JIHAD IN EUROPE

Exploring the sources of motivations for Salafi-Jihadi terrorism in Europe post-millennium

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Preface

Working with this thesis has indeed been both fascinating and challenging. Salafi-Jihadi terrorism has received a lot of attention in the Media since September 11, 2001. The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 created general fear of an increase in Islamist terrorist activity on the global scene and in Europe. Although only minor terrorist attacks have been launched by Islamist radicals in Europe after the millennium, the data-material gathered for this thesis strongly suggests massive attacks have been prevented. They were prevented mainly because of effective anti-terror efforts by European police forces and intelligence agencies. The terrorist events gathered in the appendix of this thesis suggest the threat of Islamist violence and terrorism against international and European targets in Europe has been very real, and most probably increasing. I did not want to merely describe and quantify this development, but also try to move beyond this, and analyze and problematize the motivations of the Europe-based Islamist militants who intended to attack targets in the region. In order to do so I gathered, systematized and categorized several hundreds of Western and Arab newspaper-articles and articles from research publications, in addition to reading the background literature on the Islamist movement in general, and al-Qaida in particular.

During this work I became familiar with the profiles of the captured Islamist radicals, and followed their destinies in trials and investigations on a day-to-day basis at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI). I owe a lot to FFI, and its terrorism project TERRA II, for giving me the time and resources to dig deep into the empirical complexity of radical Islamism in Europe. Especially I want to thank my boss and supervisor at the project, dr. Brynjar Lia, for giving me interesting and challenging tasks, responsibility and positive feedback at work, for sharing his vast and detailed knowledge on Islamism and terrorism with me, for helping me shaping the thesis, and giving me constructive critique when needed. I also want to thank my other supervisor Tore Nyhamar for excellent guidance concerning the structure and methodological issues of the thesis. I thank friends and colleagues at the project Laila Bokhari, Thomas Hegghammer, Åshild Kjøk and Truls Halleberg Tønnessen, for good discussions, criticism and advice. I thank scholars and fellow students at the Department of Political Science and Institute for Eastern European and Oriental Studies in Oslo, for guidance and inspiration. I thank my dear girlfriend Ingrid for her support and understanding during the work with the thesis, and for giving me the brilliant idea to study Arabic language in 1998. Studying this highly difficult, but beautiful language eventually led me to the very interesting field of research on Islamism. Last I want to thank our good friend Line Johansen, my “sister in law” Eline, my parents and Ingrid’s parents for supporting us and helping us out.

Oslo, January 15, 2004

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1. Introduction

On July 28, 2001, airport security in Dubai acted on a tip from French intelligence, and arrested French-Algerian Djamel Beghal. He was on his way back to France after a stay at a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. The arrest is considered a major breakthrough in the investigation of Sunni-Islamist terrorist-networks in Europe (Erlanger and Hedges 2001). Subsequent anti-terrorist operations by European police and intelligence forces, supported by U.S. intelligence, revealed that attacks on civil and public targets on European soil were imminent.¹ Sunni-Islamist militants or mujahidin (holy warriors) allegedly “linked to al-Qaida”, planned to attack targets in Europe (Vermaat 2002).²

The selected targets were either strategic or symbolic (e.g. military bases, embassies, parliament buildings, churches, synagogues, landmarks), or suitable to inflict mass casualties on randomly chosen civilians (e.g. marketplaces, subways, restaurants). The United States’ government or military facilities were the most preferred targets, but citizens, interests and symbols of Israel, Russia, and European countries have also been potential targets. The terrorists had gathered mainly low-tech weapons, e.g. homemade fertilizer-bombs planned delivered by suicide bombers, but they also showed an interest in using poison (ricin and cyanide). The conspirators were almost exclusively men, who were residing in Europe. They were, with the notable exceptions of a few European converts, of Middle Eastern or North African origin. Algerians and Tunisians were strongly represented. Some of them were political refugees, some were second-generation immigrants with European citizenships, and some were illegal immigrants.

Trials and investigations of the terrorist-cases revealed that several of the Islamist militants belonged to Salafi-Jihadi-movements and their front organizations or support-networks in Europe, such as the Jordanian-Palestinian al-Tawhid

¹ See ch. 5 for an overview of Sunni-Islamist terrorism in Europe 1998-2003.
² The terms “militants”, “radicals”, and “mujahidin” are used interchangeably when referring to the Islamist terrorist-conspirators.
organization, the Algerian groups GIA and GSPC and al-Takfir-wa’l-Hijra.\(^3\) In addition to the actual discovery of planned terrorist operations in Europe, al-Qaida’s leaders Aiman al-Zawahiri and Usama bin Ladin have issued specific threats against European countries, there have been several Islamist attacks on European targets outside Europe, and minor attacks inside the region (see ch. 5).\(^4\)

Islamist insurgents traditionally perceived Europe as a *sanctuary* because of European asylum-legislations, relatively open internal borders, possibilities to raise funds, and relative operational freedom with regard to propaganda efforts and recruitment etc (Lia and Kjøk 2001; Burgat 2003; Kepel 2003).\(^5\) Local insurgent groups like the Algerian GIA and GSPC maintain support networks in France, the United Kingdom and other European countries. These networks raise funds, smuggle weapons, and recruit fighters for the local Islamist insurgency in Algeria. They possibly also have recruited fighters to join jihad in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kashmir and Chechnya etc.

Europe was haunted by Islamist terrorism in the past. In the 1980s the Lebanon-based Shia-movement Hizballah attacked targets in Europe. In the mid 1990s the Algerian GIA launched a terrorist campaign in France and Belgium. Towards the end of the 1990s the GIA splinter group GSPC allegedly planned to attack the 1998 soccer World Cup in France and the Euro 2000 soccer tournament.

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\(^3\) The expression Salafi-Jihadi-movements defines radical Sunni-Islamist movements embracing the Salafi-Jihadi doctrine of Islamism (see ch. 2 and ch. 5). For group profiles of the most important Salafi-Jihadi- movements with a known presence in Europe, see ch. 5.

\(^4\) On October 9, 2001, Associated Press Television News received a cd-rom containing a statement from al-Qaida’s no. 2 dr. Aiman al-Zawahiri, in which he issues a specific warning to US allies or “the deputies of America” to get out of the Muslim World; “The mujahid youth has already sent messages to Germany and France, However, if this doses were not enough, we are prepared with the help of Allah, to inject further doses…” (Hegghammer 2002: 184). In the statement he probably refers to the bombing of the Ghriba Synagogue in Tunisia in April 2002, and the bombing of the French oil tanker Limburg October 6, 2002. On May 21, 2003 al-Jazira published a 3-4 minute tape-recorded speech by al-Zawahiri in which he urges fellow Muslims to attack the foreign interests in Muslim countries. In the recording he specifies U.S., U.K., Australian and Norwegian interests (Whitaker 2003). The latest statements by al-Zawahiri and Bin Ladin (2001-2002), if authentic, tend to focus more on the United States allies than before. The statements also tend to focus more on economic targets. Attacks on the French oil tanker Limburg and on the Ghriba Synagogue seem to confirm a new orientation towards European targets by al-Qaida. In addition we have seen attacks on European targets in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey.

\(^5\) One interpretation is that Islamists have perceived Europe as “the domain of contractual peace” (dar al-Ahd) until the diaspora communities were politicized during the 1980s. Since then Europe is increasingly perceived as dar al-Harb, a zone in which Muslims have to defend themselves and wage jihad against the infidels (Kepel 2003:185 ff).
The new patterns of Islamist terrorism differ from those in the past because they involve multiple Salafi-Jihadi movements and because the majority of the militants have received para-military or terrorist training in Afghanistan.

**Main research questions**

Why did Europe-based radical Islamists conspire to launch attacks on targets in Europe post millennium, and what was the relative importance of political and socio-economic grievances at the local, diaspora and global level of analysis in motivating the terrorists to launch attacks in the region? Are the radicals e.g. mainly motivated by grievances generated in their countries of origin, in the European diaspora, or are they mainly motivated by al-Qaida’s “global jihad” against the United States, Israel and their allies?

**Hypotheses**

*Alternative hypothesis I: “Local motivation” for attacking targets in Europe.*

Prior to 9/11, 2001, it was commonly acknowledged by analysts that Islamist terrorism in Europe was mainly motivated by political conflicts in the terrorists’ countries of origin. A survey of GIA’s terrorist campaigns in France and Belgium 1994-1996 supports this hypothesis (Lia and Kjøk 2001). The campaigns were first and foremost designed to constrain French support for the secular military regime in Algeria during in the insurgency that followed cancelling of the 1992-elections in which the moderate Islamist party FIS won the majority of votes.

*Alternative hypothesis II: “Global motivation” for attacking targets in Europe.*

Post 9/11, 2001, political analysts have strongly emphasized the global aspects of jihad and the role of al-Qaida as an instigator, financier and perpetrator of international terrorism, aimed directly at Western, and especially U.S. interests (Gunaratna 2002). The media coverage of the ongoing anti-terrorism campaigns in Europe is dominated by the expression “linked to al-Qaida”. This has created a general understanding that the foiled terrorist-conspiracies we have seen in Europe lately are parts of Bin Ladin’s “global jihad”, aiming at punishing the U.S. and its allies for their military involvement in the Middle East and the Gulf.
Main hypothesis: “Complex motivations” in which diaspora and global grievances are increasingly important.

Main hypothesis outlined
Islamists draw their motivations for attacking targets in Europe from the local, diaspora and the global contexts simultaneously (complex motivation). Political and socio-economic issues at the global and diaspora levels of analysis are more important than at the local level. The most common pattern is that diaspora grievances and frustrations are fuelled by the globalist Salafi-Jihadi program advocated by al-Qaida, manifesting itself through terrorism in Europe.

The purpose of this thesis is to test the relative importance of the terrorists’ grievances at the three levels of analysis. The hypothesis is built on the assumption that an “either-or”-perception of local and global jihad is futile. Islamist movements never forgot the local battles, and al-Qaida always incorporated them in its ideology. The insurgencies against secular and semi-secular regimes in the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia have become integrated parts of the “global jihad”. Since Islamist militants surveyed in this thesis have been residing in Europe we must consider the diaspora level of analysis a potential source of motivation for attacking targets in the region. An increase in transnational relations between radical Islamist movements (transnational radical Islamism) facilitated by globalization, sanctioned and encouraged by Islamist doctrine have “broadened the minds” of the modern mujahidin. These developments along with specific socio-economic issues and political events made them increasingly motivated by a mix of local, regional and global grievances, in this thesis called “complex motivation”.

The Norwegian Defense Research Establishment has systematically compiled press reports and articles covering the new patterns of Islamist terrorism in Western Europe dating back to 1998. Based on these sources a chronological list was made of

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6 al-Qaida’s no. 2 Aiman al-Zawahiri is the main advocate for the local jihad within the al-Qaida’s leadership, see e.g. extracts from al-Zawahiri’s book “Knights under the Prophets banner” (al-Sharq al-Awsat 2001).
7 The term “mujahidin” is Arabic for “Holy Warrior” or “one who struggles”. In this thesis it is used about the radical Islamists of the Salafi-Jihadi-movement.
8 The author has been responsible for the data collection since February 2003.
activities indicating that Islamist fighters were in “attack mode” and thus possessed motivation to launch attacks in Europe. These activities were defined as “terrorist-conspiracies”, “terrorist threats”, and “terrorist attacks” (see ch. 5). For reasons elaborated below, “Terrorist-conspiracies” was the category proving most suitable when studying the terrorists’ motivations.

In the following we measure the relative importance of the Islamist militants’ motivations along the local, diaspora, global dimension, or the extent to which a jihad in Europe is motivated by politics and socio-economic issues at the local, diaspora and global level of analysis. An explorative multiple cases study is conducted of the four best documented terrorist conspiracies in Europe revealed post-millennium and attributed to Sunni Islamist radicals. The study is mainly based on press-sources. I conduct interpretive contextual analysis of information obtained by the press during the trials and investigations of the conspiracies. The analysis is focused on the following “proxies of motivation”;

1. The type and nationality of the target chosen for the operation.
2. The backgrounds of the militants (profiles and organizational affiliations).
3. The militants’ own justifications for engaging in terrorism inside Europe.
4. The social and political contexts considered relevant to the militants at the time of the conspiracy, the local context, the diaspora context, and the global context.

The physical evidence of the terrorist-cases is presented in some detail to define the immediate context of the conspiracy, and to underscore the extent to which the militants were motivated to launch attacks in Europe. By combining the four proxies above we should be able draw a picture of the radicals’ motivations.

The aim of the study is analytical generalization based on pattern matching between predicted and empirical patterns of motivations. The method implies first assessing the internal consistency between the first three proxies, and then the consistency between them and the relevant contexts. The relevant contexts are here
seen as the fourth proxy of motivation. It is a theoretically informed, but largely empirical study and represents a genuine contribution to our understanding of transnational radical Islamist movements in the context of globalization.

**Organization of the study**

In the following section, the core concepts of the study are defined. Then we discuss reliability of the data-material and the boundaries of the study, before moving on to methodological and theoretical issues. First, the units of analysis and cases of the study are defined. Second, we operationalize the analytical concepts “complex motivations”, “local motivation”, “diaspora motivation” and “global motivation”. Third, the research design is elaborated before discussing the methodological challenges we are facing in this type of study. Fourth, the operationalizations and additional concepts borrowed from International Relations Theory, studies of Islamism and Islamist doctrine are used when developing a middle range theoretical framework for understanding why and how radical Islamists established a presence in Europe, and why Europe-based Islamists are assumed to draw their motivations from multiple levels of analysis. Fifth, four foiled terrorist conspiracies attributed to Salafi radicals in Europe post-millennium are analyzed in depth. Sixth, we sum up the analysis and findings, conclude, and discuss methodological, theoretical, and practical contributions, and implications of the study.

**Core concepts of the study**

**Terrorism**

Terrorism is political violence designed to communicate grievances and to have psychological effects beyond the immediate target (Whittaker 2001:9; Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003). Terrorists express or visualize political grievances and demands through the violence. *Because of this, target selection is an important factor when assessing terrorist’s motivations.* Terrorism is often aimed indirectly or directly at civilians (ibid). The planned operations in Europe have mainly targeted symbolic

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9 The US State Department’s definition reads: premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. – URL: http://www.state.gov/s/ci/rls/pgtrpt/2002/html/19977.htm
and strategic targets. Attacking such targets often involve collateral damage to civilians.\textsuperscript{10} The data-material of the study also shows that civilians have been targeted directly. The terms “terrorism” and “terrorist” are sensitive to the political, sociological, cultural, geographical and historical context. Terrorism means different things to different people and the meaning changes with time. Certain people will view the activities surveyed here as legitimate measures to retaliate for atrocities carried out by Westerners and Jews against Muslims worldwide. They label the terrorists “holy warriors”.

The most important criteria to distinguish terrorism from other forms of collective political violence like e.g. guerilla warfare, vigilantism, riots and sabotage is its \textit{psychological effects} (de la Roche 1996). Sabotage and terrorism are often seen as strategies of weaker parties in a conflict in terms of military power. Sabotage is designed to break down the enemy’s material capabilities in order to win a war. Terrorism is designed to paralyze the enemy with fear and break its will. No large-scale Islamist terrorist attack has materialized in Europe post-millennium, but a terrorist threat is considered “equally important” as violence itself (Whittaker 2001: 9). The threat from al-Qaida and affiliated groups is especially effective because the network has displayed both the will and the capacity to launch lethal attacks all over the world.

\textbf{Jihad}

The word jihad has two main meanings. The literal meaning is “striving in the cause of God”, and refers to the inner struggle of the believer to resist worldly temptations and sins in order to follow the straight path of Islam (Johnson 1997). The word jihad is also used about defensive and offensive holy war against the infidels.\textsuperscript{11} If the religious authority proclaims defensive holy war, it is an individual duty for every Muslim. Defensive holy war implies that the Muslim must do everything in his

\textsuperscript{10} al-Qaida’s simultaneous car-bomb attacks on the U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998 did e.g. result in 310 deaths and more than 5100 injuries.

\textsuperscript{11} Offensive jihad refers to the expansion of Islam under the first four “rightly guided caliphs”, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. Today expansion through offensive jihad is as a theoretical possibility in a future true al-Sharia-state.
capacity to protect Islam, even sacrifice his own life or commit martyrdom (istishhad).

Prophet Muhammad told his followers that the inner struggle for submission to God was the “greater jihad”, and that warfare in the name of God is “the lesser jihad” (ibid: 35). Islamists interpreted the Quran differently, and see armed struggle as the “greater jihad” (Wendell 1978). They perceive Islam to be under permanent attack from Western crusaders and the hypocrite (munafiq), quasi-Islamic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. In this thesis the two meanings are combined and used about Islamist militants’ “struggle” to strike targets in Europe.

**Islamism**

Islamism is the religio-political program, ideology and movement, calling for “an Islamic state governed by the principles of al-Shariah, the non-codified Islamic law, emanating from the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad” (Lia and Kjøk 2001:8). In Arabic terms implementing al-Sharia is the process of replacing jahiliyya (paganism; the Rule of the ignorant) with hakamiyya (the Rule of Allah). *Islamists make no distinction between religion and politics* (Vogt 1993:217 ff). According to them al-Sharia represents an all-encompassing system, governing all aspects of human life. The grievances that motivate Islamist terrorists are thus indeed political, or more accurately *religio-political*.

Students of Islamism make a distinction between radical and moderate Islamism. Moderate Islamists like the international Muslim Brotherhood organization want to implement al-Sharia through non-violent political participation, and bottom-up religious socialization of societies, by calling to Islam and religious education (el-Ghazali 2001). Sometimes moderate Islamists provide moral and financial support for radical movements (e.g. support for HAMAS’s suicide operations inside Israel). Radical groups like al-Qaida and GIA are revolutionary movements that want to overthrow pagan regimes and implement al-Sharia through violent jihad. The dominant ideological trend within radical Sunni Islamism today is Salafi-doctrine. *All the movements involved in the conspiracies analyzed below might be defined as Salafi-Jihadi movements.*
Terrorist motivation

Motivation is a psychological quality. In a Dictionary of Psychology (Coleman 2003), motivation is defined as a “driving force or forces responsible for the initiation, persistence, direction, and vigour of goal-directed behavior. It includes the biological drives such as hunger, thirst, sex, and self-preservation, and also social forms of motivation such as need for achievement and need for affiliation”. *Motivation is a “driving force”, a necessary precondition for terrorism.* On a behavioral level, terrorism studies have shown that motivated terrorists act rationally (Lia and Kjøk 2001; Hoffman 1998). They perform cost-benefit analyses and choose to act in a way that produces the best possible outcome given their preferences (Elster 1986).

The data material surveyed here does not allow me to scientifically assess how the motivations of Islamist militants were generated. Instead I focus on the question of from which context motivation is drawn. Islamist radicals are often seen as irrational fanatics that blindly follow the commands of God, as interpreted by their religious leaders or “shaykhs”. The degree of rationality involved when terrorists become motivated varies from one person to another and from one case to another. Some terrorists become motivated through rational assessments of the political context in which they are situated. Others might be convinced or socialized into being motivated to perform terrorism, through interaction with other motivated Islamist terrorists, leaders and ideologues. There are also situations in which the potential terrorist might be unable to think rationally because of e.g. psychological problems. In most cases however, Islamist terrorists’ motivations involve cognitive processes justifying use of violence for political purposes. Terrorists’ motivations stem from their perceptions and interpretations of the political context, reality or what the terrorist perceives as such. *Perceptions of injustice are central to terrorists’ motivations.* Most often they want to punish or overthrow rulers perceived as unjust.\(^\text{12}\)

\(^\text{12}\) In variable language, one could say that motivation is the intervening variable between the root causes of terrorism (independent variables) and the actual launching of a terrorist attack (the dependent variable). But variable order is not
Globalization and transnational relations

Globalisation defined widely implies flows of tangible and intangible items across state boundaries (e.g. people, money, contacts, information, knowledge, culture, ideas, beliefs and norms etc). Defined as such, the meaning overlaps with what is understood as internationalization (Østerud 1999:11). One could argue that in order to be useful, the term globalization should be utilized more narrowly to describe a fundamentally new political system in which actors other than states (international organizations and non-governmental organizations, firms etc) become more influential compared to states.  

Whether we are heading towards globalization in this narrow meaning, or not, is debatable (ibid). Al-Qaida is a phenomenon certainly implying that non-state actors have become increasingly important in world politics. The world’s only superpower is fighting a “war” against a worldwide terrorist-network consisting of Islamist groups and individuals. The terrorist-networks studied here are designed to exploit the possibilities represented by cross-border flows of tangible and intangible items. Transnational relations are important aspects of globalization. Thomas Risse (1995:3) defines them as; “regular interactions across state boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization”.  

Transnational relations and cross-border flows of people, money, information etc interconnect political issues and events in different parts of the world. They are the reasons economic shocks or local conflicts in one part of the world have direct and indirect consequences for politics in other parts. In this way, the economic crises in Asia had serious repercussions for the world economy. Similarly, the 9/11 attacks were motivated by U.S. foreign policy, and in turn had significant effects on world economy and security policies on the global given. Political factors we see as causes of terrorism might come before or after motivation. At the end of the day, this is an empirical question.

13 In an attempt to clarify, the OECD suggests that internationalization should cover increase in cross-border investments, that transnationalization should cover development of multi-national corporations, whereas globalization should be used about worldwide networks for production, information and investments (Østerud 1999:11).

14 Keohane and Nye (1972: xi) define them as – contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments.
level. In this thesis it will be argued that an increase in “transnational Islamism” makes Islamists militants draw their terrorist motivation from the local, diaspora and global contexts simultaneously.

**Data, sources and reliability**

The main sources of this study are newspaper articles from the Western and Islamic-Arab press, compiled and systematized at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment. Multiple, and different types of articles covering each terrorist-conspiracy surveyed here have been gathered. The sources are mainly cut from online newspapers and other web-resources. The database *World News Connection* contains translated newspaper articles from all over the world and has proved very useful for the purpose of the thesis. A few relevant articles from Arab press have also been included and translated by the author when gathering sources.

The data-material encompasses immediate press reports from the news agencies like *Reuters*, and background and “in depth” articles from U.S. or Europe-based independent daily newspapers like *New York Times, Los Angeles Times, The Guardian, Der Spiegel* and *Le Monde*. It also encompasses articles from the three most reliable Arab newspapers, the Saudi-owned London-based Arab dailies *al-Sharq al-Awsat, al-Quds al-Arabi* and *al-Hayat*. The reason U.S. newspapers was included is that their investigative journalists have been able to obtain unique sources from the investigations in Europe, e.g. unreleased court-documents, transcripts from intercepted phone-calls etc. The major European dailies, e.g. *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* have also published insightful background articles based on similar exclusive sources. The tensions between U.S. and European perspectives are useful for

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15 The compilation, or the “case study database” (Yin 1994:94 ff), consists of four documents containing hundreds of newspaper articles and articles from research publications, anti-terrorism web sites etc. One document contains articles sorted by country covering the conspiracies, threats and actual attacks in Europe. A second document contains general background articles on the Islamist movements in each country and Islamist group profiles. A third document contains profiles of the Islamist terrorist-suspects and convicts in the region. A fourth document contains statements by the militants from trials and interrogations and also statements by investigators, prosecutors and expert commentators concerning the motivations for attacking targets in Europe.

16 WNC-articles are translated by the U.S. government’s Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).
analytical purposes.\textsuperscript{17} Civil court-hearings have proved very useful sources to knowledge about how clandestine Islamist movements work. For example, the trial following the 1998 embassy-bombings in Kenya and Tanzania was for a long time considered one of the best sources to understand the motivations and modus operandi of al-Qaida (Hegghammer 2003a). Only three of the four cases analyzed in the thesis have reached the courtrooms. Only one trial is concluded. So far they have resulted in six verdicts. Research economy and time schedule prevented me from obtaining court-documents from the trials.

Although this is not a comparative study per definition, parallels will be drawn between the cases. The fact that the analysis of the four terrorist conspiracies is based on the same type of information must be considered an advantage in this respect. The conspiracies have been followed over time. “Up-dates” and “in depth articles” have been gathered as more information has been released to the press. The quality and reliability of the information usually increases with time, because disinformation and errors have been removed or corrected in reports and “specials” as the investigations and trials proceed. The information might however also become distorted with time if it is manipulated by the actors involved. The method of organizing and analyzing data involves shifting between different types of articles as well as between Western and Arab press coverage. This is not triangulation strictly speaking because the sources seldom might be perceived as perfectly independent. Journalists often take short cuts and cite each other uncritically in a way that might lead to distortions of the facts. We are not able to remove all such distortions, but by systematically and critically assessing the accumulated information in each case, they might be minimized. As an example, German authorities defined a group of Islamist militants belonging to the well-known Algerian Islamist movement GSPC as “non-aligned mujahidin” because of legal technicalities, in order to have them convicted in Germany (see case study below). In the analysis these militants are not seen as independent Islamist fighters, but as GSPC-fighters. The newspaper articles contain

\textsuperscript{17} U.S. newspapers did e.g. emphasize the links between the Jordanian-Palestinian movement al-Tawhid and al-Qaida, whereas German newspapers emphasized information suggesting that the movement was independent of al-Qaida.
primary sources like statements by investigators, suspects and witnesses, and secondary sources like analyses by terrorism analysts, government officials, and journalists.

Newspaper articles are sometimes unfairly dismissed as “low-quality” sources because of the media’s time pressure, its commercial considerations and political biases. Furthermore, it is often argued that journalists possess limited knowledge on the subjects they cover and perform poor source criticism. True, journalism is by nature immediate, and lacks the hindsight advantages of e.g. historical analysis. Still, when studying contemporary phenomena like radical Islamism and al-Qaida, it might be argued that the media, and especially the genre of investigative journalism is one of the best sources of knowledge (Anonymous 2002: 277 ff; Lia 2003:43 ff). *Journalists have had unique opportunities to get close to Bin Ladin and other leaders of the radical Islamist movement because the leaders use the international press to communicate their political message* (Hegghammer 2003a).18 This point is illustrated in the case studies below. Two of the terrorists managed to give radio-interviews when imprisoned.

Based on the available press-sources, researchers, having radically different time frames than journalists, may generate and test hypotheses in a systematic and critical way using the methods of social science. *In terms of research economy, the use of press sources enables us to survey a vast and complex field of study effectively.* According to a former U.S. intelligence analyst and historian (Anonymous 2002:277 ff), European and U.S. media are of modest value when it comes to understanding and reporting on the background, the intentions and beliefs of Bin Ladin and his radical allies. He argues the Arab-Islamic press is the superior source in this field. The western media on the other hand, is considered accurate when reporting on terrorist-events, providing facts like “names of suspects, dates, places, quotes by

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18 The Independent journalist Robert Fisk has interviewed Usama Bin Ladin three times, and ABC News’ John Miller has met him twice. The Qatari news channel al-Jazeera, Pakistani journalists (e.g. The Dawn’s Hamid Mir), and journalists with the London-based, Saudi-financed newspapers seem to have been regularly in contact with Bin Ladin and other radicals in Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to Reeve (1999: 193), the editor of al-Quds al-Arabi, Abd al-Bari ‘Atwan, was invited to stay at Usama Bin Ladin’s “headquarter”-cave in the Afghan mountains November 1996 when interviewing Bin Ladin. CNN-journalist Peter Bergen, the author of a comprehensive and source critical account of al-Qaida’s origins and development, has also met with and interviewed Bin Ladin.
Western government officials and documents…” (ibid: 279). Because this thesis is about terrorism in Europe, however, European and U.S. press are the most important sources. Still, an effort is made to capture the Arab perspective by analyzing articles from the London-based, Saudi-owned Arab newspapers. When studying motivation, one has to go behind the observable facts, and try to understand the background and ideology of the Islamist suspects. To this end, Arab-Islamic press provides useful background information.

To perform contextual analysis of Islamist terrorist motivation, possession of historical knowledge on the background and development of the Islamist movement is crucial. In order to gain such knowledge I have turned to the secondary literature of the Islamist movement (Vogt 1993; Ayoubi 1998; Esposito 1999; Burgat 2003; Kepel 2003), and studied primary sources like texts by the founder of Muslim Brotherhood Hasan al-Banna, the radical Islamist movement’s chief ideologue Sayyid Qutb, al-Qaida’s no. 2 dr. Aiman al-Zawahiri etc. In addition a one-month fieldwork was made in March 2002, in which I conducted semi-structured interviews with journalists and academics in Beirut and Damascus and leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo, concerning the background of the Islamist movement and their views on transnational Islamism. The material from these interviews is mainly relevant to the theoretical framework and main hypothesis of the study, but it has also been a source of inspiration for the analysis of the cases below.

**The boundaries of the study**

The focus of the thesis is the motivations, or sources of motivations for radical Islamists terrorism inside Europe. No attempt is made to *verify* allegations on the relationship between various Islamist groups. Political violence designed to have psychological effects, especially when civilians are targeted or put at risk is here seen as terrorism, despite that some people would see such acts justifiable.

Sources have been gathered from the period 1998-2003, but the cases chosen for in-depth study are from the period 2000-2003. This is partly because we see an increase in Islamist terrorist activity in Europe after 2000, and partly because terrorist cases
towards the end of the 1990s were controversial and often based on speculations and poor evidence (BBC News 1999).

The terror plots discovered in the period we study exclusively involve Sunni-Islamist militants. Shia-Islamists, primarily the Lebanon-based international organization Hizballah, are significant political actors on the Middle Eastern political scene. Hizballah has been involved in international operations, and it has attacked targets in Europe (MIPT-RAND Database 2003; Ranstorp 2003). Ad hoc cooperation between Shia-Islamists and their Sunni counterparts is a discussed and feared scenario for Israel and the United States. There is however nothing to suggest that Hizballah or other Shia-groups were involved in the revealed terrorist conspiracies surveyed here.

Most political studies of non-state actors have been focused on how they influence state policies. This thesis surveys the opposite logic of how state policies defined widely influence the motivations of non-state actors. There is an ongoing debate concerning whether the behavior of Islamists can be characterized as rational or not. The subject is touched only briefly in this study because we focus on the question of from which level of analysis the militants’ draw their motivations, not so much the psychological process through which motivations were generated in the first place.
2. Methodology and theoretical framework

The tasks of the study are methodologically and theoretically challenging. We explore the sources of motivation for Islamist terrorism in Europe. First we have to identify Islamists who possess the psychological quality; “terrorist motivation”. Europe-based Islamist militants in detention for conspiring terrorist attacks in the region are obviously good candidate research units. As far as we can tell, they are, or have been, motivated to launch terrorist attacks against targets in Europe. During interrogation some of them provided investigators and prosecutors with fairly detailed information about the conspiracies and about clandestine Salafi-Jihadi networks in Europe.

Second, we need to define the immediate contexts in which these motivated terrorists operate, the cases of the study. Third, we develop analytical concepts for studying “sources of motivation” which is the object we explore. Fourth, we combine the operationalizations with concepts from International Relations Theory and Salafi-Jihadi doctrine developing a middle range theoretical framework for understanding the motivations for an ongoing jihad in Europe. The framework recognizes “the levels of analysis problem” facing students of Islamism. The radicals surveyed here were residing in Europe, they originated from the Middle East and North Africa and most of them received para-military training in Afghanistan. All three contexts, the country of origin, the diaspora, and the global level must be considered relevant contexts when searching for explanations concerning their motivations.

Units of analysis and cases

Islamist radicals in “attack mode” and thus motivated to launch attacks in Europe are the units of analysis of the study. The data material contains information on how Europe-based Islamists organize (organizational structures), what they do (financing, recruiting, gunrunning, propaganda, preparations for terrorist attacks, threats of attacks and actual attacks), and what they say about their activities (justifications and excuses). The activities that most clearly denote motivation to launch terrorist attacks were categorized as “terrorist-conspiracies”, “terrorist threats” and “terrorist attacks”.

These events constitute the wider “universe” of cases in this study because they are the most immediate contexts in which the motivated militants operate. “Terrorist conspiracies” proved the category most suitable for case studies because conspirators in custody provided information for analysis. After defining categories of Islamist terrorist activity, a chronological list of terrorist-events was made (see ch. 5). During the work with the thesis, events have been added and removed from the list as updated information about the cases became available. Cases have also been moved from one category to another. At the time of analyzing the full list contained 11 “terrorist conspiracies”, 3 specific “terrorist threats” and 2 “terrorist attacks”, as well as 15 events categorized as “poorly documented terrorist events”.

The four cases selected for in depth studies are those who are best documented concerning the chosen proxies of motivation elaborated below. Despite that the method of selecting cases does not provide a solid basis for making generalizations (see below), four cases might tell us more than one, two or three, and it does enable us to survey cases that score differently on the proxies of motivation. There are very few available studies on this subject. Studying the motivations of Islamist militants along levels of analysis is a new and under-theorized field of study. Accordingly, there is a need to develop and test hypotheses based on the data which is available. The topic and the purpose of the thesis, exploration, give us some leeway when selecting cases.

Operationalizations
Motivation is here understood as the terrorists’ perceptions or interpretations of socio-economic and political issues at given levels of analysis. One level is the local Middle Eastern and North African context. The second level is the European diaspora context. The third level is the global context. As pointed out in the introduction, it is assumed futile to perceive the motivations of today’s Islamist militants as generated

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19 The appendix also contains 15 events, which have been considered insufficiently documented to define as “terrorist conspiracies” after conferring several sources. One example is the case of Swedish Karim Chatti who was suspected of planning to hijack an airplane and crash it into an U.S. embassy “somewhere in Europe”. The case was deleted from the list of conspiracies after checking several sources including a former Swedish intelligence officer. The reason is that it was insufficiently documented that Chatti belonged to al-Qaida or another Islamist movement (Anonymous 2003). The removed cases have been put in a category labeled “Poorly documented terrorist events” (see ch 4).
at only one level of analysis. In this thesis the motivations of Islamists are seen as “complex”, meaning that they draw motivations from the local and global context at the same time. When we survey the motivations of Europe-based radicals we need to pay special attention to a third level of analysis, the Muslim diaspora in Europe. For analytical purposes, we operationalize three “one-level-motivations” (local, diaspora, global), which in combination constitute “complex motivation”. The idea is that within a given “complex motivation”, the “one-level motivations” have varying importance as the driving forces of terrorism. We assume their relative importance is dependent on the context in which motivations were generated.

**Local motivations (local jihad)**

“Local motivation” is operationalized as perceptions of Middle Eastern, North African, Central and South East Asian regimes’ corruption and authoritarianism, their harsh measures against domestic Islamist opposition, and their “hypocrisy” (nifaq) in religious dealings. The regimes are seen as “puppet states” of Western “imperialist powers”. They have failed to implement the legal system of al-Sharia, which according to Islamist theory would resolve all the problems of Muslims. The “local jihad” is directly or indirectly aimed at replacing these local regimes with Islamic governments, and it is most often prompted by political developments in the Islamists’ countries of origin (e.g. mass arrests, political assassinations of Islamist leaders, sectarian violence, cooperation with the U.S., establishment of U.S. military bases etc).

**Diaspora motivation (diaspora jihad)**

“Diaspora motivation” is operationalized as perceptions of injustice against Muslims living abroad. This motivation can be a function of raised expectations of being included as full-fledged members of the western communities not being fulfilled. In the theorizing on social movements and revolutions this mechanism is called relative deprivation (Giddens 1989; Homer-Dixon 1999).\(^\text{20}\) High levels of unemployment, discrimination, alienation, problems of integration, racism, inferiority complexes,

\(^{20}\) Relative deprivation might be defined as “the discrepancy between the lives people are forced to lead and what they think could realistically achieved” (Giddens 1989: 615)
quest for identity among Muslims in the diaspora, and lack of respect for Islamic
traditional values in the West, are examples of perceptions that may be viewed as
diaspora motivations. In addition, concrete political developments like the anti-
terrorism campaigns in France, Germany, the U.K. etc may generate motivation to
e.g. avenge arrests of prominent Islamist shayks and leaders, or to avenge crack-
downs of support-networks in Europe that are considered crucial to an insurgency in
the Islamists’ country of origin. The “diaspora jihad” is typically aimed at the
interests of European “host states”.  

Global motivation (global jihad)
“Global motivation” is operationalized as perceptions of a global U.S.-led conspiracy
against Muslims symbolized by U.S. support for the Zionist occupation of Palestine,
U.S. deployment of troops in Saudi Arabia, the conflicts in Chechnya and Kashmir,
and the “global war on terrorism” fronted by president Bush. The “global jihad” is
mainly directed towards U.S. interests, and waged by people subscribing to the
Salafi-Jihadi ideology and program advocated by Usama Bin Ladin and the al-Qaida
leadership.

Complex motivation
“Complex motivation” includes at least two of the “one-level-motivations”
operationalized above. The last two decades we have seen a proliferation of, and
increased interaction between moderate, semi-radical and radical Islamist
organizations outside the Middle East and North Africa. It will be argued that this
development is a key to understanding the motivations of dispora-based Islamist
radicals. The baseline model of the main hypothesis is that transnational Islamism
makes Islamists’ motivations for waging jihad increasingly complex. Transnational
relations between Islamists situated in different countries interconnect or link their
local, regional and global issues of concern. They become better informed about the
religio-political grievances of “brothers” with whom they identify.

21 The term “host state” defines a state in which an Islamist movement operates, other than the state from which the
movement originated.
When Islamist movements interact, ideologies and aims might converge and further advance cross-border alliances. In consequence it becomes logical for radical Islamists to draw their motivations for jihad from the local, diaspora and global contexts at the same time, although the various grievances might be weighted differently from one context to another. The middle range theoretical framework of this thesis describes and explains why and how radical Islamist organizations proliferated on the global scene, and how this development has affected their motivations for jihad (see below).

**Proxies of measurement**

Because we do not have access to the terrorists’ minds, motivations must be measured indirectly based on other proxies. Four proxies have been chosen, which are assumed having strong potentials for measuring the terrorists’ motivations along the local, diaspora, and global dimension.

**Target selection**

It is commonly acknowledged among terrorism experts that terrorists communicate through their violence (Jongman et al 1988:21 ff). Do the terrorists select targets that symbolize their country of origin, the diaspora “host-state” (see below), or the United States-Israel axis?

**Backgrounds of the militants (profiles and organizational affiliations)**

What is the ideological orientation of the movements with which the militants are affiliated? Some movements are e.g. ideologically more independent and locally focused than others, and reluctant to allowing the globally orientated al-Qaida-network co-opting their local battle. Concerning backgrounds of the militants we ask whether they are socially embedded in their countries of origin, or in the diaspora in which they have been based prior to the terrorist-plots.

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22 The Palestinian Islamist group HAMAS has e.g. been careful to distinguish itself from al-Qaida and the “global jihad” and is believed to be exclusively focused on the local conflict in Palestine (Lia 2003).
Justifications for attacking
How do the militants justify attacks against targets in Europe? Do they emphasize e.g. political events in their countries of origin, social problems in the European diaspora, or Western U.S.-led neo-imperialism? Do they refer to one or more of these contexts?

Context
Are there political developments or issues at one or more of the levels of analysis (contexts) relevant to the Islamist militants that potentially could prompt a terrorist attack in Europe (e.g. arrests of Islamist leaders in the terrorists’ countries of origin, break up of support cells in Europe, the war in Afghanistan etc)? The analysis below aims at determining the most accurate and reliable “proxy-value” possible based on the available sources. Reliability is sought increased through critical interpretive contextual analysis of the gathered data-material.

Research design and method of analysis
As noted in the introduction a multiple cases study research design is chosen for the study. The methods of analysis used are interpretive contextual analysis and pattern matching. The method of analysis implies assessing the internal consistency between the proxies of motivation in each case. Is target selection consistent with the backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the militants? Are these proxies consistent with their justifications for attacking? Are they consistent with the relevant political contexts, in the militants’ countries of origin, in the diaspora in which they are situated and at the global the global level (the global war on terrorism)? When interpreting the information and statements released from investigations and trials it is also important to be aware of the immediate context. The actors involved; investigators, prosecutors, suspects and convicts have agendas to pursue. Who are the senders and receivers of the messages they send? These are questions asked and considered in the analysis.

The research design and the methods of analysis have been chosen according to the object of study, the motivations for Islamist terrorism in Europe. Qualitative analysis is the best way to approach this aspect of motivation, given the data-material
available. The relative importance of the three levels of analysis (local, diaspora, global) as sources of motivation is measured indirectly by making use of the proxies, operationalizations and sources elaborated above.

Case studies are typically preferred in situations like this one, in which there are few units of analysis and many variables, and in which the object studied defies quantification. They are viewed as less scientific than statistical inquiries because a small number of units of analysis make generalization difficult, if not impossible. One distinguishes between singular and multiple case studies. Singular case studies are often used in explorative studies, pilot studies and in situations in which one looks for the unique rather than the general.

If the researcher aims at some level of generalization of his findings, he can conduct a multiple cases study. Multiple cases studies are comparable to experiments in which the researchers reproduce a phenomenon under different conditions (Yin 1994: 30-31). The aim of multiple cases studies is usually to generalize empirical findings to a broader theory, or as in this study, a set of hypotheses induced through observation of Islamist groups’ terrorism in Europe. This method is called *analytical generalization*. According to Trochim in Yin (1994:106) pattern matching is the method of comparing an empirical pattern with a predicted one, or several predicted ones. Should the patterns coincide, it strengthens the study’s hypothesis.

The four terrorist-conspiracies surveyed here constitute a promising basis for further analysis of the motivations for Islamist terrorism in Europe. They have an overall similarity, but “score” differently on some of the proxies of motivation. Differences on these proxies are assumed to indicate the relative importance of local, diaspora and global motivations. If the empirical findings here suggest “complex motivations” in which global and diaspora motivations appear to be the most important elements, my main hypothesis is strengthened, given that the proxies measure what they are intended to measure, the problem of “theoretical” or “internal” validity.
Methodological challenges

There are methodological challenges to consider when studying the motivations for Islamist terrorism in Europe using the operationalizations, proxies, sources and research-design elaborated above.

Generalizability

Social scientists strive to establish covering laws of human behavior. Generalizeability is one of the main research-ideals in social science. The cases of this study are planned terrorist operations, which failed. Terrorism research usually involves studying actual terrorist-operations launched in the past (incidents). We do not know whether the cases gathered here represent the “tip of the iceberg”, or if there is an “over-reporting” of conspiracies that never would have been implemented. In addition we are not able to determine the extent to which the four cases analyzed in depth are representative of “the universe” of Islamist terrorist conspiracies in Europe post-millennium. We face a problem of generalizability.

In statistical studies researchers generalize statistical findings from a selection of randomly chosen units of analysis, to the “universe” or a “population” with a specified uncertainty. The data material of this study is not suitable for statistical generalizations. This is an explorative, qualitative multiple cases study. The main hypothesis is tested empirically, but we are not able to generalize the findings to all Islamist terrorist-conspiracies in Europe post-millennium with a specified uncertainty. The cases are not selected randomly. They are the only cases sufficiently documented to survey a broader set of proxies concerning the terrorists’ motivations. Access to information is thus the main criteria for selecting cases. This implies we cannot guarantee that the selected cases are representative of the universe of terrorist-conspiracies attributed to Islamists in the period we study.

During the data-collection we surveyed intensively the available information about a fairly comprehensive list of Islamist terrorist events presented in the appendix of the thesis. We saw clear parallels between the cases selected for in depth analysis and the other cases concerning target selection, organizational affiliations and modus operandi. All these cases were however insufficiently documented on the wider set of
proxies needed measure the motivations of the radicals more validly. In the poorly documented cases we were e.g. not able to study the militants’ own justifications for attacking, which must be considered an important proxy of motivation. Later, when we have access to more reliable information about all the proxies of motivation in the wider universe of cases, the hypothesis might be tested again using e.g. a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (see ch. 5).

As noted above, four cases make a better basis for making generalizations than one, two or three, and methodological rigor and the research ideal of generalizability should not prevent us from testing hypotheses on limited data-material in new areas of research, as long as we do it consciously, aware that the conclusions must be considered tentative. The analysis below is a promising point of departure for further testing hypotheses on the motivations of Islamists militants for attacking targets in Europe.

**Measuring “sources of motivation”**

The major challenge concerning measuring the “sources of motivation” for radical Islamists terrorism inside Europe is to ensure that the proxies chosen for determining from which level of analysis motivation is drawn, measure what they are intended. This is the question of theoretical validity. For example, in order to understand Islamist militants’ motivations for launching terrorist attacks researchers often survey their ideological programs.

To study motivations of Islamist militants based on ideology alone is problematic. First it requires that we know to which organization the militants belong. Second we need to know the content of the organization’s ideology in detail. Third we need to be certain that the militants actually subscribe to the ideology of the organization. Considering that radical Islamist organizations and networks are clandestine, we are not always able to obtain sufficient information concerning these questions. One might for example end up attributing an Islamist organization’s ideology to individuals who are independent of that particular organization or belong to another organization. In addition, there are examples of Islamists who have been affiliated with several organizations of which some are ideologically mainly
committed to the “local jihad”, while others appear to be mainly committed to the “global jihad”. This fact is one out of many examples that to Islamists, pragmatism often stands above ideologies. Accordingly, if the militants surveyed here are believed to be affiliated with al-Qaida it does not necessarily mean that they are mainly motivated by the “global jihad”. There might be situations in which locally committed Islamist radicals need to forge a strategic alliance with global networks like al-Qaida because they are under a lot of pressure in conflicts with the regimes in their countries of origin.

To tackle these challenges this study surveys a broad set of proxies, and analyzes what the militants themselves have said and done in addition to ideology. Statements and behaviour are interpreted based on what is known about which targets they selected, the ideology of the organizations to which allegedly belong, how they justified an attack, together with socio-economic and political issues at the relevant level of analysis (local, diaspora, global).

Another challenge concerning measurement is the reliability of data, elaborated above. The data material is large and consists of newspaper articles with varying reliability. Because of this there is a need to “triangulate” different types of newspaper articles and additional sources to increase data reliability. The sources considered most reliable after critical assessment are analyzed according to the chosen methods of analysis.

The need for combining levels of analysis
An important methodological and theoretical challenge is the fact that the Islamist militants surveyed in this thesis operated in, and related to three different, but interdependent contexts (levels of analysis). The radicals were situated in Europe, they originated from the Middle East and North Africa, and they trained in camps run by “global mujahidin” in Afghanistan.23

The transition from a bi-polar to a multi-polar political system with the fall of the Soviet bloc, and processes of internationalization, transnationalization and

23 A “global mujahid”, or a “global holy warrior”, operates beyond state borders, and perceives local Islamist insurgencies as integrated parts of a “global jihad” mainly against the world’s only superpower, the United States.
globalization challenged International Relations scholars to think more systematically about how politics at the local and global levels of analysis have been interconnected, and how non-state actors increasingly have gained influence in world politics.

Earlier studies of political Islamism, e.g. Kepel (1985), Ayoubi (1998) and Esposito (1999), explained the motivations and behaviors of Islamist movements mainly with reference to domestic politics. They were typically case studies of the Islamist movement in one Arab-Islamic country, or regional comparative studies of movements in multiple countries. For example, John Esposito’s 1999-account of the Egyptian and Algerian groups only briefly touched the issue of these movements’ international presence and activities. Post-millennium, and especially post-9/11, researchers of Islamism have increasingly focused on the local-global nexus in the study of political Islam (e.g. Paz 2002; Lia and Kjok 2001). Cross border flows of tangible and intangible items necessitate a more flexible approach to the “level of analysis problem” in political studies in general and studies of Islamist movements in particular. Traditionally it was imperative for International Relations scholars to avoid combining levels of analysis in the study of international politics (Singer 1961:90-91). Until recently levels of analysis have largely been used in an additive manner. This implies that one attempts to explain as much as possible of a policy outcome on one level of analysis (typically domestic level of analysis) before shifting to the next level (typically international level of analysis).

In the mid-1990s a new school of International Relations theorizing emerged, that specifically focused more on non-state actors in political analyses, and a method of simultaneous use of levels of analysis. This method implies combining explanatory variables at the local and international or systemic levels of analysis at the same time (Checkel 2000). In the analysis below an effort is made to survey all the contexts considered relevant potential sources of motivation for the militants at the time of the conspiracy.

Towards a middle range theoretical framework of analysis
Before moving on to the cases we contextualize the operationalizations elaborated above. This study is case-oriented and not variable-oriented (Ragin 1992:5).
Variable-oriented social science aims at establishing covering laws on causal relationships between independent and a dependent variable. Variable-oriented research usually surveys many cases. In this study we conduct pattern-matching analysis of a limited number of cases. We are testing the degree to which empirical patterns of Europe-based Islamists motivations coincide with predicted patterns in these cases, and thereby we aim at defining more precisely common perceptions of an emerging “global jihad”. To this end we develop a conceptual theoretical framework of the middle range for studying the motivations of Europe-based Salafi radicals in “attack mode”.

A middle range theory is suitable for this type of inquiry. It is an intermediate theoretical position between description and a full-fledged theory (Merton 1967:pp 39-72). The framework provides analytical tools guiding the pattern matching analysis of the cases. As noted above, the key to understanding the “complex motivations” of Europe-based Islamist radicals is the proliferation of and transnational relations between radical Islamist organizations globally during the 1980s and 1990s (transnational radical Islamism). Two questions are central when contextualizing motivations for jihad in Europe. Why and how did transnational radical Islamism emerge, and gain foothold in Europe? How does transnational radical Islamism influence the motivations of Islamist militants for waging jihad in Europe? In the following we theoretically and empirically elaborate these questions with reference to earlier research on Islamism and new theories of transnational politics, creating a “language of analysis”, which will be used in the case studies below.

**Why and how did transnational radical Islamism emerge?**
There are multiple explanations internal and external to the radical Islamist movements for why they established branches outside their historical core-areas, the Middle East and North Africa. Some explanations are found at the domestic level in

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24 A full-fledged theory contains clear and testable hypotheses on causal relationships between independent variables and a dependent variable. It should be able to establish casual laws generalizable to a “universe” of cases. In addition a full-fledged theory should be parsimonious in the sense that one should be able to explain variation in a dependent variable with relatively few independent variables. Kenneth Waltz’s neo-realism is an example on a full-fledged, parsimonious and
Arab-Islamic countries, some at the diaspora level, and some at the global level of analysis.

Four issues or trends are particularly relevant when studying this phenomenon. First, there is an impetus in the most influential contemporary radical Islamist doctrine, Salafi-Jihadism, for linking the local and global jihads, to operate and cooperate beyond state borders, and to tactically establish bases abroad in support of a “local jihad”. Second, the harsh policies of Middle Eastern and North African regimes against domestic Islamist opposition, and their relative failures in satisfying public demands for safety, prosperity and cultural identity were instrumental in pressuring scores of radical and moderate Islamists to search for sanctuaries and operation bases in the democratic West. Third, Western democratic societies proved to be effective sanctuaries in which networks of exiled Islamist radicals could enjoy some operational freedom with regards to recruitment, propaganda, fundraising, etc. Fourth, aspects of globalization defined widely, e.g. low-cost traveling, new communications systems, and liberal immigration legislation in the “free world”, facilitated and accelerated processes of contacts, coalitions and interactions between radical Islamist organizations and linked their grievances.

In addition to these issues and trends, specific political events have been catalysts of transnational radical Islamism. Such events are e.g. Israel’s occupation of Palestine, resulting in the wars in 1948, 1967 and 1973; the Intifadas in 1987 and 2001, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and its withdrawal in 1989; the Gulf War in 1990-1991 resulting in U.S. military presence in the Gulf (one of Bin Ladin’s main grievances); the civil war in Algeria starting in 1991; United States’ interference in Somalia in 1993; the conflicts in Kashmir, Indonesia, Bosnia, Indonesia, Chechnya etc; the Rushdie affair in 1989 and re-actualized political dispute about veiling in France dating back to the 1980s; and the the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq in 2003 (Ayoubi 1998; Esposito 1999; Bergen 2002; Paz 2002; Kepel 2003).
These political events and others generated common grievances among Islamists in different corners of the world. They made Islamist militants from the Muslim world believe in the Islamist project and actively seek arenas in which they could perform jihad. Islamist insurgents traveled to Afghanistan during the 1980s and 1990s and they travel to Chechnya, Kashmir and Iraq today, to fight the U.S.-led “crusader-alliance”. Radicals also traveled to Europe and established support-networks providing logistics, funding and fresh recruits to the various jihads. The flow of fresh recruits to these conflicts was facilitated by various features of globalization such as low-cost traveling and increased cross-border cooperation as well as alliances between Islamist movements in different parts of the world. The “Afghan jihad” and the establishment of al-Qaida were particularly important catalysts of an emerging global network of Salafi-Jihadi groups.

The “Afghan experience” produced a relatively small number of “hard core” Salafi militants having fought side by side in jihads worldwide. These “holy warriors” became top and intermediate leaders of, as well as religious guides for the transnational radical Islamist movements. One could probably say they constitute the “glue” keeping the Salafi-networks together. Personal relations between such “veteran mujahidin” further facilitated cooperation between movements with similar ideologies. Several of them found sanctuary in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, where they encouraged young Muslims to join the “global jihad”, and collected religious taxes (zakat), which they channelled to “terrorist-projects” both inside and outside Europe. The Salafi-Jihadi movements in Europe look to these experienced mujahedin as religious leaders or “shayks” (see case studies below and ch. 5). In the following we elaborate more closely the ideological normative basis for transnational radical Islamism and its dynamics on the practical political level, before showing how features of globalization facilitated operational links as well as ideological convergence between Islamist radicals, gradually making their motivations more complex.
The ideological basis for transnational radical Islamism

The radicals who are waging jihad in Europe belong to the Salafi strand of Islamism. Salafi-doctrine or Salafism is the most influential and fastest growing ideological trend in modern Islamism. The ultimate goal of Salafis is to reestablish the historical Caliphate and reunite the “true Muslims” in a borderless Islamic community, the Ummah. On the ideological level man-made state borders are perceived as obstacles to achieving this goal. The problems of Muslims must be resolved beyond borders or globally. Moreover, militant Salafis consider it a religious duty to emigrate from the quasi-Islamic states in the Middle East and North Africa, and establish bases abroad from which they can support the Islamist insurgencies in their countries of origin, and also prepare an Islamic expansion in non-Muslim countries. Importantly, Salafism is multifaceted and may be divided into traditionalist, reformist, modernist, moderate and radical or jihadi strands. Both the moderate Muslim Brotherhood organization and the jihadi al-Qaida are Salafi-movements. The Saudi Kingdom embraces moderate and traditionalist Salafism, and finances and facilitates its spread worldwide. Sometimes it also finances its radical strands.

The essence of the radical Salafi doctrine is extreme literalism and exclusive emphasis on the principle sources of Islam, al-Quran and al-Sunna (the Prophet traditions), as well as an uncompromising rejection of, and intolerance against other interpretations (legal traditions) of Islam, other religions and of course atheists. Radical Salafis are in principle anti-Shia, anti-Sufi, anti-Judaism and anti-Christianity. They cherish the “Golden Age of Islam”, the Caliphate of the first four “rightly guided” caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali (al-Khulafa al-Rashidun). The first four generations of Muslims following the era of Muhammad are termed the aslaf (predecessors). The aslaf are by Salafis considered those who truly captured the basic principles of Islam, the Oneness of God (tawhid) and the

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25 The Salafi movement is described as “a transnational effort for religious purification, connecting members of an “imagined community” through a common approach to Islam” (Wiktorowicz 2001)

26 Westerners have incorrectly labeled Salafism Wahabism. The historical ideologues of Salafism are the medieval religious scholars Ibn Tamiyya and his student al-Qaym al-Jawziyya, and the 19th century pan-Islamic activist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and the Egyptian mufti and Islamic reformer Muhammad Abduh.

According to Reuven Paz (2002), the modern Salafi ideologues have reinterpreted the Islamist doctrines of the 1960s and 1970s in a modern context, most notably the work of Muslim Brotherhood-shaykh Sayyid Qutb. Qutb is the author of the “manifesto” for modern radical Islamism, al-malumat fi al-tariq or Milestones (1964). Qutb’s ideas are believed to have had profound influence on the worldviews of Abdullah Azzam and Usama Bin Ladin (Irwin 2001). Qutb spent ten years of his life in Egyptian jails, and was hanged by president Nasir in 1966, because he was considered the ringleader of a “Muslim Brotherhood conspiracy” to overthrow the Egyptian regime. Copies of Milestones were found in the hideouts of the alleged conspirators. Al-malumat fi al-tariq has been interpreted as a recipe for jihad against the Egyptian regime modeled on the Prophet’s exile from Makka to Madina in 622 AD, culminating in the reoccupation of Makka in 630 AD (Kepel 1985). Qutb has been an inspiration for “local jihads” in several Muslim countries. His ideas have been particularly popular among Saudi Arabian Islamists, as have the ideas of his more moderate brother Muhammad Qutb, who managed to escape the crackdowns of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1965-66, and found sanctuary in Saudi Arabia.

Al-malumat fi al-tariq might just as well be interpreted as a recipe for “global jihad”. In fact, Qutb states several times throughout the book that the jihad is not confined to the Arab lands, but that it is global in scope and methods (Qutb: 48, 57, 59, 60, 73ff, 108). Qutb’s jihad-theory contains ideological concepts highly relevant to understanding jihad in Europe. Two concepts are emphasized in the theory. One is

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27 Azzam developed a relationship with Qutb’s close relatives when he studied at al-Azhar in 1971 and onwards. Azzam and Qutb’s brother Muhammad are considered the religious mentors of Usama Bin Ladin (azzam.com website, via Young Muslims in pursuit of Allah’s Pleasure website <online, downloaded December 2003>. – URL: http://www.youngmuslims.ca/biographies/display.asp?ID=9
hijra and the other is takfīr. Hijra is Arabic for emigration, and as an ideological concept it refers to Muhammad’s historical emigration from Makka to Madina where the first Muslim community was established. Takfīr is the Arabic verbal noun for deeming someone as an unbeliever (kafīr). Whereas all Salafis embrace the principle of hijra, takfīr is a controversial principle (see below). Qutb starts out by saying that the whole world is in a state of jahiliyya (ignorance), and that “true Muslims” are in a state of weakness and under attack from the kuffar (the infidels). In a world of jahiliyya, armed jihad is necessary to reinstate hakimiyah (the Rule of Allah). To succeed, a “vanguard” of “true Muslims” has to build itself up mentally and physically (militarily), to be able to launch an all out war on the kuffar. Because Muslims are in a state of weakness, the build-up requires the “vanguard” to excommunicate the infidel society, emigrate and establish a true Islamic community based on the undistorted principles of Islam. From this new community or base, the kuffar shall be attacked with all necessary means (Qutb 1964). *Emigration is not an option, but a religious duty.* The Salafi-radicals in the diaspora believe they constitute this “vanguard” following the example Prophet, emigrating jahili societies, building capacities “abroad”, and waging jihad on the infidels.

*The co-founder of al-Qaida Abdullah Azzam was the first among the al-Qaida-leadership to recognize how the principles of jihad should be applied globally.* Azzam issued fatwas and wrote books on the obligation of Muslims to emigrate from their homelands and join a jihad beyond borders. He also emphasized how local issues like the Palestine question should be understood as integrated parts of the “global jihad” (Azzam 1987; Kepel 2003:151). Usama Bin Ladin has several times pointed out how hijra is a necessary precondition for jihad, and criticized fellow Muslims for not emigrating their “quasi-Islamic” countries of origin in order to join the “global jihad” (Anonymous: 62ff, Bin Ladin in al-Jazeera 1998).

Qutb’s ideology gave birth to a cult-like movement called al-Takfīr wa’l-Hijra. This movement, founded by Shukri Mustafa in Egypt in 1969, implemented the

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28 Although Qutb’s ideas pervade the ideological programs of Azzam and Bin Ladin, they do not quote him. They rather refer to the medieval scholar Ibn Tammiyyah. This may be because Qutb’s emphasis on takfīr is so controversial that it may hamper much needed support for the global jihad.
concept takfir to the extent it was considered too extreme, even by Bin Ladin. Takfir is controversial because it implies that those who have captured the essence of Islam must excommunicate everyone failing to act in accordance with the basic principles of faith, as interpreted by the “vanguard”, including fellow Muslims. 29 The original al-Takfīr wa‘l Hijra was crushed by the Egyptian regime after assassinating an Egyptian state official in 1977. The leader, Shukri Mustafa, was hanged, but the movement has resurfaced all over the Middle East and North Africa. As we shall see, the terrorist-trials in Europe reveal that al-Takfīr wa‘l-Hijra is an important doctrine and movement in the European diaspora.

One problem facing the “vanguard” in the West, elaborated by Qutb, is how to interact with the infidels. An important ideological concept in this respect is taqiyya. Salafis adopted taqiyya from Shia-Islamist doctrine. Taqiyya is translated “fear, caution, prudence, dissimulation of one’s religion” (Wehr 1994). To the Shia-muslims it meant that they were allowed to follow Sunni practices in societies dominated by Sunni-Muslims, in order to protect themselves from persecution. Salafis in the West practice taqiyya. It allows them to display considerable pragmatism to pursue what they believe is in God’s interests. According to the principle of taqiyya, the “Vanguards” are permitted cooperate ad hoc with basically anyone as long as it serves the cause in the long run (Anonymous 2002: 55 ff). It also means that the Salafi radicals can “blend in” to western societies, using western clothes and even drink alcohol in order not to attract unwanted attention to their activities (Sifaoui 2003). One example is how the 9/11 suicide-pilots were observed drinking and partying a few days before the attacks (Ross 2001). As we can see, the Salafi-Jihadi doctrine contains specific prescriptions for how enclaves of “vanguards” situated in the Muslim diaspora should think and behave in order achieve religious purification and reestablish hakimiyya on earth. The case studies below do suggest that ideology guided the terrorist-conspirators in how they organized beyond state borders and how they interacted with the kuffar in the diaspora e.g. by practicing taqiyya.

29 The concept was allegedly the reason for strife between Bin Ladin and takfiri elements of the Algerian Islamist-
The dynamics of transnational radical Islamism

The domestic policies of Middle Eastern and North African regimes forced and encouraged Islamist radicals to “go transnational”. These regimes persecuted and pressured scores of Islamist insurgents to emigrate from their countries of origin. They found sanctuaries in neighboring states, in Europe or the United States (Kepel 1997; Paz 2002). The Western “sanctuary states” themselves facilitated the dynamics. Open and democratic societies in the West became effective bases from which exiled radical Islamists could continue the battle against the repressive “home-states” and/or expand the jihad to include battle against the infidels of the West.

Emigration and establishment of transnational support-structures are not new trends or confined to radical Islamism. The moderate Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al Muslimun) founded by Imam Hasan al-Banna in 1928 established branches outside Egypt in the 1940s in order to escape persecution by the Egyptian monarchy. Today al-Ikhwan has a worldwide presence. The Brotherhoods participate in politics and have even held cabinet posts in Muslim states. In addition the Muslim Brotherhood runs a transnational network of humanitarian and missionary organizations. Analysts consider al-Ikhwan a model for, and a provider of infrastructure for the radical movements surveyed here (Gunaratna 2002:96; Schweitzer and Shay 2003:13). The data material of this study suggests the transnational radical networks active in Europe are built on approximately the same principles as al-Ikhwan, implying cooperation and coordination between movements with similar ideologies and goals, but a considerable degree of operational autonomy to the various sub-groups and factions within a broader radical movement.

The transnational networks of Islamists (radical and moderate) are in several ways comparable to networks growing out of the social movements of 68 in how they emerge, organize, communicate, operate and cooperate beyond state boundaries. Margareth Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) developed a model conceptualizing how domestic social movements evolved into transnational networks of non-governmental
organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs), and how they organize and operate in order to influence and change the policies of states. The model was labeled “a boomerang pattern of influence” and was developed as an analytical tool for studying networks of idealists defined as “transnational advocacy networks” (e.g. the environmental movement, the movement for Human Rights, the anti-globalization movement etc). By analogy the model may be utilized to conceptualize transnational Islamism, e.g. the proliferation of and interactions between Muslim Brotherhoods worldwide, and the interactions between al-Qaida and affiliated groups.

According to the model, “a boomerang pattern of influence” occurs when domestic opposition groups faces state “blockages” from participation in domestic politics, or is being persecuted by the state apparatus. In need of support, domestic NGOs bypass the state and link up with transnational networks of likeminded NGOs and IOs capable of launching pressures on the repressive state from abroad. In addition to approaching already existing networks, the domestic groups might establish their own, as did the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaida. The dynamics might also be exemplified with PLO’s support-networks in Lebanon, and GIA’s networks in France (Brynen 1990; Lia and Kjøk 2001).

“Transnational advocacy networks” were established within a multiplicity of issue-areas and were facilitated by cross-border flows of people, money information etc. The networks are independent and flexible. They make the most out of limited resources and exploit the weaknesses of states, typically their opponents or enemies. “Transnational advocacy networks” specialize in the use of communication systems and information as strategic and tactical tools or weapons (e.g. propaganda, “shaming”, electronic warfare etc). Using these tools, networks put the grievances of the domestic group on the international agenda, and increase pressures on the “target state”. As a result, a repressive state is exposed to pressures both domestically and from abroad simultaneously.

38 By 1937 The Muslim Brotherhood had branches in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Djibouti and France (Lia 1998: 154). Interview-data suggest that Ikwan-branches in different countries interact regularly and discuss their policies vis-à-vis "host states" (al-Iryan 2002)
The Guardian-journalist and al-Qaida-analyst Jason Burke (2003: 15) also highlighted some parallels between transnational Islamist movements and other transnational movements. He e.g. pointed out how relations between al-Qaida and affiliated groups are comparable to those between factions of the anti-globalization movement, a broad-based movement consisting of multiple NGOs and IOs with differing agendas, able to mobilize under the same banner. It is however important to underscore the important difference that most of the organizations belonging to the anti-globalization movement are legal organizations committed to non-violent activism.

The Islamist radicals surveyed here belong to transnational networks that originated in the Middle East and North Africa. Initially local Islamist movements established support-networks in diaspora “host states” in order to provide the local jihads with recruits, weapons and funding. With time, diaspora-based Islamists developed their own relations with the “sanctuary states” in which they were situated (Brynen 1990). GIA’s support networks in France exemplify the dynamics. Initially they were established in support for the “local jihad” in Algeria. GIA pressured and criticized French authorities because it supported the Algerian regime. When the local GIA faced massive pressures home in Algeria, the networks in France launched a terrorist campaign in France (Lia and Kjøk 2001). French authorities cracked down on Islamists suspected of involvement in the attacks. One could probably say that the conflict between GIA militants in Franch and French authorities developed its own dynamic of attack and counter-attack. Following the dynamics outlined above Islamic and Islamist NGOs and foundations have proliferated on the global scene and in the West (Kepel 1997; Paz 2000). Islamists living in exile in Europe established political organizations and advocacy networks in the diaspora in order to launch “boomerang” pressures and attacks against the states from which they emigrated, and also to advocate the interest of diaspora Muslims vis-à-vis their “host states”. In Europe, radical and semi-radical NGOs like al-Muhajirun, al-Hizb al-Tahrir, FIS, GIA, GSPC, al-Tawhid, al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra etc have been active in e.g. Finsbury Park Mosque in London, al-Aqsa mosque in Hamburg and the Saint Denis and Rue Myrrah mosques in Paris. Especially the Finsbury Park mosque is seen as a hub for
recruitment and indoctrinations of radicals. Because of the radiant propaganda efforts of the U.K.-based shayks and jihad-veterans Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza, Abu Doha and Umar Bakri Muhammad, and because it appears as London is the “last stop” before radicals leave for Afghanistan, the British capital is ironically labelled “Londonistan” by several analysts (Thomas 2003).

As we shall see, the diaspora communities in Europe constitute an important context in which Islamist radicals are recruited, and terrorist motivation generated. During the last two decades, the Islamist movements in the Western diaspora have been increasingly politicized and vocal. Gilles Kepel (2003:185 ff) explains the politicizing of the Muslim diaspora in Europe by pointing to events like the Rushdie affair in 1989, the ban on veiling in France, and spill-over effects from the jihad in Afghanistan. In addition to such political events and developments, general socio-economic discontent among Muslims in the diaspora (because of e.g. unemployment, racism etc), made it a fertile ground for radical Islamist recruiters.

One highly political, semi-radical movement, Hizb al-Tahrir, invited Islamists from all over the world to conferences in the U.K. In the wake to the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, for example, the leader of Hizb al-Tahrir and al-Muhajirun (the emigrants), Umar Bakri Muhammad, invited 15 major militant movements to a conference called “Western Challenge and the Islamic Response” in London (Dawud 1998). Al-Bakri has openly criticized the British government and leaders of Muslim states for their general policies and injustice against Muslims in the U.K. and abroad. In addition he incited Muslims to use violence against Jews, for which he is arrested at the moment. The Internet sites of al-Muhajirun and al-Hizb al-Tahrir display both visually and in terms of content that they are transnational organizations. In 2001, the opening page of al-Muhajirun’s site e.g. showed a world map with “nodes” of the network in the Middle East, Central Asia, Europe and the United States.  

Features of globalization and transnational radical Islamism

Several features of globalization (defined widely) are considered important catalysts for the rise of transnational radical Islamism, sanctioned and encouraged by Salafi-Jihadi doctrine. Low-costs travelling, possibilities for political asylum in “the free world”, and modern systems of communication, accelerated the dynamics of interaction between Islamists in the Middle East, North Africa and in the Muslim diaspora outlined above. Such features made cross-border cooperation and coordination possible on an operational level, and enabled them to launch pressures on the authorities in the Middle East and North Africa following the “boomerang” logic, as well as directly criticizing and attacking their diaspora “host states”. Political, semi-radical movements like the mentioned al-Muhajirun and Hizb al-Tahrir have openly criticized the policies of Middle Eastern and North African governments, as well as the British government. Radical movements like the GIA channelled money, fighters and weapons to the Islamist insurgents in Algeria, as well as attacking France directly for supporting the Algerian secular regime.

Low-cost travelling enabled thousands of young Arab men to seek out the “Afghan experience” and receive basic para-military training as well as religious “guidance”. Several of the Europe-based Islamist radicals have traveled extensively back and forth between Europe and the border-areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some of them point to the influence of patrons in Afghanistan as the main motivation for attacking targets in Europe. The merger between al-Qaida and Aiman al-Zawahiri’s Egyptian Islamic Jihad (al-Jihad) into Qaidat al-Jihad (the bases of jihad or the principles of jihad), is an example on how the global and local jihad became more integrated when mujahidin from all over the world fought together in Afghanistan. Al-Jihad has been, and remains in theory, mainly committed to the battle against Egyptian authorities (al-Zawahiri in al-Sharq al-Awsat 2002). In the mid-1990s it extended its operations to include attacks on Egyptian state.

Although these are organizations are political, they are not politically sophisticated. Their criticisms basically involve complaints that Muslim state like e.g. Egypt fail to act in accordance with al-Sharia in different matters, or that European states persecute Muslims or support Israel etc. One statement on their homepage did e.g. criticize the court that convicted a group of homosexuals throwing a party on a channelboat on the Nile to several years in prison, for not giving them death-penalties (Al-Muhajirun homepage 2001 [http://www.almuhajiroun.com//default.asp])
representatives abroad. In 1998 it merged with al-Qaida, and joined a terrorist campaign mainly directed against U.S. and Western targets. The activities of the Hamburg-cell preparing the 9/11 attacks also included extensive traveling in several European countries, the U.S. and Pakistan/Afghanistan (Fouda and Fielding 2003). Because of the substantial migration from Arab-Islamic countries to Europe, facilitated by European asylum-legislation and welfare-systems, militants are able to hide among fellow Muslim immigrants and exploit the possibilities represented by these systems.\(^{33}\) Former CNN-journalist Steven Emerson (2003) has e.g. highlighted how radicals exploited the “family-reunification”-system, to obtain permits of stay. In addition there has been a substantial influx of illegal immigrants to Europe.

The Internet is an important feature of globalization facilitating transnational radical Islamism. To Islamists, the World Wide Web has become a “virtual Ummah” for propaganda and exchange of ideas. Communications over the Internet has facilitated cooperation and coordination between Islamists in different countries. The proliferation of Internet in the Middle East, North Africa and other regions in which Islamism is widespread, links the issues of concern for Islamists locally, in the diaspora and those operating beyond borders. For example, in 1999, Syria had only one state controlled and censored Internet-server. During my fieldwork in March 2002, I could observe how Internet-cafes blossomed and were filled with “net-surfers” in Beirut, Damascus, Amman and Cairo. The observation is significant considering e.g. that coded email-messages were used regularly when planning the 9/11 attacks in New York, and other attacks worldwide (Fouda and Fielding 2003:138 ff). Reuven Paz (2002) has emphasized the importance of Internet for propaganda purposes and ideological discussions, but also for engaging in “electronic warfare” against the infidels.\(^{34}\)

Satellite-phones and cell-phones are other modern communications devices widely used by the Islamist radicals. For example, the suicide-bomber of the attack on the Ghriba synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, April 11, 2002, Nizar Nawar, received a

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\(^{33}\) See ch. 5 for statistics of the Muslim population in Europe.

\(^{34}\) “Electronic warfare” is here defined as -the use of electronic signals to sabotage enemy infrastructure, e.g. through the use of data-viruses, hacking, “pinging” etc.
“go” on satellite-phone or a cell phone from one of the main “operations chiefs” in al-Qaida, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (Rotella 2003c). The case studies of this thesis also exemplify how such electronic devices were used during the planning and preparation for attacks in Europe. The digitalization of money transfers is another significant feature. One example in the case studies below shows how the Algerian Islamist shaykh Abu Doha, aka Umar Makhlouf, was asked to wire money to the terrorist cell that plotted to blow up the Notre Dame cathedral in Strasbourg, December 2000. When the U.S. intensified the efforts to cut of terrorist funding, Islamists have returned to using the alternative, informal Hawala-system for transferring money across borders. As we have seen, several political, economic and technological features of globalization have facilitated interactions between radical Islamists on an operational and ideological level.

**Sum up of the framework**

In this chapter we have developed, presented and contextualized operationalizations and concepts like “complex motivations”, “one-level motivations”, “boomerang pattern of influence”, “hijra”, “taqiyya”, “global mujahidin” etc. Now we move on to the cases and use these analytical tools in a pattern matching analysis of four terrorist plots revealed in Europe post-millennium, attributed to Salafi-Jihadi movements.

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35 The Hawala system is an informal, unregulated banking system based on the use of promissory notes for the exchange of cash and gold (Gunaratna 2003:17)
3. Case studies

The four conspiracies analyzed below involve transnational relations between Islamists in several European countries and between them and local Islamist insurgents in the Middle East, North Africa and Chechnya. Their actions and statements imply that they have been influenced by Salafi doctrine. The cases show the relevance of combining levels of analysis. The militants originated from Middle East and North Africa, they were situated in the European diaspora, and the majority of them were exposed to “global mujahidin” in Afghanistan.

There is available information on the backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the militants, the nationality and type of target they selected for terrorist attacks, and their justifications for attacking. The information is however distorted. Legal technicalities and political considerations affect the interpretations and conclusions presented by prosecutors and investigators. In addition the terrorists themselves performed taqiyya. For example, German prosecutors defined a GSPC-network as “Non-aligned Mujahidin” and several of the militants lied about the target selection in order to get lower sentences. The analysis aims at minimizing distortions through critical contextual interpretation, and establishing a more reliable combination of proxies to analyze in the context of political developments at the local, diaspora and global level of analysis. The case studies are divided into three sections.

1. The first is a description of the conspiracy and presentation of evidence and “links” revealed during the investigations.

2. The second is an analysis designed to lessen distortions of the first three proxies of motivation.

3. The last section analyzes the consistency between conclusions reached on each proxy and the political context. Then it concludes.

All three sections, but especially the second and third, involve shifting between levels of analysis.
As we shall see, links and contacts have been reported between militants involved in the different conspiracies. Although Islamist radicals belong to movements that might emphasize the “local jihad” more than the “global jihad” or the other way around, it is important to note that despite difference in their emphasis, the movements’ ideologies are largely compatible. Most of these militants seem to have received training in Afghanistan. In the camps in Afghanistan, personal relationships were established between members of different movements. The extremist-milieu in Europe is relatively small and consists of hundreds, rather than thousands of radicals. Relationships established in Afghanistan seem to live on in Europe, in the sense that Islamists belonging to different movements support each other on an operational level. Islamists who are considered “global mujahidin” might thus support a mainly locally motivated operation.

**Table of analysis-outcomes explained**

Beneath the conclusions of each case we sum up outcomes of the analysis in a table. The table shows which proxies “score” or “load” on each level of analysis. For example, if the militants justify an attack with reference to political conditions or events in their country of origin, we submit “justifications” under “local motivation” in the table. If the proxy “justifications for attacking” is largely consistent with the other proxies of analysis, target selection, backgrounds of the militants and context, it is written in bold font in the table. If the proxy “justifications for attacking” is largely inconsistent with the other proxies of motivation, and considered unreliable, it is paragraphed in the table. In this way the table visualizes the outcomes of the analysis, and the patterns of motivations as measured using the chosen proxies. In chapter 3, we have gathered all the cases in one table, which shows us how the patterns of motivation vary from one case to another.
“The Strasbourg plot”

Section I; Description of the conspiracy, evidence and ”links”

Description of the Conspiracy

On December 26, 2000, German anti-terrorism police raided two apartments in the Frankfurt-area and one in Baden Baden, 60 kilometers from the French border. They arrested four Islamists belonging to the so-called “Frankfurt-cell”. The members of the cell planned to blow up the Notre Dame cathedral in Strasbourg, France, and shoot randomly at people at the nearby Christmas marketplace. A fifth suspect was arrested in April 2001. The Algerian Islamists were identified as Aeroubi Beandali, aka Mustapha Kelouili, aka Dijilliali, aka Adam (26), Lamine Marouni, aka Bernard Pascal (31), Salim Boukari, aka Kamal (31), Fouhad Sabour (37) and Samir Karimou (33). Karimou was acquitted from terrorist charges because of lack of evidence, and released. The identities of the terrorists remain uncertain until this day (CBS News 2002). Allegedly, the terrorist cell had planned to launch the attack on New Year’s Eve 2000. The “Strasbourg plot” was the first significant terrorist conspiracy in Europe in the new millennium attributed to Islamist militants.

A number of Islamists in Europe (about 20) are suspected of being involved in the plans, or being linked to one or several of the plotters. An exact number is impossible to give, based on open sources, because the natures of these “links” are not known in detail. Some of the Islamists detained in this case have been involved in other terrorist conspiracies or support-activities that may obscure the actual link to the Strasbourg case (see below). The main source of information when analyzing the motivations of the militants arrested in Frankfurt December 2000 along the local, diaspora and global dimension, is the extensive presscoverage of the investigation and trial. The Strasbourg-plotters were convicted of conspiracy to commit murder by planting a bomb, and of weapons violations on March 10, 2003, in Frankfurt.37

36 Only Fouhad Sabour’s identity is verified (CBS News 2002)
37 The defendants were sentenced between 10 to 12 years in prison. Salim Boukari received the longest sentence, 12 years, followed by Fouhad Sabour, 11 1/2 years. Both men denied intent to kill, and insisted that they were to target an empty synagogue in Strasbourg. The alleged organizer of the attack, Aeroubi Beandali, has cooperated with the interrogators and received 10 years in prison. Lamine Maroni, shouted Islamist slogans and threats to the public and press outside the German court, but remained silent throughout the trial. He was sentenced to 11 years (AP 2002).
Evidence and “links”

The arrests of the main suspects resulted from joint anti-terrorism efforts by German and French police intelligence (Bundeskriminalamt-BKA and Territory Surveillance Directorate-DST). These agencies were warned by British domestic intelligence (MI5) that intercepted a suspicious telephone-call from Aeroubi Beandali to the London-based Islamist shaykh, the Algerian Haydar Abu Doha, aka Umar Makhlouf, aka “the doctor”. Abu Doha is believed to be a central leader of the GIA splinter-organization GSPC. Beandali asked Doha for more money to execute the attacks in Strasbourg. Doha is currently detained in the U.K. under the Terrorism Act 2000. He is also charged with terrorism by U.S. authorities for his involvement in the so-called “millennium plot”, and suspected of involvement in a terrorist conspiracy in Jordan (Harris et al 2002). This telephone-call, the fact that three of the suspects have been residing in the U.K., and evidence collected at Lamine Maroni’s former apartment in Abbeydale Road, Sheffield, have made German prosecutors to believe that the operation was organized and financed from the United Kingdom.

The raids in Germany revealed solid physical evidence that an attack was imminent. German anti-terrorism squads (GSG-9) seized 44 pounds of potassium permanganate, acetone, hydrogen peroxide and battery acid, basic ingredients sufficient to make a powerful bomb, and instructions for making explosives. The chemicals had been collected from 48 separate chemistries around Germany, under the cover of gathering urgent materials for hospitals in Africa. The police also confiscated forged passports, computers and encrypted discs, together with a mini-arsenal of weapons. The arsenal contained homemade detonators similar to one used by Richard Colvin Reid in his attempt to blow up a Paris-Miami flight in 2001, rifles with telescopic sights, a hand grenade, revolvers and silencers, Scorpio submachine guns, and large amounts of ammunition. Investigators believe that the cell also planned to blow up devices made from pressure cookers packed with nails and

38 The Algerian Ahmad Ressam was stopped at the Canadian border with explosives in his car, heading for the Los Angeles International Airport in late December 1999. The “millennium plot” also involved an attack against foreign tourists in Jordan (see e.g. Burke 2003:178 ff).
In the militants’ hide outs the police found 14,000 USD in cash and a 12-minute surveillance videotape of the locations. The prosecutors have relied heavily on this piece of evidence during the trial. According to press reports, in one sequence of the video, a camera is pointed at the cathedral and Salim Boukari says, “this is the cathedral of God’s enemies….You will all go to hell, God Willing” (Telegraph 2002).

In addition to the U.K.-contacts, investigations have linked the Strasbourg-cell to North African GSPC-militants in France, Spain and Italy. An alleged operational leader of the cell in Frankfurt is believed to be the Algerian Mohammed Bensakhria (36), aka Mohamed Ben Aissa, aka “Meliani”, who escaped German and French police, and was later arrested in Alicante, Spain. He was extradited to France, where he is awaiting trial (Eddy 2003). In April 2001, German and Italian anti-terrorism squads arrested six Algerian Islamist militants in Milan and Frankfurt suspected of giving logistical support to the Strasbourg-plotters (Sueddeutsche Zeitung 2001). This group was also suspected of being involved in plans to attack the U.S. embassy in Rome, and plans to attack the 2001 G8 Summit in Genoa (Anonymous 2002:218). French police arrested the Algerian Yacine Akhnouche, assumed to be an affiliate of the Frankfurt-cell in February 2002. On October 22, 2002, French authorities arrested a 33-year-old Tunisian, Lazhar Ben Mohammed Tlilli (33), suspected of inspiring and financing the Strasbourg terrorist plot, and also of being connected to a Tunisian al-Qaida support-network based in Italy (Sciolino 2002). On November 25, 2002, DST arrested six Algerians in Paris. They were allegedly tied to the Strasbourg conspiracy. One of them was reported to be a woman (AFP 2002b). The DST arrested yet another Algerian, Merouane Benahmed (29), in December 2002, suspected of belonging to the so-called “Chechen network” (see case study below), and being linked to one of the main suspects in the Strasbourg conspiracy. A Tunisian, Heni Ben Lased, went to trial in Italy on the charges of trafficking arms.

39 British anti-terror police seized Islamist extremist literature/propaganda and the chemical agent triacetone triperoxide (TATP- an explosive favored by suicide-bombers) in the Sheffield raid, April 2002. Richard Colvin Reid (29), the British shoe-bomber, also used TATP as detonating agent (The Guardian 2002).
explosives and chemical agents. Wire tapping of Ben Lased’s phone-calls revealed that he had shown interest in using poison gas to suffocate worshippers in the Notre Dame cathedral (Telegraph 2002).

Section II; Backgrounds, target selection and justifications

Backgrounds of the militants

The backgrounds of the Strasbourg-plotters seen isolated suggested that local and diaspora grievances most likely were the main motivations for the attack, implying that they traveled from Algeria to France with the intent to launch “boomerang” attacks on the Algerian regime and/or direct attacks on France. Most probably they belong to the Algerian GSPC-movement perceived to be ideologically committed to the “local jihad” against the Algerian regime (Burke 2003). GSPC and its forerunner GIA have targeted French and Algerian targets in Algeria and France. Attacks in France were mainly motivated by France’s support for the secular military regime in Algeria, which seized power in the early 1992 elections. Profiles of GIA-fighters that attacked France in the mid 1990s show that some of them were seemingly well integrated second-generation Franco-Algerians, whereas others were illegal immigrants and/or petty criminals (Kjøk 2003).

During the 1990s we saw examples of GIA-commanders sending fighters or mid-level-leaders on ad hoc special missions to France from Algeria (Kjøk 2003; Sifaoui 2003). The militants of the Frankfurt-cell have been in touch with close associates of Bin Ladin who were involved in conspiracies to strike U.S. and Jewish targets in the United States and Jordan. This fact could imply that they were motivated by ideas of a “global jihad”. It is beyond doubt that at least three of the Strasbourg plotters spent time in training camps in Afghanistan. Still it is important to note they have this in common with thousands of Islamists worldwide. They went to Afghanistan for lots of reasons. Some of them went there to receive training and build capabilities for a local battle, and some went to realize what they perceived as an individual religious duty to support Muslims under attack from the Soviets. Others

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In a “global jihad”-perspective France’s role as a former colonial power in the Maghreb and the Middle East and as a trusted ally of the United States would typically have been emphasized.
may have seen Afghanistan as an arena to initiate a “global jihad” against the infidels. The “Afghan jihad” also attracted many young adventurers who simply were fascinated by the Afghan myth. German prosecutors concluded that the Strasbourg plotters belonged to an independent, loose network mainly consisting of North African extremists called the “Non-aligned Mujahidin”, with “links” to al-Qaida. The court believed that they decided by themselves, after receiving training in Afghanistan to “infiltrate Western countries as terrorists” (Der Spiegel 2001). German authorities underscored how such “independent” networks could attack at any time without orders from patrons in Afghanistan, emphasizing the initiative taken by the militants. The court considered the Strasbourg plotters as “independent”, yet mainly globally motivated fighters.

If we survey the available information on the backgrounds and contacts of the Strasbourg plotters more closely, it is far from obvious that the operation was planned within a framework of “global jihad”. They had lived in Europe a relatively short time, and as noted above the reported links and contacts strongly suggested that they belonged to the GSPC (Harris et al 2002). The GSPC-movement has built a substantial support-infrastructure in Europe, and allegedly been planning terrorist operations in France against the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 soccer-tournaments. The Algerian Islamist movements’ relations to al-Qaida are debated. Based on interviews with Algerian intelligence officers, Burke (2003:15) claims that GIA turned down aid from Bin Ladin in the early 1990s and that GSPC refused to meet emissaries from al-Qaida in 2001. With reference to U.K. police-sources Gunaratna (2002:139) claims that al-Qaida infiltrated the networks of GSPC and GIA in Europe. Gunaratna considers GSPC an integrated part of al-Qaida, and claims France has been al-Qaida’s number one target in Europe since the start of GIA’s terrorist campaign in 1994. GSPC has in fact never attacked U.S. targets outside Algeria in the past. In October 2003, the movements’ new leader Nabil Sahrawi, aka Abu Ibrahim Mustafa, for the first time announced the movement’s support for al-Qaida (Muqdim 2003). This development might be interpreted in many ways. It may imply that the movement previously had no relations to al-Qaida but that ties have been developed
recently after Sahrawi became the movement’s new leader, following Hasan Hatab.\footnote{According to al-Zaman (2002) Hatab was killed in clashes with Algerian security forces in February 2002. Another Arab newspaper reported recently that Hasan Hatab is still alive and that he remains the leader of GSPC (al-Hayat 2003). Hatab must not be confused with Hassan Khattab, a Saudi national who headed the Arab fighters in Chechnya. Khattab was killed in Chechnya April 2002.} It may also imply that they have been allies all along, but that strategic considerations prevented them from publicizing this support until they did. It is also important to note that an alliance with al-Qaida does not necessarily mean that the “global jihad” is the main motivation for group’s terrorist attacks, but might indicate that the GSPC in Algeria is in need of financial and operational support.

The Strasbourg-plotters entered Europe during the 1990s as asylum seekers and illegal immigrants.\footnote{Aeroubi Beandali immigrated to Germany in 1992 (Washington Post 2002)} Only the identity of the Fouhad Sabour has been verified. The fact that the other terrorists have not been identified does suggest they have not settled or integrated properly in Europe. It also suggests they spent their youth in Algeria, and probably were exposed to Islamist influence there as well as in the diaspora. Their families stayed behind in Algeria. In Europe they lived on “the outskirts of society”, as unemployed small time criminals. Maroni, Sabour and Bokhari were registered in the U.K. as asylum seekers from early 2000 until they left for Germany in October and teamed up with Aeroubi Beandali in his Frankfurt apartment in November. Investigators claimed that the three U.K.-based Islamists had been in Afghanistan from 1998 to 2000, where al-Qaida lieutenants allegedly trained them in handling explosives.\footnote{Beandali, Sabour and Boukari have during interrogation admitted receiving training at camps in Afghanistan from 1999 to 2000.} Several of the suspects explained how Europe-based extremists recruited them to Islamist militancy, and said local grievances had been the focus of their indoctrination (see below). The terrorists themselves denied being members of an Islamist organization. Aeroubi Beandali explicitly told the court that his nine-month stay in Afghanistan had “nothing to do with al-Qaeda or Osama Bin Laden” (BBC News 2002a). He said he had received tuition at a private Taliban-school, which he had paid himself. Such statements might however be interpreted as taqiyya.
Fouhad Sabour appeared to have been closely associated with GIA in the mid-1990s, and was even convicted in absence by a French court in 1999 for involvement in the GIA terrorist attacks on the Paris Metro in 1995 and a TGV railway line near Lille, France. The fifth suspect Karimou, acquitted of terrorist charges, applied for asylum in Germany based on him being a FIS-sympathizer. One should thus not put too much emphasis on the plotters’ claims that they were recruited in Europe, but be open to the possibility that they were affiliated with the GSPC before they entered Europe. By constructing term “Non-Aligned Mujahidin” prosecutors were able to avoid the time consuming process of proving that they belonged to a terrorist organization under the new German anti-terrorism law. The law requires German authorities to prove that the cell was formed in Germany and not abroad. By dropping charges of belonging to GSPC, they managed to speed up the trial, and to have the defendants convicted in Germany.

Though incomplete, the profiles of the Strasbourg plotters showed they had little in common with Muhammad Atta and the other “global fighters” of the 9/11 Hamburg-cell and the al-Takfir wa’l Hijra-militants planning to attack U.S. targets in France or Belgium (see case study below). Atta’s companions and the al-Takfir wa’l Hijra militants were well educated and seemingly well integrated in European societies. The profiles of the Strasbourg-plotters did on the other hand show many similarities with some of the GIA-fighters launching attacks in France 1994 – 1996. These terrorists had, almost without exceptions, criminal records as petty criminals and drug dealers, and relatively short histories in Europe.

In conclusion, the backgrounds of the Strasbourg-plotters, suggested the conspiracy was a continuation of GIA’s and GSPC’s past operations in France rather than an act of “global jihad”. It seemed more likely that their motivations originated from Algeria and were fuelled in the diaspora and in Afghanistan. One should however not underestimate the importance of camps in Afghanistan, the attraction of al-Qaida’s ideology and the mechanisms of socialization at work in those camps.
Target selection

The target selection mainly suggested “local motivation” and/or “diaspora motivation”. This is because it followed the established patterns of Algerian Islamist terrorism in the French diaspora. France has not been on al-Qaida’s “official target list” until Aimain al-Zawahiri included it in October 2002. Striking at a French target in 2000 does not signify global motivation, unless we, as Rohan Gunaratna (2002; 2003) consider GIA and GSPC as integrated parts of al-Qaida having pursued a “global jihad” since the early 1990s. The terrorists planned to strike a French national and religious symbol.

The fact that the chosen target was a religious symbol is not necessarily significant. Al-Qaida and other Salafi-Jihadi groups have targeted both religious and political symbols consistent with the ideological principle that there is no distinction between religion and politics. GSPC’s forerunner the GIA mainly targeted Algerian government facilities and personnel in addition to foreign visitors and employees in Algeria, and mainly civilian targets in France. GIA did however attack religious representatives and symbols in Algeria and France, e.g. the murder of catholic priests in Tizi-Ouzou in 1994 and two planted bombs close to the Jewish synagogue in Lyon in 1996 (MIPT-RAND database 2003, Schweitzer et al 2003:72 ff).

When the French-Algerian journalist Mohamed Sifaoui infiltrated a GSPC-cell in France in 2002, the cell-leader Karim Bourti told him about plans to strike “Algerian leaders and other targets in France” (Rotella 2003a). The defendants exercised taqiyya and tried to confuse the court. Two of them, Boukari and Sabour, insisted to the end of the trial that the intended target of the operation was an empty synagogue in Strasbourg. Boukari was the one speaking on the surveillance tape calling the people outside the cathedral “the enemies of God” (Telegraph 2002).

The most talkative of the terrorists, Aeroubi Beandali, at first supported the “synagogue version” saying that on his return to Germany from Afghanistan, he intended to attack a Jewish installation in France. Confronted with the seized surveillance-tape, he explained that it had been recorded by mistake as one of his companions had mistaken it for a synagogue (BBC News 2002a). The Judges considered this version “absurd”. During the trial Beandali altered his explanation
and was the only defendant to admit that the group was targeting the cathedral and civilians outside (Boyes 3003). When reading the verdict, presiding Judge Karl Heinz Zeicher, concluded that the target indeed was the cathedral, and that the plotters wanted to “kill indiscriminately Jews, Christians as well as other people” in the proximity of the cathedral (Hooper et al 2003; Eddy 2003).

In conclusion, the target selection of the Frankfurt-cell was consistent with Algerian groups’ attacks in France and Belgium in the past. It is however important to note that France is one of a group of countries that al-Qaida perceives as a coalition partner with its main enemy, the United States, and that the former colonial power lies well within the scope of al-Qaida’s potential targets. It would probably be of interest to al-Qaida to support an attack against France if Algerian groups did the “dirty work”. Still, at the time when the Strasbourg attack should be launched there was little to suggest that France was a target of priority for al-Qaida.

**Justifications for attacking**

The terrorists’ justifications for attacking mainly suggested “local motivation”. They justified the attack almost exclusively with reference to French support for the Algerian regime. The militants’ justifications for attacking might potentially reveal the relative importance of their motivations along the local, diaspora and global dimension. In the immediate context of a trial, however, one should not emphasize explanations and justifications too much, but rather see them as one out of several proxies to analyze in a broader context.

Aeroubi Beandali was the only defendant displaying credible political reflections about the group’s motivations. He first tried to drag the Palestine-issue into his defense. When talking about the “empty synagogue version” of the conspiracy, he said that an attack “was intended to send a message to both France and Israel and to destabilize relations between the two countries” (BBC News 2002a). Islamists on trial often use the Palestinian cause to gain sympathy and understanding for their actions. Ramzi Yusuf, for example, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, made Palestine a key issue in his defense (Reeve 1999:235 ff). In another exercise of taqiyya he said “At no point did I think about killing one German
or French citizen, as I cannot reconcile this with my beliefs” (Schelzig and Finn 2002). Confronted with the evidence, Beandali altered his explanation and told German justice officials that his group wanted “to punish France for its policy of support for the Algerian government”. He accused France of interfering in Algeria and supporting a government guilty of slaughtering Muslims. Beandali admitted he acquired some of the weapons listed in the indictment, but that they were intended for shipment to Algeria and not for use in Europe, trying to convince the court that the main occupation of the cell was logistical support for the local battle in Algeria (Boyes 2003).

He also tried to excuse his behavior by referring to personal problems and indoctrination by Algerians living in Germany. He explained how he was transformed from “an irreligious drug dealer on the streets of Germany” into an Islamist activist, and how he changed back on September 11, 2001. About his arrival in Germany in 1992 he said, “I was a man who loved the joys of life and was very happy”, and continued, “I had no relationship to religion and lived in the European style: alcohol, women and hashish” (Schelzig and Finn 2002). He said he was drawn to militancy in 1998 when an exiled Algerian who had deserted the army showed him “evidence of massacres of women and children by Algerian troops”. Analyzing his reaction to this Beandali said, “I was very shaken and decided to change my life, which had previously been devoted on my own well being, to focus on my own country”. He added that “I began praying and seeking the truth” (ibid). An Algerian neighbor told him that he could find “truth” in Afghanistan, so he cashed out his savings and went to the border areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan where he attended a Taliban-run religious school. Then he moved on to Afghanistan where he took courses in handling weapons and explosives, obligatory to every male Muslim according to Islamist shaykhs. Beandali emphasized how he did this on his own initiative, independently of a Europe-based Islamist group. He further distanced himself from Bin Ladin and al-Qaida by saying how he changed his views on Islamist militancy on 9/11, 2001 while imprisoned in Germany. He told the court, “September 11 was a black day in history, especially for the entire Islamic world”, and that he was “horrified about such a terrible crime, particularly since it is allegedly justified
through our religion”. He continued saying that he “would never again participate in explosives attacks and the like, since after September 11 it is no longer possible to use such acts to call attention to political grievances in a meaningful way, since they are automatically associated with al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden” (ibid).

Salim Boukari was not cited on justification during the trial, but his comments on the surveillance tape and the fact that he has been convicted for his role in the 1995 GIA attacks, strongly indicates that he has grievances against the French and Algerian governments as well as against Western society.

Lamine Maroni remained silent throughout the trial, but swore in Arabic, English and German while urging his fellow defendants not to testify. He also shouted to bystanders in the courtroom “You're all Jews. I don't need them. I don't need the court. Allah is my defender”. Bizarrely he also uttered the following sentences as he was guided out of the court room “You want to kill me, baby, don't you?” and “We'll get out of prison soon and go to heaven.” (Telegraph 2002).

After hearing out the militants, Prosecutor Brinkman concluded that the attacks were partly locally and partly globally motivated. According to him the motive for the attack was “a militant rejection of Western society and a hatred of all unbelievers”, as well as wanting to punish France for cooperating with the Algerian government (Hauptmeier 2003).

In conclusion, the testimony of Aeroubi Beandali mainly suggested “local motivation”. This motivation appears to have been amplified in Europe and Afghanistan. There was nothing in his justifications that suggested “global motivation”. On the contrary he distanced himself from the “global mujahidin”. Still, we have to bear in mind that the Strasbourg-plotters faced heavy charges, and needed to play down issues that potentially could add to their time in prison.

**Section III; Motivations in context**

**Contextual analysis**

The proxies analyzed above suggested that the attack on the cathedral in Strasbourg was mainly motivated by French interference in Algeria. If we survey the relevant contexts at the time the attacks were planned, we see that French anti-terrorism
efforts against GSPC in France had strong potentials for motivating the terrorists. Whether the Strasbourg plot was mainly motivated by developments in Algeria or France, the proxies analyzed here suggested that it was more a continuation of GIAs and GSPCs previous attacks in France with support from “global mujahidin”, than a mainly globally motivated attack on Western interests.

We have seen how the mujahidin probably belonged to the Algerian GSPC, and how they wanted to launch an attack on a French national and religious symbol. As noted, the exact character of the relationship between the GSPC and Qaida is an issue of debate. It would certainly be in the interest of Algerian authorities to establish links between GSPC and al-Qaida. Despite this, Algerian intelligence officers denied the existence of an alliance between the movements in October 2002 (Burke 2003:15, note 14). The GSPC itself announced support for al-Qaida in October 2003. Whether GSPC is allied with al-Qaida or not is however not of crucial importance when surveying the motivations of the Strasbourg plotters. The group may have forged an alliance with al-Qaida for strategic purposes and still remained mainly committed to the “local jihad” in Algeria.

That the Strasbourg plotters were in contact with the globally focused U.K.-based shaykh Abu Doha and his cadre might be interpreted as a reaching out financial support to implement the terrorist plans. If we survey the relevant contexts more closely, we might further clarify which motivations are more important. At the time when the Strasbourg attack was about to be launched there were no clear signs that the GSPC had shifted focus from the local battle against the Algerian regime towards Bin Ladin’s “global jihad”. On the contrary, Algerian intelligence believed that the Algerian groups had refused to join Bin Ladin’s ranks because they wanted to remain independent and stay focused on Algeria and France (Burke: 15 and 185).

The organized jihad in Algeria ended with the partial dissolution of GIA in 1997 (Kepel 2003:273). Since then, GSPC, which has its strongholds in the Kabylia province, has taken the lead in a low intensity war against the Algerian government. The GSPC claims to have confined its operations in Algeria to the targeting of visible representatives of the regime, mainly soldiers and policemen (Hoskens 2003). Amnesty International’s annual reports 1998-2002 report that the Algerian regime
has continued to fiercely persecute Islamists in the country. People suspected of belonging to the radical Islamist movement in Algeria have been thrown in jails without trials, or simply executed on the spot. Some 4000 people have simply “disappeared” in recent years, and the authorities have refused to comment on their whereabouts (ibid).

The situation in Algeria must thus be seen as a constant motivation for Algerian groups. In the spring of 2003, GSPC kidnapped a group of German tourists in Mali. The kidnappings coincided with the Strasbourg trial, and German Authorities believed that the tourists were kidnapped to avenge the convictions (Boyes 2003). Algerian commandos freed some of the hostages, and the GSPC has not issued any explanations for why they were kidnapped. The above-mentioned French-Algerian journalist Mohamed Sifaoui infiltrated a GSPC support network in Paris in October-December 2002. The leader of the group Sifaoui infiltrated, Karim Bourti, emphasized GSPC’s commitment to the local battle in Algeria. When Sifaoui, using the under-cover name Djamal, praised Bin Ladin’s activities, Karim Bourti promptly told him, “Djamel, we must never forget our main enemies. The Algerian authorities, I mean” (Sifaoui 2003:28). There were, however, no specific events in Algeria in the immediate context of the Strasbourg plot that stood out as a candidate explanation for why GSPC wanted to strike a French target on New Year’s Eve 2000.

In France on the other hand, the front hardened between the authorities and the Islamists residing in the country. The GIA campaigns in 1994-1996 prompted hard-liner anti-terrorism measures in France. French authorities started their own war on terrorism, which has resulted in mass arrests of suspected Islamist militants. The investigations and trials of GIA-terrorists dominated the discourse concerning Islamism in France towards the end of the 1990s and some of the trials are still not concluded. For example, in 1999 French authorities put 138 Islamists on trial in the so-called “Chalabi-case”, suspected of being connected to GIA’s terrorist campaigns in the mid 1990s. At the same time, the French anti-terrorism apparatus has focused more on the GSPC as it appeared it was building a new support-structure in France, the U.K. and other European countries on the ruins of GIA’s euro-networks. France’s persecution of GSPC-members intensified after the movement’s plans to attack
soccer tournaments in 1998 and 2000 were revealed. About 50 Islamists were rounded up prior to the 1998 World Cup, and suspected Islamist terrorist cells were disrupted in France and the Netherlands prior to the Euro 2000 tournament (BBC 2000).

At the global level, the U.S. started to take al-Qaida very seriously following the embassy-bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Cruise missiles were launched at training camps in Afghanistan immediately after the attacks resulting in new threats from the al-Qaida leadership. The U.S. also targeted an alleged plant for production of chemical weapons in Sudan, and started the process to cut off terrorist funding worldwide. In addition the manhunt for al-Qaida leaders and operatives was intensified. The U.S. cut deals with pro-U.S. Middle Eastern and North African regimes (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi-Arabia etc) in order to have terrorist suspects extradited, or to or to gain access to Islamists imprisoned in these countries.

In addition to the general intensification of the conflict on the global level, there was one specific event in the immediate context of the Strasbourg attack that could tie the Frankfurt-cell to the “global jihad”. In December 1999, Canadian border police arrested the Algerian Ahmad Ressam on his way to detonate a bomb at the Los Angeles Airport (the Millennium plot, which also involved terrorist operations in Jordan). Ressam was strongly affiliated with the London-based Islamist shaykh Abu Doha who also played a role in the Strasbourg plot. Some press-reports refer to Ressam as a GSPC-member. Ressam and Doha were in Afghanistan at approximately the same time as the Strasbourg-plotters. Considering that the camps in Afghanistan were organized along ethnic lines, it is plausible that the Millennium plot and the Strasbourg case were connected, but there is no hard evidence to support this hypothesis. The cross border contacts of the Frankfurt-cell also involved the Algerian Merouane Benahmed, a former GIA-amir and a “mujahid globetrotter”, who trained in Chechnya, Afghanistan and Georgia. He allegedly is an expert in handling explosives and chemicals. The journalist Sifaoui met Benahmed a few days before he was arrested on December 16, 2002, suspected of preparing an attack on the Russian embassy in Paris (Serrano 2002; Eeckhaut 2003; Sifaoui 2003).
In conclusion we see there were developments and events at all levels of analysis that potentially could have motivated the Strasbourg plotters. Although not mentioned by the militants, French anti-terrorism efforts against the Algerian groups in France is a strong candidate explanation for why GSPC wanted to attack France New Year’s Eve 2000.

**Conclusion**

The analysis above suggested the Strasbourg plot was more motivated by the grievances at the local and diaspora level of analysis than the global level. The table below shows the “score” on the proxies of motivation, and which proxies were emphasized in the analysis. Although the radicals seemed more socially embedded in Algeria than in the European diaspora, the special role of the support-networks in France vis-a-vis the local movement in Algeria, and French anti-terrorism efforts against these networks must be seen as a strong candidate explanations for why the militants decided to attack the French cathedral. The plot was interpreted as an attempt to strike the Algerian authorities following the “boomerang” logic by deterring France from supporting the Algerian regime. Another interpretation is that the terrorists wanted to directly punish France for its hardliner anti-terrorism efforts against the Algerian groups. The information available on the links to “global mujahidin” was not sufficient to determine whether these were contacts of convenience or contacts that made deeper impacts on the Strasbourg-plotters’ motivations, but there is no doubt there were contacts. We cannot emphasize these contacts based on the information available. As we see below, backgrounds and organizational affiliations and contexts were emphasized the most, and these proxies mainly suggested local and diaspora motivations were most important for the Strasbourg plotters.

**Table 3.1. The outcome of the analysis**

“The Strasbourg plot”

The table shows how the proxies “scored” on the three levels of analysis. Scores that were emphasized in the analysis are written in bold font, whereas scores that were interpreted as highly unreliable are paragraphed.
Conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or in Belgium

Section I; Description of the conspiracy, evidence and “links”

Description of the Conspiracy
The arrest of Djamel Beghal (37) in Dubai, July 28, 2001, prompted joint anti-terrorism operations in France, U.K., Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and Italy. During interrogation by United Arab Emirates intelligence officers, Beghal admitted being the head of an al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra terrorist-network planning a suicide attack on the U.S. embassy in Paris, in the spring of 2002. Beghal claimed that Nizar Trabelsi, a Tunisian and a former professional soccer player who turned to Islamist militancy, was the designated suicide bomber of the attack. Trabelsi was arrested in Belgium on September 13, 2001. He insisted the target of the terrorist operation was the canteen at the U.S. airbase, Kleine Brogel, in Belgium. On September 29, 2003, Trabelsi was sentenced to ten years in prison for his intentions to launch a terrorist attack (al-Farid 2003).

The conspiracy to attack U.S. interests in France and Belgium by Beghal’s network was revealed a short time before the attacks in New York, September 11, 2001. It made European intelligence agencies realize that more cross-border cooperation and coordination was needed to tackle something that appeared as an increased threat of transnational Islamist terrorism in Europe (Vermaat 2002). Monday, September 10, 2001, French anti-terrorism squads raided an apartment in Chilly-Mazarin, Essonne, and arrested three Islamists suspected of playing central roles in the plot. General Intelligence (RG-police intelligence unit) had placed the suspects under surveillance from August 23 until September 11, and they were identified as Nabil Bounour, Yohan Bonte and Jean-Marc Grandvizir. Bonte is
Djamel Beghal’s brother in law. A sixth key suspect, the French-Tunisian computer expert Kamil Daoudi (27), managed to escape to the U.K. one day before the raid. Armed local police and MI5 later arrested him in Leicester, United Kingdom. The analysis below is mainly based on the extensive press coverage of the investigations and the trial of Nizar Trabelsi in Belgium, and the investigation of Djamel Beghal and Kamil Daoudi in France.

Evidence and “links”

The most important pieces of evidence in the al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra-investigation is Djamel Beghal’s “confession” to United Arab Emirates intelligence officers in July-September, 2001, and an interview with Nizar Trabelsi transmitted by the Belgian radio-network RTBF. Beghal retracted his testimony when he was extradited to France and put in front of France’s “anti-terrorism-sheriff”, judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere, saying “I would like to point out at this stage that the police officers who interrogated me in the United Arab Emirates forced me to say certain things that are false” (Ceux and Lhomme 2001). The United Arab Emirates intelligence officers used “unconventional” methods of interrogation, involving physical beatings and visits by Islamic clerics trying to convince the suspect that his dealings were against Islamic principles. A DST-report used in the investigation, mainly built on Beghal’s confessions in Dubai, stated that Beghal established relations with “several dangerous individuals”, and that these relations underscored “the existence of an active Islamic terrorist organization”. The report also paralleled the “modus operandi” of the planned operation with those of al-Qaida’s attacks on the U.S. embassies in East Africa in August 1998, and the attack on the U.S. destroyer Cole outside the coast of Yemen in October 2000.

Police raids in the above-mentioned countries revealed hard physical evidence that the network was preparing an attack. In the French raid the police seized “helicopter manuals and aeronautical charts showing air approaches to Paris” (Muriel

44 A medical examination of Djamel Beghal showed put forward by his lawyer Fabrice Dubest in October showed that Beghal indeed ha been beaten. The medical expert also underscores that Djamel Beghal [suffers] “psychological repercussions from the said acts” (Erlanger & Hedges 2001). Still, according to Le Monde, the French largely base their case against Beghal and his affiliates on the statements he gave to United Arab Emirates authorities.
McGrory and Kennedy (2001) reported that agents had seen several of the terrorist suspects visiting helipads and taking flying lessons. In a Belgian anti-terrorism-operation, the police seized an Uzi submachine gun and a recipe for bomb making in the suspected suicide bomber’s apartment. In an Egyptian snack bar frequented by the Belgium-based Islamist militants, they found “220 pounds of sulphur and 13 gallons of acetone” (Muriel 2001). Police sources said the chemicals were sufficient to make a bomb powerful to blow up a building (ibid). Fake passports and maps of the U.S. embassy in Paris were also seized. Nizar Trabelsi was convicted in a trial of 23 Islamists who were accused of planning operations in Belgium, and of being involved in the assassination of the Northern Alliance-leader Ahmad Shah Massoud in Afghanistan on September 9, 2001. This trial probably prompted the only actual terrorist attack attributed to Islamist radicals in Europe post millennium. A 45-year-old Iraqi sent letters laced in toxic powders to the court, the Belgian Prime minister and to U.S. and Saudi Arabian representations and firms in Belgium. The letters were signed “the International Islamic Society” (Al-Quds al-Arabi 2003). Considering that the original al-Takfir wa’l Hijra in Egypt also was referred to as”the Society of Muslims”, this might indicate that the Iraqi was an affilliate of the group.

Dutch authorities arrested a native French Islamist identified as Jerome Courtellier, two Algerians, Abdelkader Rabia and Adel Tobbichi, and one Dutch-Ethiopian, Saad Ibrahim. They were all suspected of providing fake credit cards, passports and driving licenses to the al-Takfir wa’l Hijra-conspirators in the plot to bomb U.S. targets in Europe (Wesselingh 2002). Spanish police, cooperating with FBI, CIA and Spanish military intelligence arrested six Algerian Islamists identified as Mohammed Boualem Khnouri, Mohammed Belaziz, Yasin Seddiki, Hakim Zerzour, Hocine Khouni and Madjid Sahouane. They were according to Spanish Government sources GSPC- members, who were “directly related” to some of the detainees in Belgium and the Netherlands (Xinhua 2001).

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45 The native French butcher-sons Jerome and David Courtellier are have been labeled “the blue-eyed terrorists” and they are believed to have played central roles in the conspiracy to assassinate Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah 9, 2001.
Section II; Backgrounds, target selection and justifications

Backgrounds of the militants

The backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the militants in this case suggested that diaspora grievances, which had been amplified in Afghanistan, created a combined diaspora-global motivation for the conspiracy, in which “global motivation” was interpreted as most important. The histories of the key-members of the terrorist-cell tell us how radical recruiters approached them when they were vulnerable and frustrated because of personal problems seemingly related to being Muslims in the West.

One could probably say that the frustrations made them receptive to influence from “global mujahidin”. The leaders of the al-Takfir wa’l Hijra network were second-generation immigrants or people who had been living in Europe for a long time. They were described as well integrated and socially embedded in European societies. In addition they were above average talented, skilled and relatively successful as students or in their professions. There was not much in the terrorists’ backgrounds to suggest that they were especially concerned with the political situation in the countries from which their families originated, at least not more than must be considered normal among second-generation immigrants.

The three “operation-leaders”, Beghal, Trabelsi and Daoudi, admitted being members of al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra. Beghal has even confirmed that he is “the link between three terror cells in Europe belonging to al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra” (McGrory and Kennedy 2001). The ideology of this movement does not focus on territory, but on belief. To followers of al-Takfir wa’l Hijra, the world consists of true believers and infidels, and infidels should be attacked independently of their nationality or ethnic background. According to Dutch police, the terrorist network was made up of about 20 people living in Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, Germany and The Netherlands (Wesselingh 2002). Several witnesses who frequented the Finsbury Park mosque in London confirms that Djamel Beghal stood out among the militants at the mosque, and that he and his comrades were feared among the other worshippers at the mosque because they were seen as too extreme and violent. One witness claimed that they
would “kill their own fathers if they caught them smoking or drinking” (Bright et al 2001).

Djamel Beghal and Nizar Trabelsi also admitted receiving terrorist training in al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan. Beghal and Trabelsi testified that they developed close relationships with prominent al-Qaida leaders including Usama Bin Ladin and Abu Zubaydah, one of al-Qaida’s leading commanders. Profiles of the al-Takfir wa’l Hijra militants plotting attacks in Belgium or France differ from the profiles of the Strasbourg plotters, but are similar to those of the members of the 9/11 Hamburg-cell and some of the GIA-fighters of the 1994-1996 terrorist campaigns in Europe. They are described as resourceful “model immigrants” who integrated well, at least initially (Rotella and Zucchino 2001).

Djamel Beghal was born in Algeria in 1965, and grew up in the Corbeil-Essonnes housing project in the Paris suburbs. He married a French woman and is the father of three boys. He speaks French fluently and is described as an intelligent and charismatic man with talents for leadership (Erlanger and Hedges 2001). Despite this, Beghal, as many other North African immigrants in France, was “stuck at the bottom of society”, status wise, and on the job market. He was drawn to the Mosques in which Islamist shayks lectured about atrocities and crimes carried out against fellow Muslims in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Palestine etc. Beghal was engaged in the local conflict in Algeria to a certain degree. In 1994 he was among those picked up during French police sweeps of Algerian Islamists, but it is unclear whether he was imprisoned. In 1997 he moved with his family to the United Kingdom and came under the influence of the Palestinian Islamist shayk Abu Qatada, aka Omar Mohamed Othman (43), who is described as al-Qaida’s “spiritual leader in Europe” or “Bin Ladin’s ambassador” to Europe by European intelligence agencies (ibid). Qatada is currently detained under the Terrorism Act 2000. While belonging to Qatada’s group in London, Beghal recruited other activist for al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra with intention of carrying out attacks against U.S. targets in Europe.

Kamil Daoudi’s family emigrated from Algeria to France when he was five. He grew up in the Paris suburbs and is by his family and teachers characterized as a quiet and shy, but intelligent and skilled person, who “never expressed hatred against
anyone or anything in particular” (Rotella and Zucchino 2001). Daoudi had an interest in computers, and studied aeronautical mechanics for two years. Seemingly he faced some personal problems and left school for a period in 1993. In 1996 he dropped out of his studies for good. Daoudi’s father noticed that his son started acting strangely, and he later found out that he had been seeing a psychiatrist. It is believed that it was during this period he was drawn to Islamist militancy and Beghal’s circle. He moved out of his parent’s house and moved in to Beghal’s former apartment in Paris. According to French authorities he also traveled to London and Afghanistan, using the money his family had raised for his education. He worked in a cyber-café, and is believed to have been in charge of the terrorist cell’s communication via the Internet. Daoudi is also suspected of being the network’s bomb maker (Bright et al 2001). In 1999 he moved permanently to London and joined Beghal’s operation cell.

Nizar Trabelsi, who was a member of a German al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra network involved in the plans to strike U.S. targets in Europe, defies the commonly perceived stereotype of an Islamist activist, as a religiously devout bearded young man, shunning worldly pleasures. In fact, he has this in common with most of the Europe-based radical Islamists (Kjøk 2003). He had a career as a professional soccer player for the German team Fortuna Dusseldorf before turning to Islamist militancy. Former teammates said, “He never mentioned Islam or Middle East politics”. The only outward sign of his faith was a tiny Koran he tucked into his sock as a shinguard (Rotella and Zucchino 2001). Despite a western appearance he struggled to socialize properly among his colleagues, and to follow team rules. His contract was cancelled, and his life apparently fell apart. He was divorced, and began to abuse alcohol and drugs. He then pursued a criminal career, and received sentences for drug trafficking, theft, unauthorized use of car and weapons possession etc. At the same time he started traveling a lot, to Saudi-Arabia, to Tunisia, to Spain and finally in October 2000 he went to Afghanistan. It is believed that Trabelsi was recruited and given direction by Islamist militants during the vulnerable transition phase from a successful athlete to a petty criminal. Al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra’s ties to al-Qaida are debated. Members of the movement allegedly tried to assassinate Bin Ladin in Sudan in 1994 (Anonymous 2002:143). Bin Ladin seems to disagree with the movements’
emphasis on takfir and their justifications for killing fellow Muslims not agreeing with their interpretation of al-Quran and al-Sunna. The alleged strife between GIA and al-Qaida did revolve around this controversial issue in Islamist doctrine. Bin Ladin disagreed with the targeting of Muslims in Algeria by takfiri elements within the GIA-movement. One member of Beghal’s network, Nacer Eddine Mettai, claims that an alliance was forged between al-Takfir, al-Qaida and Taliban during the end of the 1990s. According to the agreement, Bin Ladin would finance al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra if the movement joined the “global jihad” and focused on U.S. targets (Rotella and Zucchino 2001). All such statements must be assessed critically, but this particular statement fits with the modus operandi of al-Qaida, which involves sub-contracting other Islamist movements, and providing finances on the condition they attack U.S. targets.

In conclusion, organizational affiliations and the backgrounds of the radicals analyzed isolated, indicated “diaspora motivation” and “global motivation”. It appears social discontent in the diaspora made them receptive to ideological guidance or indoctrination from influential “global mujahidin” in Europe and in Afghanistan.

Target selection
The target selection strongly suggested “global motivation”. The militants managed to establish confusion concerning where the attacks were to be launched, but all versions of the plot involve U.S. or “international targets”. According to press reports, Djamel Beghal confessed that his terrorist cell was planning to attack the U.S. embassy in Paris using either a powerful car bomb, or a helicopter packed with explosives. He said that Nizar Trabelsi was the designated suicide-bomber for the attacks.

French intelligence picked up signals that other potential targets were assessed by Beghal’s network. Among them were the U.S. consulate in Marseilles, and the U.S. cultural center in Paris. The Egyptian president Husni Mubarak passed on domestic intelligence to the U.S. indicating that al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra was planning to attack the G8-summit in Genoa 2001, using an airplane loaded with explosives (McGrory and Kennedy 2001).
Nizar Trabelsi denied Beghal’s allegations and said, “I don't even know where that embassy is located”. He claimed that the selected target was the canteen of the U.S. air base in Belgium, Kleine Brogel, and that he acted on direct orders from one of Bin Ladin’s chief operatives in Afghanistan, Abu Zubaydah. During trial he said, “The plan was that I would break through the gates at the Kleine Brogel army base in a Mercedes delivery van carrying a 100-kilogram bomb and crash into the canteen. It would happen between 12:00 and 13:00. Between 50 and 70 American soldiers would be eating there at that time” (Eeckhaut 2003). Trabelsi received information about the routines at Kleine Brogel from an insider at the base. French prosecutors believed Trabelsi lied to the Belgian Court, in order to receive a lower sentence. Their theory was that Trabelsi believes French courts are much tougher on Islamists than Belgian courts.

In conclusion, target selection analyzed isolated exclusively indicated “global motivation”. If the terrorists wanted to symbolize diaspora grievances they most probably would have chosen European targets. An attack against European targets before 9/11 would probably have been considerably easier and less costly than attacking U.S. symbols because of strengthened security after the events in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. However, if they really were dependent on support from al-Qaida, it would perhaps be easier to gain such support if the target was within a global framework of attack (i.e. attacking a U.S. target).

**Justifications for attacking**

The justifications offered by the Islamist radicals, mainly suggested “global motivation”. Beghal and Trabelsi emphasized their allegiances to prominent al-Qaida leaders in Afghanistan as the most important motivation. References were however made to local Middle Eastern politics and social discontent in Europe.

When in prison, Trabelsi gave an interview to the Belgian broadcaster RTBF in which he said that he loved Bin Laden “like a father”. One of his three defense lawyers Fernande Motte de Raedt said Trabelsi had been “under the spell, hypnotized, impressed by (Usama Bin Laden's) piercing eyes and simple life”. The defense pointed out how his father abandoned him at an early age, and how Trabelsi
saw Bin Ladin as a substitute paternal figure. Another lawyer said the client would plead guilty on several counts of the indictment, but that he “agreed to these things because he was under the influence of Osama bin Laden” (The Guardian 2003). Trabelsi’s own statements underscored his allegiance to Usama Bin Ladin. For example, “I am guilty; I will have to pay for it. What I did is not good, but I had no choice”. He further emphasized the strong personal relationship to his mentor by saying, “I don't care about everything he has done - September 11 and all that. I had good relations with him. He helped me and gave me advice”. He also mentioned the conflict in Palestine as a source of motivation. When talking about his plans he said, “I would place a photo of a Palestinian child killed by the Jews on the van's dashboard to remind myself of why I was doing it” (Eeckhaut 2003). In the context of the trial we must assume Trabelsi tried to lower his sentence by expressing regrets, parallel to Beandali in the Strasbourg case. He said, “I would not do it again. Violence is not the answer. Look how the Americans reacted after 11 September. Fortunately I can think clearly again. I was a machine then. Even my wife's tears could not move me” (ibid). Towards the end of the trial, Trabelsi displayed his “global motivation” in a rather comical way by saying, “I love Islam, I love Muslims and I love all human beings, except the Americans”. The court did not buy “the new and loving Trabelsi” and sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

Djamel Beghal on the other hand made no references to conflicts in his country of origin Algeria, Palestine or other issues. He focused only on his duties towards his patrons in Afghanistan. According to Radio 1 Europe, which saw documents from the interrogations, he told Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere that he was ordered to prepare an attack on the US embassy in Paris. As Trabelsi he said that the orders came from Abu Zubaydah. The al-Qaida-commander told him “that the time to act had come”. He asked Beghal if he was ready and gave him three presents from Bin Ladin (BBC News 2001). Beghal said that his role in the plot was to “observe, collect information and assess the extent of the surveillance in place around the embassy” (ibid).

Kamil Daoudi explained to interrogators he “was not psychologically well”. He said “going to Afghanistan to join the jihad gave my life direction and it was
going to allow me to find my roots” (Ceux and Lhomme 2001). The search for “roots” or the “truth” parallels Aeroubi Beandali’s explanations for why he traveled to Afghanistan. Daoudi denied that the operations were headed by al-Qaida-chiefs saying, “Al-Qa’ida did not assign me the task of committing any kind of terrorist attack in Europe or elsewhere” (ibid).

In conclusion, the justifications of the militants suggested strong influence from al-Qaida-leaders, here interpreted as “global motivation”. They said they “had no choice”, or were “ordered” by patrons in Afghanistan. The justifications and excuses also suggested the terrorist’s personal problems in the diaspora were catalysts of their radicalization.

**Section III; Motivations in context**

**Contextual analysis**

The proxies analyzed above suggested mainly “global motivation” and some degree of “diaspora motivation”. The local level of analysis was largely absent in the case. The al-Takfir-network was multi-ethnic, but most of its affiliates originated from North Africa. They were raised and educated in Europe. Except Beghal’s alleged affiliation with the GIA, none of them was tied to other Islamist organizations or “local jihads”. Al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra was originally an Egyptian group crushed by the Egyptian regime in 1977. It resurfaced across the Middle East and North Africa, and had a particular strong position in Lebanon. During the 1990s, the movement and its ideology gained foothold in Europe. As established in the previous section, the al-Takfir-mujahidin surveyed here did not emigrate from Arab-Islamic countries in order to launch jihad according to the “boomerang” logic. They were recruited in Europe. The local context did not appear to be of significance. Trabelsi’s references to the Palestine conflict were interpreted as taqiyya or “global motivation”. He is of Tunisian decent with a long history in Europe, and has no known ties to a local Islamists in Tunisia.

Beghal’s network operated mainly in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. These three countries have a relatively high percentage of Muslim immigrants, respectively 7%, 3.4% and 2.7% (Economist 2003). Radical Islamists hid
and built an infra-structure in these diaspora-communities. As noted above, certain mosques in France, Germany and the U.K. were “hijacked” by radical elements and served as bases for fundraising, indoctrination, communication, and for preparing terrorist operations. Only France has cracked down on such activities until recently. Since the millennium German and British authorities have issued new anti-terrorism laws and intensified the hunt for Islamist terrorists. As of today, the main hub for Islamist militancy in Europe, the Finsbury park mosque in London, is closed down and its four radical preachers Abu Hamza, Abu Qatada, Abu Doha and Umar Bakri are detained and under investigation.

Shaykh Umar Bakri Muhammad, head of the U.K. branches of the semi-radical transnational organizations al-Muhajirun and Hizb al-Tahrir, boasts about having sent “hundreds” of fighters from Europe to Afghanistan. European police and intelligence sources confirm that Islamist recruits have been sent from Europe to join jihad in Chechnya, Kashmir, Iraq etc. There are also examples of Europe-based Islamists who were sent to carry out operations in the U.S., Israel and Australia (ch. 5). The French anti-terrorism-judge Jean Lois Bruguiere said recently “dozens of poor and middle-class Muslim men had left France for Iraq since the summer” (Van Natta Jr. and Butler 2003). The cases of this study show us that the terrorist-cells consisted of both poor and unemployed people, as well as people having been relatively “successful” in their lives. The profiles and justifications of the al-Takfir-mujahidin suggested that they were discontent with their status in the European diaspora. One possible explanation is the “relative deprivation” mechanism, implying expectations of being included as a full-fledged member of Western society, not being fulfilled.

On the global level the conspiracy of al-Takfir wa’l Hijra coincided in time with the 9/11 attacks in New York. This fact made analysts speculate that the plot was designed to draw attention away from the build up to the “Holy Tuesday”. Tensions at the global level increased steadily since the 1998 East Africa embassy-bombings. From 1999 to September 10, 2001, we saw thwarted terrorist plots in the U.S. and Jordan, the hijacking of an Air India plane by Kashmiri insurgents, several operations by Chechen rebels in Russia, threats against annual celebrations in
Belgium and Jordan, the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole destroyer, anti-Christian attacks in Indonesia etc, all attributed to al-Qaida-affiliated groups (Anonymous 2002). As noted above, the U.S. retaliated by attacking al-Qaida’s training camps in Afghanistan, an alleged chemical plant in Sudan, and started destroying terrorist infrastructures worldwide. Operations against U.S. symbols in Europe would definitely fit in to the conflict-pattern developing at the global level of analysis.

In conclusion we see that there were potential motivations for a terrorist attack on the diaspora level and global level, whereas the local level did not seem particularly relevant as a source of motivation.

**Conclusion**

The analysis suggested the conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or Belgium was motivated mainly by grievances at the diaspora and global levels of analysis. The conspirators were raised and recruited in Europe. They did not emigrate from an Arab-Islamic country in order to support a local Islamist insurgency. The allegiance to top-level al-Qaida leaders seemed to be the most important source of motivation for the mujahidin. Of the operationalized motivations, these allegiances were considered “global motivation”. It also looked like diaspora and global motivations were interlinked in the sense that they were mutually dependent of each other. Diaspora frustrations made the terrorists receptive to the propaganda and indoctrination of “global mujahidin”.

**Table 3.2. The outcome of the analysis**

**Conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or in Belgium**

The table shows how the proxies “scored” on the three levels of analysis. Scores that were emphasized in the analysis are written in bold font, whereas scores that were interpreted as highly unreliable are paragraphed.
### Conspiracy to attack Jewish targets in Germany

**Section I; Description of the conspiracy, evidence and "links"**

**Description of the conspiracy**

In April 2002, German anti-terrorism police arrested nine Islamists belonging to the Jordanian-Palestinian al-Tawhid movement in raids which “spanned Germany from Essen to Munich” (BBC News 2002b). German government officials said the arrestees included Jordanian, Egyptian and Iraqi and Palestinians nationals. According to the federal prosecutor Kay Nehm, the group was “on the brink” of carrying out attacks in Germany. Six militants were identified in the press as Mohammed Abu Dhess (36), Shadi Abdullah (27), Ashraf al-Dagma, Ismail Shalabi, Djamal Mustafa and Yasser H. (36). Yasser H. allegedly headed a local branch of al-Tawhid in Jordan and was also believed to be a ringleader of al-Tawhid-militants in Germany. German television reported how authorities believe “several” of the suspects had been to camps in Afghanistan, and that they had acquired weapons to use in terrorist attacks (ibid).

Al-Tawhids plans to attack targets in Germany was the third significant terrorist conspiracy in Europe having reached the courtrooms. The group was initially accused of “planning to shoot people in a square in one German city and detonate a hand grenade near a Jewish or Israeli target in another” (Moulson 2003). Late November 2003, Shadi Abdallah received four years in prison for his role in the plot. The low sentence was a discount because he cooperated extensively with investigators and prosecutors. According to the verdict, the targets of the operation were the Jewish Museum in Berlin, a café and a discothèque in Dusseldorf (Der Spiegel 2003b)
The analysis below is mainly based on released statements from interrogations of Shadi Abdallah and his court testimony. Abdullah shared detailed information about the conspiracy and about Islamist networks in Europe. Investigators and prosecutors did however express doubts concerning when Abdullah was lying and when he was not. Despite such concerns, he ended up as a key witness in the al-Tawhid-trial, and also the trial against Munir al-Mutassadiq, an affiliate of the 9/11 Hamburg-cell.

**Evidence and “links”**

As in the cases analyzed above, the al-Tawhid investigation involved anti-terrorism agencies in several countries. German police-investigators and intelligence discovered that al-Tawhid’s “central commando” in Europe was situated in the United Kingdom (Burke 2003b). The movement considers the Palestinian shaykh Abu Qatada, aka Umar Mahmoud Uthman (43) its religious guide, and the Germany-based militants have been in touch with him. Qatada is by Spanish intelligence described as al-Qaida’s “spiritual ambassador” to Europe (Gunaratna 2002). He is currently detained in Belmarsh prison, U.K., for promoting Islamist violence in the Middle East and in Europe. He is also convicted in absentia by Jordanian authorities for planning attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets in the Jordan. Investigators believed the suspect Muhammad Abu Dhess was the leader of the disrupted al-Tawhid-cell in Germany. Except Shadi Abdallah’s testimony, the main evidence against the al-Tawhid-network stemmed from intercepted phone-calls.

In April 2002, Shadi Abdallah, received a phone-call from al-Tawhid’s alleged operational leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, aka Ahmed al-Khalayleh (36), in which he received his final orders to prepare a spectacular attack on a Jewish target somewhere in Germany, in “a big square where a lot of people gather”. Abdallah was also ordered to obtain a “mute” (code for a gun with silencer) and “Russian apples” (code for Russian made hand grenades). The United States’ Secretary of State, Colin Powell, presented al-Zarqawi as “the link” between the Iraq-regime and al-Qaida before the UN Security Council during the lead-up to the war on Iraq (Moulson 2003). Shadi Abdullah was arrested in the German town Krefeld.
Police raids, in which 19 homes were searched, revealed physical evidence that an attack was in the making. The police seized uncovered Islamic “jihad propaganda”, forged documents and passports along with forgery equipment, written documents indicating Islamist militancy and terrorist activity, computers, software and a handgun. Media reports suggested a large number of nails had been found in one of the terrorist-cell’s hideouts, indicating that the group was planning a nail-bomb attack. Federal prosecutor Kay Nehm denied this (BBC 2002b). No chemicals or explosives were discovered in the raids. During interrogations, Shadi Abdullah named at least five individuals belonging to al-Tawhid living in Luton, Britain. These Islamist militants were allegedly planning a poison attack against British targets. Telephone interceptions of the U.K.-cell’s communications contained several references to “fruit juice”. According to the detainees in Germany, this was a code for poison (Burke 2003b). Abdullah did also inform the police about an al-Tawhid agent in Ireland. The investigation of al-Tawhid’s activities in Germany, and operations attributed to the group in the Middle East, made British security officials concerned about possible future suicide-operations in the United Kingdom. According to European and U.S. intelligence sources Abdullah’s cooperation was very helpful in breaking up terrorist cells in Italy and the United States. As noted, Shadi Abdullah was called in as a witness in the trial of Munir al-Mutassadeq, convicted of supporting the 9/11 Hamburg-cell headed by Muhammad Atta. He claimed he attended a meeting in one of Bin Ladin’s camps in Afghanistan in which he saw Mutassadeq.\footnote{During the meeting, Bin Ladin held a speech in which he threatened the United States, and talked about an up-coming operation which would leave thousands of dead, probably the 9/11 attacks (BBC News 2002).}

Section II; Backgrounds, target selection and justifications

Backgrounds of the militants

The backgrounds of the al-Tawhid-militants could potentially imply local, diaspora and global motivations. “Local motivation” and “global motivation” were however interpreted as the more important sources of motivations when considering this proxy alone. It was not assumed plausible that e.g. poor living-conditions for immigrants,
slow asylum procedures etc in Germany could have been the main reason the terrorists wanted to launch an attack in the country. “Diaspora frustration” caused by problems related to being Muslim immigrants in Europe must however be recognized as a possible catalyst for the radicalization of the Islamists. Political developments and events at the local and global level seemed more plausible explanations considering the context of the plot (see below). If we consider the collected evidence, the conspiracy to attack targets in Germany was clearly the work of an organized group.

The radicals lived in Europe a relatively short time before they were arrested and they belonged to al-Tawhid, a movement historically committed to the local battle against the Jordanian regime and Israel. Towards the end of the 1990s al-Tawhid was also involved in operations against Westerners in Jordan and operations outside Jordan (Anonymous 2002). The militants had been to training-camps in Afghanistan, and they were believed to have established close relationships with prominent al-Qaida-leaders. Their “Europe-records” were paralell to those of the Strasbourg-plotters. They came to the diaspora in the mid or late-1990s as asylum-seekers or illegal immigrants. They lived as small-time criminals in addition to being involved with hardliner Islamist extremists in Germany, the U.K. and other European countries. The dynamics were diffuse and raised several questions. Were the suspects affiliated with al-Tawhid before they came to Europe, and possibly sent to Europe in order to establish support-networks for the local branch of the movement, in accordance with the “boomerang logic”? Or, were they picked up from the “bottom of European societies” and indoctrinated by Europe-based al-Tawhid recruiters?

As noted, Al-Tawhid was in the past strategically and tactically focused on the local battle against the Jordanian regime, with an ultimate ideological aim of establishing a true Islamic al-Sharia-state in Jordan. Shadi Abdullah explicitly told German interrogators “although the group was linked with Al Qaeda, it focused on toppling the Jordanian monarchy” (NYT 2003). Typically, the “link” to al-Qaida was unclear, and an issue of debate. German intelligence considered al-Tawhid as a movement “independent of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization”, but following a similar hardliner agenda (ibid). According to one German intelligence-report, al-
Tawhid’s alleged operations-leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was in opposition to Bin Ladin, and al-Tawhid functioned as a group that “was especially for Jordanians who did not want to join al-Qaeda” (ibid). This characteristic contradicts Colin Powell’s description of Zarqawi as “the link” between al-Qaida and the Iraqi regime. As a movement, Al-Tawhid considers shaykh Abu Qatada in London its “religious guide”. In downloaded video-sessions from Qatada’s sermons at Finsbury Park Mosque and an interview with him published by CBS News, he openly and eagerly supported al-Qaida’s “global jihad” (CBS News 2002, Internet Haganah 2003).

German intelligence has for some time been aware that al-Tawhid maintained a network in Germany. It did however conclude that the activities of al-Tawhid-cells in the country were restricted to support-activities like supplying fake identity documents and gathering donations for Islamist insurgents abroad. The network was e.g. believed to have provided logistical aid for Islamist fighters campaigning against Western forces in Afghanistan (Burke 2003b; BBC 2002b). Shadi Abdullah confirmed that some of the funds collected by his cell went to al-Qaida “at the request of donors” (AP 2003b). Al-Tawhid’s connections with al-Zarqawi and Abu Qatada, along with support-activities for Islamists in Afghanistan suggested “global motivation”. Al-Tawhid might also be globally committed independently of its alleged organizational ties with al-Qaida. Further, targeting the Jordanian Monarchy does not exclude “global motivation”. Jordan is considered the United States’ main ally in the Middle East (Ranstorp 2003). Al-Zarqawi and al-Tawhid were suspected of murdering U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman in October 2002, and of planning to strike Israeli and U.S. tourists in the same city on New Years Eve 2000 (the millennium plot). The key suspects Shadi Abdullah and Muhammad Abu Dhess came from the same Jordanian town Irbid. Abdullah described his family as very poor, and dropped out of his training as a hairdresser and an automobile technician a short time before he left Jordan for Europe. Abu Dhess worked as a professional singer in Jordan. Dhess was believed to have held a leading position within al-Tawhid. They traveled to Germany together in 1995 and applied for political asylum. Abdullah’s application for asylum was filed in 1996. Before that he filed a similar application in Belgium. Both applications were rejected, but he was allowed to stay in
Germany on humanitarian grounds. In the applications he falsely claimed he was an Iraqi facing political persecution in Iraq. Abdullah maintained he did not know that Dhess was an al-Tawhid-leader until they were in Germany. Abdullah is believed to have been in Afghanistan from December 1999 until May 2001. He allegedly met al-Zarqawi in May 2000 and the two “developed a close, trusting relationship”, according to the German prosecutor Dirk Fernholz. Abdullah claimed he was asked to act as Bin Ladin’s bodyguard during his stay in Afghanistan because of his physical size. He was one of few who were tall enough to cover Bin Ladin’s body. According to testimonies, al-Zarqawi ordered Abdullah to return to Germany and team up with Abu Dhess for operations against Jewish targets in May 2001. The conspiracy was, according to German prosecutors, outlined properly in a meeting in Iran, September 12, 2001, in which Abu Dhess was told by al-Zarqawi to attack Jewish or Israeli installations in Germany (ibid).

In conclusion, the backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the al-Tawhid-militants suggested we should understand the terrorist-cell’s plans to strike targets in Germany mainly within a framework of “global jihad”. Given that Abdullah was telling the truth, the group acted on direct orders from al-Zarqawi who seems to be an Islamist fighter pursuing both a local and a global agenda.

Target selection
Target selection also mainly indicated “local motivation” and/or “global motivation” for the attacks, but we were not able to determine the relative importance of these motivations based on this proxy alone. German prosecutors claimed the terrorists intended to strike German citizens in the attacks. If they were, the target selection seen isolated could have implied “diaspora motivation”, but considering the immediate context of the conspiracy, it seemed more plausible the operation was globally motivated (see below). The accusations about targeting Germans were considered speculative, and Abdullah was convicted exclusively on intent to attack Jewish targets. Striking Jewish targets could point to “local motivation” because of Jordan’s proximity to and entanglement in the Palestine-conflict, but Palestine is also an important symbol of the “global jihad”. If the motivation was mainly drawn from
the local context one should also ask why Jordanian symbols in Europe were not selected as targets.

All the terrorists said they intended to attack Jewish or Israeli targets on orders from al-Zarqawi, and as noted above, the evidence supports their claims. During interrogation Abu Dhess said explicitly that the selected targets were Berlin’s Jewish Museum, a Jewish-owned discothèque and a pub owned by a Jew in Dusseldorf. Shadi Abdullah told the police his organization had planned attacks against Jewish and Israeli institutions (AFP 2002b). He said his “commanding officer”, al-Zarqawi, ordered him to launch the first attack by quoting verses 6 and 7 from the first sura of the Quran. The sura reads “lead us to the right path, the path of those to whom Thou art merciful. Not that of those with whom Thou art angry, nor that of those who stray”. For reasons not discussed in the press-coverage, the sura was by prosecutors interpreted a signal to strike a Jewish target (Der Spiegel 2002).\textsuperscript{47} Abdullah said he received his orders for the first time in Afghanistan, May 2001. Despite the wording of Abdallah’s final verdict, German authorities were not convinced that al-Tawhid exclusively targeted Jewish interests. They also believed that U.S., British, and possibly German symbols in Germany were alternative targets for the operation (BBC News 2002). At the opening of the trial German prosecutors e.g. said that Abdullah was part of the German-based al-Tawhid group and “developed a plan to attack people in a busy square of a German city using a pistol with a silencer, and to detonate a hand grenade in another German city in the immediate vicinity of an Israeli or Jewish installation with the goal of killing as many people as possible”. The target city was not named (The Guardian 2002b).

In conclusion, target selection alone suggested “local motivation” and/or “global motivation”, and seen in the light of the militants backgrounds and organizational affiliations, “global motivation” was considered the more important driving force for the attack. As noted several times, the al-Tawhid militants acted on orders from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who by most analysts is believed to be a “global

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\textsuperscript{47} One theory concerning the interpretation of this sura is that the Jews were the first to receive the divine message, and also the first to misinterpret the principles of faith and thus “go astray” (Kjøk 2003).
mujahid” although he is also said to have “an obsession” with Israeli or Jewish targets, and his exact relationship with al-Qaida is an issue of debate.

**Justifications for attacking**

The terrorists’ justifications for attacking targets in Germany were confusing, and contained references to local, diaspora and global motivations. Because of their proximity to, and entanglement in the Palestine-conflict, most Jordanian radical Islamists are eager to attack Jewish targets. For the same reason, it would also be tempting for them to justify an attack on Jewish targets in Germany with reference to Palestine in order to gain sympathy, but they did not. This observation suggests that local context was less important than the global context as a source of motivation. As noted above, Sahdi Abdullah did comment on the motivations of al-Tawhid as a movement during the trial, and said that the battle against the Jordanian Monarchy was considered its main project (NYT 2003).

He also tried to convince the court that personal social problems in Jordan and in Germany were crucial to his radicalization. Interestingly he explained that social problems in the diaspora led him to Europe-based extremists that in turn convinced him to join the “global mujahidin” in Afghanistan. After admitting lying about being an orphan Iraqi persecuted by the Iraqi authorities, Abdullah said his family in Jordan was very poor, and that he wanted to start a new life in Germany (ibid). He also said one of the reasons he left Jordan was his sexual preference for men. It does not seem intuitively plausible that a homosexual would join an Islamist extremist movement. This particular statement is here interpreted as taqiyya to confuse the court. As noted above Abdullah lived on German welfare and occasional jobs while he applied for political asylum. He described his life in Germany as “empty” and said he developed a drug habit that made him spend all his money (ibid). During this time he was offered food and housing from a mosque on the condition that he would enroll in religious classes. In December 1999 he went on Hajj to Makka with fellow students where he allegedly met Bin Ladin’s son-in-law, who personally convinced him to join the jihad in Afghanistan. When staying in Afghanistan he was further radicalized and came under the influence of Bin Ladin and al-Zarqawi, and met other high-
Abdullah explained how the U.S was seen as the main enemy in the radical Islamist camps in Afghanistan, and how Bin Ladin “often called for attacks against the U.S.” and spoke about a future massive attack (probably 9/11), that would cause “thousands of dead” (The Guardian 2002b).

In conclusion, Abdullah’s testimony mainly suggested “global motivation”, parallel to those of the al-Takfir wa’l Hijra-militants surveyed above. He emphasized social problems in the diaspora as catalysts for his radicalization, but these problems were not interpreted as serious enough to generate substantial grievances against the German “host state”. The influence of “global mujahidin” in al-Qaida training camps was interpreted as having made the deeper impact on the radicalization and terrorist motivation of the prime witness in the al-Tawhid-case, Shadi Abdallah.

Section III; Motivations in context

Contextual analysis
Surveying the contexts relevant to the Islamists at the time they planned to attack targets in Germany might enable us to further explore the terrorists’ motivations along the local, diaspora, and global dimension. The following conclusions concerning the relevant contexts are consistent with conclusions reached on backgrounds, organizational affiliations and target selection (mainly “global motivation”). The justifications for attacking, on the other hand, emphasized the diaspora level as an important context in which the motivations for terrorist attacks in Europe were generated.

There was a general intensification of anti-terrorism efforts in Europe following September 11, the plot to strike U.S. targets in France or Belgium analyzed above, and the implementation of new anti-terrorism laws in the United Kingdom and Germany. The reason the diaspora context was considered to play a minor role in motivating the attacks compared to the local and global contexts, was the militants’ relatively short period of stay in Europe, interpreted as insufficient to generate strong grievances against the German “host-state”. Although social problems in the diaspora were emphasized during the trial, these problems were not considered
serious enough to have motivated a group of Islamist militants to punish the German society. In addition there were contextual political developments suggesting a possible attack on German citizens was more likely motivated by politics on the global scene than social problems facing Islamists in Germany. The diaspora context might however have facilitated further radicalization of the militants simply because the German society was unable to present young, frustrated potential terrorists with good alternatives to Islamist militancy. The same thing could possibly be said about all the cases surveyed in this thesis.

The suspected terrorists were Jordanians and Palestinians belonging to the movement al-Tawhid, which ideologically is focused on seizing power in Jordan. The local level of analysis is thus politically significant. The Jordanian regime and Israel were historically the main targets of al-Tawhid (see ch. 5). Amnesty International’s annual reports 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 tell stories about a constant low intensity conflict between Jordanian Islamists and Jordanian authorities. Jordanian Islamists criticized the regime for its close relations with the United States, for maintaining peaceful relations with Israel, and for not properly implementing al-Sharia in Jordan. The Jordanian Islamists’ grievances might be understood in a combined local and global perspective because the Palestine-issue is an important symbol for the “global mujahidin”. Scores of Islamists were sent to Jordanian jails, often without proper trials, accused of being affiliated with al-Qaida or engaging in illegal Islamist activism like e.g. anti-regime propaganda and arms trafficking etc. In 2000, for example 16 Islamists were arrested suspected of belonging to al-Qaida and tortured by Jordanian police. The same year, 100 activists were arrested during mass demonstrations in support for the Palestinian intifada, and all together 1700 persons, mainly Islamists, were arrested for their political beliefs (Amnesty International Annual Report 2001). There were several terrorist-operations and terrorist conspiracies attributed to radical Islamists in Jordan in the past three years bearing the hallmarks of al-Qaida. The most known are the attempts to attack tourist hotels and Holy Christian sites in December 1999, and the murdering of the U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman October 2002. These events were attributed to al-Tawhid and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The local level might here be perceived as a local
battleground and an arena for “global jihad”. One significant observation in this respect is that according to Pew Global Attitudes Project (2002), a majority of Jordanians and 71% of the Palestinians say they have at least some confidence in Usama Bin Laden to “do the right thing regarding world affairs”, indicating that the “global jihad” has some popular support in the country.

At the global level of analysis, al-Tawhid’s plans to strike targets in Germany coincided with the war against al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan, in which several European countries participated, including Germany. Because of this attacks on German targets might be interpreted as retaliation for Germany’s participation in the coalition. On April 11, 2002, just before the arrests of al-Tawhid militants in Germany, a Tunisian, Nizar Nawar, launched a suicide attack on the on a Synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, killing 19, among them 11 German tourists. Nizar Nawar received logistical support from his brother Walid in France and the operation was allegedly financed by the Spaniard Enrique Cerda Ibanez. Immediately before the attack, Nizar Nawar made a telephone call to Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11-attacks, and received his “go”. Because of this, the Djerba attack was seen as orchestrated by al-Qaida in retaliation for the offensive in Afghanistan. There were speculations that the attack was designed to deter Germany from further involvement in the “war on terrorism”, but probably it was a coincidence that German tourists visited the Ghriba Synagogue in Djerba on that particular day.

In conclusion, the contacts between members of the al-Tawhid-cell and prominent Islamist leaders belonging to al-Qaeda, or with alleged ties to al-Qaeda, the developments at the global level was considered the most likely source of motivations for an attack on Jewish targets in Germany.

**Conclusion**

The analysis suggested the planned operations in Germany were most likely motivated by political developments at the global level of analysis. The proxies pointing to grievances at the local and diaspora levels do not seem consistent with each other and the local, diaspora and global contexts in which the conspiracy was
developing. It was considered unlikely that an attack on Jewish targets in Germany were meant as “boomerang” attacks on the Jordanian Monarchy. If they wanted to strike Jordan it would have been both easier and more effective to target Jordanian symbols in Germany in stead.

Table 3.3. The outcome of the analysis

**Conspiracy to attack targets in Germany**

The table shows how the proxies “scored” on the three levels of analysis. Scores that were emphasized in the analysis are written in bold font, whereas scores that were interpreted as highly unreliable are paragraphed.

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**Conspiracy to attack the Russian embassy in Paris**

**Section I; Description of the conspiracy, evidence and ”links”**

**Description of the conspiracy**

On December 16, 2002, SWAT-teams from the French police struck suspected Islamist terrorists residing in two different areas of the Paris suburbs. Nine suspects were detained. They allegedly belonged to the so-called “Chechen Network”, and according to French authorities they were planning a bomb-attack on the Russian embassy in Paris. The leaders of the network were the three Algerian nationals Merouane Benahmed (29), Menad Benchellali (28) and Noureddine Merabet. Merouane Benahmed is suspected to have provided logistical support for the Strasbourg-plotters. The two former were arrested during the two main raids, whereas the Benahmed was arrested in a separate police operation on the French-Spanish Border. Benahmed’s wife was also arrested. Menad Benachelli is the brother of

48 The “Chechen network” is a term constructed by French police defining a group of Algerian Islamists who have returned to Europe after waging jihad against the Russians in Chechnya (see ch. 5).
Mourad (23) who was captured in Afghanistan. He is currently detained at Camp X-Ray, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The two other cadres arrested in the raids in December 2002 were Mohamed Merbah and Ahmed Belhoud.

The plan of Algerian Chechnya-veterans to attack the Russian embassy in Paris in December 2002 is the fourth well documented conspiracy to strike targets in Europe attributed to Islamist radicals. As in the other cases, the plot involved contacts between Islamists situated in the country in which the attack was to be launched, and radicals based in other European countries and other parts of the world. It appears the “Chechen Network” was in contact with Islamists in Chechnya, Georgia, Afghanistan, France, The United Kingdom, Scotland and Italy. Despite that the trial has not yet started, we are still able to analyze a set of proxies similar to those analyzed in the other cases. The reason is that French officials, in response to demands for more information about the anti-terrorism efforts, released information about the investigation to the press. The French Interior Minister, Nicholas Sarkozy, e.g. issued a detailed statement about the interrogations, the items seized during house searches, and the basic profiles of the individuals in question (Le Monde 2002).

Evidence and “links”
There was substantial physical evidence that the Algerian radicals were preparing an attack. In the home of the prime suspect Merouane Benahmed, the police seized packages of iron perchlorate and other chemicals which when mixed together become a powerful explosive. They also seized a hand-written list of chemicals, which might be used to make bombs and toxic gases, and bottles containing a substance used to connect electronic circuits. Police also confiscated two empty 13 kg gas canisters (similar to those used by the GIA in their 1995 terrorist campaign in France and Belgium), 5,000 U.S. dollars and 20,000 euros in cash, fake passports and a computer with coded instructions.

49 In January 2004 Benchellali’s father Chellali, his brother Hafiz and his sister Anissa were arrested by French police suspected of planning a chemical or biological attack in France (Henley 2004).
In a second search of Benahmed’s apartment, DST-investigators discovered electronic components required to make a remote-control detonator hidden inside a washing machine. In one of the raids the police also found a military nuclear-biological-chemical protection suit making investigators suspect the militants of preparing an attack in Paris with a so-called “dirty bomb”. Fear of a chemical attack was heightened following the arrests of Algerian Islamists manufacturing the poison ricin in London, January 2003. A small amount of this poison was also found in a railway station locker in Paris shortly after those arrests. In addition, the ringleader of the “Chechen Network”, Merouane Benahmed is believed to be skilled in manufacturing and use of chemical weapons and toxins. Despite this, French officials stated that it was most likely that the conspiracy involved one or several “conventional” bomb attacks (Timmerman 2003; Le Monde 2002).

According to the French Interior Minister Nicholas Sarkozy, Benahmed had been in touch with Rabah Kadri, an Islamist militant arrested in London, November 2002, suspected of being member of a terrorist-cell planning to launch a cyanide-attack on the London Underground (The Tube). It was the interrogation of Kadri that led to the raids against “The Chechen Network”. In turn, the interrogations of Benahmed led to the arrests of Algerians in London manufacturing ricin in January 2003. Further investigations into a possible link between the ricin-cell in London and the Chechnya-veterans operating in France revealed that several of the detainees in London came to the United Kingdom from France shortly before they were arrested. Knowing this, the ricin found in France was seen as a sign of an U.K.-France-connection. Merouane Benahmed was also suspected of providing expertise in bomb making to the group convicted of planning an attack in Strasbourg in December 2000 (see above). In addition he appears to have been affiliated with an alleged al-Qaida-cell in Italy. Information from Benahmed’s computer resulted in the arrests of North African Islamists in Scotland and in the United Kingdom.

The investigation of the “Chechen network” seemed to involve interrogations of the previously France-based Islamists Mourad Benchellali and Nizar Sassi detained in Guantanamo, Cuba. These two detainees have probably provided the French investigators with useful information about structure and activities of the
network of North-African Chechnya-veterans operating in France, which probably will be important in the upcoming trial (Timmerman 2003).

**Section II; Backgrounds, target selection and justifications**

**Backgrounds of the militants**

There was shortage on available information on the backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the Algerian militants planning to strike the Russian embassy in Paris. What we do know, is that they originated from Algeria and that Merouane Benahmed, Menad Benchellali and Noureddine Merabet have been to Islamist training camps in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Georgia. In Chechnya they forged ties with Chechen warlords, received para-military training, and joined the separatist guerillas fighting the Russians. Some of the terrorists were affiliated with the GIA in the past. As we shall see the cell-leader, Merouane Benahmed, has maintained contacts with the GIA’s splinter group GSPC.

Benahmed is the only suspect profiled in the press-coverage of the case, and his profile is largely incomplete and superficial. He was however reckoned a “spider” of the Islamist networks in Europe, having multiple contacts with other Islamist radicals situated in the region, and in other parts of the world. Benahmed is known to have been a former commander (amir) of the GIA. Investigators claim that he was a “mujahid globetrotter” having spent time in Afghanistan, Germany, United Kingdom, Georgia and Chechnya using different identities. Police and intelligence agencies have hunted Benahmad since he was believed implicated in the Strasbourg conspiracy, in 2000. In Afghanistan he allegedly trained in camps run by al-Qaida, and attended special courses in bomb making and the manufacturing of chemical weapons. In these camps he was also believed to have established close contacts with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Tawhid’s operational leader, an al-Qaida-associate and a chemical weapons expert.

When the French-Algerian journalist Mohamed Sifaoui infiltrated a GSPC-cell in France in 2002, he met Benahmed on December 14, two days before he was arrested. Sifaoui believed the GSPC-cell he infiltrated provided logistical support for Benahmed’s operation. During the meeting, which took place at a restaurant run by
an Algerian Islamist, Benahmed was dressed as an “operational”, shaved, and with Western clothing. Cooperation between GSPC-militants and Chechnya-veterans illustrates how the aims and motives of militant Islamists are merging when they move around beyond state borders and become involved in jihad outside their country of origin. Sources “close to the investigation” believe the militants belonging to the “Chechen Network” were “acting on their own initiative, although no doubt with (Al-Qa’idah’s) overall approval” (AFP 2002e). French and U.K. security agents described the network as “a large structure of international terrorism uniting Algerian and Chechen cells”, and claimed the radicals arrested in London and Paris had established a “terrorism academy” in Chechnya and in the Pankisi Gorge province of Georgia. The size of such an “academy”, if it existed, cannot have been large. According to one Chechnya expert, the Russians would easily have detected and destroyed a training facility of considerable size (Wilhelmsen 2003b).

In conclusion, if Benahmed’s profile was representative of the other Algerian Chechnya-veterans constituting the “Chechen network”, this was a group mainly affiliated with the global Salafi-Jihadi networks of al-Qaida. Benahmed’s extensive traveling the recent years, the scope of his contacts, and his alleged role in Chechnya, suggest “global motivation” rather than “local motivation” generated in Algeria, or “diaspora motivation” generated in Europe. The fact that the “Chechen network” relied on support from an Algerian GSPC-cell probably exemplifies how pragmatism, personal relationships and common histories stands above organizational affiliations and ideological programs, but it might also be an example on how ideas and motives converge and the how the local and global jihads increasingly are seen as one whole. Statements by the leader of the GSPC-cell infiltrated by Sifaoui exemplified this complexity. He expressed admiration for and praised Bin Ladin and his global war, but at the same time he emphasized the importance of not forgetting “the main enemy”, the Algerian regime (Sifaoui 2003:28). It is also significant that the target

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50 To adopt a Western appearance is considered permissible, and is justified as a form of taqiyya.
51 Being a former GIA-amir, Benahmed would probably easily find someone trustworthy among Algerian Islamists in France.
selection of Benahmed’s cell differs considerably from that of Algerian groups in the past.

**Target selection**

In the “Chechen network”-case there was no doubt about the nationality and type of target chosen for the attack. The target was symbolic and Russian. Several of the suspects, including the ringleader Merouane Benahmad, admitted they intended to strike Russian targets in France. One suspect specified that the Russian embassy in Paris on Boulevard Lannes in the 16th district was the chosen target (Le Monde 2002). There were speculations that the group conducted reconnaissance against various U.S. targets, but no official sources have confirmed that this was the case (Timmerman 2003). A French Magistrate involved in the investigation stated the evidence collected suggested that the network planned several and different types of attacks, but no other sources have confirmed this.

What made the target selection problematic in relation to levels of analysis was the fact that the militants are native Algerian nationals maintaining operational ties with Algerian Islamists in France and receiving support from GSPC-militants during preparation of the attack. GSPC and GIA have almost exclusively attacked French and Algerian targets in France in the past and these attacks were mainly motivated by French support for the secular Algerian regime. The Algerians surveyed here spent time in Chechnya and Georgia and planned to attack a Russian symbol in Europe. How should we interpret this? One interpretation is that the Benahmed and his cadre have “gone Chechen”, that they perceive the Chechen context more important than the local Algerian context, and used Europe as an arena to launch attack against the Russians out of convenience, because they could hide among Algerian “brothers” and rely on their infrastructure in France. Another interpretation is that the militants have become truly “global fighters” that do not think in terms of local politics, but fights a global war against the United States and its allies (including Russia in this context), independent of state borders. Both interpretations imply a “globalization” of jihad. If Algerian Islamists have “gone Chechen” this must also be interpreted as a form of “globalization” of jihad.
In conclusion, target selection clearly suggested “global motivation” for the conspiracy.

Justifications for attacking
The justifications for attacking were explicit, and indicated that the operation was motivated exclusively by concrete events in the battle between the Russian government and Chechen rebels, such as the killings of the Chechen hostage takers in the Dubrovka Theater, Moscow, in 2003. It is however important to note that the justifications released to the press mainly stemmed from the testimony of one single person in custody, most probably Merouane Benahmed. As we have seen, Benahmed nurtured ties with Islamists in many countries, and he is also believed to have made contacts with top-level leaders of the al-Qaida-network. It could be in Benahmed’s interest to downplay his al-Qaida-contacts, obscure a possible “global motivation”, and focus on a concrete local issue in his defense in order to lower his sentence. On the other hand he probably faces a long sentence regardless of his links to al-Qaida. If he is a true “global mujahid”, he might also have perceived an up-coming trial as an arena to instigate others to join the “global jihad”.

At the beginning of the interrogations none of the detainees said a word about the conspiracy and their motivations. When the silence broke, they said they were “jihad-fighters trained in Chechnya to fight and defend their brothers”, according to “sources close to the investigation” (Le Monde 2002). Benahmed made one statement implying that his motivations for launching an attack in Europe were “complex” and involved political grievances from different parts of the world. He admitted learning to make explosives intending to “strike Russians in Chechnya and the Israelis in Palestine” (ibid). As in the other cases references were made to the Palestine-issue. Whether we can perceive this as an indicator of “global motivation” or taqiyya is difficult to say. The Palestine-conflict has a strong symbolic value and must be considered a grievance for all Islamists and other Arabs and Muslims, secular or Islamist. The context of the case did however suggest that the Palestine question was of minor importance as motivation to strike a Russian target in Europe. French
authorities considered the motivations of the attack as unproblematic based on the interrogations.

The French Interior Ministry issued a statement saying that the terrorist-cell “had decided to strike Russian targets in France”, and that the attack was mainly motivated by a desire to avenge “the elimination of the members of the Chechen commando who took a Moscow theatre audience hostage”. Retaliation for the killing of a Movsar Barayev, the alleged leader of the Dubrovka theater hostage taking was thus seen as the main motivation for the plans to strike the Russian embassy in Paris. Another press report by Le Monde added two concrete events to the justifications and motivations of the Chechen Network. One was the death of one of their “brothers”, al-Moutana, who was killed by Russian forces in Chechnya. Al-Moutana is in some press reports said to have been implicated in the Strasbourg plot 2000.

The second event was the death of the alleged “Head of the foreign legion” in Chechnya, the Saudi-born Hassan Khattab. The foreign legion is said to have consisted of fighters who came to Chechnya from the Arab World to wage jihad against the Russians. Khattab died under mysterious circumstances in April 2002. People close to Khattab claim he was poisoned, and blame it on the Russians. According to Wilhelmsen (2003), Khattab was an important financer of the jihad in Chechnya. Press reports claims that Khattab had problems being accepted by the Chechens, but that he forged an alliance with President Maskhadow’s rival Shamil Basayev, one of the Chechen warlords.

Movsar Barayev who is said to have headed the Dubrovka-operation is the nephew of Arbi Barayev, an Islamist Chechen warlord who headed the “Special Islamic Regiment” from his strongholds near Grozny. Arbi Barayev was reported killed in June 2001, and was replaced by his nephew Movsar, who was killed when Russian Special Forces pumped nerve gas into the theatre and shot the terrorists. The death of Movsar in the Dubrovka hostage taking is seen as the main motivation of the plans to attack the Russian embassy in Paris (Le Monde 2002).

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53 129 people died in the hostage taking incident.
In conclusion the justifications of the militants suggested “global motivation” for the plot. Algerian Islamists planned to avenge the deaths of “brothers” in the “Chechen jihad”, which they probably perceived as an integrated part of the al-Qaida-led “global jihad”.

Section III; Motivations in context

Contextual analysis
Target selection and justifications suggested that an attack on the Russian embassy in Paris was mainly motivated by specific events in Russia and Chechnya. The backgrounds and organizational affiliations of the suspects are not well documented, but the information available did show some potential for terrorist motivation being generated at the local Algerian level and in the European diaspora level. The militants are Algerians, some of them were former GIA-fighters, and they were affiliated with the GSPC-militants in France, mainly focused on the jihad against the Algerian regime. The leader of the cell, Merouane Benahmed, allegedly has connections with Islamist militants all over the world and must be considered a “global fighter”. Perceiving Chechnya as the local level for the Algerian Islamists would be an artificial approach. According to a Norwegian Chechnya-expert, the Arabs did not integrate well among Chechen rebels (Wilhelmsen 2003). The same has been said about the relationship between “Afghan Arabs” and Afghans in Afghanistan. There were problems of language, disagreement on strategy and tactics etc (Bergen 2002).

The conspiracy to strike Russian targets in Europe was rather understood as the works of Algerian Islamists who had “gone global” and probably perceived the conflict in Chechnya as an integrated part of a “global jihad”. The global level of analysis was thus considered the strongest candidate source of motivation for the Algerian Chechnya-veterans. Affiliation with the GSPC was in the Strasbourg case seen as indicating “local motivation” with reference to the movement’s ideological and strategic focus on the local battle in Algeria. As noted above, the leader of the GSPC-cell in Paris providing logistical support for the “Chechen network”, Karim Bourti, emphasized that the Algerian government was Algerian Islamists’ main enemy.
The conspiracy to strike Russian targets in France was considered another example on the pragmatism of Islamist militants. Radicals who differ in their interpretations of what constitutes the main enemy might maintain cooperation on an operational level. In the Strasbourg-case, the militants referred to the local battle when they justified an attack on the cathedral in Strasbourg. Some references were also made to social problems in the diaspora. The local Algerian context and the diaspora context were absent as justifications in the “Chechen Network”-case. This interpretation might however be biased due to shortage on information concerning the profiles of the militants. When we receive more information on the histories of the Chechnya-veterans, we could come across information suggesting political developments and grievances in Algeria and in Europe may have pushed the suspected terrorists into the arms of recruiters for the “global jihad”. If Algeria and Europe are important contexts, the analysis of the Strasbourg case considered the conflict between Islamists and the regime in Algeria as a constant motivation, and it also highlighted the French government’s anti-terrorism efforts targeting Algerian groups, as well as social problems for Algerian Muslims in the French diaspora. At this point we simply do not have information to say whether the militants had such local and diaspora grievances or not in the “Chechen Network”-case. All the available information suggested the Chechnya-veterans were motivated by political events in Chechnya, which they probably perceived as “global jihad”. If we survey the developments at the global level at the time the plans to strike the Russian embassy was about to be implemented, we see that the conspiracy coincided with an escalation of the conflict.

The allied forces had crushed the bases of al-Qaida in Afghanistan. President Bush and the U.S. administration were making preparation for an attack on Iraq. Aiman al-Zawahiri’s issued a statement in October 2002 in which he threatened to launch attacks against the U.S.’s European allies. The same month the U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley was murdered in Amman. The assassination was attributed to a network of Jordanian Islamists headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. On October 12, 54 The network was probably affiliated with al-Tawhid.
Jemaah Islamiyya, perceived as al-Qaida’s South East Asian arm, launched an attack on a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia, killing more than 200 people. Most of them were Western tourists. Finally, there was the escalation of the conflict in Chechnya, with the hostage taking in Moscow, which was presented as the main motivation for plans to strike the Russian embassy in Paris. As we can see, an attack on the Russian embassy in Paris could be interpreted as part of an al-Qaida-led offensive at the global level of analysis. The analysis of the proxies above supports this hypothesis.

**Conclusion**

An attack by Algerian Islamists on a Russian target in France was here interpreted as motivated mainly by political events at the global level of analysis. There was much to suggest that the Algerian Chechnya veterans had “gone global”, and that the local jihad in Algeria was less important to them than the “global jihad” against the United States and its allies in the “war on terrorism”. If the militants were Chechens, the operation would however fit the “boomerang” logic perfectly, and thus imply “local motivation” for the operation. A significant observation is that the terrorist-cell probably received support from Europe based GSPC-fighters that are believed to emphasize the “local jihad” in Algeria more than the “global jihad”. Recent developments elaborated above do however suggest that the GSPC too, is moving towards a more global orientation (Muqdim 2003).

**Table 3.4. The Outcome of the analysis**

**Conspiracy to attack the Russian embassy in Paris**

The table shows how the proxies “scored” on the three levels of analysis. Scores that were emphasized in the analysis are written in bold font, whereas scores that were interpreted as highly unreliable are paragraphed.

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4. Sum up of the study and final conclusions

Sum up of the method of analysis
Let us first briefly revisit the theme and methodological approach of the study. Our aim was to determine the relative importance of socio-economic and political grievances at the local, diaspora and global levels of analysis in motivating Salafi-Jihadi terrorism in Europe. The main hypothesis was that combinations of “diaspora motivations” and “global motivations” were increasingly important compared to “local motivations”. The method chosen was a qualitative multiple cases study of four terrorist conspiracies (cases) in which motivated Islamist militants (units of analysis) were planning to attack targets in Europe. I conducted contextual interpretive analyses of the terrorist-cases, based mainly on the press-coverage of the investigations and trials. The analyses aimed at an ordinal-level measuring of the relative importance of an operationalized set of motivations. The analysis was based on multiple proxies of analysis, including the relevant political contexts of each terrorist-case. Before analyzing the cases we developed a middle range theoretical framework in order to identify the units of analysis more clearly, and establish “a language of analysis” for the case studies. The concepts developed or presented, such as “complex motivation”, “local, diaspora and global motivations”, “a boomerang pattern of influence”, “taqiyya”, “hijra”, “takfir”, “global jihad”, “local jihad” and “global mujahidin” etc were used extensively in the analysis, guiding my conclusions concerning the terrorists’ motivations.

Sum up of the findings
“The Strasbourg plot”
The Strasbourg plot was interpreted as a mainly local and diaspora motivated operation, and a continuation of Algerian Islamists earlier efforts to strike Algerian and French interests. Justifications, target selection and contexts suggested a “boomerang” attack on the Algerian regime and/or a direct attack on France. The pattern did not match the pattern of the main hypothesis of the study. Although not
emphasized by the terrorists themselves, the Strasbourg plot could have been meant as retaliation for French authorities’ intense anti-terrorism efforts against the Algerian networks in France. Contacts and links suggested involvement by “global mujahidin”. These links were not interpreted as signs of “global motivation” considering the other proxies of motivation. Relations with “global mujahidin” were seen as established for practical reasons in order to receive training and funding. A statement by GSPC’s leadership October 2003 did however suggest that the Algerian Islamist movement is moving towards a more “global orientation”. Whether GSPC had joined the “global jihad” at the time of the Strasbourg plot has been debated among analysts. The analysis above suggested it was not.

Conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or in Belgium

The planned operation against U.S. targets in France or Belgium was interpreted as mainly motivated socio-political grievances generated in the European diaspora and ideological influence from prominent al-Qaida-leaders and other “global mujahidin” in Afghanistan. The patterns of motivation perfectly matched the predicted pattern of the main hypothesis. The al-Takfir-militants were raised and educated in Europe, and Islamist recruiters picked them up when they struggled with personal problems seemingly related to problems of “fitting in” among Westerners. Their justifications, target selection and the relevant political contexts mainly suggested ideological “global motivation” and they displayed great admiration for Bin Ladin and his “global jihad” against the United States and allied states. The local level of analysis was largely absent in the case, probably because the militants were second-generation immigrants socially embedded in Europe. The ideology of al-Takfir wa’l Hijra is strongly inspired by the Egyptian radical Islamist shaykh Sayyid Qutb. Although the original al-Takfir wa’l Hijra was focused on targeting the Egyptian state, Qutb’s doctrine emphasized that the battle is global and not confined to a particular state.

Conspiracy to attack Jewish targets in Germany

Al-Tawhid’s planned attacks against targets in Germany were also interpreted as mainly globally motivated, although the case scored significantly on “local motivation” proxies. The pattern thus partly matched the pattern of the main
hypothesis. In the analysis the terrorists’ contacts with prominent al-Qaida leaders were emphasized, given the context of the plot. The cell-members made references to the situation in Jordan and the Palestine issue, and it seemed quite clear they intended to strike Jewish targets. In this case the Palestine conflict might be seen as both a local and a global issue. Jordanian Islamists’ grievances against the Jordanian regime and Jews are partly local and partly global. The Jordanian regime has persecuted radical Islamists in Jordan. In addition the Monarchy has cooperated extensively with the U.S., and is seen as the Western World’s main ally in the Middle East (Ranstorp 2003). Their grievances against Israel and Jews are related to the conflict in Palestine. Some references were made to social grievances generated in the German diaspora, and there were speculations about plans to strike German targets. The diaspora level was not emphasized because of the terrorists’ short histories in Europe and the context of the conspiracy. If they were planning to hit German targets, we would have interpreted this as retaliation for Germany’s support for the “global war on terrorism” (e.g. deployment of troops to Afghanistan), rather than grievances against the German “host state”.

Conspiracy to attack the Russian embassy in Paris
The “Chechen network” case was interpreted as mainly, and perhaps exclusively globally motivated. The pattern partly matched with the pattern of the main hypothesis. The militants were all Algerian Islamists who had been training for jihad in Chechnya, Georgia and Afghanistan. The examination of the case suggested that the Algerian militants had “gone global”, and that an attack on the Russian embassy in Paris probably should be understood within the framework of “global jihad”. The Algerian groups traditionally fought a combined local and diaspora jihad mainly targeting French and Algerian authorities. The target selection in this case was thus “out of character” for Algerian Islamists. Despite this, it seems evident that the network of Chechnya-veterans led by Merouane Benahmed received logistical support from a GSPC-cell in Paris. This was an interesting observation. If they were, it could imply strengthened cooperation between Algerian groups and “global mujahidin”, but cooperation could also be attributed to personal contacts between the
Islamists relatively independent of ideological emphasis. The members of the “Chechen network” were former GIA militants who joined the insurgency in Chechnya. The target selection and explicit justifications were consistent. The network’s leader was considered a “nomadic mujahid” linked to prominent elements in “al-Qaida hardcore”, for example Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who also is considered the operational leader of al-Tawhid. These links was interpreted to imply mainly “global motivation”.

**Table of findings**

**Table 4.1 Sum up of findings**

The scores emphasized in the analysis are written in bold font, whereas the scores interpreted as highly unreliable are paragraphed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot</th>
<th>Proxies/Levels of analysis</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Diaspora</th>
<th>Global</th>
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<td><strong>The Strasbourg plot</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or in Belgium</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conspiracy to attack the Russian embassy in Paris</strong></td>
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The table visualizes how the relative importance of political and socio-economic grievances at the local diaspora and global level of analysis in motivating the terrorists vary across the cases. The most important observation is that two out of four cases scored on all three levels of analysis (although some of the scores are considered highly unreliable), and that three out of four cases scored
significantly on “global motivation”. Another important observation is that “local motivation” was emphasized strongly in only one out of four cases.

Conclusions of the study

Given that the chosen proxies of motivation measure what they are intended, these are the tentative conclusions reached in this study:

First, as shown in the table of findings above, all four cases suggested that motivations were drawn from more than one level of analysis, supporting the hypothesis that the motivations of the terrorists who were planning to attack targets in Europe were indeed “complex”.

Second, all four cases involved “global motivation”, supporting the hypothesis that the idea of a “global jihad” is increasingly important as a source of motivation for Islamist terrorism in Europe post-millennium, if we compare with Islamist terrorism in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, leaders and “operationals” like Beghal, Daoudi, Bendali and Abdullah are believed to have received support and training, and direct orders from alleged al-Qaida-associates and leaders. They also displayed great admiration for Bin Ladin and his religio-political program.

Third, the findings of the study did indicate that the relative importance of the three levels of analysis was sensitive to the relevant political contexts. For example, we saw that the planned attack on the cathedral in Frankfurt in 2000 seemed to be more motivated by issues concerning the Algeria-France dimension, despite the fact that the militants had been to training camps in Afghanistan and most likely established contacts with, and received support from promoters of the “global jihad” in Europe. The other conspiracies coincided with a significant increase in tensions on the global level prompted by the 9/11 attacks in New York. These attacks were to be implemented in the context of “a global war on terrorism”. The findings of the study strongly suggested that “global motivation” was the most important driving force for the terrorism in these cases. The patterns thus partly matched the predicted patterns of my main hypothesis.

Fourth, as predicted, “local motivation” appeared to be a less important driving force for Islamist terrorism inside Europe than in the past. In two of the cases, the conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or in Belgium, and the
conspiracy to strike the Russian embassy in Paris, “local motivation” appeared to be totally absent. The conspiracy to strike Jewish targets in Germany scored significantly on “local motivation” and “global motivation”, but the latter was interpreted as the more important considering the other proxies of motivation.

Fifth, as predicted, the analysis indicated some importance of the diaspora context in motivating the terrorists. However, only one out of four cases, the conspiracy to attack U.S. targets in France or in Belgium matched the predicted pattern perfectly (combination of diaspora and global motivation). The “Strasbourg plot” suggested a combination of diaspora and local motivation. The conspiracy to attack Jewish targets in Germany and the conspiracy to attack the Russian embassy in Paris scored on “diaspora motivation”, but the scores were interpreted unreliable considering the scores on the other proxies of motivation, and thus not emphasized.

These tentative conclusions must be read carefully. However, compared to the available literature on Islamist terrorism in Europe, this study is far more analytically rigorous and empirically detailed than previous studies (Lia 2003). Still, from a strictly scientific point of view, the validity of my conclusions must be considered relatively low.

Explorative studies of ongoing processes involve a multiplicity of analytical problems. The field of research is at an early stage, the data-reliability problematic, and the theoretical framework is immature. Because we have developed our own operationalizations, the question of theoretical validity is central. Do the proxies of motivation measure what they are intended, and is the data-material sufficient to establish reliable and valid scores on the proxies? For example, “local motivation” may appear absent in a given case, because we do not have information to determine its importance, because we have misinterpreted the information available, or because we did not find the appropriate proxy to measure its importance.

Contributions of the study
What was the value added of this study to research on Islamism in general and Europe in particular? Although the conclusions must be considered tentative, the study has contributed to thinking more systematically about the motivations of
Europe-based radical Salafists belonging to al-Qaida and its affiliated movements, in the context of globalization. We highlighted and problematized the motivations of Salafi militants in relation to levels of analysis, and emphasized the need for methodologically and theoretically combining levels of analysis in studies of Islamism. Another methodological issue stressed was the need for surveying a broader set of proxies when measuring terrorist motivation, not just target selection or ideology but these two proxies and additional ones.

We further developed a method and “a language of analysis” for systematically studying the motivations of Salafi-Jihadi terrorists based on sources from ongoing investigations and trials. Although not necessarily theoretically valid, concepts like “complex motivation”, “one-level motivations”, “global mujahidin” etc constitute starting points for further problematizing and theorizing the behavior and motivations of diaspora-based radical Islamists. In this way we have taken a first step towards a middle range theoretical framework for guiding and systematizing analyses of an ongoing jihad in Europe.

Practical Implications of the study
On the practical-political level, the findings, if valid, would imply that those combating terrorism should search for potential motivations at both the local, diaspora and global level of analysis when trying to predict were the next attack is going to be launched. The cases showed us how motivations could be traced back to specific political trends or events at the three levels of analysis. For example, the plan to attack the Russian embassy in Paris reportedly came as a direct response to the anti-terrorism operation at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow. Importantly, the attack was to be implemented by a network of Algerian Islamists, implying e.g. that one should not base threat assessments on ethnicity and group affiliations alone, but consider how previously locally motivated Islamist militants might “go global” and operate beyond state borders and ethnicity.

The al-Takfir wa’l Hijra conspiracy exemplified that Islamist terrorists are unfortunately also found among seemingly well-adjusted and well-intergrated individuals with an outward Western appearance. How this type of militants can be
detected and prosecuted without stigmatizing the whole communities of well-integrated Muslims in the West, remain a tremendous challenge for the authorities.

In addition, in terms of dealing with the causes of terrorism, one must address socio-economic and political issues in all the contexts or levels of analysis relevant to potential Islamist terrorists. Several of the cases indicated that problems related to being a Muslim immigrant in the West had some influence on the terrorists’ motivations. These problems seem to have made the terrorists receptive to indoctrination from Islamist recruiters. Dealing with Muslims’ social problems in the diaspora could then probably be an effective way to hamper recruitment for Islamist movements in the diaspora. The al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra case suggested that such problems are highly relative because seemingly well-adjusted people were apparently struggling on the personal level.

**Next step, how to increase reliability and validity?**

There are many strategies to increase reliability and validity of my findings. The thing we want is to make sure that the proxies of motivation measure what they are intended to measure. To this end we need to increase the reliability of the data-material, and strengthen the internal validity of the theoretical framework. To continue measuring motivation based on investigations of terrorist-conspiracies requires access to more and different types of information concerning the cases. Ideally we should also be able to investigate more cases using the same method and sources. Access to more information would also enable us to triangulate sources more extensively. If we e.g. could triangulate press-sources, court-documents and interviews with “sources close to the investigation”, investigators, prosecutors and terrorist suspects, this would enable us to determine the proxy-values more accurately and thus increase reliability and validity.

Another strategy could be combining methods of analysis, e.g. combine qualitative and quantitative methods. If we e.g. had 30 well-documented cases, we could study “target selection” and “backgrounds of the militants” statistically over time by defining categories implying local, diaspora or global motivation. In addition we should develop the research-design and theoretical framework and survey
additional proxies and levels of analysis, e.g. study the individual level more intensively than done here by conducting interviews with militants or sympathizers with radical Islamists. Last, access to more and more reliable information concerning the conspiracies would enable us to compare and contrast the cases more systematically than done here. Using a more variable-oriented comparative design could e.g. enable us to isolate explanatory variables crucial to the motivations of the terrorists.

The comprehensive data-material gathered invites us to study multiple problems concerning Islamist terrorism in Europe, the ideological basis for the radical Islamist networks in Europe, how the militants organize, how terrorist operations are financed etc. With access to more, and more reliable information, we could also study more closely how the militants generated motivation in the different terrorist-cases, if they e.g. were motivated through rational cost-benefit thinking, or if they were mainly motivated through processes of socialization. Such studies do however require more micro-level information than we have access to at the moment, most notably interviews with investigators and terrorists.
5. Appendix

Muslims in Western Europe

The Muslim diaspora in Europe is growing, and it constitutes an important context in which Islamist militants have found sanctuary and built capabilities for supporting Islamist insurgencies in e.g. Algeria, Palestine, Kashmir and Chechnya. The European diaspora also constitutes a base for recruitment and for preparing terrorist attacks. Europe-based Islamists have been engaged in terrorism both inside and outside Europe. Importantly, the radicals studied in this thesis constitute a small group of extremists, not at all representative for the majority of diaspora Muslims.

5.1 The percentages of Muslims residing in European Countries in percentage of total population.

![Graph showing the percentages of Muslims in different European countries.](source)


Note on transliteration of Arabic names and expressions

Arab names and expressions are almost without exceptions transliterated wrongly in the newspaper articles used as the main source material in this study. I have chosen to use the transliterations most commonly found in the newspapers articles when addressing the Islamist militants even though the letters used do not exist in Arabic. The reason is that it makes it easier to do Internet-searches using
these names for checking up of the information provided in the thesis. The study uses a simplified transliteration in which the Arab letters خ (ayn), ف (hamza) and the female denominator ة (tamarbuta) are omitted, leaving only the belonging vowels. The letter ى (i.e. a long i is transliterated iyy (e.g. jamyya) in the middle of a word, and simply i at the end of words. Long vowels and double-letter ٌ (shadda) are also omitted. The letter خ (ghayn) is transliterated gh, the letter خ (kha) is transliterated kh. The letter ﺪ (dha) is transliterated z, and the letter ﺔ (tha) th. When addressing movements, leaders and prominent persons among the Islamists, only the Arabic vowels “a”, “i” and “u” are used.

Glossary

Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makka, one of the five pillars or religious duties of Islam.

Hijra: Hijra is Arabic for flight or exile, and is an important concept of Islamist doctrine. As an ideological concept it refers to the historical emigration of Prophet Muhammad and his companions from Makka to Madina in 622 AD. By a strict interpretation of al-Sunna, it is the duty of any true Muslim to escape persecution in a given societal context, abandon the area in which he faces prosecution, and exile to a place in which he is able to build himself up to launch jihad against the infidels.

Mujahid: The Arabic word Mujahid means “one who struggles in the cause of God”, or “Holy warrior”.

Salafism: Salafism is a movement and an ideology representing “a transnational effort for religious purification, connecting members of an “imagined community” through a common approach to Islam” (Wiktorowicz 2001). Salafism is the State religion of Saudi Arabia, labeled Wahabism by Westerners. Salafism exists in moderate and radical interpretations. The moderate Muslim Brotherhood and the radical al-Qaida are both Salafi-movements. The Saudi State supports Salafis worldwide. Salafis are literalists and accept only al-Quran and al-Sunna as the legitimate sources of moral and just human behavior. All diversions of Islam as it was presented to Muhammad are rejected. Salafis are thus anti-Shia, anti-Sufi, anti-Judaism, anti-Christianity, anti other religions and atheism. According to Wiktorowicz (2001) it is the fastest growing trend of modern Islamism.

Shaykh: Religious guide or leader.

Takfir: Takfir is the Arabic verbal noun for deeming someone as an unbeliever, i.e. excommunication. The concept is strongly associated with the radical Islamist ideologue and Muslim Brother, Sayyid Qutb, and his book Milestones (1964) in which he creates a formula for global violent jihad. For Qutb takfir means that the true Muslims, the “vanguard” who have captured the
essence of Islam and rejects any deviation from al-Quran and al-Sunna, excommunicate the secular societies that surround them. In principle this means that everyone except the “vanguard” are excommunicated and thus legitimate targets for violent jihad (Qutb 1964; Kepel 1985). The takfir-concept is highly controversial among Islamists. It is e.g. believed to have been the main point of disagreements between Usama Bin Ladin and the leadership of the GIA in the mid 1990s. An expressed emphasis on takfir may hamper much needed popular support for the global jihad. The radical groups surveyed emphasize takfir to varying degrees, but none of them seem to reject the concept. It seems like the extent to which takfir is emphasized is guided by tactical considerations.

Lists of Islamist terrorist events in Europe 1998-2003

Overview of Sunni Islamist terrorism in Europe 1998-2003

Categories/Definitions

**Terrorist conspiracy:** An event in which there is substantial evidence that an attack on a target in Europe was planned/prepared, and evidence that identified Sunni-Islamist militants were behind the plot. Substantial evidence is e.g. video surveillance of the target, bomb-making materials hidden in the suspects’ apartments, written plans on pc-files, money transfers, testimonies and released intelligence; wire tapping etc.

**Terrorist attacks:** An attack launched against targets inside Europe by an identified Islamist group

**Terrorist threat:** A signal or communiqué by an identified Islamist person or group that an attack is imminent, specifying a target or a type of target.

**Terrorist “export” from within Europe:** Terrorist operations or conspiracies outside Europe, in which Europe-based Islamists were involved.

**Poorly documented terrorist events:** Events within an Islamist framework of attack, which are lacking sufficient documentation to fall in under the categories defined above. These events might be defined as “terrorist conspiracies”, “terrorist threats” or “terrorist export”, when more information about the events is being released.

The list of conspiracies gives an idea of the scale of Islamist terrorism activity in Europe 1998-2003, and provides an empirical basis and context for the case studies. A certain chronology is maintained in each category based on when the information about the terrorist events reached the press. When reading the list one should bear in mind that European intelligence communities have estimated that approximately 30 “spectaculars”, or massive attacks on targets in Europe have been planned by al-
Qaida-affiliated groups since 9/11 2001 (Bright et al 2001). The list gives a short description of the events. According to the definitions above we have registered 11 conspiracies, 2 terrorist attacks, 3 terrorist threats, 4 instances of “terrorist export from within Europe” and 15 poorly documented terrorist events. If we look at the “terrorist conspiracies” all over Europe, and the “terrorist attacks” in Belgium and Germany, which are the best-documented events, we see that U.S. or NATO targets were selected in 7 out of 13 cases. If we look at “terrorist conspiracies”, “terrorist attacks”, “terrorist threats” and “poorly documented terrorist events”, U.S. and NATO targets have also been selected frequently, 12 cases.

**Terrorist conspiracies**

In December 2000, German anti-terrorism police raided apartments in the Frankfurt area and arrested four Islamist terrorists planning to bomb the Notre Dame cathedral in Strasbourg. They also planned to shoot people gathered at the Christmas marketplace in front of the cathedral. The attack was probably initiated and financed by UK-based Islamists. Preparations were made in Germany, in Frankfurt, and the town Baden Baden on the French-German border. A number of Islamists of Middle Eastern and North African origin in Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and Spain, were detained suspected of being “linked” to the Strasbourg plotters (Schelzig and Finn 2001; Bright et al 2001). According to the The Guardian, the Strasbourg plot also involved an airplane attack against the European Parliament in the city.

In October 2001, French newspapers reported that a terrorist-cell led by French-Algerian Islamist Djamel Beghal had been plotting to attack the U.S. embassy in Paris, and other targets, among them the American consulate in Marseilles. The plans involved suicide bombings. Bombs were supposed to be delivered either by truck, by helicopter or by airplane. Beghal holds a leading position in the extreme, cult-like movement al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra. He cooperated with other al-Takfir-members in the U.K., France, Belgium and Spain during the preparation of the attacks. Investigations prompted by a tip from Egyptian intelligence, revealed that the network was also plotting to attack the G8 Summit in Genoa July 2001 with an airplane loaded with explosives. The designated suicide-bomber, the Tunisian Nizar Trabelsi was sentenced to ten years in prison by a Belgian court for preparing an attack against the canteen of the U.S. Air Base, Kleine Brogel. It was believed that he acted on direct orders from Usama Bin Ladin. (Ceaux et al 2001; Bright et al 2001).

In April 2002, German police arrested nine members of the Jordanian-Palestinian group al-Tawhid, allegedly being “on the brink” of carrying out attacks in Germany. They were accused of “planning to shoot people in a square in one German city and detonate a hand grenade near a Jewish or Israeli target in another” (Moulson 2003). During trial, one defendant claimed only Jewish targets were picked (Synagogue, a Jewish owned discothèque and a bar). German police was aware of al-Tawhids
presence in Germany, but believed that the main preoccupation of the group was support activities for al-Tawhid branches abroad. (BBC News 2002; Moulson 2003).

In October 2002, Italian police raided a GSPC-cell in Milan and arrested five North Africans plotting to attack the U.S. representations in Hague and Brussels. The arrests were based on information gained in a raid on a GSPC support-network in the same town. The cells were multi-ethnic, and led by Faraj Hassan, aka Hamza the Libyan. Several cell members had “Afghanistan records”, and there were reports of links to Islamists in Iran and Malaysia. The arrests were prompted by wire tapping of conversations in which the suspects talked about obtaining explosives in Southern France, and about punishing Italy for its support of the U.S. One conversation described by an investigator contained the message “Maybe you’ll find 300 or 400 dead in the subway” (Rotella 2002).

In November 2002, Islamist shaykh Abu Qatada told interrogators that al-Qaida was planning to attack the airport terminal on Heathrow airport. Al-Qaida-lieutenant Abu Zubaydah in U.S. captivity spoke of plans to hit European airports according to The Herald. On February 13, 2003, The Guardian reported that British authorities had received “high-quality intelligence that Islamist extremists with links to al-Qaida have smuggled portable SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles into Britain”. This information prompted immediate security measures at Heathrow. April 19, 2003, The Sun Herald reported that the missiles were to be fired against passenger planes taking off, from the nearby “Legoland”. All together, six men were detained and interrogated in connection with this event (Bruce 2002; Hopkins et al 2003).

In December 2002, French police struck French-Algerian Islamists living in the Paris suburbs, acting on intelligence that they were planning to attack the Russian Embassy in Paris. The suspects belonged to the so-called "the Chechen network", consisting mainly of Algerians having waged jihad and received paramilitary and terrorist training in Chechnya. One of them, Merouane Benahmed, a former emir in the GIA, was presented as a "spider" of the Islamists networks in Europe. He was also believed to be an expert in bomb making, and chemical warfare (Le Monde 2002; AFP 2002e)

In January 2003, British policemen raided an apartment in “Little Algiers”, Wood Green, North London. Traces of the lethal toxin ricin were found in the apartment. One policeman was stabbed to death with a kitchen-knife during the raid. Several persons of North African origin were detained suspected of belonging to a group planning a poison attack in the U.K.. The investigations revealed links to the “The Chechen network” in France. In April 2003, Italian intelligence and police detected links between Ansar al-Islam's camps in Northern Iraq, a support network in Italy and the cell in Wood Green (al-Shafi Muhammad 2003; Rotella 2003a).
In January 2003, five Moroccans were arrested in a building in the Northern Italian city Rovigo. Italian police found 2.2 pounds of C4 explosives (the same explosive that was used in the Bali-bombings 2002), maps with NATO bases in Northern Italy encircled, and maps of central London (Washington Post 2003; AP 2003a).

In January 2003, Italian police detained 28 Pakistanis in a raid in Naples. According to Reuters (2003) they found explosives enough “to blow up a three-story building”, Islamic religious texts, photos of “jihad martyrs”, false documents, maps of Naples with NATO installations identified, more than hundred cell phones, and addresses of contacts around the world. Despite this seemingly crystal-clear evidence, an Italian court released all 28 because of “lack of evidence” (AFP 2003b). One must assume they remain under surveillance.

In May 2003, The Guardian reported that al-Tawhid had been planning to strike civilian targets in the U.K., possibly using poison. The report was based on German intelligence documents, and interrogations of al-Tawhid members arrested in Germany in April, for planning attacks there. Al-Tawhid was also linked to the “millennium plot” targeting the Los Angeles Airport and a tourist hotel in Jordan, and the assassination of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman October 2002 (Burke 2003).

In December 2003, German authorities received “concrete indications” from U.S. intelligence that Ansar al-Islam were planning a car bomb attack on a military hospital in Hamburg, which had been treating U.S. troops wounded in Iraq. No Americans were at the hospital when the warning came. Apparently two members of the organization had entered Germany with intentions to carry out the attack (Bernstein 2003).

**Terrorist threats**

In November 2002, American authorities warned of plans by al-Qaida to launch simultaneous bomb-attacks against European ferries. The bombs should allegedly be placed in trucks. The Americans were contacted by an anonymous source that specified November 9 as a possible date of an attack. The ferries of the Scandinavian Company Stena Line where specifically mentioned as targets. The threats prompted security measures by ferry-companies in the Europe (Boarding.no 2002).

On November 2002 Belgian authorities received threats against the country’s ferry and channel ports, and believed that they came from Islamist militants (AP 2002).

In May 2003, the Sunday Express reported that U.K. intelligence MI6 picked up “credible” information that the UEFA-Cup soccer final in Sevilla was the chosen target of an al-Qaida suicide
operation. MI6 feared the terrorists would use plastic explosives produced in China, difficult to detect in regular security checks (Sunday Express 2003; VG Nett 2003).

There have been multiple other threats of Islamist violence. Some of them have been put under the category poorly documented terrorist events. The threat-category is problematic, because a lot of threats are reported, and most often they have been put forward by sympathizer’s or practical jokers. The examples above are registered because the threats have been assessed as serious by the authorities.

**Terrorist attacks**

In April 2001 the Turkish Consulate General office in Dusseldorf was attacked with a hand grenade, causing only damage to the building. On 17 April 2001, an unidentified person called a Turkish newspaper and claimed the attack on behalf of the Islamic Great East Raiders Front (IBDA-C), an extreme fundamentalist group. (MIPT-RAND database 2003)

On June 06, 2003, International Press reported that Belgian police had detained a 45-year-old Iraqi for sending letters laced with toxic powders to the Belgian Prime Minister, U.S., U.K., Saudi embassies and companies and a court in which 23 Islamists suspected of being involved in terrorist operations in Europe were being tried. According to The Straits Times “Government toxicologists said the toxic powder on the letters contained hydrazine, used as a garden pesticide, and phenarsazine, an arsenic derivative used in rat poison”. The letters were signed “the International Islamic Society”. One of the defendants in the Islamist trial was former soccer-player Nizar Trabelsi, who allegedly belonged to al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra, also known as “the Society of Muslims”. Trabelsi was suspected to be suicide bomber in a plot to strike U.S. targets in France or in Belgium. Trabelsi claimed he was supposed to blow up the canteen at Kleine Brogel Air base in Belgium, which houses U.S. soldiers. It is believed that the base also contained nuclear materials. The alleged al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra-leader Djamel Beghal claimed Trabelsi was supposed to bomb the U.S. embassy in Paris (al-Farid 2003; Reuters 2003).

**Terrorist “export” from within Europe**

On September 1, 2001, 19 Islamist extremists hijacked four U.S. airliners and attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon with three airplanes. A fourth airplane was heading for Capitol Hill but crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. The four suicide-pilots studied and lived in Europe prior to the attacks, and were probably recruited by Europe-Based Islamist recruiters. It was believed that much of the preparation of the attacks could be attributed to the “Hamburg-cell” led by Muhammad Atta. The pilots lived in Germany until 2000 when they started taking flying lessons in the U.S. (Der Spiegel 2001).
On December 22, 2001, Richard Colvin Reid tried to blow up a trans-Atlantic flight from Paris to Miami with plastic explosives concealed in his shoes. The suicide operation was prevented because passengers and crew managed to restrain Reid in his seat, and two doctors on board sedated him. Reid received a life sentence in Boston 30. January 2003. He showed no remorse, and defended his actions ideologically with reference to Bin Ladin, and U.S. support for the regimes in Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Jordan. Prosecutors claimed Reid had received paramilitary training in Afghanistan prior to the attack (Belluck 2003).

April 11, 2002, a Tunisian named Nizar Nawar launched a suicide attack against the Ghriba synagogue in Tunisia. Nawar drove a truck bomb to the doors of the synagogue and detonated the device. 21 people where killed, mostly German and French tourists. The investigation revealed links to Islamist radicals in France and Spain. According to intelligence reports Nawar made a satellite phone call to al-Qaida’s former chief of international operations Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and received a “go” only a few hours before he launched the attacks (Rotella 2003c).

On April 30, 2003, two U.K. citizens belonging to the “semi-radical” Islamist organization al-Muhajirun, attacked the nightclub Mike’s Place in Tel Aviv with explosives strapped to their bodies. Assif Muhammad Hanif (21) succeeded and killed two musicians, one waiter and himself. He injured 60. Omar Kahn Sharif (27) failed to detonate his device, managed to escape, and was found drowned in a city channel two days later (The Guardian 2003).

Since the focus of the thesis lies on terrorism inside Europe, I only offer a few examples on this aspect of radical Islamism in Europe. The list is by no means comprehensive. Europe-based radical Islamists have been put in connection with, or been involved in actual and planned terrorist operations in the U.S., Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Australia, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Iraq etc.

**Poorly documented terrorist events**

In 1998, 138 Algerians were put on trial charged with belonging to the so-called “Chalabi-network” allegedly a support structure for GIA’s 1994-1996 terrorist campaign in France and Belgium. All together 173 persons were detained during the Chalabi round on orders from Judge Jean Louis Brugiere. The trial has been described as “a scandale”. The prosecutors did not have the evidence to convict a single detainee with concrete acts of terrorism (BBC 1999; FECL 1999). The trial heightened tensions between the French authorities and the Algerian diaspora community.

According to al-Qaida-expert Rohan Gunaratna (2002: 119), the network planned simultaneous airliner attacks on several U.K. targets on 9/11, 2001. The Houses of Parliament/Big Ben, Westminster and Tower Bridge were among the targets. Gunaratna’s source was unnamed, and no
other independent sources have verified his claims. According to Gunaratna the attack was avoided because flights were cancelled when the news from New York broke.

In February 2002, four Moroccans were arrested in Rome, carrying 4 kg cyanide and maps of the Water systems of the city. The U.S. embassy was encircled on the maps. Investigation did not tie the suspects to Islamist organizations, although police believed there were links to Bin Ladin’s network. Police also discovered signs of digging in an underground utility tunnel near the U.S. embassy (Walsh 2002; Reuters 2002; AFP 2003a). Charges of being in possession of a “dangerous chemical” were dropped because the cyanide type could not be characterized as “dangerous”. An U.S. official played down the link between “tunnel-digging” and possession of cyanide, characterizing the whole thing as “speculative”. The Moroccans were released without being charged with terrorism.

In August 2002, Swedish police arrested Swedish-Tunisian Karim Sadok Chatti at Vasterås Airport. He was suspected of planning to hijack a Ryan Air Flight and crash it in to a U.S. embassy in Europe. Security personnel at the airport detected a loaded handgun in his hand luggage. The suspect had a long criminal record which included an assault against a U.S. Marine Corps guard working at the U.S. embassy in 1999. Chatti was also believed to have made connections with the al-Qaida network through fellow inmates in a Swedish prison. FBI claimed he attended flying lessons in Conway, U.S., showing no interest for take off and landing maneuvers (Timmerman 2003). A former Swedish intelligence officer told us there were no doubts about Chatti’s intentions to execute a terrorist-operation, but that there were doubts concerning his alleged al-Qaida connections (Anonymous 2003).

In November 2002, British newspapers reported that six men of Tunisian and Moroccan origin were arrested, suspected of planning a cyanide attack on the London underground (the Tube). Three suspects were released after interrogation. British intelligence had infiltrated the North African diaspora- community and detected plans to smuggle cyanide into the country. Police house-searches discovered no chemicals or explosives, only false travel documents. The suspects were charged under the Terrorism Act 2000, although evidence was poor (Walters et al 2002).

In December 2002, French police arrested a baggage handler (French citizen of Algerian origin) at the Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle airport (Paris’s main international airport). He was suspected of planning a terrorist attack. The suspect, Abd al-Razak Besseghir’s car, parked outside the airport was stuffed with weapons and explosives. In addition to Czech weapons and Yugoslav military explosives (Tolite), the investigators found radical Islamist texts and pro-Palestinian literature among the suspect’s belongings (AFP 2002f). The suspect has not been tied to radical groups. According to
French newspapers, his wife’s family might have set up Besseghir. Apparently the Franco-Algerian had problems in his marriage (Kjök 2003).

In January 2003, a Turkish man and his American fiancée were charged with conspiring to attack a U.S. military base in Heidelberg, Germany, fall 2002. Investigators found gunpowder, pipes, chemicals sufficient to make 250 pounds of explosives, and a picture of Usama Bin Ladin among their belongings. The terrorist charges were dropped, and the couple was convicted on minor drug offences. (CBS News 2003).

In January 2003 Italian police arrested “dozens” of Moroccans and Egyptians suspected of planning attacks in Italy. One group in Anzio, south of Rome, was in possession of explosives and a map of a U.S. military cemetery (BBC 2003a)

February 2003, several men of Middle Eastern origin were arrested under the UK Terrorism Act 2000 in separate incidents in proximity of Gatwick Airport and a government intelligence center nearby (Associated Press 2003; Scott 2003; Reuters 2003). The men were acting “strangely” and were detained by security personnel on high alert. In one incident on February 14, a man was arrested at the airport with a hand grenade in his luggage. Some sources claim that the man was a Venezuelan, and others say that he was a Bangladeshi Muslim “carrying a Koran” in his luggage. Scotland Yard confirmed he was Venezuelan, and did not comment what he was carrying in his luggage except the grenade.

In June 2003, German newspapers reported that the police had detected a Germany-based group of Bin Ladin sympathizers planning a terrorist attack on the French vacation islands of Reunion. German police claimed the cell was headed by Christian Ganczarski (36), aka Abu Ibrahim, a native German of Polish origin living in the German city Duisburg. He was arrested at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport on his way to Saudi-Arabia. Ganczarski was said to know Usama Bin Ladin personally, and to be “a good friend” of one of al-Qaida’s top-level leaders, the Egyptian Saif al-Adil. Ganczarski was described as one of al-Qaida’s operations coordinators. He had been frequently in Afghanistan and fought with the Taliban against the Northern Alliance. At one point he lived in Kandahar with his wife and children. The suicide-bomber of the Ghriba-Synagogue, Nizar Nawar, made phone-calls to Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and Ganczarski in Duisburg before the attack. Ganczarski’s al-Qaida-connections were revealed during interrogation of another cell-member, the

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55 The article also reported that the police found computer-diskettes, but there was no information about the contents of the diskettes.
Moroccan Karim mehdi. Mehdi made a surveillance trip to the islands to seek out potential targets (Der Spiegel 2003).

In July 2003, Dutch counter-terrorism agents started investigating a scuba-diving school in Eindhoven, headed by a Tunisian instructor and frequented by Muslims. One of between 50 and 150 Muslims taking diving-classes, Iraqi-born Kasim Ali, was suspected of recruiting terrorists for an operation in Europe. Statements by al-Qaida operatives about plans to use scuba divers in terrorist attacks on maritime targets prompted the investigations. Several of the scuba-students were suspected to be Islamist extremists. A former Algerian student was arrested in France together with an Islamist militant who has escaped from a Dutch prison (Rotella 2003d).

In November 2003, the New York Times published an article about how a considerable number of Europe-based Islamists traveled to Iraq to take part in anti-coalition operations. German intelligence confirmed that Islamists are leaving Germany heading for Iraq. The article also contained information about a planned terrorist attack on the tourist location Costa del Bravo in Spain. A Germany-based Islamist, Abderazak Mahdjoub, with ties to Islamist networks in Spain was put under investigation for his role in the alleged attack (Van Natta Jr. and Butler 2003).

In November 2003, an alleged GSPC-militant was arrested in Australia suspected of planning an attack on the Rugby World Cup. The suspect, a French citizen, a convert to Islam and a former social worker, Willie Virgile Brigitte (35), is originally from Guadalupe in the French Carribean. Brigitte had been several times to Afghanistan, and investigators believe he was involved in the assassinations of Ahmad Shah Massoud and Daniel Pearl attributed to al-Qaida. Brigitte was believed to have been a spy for al-Qaida. He was also linked to the Pakistani Laskhar e-Taiba and Jamaal al-Fuqra movements and al-Qaida’s “South-East-Asian arm”, Jemaah Islamiyya (JI). Press reports also linked him to the British shoe-bomber Richard Colvin Reid (Asia Times 2003; Green Left Weekly 2003).

In December 2003, U.K. police arrested 24-year-old Sajid Badat described as a “Briton of Asian decent”. He was suspected of being “a potential suicide bomber with links to al-Qaida” (The Guardian 2003). Badat allegedly knew the “shoe-bomber” Richard Reid. Police found “a relatively small amount” of explosives in his Gloucester-apartment. Badat was detained under the Terrorism Act 2000, to the disbelief of family and friends (The Guardian 2003).

In December 2003 several transatlantic British Airways and Air France flights were cancelled because of fear of a new 9/11 type of attack in the United States. The reason for the cancellations was that U.S. intelligence had detected the names of terrorist suspects on the passenger-lists. U.S.
government officials said a “credible threat” from al-Qaida to board airplanes bound for the Washington and/or Los Angeles had been detected (BBC News 2003).

In addition to such poorly documented threats and plots, European police forces arrested several hundreds of Islamists all over Europe suspected being engaged in support activities like fundraising, weapons smuggling, credit card frauds, supplying false travel documents, recruiting, propaganda etc. In the wake of al-Zawahiri’s statement in May 2003 in which he threatened European interests for the second time, we have seen actual attacks, and what appear to be serious threats against European interests and military presence in Afghanistan, the Middle East and in Africa.

Islamist Radicals in Europe

The following section profiles the most important radical Sunni Islamist groups believed to maintain organizational structures in the Europe. al-Qaida and al-Jihad is elaborated in more detail because the organizations merged in 1998, and because European intelligence agencies believe this merger has instigated, and probably supported financially several of the terrorist conspiracies surveyed here. The al-Qaida-al-Jihad merger is a powerful expression of the linkages between the local and global jihad.

**Al-Qaida**

Al-Qaida, aka The World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders.

Analysts have conceptualized al-Qaida in multiple ways. Most see it as an entity, but al-Qaida might also be understood as an idea or the basic principles for the “global jihad” (Burke 2003). Understood as an entity, which still is the most common way to see it, al-Qaida is a multi ethnic worldwide web of Sunni-Islamist insurgents and terrorists waging a “global jihad”, mainly targeting the United States and Israel. Al-Qaida was founded by Usama Bin Ladin and Abdullah Azzam in Afghanistan towards the end of the 1980s, and is today headed by Bin Ladin and Dr. Aiman al-Zawahiri. 56 Leading al-Qaida-experts have attributed a considerable level of command and control to the al-Qaida leadership. Al-Qaida has e.g. been characterized as a structured and hierarchical organization with a regional command system comparable to that of NATO (see e.g. Ranstorp in Ketz 2002). Some

56 The prominent Palestinian shaykh, Abdallah Azzam, was the founder of a non-governmental organization called maktab al-khidmat (MAK or Service bureau). This organization was al-Qaida’s forerunner. Its purpose was to facilitate the influx of so-called Afghan Arabs to Afghanistan during the Afghan Jihad (1979-1989---), and to support, organize and train Arab mujahidin fighting the Soviets. The training facilities set up by MAK were called al-qaidat (the bases), and in 1988 Azzam and Bin Ladin established an organization as a military arm of the MAK, called al-Qaida. When Azzam and his two sons were killed under mysterious circumstances in a car bombing in Pakistan 1989, the Saudi millionaire Usama bin Ladin became the sole leader of the organization. Some analysts speculate that Bin Ladin was behind the assassination of Azzam because of a leadership-conflict (e.g. Reeve 1999; Anonymous 2002; Bergen 2002; Gunaratna 2002). These claims are not verified by other sources.
analysts estimate that al-Qaida e.g. consists of about 3-5000 “members” (Orbach 2001). *Such estimates are probably more misleading than helpful.* The numbers are highly uncertain, and there is no consensus on the definition of an “al-Qaida member”. Most analysts do however agree that more than 10 000 Islamists did receive para-military training in camps run by al-Qaida in Afghanistan (Anonymous 2002; Burke 2003). Al-Qaida, understood as an entity, consists of individuals and groups that subscribe to the Salafi-Jihadi ideology promoted by the leadership, and have varying degrees of ties to it, ranging from ad-hoc-cooperation and alliances, to incorporation or “al-Qaida membership”.

As noted, al-Qaida belongs to the radical Salafi-movement, an Islamist doctrine based on a strict interpretation of al-Quran and al-Sunna. Since the organization is clandestine and constantly adapting to the political realities it faces, it is difficult establish a useful “al-Qaida model”. Experts have conceptualized it as a terrorist enterprise, the al-Qaida incorporated (Bergen 2002), an educational institution or a university of radical Islam and terrorism (Hegghammer 2002) etc. Jason Burke offers one of the best models of al-Qaida. For him al-Qaida is both an entity and an idea. He divides al-Qaida into “al-Qaida hardcore”, the closest companions of Bin Ladin, those who followed him for a long time (Aiman al-Zawahiri, Abu Zubaydah, Ramzi Binalshibh, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad etc), “the network of networks” various affiliated groups and cells worldwide, and the “idea of al-Qaida” that lives on through “the network of networks” probably independently of the “hard core”. Burke argues that the closest al-Qaida ever was to an entity was between 1996 and spring 2002, during Taliban-rule in Afghanistan. The ultimate goal of al-Qaida is to establish an Islamic Caliphate modeled on the ideal Muslim society founded by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina 622 A.D. In order to reach this goal, it is seen as necessary to pressure the crusader enemy of the Arab lands, to overthrow the semi-secular, corrupt, “hypocrite” (munafiq) Arab regimes, and replace them with a true Islamic state based on the all-encompassing legal system of al-Sharia. In the process al-Qaida wants to reinstate global justice by slaughtering the enemies of Islam for the crimes committed against the Muslims throughout history (i.e. the historical crusades, and the contemporary conflicts in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir and elsewhere). In 1998, Bin Ladin formed the “World Islamic Front against Jews and Crusaders” calling for global Jihad against the United States, Israel and their allies. The same year we saw the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the start of a full-scale war between the al-Qaida and the “crusaders”. Usama Bin Laden initially declared war on the United States in 1996 (Hegghammer 2003a). Al-Qaida is suspected of numerous attacks on U.S. and international targets, most importantly the spectacular

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airliner attacks against World Trade Center September 11, 2001. The network is believed to have a considerable presence in Western Europe, in the form of support-networks and “sleeper” operation-cells. Based on interviews with intelligence officers in the several European countries, Rohan Gunaratna (2002) estimates that between 2-300 of al-Qaidas “best-trained operatives” hide in Europe as “sleepers”. Again it must be emphasized that numbers are highly uncertain. This estimate probably includes people mainly connected to movements such as the GIA, GSPC, al-Tawhid and al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra etc. The intelligence community considers these groups “linked to al-Qaida” (Anonymous 2002; Bergen 2002; Burke 2003; Gunaratna 2002). Several of the suspects in the terrorism cases surveyed in this study are thus considered al-Qaida-affiliates.

**Egyptian Islamic Jihad**

Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), aka al-Jihad, aka Vanguards of Conquest.

Egyptian Islamic Jihad is a Salafi-Jihadi insurgent group, established by the electrician engineer Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj in 1979. The group considers the blind shaykh Umar Abd al-Rahman, imprisoned for life in the United States for involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, its religious guide. Al-Jihad’s original goal was to overthrow the pagan (jahili) Egyptian regime and establish an Islamist state governed by al-Sharia (hakimiyya). The group infiltrated the Egyptian state apparatus and military, and specialized in political assassinations of Egyptian state officials. Egyptian Islamic Jihad was behind assassination of president Anwar al-Sadat in 1981. Because it was established as a local Egyptian insurgent group, most members are Egyptians. According to Gunaratna (2002: 136) al-Jihad “developed an international presence as a means of surviving the Egyptian government’s harsh domestic crackdown of their activities”. In 1998, the international branch merged with al-Qaida into “al-Qaidat al-Jihad” (the bases of jihad or the principles of jihad). According to Abu-Stayt (2000a), Aiman al-Zawahiri has been the head of al-Jihad in exile since 1991. A considerable number of its members participated in the Afghan Jihad under his command. These mujahidin established an al-Jihad faction called the Vanguards of Conquest on their return to Egypt. The Egyptian security apparatus immediately targeted the organization and 800 persons were arrested. Abd al-Zumar heads the local Egyptian Branch of al-Jihad from prison. Arab press speculates in a split between the local al-Jihad leaders and al-Zawahiri, after an al-Jihad member residing in Germany announced a tactical halt of violence inside Egypt (Abu-Stayt 2000b). The truce seems to have been acknowledged by al-Jihad leaders imprisoned in Egypt, and their spiritual leader al-Rahman, but not by al-Zawahiri. European security agencies believe that the organization has a significant presence in the U.K., France, Germany, and Spain. One indicator there is an al-Jihad structure in Europe is that al-Zawahiris computer found in Afghanistan contained orders to launch an internal investigation of an al-Jihad member residing in the U.K.
because of “overspending” from financial assets (al-Shafi 2002). The U.S. State Departments annual Patterns of Global Terrorism estimated the number of al-Jihad members to around 700. The number seems low, compared to the number of suspected members imprisoned in Egypt over the years. (Kepel 1985; Moussalli 1999).

Al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya

The Islamic Group (IG), al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya or al-Gama al-Islamiyya (Egyptian transliteration). The Islamic group started as a revolutionary student movement in the 1970s. First, it was an umbrella organization for a number of Islamist student groups. Later it became a more clearly defined radical Islamist organization. The movement is influenced by Salafi-doctrine. Al-Jamiyya’s main goal is to replace the jahili Egyptian regime with hakimiyya. The movement considers Shayk Umar Abd al-Rahman its spiritual leader (as do al-Jihad). The movement differs from the other Egyptian and Algerian militant groups because it has been engaged in social and educational or missionary activities as well as violent insurgency, parallel to HAMAS in Palestine and Hizballah in Lebanon (Mousalli 1999). Al-Jamiyya served as a kind of moral religious police in Egypt, punishing people who committed sins according to their interpretation of Islam (drinking, smoking, gambling, dancing and sexual promiscuity). Al-Jamiyya has launched a number of terrorist attacks, political murders and kidnappings inside Egypt. It targeted Egyptian officials, foreign tourists (e.g. the attack on foreign tourists in Luxor 1997), and launched terrorist attacks against and were in several clashes with the Coptic minority in the Egypt. The movement has also been tied to international terrorist operations (e.g. the 1993 World Trade Center bombing). According to U.S. State Departments’ Patterns of Global Terrorism, al-Jamiyya has a “world wide presence, including the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Yemen and various locations in Europe” (Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002). The same report estimates the number of “hard core members” to 10000, and a similar number of sympathizers. Numbers must be read critically. According to Moussalli (1999:148) the movement had greatest appeal among students and urban middle class in Egypt. In 1999, the group issued a cease-fire. It is unclear whether it is valid, because Umar Abd al-Rahman withdrew his support for a cease-fire in June 2000. al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya has not been tied to any of the terrorist conspiracies surveyed here. The movement is however within the sphere of influence of people believed to be among Bin Ladin’s closest companions e.g shaykh Umar Abd al-Rahman and Aiman al-Zawahiri. Gunaratna (2002) describes it as “a part of al-Qaida’s Egyptian branch”.

Al-Takfir wa’l - Hijra

Al-Takfir wa’l Hijra (Excommunication and Emigration ), aka al-Jamiyya al-Muslimun (The Society of Muslims). Al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra or The Society of Muslims was an extremist, violent Sunni

Islamist sect or movement founded by an Egyptian agricultural engineer named Shukri Mustafa in 1969. A former member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Shukri was radicalized during harsh imprisonment in the Tura prison and Abu Zabal concentration camp in Egypt. Mustafa emphasized the ideological principle takfir to the extreme, and believed any deviation from the principles of al-Sharia and al-Sunna (as interpreted by the in-group al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra, “the chosen ones”, “Vanguards of Conquest” or “true Muslims”), should lead to excommunication. Consequently, members of al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra view all societies (Islamic, Arab and Western) and any individual that does not belong to the “in-group” they represent, as infidels (kuffar). These “vanguards” excommunicate societies, and literally leave emigrate. The reason for emigration is that the group is in a state of weakness, and cannot launch an all out attack on the kuffar at this stage (which is the ultimate goal). They have to build themselves up through an enabling stage before facing the infidel enemy. Following this ideology Mustafa and his group set up camps in the Mountains. In 1977 they felt strong enough to criticize and even threaten the Egyptian authorities. The same year they kidnapped and killed a former Egyptian minister (Muhammad Dahabi). Following the murder, Egyptian security forces arrested “hundreds” of its members, and seemingly dissolved the society (Kepel 1985:70 ff). Shukri Mustafa was executed in 1978. His ideas lived on among Islamist radicals, and new al-Takfir groups and networks resurfaced in Lebanon, Sudan, Algeria, Jordan, Libya, and during the nineties in Europe. According to European intelligence agencies, al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra, is a growing ideological trend among Arab Islamists in Europe. Several of the suspects in the recently discovered terrorist conspiracies in the region are suspected belonging to al-Takfir wa’l-Hijra. A Belgian security official characterizes al-Takfir wa’l Hijra like this, “... Takfir wal Hijra has no structure, it has no leadership, but it constitutes an informal network, not only in our country, but throughout Europe. Its members travel a lot and know each other. These radical Islamists also jointly perpetrate criminal acts: burglaries and falsifying and trafficking official documents” (Kepel 1985; Van Eylen 2001; Ternisien 2001). Witness accounts by Islamists frequenting the radical mosques in London characterize al-Takfir as a dangerous group isolating themselves from the other Islamists. They are feared because they are seen as too extreme and violent (The Guardian 2002).

GIA and GSPC

GIA, al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya al-musallaha Armed Islamic Group) and GSPC, al-Haraka al-Islamiyya li Dawa wa Qital (The Salafi Movement for Preaching and Combat)

GIA and GSPC are radical splinter groups from the moderate Algerian Sunni Islamist party FIS. The GIA was formed in 1989 and was headed by Antar Zouabri until 2002 when he was killed in Algiers. GSPC was formed in 1998 by former GIA-fighters, and was headed by Hasan Hatab until he allegedly was killed in Algeria 2003. Nabil Sahrawi, who recently announced GSPC’s support for al-Qaida, replaced Hatab. The original aim of the two movements was to overthrow the secular Algerian regime and establish an al-Sharia-state in Algeria. GIA started its campaigns during the insurgency or
civil war that followed the early 1992 elections, in which the moderate Islamist party FIS won the majority of votes. In the beginning it targeted diplomats, clergy, industrialists, feminists, journalists and foreigners, but from 1996 it is associated with brutal indiscriminate mass murder of civilians in villages throughout the Algerian countryside. The GIA consisted of several factions and sub-groups, and established support-networks abroad (especially in France and the UK) in order to increase pressure on the secular Algerian government. In 1994-1996 it launched a terrorist campaign in France and Belgium that killed 20 civilians and injured “scores of people” (Schweitzer 2003). The GIA has been the dominating Islamist militant group present in Europe from the beginning to mid 1990s. According to Gunaratna (2002: 114 ff), Bin Ladin cut a deal with GIA’s euro-network, in which it was offered support in exchange for operational cooperation. When takfiri-elements within the GIA started killing fellow Muslims in Algeria, however, Bin Ladin is said to have denounced the movement and encouraged the establishment of GSPC. According to Moussalli (1999) GSPC’s ideology “allows violent acts against all non-Islamic governments all over the world. This includes the army, the police, ministers, state employees, political leaders and others”. GSPC is the dominant factor of Algerian Islamist militancy today. It continues the insurgency in Algeria and maintains a significant presence abroad, especially in Europe and Chechnya. Several of the suspects in the cases surveyed here are believed to belong to GSPC’s European network (Moussalli 1999; Gunaratna 2002: 137 ff; Lia and Kjøk 2001: 21).

**Al-Tawhid**

Al-Tawhid (The Unity of God, the Oneness of God) is originally a Jordanian-Palestinian Salafi-movement that allegedly established ties with al-Qaida during the nineties. The movement’s original aim was to overthrow the Jordanian regime and establish an al-Sharia-state in Jordan (NYT 2003). Al-Tawhid’s operational leader is believed to be Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, currently on the run from U.S. investigators who believe he is “the link” between the Iraqi regime and al-Qaida. Al-Zarqawi is also charged with leading an al-Tawhid cell that planned to attack tourists in Jordan on New Year’s Eve 2000, and another cell behind the murder of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Amman, October 2002. He received a death penalty in absentia for his involvement in these operations. Al-Zarqawi was allegedly in charge of an al-Qaida-camp in Herat, Afghanistan, mostly frequented by Jordanians and Palestinians. In this camp Islamist militants were trained in manufacturing and using chemical weapons. The movement’s spiritual guide is the London- based Islamist shaykh Abu Qatada. Qatada is detained in Britain under the Terrorism Act 2000 charged with supporting terrorism. German intelligence has been aware of an active Islamist group in the country providing financial support to Islamist radicals in other parts of the world, and kept the group under surveillance. Investigators in

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59 When the results of the elections were cancelled by the secular regime (that received support from France), the country was cast into a brutal domestic conflict that by 1997 had killed about 120 000 people (Whittaker 2003:154)
Germany and the U.K. concluded that al-Tawhid’s base in Europe is Luton, U.K., and that the group planned conventional and possibly poison attacks in the two countries. Al-Zarqawi contacted the German cell-leader by telephone from Iran (The Guardian 2003).

**Ansar al-Islam**

Ansar al-Islam (Followers of Islam) was established September 2001, by Mullah Krekar (currently under investigation in Norway suspected of being involved in attempted suicide-operations in Northern Iraq), and Abu Abdallah al-Shafi (former leader of Jund al-Islam that merged with Krekar’s splinter group from the Kurdish Islamic Movement into Ansar al-Islam). Mullah Krekar’s was granted asylum in Norway in 1991. Since then he has traveled extensively to the Kurdish-controlled areas in Iraq. The question whether Krekar is an operational leader or a religious guide for Ansar, is for the moment highly unclear. There have been various statements released on Islamist web pages claiming that Krekar no longer is the movement’s leader, but such statements might have been issued to take some of the pressure of the Norway-based mullah. Some statements claim he has been replaced with Muhammad Hasan; former leader of the Islamist group Soran Forces, while others claim Abdallah al-Shafi is the current leader of the movement. Al-Shafi was however reported killed in unconfirmed press-reports, December 2002 (Tønnessen 2004).

The group main base was in Biyarah in Northern Iraq, until March 2003, when U.S. bombers attacked the its compounds. Ansar al-Islam’s original goal was to establish an al-Sharia-state in Kurdish-controlled Iraq. According to U.S. intelligence and state officials, Ansar al-Islam is “a very dangerous group” tied to al-Qaida. U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, described the movement as the link between al-Qaida and the Iraqi regime during the lead up to the war on Iraq. Although no such link is proven, there are several indications that Ansar al-Islam has built an international support structure internationally, especially in Europe. Investigations of the camp in Biyarah revealed a chemical laboratory and equipment and raw materials for production of the lethal toxin ricin. Traces of this toxin have been found in an Islamist hideout in London January 2003, and in a railwaystation locker in Paris the same month. Italian police disclosed evidence that an Ansar-network in Italy recruited and sent fighters to Northern Iraq via Syria. The shadowy al-Qaida affiliate and operational leader of al-Tawhid, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, is suspected of being an organizer of this trafficking of jihad-recruits. Two Kurdish Ansar-members in Italy have made telephone-contact with al-Zarqawi. The phonenumbers of these kurds were found on Mullah Krekar when he was arrested in Amsterdam September 2002 (Rotella 2003b). In December 2003, in the raids leading to the arrest of Saddam Hussein, U.S. soldiers found documents confirming the existence of an Ansar-al-Islam-network active in Italy, Germany, Norway and Spain supporting and recruiting fighters for the post-war insurgency in Iraq. Ansar-militants are also believed to have built infrastructure in the United

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60 Islamists have a strong position in the Jordanian society, and the Muslim Brotherhood has even held cabinet posts in
Kingdom (Cox 2003; Rotella 2003b; Williams 2003). In December 2003, U.S. authorities warned the
Germans that Ansar Islam planned to attack a military hospital in Hamburg, which has hosted U.S.
soldiers wounded in Iraq. German authorities have launched an investigation into this event.

"Chechen network"

French intelligence and police constructed the label “The Chechen Network” to define a network of
Islamists that planned to attack on the Russian embassy in Paris in December 2002. The Network was
headed by the Algerian former GIA-amir Merouane Benahmed. The group consists of about 20
Algerians, Franco-Algerians and French nationals that have spent time in Chechnya, Georgia and
Afghanistan. They have received paramilitary and terrorist training and been waging jihad against the
Russians in Chechnya. This network or “operational cell” seems to have received logistical support
from GSRC’s network in France. The leader Benahmed is described as a “nomadic jihadi” with
alleged ties to prominent members of al-Qaida. Benahmed has also been connected to the Strasbourg
plot and Islamists planning poison attacks in the United Kingdom (AFP 2003a; Le Monde 2002).

"Non-aligned Mujahidin"

German prosecutors defined the Algerian Islamist militants convicted in 2002 for conspiracy to blow
up the Notre Dame cathedral in Strasbourg and shoot at people at a Christmas marketplace outside
the cathedral as “non-aligned Mujahidin”. The definition incorrectly suggests that the terrorists were
acting independently of established Islamist organizations. The label was constructed in order to
circumcise legal technicalities of German terrorism-legislation. Prosecutors managed to speed up the
trial and have the militants convicted in Germany. The label obscures that the militants most
probably belong to the Algerian GSPC-movement (Eddy 2003; Harris et al 2002).

IBDA-C

The Great Eastern Islamic Raiders’ front, IBDA-C is a Turkish Salaf-Jihadi movement established in
the 1970s, allegedly affiliated with al-Qaida. The main aim of the movement is to replace the secular
government in Turkey with a Sharia-state. Ideologically the movement mixes communist ideas with
Salafi-Jihadism. IBDA-C has carried out assassinations, bombings, and violent demonstrations in
Turkey. The movement claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks on two synagogues, the British
consulate and a London-based bank in Istanbul killing altogether approximately 40 people,
November 2003. Previously it has claimed responsibility for a handgrenade attack on the Turkish
general consulate in Dusseldorf, April 2001. In the wake of these attacks the press obtained
information from an internal report by the Federal Office of Criminal Investigations (BKA), that the
IBDA-C was active in 8 German cities, and also in France, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.
The same report estimated that the movement had about 40 members in Europe, and about 5-600

Jordan (Esposito 1999). Jordanian family law has e.g. traditionally been within the jurisdiction of the Islamic clergy.
supporters only in Germany. It also described IBDA-C as “extremely violent”. Der Spiegel interviewed one member of the German branch of the movement called Zafer Yılmaz. He assured that the movement would strike again, saying, “Istanbul war nur eine kleinigkeit. Das richtige Schlachtfest kommt erst noch” (Istanbul was just something small. The real slaughter is yet to come). German security officials believe the IBDA-C does not have the capacity to launch massive attacks in Germany. (Der Spiegel 2003c; Jyllandsposten 2003).
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