), we also established that actors who framed their – short-term or long-term – frustrated idealism and political activism in a radical and religious ideology – and who actually regarded themselves as *mujaheddin* at a specific point in time – became the driving forces and consequently most dangerous powers within most cooperations. They often manifested themselves as the elements who put words into action: as those actors with the strongest motivation to put words into practice, more particularly into violent acts. It still remains debatable whether the intentions underlying these acts were as revolutionary as the religious principles they preached led us to suspect. It is hard to believe that all the individuals we may count as members of this group actually had the illusion that the Caliphate would be realised by terrorism. They more frequently seem to be oriented towards revenge or retaliation, or they hope to lure 'the enemy' into a reaction, by which both their action and the cause for which they fight will acquire a form of recognition and honour (see also Richardson, 2006).

5.4 Women

Within the fundamentalist social context of these actors, in which men nearly always rule the roost, it is easy to ignore the significance of *female* actors, the more so because they did not once emerge as formal suspects from our files.

In most cooperations, however, we came across women who had a relevant influence – whether passively or actively – on the performance of the opposite sex and their broader extremist environment.

5.4.1   Man-woman relationships and friendships

The principal binding factors, as a result of which the women in our case files became more or less involved in jihadism, were marriages and love affairs with male actors. A few foreign women had emigrated to the Netherlands together with or following their husbands. But even more interesting was the observation that *locally born Muslim women* as well as *female converts* with non-Islamic backgrounds constituted a significant majority within the group of spouses, whereas the majority of their husbands – on the contrary – had come to the West as Islamic immigrants.

There may be various explanations for this last observation. First of all, a radical Muslim originating from abroad who is staying in the West on his own, may simply fill a void by entering into a relationship with a Western woman. This is a natural and everyday process of love or lust that we will take at face value.

In addition, however, a considerable number of illegal actors could obtain a *residence permit* by marrying a woman who already has Dutch nationality. Various individuals stated frankly that this prospect was the reason for their marriage. Investigation services furthermore had evidence that some suspects arranged purely practical 'sham marriages' to avoid being repatriated. A Syrian facilitator who had exhausted all legal remedies to obtain a residence permit, for instance, received a telephone call from an intermediary who mentioned several superficial details about a divorced woman of Algerian origin. The caller asked him to pay 2,000 Euros if his efforts resulted in a wedding. During another telephone call, this Syrian negotiated directly with a candidate. He proposed that she enter into a relationship – legal or otherwise – of two years and offered compensation for a few additional costs.

In the light of this sort of advantageous marriage, it is therefore even more remarkable that in all large cooperations, very influential heartland-oriented actors were married to locally converted women. The example of a guiding Arab jihad veteran, who married a highly educated Dutch aid worker after a meeting 'in the field' abroad, is telling. Since her drastic conversion to Islam, she had been wearing an all-concealing burka in public. In another cluster, a skilful coordinator of jihadism, who in fact mainly exercised influence on a subcluster in the Netherlands from abroad, married a converted French woman. And an authoritative Arab source of inspiration of extremism in yet another cooperation married a Dutch woman of Latin-American origin. From that moment onwards, she followed her partner in his faith and in his views.

Because some of these marriages had not been contracted legally, but purely on an informal religious basis (the Islamic marriage),[83] it is not possible to point to residence permits as the only possible underlying reason for the many relationships between converted local women and legal and illegal actors. Another motivation may be that guiding heartland-oriented actors seem to acquire a higher *social status* in their environment when they show off with women they have personally convinced of the pure Islamic doctrine. In addition, they can present the conversion of their formerly 'unbelieving' wives as an ultimate expression of loyalty and dedication.

Social gain is probably sometimes also a motive for jihadis to influence women in the broader sense. A young illegal Moroccan, for instance, found a listening ear in many teenage girls and young women with his militant *dawa*. He knew a few of these women through his contact persons, and he had approached the others through Internet forums. He converted or introduced them to his intolerant ideology and tried to make them members of a community of radical Muslim women who developed parallel activities within a jihadi cooperation that was dominated by men. As a result of his success with women, he stood head and shoulder above the rest.

Other women also got involved in jihadism, often in the slipstream of man-woman relationships: for instance, family members such as daughters and sisters, or friends and acquaintances. A Dutch woman who had converted to Islam from Christianity, for instance, made her house available for the inflammatory sermons and Islam lessons given by a young jihadi. At the time, she had not known him for very long as he was the new husband of a friend from a mosque. When the couple was on the run from the police, she helped them, among other things, by giving them shelter and transport.

5.4.2 The roles of women

This raises the question of which variety of roles was actually fulfilled by the women in the movements we studied. Women often supported their husbands, of course, and they were aware of their activities. The concept of matrimonial loyalty still had its limits, sometimes also for partners of radical and jihadi Muslims. Some of them therefore kept as much distance as possible, or attempted to make their husbands change their minds. They may nevertheless be confronted with fierce conflicts or even with divorce if they reject the puritan clothing prescriptions and behavioural requirements. In this context, a Moroccan woman left her husband, because he had 'badly changed' in a short period of time due to – according to her – his newly acquired ties with extremists. After a process of mutual estrangement, various rows, and at least one incident of abuse, his new wish to marry a second partner on the basis of

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83   The studies *Informele islamitische huwelijken* (NCTb, 2006b) and *Informele huwelijken in Nederland; een explo-ratieve studie* (Van der Leun & Leupen, 2009) describe the backgrounds of this phenomenon, the manner in which they appear in the Netherlands, and its possible social consequences.

his puritan religious convictions was the last drop that caused her to divorce him.

Other women, on the other hand, had less problems with their husbands' radicalisation, and consequently interacted more frequently in jihadi circles. During an interview, one of them declared that she 'actually did not mind at all', for

> '[…] he had stopped drinking, smoking, going out, and he started to see people. And we made visits to people. I started to visit people and meet women and I enjoyed that. For this was something entirely different from visiting his family or my parents where he was not welcome.'

This attitude is typical of many women in our population of actors, who followed in their husbands' wake and adopted a cooperative, albeit cautiously cooperative, attitude in this context. They started to support the jihadi views; allowed themselves to be used as covers; adopted a hospitable and cooperative attitude towards extremists; accompanied their partners during trips; or fled together with them when they were on the run from agencies combating terrorism. In these subordinate capacities, they sometimes cooperated in facilitating acts, such as drugs trafficking, fund-raising, or the trafficking of human beings. They did this, for instance, by making their passport available for abuse or forgery.

Women who participated in the jihadi movement in such indirect ways often appeared to be well informed, usually not so much so about all kinds of tactical and operational details, but more so about the overall intentions, contact persons, and activities of their husbands. Many of them also made each other's acquaintances this way, and subsequently exchanged information among themselves. A good example of this is the story of three women who travelled with their men to jihadi centres and training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In local guest houses, among other places where they lived temporarily separated from their husbands, they gossiped a lot and this way they would pass on much of the information they had come to know to one another. One woman, for instance, told another there that her husband would fulfil a 'secret mission' in Europe.

In a few cooperations, the 'women of' therefore created their own parallel groups. These often served as a place where they could vent their family-related issues or simply for collective enjoyment. But sometimes, the things that took place in such women's clubs were also a less action-oriented reflection of the 'male practice'. Inspired by their partners, the women studied religious writings or extremist propaganda together. Sporadically, large clusters originated as a result of these types of meetings, in which one or more enthusiastic women would adopt a key role or do pioneering work, give lessons and lectures, or organise meetings. Such social constellations were also attractive to friends and acquaintances from outside the family circles who were still

'seeking' within the Islamic faith. Women who frequently met on account of their affinity with religious radicalism and jihadism also judged one another constantly. In this way, informal control mechanisms also developed in these types of groups. Apart from this, statements stirring up hatred also repeatedly contribute to the social cohesion of these groups. The following 'good wishes' spoken by a woman at the kitchen tea of an Islamic-activist bride are illustrative of the inflammatory language among radicalising women:

> '[…] I wish you all the luck in the world, and that you may build many bombs, and that you may send all Jews to hell, hallelujah.'

Only a few women seemed to be motivated to such a degree that they were actually prepared to go beyond radical talk and indirect involvement. These women often – though usually in vain – aimed at having a more or less fulfilling role in the jihadi man's world. One of them, for instance, wanted to participate in Afghanistan or Pakistan in a training camp for women that was yet to be realised. According to a friend, she was longing to sacrifice her life for the 'good cause'. In another jihadi cluster, a young female convert together with an older woman wanted to leave for the Palestine regions for the purpose of the jihad. This plan soon went off the rails when the local authorities there blocked her visa application. And an acquaintance of this duo, an extremely radical Muslim woman, tried to get details about possible targets for terrorist actions – presumably for her husband, among others. In later criminal investigations, she entered the picture again because she had helped prepare attacks and had hidden several weapons.

A last notable aspect that deserves attention here is the relatively fast *deradicalisation* of radicalised women. In some of the cooperations studied by us, the women – compared to men – realised after a relatively short period of jihadi commitment that their extremist contacts and activities were wrong, and that they had not done them much good. This applied both to many of the wives of male actors, as well as to many of the 'seeking' women, who turned away from the scene that used to intrigue them and from the ideology that once gave them something to hold on to.

5.5   Recapitulation

The twelve criminal investigations revealed that a total of 113 different actors had been active on Dutch territory in the research period. In this population of actors we found *people with various life stories and strongly different backgrounds and motives.* Although it is not possible to identify clear terrorist profiles, four groups of persons are conspicuous because of their circumstances and motives. Firstly, *illegal immigrants* are amply represented in all jihadi cooperations. Jihadi groups may provide illegal immigrants with essential

necessities of life or other needs, such as accommodation, forged or genuine documents, employment, social assistance, respect, social status and a purpose in life. Secondly, many of the actors participating in the population we analysed were *former or current addicts and people with criminal records,* who have given their lives a new direction by embracing jihadism and the strong and clear Salafist doctrine which is regarded as pure. Thirdly, the jihadi groups are attractive to individuals who are seekers with existential or identity issues because these jihadi groups meet their personal desire to find meaning in life, and provide social ties, a sense of structure in daily life, and a positive self-image. And, fourthly, we distinguish *idealists and political activists,* for whom social discontent is the most important motivation for their involvement in the international jihadi movement.

6 Concluding observations

This report gives a picture of the way in which the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism has manifested itself in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005, based on an analysis of twelve closed criminal investigations into jihadi activities that were performed in the Netherlands during this period. A first general finding is that the same names, places, and actors regularly occurred in the selected criminal investigations into case groups that had been active in the Netherlands. Actors from different cases visited the same mosques, obtained propaganda material and other material and documents from the same suppliers, met one another in person during lectures and meetings or at the homes of sympathisers, and met each other 'virtually' in on-line chat rooms or on websites. Partly because of the interrelatedness, but also in order to keep our analysis as systematic and neutral as possible, we chose to ignore the structures of the original criminal investigations and to consider the *raw* investigation material in its entirety.

In these concluding observations we will provide a synthesis of several significant research findings in a more theoretical framework. The specific findings on the basis of the empirical source material have already been described by chapter in the summary of this report.

Section 6.1 will focus on a number of general characteristics of the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism that manifested itself in this country in the period between 2001 and 2005, and will deal with the question of whether this manifestation is (or was) typically Dutch. In the next section (6.2), the more or less pan-ideological body of thought that inspired or guided actors is central. In this section, we will examine how this internationally-oriented Salafist-jihadi body of thought originated. We will be seeking explanations for the fact that throughout the world this doctrine has exerted a strong force of attraction on some Muslims, and for the fact that adherents to this doctrine may actually carry out jihadi actions. We will subsequently deal with the question of which actors may be receptive to this philosophy (Section 6.3) and we will discuss how jihadi cooperations are able to function (Section 6.4).

Before focusing on the findings from this research, we repeat the note regarding our methodology, which we made at the beginning of the report. We have based this research on police files of criminal investigations that were performed in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005. Although these files contained much information about jihadi activities that were carried out on Dutch soil in this period, this research also entails considerable restrictions. Firstly, not all jihadi activities come to the knowledge of the police, and the police do not initiate criminal investigations into all jihadi activities which come to their knowledge. Secondly, we only selected and studied a limited number of the cases investigated in the aforementioned period. This selection may have influenced our perception of the phenomenon. Thirdly, we based our research on the information collected by the investigation teams for the purpose of reconstructing terrorist crimes and

submitting these to the court, substantiated by evidence. This focus of the investigation teams, their investigation hypotheses and the associated selection and interpretation of information also influenced our perception. The picture we outline of the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism must therefore be seen in this light.

6.1 Dutch or international jihad?

The image of jihadi terrorism sketched by public authorities, researchers, and journalists in the Netherlands in the past few years was strongly coloured by the attack of 2 November 2004 on writer, director, and television producer Theo van Gogh. Unlike the attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States, this attack was said to involve 'home-grown fighters' (Buijs et al., 2006); 'inside, home-grown, self-financed, self-trained terrorists' (Sageman, 2008); or networks with an 'amorphous structure and lack of ties with international networks' (Vidino, 2007). Various scientists have used this Dutch case to emphasise that jihadi terrorism evolved in the period between 2001 and 2005 from relatively strictly organised and centrally directed terrorist cells that originated in Muslim countries and moved to the West, to small groups of young people who were raised in the West and who are fighting their own holy war. But has so much actually changed in this period? Our analyses of jihadi networks that had been active on Dutch soil in this period of time reveal a more refined picture of the situation. A general picture that emerged from our analyses is that the jihadi cooperations studied had much more in common than that they differed from each other. Whether we look at their elementary orientation, their composition, the way in which these cooperations function, their national and international contacts, or the activities developed by actors within the cooperations: in all cases, it is the evidence of this *common ground* in particular, that stands out. The cooperations studied were always relatively heterogeneous, consisting of individuals with different socio-cultural backgrounds and profiles, who were well connected with actors and networks in both the Netherlands and abroad. The actors demonstrated an all-encompassing orientation towards the worldwide struggle in the name of Islam, and they all seemed to be part of the same broader jihadi movement. Their cooperations were both locally and internationally active, and engaged in many different activities – in various combinations of actors and groups – for the purpose of the international Salafist jihad. In addition, the cooperations evolved and functioned through corresponding interactions between guiding 'heartland-oriented' actors – extremists from the traditionally Islamic countries, whose convictions and actions were based on experiences in and connections with the Islamic 'heartland' – and the more differentiated groups of individuals who – for whatever reason – proved to be receptive to their message.

Even if we look very specifically at a network with a relatively large number of actors who were raised in the Netherlands, the 'home-grown' actors were still a minority, and the many international connections were conspicuous. Only the female actors, who operated in the 'grey' external zones of this network, stand out in the sense that they were notably often raised in the West. Only if we include these women's clusters in the equation would the percentage of home-grown actors increase.

International orientation

In the context of their activities, the actors in the jihadi clusters studied by us did not seem to make a fundamental distinction between enemies or targets in the Netherlands or abroad. Their orientation was worldwide, and their activities were always in the service of the international jihad. Their enemies might be anywhere in the world. Occasionally, the actors aimed directly at the Netherlands for their activities. They were, however, more often involved in supporting or performing cross-border activities aimed at targets and perceived enemies abroad.

The activities that were developed during the period studied, for the purpose of the international jihad in the Netherlands, appeared neither to be typically Dutch nor to be specifically tailored to the possibilities or opportunities provided by the infrastructure in this country. The choice for specific activities was, however, influenced by more or less accidental opportunities that presented themselves within jihadi networks. On the basis of the police data analysed, we may conclude that personal qualities, preferences and motives, available means and connections, trigger events, the chance of success, time, geographical proximity, and – in particular also – symbolism may have been of overriding importance in the choices made for specific collective jihadi activities.

Jihadi projects often seemed to proceed with much improvisation and last-minute decision-making.[84] Partly as a result of this, the jihadi activities undertaken in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005 were extremely diverse. But whether it concerned theft, an act of violence, drugs trafficking, passport and identity fraud, credit card fraud, stirring up the fight in the Middle East, recruitment, training and dispatching fighters, or carrying out an attack with the aim to punish a generic group of unbelievers for the crimes committed against Muslims: in all these cases it concerned activities which served the international jihad *in the opinion of the actors*. It is especially this conviction of acting in the service of the holy war, or in the service of God, that provided actors with a legitimisation for their actions.

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84 A similar picture emerged from the information on the German 'Sauerlandgroep' which reached us through the media. In this case, a jihadi suspect stated in court that it did not really matter for him and his friends with which group they linked up, and whether they would carry out an attack in Iraq, Chechnya, Afghanistan, or Europe: 'it really did not make any difference where, we just wanted to participate in the jihad', were his exact words. (See Haegens, 2009.)

We assume that what happened in the Netherlands during the period studied is reasonably comparable to what happened in other West European countries at the time. But in order to obtain more insight into this issue, further research – with an internationally comparative scope – should be conducted. Which characteristics make a country such as the Netherlands attractive to jihadi activities is another relevant question. On the basis of our research, we may conclude that the availability of accessible connections (key figures) and ports of call was of crucial importance in this respect. For guiding individuals who had emigrated from Islamic countries to the Netherlands, the long-established social contacts seemed to have been the main motive to come to or to stay in this country. Factors such as having acquaintances, internationally-oriented key figures, and meeting places that provided opportunities to build new cooperations were essential to them. Through existing contacts, heartland-oriented actors had access to housing, documents, and a pool of would-be volunteers: receptive individuals who could fulfil many functions within the broad palette of activities undertaken in jihadi cooperations.

6.2   Struggle against evil and against injustice

But what is actually the aim of the jihadis in the population of actors studied? And what do the cooperations they belong to, with their extremely varied membership, want to achieve? The most important factor that the jihadi actors in selected investigation files have in common is the general conviction that a worldwide struggle must be waged between good and evil, between justice and injustice, between truth and lies, and between true Muslims and enemies of Islam. This orientation towards the international struggle was far more prominent with the jihadi cooperations analysed than the final political-religious goal they pretended to want to achieve with this struggle. In other words, the actors seemed not to have formed a specific idea of the ideal Islamic state that they – in theory – have in mind. The interesting point is that their focus on the worldwide struggle is actually an ideology-exceeding orientation, which binds actors who have become involved in the jihadi movement from different ideological backgrounds, or from an incoherent (copy-paste) ideology. Dogmatic differences between actors, which sometimes cause violent rows in the countries of origin, appeared to play an insignificant role in the West in the cooperations studied by us. Our analyses show that the actors involved in international jihadism, who had backgrounds that were otherwise sometimes difficult to reconcile, cooperated with one another remarkably well, and that they also tended to seek cooperation with people who should actually be seen as belonging to a prohibited out-group according to the group ideology preached internally. The orientation towards the joint worldwide struggle is apparently an important goal that exceeds the groups' own interests, and is able to diminish inter-group

conflicts. But this shared orientation is not the only aspect that causes ideo-logical flexibility among jihadis. The actors studied seemed to justify their more or less opportunistic behaviour with the argument that in the end it is the holy struggle in the name of God that counts, and that God will approve of everything that serves this struggle.

Ideology of the 'suppressed'
So, how did this pan-ideological orientation on the worldwide struggle between Muslims and the enemies of Islam originate? And why do some present-day Muslims feel attracted to it? Salafist jihadism initially arose in Islamic countries, primarily fed by a sense of injustice. The primary goal of this ideology was to overthrow the Establishment and to return to a com-munity that was based on the pure principles of Islam: an ideal state in which all existing power structures would be broken, in which only the power of God was accepted, and in which everyone would live in accordance with God's laws. Originally, the monarchies and oligarchies in Muslim countries – which proved to be incapable of spreading prosperity equally among the people – were the target of this struggle. In the course of years, however, the causes of the injustice felt have changed. Nowadays, Salafist-jihadis not only regard the failing Muslim regimes as targets of the struggle, but also 'Western society', 'all renegades and unbelievers', or even 'everyone who does not obey the pure rules of Islam'. In their present-day view of the world, an ideal Islamic state could only be established if everyone were to live in accordance with the rules and laws of God. As a result of this idea, *all* people who do not obey these laws and rules have become guilty of injustice.

Shift in the concept of 'the enemy'
This shift in the concept of who the enemy is – and as a result of this also a shift in the perception of who belongs to the in-group and who to the out-group – is an interesting, but also complicated, phenomenon that requires further explanation. With respect to many actors in the case files studied dur-ing our research, it applied that feelings of injustice and suppression were not based on personal experiences, but mainly on *perceptions*. Large quantities of television images, audio tapes, videos, websites, sermons, and stories have given these actors the idea that the group with which they identify – the Mus-lims in general – are under worldwide pressure through the agency of unbe-lievers and renegades. Perceptions of worldwide injustice have subsequently paved the way to the jihadi body of thought they currently adhere to, and to the preparedness to engage in jihadi activities. The ideology they are cur-rently led by has turned against a large portion of the group for which the actors claim they are making a stand, and against the people for whom they are fighting. After all, according to this ideology, only people who adhere to the pure doctrine from the initial period of Islam are regarded as true Mus-lims; the rest – non-Muslims and Muslims who are unsound in the faith – is a

hostile group. This paradox may only be understood if we also analyse the actors' feelings of injustice and suppression further.

Relative deprivation and realistic suppression or symbolic threat?
It is not only the jihadi concept of the enemy that has changed in the course of years; the struggle is also no longer always waged only by the suppressed themselves. In his latest work, Sageman (2008), however, assumes that the theme of global injustice against Muslims often resonates with personal experience. According to him, their actual personal experiences with relative deprivation and discrimination has a catalytic effect on the view that the group with which they identify is suppressed and wronged all over the world. On the basis of the Dutch investigation data, however, we cannot substantiate Sageman's thesis. As stated above, the injustice that was felt by the actors studied by us, who had been active in the Netherlands in the period between 2001 and 2005, was based more on perception than on direct personal experience of injustice and discrimination (cf: Van den Bos, Loseman & Doosje, 2009). Nevertheless, in this process other and more complicated processes have probably played a role; these are processes that are not so much related to realistic threats and actual injustice, but more in particular to symbolic threats.
If groups are afraid that other groups will interfere with their existence, this may give rise to a threat that is felt collectively. This threat may, of course, be realistic in nature, but also symbolic (see Van der Pligt & Koomen, 2009; Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006). Symbolic threats are often the result of conflicting standards, values, and views. If such moral issues are included in a conflict, this arouses powerful emotions, such as anger, contempt, aversion, and even hate. The fact is that adopting a moralising attitude towards issues often results in less tolerance and a greater alienation from people with different opinions (see Cole Wright, Cullum & Schwab, 2008).
According to Slootman and Tillie (2006), many Muslims experience a gap between the Western and Islamic way of living. Some of them have the idea that the West is deliberately focused on the suppression of Islam, others fear that their faith will be overshadowed by Western standards and values (see also Berger, 1999, 2008). To many Muslims, this last notion particularly is a source of symbolic threat. Their existence is not *physically* threatened, in a literal sense, but their identity is in danger. It is therefore not surprising that a portion of these Muslims turns to a body of thought in which the Muslim identity in its pure form is central.
For the small group of Salafist-jihadi Muslims, it is not only Western societies, unbelievers, and renegades who are perceived as a threat. Fellow Muslims who have adopted those Western standards and Western morals to an unacceptable degree may also be seen as a threat to their identity. And thus the situation comes full circle: the ideologies of those jihadis who are actually

being suppressed and of those threatened symbolically go together very well. As a converted jihadi stated in a farewell letter quoted above:

> 'We are living in an age in which the Muslim community is being attacked from all sides, both physically and ideologically by the army of unbelief and corruption … .'

International Salafist jihadism is consequently – in this respect as well – a denominator for actors with different backgrounds, motives, and goals. The jihad veterans from Muslim countries who operate in the West sometimes feel physically threatened; the Muslims who are afraid of being overshadowed by Western standards feel symbolically threatened. Together they are struggling against the secular Western society.

Terrorism as moral duty
A significant observation in this light is the prominent role played by the active stirring of a latent feeling of threat and the moralising attitude that is adopted in the cooperations studied. The collective feelings of threat and suppression in these cooperations were continually fed by images of injustice done to Muslims. It is such images – primarily from the Middle East – from which the actors repeatedly derived confirmation that the group with which they feel a bond is suffering injustice. Injustice towards a group with which they identify may create strong feelings of anger, contempt, and rage (Van der Pligt & Koomen, 2009). And these emotions may in turn be accompanied by an increasing preparedness to take action to do something about this unjust situation.

In the jihadi cooperations analysed, such images that intensify emotions were often observed in a collective context, as a result of which the group cohesion was enhanced and the collective feeling of rage and the preparedness to take action may be stirred up even further. A collectively felt group threat will in any case always have an enhancing effect on group identity and group cohesion, a phenomenon that has much in common with 'rallying around the flag'. This, in turn, increases the alienation between the group that feels driven into a corner and the community that is regarded as a threat or an enemy by this group: in this case Western society (see also Van der Pligt & Koomen, 2009).

This is a fascinating process. Increasing one's alienation towards the society in which one lives, as well as stirring up the rage and feelings of revenge against that society, may result in actions that are meant to eliminate, or avenge, the perceived injustice. According to Silke (2008), revenge may be seen as a key motivation of terrorists or would-be terrorists because revenge serves to rectify perceived injustice, to restore the dignity of the revengeful person, and to deter future injustice (see also Cota-McKinley, Woody & Bell, 2001; Van der Pligt & Koomen, 2009).

Revengeful people can be prepared to do anything. Research conducted by Cota-McKinley et al. (2001) revealed that men are usually more bent on revenge than women, and that young people are more so than older people. This may be one of the reasons that more male than female actors participated in the jihadi cooperations and that the women often operated more in the peripheral social zones of these clusters. In addition, their research revealed that people who see God as master and judge have a relatively positive view on revenge (in this research, it concerned people who interpreted the Old Testament very literally). On the basis of this finding, Van der Pligt and Koomen (2009) suggested that there is possibly a connection between religious fundamentalism in general – and consequently also Islamic fundamentalism – and accepting or admitting feelings of revenge. Religious fundamentalists are more likely to consider revenge a moral duty, and will be more likely to undertake action to rectify any injustice felt.

Cognitive processes
Van der Pligt and Koomen furthermore pointed to another process that may make activists more prepared to fight out of anger and rage. Anger causes tension which influences the processing of information. Anger promotes a situation in which negative actions undertaken by the group that has turned against them are exaggerated, whereby information is processed superficially and with a minimum of systematics. This emotion also results in the fact that people are less prepared or less capable of considering the broader situation in a neutral, down to earth manner, and of regarding it as co-responsible for the negative actions of the other group, or of trying to see things from the point of view of that other group in order to understand their actions. In addition, anger results in risky behaviour. Stirring up anger and feelings of revenge may therefore have an escalating effect. This is also the reason why it is disquieting to observe that actors in jihadi cooperations spent a large part of their time stirring up such emotions.

6.3 Receptivity to jihadi ideology

Proceeding from the selected police files, we also sought answers to questions such as: which people are receptive to a jihadi ideology; to the solidarity of a jihadi group; to the shared identity that is connected with this group membership; or to other advantages offered by such groups? In brief, what kind of person becomes involved in jihadi cooperations? Firstly, our data file showed a mixed population of actors from different countries of origin and with different backgrounds. On closer consideration, however, a characteristic emerged that was shared by many of the actors: individuals who were active in the jihadi clusters studied felt hardly connected, if at all, to the secular society in which they were living or staying temporarily, which caused

them to be receptive to the jihadi ideology. In addition, the jihadi coopera-
tions were able to fulfil specific, more concrete, needs.

Absence of ties with the secular society
Our research showed that most actors who emerged in the investigation files
had hardly any ties with the society they lived in. The majority of them never
even actually felt a bond with Western society. These actors had not been
raised in the West, had lived there for a short period of time, and were part of
a migrant culture. Out of the total of 93 male actors studied, nearly half of
them did not have legal residence status in the Netherlands or in another
West European country. These individuals had come to live in the Nether-
lands or in another West European country on average three years before
being arrested. Eleven men had been born in the Netherlands, out of whom
ten men had been raised here. In addition to this, two men had come to live
in the Netherlands at a young age. All other male actors had either been born
or raised abroad, and a large number of them had only taken up residence in
the Netherlands recently.
The actors who originated from the Middle East had on average been residing
in the Netherlands for 4.5 years at the time they came to the attention of the
police; the actors from North Africa on average 3.6 years; and the actors from
East Europe and the Northern Caucasus on average 4 years. As a result of the
fact that these individuals had lived in a secular Western society for a rela-
tively short period of time, they probably felt poorly connected to this society.
We presume that this absence of social ties, among other things, made them
receptive to guiding actors who communicated a clear ideology, but that they
were also receptive to the solidarity of a jihadi group, to the shared identity
that is connected with this group membership, and to other advantages such
groups may offer them.
A smaller number of actors *had* presumably felt connected with our society
at one time, but had lost this sense of belonging for different reasons. A num-
ber of them had ended up in the margin of society due to problems of addic-
tion, because they had ended up in crime, or for other personal reasons. It
also applies to these actors that their receptivity to guiding actors and key fig-
ures – who held out the prospect of another life – resulted from their vulnera-
ble position and their lack of social ties. Influenced by these actors, they
made the decision to place their lives in the service of the holy war.
Other actors, also a minority in the total population of actors, did not loose
their social ties until they embraced jihadism. Because the gap with society is
deliberately increased in jihadi cooperations, and – in particular – feelings of
anger and rage were created and stirred up, these actors experienced an ever-
increasing alienation from society. Among these actors, we identified ideal-
ists, political activists, seekers, as well as individuals who had come into con-
tact with the jihadi ideology through friends or acquaintances and who had
started to believe in it for various reasons. A remarkably large number of

these individuals are Muslim women. Many of the women who fulfilled roles
in the clusters studied by us had been born and bred in Western Europe; a
few of them only converted to Islam at an advanced age. Some of them had
ended up in such clusters because they had sexual relationships with jihadi
partners. Because these women subsequently started to identify with these
clusters, or because they had started to believe what was preached in those
clusters, they had loosened – or had explicitly broken off – their ties with the
West European or Dutch society. Some Muslim women from the clusters
analysed, however, continued to maintain contact with the Dutch society
despite their interest in the jihadi body of thought. They attended regular
educational courses or training courses, and also maintained relationships
outside the jihadi circles.

The idealists and political activists in the population of actors had become
receptive to the stimuli from the jihadi movement as a result of their deeply
rooted social dissatisfaction. Indignation about political, economic, and cul-
tural injustice in the world stirred up their preparedness to take action. Those
who we characterised as 'seekers in this report, were presumably mainly
receptive to the Salafist-jihadi views from the need for existential security,
meaning in life, and structure.

Concrete needs
In addition to the absence of social ties, which probably caused the actors to
be receptive to jihadi ideologies and communities, the jihadi clusters identi-
fied by us seemed also attractive because they could fulfil a variety of needs
and necessities of life. Actors often not only joined such groups because of
their receptivity to the dominant views and activities of these groups, but
sometimes also because of the social advantages such groups may offer
them. Most people seek some degree of social solidarity, motivated by a need
for security, safety, structure (Meertens et al., 2006), status, meaning in life,
and identity. Militant religious groups are able to satisfy such needs. Espe-
cially young adults and illegal actors appeared to attach importance to these
types of advantages.

For the large groups of illegal foreigners and asylum seekers who were active
in the jihadi clusters analysed, specific material needs also appeared to play a
role in the process that connected them to these groups. Such cooperations
often included actors or key figures who were in the position to provide work,
accommodation, contacts (criminal or otherwise), identity papers, and other
useful necessities of life. These figures could sometimes also provide com-
pletely different advantages or rewards, such as privileges or positions that
increased their status within a cooperation.

The jihadi cooperations were probably appealing to addicts, former addicts
and criminal actors for other advantages. By exerting themselves for their
faith within such a group, they attempted to straighten things out for them-
selves after a life of sin. Jihadi clusters offered many possibilities to this end.

Moreover, guiding actors often suggested that they could mediate a place in paradise, provided that those chosen conformed to the criteria of good jihadism prescribed by such actors.

6.4   Dynamics of the cooperations

The group of receptive people was consequently extremely varied. But what about the guiding actors? And how did the cooperations led by them evolve and function in practice? In each of the cooperations studied, the presence of individuals who possessed an ideological or militant frame of reference based on experiences in the Islamic world appeared to be crucial to the formation and consolidation of jihadi clusters. These actors appeared to be remarkably capable of attracting and mobilising people. In a Western context, these heartland-oriented actors actually had a relatively strong ability to sell a coherent jihadi narrative. They were regarded by receptive actors as authoritative representatives of a movement that had revived in the Islamic world, and they had characteristics that gave them credibility and status, such as knowledge of the Qur'an and of classic Arabic, experiences in combat, contacts with other charismatic key figures, and/or verbal (or physical) power of persuasion. Due to these characteristics they functioned relatively often as role models. The relationships between guiding individuals and receptive people in the clusters identified and studied by us had a relative nature. Individuals who were capable of giving direction to specific groups of actors often appeared to be receptive themselves to the direction of other actors at home or abroad who in turn took advantage of their commitment. And people who became involved in jihadi clusters could develop to such a degree that they were able to take leading roles themselves in time, for example to new followers or recruits.

Self-selection
When guiding actors, with their clearly articulated ideology and relative credibility, come into contact with individuals or groups of individuals who, for whatever reason, prove to be receptive to their message or to other advantages that these actors – or their networks – have to offer, processes of radicalisation are stimulated. These processes may subsequently develop further within existing groups. In this process, we observed a form of self-selection. Those who were receptive – and *remained* receptive – to guiding heartland-oriented actors or individuals associated with them – continued to radicalise collectively. Others chose to distance themselves on their own initiative. In each case, it was a dynamic process. Actors who came to consider their environment to be too radical left the group. Other individuals who proved to be receptive – either to the jihadi ideology or to other advantages offered by the cooperations – joined the group.

Extremists from the traditional Islamic world usually played a contributory role in the continued collective developments: in some cases because group members took the initiative to actively seek teachers who could continue to educate them in radical Islam, and in other cases because teachers continued to present themselves actively to them.

Informal and fluid relationships
In the jihadi cooperations studied, we observed series of informally linked dependence-receptivity relationships. Actors who relied on the commitment and abilities of others gave direction to individuals who showed themselves to be receptive to them. Guiding actors often appeared to be receptive themselves to the direction of other actors who took advantage of their commitment. Due to the complex and dynamic nature of these interactions, we did not notice any formal, strictly organised, hierarchical relationships. The relationships were always informal, fluid and strongly decentralised, with the actors relatively free to improvise when carrying out their tasks. The linked series of social dependence-receptivity relationships was able to compensate for the absence of formal hierarchical relationships within jihadi cooperations.
Within the margins of this overall picture, it is obvious that the one cooperation has slightly more or different organisational substance than the other. The degree and way in which this developed in each cooperation appeared to be determined in particular by the *nature* of the activities organised within these cooperations. Specific activities simply required more coordination and a stricter allocation of tasks than other activities. As a result of the large diversity of the activities that were usually organised in most cooperations, the roles and functions of the individuals often changed by the moment.

6.5 In conclusion

If only the world was simple. Preferably as simple as the most enthusiastic of the actors from the criminal investigations analysed by us presented it, in their vision of a universalistic black-and white version of the world. Policy makers and field workers who are engaged in counterterrorism would have considerably less trouble countering jihadi terrorism, and scientists would have less trouble understanding and explaining the phenomenon. However, our findings mainly show the complexity and ambiguity in which the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism presented itself in Netherlands during the period studied. We are dealing with extremely fluid and informal cooperations, which are part of a broader movement by their mutual and transnational interrelatedness as decentralised clusters. In addition, the jihadi cooperations studied by us engaged in a wide range of activities. Usually, these activities were by no means always equally threatening. Whereas direct pre-

paratory acts for attacks may set the alarm bells ringing, the broader jihadi movement is supported and sustained by more subtle activities, such as fund-raising, document fraud or other forms of facilitating crimes. Jihadi activities aimed at providing protection for the cooperations and their actors are often as varied as the other activities, and are performed systematically. At an individual level, as well, the situation appears to be complex. The jihadi cooperations derived their capacities from people with extremely divergent backgrounds, origins, ages and motives. Because of their mixed and changing socio-cultural compositions, the jihadi communities are hard to characterise. Likewise, it is not possible to provide an unambiguous, clear-cut profile of a jihadi individual. And although it is remarkably often migrants from the Islamic heartland who provide direction and inspiration to actors, there appears to be no connection at all between the socio-cultural background of someone who participates in jihadi circles and the degree to which he poses a direct physical danger to society. This seems to be connected to individual emotional involvement or motivation – factors that are far more difficult to establish, and which may sometimes not be established until after a drastic terrorist act has taken place. In this respect, as well, those researchers who have the relative luxury of analysing this phenomenon in detail, and in retrospect, have an easier job than authorities and organisations that have to combat this terrorism as it takes place. This situation, however, makes the findings described in this report even more valuable. Knowledge and understanding of the nature of jihadi terrorism are, after all, necessary: not only to develop and test the scientific theories in this field, but also to develop practical ways to address this phenomenon.

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Appendix 1 Advisory Board

Chairman

Prof. dr. S. Bogaerts Full Professor, Forensic Psychology at the faculty of
Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University, and
Full Professor, Forensic Psychology and Victimology at
the Victimology Institute, Tilburg University

Members

A representative of the Expertise and Analysis Department of the National
Coordinator for Counterterrorism
A representative of the National Office of the Public Prosecution Service
A representative of the Ministry of the Interior
A representative of the National Crime Squad of the National Police Services
Agency
Two representatives of the Department of International Police Information of
the National Police Services Agency.

WODC-rapporten

Om zo veel mogelijk belanghebbenden te informeren over de onderzoeks-
resultaten van het WODC wordt een beperkte oplage van de rapporten koste-
loos verspreid onder functionarissen, werkgroepen en instellingen binnen en
buiten het ministerie van Justitie. Dit gebeurt aan de hand van een verzend-
lijst die afhankelijk van het onderwerp van het rapport opgesteld wordt. De
rapporten in de reeks Onderzoek en beleid (O&B) worden uitgegeven door
Boom Juridische uitgevers en zijn voor belangstellenden die niet voor een
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Een complete lijst van de WODC-rapporten is te vinden op de WODC-site
(www.wodc.nl). Daar zijn ook de uitgebreide samenvattingen te vinden van
alle vanaf 1997 verschenen WODC-rapporten. Volledige teksten van de rap-
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