

Calling on Women: Female-Specific Motivation Narratives in Danish Online Jihad Propaganda

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Abstract

Based on a monitoring of 16 official social media profiles of three Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations over a five-year period, this article explores how these jihadi-Salafists motivate women to take part in defensive jihad (jihād al-dafʿa). The issue is explored through the analytical lens of discourse, and intersectionality theory as well as the theoretical perspective on affect and the social construction of gender. The article finds that women are motivated to take part in jihad by referencing classical doctrines of defensive jihad and by means of records of charismatic female fighters from the time of the Prophet. However, the female-specific motivation narratives are as contemporary and empowering as they are regressive and founded in classical sources such as the Quran, ahadith and Sira. The motivation narratives show strong push-back against Western feminism and counter-narrate Western views of Muslim women as oppressed, passive victims of male-dominated ideologies. Instead they (de-)construct 'the Muslim woman' in motivation narratives in which jihadi-Salafism is an important source not only of authenticity but also of strong self-identity and (em)power(ment).

Keywords: Denmark, Jihad, jihadi-Salafism, propaganda, social media, gender, women.

Introduction

Within the last ten years, women's involvement in terrorism has been widening ideologically and logistically, and is expected to increase in future.[1] Accordingly, studies on terrorism have increasingly focused on women. Literature on female terrorism provides important knowledge on issues such as the history of female involvement in terrorism, women's strategic role and impact, and female suicide attacks.[2] Studies that specifically address the issue of women's motives for involvement in terrorist organisations have predominantly done so through milieu approaches and mappings of demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds of women who have left West European countries to join jihadi organizations in Syria or Iraq.[3] They find that women's motives to take part in jihad are complex and without clear patterns.[4] However, the body of literature is still small and what it does not consider in detail, is the female-specific jihad propaganda aimed at West European Muslim women by the jihadi organizations. While social media play an increasingly essential part in jihadists' female-specific recruitment strategy,[5] few studies have been undertaken on the issue of female-specific jihad propaganda on social media.[6] This article therefore aims to examine how three jihadi-Salafi organizations based in Denmark motivate women through their narratives on social media to take part in defensive jihad (*jihād al-dafʿa* or the violent defense of Islam).[7] The questions explored are: How do the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations online motivate Muslim women to take part in jihad? What subject positions are constructed and what narratives are offered?

The issue of Jihadism has been on the public agenda in Denmark since the cartoons controversy of 2005–2006, intensifying with the 2015 shootings in Copenhagen. The large number of Danish Muslims who have traveled to Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters further caused the Danish discourse to expand. With nearly 30 citizens leaving for Iraq and Syria per one million inhabitants, Denmark has more so-called foreign fighters per capita than most other EU Member States, only slightly outscored by Belgium. At least 150 individuals have travelled from Denmark to Syria and Iraq, and, according to the latest assessment from the Danish Security and Intelligence Service, the number is now estimated to be even higher. The vast majority of those leaving for Syria and Iraq are young men, but more women have left in recent years. Women now make up every seventh of the total number of Danish jihad travelers.[8] Particularly interesting in the case of Danish jihadi-Salafism is furthermore that while international jihad organizations such as the terrorist organization that calls itself Islamic

State (ISIS) have until recently excluded women from the battlefield, the Danish jihadi-Salafists have called on women to take part in combat for almost ten years. More specifically, the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations assign three conceptual subject positions for Muslim women to take within jihad: “mother,” “martyr wife,” and “*mujāhida*” [9]. [10] Thus Muslim women are assigned both non-military and military positions in jihad. The discursive online construction of Muslim women’s role as *mujāhida*, that is female fighter, is the focus of this article. [11] The question is how the jihadi-Salafi organizations appeal to women to participate in combat.

The main argument of the article is that the jihadi-Salafist’s female-specific motivation narratives are as contemporary and empowering as they are regressive and based on classical Islamic sources such as the Quran, ahadith and the schools of Sunni jurisprudence. [12] The motivation narratives show strong push-back against Western feminism and counter-narrate Western views of Muslim women as oppressed, passive victims of male-dominated ideologies. Instead they (de-)construct ‘the Muslim woman’ in motivation narratives in which jihadi-Salafism is an important source not only of authenticity but also of strong self-identity and (em) power(ment).

The article is based on an open-source study of textual and audio uploads posted by three Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations on their sixteen official social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube – over 8,000 uploads in total. All textual and audio materials were uploaded by the jihadi-Salafi organizations themselves, not by followers or members. Data include all uploads posted by the organizations from the creation of their social media accounts to the end of 2015. All told, data cover a time period of over five years. This period is particularly interesting in relation to online jihadi narratives because online anti-radicalization initiatives at that time were less developed than they are today. More specifically, Danish anti-radicalization initiatives had not yet begun to force takedowns [13] of online so-called radicalization material from social media in the “fight against online radicalization”. Thus, online censure on social media platforms was almost non-existent and Danish jihadi-Salafists could speak almost freely online. Large parts of the materials collected for this article no longer exist on social media today.

The textual and audio uploads were downloaded, stored, systematized, and analyzed with the help of qualitative software programs. To narrow down the dataset to textual and audio uploads that specifically deal with jihad (-ism), data were coded by data-driven [14] jihad-specific codes (See appendix). for codebook on codes and descriptions). All uploads in which jihad-specific codes appeared were included in their full length which in textual uploads vary from three lines to 20 pages and in audio uploads vary from three minutes to almost four hours. Most uploads were in Danish, a few in English and almost none in Arabic. Variable spellings in Danish, English, and Arabic as well as the nouns in singular and plural were included in the coding process. [15]

Methodologically, the article builds on Jonathan Potter & Margaret Wetherells psychological discourse analysis (1987) and their social constructionist perception of language: that is, that the world is socially constructed through language, both spoken and written, and that language shapes identities, social relations and understandings of the world. [16] Accordingly, social media texts such as the texts and audios uploaded by the jihadi Salafi organizations, construct a version of world situations, rather than merely reflecting or mirroring them. [17] More specifically, the present analysis built on Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe’s (1985) theory on how subject positions take place in the social field of meaning-making processes. [18] Simply put, subject positions (i.e., when the subject is placed in a specific position by a certain discourse,) are constructed in their relations: they are defined in relation to what they are and what they are not. [19] Furthermore, the article theoretically builds on Judith Butler’s theorization of gender as a social construction. [20] According to Butler (1990; 1997), our gendered identity is created when we are interpolated [21] that is ‘called’ by someone or something, and given an identity via that call. [22] Thus gender is an effect of repeated speech acts that calls the subject into a gender identity, and thereby constructs a person as a gendered subject. Through continuous repetition and citations, norms about ‘right/wrong’ or ‘natural/unnatural’ ways of ‘doing gender’ become fixed and naturalized. [23] Through the repeated speech acts, gender comes to appear as if it were substantial and essential. [24] This, Butler argues, has consequences for the discursive frames within which subjects can define themselves. Butler uses the metaphor ‘congealing’ [25] to indicate what happens. According to Butler, language should thus be understood not only as meaning making, but also as an active praxis with reality-producing

effects.[26] The present article also theoretically builds on feminist accounts of intersectionality.[27] Despite differences and variations, the shared theoretical assertion of feminist accounts of intersectionality is that different social categories such as gender, ethnicity and class intersect. This means that they mutually influence and transform one another as overall social structures, as well as in creating complex identities. On the level of social identities, this means that as an individual you are never just a woman, but always also, ethnically and class-wise, etc. positioned in a way that has consequences for which gender identities become possible, difficult, or impossible.[28] Lastly, the article is using affect theory for an understanding of the online space as social networks constructed around emotion and affectual relationships. As Sara Ahmed stressed (2004), shared anger, shame, hate, or love are inherently politicizing emotions offline and online. In this way, the discursive construction of emotion can be instrumental in creating online communities of feeling.[29] These theories are encompassed to complement each other in the analysis of how the Danish jihad-Salafists motivate women to take part in combat in their jihad-specific online narratives.

The term jihadi-Salafism (or its equivalent, Salafi jihadism) is used to refer to the Danish organizations as they in various ways position themselves in their textual and audio uploads on social media with a violent fraction within a strand of conservative Islam known as jihadi Salafism.[30] Simply put, the concept of Salafism is derived from the Arabic expression *as-salaf as-Sālih* (the righteous predecessors), which refers to the Prophet and the first generations of the rightly guided Muslims.[31] Salafism as a general approach to the interpretation of Islam is thus embedded in the idea of following in the footsteps of these early generations and deriving religious guidance directly from the sources.[32] The markers by which this is done include explicitly stressing that the organizations follow the way of conservative Salafism or normatively constructing the “right Islam” in a textually rigorous way and rooted in pre-modern time. The organizations furthermore place a strong emphasis on being jihadists by, for example, legitimizing violent defense of Islam, glorifying martyrdom, and paying tribute to specific martyrs.

The three Danish jihadi Salafi organizations included in this study are the Call to Islam (“Kaldet til Islam”), the Muslim Youth Centre (“Muslimsk UngdomsCenter”), and the Islamic Culture Centre (“Islamisk KulturCenter”). [33] To briefly introduce the three organizations, The Call to Islam was until recently one of the most visible and vocal Islamic organizations in Denmark. The Call to Islam has now been dissolved, as several of its members, including its leader, Shiraz Tariq (also known as Abu Musa), have died as foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. [34] The Muslim Youth Centre is less visible and less vocal, rarely appearing in the Danish media. The mosque attended by its members, however – the Grimhøj Mosque in Aarhus – has attracted frequent media attention, most recently when its imam was portrayed in a documentary as expressing support for stoning of women as a punishment for adultery. Lastly, the Islamic Culture Centre is also not very visible and vocal. This group is considered rather classic or traditional and follows only one sheikh, Sheikh Abu Ahmad. Some of those implicated in two Danish terror cases – the Glostrup case (also known as “the Sarajevo case”) and the Glasvej case (also known as “Operation Dagger”) – are reported to have participated in Abu Ahmad’s classes.[35] This article is based on these three specific organizations because at the time of data collection they were among the most influential jihadi-Salafi organizations in Denmark, both online and offline. More specifically, these organizations have been among the main establishers of a Danish online jihad narrative. The organizations have been the main base of large clusters of Danish foreign fighters who have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join contemporary Islamist organizations such as ISIS. All three are termed “organizations” to underline that they all exist or existed online as well as offline (organized with affiliation to mosques etc.), and are not simply online debate forums.

Pre-modern Motivation Narratives

Now turning to the questions of how the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations motivate Muslim women to take part in jihad, the article finds that they encourage women to take the position of a female fighter by referencing classical doctrines of defensive jihad. The jihadi-Salafists thus put forth female-specific classical doctrines on defensive jihad to argue that women are obligated to take part in jihad. Classical jihad doctrines are a theory

of warfare developed by Muslim jurists long before the emergence of the modern nation state to distinguish between offensive and defensive warfare. Simply put, offensive jihad (*jihād al-talab*) was war to be waged against other states, while defensive jihad (*jihād al-daf'a*) addressed the need for all Muslims to fight if their own territories were invaded. Thus, offensive jihad was associated with military conquest and expanding the geographical boundaries of the community and was considered a collective duty (*fard kifayya*) for mature able-bodied males. On the other hand, defensive jihad was related to the defense of Islamic lands and was considered an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) upon both men and women.[36] According to the classical doctrine, the individual obligation of defensive jihad applies to those residing in a territory that is under attack or those who are nearby.[37] Modern jihadi-Salafists, including the Danish jihadi-Salafists on which this article is based, drop this distinction, however, as they perceive the “enemy” (i.e. the West, apostate regimes, etc.) as being in charge of Muslim territories and Islam as being under attack, and therefore call on all Muslims to defend themselves.[38] The organizations have thus discursively turned defensive jihad from a territorially oriented doctrine to a contemporary global military program.

Below is an example of a textual upload posted by one of the Danish jihadi-Salafists at the beginning of the Syrian civil war. They explicitly refer to the classical doctrines of defensive jihad to define the individual obligation for women. They refer to the doctrines stressing that “if an enemy attacks a Muslim country, Jihaad becomes an individual duty upon every man and woman”, that “in cases of necessity, such as if the kuffaar attack a Muslim country (...) Jihaad is obligatory for women” and that “Jihaad is, in cases where the enemy has invaded the Muslim country, obligatory for all healthy people, men and women”. They furthermore explicitly reference the Quran (here surah *Al-Tawbah*) and the Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence (here the Hanafi and Maliki schools of law). In doing so, the Danish Jihadi-Salafists legitimize the position of the female fighter and through continuous repetition and citations, ways of ‘doing gender’ in jihad, thus, become fixed and naturalized.[39] Through online repeated narratives, women’s position in defensive jihad, thus, comes to appear as if it were substantial and essential.[40]

Example I:

When jihaad is fard 'ayn [individual obligation],[41] which means an individual obligation, there are no excuses, then you must go out and have tawakkul [trust][42] on Allah, that is, to trust in Allah, that He, Azza wa Jall [mighty and majestic],[43] takes care of one’s children (...) Jihaad is, in cases where the enemy has invaded the Muslim country, obligatory for all healthy people, men and women, and a woman can go out without permission of her father or husband (...) Al-Kaasaani al-Hanafi,[44] may Allah have mercy on him, said: “In a time of general mobilization, such as when the enemy is trying to invade a Muslim country, it becomes an individual obligation, fard 'ayn, on every Muslim who is able to fight, because Allah says (...): ‘March forward, whether you’re light (fast, young and wealthy) or heavy (sick, old and poor)’ (Al-Tawbah 9:41). It was said that this was revealed about mobilization in general: ‘It was not true for the people of Al-Madinah and the Bedouins in the neighborhood to stay behind the Prophet (fighting for Allaah’s cause) and it was not right for them to prefer their own lives over his life.’ (Al-Tawbah 9: 120). Al-Sharh al-Sagheer, one of Maliki’s books (2/274) says something similar, stating that if an enemy attacks a Muslim country, Jihaad becomes an individual duty upon every man and woman (...) Jihaad is not obligatory for women, in principle, except in cases of necessity, such as if the kuffaar attack a Muslim country. In this case, Jihaad is obligatory for women in accordance with their capabilities (...) (text upload by Islamic Culture Centre, June 2013, my translation of the Danish, Arabic as in the original).[45]

As in the text above, the jihadi-Salafists also frequently address the specific ways in which women can leave for jihad. In general, they argue that a woman may only travel in the company of her husband or a *mahram* (a male relative whom she may not marry). However, the Danish jihadi-Salafists argue that in the extraordinary circumstances of defensive jihad the classical legal stipulation that a woman must not travel without a *mahram* does not apply. As the text upload above exemplify, they emphasize that in times of defensive warfare, “when the enemy has invaded a Muslim country” (Example I), the classical jurists stipulate that no woman is required

to seek permission from another to defend herself. And Muslim woman “can go without permission of her father or husband” (Example I).[46]

In their pre-modern motivation narratives, the Danish jihadi-Salafists furthermore motivate women to take part in jihad by posting records of charismatic female fighters from the time of the Prophet. These Salafi women are emphasized as role models for contemporary Muslim women to emulate. In a text upload, one of the organizations encourages women to follow in the lines of the “women from the past,” who “fought and died for their belief” and “gave their blood and tears and sacrificed everything”:

Example II:

(...) We never know when death will come, so let this reminder go into your hearts and minds, my honored sisters. Who are we compared to the women of the past? Those who fought for this deen [religion],[47] who died for this deen, who lost family members for this deen, they gave blood and tears; they sacrificed everything, subhan Allah [glory to God].[48] Everything. So who are we to lay on the lazy side? Thanks to Allah, he has given us many chances this year. Subhan Allah He has ta'ala [may he be exalted][49] directed many and subhanAllah [(all) praise be to God][50] these sisters and brothers who fought side by side with the Prophet have changed much today! They have brought Islam into our hearts, so let's not miss our chances, In Shaa Allah.[51]

In the text, the Danish jihadi-Salafists through a female voice encourage their “honored sisters” to take this reminder of the female fighters from the past into their heart and not “miss their chances” (Example II). The Danish jihadi-Salafists do not simply refer to women at the time of the Prophet Muhammad in the abstract; they refer to a handful of specific women who at the time of the Prophet participated in defensive jihad. Some of the hadiths referred to even recount women saving the Prophet’s life in situations when he and Islam faced an existential threat. The woman most referred to is Umm ‘Umara,[52] who fought in several battles and sustained numerous injuries to the extent that the Prophet himself is said to have extolled her heroism on the battlefield.[53] In a three-part audio series telling this fighter’s story, it is stated that she defended not only the Prophet but entire Islam: “When she saw that the Prophet was surrounded and that Muhammad was threatened and that all of Islam was threatened, she drew a sword” (Audio upload The Muslim Youth Centre, April 2015, my transcription, my translation from Danish). It is further underlined that “many men wish they were as courageous as she was” and that Umm ‘Umara “had some great characteristics that many men do not have today”.[54]

The audios also refer in particular to Khawlah Bint al-Azwar, a Muslim female fighter, sister to the legendary soldier and Companion of the Prophet Muhammad. According to tradition, she fought alongside her brother in several battles, including the Battle of Yarmouk against Byzantine forces. Khawlah was well known for her leadership in battles of the Muslim conquests in parts of what are today Syria, Jordan, and Palestine, and in particular one battle in which she is said to have led a group of women against the Byzantine army. An example is a video on Khawlah’s life, in which one of the organizations, in glorifying terms, states that she is said to have hunted down and forced men who tried to escape the battle back onto the battlefield.[55] The jihadi-Salafists thus highlight Khawlah Bint al-Azwar as well as Umm ‘Umara for their courageous actions and honorable participation in jihad while at the same time shaming men who have not left for jihad by underlining that modern-day men lack the courage and characteristics of the female warriors who fought for Islam.

The examples above exemplify how the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations have adapted the rationale of defensive jihad in order to argue that the role of the female jihadi fighter is lawful. In their pre-modern motivation narratives, they create legitimacy and lawfulness in the position as mujāhida by referencing classical sources such as the Qur’an, ahadith, Sīra and schools of orthodox Sunni jurisprudence (Example I). They furthermore call on women to take the position of female fighters by posting stories of charismatic female fighters from the time of Prophet Muhammad (Example II) and thereby offer them authenticity and identity via that call. [56] Put differently, they interpolate [57] the subject is into a gender identity in jihad. Through continuous repetition and citations, ways of ‘doing gender’ in jihad, more specific the position of the female fighter, become congealed.[58]

Contemporary Motivation Narratives

However, the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations' motivation narratives are not simply regressive and founded in pre-modern times. They are also contemporary and contextualized in modern-day female-specific identity issues. The motivation narratives merge a focus on classical doctrines of defensive jihad and records of tradition with contemporary narratives which address complex identity issues specific to Muslim women in the West. In particular, they motivate Muslim women to take part in jihad by counter-narrating a (perceived) Western essentialism in which Muslim women (according to them) are seen as passive victims of oppressive male-dominated ideologies (see Example III). An example is the following textual upload in which the jihadi-Salafists counter-narrate a (perceived) hegemonic and stereotyped view of 'the Muslim woman' as "reserved, oppressed and weak". Instead they (de-)construct Muslim women as "strong and self-confident" and emphasize that they are "defined by Islam in the form of the Qur'an and Sunnah". The Danish jihadi-Salafists refer to female fighters in the Prophet Muhammad's army "fighting on equal terms with weapon in hand defending Islam against the enemy" (see following example). More specifically, they refer to the heroic actions of the already mentioned Umm 'Umara (here 'Nasiba bint Kaab Al Mazini') and Khawla bint Al Azwar who disprove the "distorted perception of Islam as women's oppressive and reactionary". And they ask the rhetorical question: whether contemporary Muslim women have the strength to follow in the footsteps of these brave women. [59]

Example III:

The perception of the Muslim woman as a weak, oppressed and passive is widespread in the West. That women in the western world are forced to be walking sex objects is called 'freedom'. However, the Muslim woman – as defined by Islam in its writings in the form of the Quran and the Sunnah – is strong and self-confident (...) when the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was in conflict with the local infidel tribes in the Arabian peninsula, his army of faithful soldiers was joined by many women fighting on equal terms with weapon in hand defending Islam against the enemy. Especially well known is Nasiba Bint Kaab Al Mazini, who was always in the lead. In one battle, she was wounded 13 times, lost one hand, and killed in close combat the man who killed her son Umara (...) Khawla bint Al Azwar saved her brother in a battle by killing his opponents (...) The West rejoices women who can contribute to the distorted perception of Islam as women's oppressive and reactionary. The West allows the woman to show off her body; to degrade her to a sex object. It allows her the right to do many things, but not to the right to be Muslim. The West will not recognize women who choose Islam. According to the West's mind, women who choose Islam must be forced to do so by their husbands. In the ideological crusade against Islam, the West uses the Muslim woman as hostage. Women's oppression is a problem we all must help fight. But the solution – the liberation – is not called free sex (...) it is called Islam. Islam's historical and brave women have shown the way to it. But are Muslims today strong enough to follow? [60]

The Danish jihadi-Salafists in particular critique the Western lack of tolerance for Islamic women's insistence on defining themselves within a conservative religious paradigm. They counter-narrate the Western vision of 'freedom' and stress that the West "allows" women "to degrade her to a sex object" but not "the right to be Muslim" (Example III). According to Danish jihadi-Salafists, the West does not "recognize women, that choose Islam" but generalize women as male dominated and "forced to do so by their husbands." The Danish jihadi-Salafists thereby counter-narrate the Western fight against women's oppression. Instead they construct Islam – more specifically to take part in jihad and follow in the lines of the righteous predecessors (*as-salaf as-salih*) – as the source of female strength and liberation.

The Danish jihadi-Salafists more specifically counter position the notion of western feminism as a universal identity platform and global sisterhood (see Example IV). This notion is, according to the Danish Jihadi-Salafists, based on the mistaken idea that women all over the world have identical interests. The West constructs a homogenous, global, feminist 'we', and in so doing neglects the differences in interests generated, for example, by a religious self-identity. The idea of the global, feminist 'we' is however, according to the Danish jihadi-Salafists, related to an equally unspecified 'they'. The unspecified 'they' is abstractly defined as Muslim women,

who appear to be “oppressed” (see Example IV) and therefore more backwards’ in terms of reaching out for the ‘common’ feminist goals. The Danish jihadi-Salafists instead stress the honor of being “sisters of Islam” and the obligation to “stand up” for their “deen” (i.e. *dīn*, religion) and “defend it with all their power.” They call on women to stand united and be among those who fight for the religion for which Muhammad fought. They discuss the issue of women’s oppression by saying tradition that Muhammad gave Muslim women their rights 1,400 years ago and pray that “Allah punish those who oppress Muslim sisters”. They call on woman to fight for their “honor”, “deen” (i.e. *dīn*, religion) and “protection” and ask that women may be among those who rise the “khilafa” (i.e. the caliphate) and die on “la ilaha illa Allah Muhammad rasool Allah” (i.e. the *Shahada* or the Islamic creed).

Example IV:

Dear sisters, remember, we are sisters of Islam! We are the ones who must bring our nation forward! (...) we are those who will stand up for la ilaha illa Allah! ! [shahada, the Islamic creed][61] Remember Islam is our deen [religion][62] we must defend it with all our power! Remember our beloved Prophet fought for Islam! Even the women did in his time! Islam is what we must fight for! Islam is our honor! Our deen! [religion][63] Our protection! (...) No kuffar can say we are oppressed when Muhammad saws [Peace be upon him] [64] gave women their rights 1400 years ago! Indeed, it’s the kuffar who suppressed! We are well, Alhamdulillah! [praise be to Allah] [65] May Allah use us, may we be among those who fight for our beloved deen that Muhammad fought for, may we be among those who rise the khilafa! [caliphate] [66] So the Muslims can have peace from these kuffar! May we be among those who are God-fearing and die on la ilaha illa Allah Muhammad rasool Allah! [sic, shahada, the Islamic creed] May Allah protect our sisters and brothers all over the world! May Allah punish those who oppress our sisters and brothers of Islam!). [67]

The four textual examples above exemplify how the Danish jihadi-Salafists exhort women to take part in jihad by setting jihad-specific narratives within the context of complex identity issues and emotions specific for the intersection [68] of being woman and Muslim in the West. They also counter-narrate the stereotyped perception of Muslim women as oppressed, passive and male-dominated. The three organizations studied for this article upload narratives that (de-)construct ‘the Muslim woman’ as strong and independent. In so doing, they use contemporary available discourses and situational, contextual language flexibly in a micro-context – that is, their everyday interaction on social media – to motivate Muslim women to take part in jihad.

Conclusion

To motivate women to take part in violent jihad, the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations repeat female-specific doctrines on defensive jihad from pre-modern, classical Salafi sources. Furthermore, they upload stories of charismatic female fighters from Prophet Muhammad’s time and appeal to modern Muslim women to emulate their example. In so doing, they enable Muslim women to connect their own individual self-perception with the larger notion of tradition and authenticity.

However, the female-specific motivation narratives are just as contemporary and empowering as they are pre-modern and regressive. The gender-based discrimination that Muslim women (feel that they) face in modern-day society is constructed as additional motivation. Therefore, the jihadi-Salafists strategically motivate Muslim women to take part in jihad by addressing issues specific for the intersection of being women and being Muslim in the West today.

Salafists are often perceived as conservative: as founded in the time of the Prophet, and in ideological terms as representing a search to recover the distant past. The Danish jihadi-Salafists also perceive themselves in this way. In some respects, however, this is a distorted view. As shown above, these organizations’ jihad mindset also embodies a contemporary, modern-day jihad narrative. Although they encompass the older notion of Salafi theology, the motivation narratives of the Danish jihadi-Salafists are more complex and more multi-

faceted than the doctrines of the forefathers of the medieval period. In exhaustive ways, they rearticulate the records of tradition and history into emotions and affect specific for contemporary Muslim western women.

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Appendix: Codebook: Data-Driven Codes and Description

Code	Description
Jihad, jihadi, jihadist, jihadism	Uploads that concern jihad as a concept, phenomena, position or ideology. Focusing specifically on violent jihad.
Mujāhid, mujāhida, mujāhidīn	Uploads that concern the concept, phenomena or position of one engaged in jihad; mujāhid, mujāhida, mujāhidīn.
Martyr; martyrdom, šahīd, šahīda, šuhadā'	Uploads that concern the concept, phenomena or position of a martyr (šahīd, šahīda, šuhadā') or martyrdom.
Die, death, day of judgment	Uploads that concern death, dying, or day of judgment in relation to jihad (ism), martyrdom (šuhadā') or being jihadist, martyr, mujāhid or mujāhida.
Green birds, lions	Uploads that concern jihad-specific metaphors. Specifically focusing on green birds and lions e.g. martyrs living on in the heart of green birds or mujāhidīn as lions.
Caliphate, Khilafah	Uploads that concern the caliphate as a phenomena or concept. And in relation to the terror organization that call themselves Islamic State.
Hijra	Uploads that concern the notion of emigration (hijra) as a synonym for jihad or narratives of hijra as a part of jihad or the establishment of an Islamic State. [69]

Notes

- [1] Elizabeth Pearson & Emily Winterbotham, "Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation," *The RUSI Journal*, 162, no. 3 (2017): 60–72, DOI: 10.1080/03071847.2017.1353251; Jytte Klausen, "Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 38, no. 1 (2015): 1–22, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2014.974948; Mia Bloom, "Bombshells: Women and Terror," *Gender Issues*, 28, no. 1 (2011): 1–21, DOI:10.1007/s12147-011-9098-z; Karla J Cunningham, "Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 26, no. 3 (2010): 171-195, DOI: 10.1080/10576100390211419; Erin Marie Saltman & Malanie Smidth, "Till Martyrdom do Us Apart—Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon," Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2015).
- [2] See, for example, Karla J Cunningham 2010; Cindy Ness, "In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28 (2005): 353–373; Martijn de Koning, "Changing Worldviews and Friendship An Exploration of the Life Stories of Two Female Salafists in the Netherlands"; in: Roel Meijer (Ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London / New York: Hurst Publishers, 2015); Katharina von Knop, "The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30, no. 5 (2007): 397-414: DOI: 10.1080/10576100701258585.
- [3] See for example Elizabeth Pearson & Emily Winterbotham 2017; Mia Bloom 201; Karla J Cunningham 2010; Erin Marie Saltman & Malanie Smidth 2015; Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford and Ross Frenett "Becoming Mulan?: Female Western Migrants to ISIS," Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2015); Karen Jacques & Paul J. Taylor, "Male and Female Suicide Bombers: Different Sexes, Different Reasons?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31, no. 4, 304-326: DO I: 10.1080/10576100801925695
- [4] See for example Elizabeth Pearson & Emily Winterbotham 2017; Mia Bloom, 2011; Karla J Cunningham, 2010; Erin Marie Saltman & Malanie Smidth, 2015; Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford and Ross Frenett, 2015.
- [5] See Jytte Klausen, 2015; Pearson & Winterbotham, 2017.
- [6] With the exception of a few studies also exploring the gender aspect in jihad propaganda on social media e.g. Elizabeth Pearson, "Online as the New Frontline: Affect, Gender, and ISIS-Take-Down on Social Media," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 41, no. 11 (2018): DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2017.1352280 and Jytte Klausen, 2015.
- [7] See Nelly Lahoud, "The Neglected Sex: The jihadis' Exclusion of Women from Jihad," in: *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 5 (2014): 780–802 DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2013.772511. The Arabic verb jahada, from which the noun "jihad" is derived, means to struggle or exert oneself. The Qur'an often uses the phrase jihad fi sabil Allah, "exerting oneself in the path of God" (4:96, 9:20). This struggle need not always refer to fighting. However, in the article this is the specific focus. See Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, *Islam Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
- [8] See for example the Danish Security and Intelligence Service, Centre for Terror Analysis (CTA): Assessment of the Terror Threat to Denmark (January 2018). More reports in Danish and English are accessible at www.pet.dk.
- [9] In this article, the term 'mujāhida' is used to conceptualize a female engaged in violent jihad.
- [10] See Sara Jul Jacobsen, "'Mother,' 'martyr wife' or 'mujāhida': The Muslim woman in Danish online jihadi Salafism. A study of the assigned role of the Muslim woman in online jihadi communication," *Tidsskrift for Islamforskning* 10, no. 1 (2016): 165–187: DOI:10.7146/tifo.v10i1.24880.
- [11] For further elaboration on roles assigned to women in jihad by the Danish jihadi Salafi organizations, see Sara Jul Jacobsen, 2016.
- [12] See Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, 2008: "Four main schools of Sunni jurisprudence have dominated Muslim history, along with one major and several minor schools of Shi'ia jurisprudence. By the early fourth/tenth century, these groups of more or less loosely affiliated scholars were clustered into definable schools of thought. The rise of the schools did not eliminate internal dissent but rather circumscribed its boundaries. The Sunni schools, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali, are named after, respectively, Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767), Malik ibn Anas (d. 179/796), Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d. 204/820), and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855). Although these men are sometimes referred to as the founders of the schools, they did not actually found them though they did originate many of their distinctive doctrines".
- [13] I.e., the deletion of uploads on social media.
- [14] The jihad-specific codes are data-driven i.e., they emerge from readings of the raw data. Data-driven codes involve five steps to inductively create codes for a codebook: (1) reduce raw information; (2) identify subsample themes; (3) compare themes across subsamples; (4) create codes; and (5) determine reliability of codes. See Jessica T. DeCuir-Gunby, Patricia L. Marshall, and Allison W. McCulloch, "Developing and Using a Codebook for the Analysis of Interview Data: An Example from a Professional Development Research Project", *Field Methods*, 23, no. 2 (2011): 136-155: DOI: 10.1177/1525822X10388468.
- [15] All codes were truncated, which means that all words beginning with the letter composition were included. For example 'jiha*' includes 'jihad', 'jihadi', 'jihadism', 'jihaad', 'jihaadi', 'jihaadism', etc. For further elaboration on methodology, see this author's forthcoming dissertation (to be completed in 2019).

- [16] Jonathan Potter & Margaret Wetherell, *Discourse and Social Psychology* (London: Sage, 1987).
- [17] Idem.
- [18] Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).
- [19] Idem.
- [20] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge, 1997).
- [21] See Althusser, in Judith Butler 1997. According to Althusser, interpellation means that our identity is created when we are 'called' by someone or something, and given a name and an identity via that call (Judith Butler, 1997, 25).
- [22] Judith Butler, 1997, 25.
- [23] Judith Butler, 1990, 25.
- [24] Judith Butler, 1990, 33.
- [25] Ibid.
- [26] Judith Butler, 1997, 44.
- [27] See Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-299: DOI:10.2307/1229039; Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful," *Feminist Theory*, 9, no. 1 (2008):67-85; Nina Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women Studies*, 3, no. 3 (2006):193-209; Nina Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality, Citizenship and Contemporary Politics of Belonging," *Critical Review of International, Social and Political Philosophy*, Special Issue, 10, no. 4 (2007): 561-574; Nina Lykke, *Feminist Studies, A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- [28] Kimberle Crenshaw, 1991; Kathy Davis, 2008; Nina Yuval-Davis, 2006; Nina Yuval-Davis, 2007; Nina Lykke, 2010.
- [29] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).
- [30] See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29, no. 3 (2006): 207-239: DOI: 10.1080/10576100500497004; Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).
- [31] See Quintan Wiktorowicz, 2005; 2006.
- [32] Several studies present a significant advance in our understanding of the diverse forms of contemporary jihadi Salafism. See for example, Quintan Wiktorowicz 2005; Quintan Wiktorowicz 2006; Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting", *American Political Science Review*, 107, no. 1 (2013): 1-15: DOI: 10.1017/S0003055412000615; Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihad, Yes, But Not Revolution: Explaining the Extraversion of Islamist Violence in Saudi Arabia", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36, no. 3 (2009): 395-416: DOI:10.1080/13530190903338938; Thomas Hegghammer, "Islamist violence and regime stability in Saudi Arabia", *International Affairs*, 84, no. 4 (2008a): 701-715: DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00733.x; Thomas Hegghammer, "Abdallah Azzam, the Imam of jihad"; in: Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli (Eds.), *Al Qaeda in its Own Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008b); Thomas Hegghammer and Stephane Lacroix, "Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia", *International Journal Middle East Studies*, 39, no. 1 (2007): 103-122: DOI:10.1017/S0020743807002553; Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Edwin Bakker, *Jihadi Terrorists in Europe. Their Characteristics and the Circumstances in which They Joined the Jihad: an Exploratory Study* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2006); Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Inside Jihadism. Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2009). For further elaboration on this author's perspective on the term, see her forthcoming dissertation (to be completed in 2019).
- [33] Also called "Masjid Quba".
- [34] See Manni Crone, "Denmark." *World Almanac of Islamism* (2011): almanac.afpc.org/Denmark). The Call to Islam's construction of 'the Muslim woman' is still interesting and relevant because this group is among the main actors in the establishment of a Danish online jihad narrative. Their text-uploads and videos are still circulated online within the current Danish jihadi-Salafi milieu.
- [35] See Manni Crone 2011; Ann-Sophie Hemmingsen, "The Attractions of Jihadism – An Identity Approach to Three Danish Terrorism Cases and the Gallery of Characters around Them", Ph.D. dissertation (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2010). For further elaboration on the three Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations included, see forthcoming dissertation of the author of this

article (to be completed in 2019).

[36] See Nelly Lahoud, 2014; Quintan Wiktorowicz, 2006; Thomas Hegghammer, 2013; Thomas Hegghammer, 2009; Thomas Hegghammer 2008a.

[37] See Nelly Lahoud, 2014; Thomas Hegghammer, 2008; Thomas Hegghammer, 2013.

[38] See Nelly Lahoud, 2014; Thomas Hegghammer, 2008; Thomas Hegghammer, 2013.

[39] Judith Butler, 1990, 25.

[40] Judith Butler, 1990, 33.

[41] Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, *Islam Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[42] Idem.

[43] Idem.

[44] A Hanafi jurist, who authored one of the major works in the Hanafi School of Law i.e. one of the four religious Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence (fiqh).

[45] Text upload by Islamic Culture Centre, November 2012, translation from Danish by author of this article; Arabic as in the original.

[46] In three of the over 12,000 uploads the Danish jihadi-Salafi organizations, however, indicates that it is unlawful for a woman to go without a mahram even in situations of defensive jihad while in one upload one of the organizations indicates that violent jihad is for men only. For further elaboration, see forthcoming dissertation by the author of this article (to be completed in 2019).

[47] Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, *Islam Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[48] Idem.

[49] Idem.

[50] Idem.

[51] Text upload by Islamic Culture Centre, February 2013, translation from Danish by author of this article; Arabic as in the original.

[52] Also called Umm Imara on the Muslim Youth Centre's profile and Nasiba Bint Kaab al Mazini on the Islamic Teaching profile.

[53] Audio upload by The Muslim Youth Centre, April 2015.

[54] Audio upload by The Muslim Youth Centre, April 2015, transcription and translation from Danish by author of this article.

[55] Audio upload by Muslim Youth Centre, 2013.

[56] Judith Butler, 1997, 25; Jonathan Potter & Margaret Wetherell, 1987.

[57] See Althusser, in Judith Butler, 1997, 25.

[58] Judith Butler, 1990, 33; 178.

[59] And others: for example, Safiya Bint Abdumuttalib who according to tradition was the first Muslim woman to kill an enemy in battle and Asma bint Yazid who according to tradition killed 9 opponents in the battle of Yarmuk and Khawla bint Al Azwar (Text upload by Islamic Culture Centre, October 2012). Also, Hussain's sister, Zainab, is said to have fought side by side with her brother in battle (audio-upload by Muslim Youth Centre, November 2014).

[60] Text upload by Islamic Culture Centre, October 2012, translation from Danish by author of this article; Arabic as in the original.

[61] The Shahada (aš-šahādah, i.e., the testimony). An Islamic creed declaring belief in tawhid i.e. the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's prophet. The declaration in its shortest form reads: lā 'ilāha 'illā llāh muhammadun rasūlu llāh. See Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, *Islam Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge 2008).

[62] Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, *Islam Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[63] Idem.

[64] Idem.

[65] Idem.

[66] Idem.

[67] Text upload by Islamic Culture Centre, November 2012, translation from Danish by author of this article; Arabic as in the original.

[68] See Kimberle Crenshaw, 1991; Kathy Davis, 2008; Nina Yuval-Davis, 2006; Nina Yuval-Davis, 2007; Nina Lykke, 2010 for elaborated points on intersectionality and Sara Ahmed 2004 for affect.

[69] Hijrah, or emigration, refers to the relocation of the first Muslims from the urban centre of Mecca, to the oasis town, which eventually became known as Medina. The hijrah looms large in the Muslim imagination because it is through this emigration that the first Muslim community was truly established. The notion of emigration has become an important metaphor for some Muslim thinkers who, adopting for themselves the mantle of authenticity of the first Muslim community, have advocated flight from “un-Islamic” society. See Kecia Ali & Oliver Leaman, 2008.