



Universiteit Utrecht

# Honour in terrorism

*The development of the role of honour in the propaganda of Al Qaeda*



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**Master's thesis International Relations in Historical Perspective**

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**July 2018**

Image on the front page: Soldiers of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula on a jeep in the Yemeni desert.  
Retrieved from: IANS, 'Al-Qaeda warns Saudi Arabia over 'westernising projects' (version June 2 2018)  
<https://www.financialexpress.com/world-news/al-qaeda-warns-saudi-arabia-over-westernising-projects/1190780/> (accessed on 20 July 2018).



# Abstract

This thesis seeks to explicate the mechanism of honour in the propaganda of jihadist organisations, specifically Al Qaeda. Honour is a complex and multifaceted notion that has been under-researched in the academic literature until now and has never been convincingly connected to Islamic terrorism. Yet, the propaganda of militant jihadist organisations is filled with references to honour. In an explorative qualitative manner, the rhetoric of Al Qaeda is analysed for its use of the concept of 'honour'. The main research question is: *How does honour function in the propaganda of Al Qaeda over time?* To answer this question, a framework is drafted based on secondary sources about honour. Different mechanisms of honour are extracted from the characteristics discussed in these sources. With this framework, the role of honour in two types of primary sources is analysed: the speeches of Osama bin Laden and in Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's propaganda magazine *Inspire*. Al Qaeda is the longest standing jihadist terrorist organisation and is still operating today. The longevity of the organisation allows an analysis of the development of the use of honour over time. The historical development of Al Qaeda will be explained and changes in the use of honour will be compared to different phases in the development of the organisation. Since jihadist terrorism is one of the most pressing threats to the freedom and safety in the West today, a thorough understanding of honour might contribute to countering this threat.

**Key words:** *Terrorism, Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Osama bin Laden, Honour, jihadist terrorism, explorative concept analysis, Inspire.*

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# Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis was a long and challenging journey. Although I spent many hours working on it, I did not do it alone. I would like to express my great appreciation to my supervisor, prof. dr. Beatrice de Graaf, for providing me with helpful feedback and enthusiastic encouragements throughout the process. I would also like to offer my special thanks to Saskia Huygen for the many fruitful brainstorm sessions and Celine Mureau for her review of an earlier version of this thesis. Finally, I wish to thank my parents, sister, roommates and friends for their unceasing support and encouragement during the writing of this thesis.

# 1.0 Introduction

Walking through the streets of Mirpur, a city in Pakistan, one might be impressed by the enormity of the houses. As British anthropologist Roger Ballard noticed in 2003, most were five or six stories high. Despite the apparent image of prosperity, the houses were abandoned and unfurnished. The only exception in most homes was the guestroom, which was comfortably furnished and richly decorated. The owners of these small palaces left for England, closing the door behind them, only to be opened for holiday or special activities like weddings, birthdays or funerals.<sup>1</sup> These luxurious buildings were constructed in areas where each house is slightly larger than the neighbouring one. An explanation for this strange competition in construction is to be found in the Urdu concept of *izzat*. *Izzat* could be translated as honour, reputation or status, and is a central term in traditional Pakistani society. The migrated former inhabitants of Mirpur built these houses to impress their relatives and tribesmen remaining in Mirpur.<sup>2</sup> 'Each emigrant edifice in Mirpur is a differentiated and public boast of the owner's personal attainments overseas and his wish that these be recognized at home'.<sup>3</sup> The recognition the owners seek is local, directed at the tribe they are part of.



Image 1.1: Still from YouTube video 'Mirpur Azad Kashmir City Mirpur AJK Mini London World Beautiful Place Dji phantom 4 2017'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert S. Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation* (Oxford 2012) 118.

<sup>2</sup> Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims*, 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, 119.

<sup>4</sup> Kashmir TV, 'Mirpur Azad Kashmir City Mirpur AJK Mini London World Beautiful Place Dji phantom 4 2017' (12 July 2017), <https://youtu.be/Hiz3DHR1SMM> (accessed on 15 March 2018).

This is only one relatively harmless way in which honour might demonstrate itself in society. Other, more violent events might equally be attributed to the importance of honour in many Middle Eastern societies. Also in some immigrant communities in Europe, honour continues to motivate actions and regulate societal behaviour. On January 10, 2018, a thirteen year old Afghan boy living in Den Bosch stabbed his mother. The boy justified his horrible deed in front of a judge as an honour crime. His mother took the initiative in divorcing his father, a transgression of the Afghan code of honour. Of course, with these examples of the way honour demonstrates itself in society it is not suggested that the Afghan concept of honour is the same as the Pakistani one, because in fact these two societies are deeply at odds with each other. Although the concept and practical occurrence of honour might be different, the importance of honour in both societies demonstrates the relevance of conducting research on honour.

It is important to clearly define the units of analysis to avoid confusion about the subject of research. Although this thesis investigates the role of honour in Islamic terrorism, the societies in which honour plays an important role will be referred to as 'Middle Eastern societies'.<sup>5</sup> While honour might also play a role in societies in other parts of the world (like Asia), Islamic terrorism is often rooted in the Middle East. Al Qaeda for example has a constituency all over the world, but their basis is in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of 'honour' is both difficult and utterly crucial in understanding the behaviour of people in Middle Eastern societies. In many of these societies, honour functions as a regulatory principle and its influence on the thinking and the actions of members of the society is hard to overestimate. 'Live with Honer, Die with Honer', as an anonymous supporter of the Pakistani jihadist organisation Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen, wrote in incorrect English on a sign in Kabul.<sup>7</sup>

According to American political scientist David Charles Rapoport, we are currently experiencing a wave of religious terrorism that is dominated by Islamic terrorism.<sup>8</sup> Al Qaeda

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<sup>5</sup> In this thesis the term category 'Middle Eastern communities' should be interpreted as geographically covering the MENA-countries of the Middle East and North Africa. This is still a very broad category with many different societies. And although the role and practical occurrence of honour might differ, in many of these societies honour is an important regulatory principle.

<sup>6</sup> The term Islamic societies is avoided, although it would better cover all forms of Islamic terrorism (for example jihadist groups in Indonesia), because it might suggest a direct link between honour and Islam. Honour and Islam are not analytically linked, as honour culture predates the rise of Islam in the seventh century.

<sup>7</sup> James Bowman, *Honor: A History* (New York 2006) 357, note 2.

<sup>8</sup> David C. Rapoport, 'The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11', *Anthropoetics* 8 (2002) 1-14, there 6.

as radical Islamic terrorist group is part of this religious wave. Since most jihadist terrorist organisations are rooted in the Middle East, it is reasonable to expect that honour plays a role in the current wave of terrorism. The role of religion in terrorism is much debated and has great impact on the political debate around Islam as well. While this debate is very important, it does not fall within the scope of this this research.<sup>9</sup>

International Jihadist organisations often use references to honour in their propaganda. Former official spokesman of Islamic State, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, said in a speech: 'Honor is for this ummah. It is from the honor of Allah (the Exalted) – honor that mixes with the faith residing in the believers' heart. Thus, if faith becomes firm in the heart, honor becomes firm along with it'.<sup>10</sup> And Ayman al-Zawahiri, successor of Osama bin Laden as leader of Al Qaeda, who said: 'I call on every free and honorable person with concern for his religion, his Islam, his honor and his dignity to work with everything in his power to spread this awareness'.<sup>11</sup>

Norwegian social antropologist Unni Wikan argues that honour does not just plays an important role in Middle Eastern societies, but that immigration to Europe can make the tradition of honour even stronger.

There is much evidence to suggest that immigrants in European countries often revise their concepts of honor in a conservative direction: they feel surrounded by hostile neighbours, infidels, and uncivilized strangers and react by setting a greater value on traditions of honor.<sup>12</sup>

This means that the appeal to honour of the terrorist organisations might also resonate amongst immigrant Muslims in Western Europe and other Western societies. Al Qaeda, for

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<sup>9</sup> The current debate about the role of religious terrorism seems to be divided into two camps. On the one side scholars argue that religious fanaticism is the main cause for contemporary terrorism. They argue for example that Islam is a violent ideology that incites violence. On the other side scholars argue that deprivation causes radicalism and that religion is just something to fall back to in tough times. They reduce the role of religion to practically zero. For more information on this debate I recommend: Bruce Hoffman, *Inside terrorism* (New York 2006); Jeroen Gunning and Richard Jackson, 'What's so 'religious' about 'religious terrorism?', *Critical studies on terrorism*, 4 (2011) 3, 369-388; Karen Armstrong, *Fields of blood: Religion and the history of violence* (New York 2015) and Simon Cottee, "'What ISIS Really Wants" Revisited: Religion Matters in Jihadist Violence, but How?', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40 (2017) 6, 439-454.

<sup>10</sup> Abu Muhammad Al 'Adnani Al-Shami, 'This Is the Promise of Allah' (19 June 2014), <https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/bitstream/handle/10066/14242/ADN20140629.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed on 21 January 2018) 1-11, there 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ayman Al-Zawahiri, 'A Victorious Ummah, A Broken Crusade: Nine Years After the Start of the Crusader Campaign' (15 September 2010), <https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/bitstream/handle/10066/7272/ZAW20100915.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed on 21 January 2018) 1-13, there 8.

<sup>12</sup> Unni Wikan, *In Honor of Fadime: Murder and Shame*, trans. Anna Paterson (Chicago 2008) 58.

example, tries to convince Muslims in the West to commit attacks in their country in the name of religion and honour in their propaganda magazine.

### 1.1 Theoretical and practical relevance

Revenge for the violence and humiliation inflicted on the Muslim community worldwide, the *ummah*, is a central motive for contemporary Islamic terrorism. In a culture of honour, being attacked and not fighting back is humiliating and violates the honour of the attacked. Jihadist terrorism is often presented as revenge for the violence inflicted on the *ummah* and lauded by terrorist organisations as active resistance. As Irish political scientist Louise Richardson remarks: 'Statements by Al Qaeda, and all other terrorist groups, whether for internal or external consumption, are suffused with the language of revenge. It is difficult to overestimate its importance'.<sup>13</sup>

But while many prominent experts on terrorism recognise the importance of revenge, it has never been convincingly connected to the concept of 'honour'. In Middle Eastern societies, revenge might be seen as a means to restore the honour. Although scholars like Robert Pape, Jessica Stern, Louise Richardson mention the importance of honour in Middle Eastern societies, they do not specify how honour plays a role in the rhetoric of jihadist organisations.<sup>14</sup> For example, Richardson says: 'The honor and glory of the battle is another constant theme in the conversations of terrorists everywhere from Andersontown to Afghanistan'.<sup>15</sup> But a critical explanation of this constant recurring theme is lacking. This thesis aims to cover this theoretical gap between honour and terrorism. Al Qaeda will be the case study in this study on the role of honour in Islamic terrorism.

The goal is to specify in what way exactly honour is used in the propaganda of the longest existing and still operating jihadist terrorist organisation, Al Qaeda. Since honour is a recurring theme in the academic literature, but its mechanisms are not yet established, different ways in which honour might be used to motivate terrorists will be identified. Resulting from the lack of literature on the role of honour on terrorism, not all examples,

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<sup>13</sup> Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (New York 2007) 4.

<sup>14</sup> Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, xvii; Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York 2003) 33; Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York 2005) 135.

<sup>15</sup> Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, 74.

secondary sources and concepts will be immediately pertinent to the Al Qaeda case. However, a firm theoretical basis is necessary to analyse the Al Qaeda sources and therefore secondary sources about honour will be used, even if they are not directly related to Islamic terrorism. The lack of preceding sources proves the necessity of this research. The propaganda magazine *Inspire* and the speeches of Osama bin Laden will be instrumental to find out whether honour plays a prominent role for Al Qaeda terrorists, and if so, how it functions.

Al Qaeda has carried out some of the most violent and infamous attacks in the last twenty-five years.<sup>16</sup> The 9/11 attacks are the gruesome highlight of the organisation's capability to threaten even the most powerful nation in the world. The organisation developed significantly after the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in 2001. Although its central leadership was effectively cut off from its affiliates, Al Qaeda showed remarkable resilience. Exactly thirty years after its foundation in 1988, Al Qaeda remains relevant and threatening. Its ideology of jihad against America and its allies is still attractive to radicalised Muslims all around the world.

American political analyst and professor of terrorism studies Bruce Hoffman, has stated that while Islamic State (IS) receives all the attention, Al Qaeda has been quickly rebuilding.<sup>17</sup> They announced another affiliate in Kashmir and solidified their influence in Syria, Yemen and Somalia. While IS is more focussed on the close enemy, enrolled in sectarian strife and fighting against apostate rulers and renegade Muslims, Al Qaeda's prominent enemy is still the United States and the West.<sup>18</sup> Instead of demanding their followers to migrate to the Middle East, like IS does, Al Qaeda tries to inspire their followers to wage lone jihad in the West.<sup>19</sup> According to Hoffman, Al Qaeda surpassed IS in terms of influence, reach, manpower and cohesion.<sup>20</sup> Contrary to IS' narrative, which revolves around establishing an Islamic State, Al Qaeda's ideology does not need territory to survive. The long existence – but also the still existing substantial threat – of Al Qaeda, makes it particularly interesting to

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I know: An Oral History of Al-Qaeda's leader* (New York 2006) xxxi.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce Hoffman, 'Al Qaeda's Resurrection' (version 6 March 2018), <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/al-qaedas-resurrection> (accessed on 26 June 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Celine Marie I. Novenario, 'Differentiating Al Qaeda and Islamic State Through Strategies Publicized in Jihadist Magazines', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 39 (2016) 11, 953-954, there 962.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Vallee, 'Digital Jihad: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Dabiq vs. Inspire' (version 20 July 2015), <https://www.ict.org.il/UserFiles/Vallee-Digital-Jihad-Dabiq-Inspire.pdf> (accessed on 22 February 2018) 1-38, there 9.

<sup>20</sup> Hoffman, 'Al-Qaeda's Resurrection'.

research the historical development of the organisation and the use of the concept of 'honour' in the rhetoric over time.

## 1.2 Historiography

In his pioneering book about the cross-cultural applicability of the concept of 'honour', British anthropologist Frank Henderson Stewart says: 'Honor is very important --- more important than life itself, it is often said'.<sup>21</sup> Honour is central to most Middle Eastern communities. Yet, honour is a complex concept which can take on many shapes. According to Unni Wikan 'the question of what honour "is" in society must surely be an empirical one'.<sup>22</sup> Honour is culturally dependent and is not established universally. But as American academic James Bowman recognises, while honour by 'its very nature is relative to particular social context the use of honour in certain societies is remarkably consistent'.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Al Qaeda tries to convince Muslims from all over the world to commit attacks to defend the honour of the *ummah*, shows that the rhetoric of honour is perceived to resonate among Muslims in the West as well as anywhere in the world. Al Qaeda is in that sense a product of globalisation, connecting different societies with their jihadist ideology.<sup>24</sup> Since this thesis examines many different uses of honour, a narrow definition would restrict the research. Instead of giving a definition of honour in terms of synonyms, this thesis seeks to give a functional definition, explaining how the concept functions in society.

Although it is not immediately pertinent to honour in Islamic terrorism, a short explanation of the historiography of honour will be given. Some knowledge on the research on honour until now might provide helpful theoretical context to this study. According to Bowman, divergent historical processes have led to a preservation of honour culture in the Middle East, while the honour culture in the West has disappeared.<sup>25</sup> The unfamiliarity with the concept made honour hard to define for Western scholars. As Bowman says: 'Instead of "Honour," we now have only a motley collection of synonyms – pride, self-respect, *amour propre*, reputation, dignity prestige and credibility etc.– which contains no exact equivalent'.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Frank Henderson Stewart, *Honor* (Chicago 1994) 45.

<sup>22</sup> Unni Wikan, 'Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair', *Man* 19 (1984) 4, 635-652, there 645.

<sup>23</sup> Bowman, Honor, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks* (Baltimore 2008) 138.

<sup>25</sup> Bowman, Honor, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, 38.

American psychologist Guy Fricano also notices confusion about the definition of the concept. He remarks: 'the academic literature on honour spans the disciplines [...] it has become so vast and varied that it can be unclear when they are truly exploring the same phenomenon denoted as honour'.<sup>27</sup>

After the Second World War, the concept of 'honour' had become so unfamiliar in the West that it was researched as backward phenomenon. Greek anthropologist J. G. Peristiany, for example, examined the remaining honour culture in Mediterranean societies in the 1960's as a leftover from European antiquity.<sup>28</sup> Together with British social anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers, he published a study on honour and grace in anthropology in the 1990s, that still informs many of the anthropological research on honour.<sup>29</sup> In the 1990s, American social scientists Dov Cohen and Richard E. Nisbett did a series of experiments on honour culture in South America. They concluded that the Southerners were relatively more violent than the North Americans and explained this by referring to the honour culture in the South.<sup>30</sup> While these are all examples of studies on honour, honour was almost never thoroughly studied in connection to terrorism.

Gustavo Correa, professor of Spanish poetics, analysed the use of honour in theatre plays of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in 1958. He identified two mutually constitutive aspects, namely horizontal and vertical honour.<sup>31</sup> This distinction has been prominent in the literature about honour ever since. Fricano uses this distinction to analyse the speeches of Osama bin Laden. Fricano's research is the only study that analyses the exact functioning of honour in jihadist texts. His most important finding is that Correa's theory is better applicable to bin Laden's statements when the *ummah* is considered the primary locus of honour. Correa implied that horizontal and vertical honour are individual attributes, but Fricano argues that they should be considered attributes of the *ummah*.<sup>32</sup> Although his research offers interesting insights, he

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<sup>27</sup> Guy Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour in the statements of Osama bin Laden', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 5 (2012) 2, 197-217, there 198.

<sup>28</sup> J. G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago 1994).

<sup>29</sup> J. G. Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers, ed., *Honor and Grace in Anthropology* (Cambridge 1992).

<sup>30</sup> Dov Cohen and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Field Experiments Examining the Culture of Honor: The Role of Institutions in Perpetuating Norms About Violence', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23 (1997) 11, 1188-1199; Dov Cohen and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Self-Protection and the Culture of Honor: Explaining Southern Violence', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 20 (1994) 5, 551-567.

<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, I was not able to read the original text by Correa: Gustavo Correa, 'El doble aspecto de la honra en el teatro del siglo XVII', *Hispanic Review* 26(1958) 99-107. My knowledge of the Spanish language is unfortunately lacking.

<sup>32</sup> Guy Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 212.

only focusses on horizontal and vertical honour, while leaving out thorough investigation in other forms of honour. A thorough understanding of the concept of honour is indispensable in understanding an Islamic terrorist group like al Qaeda.

Those who live and die by honour will not be deterred by the threat of violence. As Fricano rightly argues: 'traditional honour has become increasingly alien to Western social thought and vexes the present war on terror in the form of Western difficulty to assessing the honour-oriented perceptions of allies, adversaries and others within the Islamic world'.<sup>33</sup> In a globalised world in which local cultures are getting more and more connected to each other, understanding each other's cultures is essential to act decisively and effectively. Especially the Global War on Terror, wherein Western countries seek to cooperate with local Islamic societies, renders a comprehensive study into honour indispensable.

The general ignorance towards honour in the West is as difficult to understand for people in the Middle East as honour crimes are for people who are not used to the all-embracing reach of honour. Illustrative for this mutual misunderstanding and the dangers that it might entail, is the reaction of the US leadership' condemnation of the US Marines who urinated of dead Taliban fighters and recorded it. While stories of Taliban torture of Western prisoners of war were widely known, US leaders still condemned this act of retaliation. Although the condemnation is a logical response from a Western perspective as an attempt to uphold a moral standard in the conflict, according to Fricano, it propagated the perception that the coalition is without honour.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, proceeding Fricano's research and supplementing it with more thorough research is essential in creating a more complete understanding of the terrorist motivation.

### 1.3 Goal and research question

The purpose of this thesis is to explicate the way in which honour functions in the propaganda of Al Qaeda over time. Researching the development of the concept of 'honour' as it is used by one of the most prominent jihadist organisation, will give important insights in the way honour functions in Islamic terrorism. Because Al Qaeda is an international terrorist organization, that attracted many foreign jihadists and has a constituency in all corners of the world, the organisation probably used an appeal on honour that resonates within the entire

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<sup>33</sup> Guy Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', *Ibidem*, 198.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, 214.

Islamic community. Researching honour in connection to terrorism in a structured manner will offer a new perspective for the study of jihadist terrorism. Honour is an underexposed phenomenon in the study on terrorism, while for many of the terrorists that are being discussed, honour is very important. Understanding honour might lead to a better understanding of terrorists' motivation, which is the first step in developing a successful counter-terrorism policy.

The main research question that will be answered is: How does honour function in the propaganda of Al Qaeda over time? To answer this the question, it is essential to research which different forms of honour could be defined in jihadist propaganda. The complexity of the concept requires a thorough analysis of the possible characteristics of honour. Honour might be lost in many ways, and this might require different ways of restoring the honour. Different mechanism of honour, might motivate individuals differently.<sup>35</sup>

Since this thesis will be dealing with the use of honour over time, sources will be analysed from the early days of Al Qaeda up until today. An explanation of the historical development of Al Qaeda and its local branch Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) will provide the essential background information. Subsequently, the role of honour in the speeches of Osama bin Laden, covering the years 1994 to 2004, will be established. Thereafter, the role of honour in the propaganda magazine of AQAP, *Inspire* magazine, will be analysed. The issues of this magazine were published from 2010 to 2017. The analysis of these sources enables a comparison of the concept of 'honour' over time. This will give insight in the dynamics of honour in the propaganda and how it has changed in the different stages of development of Al Qaeda.

The hypothesis is thus, that changes in endogenous and exogenous factors of Al Qaeda influence the use of the concept of 'honour' in the propaganda. Endogenous factors are for example organisational transformations and changes in ideology, while exogenous factors are for example enhanced pressure from the United States and other adversaries. The exact manner in which the development of the organisation influences the use of honour will be

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<sup>35</sup> The difference between discourse and practice is a complicated one, that has been subject to much debate. Although words and actions are two distinct categories of historical evidence, it is difficult to differentiate between the two. Although honour discourse in the propaganda and the practical use are not the same, for this research on jihadist terrorism the difference between discourse and action is less relevant. In radical religious discourse words can already be legally punishable. Since the jihadist discourse is all-encompassing, expressing radical thoughts is usually perceived as threatening to society. That's why I will treat the jihadist propaganda as discourse as use.

established. Atrocities done to the Muslim community by the United States could for example result in a more prominent place for revenge in the rhetoric of Al Qaeda. Understanding how certain situations influence the use of honour, will be instrumental in comprehending the role of honour in jihadist terrorism.

#### 1.4 Methodology

This thesis consists of an explorative qualitative concept analysis of the use of honour in the propaganda of Al Qaeda over time. To analyse the mechanisms of honour, a conceptual framework is necessary in which the different uses of honour can be compared. Considering that previous research into the mechanisms of honour is lacking, a new model should be constructed in order to establish the relevant variables.<sup>36</sup> An explorative method will be employed to construct a framework on the basis of characteristics of honour extracted from secondary literature from mainly anthropological and sociological perspectives. As stated above, since literature on honour in terrorism is lacking, it is necessary to research secondary sources on honour that are not directly pertinent to the Al Qaeda case. To investigate how honour functions in Islamic terrorism, a more general research into the functioning of honour is necessary. The literature about honour will provide the necessary variables, namely different characteristics that might be ascribed to honour.

By combining these variables, distinguishable honour moves will be defined. A move is defined as an action or combination of actions that make up the process from one situation to another. For example, writing a thesis is an action, but graduation is in this definition a move, because it entails a process in which someone is a student in the starting situation, but becomes a graduate after certain actions at the end of the process. In combination with honour, the starting position will usually entail violated honour and requires certain actions to restore the honour. After the actions, the honour will be restored and this is the end of the process. American psychologist Dan P. McAdams was an inspiration for the method of this thesis. In his book *The Redemptive Self*, McAdams establishes six moves of redemption, that will serve as a foundation for the establishment of the honour moves.<sup>37</sup> McAdams researches redemption specifically in the context of the American society, which might seem irrelevant for this study of honour in Islamic terrorist. It might seem remarkable to use the analytic

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<sup>36</sup> Peter G. Swanborn, 'Kwalitatief onderzoek en exploratie' *KWALON* 9 (2004) 2, 7-13, there 9.

<sup>37</sup> Dan P. McAdams, *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By* (Oxford 2013).

method he employed to study the American society for Middle Eastern societies. However, the methodological basis for his redemptive narratives is equally apt to study honour moves. In the next chapter, a more extended explanation of McAdams will be given. Trigger words will be derived from secondary literature, in an iterative process with the primary sources. These trigger words will be instrumental to identify the moves in the texts.

To provide the necessary background information, the development of Al Qaeda will be explained in chapter 3. The history of Al Qaeda will be divided in five phases, distinguished by changes in endogenous and exogenous factors. Subsequently, the framework from chapter 2 will be directive to the explorative qualitative discourse analysis of the primary sources. Firstly, the speeches of Osama bin Laden will be analysed in chapter 4. Since most speeches are written in Arabic, a translation by James Howarth will be used. A thorough analysis of the honour moves will be performed to find out how often and in what manner the different honour moves occur. The development of the use of honour will be compared to the development of Al Qaeda. In chapter 5, all the issues of the English propaganda magazine, *Inspire*, that have been published until the writing of this thesis will be analysed. Since these magazines are published by Al Qaeda's local branch, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, this chapter will start with a short description of the organisation. The same method of analysis will be used to analyse the use of honour moves in the issues of *Inspire*.

To effectively analyse the development of the concept of 'honour' over time, an explorative analysis of the amount of occurrence of different moves will be presented in a quantitative manner. Although tables and figures are usually lacking in qualitative studies, for both the honour moves in bin Laden's speeches as the honour moves in *Inspire* a table and a figure will be added.<sup>38</sup> In these tables data will be provided on the occurrence of the different moves. The data presented in these tables functions as an instrument to provide insight into patterns and developments in the use of honour. Since this is not a quantitative study, they should merely be interpreted as explorative. The large number of pages of the sources require a structural display of the results.

Since the issues of *Inspire* make up many more pages than the speeches of bin Laden, the analysis of the magazine requires more space in this thesis. To ensure an equivalent treatment of the sources and to prevent a loss of focus, the analysis of the sources will be mainly based on the trigger words. Osama bin Laden was one of the contributors to *Inspire*

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<sup>38</sup> Swanborn, 'Kwalitatief onderzoek en exploratie', 8.

and influenced almost all authors directly or indirectly. It is important to recognise this, since it could distort the results of the analysis.

## 2.0 Theoretical framework

Since an existing frame to analyse honour is lacking in scientific literature, a framework will be drafted in this chapter. The variables for the framework will be extracted from secondary sources on honour. Since the secondary literature is not directly pertinent to the Al Qaeda case, this framework might be useful for other Islamic terrorist organisations as well. The various characteristics that might be ascribed to honour will be examined. These characteristics will be presented in contradictory sets of concepts and will function as the building stones for the establishing of five honour moves. The moves are distinguished by differences in narratives and exclusive indicators in the form of certain trigger words. In chapter three and four, the moves will be applied to the speeches of Osama bin Laden and the issues of *Inspire* to analyse the mechanism of honour used in the rhetoric.

### 2.1 Redemption from dishonour

The methodology of this thesis is inspired by McAdams' theory of redemptive narratives. In his book, *the Redemptive Self*, McAdams describes the way some Americans narrate their life story. He states that 'highly generative adults' tend to tell their life story in a redemptive way. Generativity is defined as being highly concerned and committed to 'promoting the fare and development of future generations'.<sup>39</sup> These generative adults recall that struggles and setbacks have contributed positively to their life. Bad things, for them, eventually always lead to positive outcomes, that is why McAdams call these narratives redemptive. McAdams defines redemption as 'a deliverance from suffering to a better world'.<sup>40</sup> In religion, redemption is imagined as a divine intervention or sacred process and the better world might be a divinely transcendent status in this life or in the afterlife.<sup>41</sup> Apart from the religious connotations, redemption also carries many secular meanings not related to religion.

In secular terms, redemption is defined in the dictionary as the act of making something better or more acceptable.<sup>42</sup> Restoration of certain forms of honour might be a form of redemption, in the sense that losing honour requires an action or a set of actions to

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<sup>39</sup> McAdams, *The Redemptive Self*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Merriam-Webster, 'Redemption', <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/redemption>, (accessed on 25 March 2018).

regain it. The moves and dynamics that McAdams describes for redemption might therefore be effectively used for honour moves as well. While the content of his research is culturally dependent, his methodological framework is not.

The loss of honour is a tragic and all-encompassing event in honour societies. Honour might be lost in various manners, for example through not responding adequately to an insult or transgressing the honour code. Bowman explains the risk of dishonour: 'Dishonor is more like a fatal disease than a moral failing. It requires constant vigilance and even than can strike anyone at any time. And its only end can be death'.<sup>43</sup> The compelling mechanism of honour is hard to understand for Westerners not used to the all-compassing reach of the concept. Guy Fricano says: 'Loss of honour implies loss of worth and dispossession of humanity within the honour group, and, by extension imperilled spiritual status'.<sup>44</sup>

Losing honour is such a serious matter, that it is essential to restore honour to participate in society. Honour isn't a luxury, but necessary for social acceptance and general welfare.<sup>45</sup> Immoral sexual behaviour by unmarried girls, might in some Muslim communities require honour violence to restore the honour of the family. Honour violence might in this case lead to redemption from dishonour. However, not all honour moves deal with the restoration of honour. Some honour moves are aimed at increasing the honour of the actor, as will be demonstrated in the next paragraph.

McAdams distinguishes six languages of redemption: 1. atonement/ salvation; 2. emancipation/ freeing from oppression; 3. upward mobility; 4. healing and recovery; 5. enlightenment and; 6. development. He identifies the domain in which these languages are commonly used and establishes the redemptive move they embody.<sup>46</sup> Moves entail an action or a set of actions in a process from one situation to another. Image 2.1 shows all the redemptive moves McAdams identifies. Atonement is, for example commonly used in a religious domain as a move from a situation in which a person is sinful but gains insight and redeems oneself through acts of conversion and penance.<sup>47</sup> In the same manner McAdams establishes redemption moves, in this thesis five honour moves will be established.

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<sup>43</sup> Bowman, *Honor*, 18.

<sup>44</sup> Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 199.

<sup>45</sup> Wikan, *In Honor of Fadime*, 63.

<sup>46</sup> McAdams, *The Redemptive Self*, 42.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, 41.

TABLE 1.1. *Six Languages of Redemption*

Type	Source Domains	Redemptive Move	Examples
Atonement	Religion	Sin → forgiveness, salvation	Puritan spiritual autobiographies Christian conversion experiences and confession
Emancipation	Political system	Slavery → freedom	African American slave narratives Stories of escaping abuse, liberation from oppression
Upward mobility	Economy	Poverty → wealth, social standing	Benjamin Franklin's <i>Autobiography</i> Horatio Alger stories, rags-to-riches immigrant success stories Motivational speakers, business testimonials
Recovery	Medicine, psychology	Sickness → health, wholeness	Stories of healing Psychotherapy narratives 12-step programs
Enlightenment	Education, science	Ignorance → knowledge	Stories of the growth of mind Stories of insight, discovery
Development	Parenting, psychology	Immaturity → actualization	Stories of psychological growth Stories of moral development and character-building

Common stories, images, and metaphors for redemption include religious atonement, political emancipation, upward economic mobility, the recovery of health and well-being, enlightenment and insight, and the many ways in which people talk about positive psychological and moral development. In making narrative sense of our own lives, we may borrow from and blend many different discourses to capture the idea of moving from suffering to a positive life outcome.

Image 2.1: *Six Languages of Redemption*<sup>48</sup>

## 2.2 Characteristics of honour

The different characteristics of honour will now be described, using secondary literature on the subject. It will be demonstrated how these characteristics were derived, and what choices have been made. The characteristics are horizontal/vertical, gendered/non-gendered, and individual/collective. These characteristics constitute the variables for the honour moves. In paragraph 2.3, further clarifications for the theoretical framework will be explained.

### 2.2.1 Horizontal/vertical

Frank Henderson Stewart makes a distinction between horizontal- and vertical honour. He defines honour as a right to be treated with respect. According to him horizontal honour is the right to be treated equally by others who accept the same code of honour: the honour community. If a person follows the rules of the code, he or she has a right to be treated as equal. Within the honour community, everyone is aware of the rules concerning honourable and dishonourable conduct. An important aspect of honour is that it can be lost. Horizontal honour can be lost when someone neglects the code and it is retained when certain rules are followed.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> McAdams, *The Redemptive Self*, 42.

<sup>49</sup> Stewart, *Honor*, 60

As is illustrated in figure 2.1, a certain action at point 'a', might cause horizontal honour to be lost, while a certain action at point 'b' might effectively lead to a restoration of honour. Horizontal honour is sometimes also referred to as negative honour, because it can be lost while it cannot be increased.<sup>50</sup> Thus, referring back to the previous paragraph, redemption through the restoration of honour deals with horizontal honour but not with vertical honour.

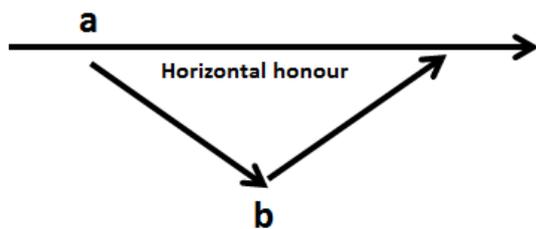


Figure 2.1: *Visual representation of the mechanism of horizontal honour*

In contrast, vertical honour functions as a mechanism of hierarchical social differentiation. Stewart defines it as the special right to respect for those who are superior by virtue of 'their abilities, their rank, their services to the community, their sex, their kin relationship, their office, or anything else'.<sup>51</sup> Vertical honour thus indicates the special respect inherent to the position of an individual in the social structural scheme. It can be rooted in the nobility of birth, manifested in rank or established through competition. It is the 'honor that is enjoyed by those who have shown themselves to be superior as individuals'.<sup>52</sup> With vertical honour, one distinguishes oneself through a certain action from the rest of the honour group by transcending it.

In figure 2.2, it is illustrated that by a certain action at point 'a', honour is increased and rises above the horizontal honour of the community. Vertical honour requires horizontality, but horizontal honour does not require vertical honour. In Arabic, both in the literary language and in many dialects, one word for honour (*'ird*) refers only to certain kinds of horizontal honour, while another (*sharaf*) may refer either to certain kinds of vertical honour, certain kinds of horizontal honour or to both.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Stewart, *Honor*, 59.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

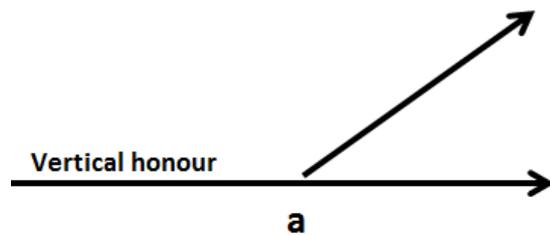


Figure 2.2: *Visual representation of the mechanism of vertical honour*

### 2.2.3. Gendered/non-gendered

According to Fricano, horizontal honour is gendered. He argues that the required actions concerning the prevention of honour loss and the restoration of honour differs between men and women. This is a reason why honour culture is opposed to the egalitarian morality of men or women in the West. Because the gendered concept of honour is so far removed from (theoretical) Western equality between men and women in society, this characteristic of honour deserves to be taken into account. Understanding this aspect of honour, might lead to a better understanding of how the use of honour might motivate the readers of jihadist propaganda.

The code of honour regulates the roles of men and women in the household, but also in the society as a whole. Male honourable behaviour consists of bravery, indomitability and the readiness to avenge insults or injuries. Men are expected to uphold traditional warrior virtues. Honourable female virtues are modesty, faithfulness and chastity.<sup>54</sup> In some Middle Eastern societies women are completely excluded from the public sphere, which excludes them from the domain of honour. In other societies, women's honour belongs to the men of the family. If a women's honour is impugned, it is often the man who responds.<sup>55</sup>

Terrorism as violent act of war or defence is perceived by radical Muslims as a masculine project. The violent defence of the honour of the *ummah* is a masculine responsibility. Passivity is on the other hand a feminine virtue. Young able-bodied men who forsake their masculine duty to defend their honour forfeit at once their honour as well as their masculinity.<sup>56</sup>

Although female suicide bombers are sometimes used by terrorist organisations, it is not common. 'The very statement that "women" can be terrorists or even violent seems to be

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<sup>54</sup> Bowman, *Honor*, 313.

<sup>55</sup> Stewart, *Honor*, 107.

<sup>56</sup> Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 206.

a contradiction in terms. Most notions of what it means to be a “woman” emphasise peacefulness, mothering, care, and interdependence rather than violence’.<sup>57</sup> According to Dutch professor in the International Relations, Beatrice de Graaf, the reason why terrorist organisations accept women, is because it is more cost-efficient, women arouse less suspicion and are checked less often.<sup>58</sup> However, admitting women into terrorist organisations might convey the image that there are not enough brave men, which leads to a loss of honour for the organisation.<sup>59</sup>

Sometimes gender roles are not that discriminate in situations which involve honour. Although the roles of men and women are theoretically clearly divided and the domains for men and woman are strictly divided in most Middle Eastern societies, people do not always act accordingly. There are women who throw acid in their adulterous husband’s face to restore their honour, although violent action is commonly perceived as a male activity. The term gendered will be attributed to honour when there is a clear division between the expected behaviour for men and women. The term non-gendered will be used for situations in which the division is less clear or when honour is indiscriminate to gender.

#### 2.2.4. Collective/individual

Honour might belong to a person, but could also belong to a family or another social group. As Carolyn Strange and Robert Cribb argue: ‘Honour is an individual quality, but it also connects individuals to families, clans, communities, professions and ethnic and religious groups’.<sup>60</sup> According to Wikan, honour is a personal attribute, it is part of a person. The Arabic word for honour, *‘ird*, might also be translated as face. To lose face is a common expression for losing your reputation or respect. But she also says that honour might be attributed to a collective. ‘Honour also has a *collective* aspect: it belongs to the family, the clan, or the tribe – sometimes to a nation state. Members of the collective have a stake in the shared honour: if one of them is dishonoured, so are they all’.<sup>61</sup>

The men in the family are responsible for the honour of the women, and dishonour befalls the whole family. If a woman loses her individual honour this reflects on her husband

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<sup>57</sup> Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, eds., *Women, Gender, and Terrorism* (Athens 2011) 3.

<sup>58</sup> Beatrice de Graaf, *Gevaarlijke vrouwen: Tien militante vrouwen in het vizier* (Amsterdam 2012) 10.

<sup>59</sup> De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke vrouwen*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Carolyn Strange and Robert Cribb, ‘Historical perspectives on honour, violence and emotion’, in: Carolyn Strange, Robert Cribb and Christopher E. Forth, eds., *Honour, Violence and Emotions in History* (London 2014) 8-28, there 15-16.

<sup>61</sup> Unni Wikan, *In Honor of Fadime*, 58.

if she is married, and to her brothers and father if she is unmarried. Likewise, the honour of other social groups like the clan, tribe or religious group must be protected. To identify with the group means to identify with the honour of the group. Members of the community are responsible for the collective honour. The collective honour of the *ummah* is a prominent concept in terrorist' propaganda. If an insult or an attack is made or seen to be made on the beliefs of the *ummah* it will draw the anger of Muslims across the world.<sup>62</sup>

### 2.3 Clarifications of the framework

Some clarifications are needed. First of all, this theoretical framework is an artificial scheme that only to some extent reflects the reality. It does, however, help to get a grip on the fluid concept of honour and to clarify its mechanism, through an analytically distinguished framework. In reality, certain characteristics of honour are indistinct or at least not mutually exclusive. Particularly, the distinction between individual honour and collective honour is problematic.

The individual honour is based upon the commonly shared honour code, and thereby the individual derives his honour from the group. The *ummah* as the representative of the collective Muslim identity is honourable, and because the individuals identify with the *ummah* and its attributes, they become, by extension, honourable.<sup>63</sup> Any reference to the self is also a reference to the collective and any reference to the collective is a reference to the individual. If one belongs to a group that is being humiliated, he must show strength and retaliate to defend his honour.

'The concerns of the individual are secondary to those of the collective. Its good name and reputation are all that matters'.<sup>64</sup> This explains why the Muslim community worldwide reacted so aggressively to the Danish Mohammed cartoons. To insult the Prophet is to insult every Muslim who identifies with the Islamic community. Failure to respond to an insult means that the honour of the Islam and simultaneously every individual who identifies with the Islam is violated. By fighting for the honour of the *ummah*, the individual also fights for his/her self-interest. As Kruglanski says: 'Sacrifice for the cause is both personally redemptive and a mark

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<sup>62</sup> Akbar Ahmed, 'World Without Honour?', *The World Today* 54 (1998) 10, 246-248, there 246.

<sup>63</sup> Aida Arosoaie, 'In the name of honour and freedom: the sacred as a justifying tool for ISIS' and secular violence', *Culture and Religion* 18 (2017) 278-296, there 281.

<sup>64</sup> Wikan, *In Honor of Fadime*, 64.

of honor, a way of becoming a hero and part of an exalted elite'.<sup>65</sup> To uphold and protect the honour of the group is essential to uphold and protect one's own horizontal honour.<sup>66</sup>

Since these characteristics are intended as variables for a theoretical framework, there is no need for mutually exclusive concepts. The variables will demarcate the framework, that will be used as a clarification tool for comparing honour rhetoric within bin Laden's speeches and *Inspire*. If the characteristics contribute to the clarification of the object of research they are useful. In most sources that are analysed, the distinction between individual and collective honour could easily be recognised through the subject of the sentence.

The second clarification that needs to be made, is that these characteristics are not exhaustive. There are more characteristics of honour to be distinguished. For example, the concept of cultural honour could also be distinguished from religious honour. Bowman argues that religion has nothing to do with honour culture, and that it is purely cultural. According to him, stark and unforgiving dynamics, like the mechanisms of honour, tend to be associated with religion in the West since the enlightenment. He says:

It is partly just because Kant's principle arose out of the Enlightenment, which is in turn widely regarded as the triumph of reason over religious belief, that we so readily believe the Islamic honor culture to have been produced by religion. But this is not the case.<sup>67</sup>

The honour culture of Islamic societies predates the conversion to Islam in the seventh century. He finds evidence in the existence of local honour cultures of non-Islamic and non-Christian cultures nearby which resemble those of Islamic societies.<sup>68</sup>

But while it might be true that honour already existed before Islam, Islamic societies successfully blended the honour discourse in the Islamic religion. According to Fricano, honour is being rooted in divinity. The honour of the *ummah* is given by Allah, because the Muslims are the chosen ones to receive the true revelation. This means that the loss of honour would therefore imperil the status of the soul and the social worth of the individual or community.<sup>69</sup> This loss of the pure soul is also perceived as extending into the afterlife, in which Allah will punish the dishonourable with damnation.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Arie W. Kruglanski e.a., 'Fully Committed: Suicide Bomber's Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance', *Political Psychology* 30 (2009) 3, 331-357, there 335.

<sup>66</sup> Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 199.

<sup>67</sup> Bowman, *Honor*, 19.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>69</sup> Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 205.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, 206.

This distinction between cultural honour and religious honour is left out of the framework, because Islamists make no such distinction themselves. As Fricano says, Osama bin Laden presents Islam as recognising no valid distinction between religious, secular, cultural or political domains.<sup>71</sup> Religious identity is for bin Laden the cardinal axis of social recognition. In jihadism, Islam is perceived as covering all aspects of the world.

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that honour is just one factor in the rhetoric of terrorist organisations. Other factors commonly referred to in terrorist rhetoric are personal gain, injustice in power division and religious *fatwas* and Qur'anic texts. Honour and religion might often coincide, but that does not mean they are the same. Terrorists often justify their deeds citing verses from the Quran or sharia laws, which will not be discussed in this thesis. It would be wrong to argue that honour is a sufficient or a necessary explanation for terrorism. There are other components that play an important role, and without considering those elements, a satisfying explanation could not be reached. Nor is honour always a prominent element in every case of Islamic religious terrorism. It is however an under-researched concept and might contribute to a new enlightening perspective on terrorism.

## 2.4 Honour moves

Now the different possible characteristics of honour are established, six possible honour moves will be constructed. Constructing these different languages of honour, the variables were put in a table. The characteristics were combined and a definition of a move consisting of these variables was noted. For example, the variables vertical and individual were together defined as elevation move, because an individual might vertically enhance his honour when he or she elevates his or her status with respect to the honour community. And combining individual with horizontal, revenge was defined as moves, because the violated honour of an individual might be restored through revenge. The same was done for all different characteristics and all variables were combined. The combination of the characteristics resulted in five clearly distinct moves that together covered all the variables. These moves are: revenge, liberation, elevation, atonement and exoneration. This paragraph will elaborate on what these moves entail, how they could be indicated, and which trigger words will designate the move in the primary sources. The moves will be clarified with examples from many

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<sup>71</sup> Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 208.

different countries and communities that are deeply at odds with each other. Although the examples given below will not be immediately pertinent to the Al Qaeda case, their sole purpose is to illustrate the different moves. Thereby, Al Qaeda's global message connects local communities in a global battle for the honour of the *ummah*.

The first move that will be explained is *revenge*, which could be defined as a horizontal reflexive move. Stewart describes reflexive honour as a mechanism in which, beside someone's own actions, honour is being threatened and will be lost if a person fails to act accordingly. 'In a system of reflexive honour, a man's honour depends [...] on his responding properly each and every time his honour is challenged.'<sup>72</sup> As Stewart explains: 'If A impugns B's honor, then B's honor is ipso facto diminished or destroyed, unless B responds with an appropriate counterattack on A'.<sup>73</sup> In figure 2.3, it is illustrated that after point 'a', there are two possible paths, either a person fails to act properly and loses its honour, or he acts properly and keeps his horizontal honour.

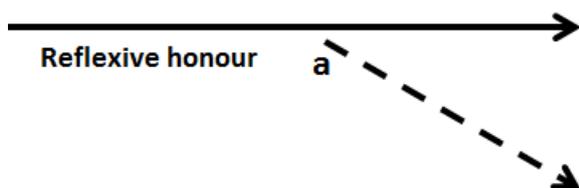


Figure 2.3: Visual representation of the mechanism of Reflexive honour

When you are insulted, you must act efficacious and take revenge to prevent honour from being lost. Whether honour is lost or restored, depends on the success of the revenging move. Since honour could be lost and restored, but not be enhanced, this move is horizontal.

Many young Muslims resented America's policies and its *Pax Americana* in the Middle East.<sup>74</sup> Between 1980 and 1995 the United States engaged in seventeen military operations in the Middle East, every one of them directed against Muslims. American professor for International Relations Stephen Walt estimates that over the past thirty years, the United States has killed approximately 288,888 Muslims worldwide. The hegemonic attitude of the

<sup>72</sup> Stewart, *Honor*, 139.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem, 64.

<sup>74</sup> Mohamed-Mahmoud Ould Mahamedou, *Understanding Al Qaeda: Changing War and Global Politics* (London 2011) 12.

US towards the Islamic world caused a feeling of humiliation and a violent resentment under Muslims.<sup>75</sup> With the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, this feeling multiplied.

This move might be both individual and collective. An example of individual revenge through a terrorist attack is described by Beatrice de Graaf. De Graaf describes how the widow Zarema violated the honour of her family by stealing from them and was consequently cast away. Without the perspective on a future and without honour, she was convinced by Chechen rebels to commit a suicide attack to restore her honour and pay back her debts. She ultimately refused to ignite the bomb and was arrested.<sup>76</sup>

Revenge is characterised as a gendered masculine move, although Zarema was a woman. It was already explained that female suicide bombers are not fully integrated. In sources, a revenge move might be recognised when honour is lost or in danger of being lost and could be restored through acting properly to the violated. Trigger words are: vengeance, retaliation, revenge, punish those who did harm, hitting back and avenging.

The second move is *liberation*. Liberation is a horizontal honour move, because this move might restore lost honour, but it cannot enhance it. Oppression leads to dishonour, because the male virtue of indomitability is violated. Therefore, this move is characterised as a gendered masculine move. The oppressed community wants to free themselves from oppression and seeks redemption from slavery. Since honour is lost because the community is dominated, liberation restores the honour. Liberation is collective, because it usually refers to an entire community and not just an individual. Although liberation is not always connected to honour, in most Islamic cultures it is, because indomitability is an important value for Muslim men. There are many examples of both religious and non-religious terrorist groups that fight for liberation. For example, the violent Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), have fought for their own state since the 1970's, in order to stop the oppression of the Indian government. An indicator in a source for the liberation move is that it is about an oppressed community that wants to free itself to restore honour. Trigger words are: freeing from oppression, emancipation, slavery and liberation itself.

The third move is *elevation*. Elevation is the only vertical move of the five, which means that the move is not required to prevent or restore the loss of honour, but it might lead to an

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<sup>75</sup> Mahamedou, *Understanding Al Qaeda*, 10.

<sup>76</sup> De Graaf, *Gevaarlijke vrouwen*, 173.

enhancement of honour. Through this move, an individual or a community transcends the horizontal honour community by performing honourable actions. These actions might differ per community but are similar in that they earn the actor a higher social status. Elevation is not gendered per se, because it is possible for men and in some societies for women as well to excel.

Elevation through certain actions will be illustrated by the following example. Unni Wikan lived among the men and women of a community in Sohar, an Omani town. At first, Sohar looked like a traditional honour community to her, in which sexual immorality was gravely damaging to the family honour. However, there were some exceptions. One woman of 25 years, Sheikha, had become flagrantly adulterous.<sup>77</sup> She openly violated the code of the community, but she was never criticised. When Wikan asked her neighbours why they did not reprimand her, they said “‘She is always friendly and hospitable, does not gossip, is kind and helpful’”.<sup>78</sup> In the culture of Sohari women hospitality is a particularly significant value for women. Unni explains: ‘Before she engaged in her adulterous career, Sheikha’s hospitality had been restrained: her husband was known to be stingy. In her new life she excelled among all her neighbours’.<sup>79</sup> So while her adulterous actions were dishonourable, she excelled in other actions. Her hospitable actions were deemed as honourable, which resulted in an elevated status in society.

In connection to terrorism, martyrdom is the best example of this move. Naim Stefan Ateek, a Palestinian Anglican cleric and theologian, defines a martyr as ‘one who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce a religious principle; one who makes great sacrifices for a cause or principle; one who endures great suffering’.<sup>80</sup> Elevation often has strong religious connotations, especially in martyrdom. An individual can achieve a status of martyr by sacrificing himself, which exalts him above the honour community and gives admission to the heavenly afterlife. Suicide bombers transcend the community and glorify themselves, because they make the ultimate sacrifice for the cause. Martyrdom is individual, but jihadist groups also enjoy an elevated position in certain Islamic communities.

Elevation might be based on cultural norms, like hospitality, but also on religious principles in the case of martyrdom. The indicator of elevation is when a source speaks of

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<sup>77</sup> Wikan, ‘Shame and Honour’, 639.

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem, 640.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 644.

<sup>80</sup> Naim Stefan Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (New York 2008) 122.

increased honour through the performance of certain actions like sacrificing one's life, or whatever action that elevates one's social status. Trigger words for this move are promotion, aggrandisement, raising, uplift, competition, excellence, glorification, apotheosis, laudation and martyrdom.

The fourth move is *atonement*. Atonement is a horizontal move, because it is defined as reparation of a wrong or injury. This move could be regarded as the diagonal opposite of elevation. Where elevation is about the restoration or prevention of lost honour, elevation vertically increases honour. Atonement has, like elevation, strong religious connotations. Atonement is characterised by an individual or community that committed a sin and therefore lost its honour. The honour might effectively be restored through doing penance or reconciliation. Since both men and women can be sinful, this move is non-gendered. Atonement in religion means doing penance for your sins to restore the imperilled status of your soul. While atonement is mostly directed towards an individual, communities might perform certain actions for atonement as well.

In Islam, certain purist groups argue that moderate Muslims deviated from the true religion and are sinful until they return to the right path. For example, Salafism is such a fundamental Sunni branch, arguing for the return to the path set out by Mohammed.<sup>81</sup> For Salafis, all modern interpretations of Islam are heretical. The essence of Salafism is the principle of *Tawhid*, or the oneness of God, which entails that Allah is the only authority and he decides everything.<sup>82</sup> Returning to the right path and refrain from sins fall under the atonement move. Osama bin Laden is a well-known adherent of the Salafi movement.

An indicator for atonement is that a sinful individual or a community does penance for its sins and thereby restores honour. Trigger words might be deviation, sin, penance, returning to the right path, reconciliation, forgiveness and blessing.

The fifth and last move is *exoneration*. This means that honour should be restored through an act of purification. Exoneration is a horizontal move, because it might restore the lost honour, but not increase it. Usually, exoneration refers to a community and not to an individual. A community is corrupted by the presence of subversive elements which infringes upon their honour. These elements should be removed to purify the community and restore the honour.

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<sup>81</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006) 207-239, there 207.

<sup>82</sup> Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', 208.

Exoneration has strong religious connotations in the sense that a religious community should be purified from other believers. Guy Fricano remarks for example that the ousting of Western troops from holy Muslim territory is inseparably connected to honour. He says: 'To defend Islamic honour is to defend the integrity of its territory, the invasion of which is tantamount to a breach of collective honour'.<sup>83</sup> Thus, exoneration might apply to a community, but to territory as well. The protection of the purity of the community is a masculine duty, while purity itself is a feminine virtue, which makes the move gendered. An indicator for exoneration is when a source speaks of a corrupted community that purifies itself through the elimination or ousting of subversive elements to restore the collective honour. Trigger words are purification, purge, exemption, corruption, ousting, catharsis, and cleansing. In table 2.1 beneath, all the moves with their characteristics, the indicator and possible trigger words are indicated.

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<sup>83</sup> Guy Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 207.

<b>Move</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Trigger words</b>
<i>Revenge</i>	Horizontal, reflexive, gendered, individual or collective	Honour is or will be lost when not acting properly to humiliation	Vengeance, retaliation, revenge, punish those who did harm, hitting back and avenging.
<i>Liberation</i>	Horizontal, gendered, collective	Community is oppressed and has to free itself to restore honour	Freeing from oppression, emancipation, slavery, liberation
<i>Elevation</i>	Vertical, non-gendered, individual or collective	Increased honour through the performance of actions that enhance social status	Promotion, aggrandisement, raising, uplift, competition, excellence, glorification, apotheosis, laudation, martyrdom
<i>Atonement</i>	Horizontal, non-gendered, individual or collective	Sinful actor does penance for his sins and restores honour	deviation, sin, penance, returning to the right path, reconciliation, forgiveness and blessing.
<i>Exoneration</i>	Horizontal, gendered, collective	Corrupted community purifies subversive elements to restore collective honour	purification, purge, exemption, corruption, ousting, catharsis, and cleansing.

Table 2.1 Honour moves

## 2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the different characteristics of honour are explained. These characteristics are the variables, which are necessary to demarcate the object of analysis. From the determined variables five honour moves were extracted. For each move, a short explanation was given on what it entails, what the main characteristics are, what might be an indication for the move in sources and trigger words were established that might be useful in identifying the different moves in the primary sources.

Four out of five honour moves comprise horizontal moves. Only elevation is a vertical move. All moves are either only applicable to collective actors or to both individuals and communities. The majority of the moves are gendered and masculine, which might be explained by the emphasis on passivity for women in traditional Islamic communities. Active defence is deemed a male task, which makes moves that entail violence more masculine. However, elevation and atonement could also be feminine. A possible reason for this might be that these moves do not explicitly require violent action. For the other moves violence is not essential, though a central element.

In the next chapter, the historical and political context of the rise and development of Al Qaeda will be explained. Subsequently, the primary sources will be analysed using this framework, to determine how honour is used in the rhetoric of Al Qaeda.

## 3.0 Historical development of Al Qaeda

To understand the function of honour in the propaganda of Al Qaeda over time, it is imperative to know the context in which the concept is used. This chapter provides the historical background of Al Qaeda. Since its foundation thirty years ago, in 1988, the organisation changed significantly. Providing the context is crucial to explain the possible changes in the use of honour.

Rendering the analysis of the use of honour over time more structural, the history of the development of Al Qaeda will be categorised in five phases, each covering roughly six years. The conceptual reason for the division of the phases is based on changing endogenous and exogenous factors, like key events or radical changes in the internal network. The study of American social network analyst Victoria Barber on the evolution of Al Qaeda's global network will be used as a rough guideline for this division. Barber applied a network analysis to Al Qaeda's history from 1996 to 2013 and made a division in the development in four phases.<sup>84</sup> Her research was restricted to these years, because she based her findings on data from the Global Terrorism Database and the Mapping Militants Project. Since the sources used in this thesis span the years 1994 to 2017, an earlier phase will be added, and the last phase will be extended.

The prehistory of Al Qaeda, started with the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan that started in 1979.<sup>85</sup> Throughout the 1980s, thousands of Muslims travelled to Afghanistan to liberate the Muslim land from the foreign occupiers. Osama bin Laden, the seventeenth son of the wealthy Mohammed bin Laden, became a prominent financier of the Afghan jihad. After the death of his father, Osama inherited a small fortune of around 25 million dollars, which he used to set up a gateway organisation for foreign fighters in Afghanistan.

Together with the Palestinian Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden founded the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) or 'Services bureau' in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1984.<sup>86</sup> MAK housed, trained and financed the anti-Soviet jihad. Azzam is considered the ideological father of Al Qaeda. In 1984, he issued a religious ruling, or *fatwa*, entitled *Defence of Muslim lands*, in which he

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<sup>84</sup> Victoria Barber, 'The Evolution of Al Qaeda's Global Network and Al Qaeda Core's Position Within it a Network Analysis', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9 (2015) 6, 2-35, there 2.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel L. Byman, 'Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: different goals, different targets' (version 29 April 2015), <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/comparing-al-qaeda-and-isis-different-goals-different-targets/> (accessed on May 7 2018).

<sup>86</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York 2001) 51.

outlined the difference between defensive and offensive jihad. He revolutionary argued that defensive jihad is both a responsibility for the entire Muslims community, and an individual obligation for all Muslims. This led to an influx of foreigners to join the ranks of the *mujahidin* (religious fighters).<sup>87</sup>

### 3.1 Phase one: Al Qaeda's infancy (1988 – 1996)

The first phase covers the years 1988 to 1996, which could be seen as a period of infancy of the organisation. Al Qaeda was still in the process of formulating a comprehensive ideology. During this period the most important adversary of Al Qaeda changed from corrupt Arab regimes to the United States.

Azzam conceptualised Al Qaeda in 1987, defining its composition and aims. Both Azzam and bin Laden wanted to unite the multiple small jihadist movements that fought in Afghanistan and combine them under one banner. They founded Al Qaeda al-Sulbah, that could be translated as 'the solid base' in 1988.<sup>88</sup> By this time, bin Laden also developed close ties with Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Zawahiri had been imprisoned and tortured by Egyptian authorities. This experience deeply shaped him and influenced him in prioritizing overthrowing certain Arab governments over repelling foreign invaders.<sup>89</sup> According to Al-Zawahiri it was not only an individual duty for Muslims to fight against foreign invaders, but also to overthrow *murtaddeen* (apostate) rules in Arab countries.<sup>90</sup>

After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1989, the success of anti-Soviet jihad motivated the *mujahidin* to build a global jihad network. Osama bin Laden became the sole leader and ideological driving force of Al Qaeda after the murder of Azzam in November 1989. His personal goal was to topple the Saudi regime and to re-establish the Islamic Caliphate, but he was also supporting campaigns against other apostate Arab governments.<sup>91</sup> Most *mujahidin* who had fought in Afghanistan wanted radical social and political change in their own countries. Because Arab governments ruled according to man-made law instead of sharia, they abashed the oneness of Allah, or *Tawhid*. Since strict monotheism is a very important characteristic of radical Islam, Al Qaeda interpreted this as a declaration of war to

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<sup>87</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York 2016), 130.

<sup>88</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York 2002) 3.

<sup>89</sup> Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 58.

<sup>90</sup> R. Kim Cragin, 'Early History of Al-Qa'ida', *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008) 4, 1047-1067, there 1054.

<sup>91</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 55.

the Islam.<sup>92</sup> The Arab regimes were openly hostile to Islamist movements, suppressing them ferociously. Al Qaeda used the humanitarian cover of MAK to infiltrate in the various regional conflicts in the Middle East and to recruit and train fighters.<sup>93</sup>

The decision of the regime of Saudi Arabia to request military support from the United States and allowing them to be based on the Arabian Peninsula during the Gulf War, made bin Laden more hostile to the regime.<sup>94</sup> But it was only after the Gulf War, that Osama bin Laden began to perceive the United States as the most significant enemy of Islam. The exogenous factor that caused this change was the influence of the United States in the Middle East and its continued presence on the Arabian Peninsula. The *mujahidin* realised that without directly challenging the Western military power, they could not bring about change in their own countries. The support of the US and its Western allies for unrepresentative Arab regimes made change impossible. For bin Laden, the intervention in Somalia by the United States in 1991, was another proof of the US' ambition to dominate the Muslims.<sup>95</sup> According to Al Qaeda's leadership, the US would not only retreat from Somalia, but from the Muslim world altogether if they could successfully attack the US in Somalia. When the US indeed pulled out of Somalia in 1994, this was put forward as a victory for Al Qaeda.

### 3.2 Phase two: the path to 9/11 (1997-2001)

In this phase, Al Qaeda's central leadership consisted of a small and highly selective group. Only around two hundred mujahidin were selected to join the Al Qaeda organisation.<sup>96</sup> The focus on the United States, the bureaucratisation of the organisation and the preparation of the attack on the US homeland 11 September 2001, are the endogenous factors that differentiates this phase from the previous one.

In 1996, the Al Qaeda leadership issued a *Declaration of Jihad* in which the US was accused of imperialism, massacres against Muslims and corruption. Televised images of Israeli troops repressing Palestinian protestors in the occupied territories, and other Muslim suffering reinforced bin Laden's message that Muslims are under attack and that they should fight back. The humiliation inflicted on the Muslims, and their overall inability to step up to it, caused considerable support for Al Qaeda.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Cragin, 'Early History of Al-Qa'ida', 1063.

<sup>93</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 5.

<sup>94</sup> Cragin, 'Early History of Al-Qa'ida', 1058.

<sup>95</sup> Bergen, *Holy War Inc.*, 81.

<sup>96</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and al-Qaeda* (New York 2011) 88.

<sup>97</sup> Jason Burke, 'Al Qaeda', *Foreign Policy* 142 (2004) 18-20+22+24+26, there 22.

Osama broadened the appeal of Al Qaeda's ideology to attract the widest possible audience. He was not trained as a religious scholar and thus more flexible in his ideology, which explains his willingness to establish links with Shia jihadist groups, like Lebanese Hezbollah.<sup>98</sup> In his speeches, he frequently calls on Muslims to forget their internal differences. 'It is crucial to overlook many of the issues of infighting in order to unite our ranks so that we can repel the greater unbelief'.<sup>99</sup> Doctrinal differences between Muslims were subordinate to the real enemy, which were the US and its allies. Al Qaeda's management structure consisted of several committees, each headed by an emir. This led American security professor Peter Bergen to call Al Qaeda 'one of the most bureaucratic terrorist organizations in history'.<sup>100</sup>

Between 1991 and 2001, Al Qaeda was responsible for six major attacks on US targets. On February 26, 1993, the World Trade Centre was bombed for the first time by a truck bomb. On November 13, 1995, the Saudi-America military base in Riyadh was bombed, and on June 25, 1996, Al Qaeda operatives attacked the Al Khobar towers in Saudi Arabia. The US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed simultaneously on 7 August 1998. On 12 October 2000, the local affiliate of Al Qaeda in Yemen committed a suicide attack against the USS *Cole* Warship. By far the most important attack was the operation against the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.<sup>101</sup>

Al Qaeda preferred large-scale, dramatic bombings against symbolic targets. By selecting these targets, they aimed to denigrate the United States, expose its vulnerability and prompt further retaliations.<sup>102</sup> The attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, that killed 257 people and injured over 4000, made Al Qaeda known worldwide.<sup>103</sup> These attacks showed the power and capability in operational planning of the terrorist organisation. The 9/11 attacks were the absolute peak of power. Al Qaeda was able to organise a mass-casualty attack in the heart of the United States, showing the organisation posed a legitimate threat. It chose a highly symbolic target in the capital killing 2700 people and seriously harming the economy in the assault.

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<sup>98</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 86.

<sup>99</sup> Osama bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, trans. James Howarth (New York 2005) 42.

<sup>100</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *The Longest War*, 89.

<sup>101</sup> Mahamedou, *Understanding Al Qaeda*, 10.

<sup>102</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Byman, 'Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS'.

### 3.3 Phase three: Al Qaeda as household name (2002 – 2006)

The endogenous factors in which this phase differs from the former one, are that Al Qaeda was a household name. Through its fame, the network of affiliated organisations expanded quickly. The exogenous factors that differentiates this phase are the Global War on Terror and the resulting pressure on the central leadership. Al Qaeda's geographical base in Afghanistan was destroyed and bin Laden went into hiding, which resulted in the decentralization of authority.

Since 9/11, every militant jihadist organisation wanted to be part of the Al Qaeda brand. For local organisations it was beneficial to establish an alliance with Al Qaeda. 'For local jihadists, pledging allegiance to bin Laden and adopting the Al Qaeda brand meant obtaining access to a wide variety of assets: money, weapons, logistical support, expertise, and, of course, training'.<sup>104</sup> There were multiple organisations that swore *bayat* (allegiance) to Osama bin Laden. Next to that, the concept of 'home-grown' terrorism developed as inspired individuals began to operate on Al Qaeda's behest. All these Al Qaeda affiliates participated in the ideology of the US as the enemy and expressed the willingness to target American institutions, combatants and non-combatants. At the same time, they were waging domestic jihad in their countries.<sup>105</sup> The Al Qaeda leadership believed that they could pressure the US to end their support for Arab regimes and to withdraw from the Middle East, after which the regimes could be toppled.<sup>106</sup>

The US counter-terrorism response, the War on Terror, that followed 9/11, killed or imprisoned most of Al Qaeda's leadership, froze and disrupted its finances, destroyed its trainings camp and infiltrated its communications networks.<sup>107</sup> As a result of the American campaign in Afghanistan starting on October 7, 2001, the Al Qaeda leadership lost its main base for planning and preparing terrorist operations and became geographically isolated. However, Al Qaeda and the Taliban made close alliances and merged into one effective unit to wage a guerrilla war against the US troops.<sup>108</sup> Bin Laden went into hiding in the adjacent border regions of Pakistan but was unable to set up facilities as remotely as sophisticated as those destroyed.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Byman, 'Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS'.

<sup>105</sup> Angel Rabasa e.a., *Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part 1, The Global Jihadist Movement* (Santa Monica 2006), 75.

<sup>106</sup> Byman, 'Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS'.

<sup>107</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>108</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 9.

<sup>109</sup> Scott Atran, 'A Question of Honour: Why the Taliban Fight and What to do About It', *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38 (2010) 343-363, there 360.

To survive without central command, Al Qaeda decentralised the leadership to various regional Al Qaeda groups. The local affiliates of Al Qaeda in different regions in the world became more autonomous. Al Qaeda became a worldwide strategic framework of Islamist military and political organisations without the need for a centralised command.<sup>110</sup>

To stay relevant and to secure the central leadership's legitimacy, Osama bin Laden intensified the effort to formulate a comprehensive ideology, based on sharia law between 2002 and 2004.<sup>111</sup> The essence of this ideology was *takfiri* thought, which frames Arab rulers as apostates and this justifies toppling them. *Takfir* could be translated as excommunication, and Al Qaeda presented itself as executor of this punishment for apostasy.<sup>112</sup> While Arab regimes were the close enemy, the global enemy for Al Qaeda was the Jewish-Crusader alliance. But the ideology formulated made 'little distinction between targeting local enemies and targeting global ones and have a one-size-fits solution – jihad'.<sup>113</sup> The invasion of Iraq by the US in 2003 made the war against the Crusaders ever more relevant.

Bin Laden still called on affiliate militant organisations to unite and confront the biggest enemy, the US, together. In his speeches he tried to keep the affiliates ideologically bound to the central leadership. While many militant groups had their own local agenda, the central leadership also required them to carry out external operations against the West. All local affiliates had to find a balance between seeking local acceptance and adhering to the orders of the central leadership. To convey an image of unity and power, it was important for the central leadership that the leaders of affiliated groups present a united front.<sup>114</sup> Dedication to the Al Qaeda core could manifest itself in rhetorical pledges of allegiance to Osama bin Laden, spectacular attacks on foreign targets, or expanding operations across national boundaries.<sup>115</sup> The demands of the leadership differed per group, depending on the organic ties of the group's leaders to the al Qaeda core. A close relationship could lead affiliates to neglect their local audience and interests to meet the requirements of performing external

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<sup>110</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 6.

<sup>111</sup> Leah Farall, 'How al Qaeda works: What the Organization's Subsidiaries Say About Its Strength', *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2011) 2, 128-138, there 132.

<sup>112</sup> Wright, *The looming Tower*, 125.

<sup>113</sup> Farall, 'How al Qaeda works', 132.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibidem*, 133.

<sup>115</sup> Bryce Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local: The Dual Agendas of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34 (2011) 2, 102-123, there 103.

attacks.<sup>116</sup> So, although Al Qaeda did not exercise full command and control over its affiliated groups, it did control external operations.<sup>117</sup>

### 3.4 Phase four: the decline of Al Qaeda (2007 – 2011)

During this phase, the external pressure increased, since the US were trying to decapitate Al Qaeda's leadership by targeting them with bombs or drones. The endogenous factors that changed resulted from the exogenous ones. The network of Al Qaeda overextended and Al Qaeda's core lost control over some of its affiliates, causing the structure of the network changed dramatically.<sup>118</sup>

Aggressive counter-terrorism operations by the West and Arab rulers, weakened the organisation, and diminished Al Qaeda's central leadership capacity for effective command and control. However, Al Qaeda's network was not much affected by it, because communication between the leadership and its subsidiaries was managed by second-tier leadership.<sup>119</sup> They began to rely on the internet to inspire lone wolf attacks in the West. 'Al Qaeda has become the first guerrilla movement in history to migrate from physical space to cyberspace'.<sup>120</sup> To remain a global threat, they tried to persuade radicalised individuals to stay in their place of residence and carry out attacks within the borders of their own country.

Many attacks were planned by operatives who had either a very loose connection to Al Qaeda or none at all. Like one of the perpetrators of the London underground attacks of 2005, who visited an Al Qaeda camp in Pakistan. This led American political scientist Angel Rabasa to conclude that Al Qaeda was no longer an organisation but a 'network of like-minded Islamic radicals who commit violent terrorist attacks to defeat their Western enemies'. He describes Al Qaeda as a 'global jihadist nebula' with the goal of harming the West and apostate governments in the Muslim world.<sup>121</sup>

On May 1, 2011, US Navy Seals stormed the safe house where Osama bin Laden hid and killed him. After bin Laden's death the central leadership further eroded. Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's second in command assumed the role of emir or leader. Although its ideology is puritanical, in this phase Al Qaeda became an essentially modern organisation.

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<sup>116</sup> Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local', 103.

<sup>117</sup> Farall, 'How al Qaeda works', 133.

<sup>118</sup> Barber, 'The Evolution of Al Qaeda's Global Network', 18.

<sup>119</sup> Farall, 'How al Qaeda works', 136.

<sup>120</sup> Michael Page, Lara Challita and Alistair Harris, 'Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Framing Narratives and Prescriptions', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23 (2011) 2, 150-172, there 151.

<sup>121</sup> Rabasa, *Beyond Al-Qaeda*, 77.

They began using modern communication techniques like YouTube and Twitter to disseminate its message all over the world. Through statements, videos and their propaganda magazines, they tried to convince Muslims that jihad is their obligation.<sup>122</sup>

### 3.5 Phase five: in the shadow of IS (2012 – Present)

Phase five covers the period in which Al Qaeda disappears even more into the background, since Islamic State takes over Al Qaeda's role as main adversary of the West. This could be identified as an exogenous factor. However, while the world is currently focussing on IS, Al Qaeda is quietly rebuilding its strengths. An endogenous factor for the decline is the succession of Al-Zawahiri and his lack of charismatic qualities and legendary status. He failed to appeal to an audience of young Muslims, but implemented a successful strategy to regain Al Qaeda's former strength.

After the killing of Osama bin Laden, chief propagandist Anwar al-Awlaki, and its second-in-command, Abu Yahya al-Libi, Al Qaeda was in decline. Al-Zawahiri had been unable to control the affiliates associated with the Al Qaeda brand name.<sup>123</sup> Al Qaeda's leadership did not possess any military capability, and its legitimacy was derived from the successes of its affiliates. The network had become too big, and Zawahiri could not control the affiliates anymore.

In February 2014, Al Qaeda disavowed relations with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), one of its former affiliates. ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi tried to expand the region of operation of his organisation from Iraq to include civil war-torn Syria. He declared a merger of Islamic State of Iraq and fellow Al Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra in 2013. Both the leader of Jabhat al-Nusra, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani and Ayman al-Zawahiri were against the merger. Eventually this led to a break in the relation between Al Qaeda and ISIS.

While Al Qaeda was in decline, ISIS conquered large swaths of territory in an astonishing speed. On June 29, 2014, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared the establishment of a caliphate called Islamic State, with himself as caliph. Ever since, the media seems to have forgotten Al Qaeda and focussed completely on IS. A coalition was set up to fight IS and resulting from the heavy bombardments and regional battles by the coalition against IS, it lost much of its terrain since 2015.

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<sup>122</sup> Byman, 'Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS'.

<sup>123</sup> Ahmed S. Hashim, 'The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate', *Middle East Policy* 21 (2014) 4, 69-83, there 76.

In a recent analysis by Bruce Hoffman, he predicts a resurgence of Al Qaeda. According to Hoffman, Al Qaeda particularly profited from the Arab Spring. While the West saw the popular uprising as a unique opportunity to establish a democratic government, Al Qaeda saw the toppling of oppressive regimes as a chance for militant jihadism.<sup>124</sup> Hoffman states that after seven years, 'it appears that al-Qaeda was among the regional forces that benefited most from the Arab Spring's tumult'.<sup>125</sup> Al Qaeda just announced a new affiliate in Kashmir and solidified its influence in Syria, Yemen and Somalia. According to Hoffman, Al Qaeda's presence in Syria by Jabhat al-Nusra is far more detrimental than that of IS.<sup>126</sup>

Al-Zawahiri has developed into a strong strategist. 'Ayman al-Zawahiri has emerged as a powerful leader, with a strategic vision that he has systematically implemented'.<sup>127</sup> He ordered to avoid mass killings, especially among Muslim civilians. Because of this, Al Qaeda was able to present itself as moderate extremist organisation, relative to the brutal practices of IS. According to Hoffman, Al Qaeda surpassed IS in influence, reach, manpower, and cohesion. Al Qaeda can count on the loyalty of tens of thousands of forces. They can disrupt local and regional stability and have the capability to plan operations against their declared enemies all over the world. The senior leadership is protected from drone strikes by dispersing over different countries. Al-Zawahiri refrains from external operations in the West, because he wants IS to take the blows from the coalition while Al Qaeda is rebuilding its army. But the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks shows that they are still capable.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Vallee, 'Digital Jihad', 26.

<sup>125</sup> Hoffman, 'Al Qaeda's Resurrection'.

<sup>126</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

## 4.0 Honour according to bin Laden

This chapter consists of an analysis of the speeches of Osama bin Laden. His most well-known speeches span the years from 1994 to 2004. After this year bin Laden was being chased down and disappeared from the radar completely. Some audiotapes have been released by Al Jazeera after 2004, purportedly by bin Laden, but this could not be confirmed. In the book *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, Bruce Lawrence collected all speeches and interviews of Osama bin Laden that could reasonably be confirmed as authentic. This book will be used as main source for the speeches that will be analysed.

Terrorism does not work if no one is watching, and in the days before YouTube and Twitter, Al Qaeda needed Western journalists or television broadcast companies to bring its message to its target audience.<sup>129</sup> Pressured by the United States and local regimes, most media were unwilling to broadcast speeches of bin Laden. Al Jazeera's commitment to broadcast stories that were newsworthy, regardless of ideological orientation, made it the perfect broadcast company for bin Laden to reach his audience.<sup>130</sup> Bin Laden was neither an original thinker, nor an outstanding Quranic scholar. What makes him unique are his literary gifts, his ability to build polemic arguments and charismatic attitude.<sup>131</sup> Bin Laden was the leader of global jihadism and could rationally substantiate his campaign against the United States. This makes his speeches particularly interesting to analyse.

### 4.1 Honour in the messages

In Lawrence's *Messages to the World*, consisting of 24 speeches between 1994 and 2004, the term 'honor' occurs forty times on 242 pages. Of these forty times, seventeen times it occurs as 'honorable' a common denomination of scholars and religious authorities. 'Honor' as a noun occurs 21 times, while 'honored' occurs the remaining two times. The use of honour by Osama bin Laden could be divided in three categories.

Honour is firstly used to address religious scholars or sheiks. For example, when he addressed the Islamic scholars of the Arabian Peninsula in a letter in 1995. Bin Laden said: 'To the honorable scholars of our Islamic *umma* in general and to the scholars of the Arabian

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<sup>129</sup> Byman, 'Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS'.

<sup>130</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 65.

<sup>131</sup> Bruce Lawrence, 'Introduction', in: Osama bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, ed. Bruce Lawrence, trans. James Howarth (New York 2005) xvi.

Peninsula in particular'.<sup>132</sup> This appellation is a form of vertical honour. Through their authority in faith, scholars and sheiks transcend the honour community and have the special right to respect inherent to their position in society. Bin Laden explained the special role of scholars, when he addressed them at the International Conference of Deobandis held from April 9 to 11, 2001. 'Honorable scholars, it is no secret to you that a great duty has been thrown upon your shoulders, for you are the inheritors of the Prophets legacy, you are the leaders among men, who publish your juridical decrees and work in the light of your guidance'.<sup>133</sup> In this way of using, honour is a title of respect or a form of addressing a person with a certain rank. This is not the form of honour most interesting for this thesis.

Secondly, honour was used to describe the prestige rewarded to people for certain actions. When Bin Laden applauded the perpetrators of the attacks in Riyadh and Khobar, he said that 'they did a great job; theirs was a big honor that I missed participating in'.<sup>134</sup> And: 'a great honor passed us by that it was not us who participated in the killing of the Americans in Riyadh'.<sup>135</sup>

Killing Americans was perceived as a prestigious act, and so is being killed in the name of God. Bin Laden said: 'Getting killed in the cause of God is a great honor wished for by our Prophet. [...] Being killed for God's cause is a great honor achieved only by those who are the elite of the nation'.<sup>136</sup> According to bin Laden, only some people are chosen to die for God. The *mujahidin* are granted this special opportunity: 'I swear by God, happy are those who are martyred today, happy are those who are honoured to stand under the banner of Muhammed, under the banner of Islam, to fight those Jews and Americans, the killing of whom is among the most important duties and most pressing things'.<sup>137</sup> This form of honour might be considered as a form of vertical honour. By performing a certain action, in this case killing the Americans or getting killed while trying, a person earns the right to special honour. This special right might only be attributed to the elite of the nation, namely the *mujahidin*, a hierarchal differentiated group. Fighting for God's cause elevates someone's status, which

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<sup>132</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 15.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*, 96.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

best fits the elevation move. The use of honour as elevation will be further elaborated in the paragraph about the elevation move.

The last and most important form of honour in bin Laden's speeches is the honour that he attributed to the *ummah*. Trying to convince the Americans to convert, he described Islam as 'the religion of the unity of God, sincerity, the best of manners, righteousness, mercy, honor, purity, and piety. It is the religion of total equality between all people, without regard to their colour, sex, or language'.<sup>138</sup> He also said that the *ummah* is addressed in the Qur'an as 'the Nation of honor and respect'.<sup>139</sup> Bin Laden attributed honour to the community of Muslims and the Islamic religion. This is in line with what is said in chapter 1, namely that honour is a collective characteristic of the *ummah* and by extension a characteristic of all individuals in the *ummah*.

According to bin Laden, this collective honour was lost when the Americans entered the Arabian Peninsula. When the forces of the Crusader-Jewish alliance occupied Saudi Arabia, they 'insulted the pride of our *umma* and sullied its honor, as well as polluting its holy places'.<sup>140</sup> During the invasion of Kuwait, the Saudi regime allowed soldiers of the United States to be based on the Peninsula. Bin Laden offered the service of his *mujahidin* warriors who successfully expelled the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, but the regime refused.

This refusal violated the honour of the Muslim men, because it conveyed the message that they were not thought capable of defending the land. 'Saudi Arabia was the regime which provoked the youths by opening up the country for the Crusaders in violation of religion, in disregard for the Muslims' sentiments, and in defiance of the manliness of the men of Saudi Arabia'.<sup>141</sup> By surpassing the Muslim soldiers, the Saudi regime insulted the virility of the *mujahidin*.

Another way in which the honour was violated was through the presence of infidels in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden described the country as 'the cornerstone of the Islamic world, place of revelation, source of the Prophetic mission, and home of the Noble Ka'ba where Muslims direct their prayers'.<sup>142</sup> Mecca and Medina are the most sacred places in Islam, and entrance to the cities is forbidden for non-believers. The Ka'ba in Mecca is the *qibla*, the direction of

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<sup>138</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 166.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*, 171.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

prayer for all Muslims all over the world. Bin Laden was shocked by the decision of the Saudi regime to allow unbelievers to be based close to the holy cities. He described the decision to ask help from infidels as humiliating.

And is there any torment – in the world, in the spirit, or in the senses – worse for any believer than the humiliation and weakness that his *umma* is experiencing, not to mention the defilement of her holy places, occupation of her land, and violation and plundering of her sanctuaries.<sup>143</sup>

For bin Laden, the apparent inability of the Saudi kingdom to defend itself without the help of foreign troops was the result of the House of Saud's renunciation of Islam.<sup>144</sup> In a message directed at the scholars of the Arabian Peninsula, bin Laden addressed the problem by saying:

You are all aware of the degree of degradation and corruption to which our Islamic *umma* has sunk, in its government and in the feebleness and cowardice of many of its scholars in the face of its enemies, as well as in its internal divisions. This is because of their neglect of religion and weakness of faith, which allowed the enemy to attack. The enemy invaded the land of our *umma* and violated her honor, shed her blood, and occupied her sanctuaries.<sup>145</sup>

The regime asked infidels, enemies of Islam, to protect the most holy places of the religion, which was unacceptable. References to the violation of honour by the invading American troops were widespread in his statements. For example, he said that Muslims should stick to their religion and not 'smile in the face of America while it occupies our land and corrupts our honor under the pretext of liberty, equality, and the laws of the United Nations'.<sup>146</sup> He described America as 'killers who have scorned the blood, honor, and holy places of Muslim'.<sup>147</sup> So the honour is violated by the invading forces, and the holy places are corrupted.

To find out how exactly honour functions, it is essential to examine how bin Laden assumes honour could be restored. Speaking of the restoration of honour, he prayed to God to establish an *ummah* 'in which the banner of *jihad* is raised up high to restore to our *umma* its pride and honor, and in which the banner of God's unity is raised once again over every stolen Islamic land'.<sup>148</sup> For bin Laden, raising the banner of *jihad* was the way to restore the

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<sup>143</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 18.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*, 3.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

pride and honour of the *ummah*. In his speech about the nineteen students who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks, he said: '*jihad* is the way to honor our *umma* and [preserve] its security'.<sup>149</sup> Jihad is presented as the best method to restore the honour of the *ummah*.

Yet, jihad can function in many different ways, and jihad alone does not answer the question how honour functions in his speeches. How exactly jihad functions in the restoration of honour does not become sufficiently clear from analysing the concept alone. Therefore, in the next paragraph, the speeches will be examined to find out which honour moves are used.

## 4.2 Honour moves

The speeches of Osama bin Laden have been analysed to determine which moves he used. Using the indicators and trigger words established in chapter 1, the different moves were marked and counted. In the table below, the results of this analysis are presented in a quantitative manner. Since this is an explorative qualitative analysis, the data presented here should be considered as a clarification tool only. The patterns and dynamics that could be extracted from the table and the figure, will be worked out further in a qualitative manner.

In the table below, bin Laden's speeches have been marked from 1 to 24. The letters above the columns represent the different moves: 'H' is for honour, 'R' for revenge, 'L' for liberation, 'EL' for elevation, 'A' for atonement and 'EX' for exoneration. The percentage underneath the columns of the moves, indicates how often the moves are used relative to each other. In the figure, the year of the publication of the speech is displayed. The corresponding phase in the development of Al Qaeda is represented by the lines under the years and the number. Note that the colours of the lines have nothing to do with the honour moves but are purely meant to differentiate between the phases.

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<sup>149</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 195.

	H	R	L	EL	A	EX	Year	Main theme
1	2	0	1	0	2	2	1994	Letter to bin Baz
2	2	0	3	0	2	0	1995/1996	Letter to Arab scholars
3	0	0	4	2	2	2	1996	Declaration of jihad
4	0	0	5	0	0	1	1996	Critique on Saudi Arabia
5	4	3	5	1	4	1	1997	US as occupier
6	0	0	3	0	3	0	1998	Declaration of jihad by World Islamic Front
7	3	5	3	0	0	1	1998	About attacks on Riyadh and Khobar
8	2	0	0	0	1	1	2001	Speech for Conference of Deobandis
9	0	1	0	1	0	0	2001	Encouraging Pakistani protests
10	1	3	0	1	0	1	2001	Responding to invasion of Afghanistan
11	0	6	2	0	0	2	2001	Justifying reciprocity of killings
12	0	1	0	0	0	0	2001/2002	Crusade against Muslims
13	0	2	0	0	0	0	2001	9/11 was revenge
14	0	1	1	2	0	0	2001	Celebration of the hijackers of 9/11
15	0	0	1	3	0	1	2002	Motivating Afghans to rise up
16	3	3	3	0	0	1	2002	Letter to the Americans
17	0	3	0	0	0	0	2002	To the allies of America
18	0	0	2	0	1	1	2003	Motivating Iraqis to resist invasion
19	3	1	1	0	4	2	2003	History of Crusader violence
20	0	0	1	3	0	0	2003	Congratulating the Iraqi resistance
21	1	1	1	0	7	3	2004	Attack on Arab rulers
22	0	3	0	0	0	0	2004	Offering truce to peoples of Europa
23	0	3	0	0	0	0	2004	Claiming responsibility for 9/11
24	3	0	1	2	8	5	2004	Indictment of Saudi regime
	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>24</b>		
		24,80%	25,50%	9,70%	23,40%	16,60%		

Table 4.1: Amount of honour moves to be identified in the speeches.

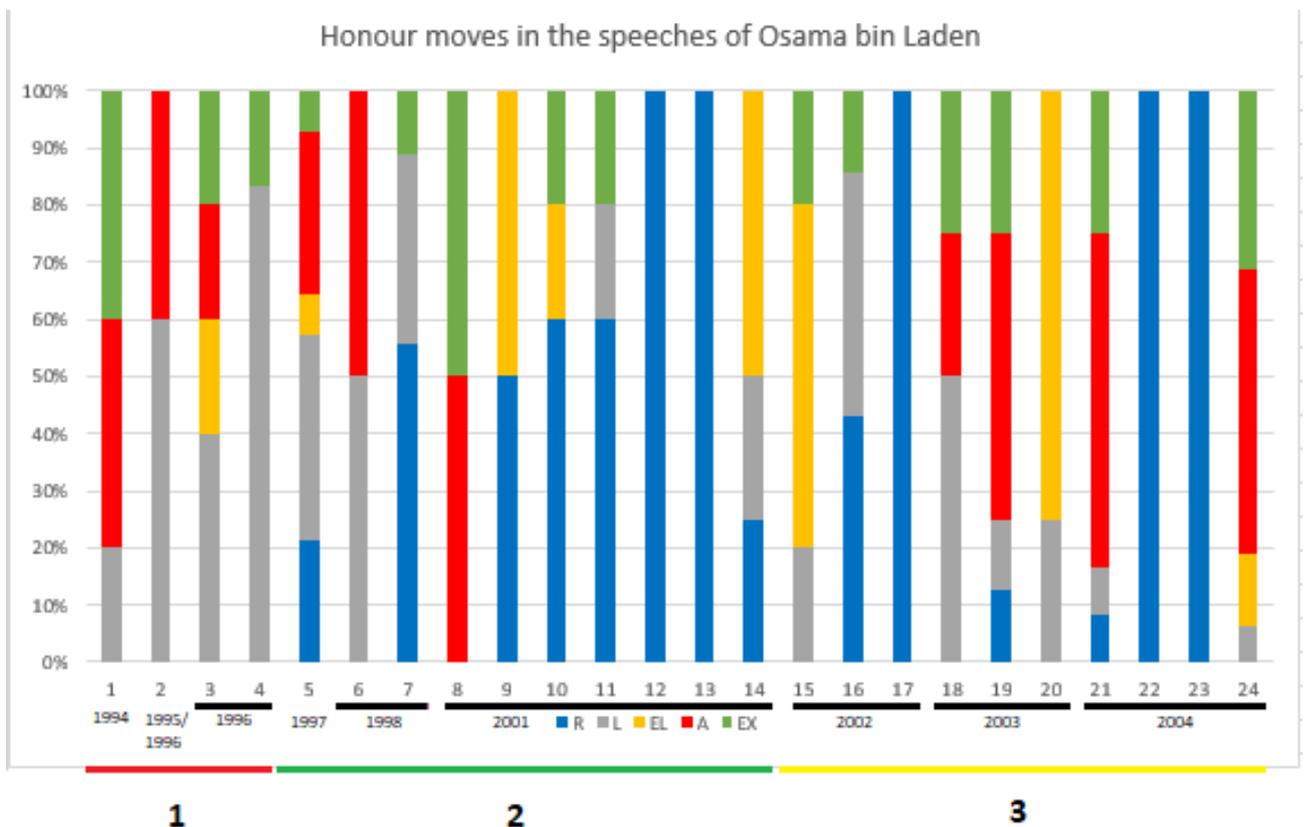


Figure 4.1: Honour moves in the speeches

Data findings suggest that all moves except for elevation were used more or less in equal quantity. Revenge is used for the first time in speech 5 and occurs almost in every speech after that. This corresponds with the second phase in the development of Al Qaeda, in which Al Qaeda planned attacks against its greatest enemy: America. Liberation occurs many times in the first seven speeches, corresponding with the first phase and the beginning of the second phase. Especially in the first phase, Bin Laden's main concern was the permission the Saudi regime gave to the Americans to be based on the peninsula. It was less used in speeches 8 to 13 and reoccurs in the speeches 14 to 21, although less often. Elevation is the least used move of the five and there is no clear pattern to be recognised in the figure. In the table, however, there is a link visible between speeches that celebrate attacks or resistance and the occurrence of the elevation move. Atonement was variably used in speeches 1 to 8, but did not occur in the speeches 9 to 17. In speeches 18,19, 21 and 24, atonement is more prominently present again. From data findings it could be derived that atonement is often used in speeches that address Muslim audiences. Exoneration was used in many speeches, but a clear pattern could not be established. The move is used for both Muslim audiences and the American and European audiences.

In the following subparagraphs, the patterns will be further analysed and supplemented with additional dynamics that were found in the qualitative analysis. An explanation for the changes in the use of honour will be given on the basis of the contextual analysis in the previous chapter.

#### 4.2.1 Revenge

The revenge move is at play in cases where honour is lost and is considered only to be restored by adequately reacting to an insult. Revenge for the killing of Muslim by the United States and its Western allies was an important motive in bin Laden's statements.

Until the first Gulf War, his speeches were prominently focussed on the Saudi regimes transgressions, which corresponds with the characteristics of phase 1. On August 23, 1996, bin Laden changed his target and issued a *fatwa* authorizing jihad against the Americans for their presence in Saudi Arabia. However, it was not until the bombings of the American military bases in Riyadh and Khobar that revenge became a prominent concept in his statements. This could be explained, because bin Laden referred to these terrorist attacks as a reaction to American aggression against Muslims. 'The explosion was a reaction to US

provocation of the Muslim peoples, in which the US transgressed in its aggression until it reached the *qibla* of Muslims in the whole world'.<sup>150</sup> He expressed a threat to more bombings in revenge for the Muslims killed by the US in the Middle East. He said: 'If the American government is serious about avoiding the explosions inside the US, then let it stop provoking the feelings of 1.25 billion Muslims'.<sup>151</sup>

Revenge was thus used as a justification for the use of violence against Americans and its allies. In his speech of December 1996, he also justified the simultaneous bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania as revenge against the US. In Islamic jurisdiction, jihad is defined as defensive struggle, which is an individual obligation for all Muslims when the *ummah* has come under attack.<sup>152</sup> 'The enemy occupies an Islamic land and uses its people as human shields. A person has the right to attack the enemy. That is why Muslims have the right to carry out revenge attacks on the United States'.<sup>153</sup>

American citizens were considered a legitimate target as well, because America also killed innocent Muslims. Although the killing of innocents is forbidden in the Qur'an, it is justified as a form of defence. He said: 'Those who kill our women and innocent, we will their women and innocent. Until they stop doing so'.<sup>154</sup> The killing of innocents thus functioned as a means of deterrence to protect the women and children of the *ummah*.

Thereby, bin Laden did not consider American citizens to be innocent at all. The citizens of America chose the government and had the possibility to change the government. Since they refrained from protesting, they were by extension responsible for the American policy in the Middle East. Therefore, they might be targeted as well. After the attack on the Twin Towers, bin Laden issued a statement saying:

America has been filled with terror from North to South. What America is tasting today is but a fraction of what we tasted for decades. For over eighty years our *umma* has endured this humiliation and contempt. Its sons have been killed, its blood has been shed, its holy sanctuaries have been violated, all in a matter contrary to that revealed by God, without anyone listening or responding.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 52.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, 53.

<sup>152</sup> Lawrence, 'Introduction', xx.

<sup>153</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 140.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibidem*, 199.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

Bin Laden described the attitude of America vis-à-vis the *ummah* as humiliating. And since America did not listen to anything but the language of arms, they should fight back. 'They evidently won't wizen up without the language of beatings and killings so as they kill us without a doubt, we have to kill them, until we obtain a balance in terror'.<sup>156</sup> Revenge is thus justified as a means to defend the Muslim *ummah* against the US aggression, but this was not evidently connected to honour.

However, bin Laden also referred to revenge as a means to restore honour. He said that by waging jihad and bombing the Americans the men of the *ummah* erased the humiliation. About the attackers of Riyadh and Khobar he said: 'They have wiped disgrace and submissiveness of the forehead of their nation'.<sup>157</sup> He made the same remark about the perpetrators of the attacks on the US embassies in East Africa. 'I look at these men with much admiration and respect for they have removed the shame from the forehead of our *umma* whether in Riyadh or Khobar or east Africa or the like'.<sup>158</sup> While the Saudi regime allowed the Americans in the country, most Muslims did nothing against the much stronger occupier. The attacks showed bin Laden that some young men refused to remain passive, did their duty and attacked the United States. For bin Laden this active resistance meant that these men washed away the shame and submissiveness and restored the honour.

From this analysis it could be derived that revenge is commonly used by bin Laden in connection to a means of defence and deterrence, but is not evidently connected to honour. However, by actively resisting occupation, the *mujahidin* wiped away the shame of the *ummah* and thus restored its honour. Thus, bin Laden did use the revenge move in his speeches, although not often.

#### 4.2.2 Liberation

The liberation move is characterised by an oppressed community that has to free itself to restore its honour. Being dominated might violate the honour of the community. Indomitability is a male virtue and being submissive is thought to violate the honour of the man.

Whereas revenge was used more frequently by bin Laden in his latter speeches,

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<sup>156</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 119.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibidem*, 51.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

corresponding with phase 2 and 3, liberation was a very important motive in his first speeches. Especially when referring to the occupation of the holy sanctuaries, bin Laden used the term 'liberation'. In phase 1, the liberation of Saudi Arabia was bin Laden's gravest concern. He tried to convince the Muslim community that the presence of American troops on the Arabian Peninsula was an occupation and that they should wage a defensive jihad to oust them. In his latter speeches liberation was usually used in relation to Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and other Islamic countries where the US was involved. Moreover, liberation was used by bin Laden to convince Muslims to oust their oppressive tyrant rulers.

From his first speech for a wider audience in 1994 to his laudation of the simultaneous bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, on August 7, 1998, occupation and liberation were important motives in his speeches. The symbolic bombing of the embassies occurred exactly eight years after the US army first deployment to Saudi Arabia. In his speech directed at rulers, religious scholars and Muslims worldwide he urged them to stop the occupation of Saudi Arabia and to free the holy land. 'Defy them [the Israelis and Americans] in whatever way you possibly can, so as to expel them in defeat and humiliation from the holy places of Islam'.<sup>159</sup> In 1998, he said that it is well-acknowledged and commonly agreed that the Americans have occupied the holiest parts of the Islamic lands for over seven years. He said: 'To kill Americans and their allies - civilians and military - is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslims in all countries in order to liberate the al-Aqsa mosque and the holy mosque. So that their armies leave the territory of Muslims defeated broken and unable to threaten any Muslim'.<sup>160</sup>

Bin Laden was trying to raise awareness for the occupation and tried to motivate the *ummah* to wage jihad with his speeches. He said: 'our goal is to liberate the land of unbelief and to apply the law of God almighty'.<sup>161</sup> And referring to the history of the occupation of Muslim lands he deemed violence necessary, because 'Islamic countries in the past century were not liberated from the Crusaders' military occupation, except through Jihad in the cause of God'.<sup>162</sup>

In his later speeches, liberation occurs less often. When it occurs, it is in combination with Palestine or other Arab countries. For example, when he said: 'so let us relieve the

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<sup>159</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 30. Author's addition.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibidem*, 61.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

oppression of the poor people in Palestine and elsewhere'.<sup>163</sup> After the invasion of Afghanistan, he called the Americans colonizers, occupying Muslim countries for economic and religious reasons. Thereby, apart from inciting them to liberate themselves from the American occupiers, bin Laden also encouraged Muslims to 'motivate and mobilize the *umma* to liberate themselves from their enslavement to these oppressive, tyrannical, apostate ruling regimes who are supported by America, and to establish God's rule on earth. The areas most in need of liberation are Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen'.<sup>164</sup>

Although occupation and liberation from the Americans and tyrannical rulers were prominent themes in his speeches, bin Laden did not directly relate it to the restoration of honour. Being occupied by the Americans was perceived as humiliating for bin Laden and expelling them was constantly referred to as obligatory for Muslim. However, liberation per se does not seem to be the most important honour move to be identified in the statements.

#### 4.2.3 Elevation

The elevation move is characterised by the performance of certain actions to enhance the honour of a person or a group. Elevation was not common in the rhetoric of Osama bin Laden. But when the elevation move could be identified, it was mostly in connection to the rewards of jihad.

For bin Laden, God was the one who grants honour or punishes with humiliation. As stated in paragraph 2.3, Fricano concludes from his analysis that for bin Laden him, honour is vested in divinity. Allah is the one granting honour, and as a result, losing honour means losing Allah's favour and therefore being condemned to hell for eternity.<sup>165</sup> Bin Laden frequently cites the following prayer: 'We ask god to give this community the guidance to exalt the people who obey him and humiliate those who disobey him'.<sup>166</sup> Those who obey God will be exalted by God and transcend the horizontal honour community.

According to bin Laden, jihad was an obligation that would grant prestige for all Muslims. 'Jihad is one of the utmost values in Islam, and that with it we can gain pride and eminence in this world and the next'.<sup>167</sup> As previously stated in paragraph 4.1, killing or being

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<sup>163</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 152.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibidem*, 180.

<sup>165</sup> Fricano, 'Horizontal and vertical honour', 205.

<sup>166</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 43.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibidem*, 158.

killed in the name of God is perceived by bin Laden to elevate the status of the martyr. About the advantages of jihad for the *mujahidin* bin Laden said:

The Prophet said: "There are one hundred levels in Heaven that God has prepared for the holy warriors who have died for Him". [...] And He says: "The martyr has a guarantee from God: he forgives him at the first drop of his blood and shows him his seat in Heaven. He decorates him with the jewels of faith, protects him from the torment of the grave, keeps him safe on the day of judgement, places a crown of dignity on his head."<sup>168</sup>

God forgives the jihadis their sins and guarantees them a place in heaven. Although suicide is forbidden in the Islam, martyrdom is considered a highly prestigious deed. In the paragraph about honour above, it was already mentioned that bin Laden considers it a great honour to die for God, which could only be achieved by those who are the elite of the nation. If someone is killed for the cause of God, he achieves martyrdom and is exalted above the rest of the community.

In the speeches this elevation move was used by bin Laden in connection to the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks. He said about them: 'We ask God to accept them among the martyrs and place them among the prophets, martyrs, and the pious, true men'.<sup>169</sup> He also asked God to bless their parents, their sons and give them the greatest reward, which is a place in the highest heavens. Applauding the bombers of 9/11 again in speech 14, bin Laden asked god again to admit them to a place in heaven among the prophets and the righteous. He ended his speech saying: 'Before I finish, I should mention these heroes, these true men, these great giants, who erased the shame from the forehead of the umma'.<sup>170</sup> Again, he portrayed the bombers as defenders of honour of the entire *ummah* and elevated them to the status of heroes and giants.

Elevation of status was not perceived to be reserved for suicide bomber, but the *mujahidin* as group were also considered to be vertically differentiated from the rest of the community. Bin Laden said for example: 'God helped the vanguard group of Islam. I pray to God to lift them up to the highest Paradise'.<sup>171</sup> The *mujahidin* were described as the vanguard of Islam, and therefore they deserved a special right to respect. They were the once who stood

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<sup>168</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 29.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibidem*, 100.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

up to defend their religion, while the others remained inactive. Reacting to the way the regimes and the media dealt with the *mujahidin*, he said: '[They] desire to strip us of our virility - we believe that we are men, Muslim men who have a duty to defend the greatest house in the world, the noble Ka'ba, and to be honoured in doing so'.<sup>172</sup> This quote refers to the gender roles in the Islamic society. The manliness of the Muslim men was perceived to be under attack by the regime and the media. According to bin Laden, defending the *ummah* is the duty of the men, and they deserve honour for it.

According to bin Laden, special respect was also due to the population of Afghanistan and Iraq for actively resisting the American invasion. About the Afghan people he said that they are a 'resilient people who waged jihad with the sword in one hand and the holy Quran in the other. You lions of the holy law. You guardians of the religion'.<sup>173</sup> He addressed the Iraqi people in the same way, calling them the soldiers of God. He said: 'God has given you the best reward and your jihad is appreciated'.<sup>174</sup>

From this it could be derived that elevation is a move that was used by bin Laden to make martyrdom more appealing for individuals and to applaud the jihadist groups, although it was not the most prominent move. As American writer Lawrence Wright says: 'The lure of an illustrious and meaningful death was especially powerful in cases where the pleasures and rewards of life were crushed by government oppression and economic deprivation'.<sup>175</sup> While liberation and revenge were typically used in connection to the justification or the cause of violence, elevation was used to describe the rewards of jihad. While bin Laden described Islam as the religion of equality, he addressed the jihadis as elevated group above other Muslims.

#### 4.2.4 Atonement

Atonement means that a sinful community seeks to restore its honour by doing penance or returning to the true religion. Since honour is vested in Allah, disobeying His laws leads to a violating of honour. In bin Laden's speeches, atonement occurs often in the first eight speeches and the last six speeches. The occurrence of atonement corresponds with the first phase, the beginning of the second and the third phase. Bin Laden was an Islamic purist and the most well-known adherent to the Salafi movement, which explains the prominence of the atonement move.

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<sup>172</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 89. Author's addition.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibidem*, 158.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>175</sup> Wright, 'The Looming Tower', 123.

While revenge and liberation were moves that are more often used in letters or speeches directed at the Americans and their allies and to convince Muslims to wage jihad, atonement was commonly used in his speeches directed at the Arab rulers, scholars and Muslims to convince them to return to the right path. Bin Laden perceived the humiliating situation of the *ummah*, characterised by forces of unbelievers occupying Muslims lands and apostate Arab rulers, as being caused by internal and external factors. Atonement is presented by bin Laden as a solution to the internal problem of the *ummah*.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, God is perceived by bin Laden as the one who grants certain people honour and punishes those who are disobedient with humiliation. The corrupt and humiliating situation of the *ummah* is considered to be a punishment of God for the defiance of religion by Muslim rulers and Muslims in general. The Muslim rulers transgressed *Tawhid*, because they ruled according to man-made laws. In accordance to Salafism, there can be no law, except for the law of God. Describing the rulers' transgressions, bin Laden said: 'Among the most serious things [...] was the setting-up of a rival authority to God. This can be seen in the enactment of man-made laws that deem illegal acts to be permissible'.<sup>176</sup> When they implemented man-made law and practiced authority, they placed themselves next to God. This was considered a transgression of strict monotheism, and therefore an attack on Islam. 'In doing so he becomes an apostate and an infidel who has placed himself outside the religious community, because he has considered himself an equal and a partner to God in deciding what is permissible and what is not'.<sup>177</sup>

Bin Laden recalled that before the religion of Islam was revealed to the Arabic people, they lived in chaos and sin. When God gave them Islam, they were enlightened and became prosperous. But when the adherence to faith weakened, the crusaders returned to dominate the Muslim lands.<sup>178</sup> For bin Laden, ordinary Muslims were complicit to the weakness of *ummah*, because they were ignorant to faith. 'We have reached this miserable situation, because many of us lack the correct and comprehensive understanding of the religion of Islam'.<sup>179</sup> The dominance of the Crusader forces over the Arab countries was a result of the sinful *ummah*. For 'our *umma* has been promised victory. That it has been delayed is only

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<sup>176</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 6.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

because of our sins and our failure to help God'.<sup>180</sup>

If lack of understanding and sinfulness were the internal causes of the problem, the solution for bin Laden was 'to return to God Almighty, pray for forgiveness, turn in repentance to him and follow the path of his great Quran, and the tradition of his faithful Messenger'.<sup>181</sup> He said: 'God will cover you with humiliation and will not remove it until you return to your religion'.<sup>182</sup> According to bin Laden, returning to religion does not only entail studying the Qur'an, but 'to return to the original source, to this religion, to God's Book and to the *sunna* of His Prophet. Off this, the peak of this religion is Jihad'.<sup>183</sup> Bin Laden perceived jihad as a religious obligation that should be waged to live up to God's laws. Jihad functions as form of atonement, that should therefore restore both the humiliating situation of the *ummah* and grant victory for the believers over the Americans.

In sum, atonement is one of the most important moves in the speeches of bin Laden. God is deemed almighty and He gives honour and grants victory to the obedient Muslims. The humiliation of the *ummah* and the invasion of the infidel armies were perceived as a punishment by God for the neglecting of faith by Muslims and their rulers. The way to restore the honour of the *ummah* was to return to faith and seek repentance for their sins by waging jihad, which might be identified as atonement move.

#### 4.2.5 Exoneration

The exoneration move is characterised by a corrupted community that purifies itself from subversive elements to restore the collective honour. This move was frequently employed in the speeches of bin Laden and was connected to the liberation move. While liberation is about removing an oppressive factor to be free, exoneration is about eliminating a corrupting factor to be pure. Being pure is also strongly connected to the atonement move. But whereas the atonement move was directed towards the Muslims of the *ummah* itself, exoneration was about removing the factors that corrupt the *ummah* in bin Laden's speeches. The atonement move was perceived as a solution for the internal problems of the *ummah*, while the exoneration move was presented as a solution for external problems. The exoneration move was commonly used in the rhetoric of bin Laden in connection to the ousting of invading infidels and the apostate rulers.

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<sup>180</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 190.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibidem*, 216.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

Almost every time bin Laden discussed liberation, he spoke of liberation of the holy places. For example: 'Men of the radiant future of our *umma* of Muhammed, raise the banner of  *Jihad*  up high against the Judeo-American alliance that has occupied the holy places of Islam'.<sup>184</sup> As already said, Saudi Arabia had a special status for bin Laden as the country of the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina. He said: 'In our religion it is not permissible for any non-Muslims to stay in the country'.<sup>185</sup> Jihad should be waged against the Americans not just because they are an invading enemy, but foremost because bin Laden perceived the Americans as unbelievers, polluting the Arab countries. America was seen as the leader of the unbelievers and bin Laden believed they tried to seduce the Muslims to neglect God. 'They want the believers to desist from worshipping God, so that they can enslave them, occupy their countries, and loot their wealth'.<sup>186</sup> According to bin Laden the Americans corrupt religion and the world, and that this greater unbelief should be repelled.

The metaphor of pollution, which is an indicator for the exoneration move, was frequently used by bin Laden. For example, 'each and every person whose hands have become polluted in the contribution towards this crime [occupation of Palestine] must pay its price, and pay for it heavily'.<sup>187</sup> And when bin Laden poetically lamented the defilement of the Muslim holy cities occupied by the Judeo-Christian alliance: 'Jerusalem, woe unto Jerusalem, it's chastity has been desecrated and Muslims, have chosen not to engage in Jihad. Bagdad, O house of the Califate. Woe upon you. Why has your chastity been defiled by rabble'.<sup>188</sup>

The solution for the corruption of the Muslim lands by the unbelievers was to expel them by waging jihad. 'Continue the path, don't be afraid of any difficulty and be sure to cleanse the Arabian Peninsula of polytheists, atheists and heretics'.<sup>189</sup> Through jihad, the holy sanctuaries might be cleansed from the pollution of the unbelievers.

However, the problem was not only with the American unbelievers, but also internal, with the apostate rulers. 'This struggle is partly an internal regional struggle, but in other respects it is a struggle between global unbelief with the apostates today under the leadership of America on one side, and the Islamic *umma*, and the brigade of mujahidin on the other'.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 29.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibidem*, 47.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 162. Author's addition.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

In his first speeches, directed at the Saudi regime, bin Laden was convinced that the leaders could return to religion and restore the situation, which would be an atonement move. But the transgressions of the regime became so grave, that they placed themselves outside the community of believers. He began to see them as infidels, corrupting the community, so they should be ousted. 'The solution to improve the situation is what has been made clear by God's law, and that is to remove the ruler. Even if he refuses to go. It is obligatory to dispose him through force of arms. This is the ruling of God's law, which maintains people's religious and material interest'.<sup>191</sup>

Concludingly, exoneration is the most important move in the speeches of bin Laden concerning the external problem of the *ummah* being threatened. Almost every time bin Laden spoke about liberation, it was in connection to the expelling of infidel occupiers of Muslim countries and should thus be considered an exoneration move. The purity of the *ummah* was of the utmost importance, because God only grants victory and honour to the Muslims when they obey his laws. Subversive elements outside the *ummah* should be eliminated in order to be granted honour.

#### 4.3 Conclusion

Honour plays an important role in the speeches of Osama bin Laden. The concept was used in three different manners; as form of addressing religious authorities, to describe prestigious deeds, and, most importantly, as characteristic of the *ummah*. In his speeches, bin Laden said that the honour of the *ummah* was violated when the Americans invaded the Arabian Peninsula. Analysing the use of the concept of 'honour' alone, did not explain sufficiently how jihad was perceived to restore honour. Analysing the different moves in the rhetoric of bin Laden was more clarifying.

Although revenge was frequently used in his speeches, it was not always directly linked to the restoration of honour. Most of the time, revenge functioned as deterrence from the Americans to kill more Muslims and to stop them from intervening in Muslim countries. This explains the absence of revenge in the speeches published in the first phase, when bin Laden targeted the Saudi regime. However, revenge was also described as a manner to wipe the shame of the forehead of the *ummah*. This might be interpreted as an honour move. Muslims

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<sup>191</sup> Bin Laden, *Messages to the World*, 260.

that actively resisted being dominated and killed by Americans, restored the honour of the *ummah*. Violent defence of the *ummah* was perceived as a duty of Muslim men, and jihadis fulfilled this duty.

Liberation also played an important role in the speeches of bin Laden. In the first speeches, published in the first and the beginning of the second phase, liberation was mostly used in relation to the occupation of Saudi-Arabia, while in the third phase, bin Laden used it in relation to Palestine and other Arab countries. But liberation was barely used in connection to honour. However, liberation was closely related to exoneration, which was one of the most important moves in the speeches. The honour of the *ummah* was lost when the Americans invaded, because they polluted the holy places. To restore the honour, bin Laden incited the Muslims to expel the Americans to purify the Arab world, which is an exoneration move.

Jihad was not only perceived as an individual duty, but was also perceived to bring about notable rewards. Apart from a place in the highest heavens and forgiveness for all their sins, God might grant the *mujahidin* an elevated status. In the rhetoric of bin Laden, the elevation move is connected to the special status of *mujahidin* and martyrs. Bin Laden said that Muslims could earn a special right to respect by waging jihad. The *mujahidin* were perceived as a vertically differentiated group, because of their commitment to God's cause.

Bin Laden addressed two major problems that have caused the corrupt and humiliating status of the *ummah* in his time. On the one hand: the internal struggle of the weakness of faith amongst Muslims, and on the other hand: the global struggle against the greater unbelief. The atonement move dealt with the solution for the internal problem. Since God was perceived as the one granting honour of humiliation, obeying His laws restores the honour, while disobeying Him brings humiliation. To restore the honour of the *ummah*, Muslims should repent their sins and return to the true religion. While bin Laden used the atonement move to address the transgressions of the Arab regimes in phase 1 and the beginning of phase 2, he used the exoneration move in phase 3. This might be explained by bin Laden's change in his stance towards the possibility to return to Islam. While he thought reconciliation was possible in phase 1, the transgressions had become so grave that the apostate regimes should be expelled. Apostate rulers had forsaken their religion and had placed themselves outside the community of Islam. Therefore, both Arab rulers and the Crusader forces were considered corrupting elements that should be eliminated to restore the honour.

Bin Laden presented atonement and exoneration as the most important solutions for the restoration of the honour of the ummah. It would be interesting to see if exoneration still plays a central role in the honour rhetoric of Al Qaeda in the issues of *Inspire*. *Inspire* was first published in 2010, corresponding with phase 4. In phase 4 and 5 the United States did not invade any Arab country; they pulled out of most countries entirely. Would the absence of Americans be a reason for the diminishing of the importance of the exoneration move? In the next chapter, the honour moves in *Inspire* will be analysed in order to answer this.

## 5.0 Inspire to kill for honour

The second type of primary source that will be analysed for its use of honour is the propaganda magazine of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. This local branch of Al Qaeda started publishing the English-language glossy magazine *Inspire* in July 2010. Since then, seventeen issues have been published until the writing of this thesis. The last issue stems from August 2017. Although it is stated in issue 16 that multiple issues would follow, for unknown reasons, an 18<sup>th</sup> publication never appeared. The magazines are retrieved from *Jihadology.com*, a website operated by academic Aaron Y. Zelin as clearinghouse for primary jihadist sources for academic uses.

While Osama bin Laden depended on the willingness of traditional media outlets to broadcast his speeches, AQAP was able to use the development of new media to take direct control over their strategic media messaging.<sup>192</sup> From phase 4 onwards in the development of Al Qaeda, the organisation depended ever more on the internet. 'Within the last 10 years, the internet has become the principle platform for the dissemination and mediation of the culture and ideology of jihadism'.<sup>193</sup> Online magazines are just one of the many media used by modern jihadist organisations but might offer the most comprehensive and cohesive insight in the tactics and ideology of the organisation.<sup>194</sup>

*Inspire* is not the first jihadist magazine, but the glossy magazine, written in perfect English, stood out in its 'quality, creativity, and most importantly, effectiveness'.<sup>195</sup> As the name suggests, the goal of its editors is to inspire Muslims in the United States and the West to carry out attacks in their country. The bombs used by Dzhokar and Tamerland Tsarnaev at the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013, were for example made using the instructions for making a bomb in *Inspire's* 'Open Source Jihad' section.<sup>196</sup> This section offers a detailed step-by-step guide for bomb-making, handling a handgun or AK-47 or running people over with a pickup truck. AQAP offers the readers of their magazine a chance to interact with prominent figures in the organisation. In the 'Inspire reactions' section, readers can ask critical question or express admiration. As the editor of the ninth edition said in the

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<sup>192</sup> Page, 'Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula', 151.

<sup>193</sup> Ibidem, 151.

<sup>194</sup> Novenario, 'Differentiating Al Qaeda and Islamic State', 953.

<sup>195</sup> Vallee, 'Digital Jihad', 3.

<sup>196</sup> Ibidem.

introduction: 'This magazine was set up to fulfil two objectives. The first one is to call for and inspire to jihad in the English speaking world and [the] second one is to deliver to every inspired Muslim anywhere around the world the operational know-how of carrying out attacks from within the West'.<sup>197</sup> Supported by graphic content, the magazine provides the religious justification, emotional pressure and practical guideline for future jihadists.<sup>198</sup>

Although AQAP is a local branch of Al Qaeda and the most loyal affiliate of the central leadership, they cannot be treated as the same organisation. Being a local affiliate entails different dynamics, which might be reflected in the use of honour. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some background information about AQAP, before the role of honour in *Inspire* will be analysed.

### 5.1 Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was formed in January 2009, when the Saudi and Yemeni branches of Al Qaeda fused. Yemeni jihadism originated in the late 1980's with the return of the *mujahidin* who fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet troops. Osama bin Laden joined the Yemeni *mujahidin* in their quest to oust the communist government in south Yemen.<sup>199</sup> This led to the foundation of Al Qaeda in Yemen (AQY) in 1998. This local franchise was responsible for multiple local and international terrorist attacks and is perceived by some as the most lethal franchise.<sup>200</sup> The group committed for example the USS *Cole* attack in the port of Aden in 2000 and, more recently, provided the operatives for the mission against Charlie Hebdo.

Following the USS *Cole* attack, President George W. Bush pressed Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to implement an aggressive counterterrorism policy against AQY. AQY suffered losses and was decimated but proved to be remarkable resilient and it eventually survived. The escape of 23 convicted terrorists from a prison in Sana'a in 2003 marked a turning point for the organisation.<sup>201</sup> These escapees were the impetus to launch a new campaign and commit new attacks. Most prominently, the failed assassination of Saudi prince Mohammed

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<sup>197</sup> Yahya Ibrahim, 'Letter from the editor', *Inspire* 9 (2012) 4. Author's addition.

<sup>198</sup> Vallee, 'Digital Jihad', 3.

<sup>199</sup> CFR Staff, 'Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula(AQAP)' (version 19 June 2015), <https://www.cfr.org/background/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-aqap> (accessed on 26 June 2018).

<sup>200</sup> CFR Staff, 'Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula(AQAP)'.

<sup>201</sup> Ibidem.

bin Nayef, an attack on the US embassy in Sana'a in 2008, attacks on Italian and British embassies and the bombing of a Japanese oil tanker in April 2008.<sup>202</sup>

In 2008, the remnants of Al Qaeda jihadists in Saudi Arabia fled into Yemen because of Saudi counterterrorism operations, and eventually merged with the Yemen branch. They changed their name to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, even though they were based in Yemen. Contrary to other Al Qaeda franchises, AQAP did not swear alliance to bring their organisation under the Al Qaeda organisation, because they were created by the central leadership.<sup>203</sup>

The slogan 'From Here We Begin, in al-Aqsa We Meet' is indicative for the more transnational orientation of AQAP since its merger in 2009.<sup>204</sup> This orientation is reflected in AQAP's involvement in various attempts to strike the US homeland. Such attacks can be interpreted as an attempt by AQAP to legitimate itself as a serious international threat.<sup>205</sup> For example, in 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to bomb a Detroit-bound jet on Christmas Day but the bomb did not explode. Two attempts to down UPS cargo planes with bombs disguised as printer cartridges were intercepted in October 2010. Most recently, the group claimed responsibility for the attack on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015 that killed twelve people.

Like other Al Qaeda affiliates, AQAP had to find a balance between the global directives of Al Qaeda's central leadership and bolstering local support.<sup>206</sup> AQAP resolved possible tension between its global and local agendas by carrying out symbolic attacks abroad, while also striking local targets associated with the regime of Saleh.<sup>207</sup> For example, in May 2012, a suicide bomber killed more than ninety Yemeni soldiers rehearsing for a military parade and more than fifty people were killed in an attack on the defence ministry and military hospital in December.

Of all local affiliates, AQAP follows the orders of the central leadership the most closely, which could be explained by the personal relationship between both leaderships. The former emir of AQAP, Nasir al-Wahayshi, fought with bin Laden in the Tora Bora mountains in 2001. Instead of local operations, Al Qaeda's central leadership prefers AQAP to plan attacks

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<sup>202</sup> CFR Staff, 'Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula(AQAP)'.

<sup>203</sup> Farall, 'How al Qaeda works', 132.

<sup>204</sup> Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local', 107.

<sup>205</sup> Ibidem, 104.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 104.

against the US homeland, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia or somewhere else in the Arab world.<sup>208</sup> Yemen is envisioned as a refuge and a waypoint from which other fronts in the jihad can be supported.<sup>209</sup> The geographically mountainous terrain provides a natural fortress for the *mujahidin* and its topographical location makes Yemen the perfect base for AQAP.<sup>210</sup>

According to the US state department, the AQAP's numbers increased from two hundred to a thousand members from 2009 to 2014.<sup>211</sup> The organisation showed its success in using the new media to recruit members or incite lone wolf attacks. AQAP positioned itself at the vanguard of the jihadist media revolution. The organisation dedicated itself to confronting the enemy on the internet, claiming to offer Muslims a truthful media source without Western or Arab interference.<sup>212</sup>

Analogous to its dual agenda, AQAP's media campaign targets both a regional and an international audience.<sup>213</sup> AQAP published a bimonthly magazine in Arabic, *Sada al-Malahim* ('The Echo of Battles'), aimed at a Yemeni audience. Thereby, they produced *Inspire*, aimed at Western audiences. The magazine was edited by US-born Anwar al-Awlaki and Pakistani-American Samir Khan, until they were killed in a US drone strike in October 2011. However, after their death, the publication of the magazine continued until 2017.

During the uproar of the Arab Spring in 2011, Yemeni president Saleh moved all his troops to Sana'a to secure his regime's survival. AQAP used the security vacuum this created in the south to consolidate territory in the province of Abyan. In the absence of the government forces, sectarian strife broke out between AQAP and Yemeni Houthi's.<sup>214</sup>

## 5.2 Honour in *Inspire*

It is important to remark that the magazines differ from the speeches in both form and content. Whereas Osama bin Laden was able to set out the ideology of his organisation and the legitimization for its violence quite consistently in his speeches, *Inspire's* exact message is more difficult to pin down. This is caused by the multiple higher and lower-placed Al Qaeda operatives (including bin Laden) who contributed to the magazine. Of course, the editors

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<sup>208</sup> Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local', 107.

<sup>209</sup> Ibidem, 105.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>211</sup> CFR Staff, 'Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula'.

<sup>212</sup> Page, 'Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula', 151.

<sup>213</sup> Ibidem, 165.

<sup>214</sup> CFR Staff, 'Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula(AQAP)'.

made sure the message conveyed was consistent with AQAP's ideology, but the margin for flexibility in content was much larger. This becomes evident from the wide variety of subjects dealt with in the magazines. Whereas most speeches comprise around ten pages average, most *Inspire* magazines have around seventy pages. This gave the editors of the magazine the chance to include all different sorts of articles and photo reports.

All the same, an attempt will be made to extract a comprehensive view on the use of honour moves by AQAP from the articles in *Inspire*. In all the seventeen issues of the magazine, consisting of 1133 pages, the concept 'honour' occurs quite often, 176 times to be precise. This means that analysing the use of the concepts requires a lengthier analysis. The use of honour by in *Inspire* could be divided in three categories. The first is honour as title of respect, which is not significant. After that, two important themes of honour will be discussed: honour as attribute of an individual or community and the appeal to honour.

Just like in the speeches of bin Laden, honour was sometimes used as a title of respect to address a particular person or group. In an article of Ayman al-Zawahiri in issue 5, Al-Zawahiri addressed the Muslims participating in the Arab Spring as 'respectable and honourable brothers'.<sup>215</sup> The title of respect was also used for Prophets or Islamic scholars. For example, in the last issue of *Inspire*, the introduction started with: 'All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessings be on the most honourable of the Prophets and messengers.'<sup>216</sup> Or when an interview with Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood, emir of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb, was introduced: 'We would like to extend a warm welcome to our honoured Sheikh. We are thankful to him for honouring us by fulfilling our request to conduct this interview'.<sup>217</sup>

This appellation is a form of vertical honour, affirming the elevated rank of the addressed person, group or land. This form of honour is not particularly interesting for the answering of the question what the role is of honour in the rhetoric of Al Qaeda.

### 5.2.1 Honour as attribute

In *Inspire*, honour is used as an attribute of a person or a group that could be lost. In issue 10, called *We are all Usama*, the editors of *Inspire* reacted to the Anti-Islam film 'Innocence of

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<sup>215</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, 'The Overlooked Backdrop', *Inspire* 5 (2011) 2, 37-42, there 37.

<sup>216</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Statement Regarding America's Raid in Qaifa', 4.

<sup>217</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', *Inspire* 17 (2017) 32-55, there 33.

Muslims', produced in the United States in 2012. In the controversial film, Prophet Mohammed is presented as a paedophile and a murderer. The film caused worldwide protests and attacks on American targets and 74 people died as a result of police violence during the protests. The author wrote:

O, Muslims, the film produced in America which insults our Messenger Muhammad, comes in the chain of the crusade attacks on Islam. In response to these consecutive assaults, the Muslim *ummah* revolted in honor of their noble Messenger. The plot of the enemies backfired and became a disgrace and shame on them, a penalty for their insults on the status of the Prophets, violation of the sacred lands and trespassing the boundaries of war ethics. Meanwhile, the status of our Messenger remains high and honorable. No insult could ever tarnish him.<sup>218</sup>

While this quote says no insult could ever tarnish the Prophet, reacting to the insult and rising up to defend the honour of the prophet is at the same time deemed as obligatory for all Muslims. In the speeches of bin Laden, it was mostly the honour of the *ummah* and the holy land that had been violated, but in *Inspire*, insults towards the Prophet also functioned as a call to action to restore his honour. 'We affirm that defending the honor of the Prophet is an inevitable obligation in Islam upon the Muslim *ummah*, every individual as per his capability'.<sup>219</sup> The honour of the Prophet should be protected, and if the honour is violated, it should be avenged.

As explained in paragraph 2.3, the honour of the individual is derived from the honour of the community. If Muhammad is insulted, the honour of all Muslims is violated, and an effective response is required. 'No Muslim can bare any insults towards his religion. He cannot sit sluggishly behind and not be ardent towards his religion. Nor stand up to defend the honor of our beloved Prophet'.<sup>220</sup> This becomes particularly evident in the event of the attack of Charlie Hebdo on 7 January 2015, when two jihadists from AQAP entered the building and killed ten employees. One of them was Stéphane Charbonnier, the chief editor of the satirical newspaper. Charbonnier was on a wanted list published in *Inspire* issue 10, which also contained the names of Dutch politicians Geert Wilders and Ayaan Hirsi Ali (see image 5.1).

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<sup>218</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'In Defense of The Honor of The Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him', *Inspire* 10 (2013) 5.

<sup>219</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'In Defense of The Honor of The Prophet', 5.

<sup>220</sup> Khalid Umar Batarfi, 'If you return we too shall return', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 52-55, there 54.

Responding to the attacks on American embassies because of 'Innocence of Muslims', Charlie Hebdo published some satirical cartoons depicting Muhammed naked. In the Islam, it is forbidden to show images of the Prophet, and depicting him naked in a satirical manner is perceived as highly insulting by some Muslims. The author said about this:

Those dissolute kuffar insulted the chosen Prophets of Allah. They persisted in their disbelief until they insulted the Friend of Allah and the peak of His creation, Muhammad bin 'Abdillah may the Peace and Blessings of my Lord be upon him. Thereupon, the Muslim *ummah* awoke and roared out of rage because of the honor of the Prophet of Allah. They resorted to supplication and prayers to Allah the Almighty that He take revenge on them.<sup>221</sup>



Image 5.1: *The Inspire wanted list.*<sup>222</sup>

The operation in Paris was described as revenge for the insulting of the honour of the Prophet. So, regarding the perceived insults of the prophet, revenge was seen as the way to restore the violated honour. In an article about a military analysis of the Charlie Hebdo shooting, chief bomb maker Ibrahim Ibn Hassan al-A'siri, wrote that the killing of Stéphane Charbonnier and his fellow editors was a great success.

<sup>221</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Statement Regarding the Blessed Paris Operation: Vengeance for the Prophet', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 5-7, there 5.

<sup>222</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Yes we can', *Inspire* 10 (2013) 15.

Not only killing him, but the cadres who were participating in the publication of the magazine. Ending the operation as one of the best and wonderful assassination operation to be executed. This is because it gave victory to the honor of the prophet and silenced the abusive mouths.<sup>223</sup>

The assassination of the editors and journalists of Charlie Hebdo avenged the insults and so restored the honour of the prophet, which is a revenge move. In the paragraph about revenge, this will be further analysed.

Apart from the honour of the prophet, the honour of the *ummah* is also perceived to be under threat. The authors in *Inspire* dealt with the violation of the *ummah's* honour by the Jews and the Crusaders, although it was less prominent in comparison to in the speeches of Osama bin Laden. In an interview in issue 4, Shaykh Adil al-Abbab, AQAP's sharia official and fourth most important leader, said that: 'The Jews and the Christians have attacked the Muslim nation in order to suppress their identity, uproot them, violate their honor and steal their wealth'.<sup>224</sup> In the section 'Why did I choose Al Qaeda?' Shaykh Abu Mus'ab al-Awlaki provides 46 reasons why he chose to join the organisation. In issue 12, al-Awlaki, said in this section that without the activity of Al Qaeda the 'crimes of the Americans and their supporters would have increased, so would have their violation of the honor of Muslims and their money'.<sup>225</sup> Whereas the invasion of Saudi-Arabia and other Islamic countries were the most prominent reasons why the honour of the *ummah* was violated for Osama bin Laden, there were no American invasions during the years 2010-2017, the years of the publishing of the magazines. Instead, the US withdrew its troops from Iraq in 2011 and withdrew for a large part from Afghanistan in 2014. So, when referring to the Americans violating the *ummah's* honour this mostly referred back to past events like the invasion of Iraq:

The American 'justice' has manifested itself when it invaded the Iraq people, killing, detaining, torturing and violating the honor of hundreds of thousands of people. The entire world witnessed what happened in Abu-Ghuraib prison in Iraq, and how inhumanly the American soldiers treated the prisoners.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Ibrahim Ibn Hassan al-A'siri, 'Charlie Hebdo: Military Operation', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 39-42, there 41.

<sup>224</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Q&A with Shayk Adil al-Abbab: on targeting non-Muslim civilians and Yemeni soldiers', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 20-23, there 22.

<sup>225</sup> Abu Mus'ab al-Awlaki, 'Why did I choose Al Qaeda?', *Inspire* 12 (2014), 32-33, there 32.

<sup>226</sup> Ibrahim bin Hassan Al-Asiri, 'The American Globalization is Falling', *Inspire* 16 (2016) 2, 42.

However, the United States still was military present because of trainings missions and political influence in the region. The United States is therefore still the most important enemy of AQAP and in issue 15, the editors pledge that they are 'continuing to try to target the nests of the Crusaders who loot our resources and offend our sanctuaries, holy places and honor'.<sup>227</sup>

The human rights violations committed by American soldiers in the Aby-Ghraib prison in Iraq led to worldwide upheaval when CBS News published pictures in April 2004. The torture was perceived as a grave humiliation and as a violation of the honour of the Muslims. The accused leader of Egyptian jihadist group 'The Islamic Group', Omar Abdur-Rahman, sent a message from a US prison, that was published in issue 10. Talking about the torture he had to endure he said: 'Surely the US government has found in my imprisonment an opportunity; an opportunity to defile the honor of a Muslim, snatching away his dignity and respect'.<sup>228</sup>

Not only the Jewish-Crusader alliance has violated the honour of the Muslims. In an interview with vice emir of AQAP, Shaykh Abu Sufyan, in issue 2, he explained that he returned to Yemen after his release from Guantanamo Bay. The reason for this was that 'the Muslims are still being killed, manmade laws are still ruling over our land, the disbelievers are still on the soil of the Arabian Peninsula, and our honor is being violated'.<sup>229</sup> And in issue 5, dedicated to the Arab Spring, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri said that: 'The corrupt and corruptive regime has been savage with everyone who opposes it, and indeed, with all the people, and its police and security agencies have become packs of hungry wolves which bite at the flesh, sanctity and honor of our family, brothers and sisters'.<sup>230</sup>

In contrast to the speeches of bin Laden, a third enemy is identified in *Inspire*. The Shia Muslims are perceived as a threat by the authors of *Inspire*. 'We call the people of *ahl as-sunnah* to join the battalions of defense of the honor of the prophet, and we warn them of the coming danger of the Shi'a'.<sup>231</sup> When Shia Houthi's succeeded in conquering territory at the expense of the Sunni *mujahidin* in Yemen in 2010. The *mujahidin* attacked the Houthi's in two suicide operations, bombing two motorcades to halt their advance. The author wrote: 'These operations were in defense of the honor of our Prophet and his companions and in

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<sup>227</sup> Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, 'Statement Regarding the Burkina Faso Raid: When Muslim Africa Takes Revenge for Its Victims', *Inspire* 15 (2016) 5-6, there 5.

<sup>228</sup> Omar Abdur-Rahman, 'My message and will to the blessed muslim nation', *Inspire* 10 (2013) 28.

<sup>229</sup> Al-Mahalem, 'Interview with Shaykh Abu Sufyan: the vice Amir of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula', *Inspire* 2 (2010) 2, 42-44, there 43.

<sup>230</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, 'The short and long-term plans after protests', *Inspire* 5 (2011) 2, 34.

<sup>231</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Operation for Defending *Ahl as-Sunnah*', 6.

defense of our brothers from *ahl as-sunnah* when we saw them being killed, their honor violated, their homes destroyed'.<sup>232</sup> So not only the Judeo-Crusader alliance and corrupt regimes violated the honour of the Muslims, the Shia Houthi's were also perceived as violating the honour.

The means to restore the violated honour of the *ummah*, suggested in *Inspire* are comparable to the method bin Laden propagated in his speeches, namely: jihad. Al-Awlaki said in the first article of his column that: 'I chose Al Qaeda because they are on the *manhaj* [way of worship] of jihad and jihad is a means provided for the elevation of humiliation and returning the Islamic nation's honor'.<sup>233</sup> So jihad was seen by al-Awlaki as a means to restore the honour of the *ummah*. Likewise, Khubaib As-Sudani argues that war is the only way to restore the violated honour. 'Success, prosperity, a life of honor and dignity to our Ummah, in this life and hereafter, will not be achieved except in the grounds of the battlefield'.<sup>234</sup> Jihad is perceived as an opportunity to give honour to the Muslims. 'We are in a time where the doors of Jihad have opened, offering the Muslim *ummah* to rise and bring back the honor of Islam, defend the oppressed and weak, punish the disbelievers for their crimes and giving victory to the Muslim Ummah'.<sup>235</sup>

But, jihad was not only perceived as the way to defend and restore the violated honour in *Inspire*, it was also presented as giving honour to the individual Muslim fighter. As former Guantanamo Bay detainee, 'Uthman al-Ghamidi, said: 'The Muslim is honourable if he takes jihad as his path'.<sup>236</sup> Bin Laden writes in a letter to the revolutionaries of the Arab Spring that they threw off the yoke of humiliated and chose for honour or the grave.<sup>237</sup> Speaking about honour in this manner indicates that jihad could be identified as an elevation move. Through jihad, the honour of the *mujahidin* might be enlarged, and his status might be elevated. This will be further analysed in the paragraph about elevation.

A *hadith* that was often repeated in *Inspire* is: 'Honor, power and glory belong to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, but the hypocrites know not'.<sup>238</sup> This *hadith* was also often

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<sup>232</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Operation for Defending *Ahl as-Sunnah*', *Inspire* 4 (2010) 3, 6.

<sup>233</sup> Abu Mus'ab al-Awlaki, 'Why did I choose Al Qaeda?', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 48-50, there 48. Author's addition.

<sup>234</sup> Khubaib As-Sudani, 'A moment in the life of Sheikh *Usama*', *Inspire* 15 (2016) 20-24, there 23.

<sup>235</sup> Abdulrahman bin Mohammad, 'Analyzing the impact of Muslims targeting the Qurayshi Economy', *Inspire* 15 (2016), 26-31, there 31.

<sup>236</sup> 'Uthman al-Ghamidi, 'My life in Jihad: the story of Commander 'Uthman al-Ghamidi', *Inspire* 2 (2010) 2, 11-16, there 15.

<sup>237</sup> Osama bin Laden, 'An Address to the Revolutionaries', *Inspire* 6 (2011) 3, 51-53, there 53.

<sup>238</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', 55.

referred to in the speeches of bin Laden. Qadhi Bishr said: 'High determination and aspiration for glory and honor for the religion is the characteristic of a true believer. Islam taught us the peak of determinations, the love of courage, and racing towards what is good. And the best of deeds is Jihad in the path of Allah'.<sup>239</sup> Through jihad, honour might be restored, because doing what Allah commands might result in Him giving back honour to the *ummah*. From this it might be derived that, comparable to the role of jihad in the speeches, jihad is an atonement move. This will be further analysed in the paragraph on atonement.

### 5.2.2 Appeal to honour

Honour is used in an interesting new manner that was absent in the speeches. A remarkable difference with Osama bin Laden is that the authors of *Inspire* did not only seduce its readers with the prospect of gaining honour through jihad, but it also appealed directly to their sense of honour. For example, speaking about the speech bin Laden gave after the 9/11 attacks, Ayman Al-Zawahiri said: 'Few words that continue to echo in the minds and thoughts of men who even hold the smallest weight of honor, dignity and jealousy of their religion in their hearts'.<sup>240</sup> And in his speech responding to the anti-Muslim film Ayman al-Zawahiri appealed to the honour of his readers as well, saying: 'I call upon every honorable free enthusiastic Muslim to confront the Zio-Crusade alliance which assaults our religion, our Prophet Muhammad and our lands and wealth'.<sup>241</sup>

This direct appeal to the honour of the readers could be interpreted as an attempt to move them to action. This way of using honour is practically absent in the speeches of bin Laden, which might be explained by the dual goal of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. American political scientist Bryce Loidolt researches the dual agenda of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. He says that although AQAP must prove their dedication to the central leadership's cause, they 'must remain true to the contours of their immediate surroundings, deriving legitimacy and local credibility by articulating a local cause'.<sup>242</sup> This is reflected in the operations executed upon Yemeni soldiers, but also in the language used to convey its ideological message.

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<sup>239</sup> Qadhi Bishr, 'Remembering Boston: Friday lecture delivered by Qadhi Bishr', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 34-36, there 36.

<sup>240</sup> Khubeib As-Sudani, 'A Thousand Times Greater than USS-Cole', *Inspire* 16 (2016) 2, 16-21, there 21.

<sup>241</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, 'Defending the Prophet', *Inspire* 10 (2013) 12-13.

<sup>242</sup> Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local', 103.

The communication through their magazines contains motifs and themes tailored for specific Yemeni audiences.<sup>243</sup> AQAP uses the magazines to channel regional grievances and norms. While this is mostly true for their local magazine *Sada al-Malahim*, *Inspire* also includes articles specifically aimed at a Yemeni audience. For example, the magazine's first issue includes a 'message to the people of Yemen' by Ayman Al-Zawahiri, issue 4 includes a Q&A about why AQAP targets Yemeni Soldiers and in issue 5, an article is dedicated to the assistance of the Yemeni people for jihad.

Loidolt explains that even more than in other Arab countries, Yemen society is defined by tribal norms and codes. People are defined by their tribal affiliation (*qabila*) and their behaviour is regulated by *qabyala*, tribal norms and values.<sup>244</sup> Characteristic for *qabyala* is that the tribes are strongly attached to specific geographical locations, that are seen as their ancestral homeland. Violating the sanctity of a tribesmen's land is a grave violation of one's honour (*'ird*). As explained in paragraph 2.2.1, *'ird* refers only to certain kinds of horizontal honour, while *sharaf* may refer to vertical honour, horizontal honour or to both. According to Loidolt, *'ird* is violated when things vulnerable to outsiders, like land, weapons and other tribal members are harmed. Outsiders trespassing on tribal land should seek approval of the local Sheikh. Sheikhs should protect their land to preserve their *sharaf*, which is also translated as honour, but denoting more reputation or status. Loidolt further argues that, violations of tribal honour and transgressions of the honour code lead tribesmen to undertake collective or individual revenge.<sup>245</sup> The rhetoric of honour and revenge is therefore deeply embedded in the local audience AQAP seeks to address.

According to Loidolt, another prominent tribal norm is the emphasis on autonomy and manhood.<sup>246</sup> Both manhood and autonomy are expressed through the possession of weapons. 'These weapons symbolise manhood (*rujula*), rendering stripping a tribesman of his weapon akin to insulting his manhood and violating his honor'.<sup>247</sup> It is therefore remarkable that in two issues of *inspire*, there are also appeals to honourable women. In issue 12 for example, Umm Yahya addressed the female mujahid, the mujahidah, by saying:

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<sup>243</sup> Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local', 104.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibidem*, 110.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

O beloved sister in Islam, the honorable wife of a Mujāhid and his best companion, all praise to the Almighty. *MashāAllāh*, you are different from the rest of the women. You are a Mujāhidah, just like your husband. You are a hero, and a Soldier of Allāh. And you possess a heart of an oak.<sup>248</sup>

And when Rashonara Choudry, a 21-year old British girl, stabbed member of parliament Stephen Timms on 14 May 2010, an appeal was made on the men of the *ummah* to follow the example of the girl.

A woman has shown to the ummah's men the path of jihad! A woman my brothers! Shame on all the men for sitting on their hands while one of our women has taken up the individual jihad! She felt the need to do it simply because our men gave all to many excuses to refrain from it.<sup>249</sup>

This article appealed to the masculinity of the reader and could be explained as an attempt to arouse guilt in the readers. When a woman takes up the duty to defend the *ummah*, while the men of the *ummah* remain inactive, this violates the manhood and honour of the men.

Appealing to the sense of honour of the Yemeni populations and using the rubric of the tribes strengthens the bond between AQAP and its immediate environment. While the government rejects forms of *qabyala* as medieval practices, using its social values gives AQAP the unique ability to convince the tribes of their legitimacy.<sup>250</sup> This might result in more local recruits, willing to fight for the cause of AQAP, although they might not have strong ideological affinity.<sup>251</sup> For example in issue 4, Shayk Adil al-Abbab justifies the attacks on soldiers in Yemen by referring to tribal values as honour and virility:

Every free man with honor would not accept oppression on himself and his people and would not accept humiliation and transgression against his honor or the honor of any Muslim. This is why we target the soldiers of evil. We target them because they oppress the people and humiliate them. They are the striking arm of the oppressive rulers of this country.<sup>252</sup>

This message was understandable for the local population and channelled the populations own grievances with the government.

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<sup>248</sup> Umm Yahya, 'Mujahidah wife of Mujahid' *Inspire* 12 (2014) 48-49, there 48.

<sup>249</sup> Muhammad al-Sana'ani, 'Roshanara & Taimour: Followers of the borderless loyalty', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 24.

<sup>250</sup> Loidolt, 'Managing the Global and Local', 110.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibidem*, 111.

<sup>252</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Q&A with Shayk Adil al-Abbab: on targeting non-Muslim civilians and Yemeni soldiers', 21.

Moreover, *Inspire* also tried to appeal to the honour of international Muslims. In 'A Message to our Muslim Brothers in America', Abd Allah Al-Murabit tried to convince American Muslims to join the jihadi cause. He wrote: 'We are appealing to your sense of honor, jealousy and zeal towards defending your Muslim brothers, by pushing the aggression of the American government as much as possible'.<sup>253</sup> These direct appeals to honour are an effective method to make the reader feel guilty towards his inaction to the violations against the *ummah*. They are a personal attack to the Muslims who refrains from jihad.

### 5.3 Honour moves

The same method used to find the honour moves in bin Laden's speeches has been used to find out what how honour functions in *Inspire*. Again, trigger words have been used to establish how many times certain moves were used and the results of this analysis are put in the table below. The percentage underneath the columns of the moves indicate how often the moves are used relative to each other. In the figure below, the year of publication is displayed under the number of the issue, and the phase in the development of Al Qaeda is marked underneath.

Some interesting patterns emerge from the table and the figure. Firstly, it stands out how often revenge is used in the issues of *Inspire*. Revenge comprises 56% of the total moves identified. Only in issue 5 and 6, revenge occurs not that often. It stands out that in issue 4,5 and 6, liberation occurs relatively many times. These issues were published after the Arab Spring. In the paragraph about liberation this will be further examined. Elevation occurs the least in the issues of *Inspire*, while exoneration and atonement are also scarce.

In comparison to the speeches of Osama bin Laden it is more complicated to extract patterns from the magazine issues. While bin Laden's speeches were often dealing with one specific subject or audience, the length of the *Inspire* issues allowed the editors to include many different subjects. The editors of the magazine responded to current problems, which makes periodization in periods less helpful. The coming paragraphs will further elaborate on the honour moves in an attempt to find patterns. Moreover, the use of the different moves will be compared to bin Laden's use of the moves.

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<sup>253</sup> Abd Allah Al-Murabit, 'A Message to our Muslim Brothers in America', *Inspire* 16 (2016) 2, 34-35, there 35.

	H	R	L	EL	A	EX	Year	Main theme
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2010	Issue unreadable
2	8	7	2	1	2	0	2010	Called for attacks on the US
3	0	3	0	0	0	0	2010	Special issue about Operation hemorrhage
4	14	5	7	0	1	2	2011	Taking wealth from disbelievers
5	23	2	9	2	0	0	2011	The Arab Spring
6	16	1	4	1	3	0	2011	The death of Osama bin Laden
7	0	2	0	0	0	0	2011	Anniversary of 9/11 attacks
8	1	1	0	0	1	1	2012	Killing non-Muslim civilians
9	4	6	2	1	1	2	2012	The death of al-Awlaki and Samir Khan
10	13	9	7	1	0	0	2013	About the 'Innocence of Muslims' protests
11	4	20	1	1	0	0	2013	Celebrating Boston marathon bombing
12	13	8	4	0	1	0	2014	Called for car bomb attacks in the US
13	8	15	1	0	3	3	2014	Targetting US economy to isolate Arab rulers
14	25	10	2	2	1	1	2015	Celebrating the Charlie Hebdo attack
15	18	6	5	1	1	3	2016	Professional assassinations
16	12	6	0	0	0	1	2016	Celebrating the New York and New Jersey Bombings
17	17	5	3	0	2	1	2017	Trail derail operations
	176	106	47	10	16	14		
		56%	24,60%	5,20%	8,40%	6,30%		

Table 5.1: honour moves in Inspire

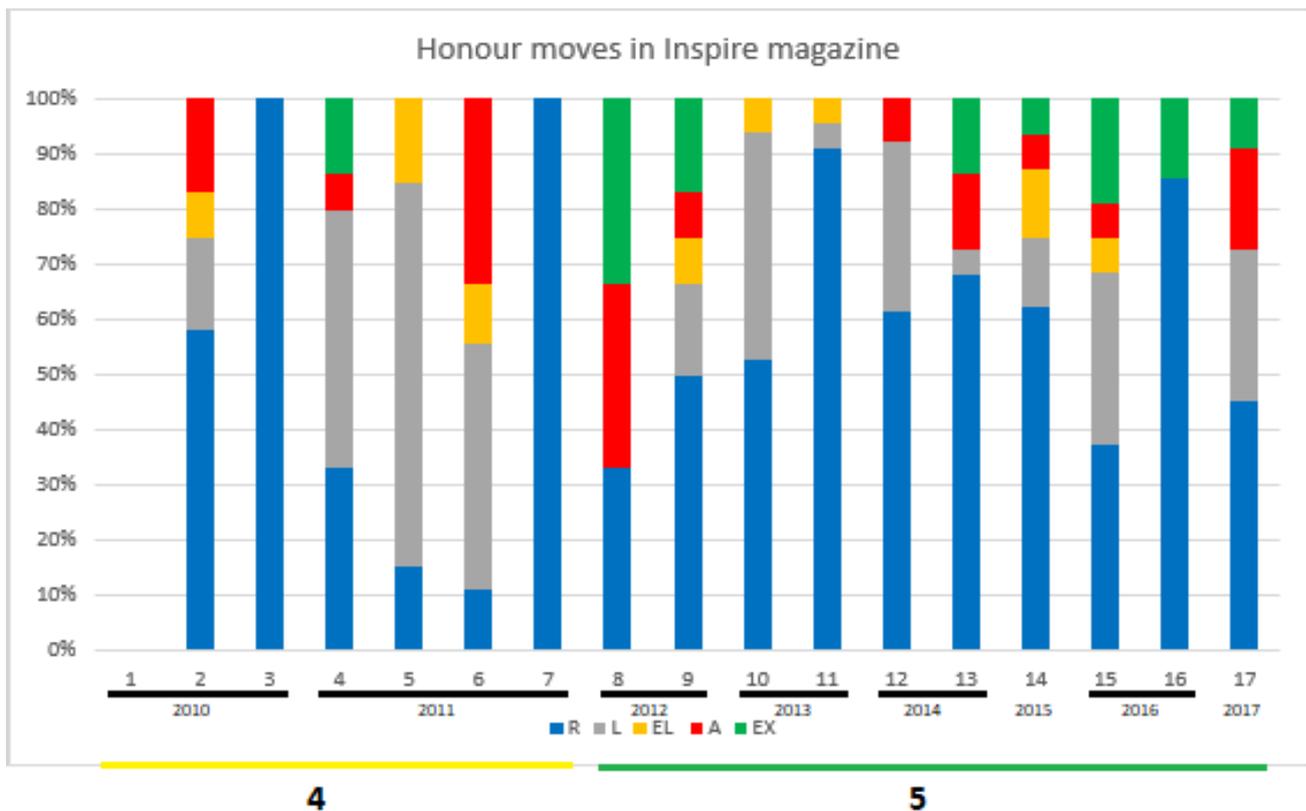


Figure 5.2: Honour moves in Inspire

### 5.3.1 Revenge

The revenge move could be identified when honour is violated and could be restored by an adequate reaction to the violation. Even more than bin Laden's speeches, *Inspire* is replete with the rhetoric of revenge. The table and the figure above demonstrate that revenge is present in every issue of *Inspire* and makes up more than half of the total moves used. But comparable to the role of revenge for bin Laden's rhetoric, revenge was often used as a justification for the violence conducted by the *mujahidin*. It was not always connected to the restoration of honour and thus not an honour move. Most of the times, revenge was justified by the principle of reciprocity, or as means of deterrence from further violations against the *ummah*.

A quote of bin Laden that was repeated time and again in *Inspire* is from his speech after the attacks on 9/11: 'Bas-sy Allah the Great and Exalted, America and those in America will never live in peace until our brothers in Palestine live in peace'.<sup>254</sup> This equation was central in *Inspire*'s justification for violence and is referred to on many occasions. For example: 'We say that whoever terrorizes us, we will terrorize them and we will do what we can to strip them of their safety and security as long as they do us the same'.<sup>255</sup> And: 'This is the simple, moderate and clear equation; As you threaten our security, we too shall crash and destroy yours'.<sup>256</sup>

Individual jihad in the West was seen as the best method to avenge for the killing of Muslims. That was why *Inspire* included the 'Open Source Jihad' section. In this section in issue 2, America is called a terrorist state that brutally killed thousands of Muslims and that the time has come for Muslims to payback America what is due to it.<sup>257</sup> And just like in bin Laden's speeches, it was not only the government that is considered responsible for the killing of the Muslims, the population was also responsible. The public might be targeted as well, especially in countries where 'the government and public sentiment is in support of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq or countries that had a prominent role in the defamation of Muhammad'.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> As-Sudani, 'A Thousand Times Greater than USS-Cole', 21.

<sup>255</sup> Anwar al-Awlaki, 'The New Mardin Declaration: An Attempt at Justifying the New World Order', *Inspire* 2 (2010) 2, 33-40, there 33.

<sup>256</sup> Khubaib As-Sudani, 'A Moment in the Life of Sheikh Usama', 24.

<sup>257</sup> Yahya Ibrahim, 'The Ultimate mowing machine', *Inspire* 2 (2010) 2, 53-54, there 53.

<sup>258</sup> Ibrahim, 'The Ultimate mowing machine', 54. Author's addition.

The killing of innocent civilians returned in multiple issues as an important subject. In issue 9, an author wrote that AQAP did not deliberately targeted women and children, while the crusaders felt free to target them. Al Qaeda purposely targeted institutions to send a political message and to damage the economy. However, referring to the principle of reciprocity, he also said that the mujahidin took revenge for the Muslims massacred by the Judaeo-Christian alliance so that 'they may taste what we have tasted on a nearly daily basis'.<sup>259</sup> Damaging the economy and targeting civilians to provoke the fiercest reaction was thought to deter America from attacking Muslims and mingling in their affairs in the future. Revenge was thus considered a means to deter the enemy.

The role of jihad as deterrence in *Inspire* is comparable to its role in bin Laden's speeches. To stop America from targeting Muslims, AQAP targeted them. Operation Hemorrhage, in which a bomb in a UPS cargo plane was detonated while the airplane took off from Dubai on 3 September 2010, was for example framed as a defensive attack. 'The operation of the explosive packages which was performed by the *mujahidin* of the Arabian Peninsula against the companies of air freight belonging to the disbelieving nations is our right. It is our right because we are defending the Muslim lands'.<sup>260</sup> Likewise, the necessity of defensive jihad was expressed in issue 5: 'If we don't fulfil the obligation of defending and repelling their oppression which aims to destroy us, then know that the ones who target the Muslims with bombs won't be repelled except when these bombs are exploded amidst them and on their own lands'.<sup>261</sup>

Just like bin Laden used revenge to justify the bombings of Rayidh, Khobar and 9/11, so *Inspire* framed the Boston bombings as a justified revenge for American transgressions against the Muslims. In an article named 'The inevitable' Abu Ziyad Al-Muhajir wrote that the Tsarnaev brothers carried out the April 15 bombings to avenge for the perceived insults against Islam and the American invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>262</sup> In another article in the same issue, author Abu Abdillah Almoravid presented lone jihad as an inevitable outcome of all the crimes the US had committed to the Muslim world. He said:

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<sup>259</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Do the mujahideen and Christian terrorists have similar goals?', *Inspire* 9 (2012) 2, 41.

<sup>260</sup> Ibrahim Al-Banna, 'Tawaghit Exposed', trans. Al-Malahem Media, *Inspire* 3, 10-11, there 10.

<sup>261</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'An interview with Shaykh Abu Hurairha: The military commander of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula', *Inspire* 5 (2011) 2, 26-28, there 26.

<sup>262</sup> Abu Ziyad Al-Muhajir, 'The inevitable', *Inspire* 11 (2013) 2, 20-22, there 21.

The American nation should have a good grasp of all of these and other historical facts so that they can comprehend the background and the context of the Boston Marathon operation, Detroit, September 11 and other operations which are barely a wave of anger; vengeance.<sup>263</sup>

Revenge was prominently used as justification for the attacks committed by AQAP and as a means of deterrence, which is not directly connected to honour.

However, as already demonstrated in paragraph 5.2.1, the Charlie Hebdo attack was framed as an honour move. Revenge was thought to restore the honour of the prophet violated by the insults made by Charlie Hebdo. Claiming responsibility for the operation, the editor wrote:

As for the blessed Battle of Paris: We in the Organisation of Qa'idatul Jihad in the Arabian Peninsula claim responsibility for this operation as a vengeance for the Messenger of Allah. We clarify to the ummah that the one who chose the target, laid the plan and financed the operation, is the leadership of the organisation.<sup>264</sup>

This use of the revenge move differs from the way bin Laden used it in that it took vengeance for the honour of the prophet and not the *ummah*. The insults demanded an effective response to restore the violated honour.

By Allah they have revenged our honorable prophet and all the prophets - May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them. Quenching our thirst for revenge. Raising high the head of the Ummah, after the prolonged insults towards our religion. Congratulations unto you for this great honor and this great martyrdom.<sup>265</sup>

While the worst violation of Muslim sanctities in bin Laden's speeches was the invasion of Saudi Arabia, the insults of the Prophet were a prominent theme in *Inspire*. This corresponds with the change of focus in the development of Al Qaeda. While the violation of the sanctity of Saudi Arabia called for revenge in phase 1, in 2015, corresponding with phase 5 in the development, offences of the prophet sparked revenge. Since Charlie Hebdo was a French magazine, and because France invaded Mali, it was portrayed as an important adversary of Islam in *Inspire*.

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<sup>263</sup> Abu Abdillah Almoravid, 'Who & Why?', *Inspire* 11 (2013) 2, 28-31, there 31.

<sup>264</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Statement Regarding the Blessed Paris Operation', 7.

<sup>265</sup> Batarfi, 'If you return we too shall return', 53.

It is France that has shared all of America's crimes. It is France that has committed crimes in Mali and the Islamic Maghreb. It is France that supports the annihilation of Muslims in Central Africa in the name of race cleansing. They are the party of Satan, the enemies of Allah the Almighty and the enemies of His Prophets.<sup>266</sup>

Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood, the emir of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb said in his interview that 'France's enmity of Islam is historical and deep-rooted'.<sup>267</sup> So while America was the biggest enemy for bin Laden, France and the United States were both described as the fiercest adversaries in *Inspire*. Wudood described the two countries as flagbearers of oppression and transgressions against Muslims in cultural, military and economic terms.<sup>268</sup>

Revenge was also perceived as a means to restore the violated honour of the *ummah*. However, revenge is less frequently used in this sense by *Inspire's* authors.

Allah had blessed this Muslim Ummah and its Mujahideen in general, and He blessed al-Qaeda in particular by honouring it to take revenge for the position of the noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and forced the blasphemers who had transgressed against his honour in France and Bangladesh, to promise never to repeat their crimes. And if they return, so will we, by the grace of Allah.<sup>269</sup>

Allah honoured the *ummah*, mujahidin and Al Qaeda in particular by letting them take revenge for the honour of the prophet. In a message for the American people regarding the killing of Luke Somers, Sheikh Nasr Al-Anisi said: 'The Muslim youth, whom you rape their lands and assault their lives and honor, are anxious to spill your blood, capture and slaughter your soldiers and take their revenge.'<sup>270</sup> In an appeal to the Muslim *ummah*, the editor wrote: 'Take vengeance for the Muslim blood that is spilled, the honors that are defiled, the Quran that is torn'.<sup>271</sup>

From the analysis of use of the revenge in *Inspire* it becomes clear that revenge was time and again used as justification for violence, but less as a move to restore the honour. Only in the case the violated honour of the prophet and sometimes in connection to the

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<sup>266</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Statement Regarding the Blessed Paris Operation', 6.

<sup>267</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', 48.

<sup>268</sup> Ibidem, 51.

<sup>269</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, 'Those who defy Injustice. An Address by Sheikh Ayman Adhawahiri/ on the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 9/11 attacks', *Inspire* 16 (2016) 2, 12-15, there 14.

<sup>270</sup> Nasr Al-Anisi, 'A Message for the American People Regarding the Killing of the Hostage Luke Somers,' *Inspire* 13 (2014) 2, 8-9, there 8.

<sup>271</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Statement Regarding the Blessed Paris Operation', 6.

honour of the *ummah*, revenge was described as a move to restore the honour. Still, the revenge move is important since the bombings are justified by it.

### 5.3.2 Liberation

The liberation move is identified when a community lost its honour, because it is oppressed and restores the honour by freeing themselves from their oppression. In bin Laden's speeches liberation was particularly used in the first speeches and referred to the occupation of Saudi Arabia by the United States. In bin Laden's later speeches liberation occurs more in connection to Palestine and other Arab countries.

Liberation was used several times in *Inspire*, although not so many times as revenge. Liberation mainly occurs in issue 4, 5 and 6, corresponding with phase 4 in the development of Al Qaeda. These issues were published in 2011, the same year as the Arab Spring. Issue 5 is even entirely dedicated to the Arab Spring. In this issue, Al-Zawahiri wrote:

O people of freedom and honor in Tunisia, Egypt and in each of the Islamic lands: May Allah bless your firmness, steadfastness and your sacrifices. The way is still long in order to liberate the ummah from its invaders, so be aware lest your reaping is stolen, or that your sufferance is taken advantage of, lest the faces change, oppression remains and subordination continues.<sup>272</sup>

According to Al-Zawahiri, the Arab Spring was the beginning of in the process of liberation from the invaders. He also said that although the leaders might change, the oppression remains. What he meant, is that it made no difference who ruled the country, because as long as America has the power to install or topple regimes, they will oppress the *ummah*. America will install a new puppet government, unless the *ummah* liberates itself from US influence. The outlook of Al Qaeda on the Arab spring is a very positive one, which resonated in the poetical manner in which the revolutions were described:

The revolution has shined from Tunisia and the ummah went along with it, so people's faces were brighten while the rulers throats became choked and the Jews were panic-stricken because of the approaching promised moment. Hence with the falling of the tyrant, the meanings of humiliation, subservience, fear and abstention have also fallen. On the other

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<sup>272</sup> Al-Zawahiri, 'The overlooked Backdrop', 38.

hand, the meanings of freedom, glory, courage and fearlessness rose up so the winds of change breezed with the desire to liberate.<sup>273</sup>

According to Al-Awlaki, the revolutions brought about the demise of humiliation and fear. The winds of change blew over the Arab countries and made people willing to stand up against oppressive rulers. He also said that the most important change that the revolution in Tunisia brought is a mental one, because the *ummah* broke the barriers of fear and started believing that the tyrants could be removed.<sup>274</sup>

Moreover, Arab Spring is described as restoring the honour of the *ummah*. In a letter to the revolutionaries, Osama bin Laden wrote: 'This revolution was not after foodstuff or clothing; rather it's after glory and honor. It is a revolution of sacrifice and giving'.<sup>275</sup> The liberation of the repressive regimes might thus be regarded as an honour move. The humiliation caused by the oppression of the regimes was lifted through the revolution and through the project of liberation the honour was restored. When asked why Al Qaeda still focussed on the West, instead of disposing Arab leaders, Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood answered that:

[The leadership's] reasoning is based on uniting the Ummah on a project which can restore its honor and dignity under the shade of the Shariah of its Lord, free from foreign hegemony or interference in its affairs, and this should be concurrent with cleansing the Ummah's lands from all forms of occupation and protecting its resources from all forms of plunder.<sup>276</sup>

Here, freeing the *ummah* of interference of foreign powers was described as a means to restore the honour of the *ummah* and could thus be described as a liberation move.

Al Qaeda saw the revolutions and the removal of oppressive regimes as creating a platform where the Muslim community could voice their desires for jihad and the removal of American influence.<sup>277</sup> The Arab Spring demonstrated unity and a will for change among the Muslims, but this was just the start. The *ummah* now had the possibility to introduce sharia law in their countries, but they still needed to make the right choices.

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<sup>273</sup> Sheikh Anwar Al-Awlaki, 'The Tsunami of Change', *Inspire* 5 (2011) 2, 50-52, there 51.

<sup>274</sup> Al-Awlaki, 'The Tsunami of Change', 51.

<sup>275</sup> Bin Laden, 'An Address to the Revolutionaries', 51.

<sup>276</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', 45. Author's addition.

<sup>277</sup> Vallee, 'Digital Jihad', 26.

O sons of my Muslim ummah, ahead of you are serious crossways and a great and rare historical opportunity to rise with the ummah and be liberated from slavery to the desires of rulers, man-made laws as well as Western dominance. It is considered to be a great sin and massive ignorance that this opportunity is lost which the ummah had been waiting for since long decades.<sup>278</sup>

The Arab Spring gave the *ummah* a choice, that was not available to them under repressive governments. But the choice still needed to be made. While America thought the liberation of the regimes would lead the *ummah* to choose for democracy, Al Qaeda saw America as the biggest obstacle for freedom.

Just like in bin Laden's latter speeches, Palestine was mostly referred to as in grave need of liberation in *Inspire*. The slogan of AQAP, here we begin and in Al-Aqsa (Jerusalem) we meet, is perhaps most illustrative for this focus. The liberation of Palestine was often mentioned as the ultimate goal in *Inspire*. The toppling of the Arab regimes is seen as instrumental for the liberation of Palestine.<sup>279</sup> This is demonstrated in issue 15, when Al-Zawahiri called on Muslims to unite and fight America and the neighbouring countries of Israel, to liberate Palestine. 'Jerusalem is a trust on our necks and to liberate it we must make the supporters of Israel pay the price with their blood and their economy for their aggression on our Ummah. It is incumbent upon us to work for the establishment of Muslim government in the neighbouring lands to Israel'.<sup>280</sup>

In *Inspire*, France was also explicitly called an oppressor and occupation force, especially in connection to the humanitarian intervention in Mali. Abdul Wudood said that although French troops left its former colonies, they have still exercised influence over the governments of these countries. And that: 'Every Muslim must thus realize that Jihad against these apostate puppet regimes is part of Jihad against France, and liberation from these regimes is liberation from France'.<sup>281</sup>

Interesting in *Inspire* is that they specifically addressed the oppression of black Americans in multiple issues. Drawing a comparison between the oppression of the US against Muslims and black citizens, *Inspire* sought to motivate the black population to turn to Islam and wage jihad against America. 'The same American oppression towards the Blacks today, is

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<sup>278</sup> Al-Awlaki, 'The Tsunami of Change', 51-52.

<sup>279</sup> Yahya Ibrahim, 'Protest Focus', *Inspire* 5 (2011) 2, 5.

<sup>280</sup> Ayman Al-Zawahiri, 'Let us Unite for Palestine', *Inspire* 15 (2016) 2, 16-19, there 18.

<sup>281</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', 33.

practiced towards other communities around the world. The same level of oppression is exercised against the Muslims today'.<sup>282</sup> While bin Laden only addressed the Muslims to liberate Saudi Arabia and Palestine, *Inspire* extended their appeal for liberation to other non-Muslim oppressed people, Afro-Americans, as well.

In *Inspire*, liberation was mostly used in connection to the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring was portrayed as the freeing of the *ummah* from the oppressive governments of the Arab world. The revolutions were presented as the first step to restore the honour of the *ummah* and could thus be identified as a liberation move. But the Muslim community still needed to choose for the introduction of sharia law. Like in bin Laden's later speeches the liberation of Palestine was portrayed as the ultimate goal. Toppling the other Arab regimes were just a means to that goal. *Inspire* also appealed to non-Muslim oppressed people to liberate themselves, especially Afro-Americans. Although liberation was connected to honour in the Arab Spring, the liberation move did not occur often.

### 5.3.3 Elevation

The elevation move could be identified when an actor performs certain actions to enhance his honour, or when the honour of a group is enhanced through certain actions. When Osama bin Laden used the elevation move, it was mostly in connection to the rewards from jihad.

In the same manner, the elevation move is used in *Inspire*, although not very often. The rewards for martyrdom are explained and the deeds of mujahidin are applauded. In an article called 'On who stays behind', Abu 'Ubaydah Al-Hadhramy, said that: 'Jihad is a great 'ibadah [worship] and its rewards are abundant. Allah has prepared great rewards and high status in *Jannah* [heaven] for those who perform *Jihad* with pure intentions'.<sup>283</sup>

Like bin Laden spoke about an elevated status for the bombers of Riyadh and Khobar and especially about the 9/11 bombers, martyrs were also said to have enhanced their status in *Inspire*. For example, in issue 6, entirely dedicated to the death of Osama bin Laden the editors said: 'Allah elevated his status as much as he elevated Islam, gave him glory as much as he strove to glorify Islam'.<sup>284</sup> Concerning the American Muhammad Abdulaziz, who entered

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<sup>282</sup> Abu Abdillâh Almorâvid, 'The Blacks in America', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 18-23, there 22.

<sup>283</sup> Abu 'Ubaydah Al-Hadhramy, 'On who stays behind', *Inspire* 10 (2013) 39. Author's addition.

<sup>284</sup> Al Qaeda Organization, 'The Martyrdom of Shaykh Usama', *Inspire* 6 (2011) 3, 7-8, there 8.

a US marine base and shot five soldiers in a lone jihad attack, Sheykh Khalid Umar Batarfi wrote: 'We ask Allah to accept him and raise his status among martyrs'.<sup>285</sup>

Similar to the special respect bin Laden ascribed to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq for their assistance in the jihad, so *Inspire* applauded the people of Yemen. Resulting from the conquering of territory in Yemen and the assistance the Yemeni people gave to the AQAP fighters, Islamic scholar Shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi dedicated an entire article to the elevated status of Yemeni people.

[The people of Yemen are] the reinforcement for the people of Islam, they are the supporters of the truth and the people of Yemen are continuing to be so. We have seen their assistance in Afghanistan, Iraq and in each field of the fields of jihad you see their crowds rushing to support the people of Islam. They're distinguished with a sense of honor, rigidity and with taking upon themselves the initiative of supporting the people of Islam.<sup>286</sup>

The people of Yemen are presented as the supporters of Islam and several positive characteristics are attributed to them. This demonstrates AQAP's appreciation for the Yemeni population. Describing several virtues of the Yemeni people, al-Maqdisi wrote:

There is nothing beyond this high reputation and honor from Allah, the Almighty, because whomever Allah loves, they attain such happiness which no happiness can resemble. They have been honored such an honor that can't be measured by the likes. They have succeeded in such achievements that aren't equivalent to others and they have been given a great repute that can't be matched.<sup>287</sup>

So, the status of the Yemeni people was said to be honourable to such an extent as never measured before, and that their reputation is unparalleled. This extremely positive image drawn of the Yemeni tribes was clearly a strategical appeal to enforce the alliance between AQAP and the population of Yemen and consolidate their newly conquered territory in the province of Abyan.

But almost every time the rewards of jihad are spelled out, the author reminds the readers that the elevation of status could never be the aim for *mujahidin*. Martyrdom is 'such a high status for a human being to give his life, which is the most valuable thing to him, for the

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<sup>285</sup> Batarfi, 'If you return we too shall return', 55.

<sup>286</sup> Al-Maqdisi, 'A Reply to a Question', 17. Author's addition.

<sup>287</sup> Ibidem, 20.

sake of Allah'.<sup>288</sup> Martyrdom is only valuable for the sake of Allah. The elevation of status could not be the intention of the mujahidin, because jihad should be waged to please Allah alone. In jihad 'the intention of the believer must be correct. It is to gain the pleasure of Allah and not to seek any praise from the people'.<sup>289</sup> It was not the recognition of the honour group the jihadists were after, because that would corrupt the intentions of the jihadist. It is God who grants the elevated status and not the people of the honour community. This means that although jihad elevates the status of a Muslim, in the rhetoric, elevation cannot be the prominent move, because that would make the intentions wrong.

In conclusion, the status of both individual *mujahidin*, as well as jihadi communities like Yemen were thought to be elevated. Although this elevated status might not be the intention of the martyr, undoubtedly it made it more appealing to Muslims to sacrifice their lives, if they are promised the status of martyr. The perpetrators of attacks were applauded for their actions, but it is Allah who is able to enhance their honour and elevate their status. It could be derived from this that although the elevation move is used to make martyrdom more appealing, it does not occur often because that would corrupt the intentions of the *mujahidin*.

#### 5.3.4 Atonement

The atonement move is characterised by the losing of honour and restoration of the violated honour by doing penance for the sins committed. In bin Laden's speeches, atonement was a central move, because Allah was perceived as the one who grants victory and gives honour to the people. Bin Laden used this move particularly in his address to the Muslim rulers or ordinary Muslims to convince them to return to the right path.

Just like in bin Laden's speeches, in *Inspire*, the state of the *ummah* was described as humiliating, disgraceful and dishonourable. The perceived reason for this was the neglect of religion and the sinful action performed by the *ummah*:

There has been a general drift away from the guidance of Allah in all aspects of life: governance, politics, judiciary, education, economy, trade, ethics, and manners. This is one of

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<sup>288</sup> Abu Knowla, 'Which is better: martyrdom or victory?', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 26-28, there 27.

<sup>289</sup> Al-Mahalem, 'Advice for those who want to help Al-Malahem media', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 41-46, there 44.

the reasons of the Ummah having reached this state of weakness, humiliation and worthlessness where it became an easy prey for every covetous enemy.<sup>290</sup>

Since Islam is perceived to be regulatory in all aspects of life, the abandoning of religion affects all aspects of life.

Because the drift from religion was perceived as the reason for the current dishonourable status of the *ummah*, the solution is to return to religion. Because: 'When Muslims return to their religion, they live in peace and security, honor and glory'.<sup>291</sup> Since jihad was often described as the ultimate commitment to religion, the solution to restore the lost honour of the *ummah* was perceived to be jihad. 'We do not need interpretation and theorizations to find ourselves a remedy, and all what we need to do is to follow the path of jihad and the humiliation is elevated from the Islamic nation'.<sup>292</sup> As one of AQAP's leader, Sheikh Qassim Ar-Raymi, wrote in his pledge of alliance to al-Zawahiri: 'Our Muslim ummah, Jihad is the true solution and it is our way out from disgrace and humiliation. Solution is in jihad, and the solution is returning to Islam. [...] None of you will have security over himself, his wealth, his honor, his land except through Islam'.<sup>293</sup>

The abandonment of jihad was even presented as the original reason why the unbelievers were able to dominate the Muslims. Al-Awlaki said: 'don't you know that because of our abandoning of Jihad we live in humiliation and shame'.<sup>294</sup> So returning to wage jihad, might restore the honour of the *ummah* and remove the shame and humiliation. In an article called 'It is either Jihad or Disgrace. So choose.', Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Libi wrote that: 'jihad is the legitimate gateway for matters to be righted and brought back to their original condition so that the religion is honored, *kufir* is dishonored, Islam is spread and *shirk* is restrained'.<sup>295</sup>

Allah is perceived to decide over who receives honour or who is dishonoured. If the Muslims follow sharia law, He will give them honour and if they neglect those rules, they will be dishonoured. The same goes for victory, 'we obtain victory only from Allah and as long as we commit ourselves to the laws of the Almighty Allah, we are without a doubt victorious'.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', 51-52.

<sup>291</sup> Abu 'Ubeidah Al-Hadhrami, 'I am Confused', *Inspire* 13 (2014) 2, 36-37, there 37.

<sup>292</sup> Abu Mus'ab al-Awlaki, 'Why did I choose Al Qaeda?', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 48-50, there 49.

<sup>293</sup> Qassim Ar-Raymi, 'But they never lost heart for that which did befall them in Allah's way', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 46-47, there 47.

<sup>294</sup> Abu Mus'ab Al-Awlaki, 'Why did I choose Al Qaeda?', *Inspire* 12 (2014), 32.

<sup>295</sup> Abu Yahya al-Libi, 'It is either Jihad or Disgrace. So choose.' *Inspire* 6 (2011) 3, 55-56, there 56.

<sup>296</sup> Harith Al Nadari, 'The Ruling of Burning the Forests in the Land of the Kuffar Enemies', *Inspire* 9 (2012) 2, 45-48, there 45.

In a notable manner, Abdul Wudood explained that according to him, the *ummah* does not differ from its enemies, except for their commitment to the rules of Allah.

Muslims are only given victory because of the disobedience of their enemy to Allah; otherwise, we would not have been able to overcome them, because our numbers and equipment are not a match for theirs. So if we become equal in our sins, they will have an edge over us in terms of power. And if we are not able to defeat them with our moral superiority, we will not be able to overcome them with our might.<sup>297</sup>

For Wudood, it is not the elevated status of the *ummah* that might grant them victory, but the sinfulness of its enemies. If Muslims did not repent for their sins, and would continue to ignore religion, they would be equal in sins and would never be able to defeat the enemy.

Since Allah is almighty, he could choose to destroy the crusaders if he wanted to. Abu Yahya Al-Libi writes that: 'Allah has conveyed to us that one of the reasons for ordaining jihad is to test you. If Allah had willed he could have taken vengeance on the *Kuffar* by punishing them and exterminating them instantly but he has chosen to leave them until an appointed time'.<sup>298</sup> So jihad is perceived as a test of commitment to the religion, and only if the *ummah* would refrain from sins, Allah will grant victory and restores the honour.

The use of the atonement move in *Inspire* corresponds with bin Laden's use of the move. In articles directed at the Muslim *ummah*, the writers called on Muslims to repent for their sins and return to religion. Through jihad, Muslims might do penance for their sins and restore the honour of the *ummah*. However, different from bin Laden, the emphasis on the current situation of the *ummah* as a punishment from God was less apparent.

### 5.3.5 Exoneration

The exoneration move entails that a community or a territory is corrupted by subversive elements that violate its honour. The way to restore the honour is through removing or expelling these elements. In bin Laden's speeches, the exoneration move was very important. Whereas atonement was perceived as the solution to the internal problem of the *ummah*, exoneration was perceived as the solution to purify the *ummah* from corrupting elements from the outside. In *Inspire*, the move was not often used, but it did occur a couple of times.

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<sup>297</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Inspire Interview: Sheikh Abu Mus'ab Abdul Wudood', 53.

<sup>298</sup> Abu Yahya Al-Libi, 'The American Army & War Ethics', *Inspire* 10 (2013) 26-27, there 26.

It was set out in paragraph 5.2.2, that trespassing tribal land without permission violates the honour of the tribe. In the same manner, the presence of apostates of infidels is perceived to violate the honour of the *ummah*.

As explained in paragraph 5.2.1, the *ummah* was perceived to be under attack from three sides. These three enemies were considered to corrupt Islam and pollute the Muslim lands. The first enemy polluting Sunni territory are the Shia Muslims. Speaking about the Sunni Muslims in Yemen that were under threat from the Shia Houthi's, the author writes: 'We have for you men who will not rest until they purify the land from their impurity and crimes against ahl as-sunnah and until there is no more dissent and all religion belongs to Allah and the transgressors would know what an evil fate awaits them'.<sup>299</sup> The Houthi's were called impure, and to purify the land, they should be exterminated. Because the Shia were deemed heretical, they polluted the land.

The second source of impurity was the United States, who occupied the holy Arabian Peninsula and corrupted religion. Similar to the speeches of Osama bin Laden, the exoneration move was used in connection to the American occupation of Saudi Arabia. In an interview with senior Al Qaeda operative Abu-Khubeyb As-Sudani, he explained Saudi Arabia's special status: 'The Arabian Peninsula is exclusive from any other land of the Muslims. It has its own special significance in our religion. It is where the revelation begun, land of the two holy mosques and a place of hijra [journey from Mecca to Medina] for our Prophet'.<sup>300</sup> Al-Zawahiri wrote in a letter to the American people, that Al Qaeda targets them, because the Americans 'occupy our countries with your military forces and build your bases, desecrating our land and encircling our holy places to protect the security of the Jews and to ensure the continuation of the perpetual plunder of our wealth'.<sup>301</sup> Again, the metaphor of pollution was used to describe the presence of the unbelievers. 'The invading American army dirtied and desecrated the holy land of the prophet Muhammad'.<sup>302</sup>

The third source of corruption were the Arab apostate rulers, who abashed the oneness of God. It was explained in issue 4 that 'the so-called Muslim governments in the Islamic lands are in fact occupation forces. Unless and until they are removed physically, the

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<sup>299</sup> Qaeda al-Jihad Organization in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Operation for Defending *Ahl as-Sunnah*', 14.

<sup>300</sup> Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, 'Interview Abu-Khubeyb As-Sudani', *Inspire* 15 (2016) 50-63, there 56. Author's addition.

<sup>301</sup> Ayman Al-Zawahiri, 'Letter to the American People', *Inspire* 13 (2014) 2, 12-14, there 12.

<sup>302</sup> Ibrahim, 'Winning on the Ground', 55.

Muslims would be living in the same state of sin similar to that of a foreign disbelieving army occupying a Muslim land'.<sup>303</sup> As long as apostate rulers who corrupt the religion and the lands of the Muslims were not expelled, Muslim would live in sin. In *Inspire* 8, an article was published, written by Osama bin Laden. He said that the apostate rulers 'have already gone astray away from the straight path so it becomes necessary to renounce them, stay away from them and to warn others about them'.<sup>304</sup> Apostate rulers should be renounced and even removed, because they have placed themselves out of the community of the believers and corrupt the true religion.

The solution to the corruption of religion by the Americans and other disbelievers is the same as for atonement: jihad. 'The sanctity of Islam cannot be protected unless with Jihad. Fighting the disbelievers, fighting America and Israel. This is the only Islamic solution to solve the problems of the Muslims today, the only logical one'.<sup>305</sup> In an article about the Burkina Faso raids by jihadist groups, it was written: 'This blessed attack is among a series of operations designed to cleanse the lands of Islam from the nests of the global spying agencies'.<sup>306</sup> Exoneration should cleanse the country from the polluting presence of the three enemies of Islam.

From this it could be derived that exoneration is an important move in *Inspire*, although it was not often used. This might be explained by the relative small presence of American troops in Arab countries. American Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, decided to pull out the US soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia in 2003. Nowadays, only a few training missions still require the presence of American troops. Likewise, American combat troops were pulled out of Iraq in 2011, and most of the army left Afghanistan except for four garrisons, consisting of 8400 men. For bin Laden, US presence in the Arabian Peninsula, desecrating the holy places, was a central problem in his speeches. In *Inspire* most troops were already gone. The exoneration move was mostly used in connection to the invasions of the United States in the past, prominently in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

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<sup>303</sup> Samir Kahn, 'The Central Issue', *Inspire* 4 (2011) 12-16, there 14.

<sup>304</sup> Osama bin Laden, 'Freedom From Blind Following', *Inspire* 8 (2012) 56-59, there 56.

<sup>305</sup> Mushin Ali, 'The Corner', *Inspire* 14 (2015) 50.

<sup>306</sup> Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, 'Statement Regarding the Burkina Faso Raid', 5.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Honour is a central concept in *Inspire* as it was frequently used in many different manners. This made it more difficult to extract patterns and dynamics from *Inspire*. The editors reacted to current situations, which made the periodization in phases less helpful. By close reading the articles and determining their subject and audience, some dynamics were discovered. A comparison to bin Laden's speeches showed many resemblances and some remarkable differences.

While bin Laden spoke about the violation of the Muslim *ummah* and about the violation of the holy places in particular, *Inspire* dedicated many articles to the violated honour of the Prophet and tried to motivate Muslims to take vengeance to restore the honour of the Prophet. The Prophet's honour was perceived to be violated by the movie 'Innocence of the Muslims' and the Charlie Hebdo cartoons. Revenge by terrorist attacks was perceived as a solution to restore the honour.

The honour of the *ummah* was thought to be under attack from three sides. Firstly, the Shia Houthi's who fought the Sunni's over territory in Yemen. Secondly, the Judeo-Crusader alliance under the leadership of America and France. In *Inspire*, France gained in prominence as enemy and was referred to as being at the same level of enmity as the United States. Thirdly, by the apostate regimes of Arab countries, oppressing the population and renouncing *Tawhid*.

Revenge was mostly used as a justification for violence and attacks, comparable to bin Laden's use of revenge in the speeches. Referring to the principle of reciprocity, the killing of innocent civilians was justified as a method of deterrence. As honour move, revenge was mostly used in combination with the restoration of the honour of the Prophet and sometimes to restore the violated honour of the *ummah*. Revenge is by far the most common move in *Inspire*.

While liberation was used by bin Laden in connection to Saudi Arabia and Palestine, the move was mostly used in combination with the Arab Spring in *Inspire*. The Arab Spring was portrayed as a revolution of honour, in which the *ummah* disposed the repressive tyrants and liberated themselves. The revolutions were just the first step in the path towards Islamic States based on sharia law. The ultimate goal was the liberation of Jerusalem, as is reflected in the slogan of AQAP: Here we start and in Al-Asqa we meet.

The elevation move did not often occur in *Inspire*. When it was used it was to describe the rewards of martyrdom for the *mujahidin*. The reason for the relative scarcity of this honour move in *Inspire* is that the authors time and again reminded the readers that *mujahidin* should not strive towards an elevated status. The martyr should be pure in its intentions and should only desire to please Allah. Although hagiographies were manifold in *Inspire*, these mostly reflected on the piety of the martyrs during their life and only sometimes to their elevated status in the afterlife.

The atonement move is used in *Inspire* to try to convince people to return to religion and wage jihad. The situation of the *ummah* was perceived to be caused by the ignoring of religion but especially by the abandoning of jihad. In contrast to the move in the speeches of bin Laden, the humiliation the *ummah* was experiencing was less portrayed as a punishment from God, but more as a result of the lack of fighting spirit. To restore the honour, the *ummah* should return to religion and to its peak, jihad.

Exoneration was much less important in *Inspire* than it was in the speeches of Osama bin Laden. Whereas for bin Laden the prime target was to oust the Americans out of the holy land, by the time the magazines were published, they had already pulled out of Saudi Arabia. This corresponds with phase 5 in the development of Al Qaeda. Although exoneration was still used, most of the time it referred to the violation of honour in the past.

## 6.0 Conclusion

This thesis analysed the rhetoric of Al Qaeda for its use of the concept of 'honour'. Honour is a complex notion that has been under-researched in the academic literature up until now. Honour is crucial in understanding the actions of the individuals in Middle Eastern societies. Since Islamic terrorism is one of the most pressing threats to the freedom and safety in the West today, a thorough understanding of honour might help to counter this threat. The propaganda of militant jihadist organisations has many references to the use of honour. This explorative qualitative discourse analysis contributes to a better understanding of the mechanisms of honour, through examining the use of honour moves by the longest existing jihadist terrorist organisation the world knows today: Al Qaeda.

To answer the research question and to examine the way in which honour functions in the rhetoric of Al Qaeda over time, a framework had to be established. Since previous research into the different mechanisms of honour was lacking, in the first chapter of this thesis a framework was drafted to analyse the primary sources with. Since the subject of research was not yet clearly delineated, the variables still had to be established. Three sets of characteristics— horizontal/vertical, gendered/non-gendered and individual/collective – were extracted from secondary sources on honour to function as variables for this research. To cover all possible variations of these characteristics in a move, five moves were extracted. Four of the five moves – revenge, liberation, atonement and exoneration – were identified as horizontal moves, while elevation is the only vertical move. All moves are collective moves, although some, such as revenge and atonement, could also be performed by individual actors. For all moves, an indicator was set, and certain trigger words were established to make the identification of moves in the primary sources possible. The moves enabled the recognition of different forms of honour in the sources and to determine possible change in the use of honour.

Al Qaeda was for a long time perceived as one of the biggest terrorist threats to Western states and carried out the most lethal terrorist assault ever, namely the September 11 attacks in 2001. Although Western media and politicians today mainly focus on Islamic State when it comes to terrorism, Al Qaeda still poses a considerable threat. While IS is losing territory and therefore becomes less attractive for young Muslims, Al Qaeda does not need territory to survive. It has proved its remarkable capability to reform and resilience after the

Global War on Terror. The invasion of Afghanistan successfully destroyed Al Qaeda's geographical base and disrupted the leadership's effective control over its affiliates. Al Qaeda's central leadership migrated its field of operations to the internet and successfully tried to inspire Muslims in the West to wage lone jihad in their country of residence. While IS focuses on consolidating the power over their conquered territories, Al Qaeda still perceives the United States and the West as its main enemy. Keeping a low profile while the coalition forces are bombing IS, allows Al Qaeda to quickly rebuild its strength.

Both the speeches of Osama bin Laden from 1994 to 2004, and all the *Inspire* magazines covering the years 2010 to 2017 were subject to analysis in order to establish the role of honour. Because Al Qaeda has existed for such a time, developments in the use of honour could be examined. The use of the different honour moves was compared to the development over time that was explained in chapter 2 to discover the dynamics in the use of honour by Al Qaeda.

### 6.1 Comparing the use of honour in the speeches and *Inspire*

Since a comparison between the use of honour in the speeches of bin Laden and the magazines has already been made in chapter 5, the results of the partial conclusion will not be repeated here extensively. Instead, some highlights will be emphasised, and certain dynamics will be clarified.

In both the speeches of Osama bin Laden and in the issues of *Inspire*, honour played an important role. Apart from functioning as a title of respect or a form of addressing a person with a certain rank, honour was perceived as attribute that could be lost or enhanced. Honour was used 24 times in bin Laden's speeches and 119 times in *Inspire*. Relative to the number of pages, 242 and 1133 respectively, this comes down to a factor 0.10 and 0.16.

Although the difference is not significant, the increase in the use of honour could be explained by the dual agenda of AQAP. As local affiliate of Al Qaeda, AQAP should adhere to the demands of the central leadership, while at the same time it seeks local legitimization. AQAP successfully tried to convince the local Yemeni population of the righteousness of their use of violence, by justifying their actions in terms often used in *qabyala*, tribe culture in Yemen. Loidolt argues that Yemen society is one in which citizens behave according to the set of norms based on tribal affiliation. The characteristics of this tribal set of norms is a strong emphasis on honour and revenge. AQAP's regular use of the rhetoric of honour could be interpreted as a tactical move to bolster local support amongst the tribes. Although the main

aim of *Inspire* is to inspire Western Muslims to commit jihadist attacks in their country of residence, the Yemeni population was addressed in various articles.

This might also explain the direct honour appeal in *Inspire*. While Osama bin Laden seems to be more concerned with justifying and explaining the reasons for jihad to the wider audience, *Inspire* seeks to motivate its readers to violent actions. This is reflected in the way the concept of 'honour' is used. Bin Laden uses honour most of the times as something that has been lost and should be restored. While *Inspire* also uses honour in this manner, for them the lost honour results in an even stronger call to action. The writers of *Inspire* often appealed directly to the sense of honour of their readers, with the goal to spark guilt and convince them that jihad is their duty.

## 6.2 Discussion

In both the speeches and the magazine jihad was the core of every move. Whether honour was considered to be violated by an insult and requires revenge to be restored, or by sinfulness and requires atonement, jihad was presented as the means to restore the honour. For example, the violated honour of the Prophet by the cartoons was perceived to be restored by revenge through jihad. Likewise, the violated honour of the *ummah* as a result of their ignorance to religion was thought to be restored by returning to religion. Jihad was often referred to as the ultimate commitment to religion and thus the most apparent way to adhere to Islam. In the same manner, jihad is instrumental to restore the honour of all horizontal moves. When honour is violated in the starting situation, honour might be effectively restored by jihad. Furthermore, jihad was also perceived to be instrumental to enhance the honour of the actor vertically. *Mujahidin* can enhance their status by waging jihad and becoming a martyr.

This demonstrates the centrality of jihad as a solution to the experienced problems in the rhetoric of Al Qaeda throughout all the phases. Whilst jihad is the core of the moves, the cause for the loss of honour and the manner in which the need for jihad is framed in the sources is different for all moves. For example, if honour is considered to be lost, because the land is polluted by an infidel occupation army, jihad is presented as the solution to purify the land. The ousting of corruptive elements is framed as exoneration move, but jihad is the instrument to do so. Considering the violation of honour, jihad is for Al Qaeda the one-size-fits-all solution throughout all phases.

Revenge was often used in connection to self-defence and as a means of deterrence, but only now and then in connection to the restoration of honour. Whereas revenge was absent from Bin Laden's first speeches, corresponding with phase 1 of the development of Al Qaeda, it is the most prominent move in the issues of *Inspire*. The nature of revenge also changed. Revenge was generally used by Bin Laden as a justification for the violence conducted in the phase 1,2 and 3. While the authors of *Inspire* also use revenge as justification, revenge is much more specific. The authors of *Inspire* actively encourage their readers to take revenge for the atrocities done to the *ummah*. In the 'Open Source Jihad' section, the reader learns how to make bombs, use weapons and commit an assassination in a professional manner. Instead of explaining and justifying committed attacks after the event, *Inspire* moves people to murder. Corresponding to the aim of the magazine, the articles of *Inspire* are an attempt to convince people that revenge in the West is necessary, while the 'Open Source Jihad' section gives them the concrete know-how. Instead of big-scale symbolic attacks, like the 9/11 attacks and the bombings of the Madrid and London underground, *Inspire* motivates its readers to carry out small-scale attacks. This makes *Inspire* more threatening to the security of Western communities than the speeches of Osama bin Laden ever were. Bin Laden was always committed to attract the largest possible constituency. He tried to create awareness and spread knowledge about the atrocities done to Muslims to bolster support. He attempted to convince Muslims of the justice of Al Qaeda's actions and tried not to scare them of by extreme brutality.<sup>307</sup> The 'Open Source Jihad' section with its step-to-step guide to brutally murdering people demonstrates the increased aggressiveness of Al Qaeda.

The evolution of Al Qaeda from a centralised and highly bureaucratic organisation in phase 2, to a network of ideological adherents in subsequent phases, made them more reliable on the capability to inspire 'ordinary' people to conduct attacks. In phase 4, the central leadership was lacking military power and AQAP was trying to balance between its local and global agenda. *Inspire* was an effective tool to stay threatening, by actively encouraging violent revenge. That is why revenge developed from being mostly used as a justification to a very concrete set of actions in the rhetoric of Al Qaeda.

Liberation was used by bin Laden in the first phase and the beginning of the second phase in connection to the American invasion of Saudi Arabia. This was his gravest concern and the

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<sup>307</sup> Bob de Graaff, 'IS and its Predecessors: Violent Extremism in Historical Perspective', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10 (2016) 5, 96-103, there 101.

liberation of the holy places of Islam receive much attention in his speeches. But like revenge, liberation was not often connected to honour. In *Inspire*, the liberation move is used in phase 4 in connection to the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring was portrayed as a revolution of honour, in which the *ummah* made the first step towards the establishment of an Islamic State. They freed themselves of fear for the tyrants and disposed those repressive regimes. The revolutions were considered a unique possibility for the *ummah* to impose sharia law and end US influence. For Osama bin Laden, the establishment of an Islamic State was a vision for the future, which he did not expect to be realised during his life.<sup>308</sup> The Arab Spring created a rapid for the establishment of Islamic States and AQAP wanted to grasp the possibility. While IS dismissed the peaceful protests as being too moderate, AQAP called the protesters honourable and the Arab Spring a revolution for honour.

It is remarkable that liberation might be the only honour move used in *Inspire* that is not necessarily connected to violence. In both sources and in all phases, honour is considered only to be restored or enhanced through violent jihad. Even atonement, which entails a return to religion could be considered a violent move, because jihad is seen as the peak of religion and the best way to honour Allah in the Al Qaeda religion. The positive outlook on the relative peaceful protests during the Arab Spring demonstrates that the possibility for non-violent restoration of honour were not impossible.

In *Inspire*, the emphasis on good intentions and a pious life is more present in the elevation move than in the speeches of bin Laden. In his speeches, bin Laden lauded the *mujahidin* as heroes of Islam who had earned great rewards by scarifying their lives. In the hagiographies in *Inspire*, not the rewards are emphasised, but instead the pious life of the passed away *mujahidin* is described in detail. Time and again the reader is reminded that rewards will only be earned if the martyr's intentions are right. The right intentions are pursuing God's quest for the sole purpose of pleasing him. This might reflect a shift towards an even more puritanical live in phase 4, but more research into this phenomenon is necessary.

In his speeches, Bin Laden frequently reminded the *ummah* that unity and internal cohesion are essential to face the real enemy: the United States. Bin Laden was not a religious scholar and was mainly concerned by ending the influence and violence of the US in the Arab

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<sup>308</sup> Graeme Wood, 'What ISIS Really Wants' (version March 2015) <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/> (accessed on 7 May 2018).

countries. This allowed him to be more flexible in his ideology and more tolerant to Shia Muslim. Nonetheless, in the issues of *Inspire* the Shia Houthi's are considered to be one of the three enemies of Islam. While bin Laden called on the *ummah* to unite and forget internal dispute and focus on the main enemy, the authors of *Inspire* see the Shia Muslims as corrupting religion and polluting the land. Therefore, they called on their readers to exterminate these subversive elements. Although exoneration is less used in *Inspire*, sectarian violence is propagated. A reason for this is that in Yemen, Shia groups were fighting the Sunni Muslims, including AQAP, over territory in phase 5. Another possible explanation might be that Al Qaeda is influenced by IS to take a more violent stance towards Shia Muslims. The excessive violence of Al-Zarqawi was one of the main points of dispute between Al Qaeda and Zarqawi. Al Qaeda's leadership has always seen Shia Muslims as apostates, who need guidance to return to the right path. They believe that Shiites should be invited to join the real Islam, and not be killed. Islamic State's main criticism of Zawahiri's policy is that Al Qaeda is reluctant to kill members of the Shia denomination. AQAP's policy towards Shiites is perceived to have caused considerable frustration amongst lower-level Al Qaeda operatives.<sup>309</sup> The more violent stance towards Shia Muslims in *Inspire*, might be an attempt to satisfy the demands of the operatives.

From the analysis of the use of honour in the propaganda of Al Qaeda it could be derived that there is a link between the historical development of the organisation and the use of honour by Al Qaeda. The hypothesis of this thesis is thus confirmed. Although some moves are used quite consistently over time, others are used specifically in certain situation or for certain audiences. Atonement is for example used in all phases, but is exclusively targeted at Muslims. Both the changing views on the perceived enemy and external events influence the rhetoric of honour. Liberation was for example framed as a revolution in honour in *Inspire*, even though it was not used in connection to honour in the speeches. Whereas Osama bin Laden's main goal was to give insight to the *ummah* in the importance of the invasion of Saudi Arabia and the duty to repel the enemy, *Inspire* sought to motivate its readers to commit lone jihad attacks. Correspondingly, honour was used to move its readers to direct action in *Inspire*. This thesis gives insight in the different ways in which honour functions in the propaganda of Al Qaeda. It demonstrates that certain moves were more prominent during different phases,

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<sup>309</sup> Vallee, 'Digital Jihad', 32.

though others, like revenge, were used consistently. The observations in this thesis provide the starting point for further research.

#### 6.4 Recommendations for further research

Understanding how honour functions in the propaganda of Al Qaeda contributes to the research into the appeal of jihadist terrorism. The common use of honour in the speeches and magazines shows that honour might effectively be used to convince people to join the jihad. This has consequences for the counter-terrorism policies employed by Western and Arab government. If these governments dismiss honour culture as dissolute, they miss out on an opportunity to appeal to people worldwide who consider honour as central concept. Our understanding of terrorist' motivation actively contributes to the prevention of terrorism, because Jihadist organisations do use this mechanism and to counter this, an effective counter-narrative should be established.

The image that the West is without honour negatively influences the strength of counter-terrorism programs, because accepting help from dishonourable agents will be harmful to one's own honour. For example, the Prevent strategy in the United Kingdom (part of the government's four stranded counter-terrorism policy, known as Contest) relies on the help of faith leaders, teachers, doctors and others to refer any suspicions about radicalized individuals to a local Prevent body. Muslim organizations in cooperation with the strategy are vilified in the community, because the Muslim youth feel stigmatized. Critics argue that the strategy contributes to the isolation of Muslims students which might make them more open to radicalisation.<sup>310</sup> Honour should be taken into consideration to avoid that good intentions are interpreted as insulting. The lack of understanding the principles of honour code by the Yemeni regime is one of the reasons why Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is so successful in bolstering local support among the Yemeni tribes.

Researching the Al Qaeda magazine aimed at the local audience, *Sada al-Malahim*, using the same method as this thesis, will be enlightening to find out whether honour is more frequently used for tribal audiences. Other propaganda magazines written in Arabic would also be a fruitful contribution to the study on honour in terrorism. Interesting would also be to see how the differences in ideology reflect in the different uses of honour in the propaganda magazines of IS *Dabiq*. While Al Qaeda focussed on the United States and the violation of

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<sup>310</sup> Reality Check: What is the Prevent strategy?' (version 4 June 2017), <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2017-40151991> (accessed on 26 September 2018).

Muslims by the US and the West, IS has always been more concerned with apostate Muslims. IS's extreme violent campaign against the Shia in Syria was one of the reasons why Al-Zawahiri broke relations with the organisation. For this reason, it could reasonably be expected that the exoneration move and the atonement move would be more prominent in *Dabiq*. IS wants to purify their conquered territory from subversive elements like Shia sects.

Thereby, building on this study, a genuinely quantitative research could be performed to check the conclusion presented here. Working with coded programs to examine the use of honour, might yield new and informative results. The margin for human mistakes when reading 1133 pages is big and could be diminished by using computer programs. Because this is an explorative study, the results of the analysis should be evaluated carefully. In explorative research, the danger of biased results is always more present than in other forms of research. This is because irrelevant information might be included or relevant information might be left out, because the subject of research was not demarcated before this result. Overall, the bias of the author plays a bigger role in explorative research, because it might unwittingly influence the researcher into searching in a certain direction.<sup>311</sup>

Acknowledging that this explorative study is only the first step in a comprehensive understanding of the complex mechanism of honour, more research should be done to the effect of an appeal to honour in different societies. Importantly, protecting the Western countries from self-radicalised individuals, honour might be a crucial perspective. While honour does not play a central role in Western societies, second- or third-generation immigrants from honour societies might still perceive honour as incredibly important. This is confirmed by news articles about honour killings in the West.

Recognizing that there is still a long way to go, this thesis should be seen as the first attempt to comprehensively research the mechanism of honour, and to understand how the concept functions in terrorist propaganda. In a field that has grown exponentially since 9/11, losing track of the important issues is a lingering threat. Researching honour conceptually might offer a refreshing contribution to the debate about radicalization and Islamic terrorism. Ultimately, I hope this study will enhance the understanding of the horrible phenomenon that terrorism is and it can contribute to a safer world. For you, as the reader of this thesis, I hope that it contributed to more understanding for the reasons why Al Qaeda or any other Islamic terrorist

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<sup>311</sup> Swanborn, 'Kwalitatief onderzoek en exploratie', 11.

group commit terrorist attacks. This might reduce the fear of terrorism, which often results in demonization of terrorists and portraying them as inherently evil. I hope that my readers have learned that Islamic terrorism did not just pop up, but that it has its reasons, of which infringed honour is one.

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