The role of racial and ethnic issues in the radicalization of Muslim youth

A comparative study of Norway and South Africa

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Master Thesis in Religion and Diversity: Conflict and Coexistence, The Faculty of Theology

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

May 2020

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2020

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http://www.duo.uio.no/

Print: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

This thesis examines the role of racial and ethnic issues in the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and in South Africa. The thesis employs the methods of expert interviews, comparison and cross-cultural research to engage this interesting topic.

The thesis pays particular attention to terminology and investigates meanings and use of certain terms within ongoing discourses on topics relating to race/ethnicity and radicalization. The terms which are outlined and examined in relation to the topics are "radicalism", "fundamentalism", "islamophobia" and "anti-muslimism". topics related to the question are discussed and explained. I employ Critical Race Theory and useful concepts such as "identity politics" and "othering" in order to understand and critically engage the findings of the empirical data collected for this thesis. Finally, the importance of the two different contexts and their societal discourses are considered throughout the thesis, as it explores the role of race and ethnicity in the contexts of South Africa and Norway employing a comparative lens.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Nina Hoel for helping me get in contact with interviewees and for helping me through writing this thesis in general. Your input and insights have been incomparable.

There are many who deserve a mention in these acknowledgements, but none stand out like my parents. Thank you for always supporting me, being there for me and trusting me to find my own way. Your tenacity and love always has and always will inspire me to give my all. I am beyond grateful for the identity and freedom that your choices have given me and I can only hope that this thesis is the first step of a life in which I do you proud.

To my family in South Africa, I am beyond grateful for you. Thank you for being my safe harbour in the storm that was my field work. Your support and reassurance through this and in life in general has allowed me to get to where I am today.

To everybody else, you know who you are. Thank you for putting up with me through this process. Thank you for countless cups of tea, words of encouragement and reminders of why I am doing this. Most of all, thank you for being equally adamant that I work and that I rest.

This thesis is dedicated to my family; past, present and future.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The topics of race and ethnicity, and the topic of radical Islam are ones that are often explored, both in media and in research. However, it seems that the possible intersections between them, i.e. race and ethnicity and radical Islam has not been explored too much, if at all. Simultaneously, there is much focus on processes of radicalization of youth, and what makes youth susceptible to processes of radicalization, Islamic or otherwise. This thesis will therefore explore the role of race and ethnicity on processes of radicalization of Muslim youth. Commonly, the discourses on race and ethnicity, as well as discourses on the radicalization of Islam are largely confined to one nation's context. In this thesis, I examine the role of race and ethnicity on processes of radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and South Africa. Choosing to examine two contexts open up for a comparative element that might engender insights into how the role of race and ethnicity in radicalization of Muslim youth may vary due to geographical placement and the different history of Islam and race/ethnicity in each context.

1.2 Research objectives

The main question that this thesis will be exploring is;

What is the role of race and ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and in South Africa?

The aim of this thesis is to outline and explore the role of race and ethnicity in processes of radicalization among Muslim youth. Using expert interviews as primary data, I engage the intersections between race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth within the chosen contexts. The goal is not to provide one definite answer of how issues of race/ethnicity affect radicalization processes, but rather to provide an insight into the various ways in which discourses of race and ethnicity bring to bear on Muslim radicalization. Due to the fact that not much research has been done that connects race and ethnicity with radicalization, this

thesis provides a cursory glance at this important topic. The thesis provides empirical data, through expert interviews to examine this topic and as such contribute to new knowledge in the field of religion and race. A limited number of expert interviews were conducted as they represent some of the most leading voices in the field. Although their reflections and opinions may speak to general trends and important aspects internationally, the thesis aims to highlight the contextual nature of experts' reflections and opinions. Finally, as terms such as radicalization are hotly debated, the thesis provides a chapter on terminology so as to clarify and provide a rationale for the terminology chosen in this thesis, and thereby the findings need to be seen in relation to these clarified terms, both in regard to language/discourse and theoretical approaches.

1.3 Outline of thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, which all deal with different aspects of the thesis and relate back to the main research question. Chapter two is a clarification of terminology. In this chapter the terms chosen and used are discussed and problematized in relation to the main research question, and thereby in relation to the contexts of Norway and South Africa. The terms 'radicalism', 'fundamentalism'. 'Islamophobia' and 'anti-muslimism' are discussed and explored in such a way that they may prove helpful in analysing the empirical work and eventually attempting to unpack the main research question. The third chapter relates to the contexts of Norway and South Africa and the contemporary and historical positioning of Islam within these two contexts. The fourth chapter deals with theories and concepts used to unpack and understand the empirical data as well as to engage the research question. Chapter five is the methodological chapter in which all things relating to the method of research are explained, discussed and rationalized. In chapter six the empirical findings are analysed; this chapter has been broken into four sub-categories so that different aspects of the empirical data can be explored separately and discussed in relation to each other in an organized manner. Finally, the last chapter before the Bibliography and appendices is the conclusion in which the concluding statements and discussion on what can be taken from the thesis are made.

2 Terminology

This chapter discusses specifically the terms ‘radical’, ‘Islamophobia’ and ‘racism’. The reason for this is that these are terms that I find it necessary to unpack and present thoroughly to understand their relations to each other as well as the possible relations between race/ethnicity and the radicalization of Muslim youth. It is important to understand these terms and their use as they provide concrete focus points in terms of discourse. It seems logical that the way discourse on the topics of race and radicalization is shaped is heavily reliant on the use and understandings of some key terms. The chapters on “radicalism and fundamentalism” and “islamophobia and anti-Muslimism” essentially outline important discourses surrounding the terms used in questions of race and radicalization within the chosen contexts and thereby allow for a discussion of secondary sources, with the overall goal of connecting these discourses with the role of race/ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth. The reason behind an inclusion of these chapters is that to understand the empirical work and research relating to the question of race and ethnicity’s role in the radicalization of Muslim youth some background knowledge is needed. As it is a quite specific area of research the background knowledge needed is equally specific and providing the reader with this knowledge is essential for the understanding of the later empirical work. The chapters “Islamophobia and anti-Muslimism” and “radicalism and fundamentalism” aim to outline the terms being used in academic writing as well as within public discourses.

2.1 Radicalism and Fundamentalism

When dealing with the topics that the research question here does (the relation between race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth), the issue of language and choice of terms is unavoidable. Within this chapter I explain the terms fundamentalist and radical Islam and provide a rationale for why I have chosen to employ radical Islam as opposed to fundamentalist Islam in this thesis. The main focus of this chapter will be how radicalism can be defined and whether radical and fundamentalist can be considered interchangeable terms.

Torkel Brekke discusses the use and nature of the term “fundamentalism” in his book by that very name (2012). The need for a clarification and outline of this term might be based in the meaning of the word in itself and how that meaning compares with the beliefs and actions of “fundamentalist” religious groups. In my reading, Brekke’s discussion of the term

fundamentalism is based on two main points. First, that "fundamentalism" does not have one meaning, but rather is used in different contexts by different people, to mean slightly different things. Second, and perhaps most interestingly to this thesis work, is his claim that fundamentalism in the discussion of religion is only applicable to a Christian context[1]. Taking these factors into account raises a question as to why Brekke chose to use this particular term as the title of his book, however, he argues for the relevance of the term in a way that makes his choice more understandable. Brekke's rationalisation comes after a short explanation of religions relevance to western society after many assumed it would lose its hold. This largely, according to Brekke, was the result of Islamic immigration to western nations[2]. This claim seems believable in the context of Norway as I engage in the chapter called "situating Islam" how the presence of Islam has affected the religious landscape of the country. The Fundamentalist Project is the work that Brekke relies on in his outline and discussion of the use of the term fundamentalism. He underlines the role that The Fundamentalist Project had in producing new data and ways of thinking about fundamentalism, and Brekke also highlights that the idea of several religious groupings as similar enough in key-traits to be placed under the same definition is something that has been highly contested and criticised[3].The word "fundamentalism" in itself means that one is returning to the original ideas and understandings of something. The use of the term in a Christian context was thereby in reference to movements that were in some ways attempting to return to the original ideas of the religion. According to Brekke, in recent times Islamic fundamentalism is more discussed and debated than other forms of fundamentalism due to several reasons. Brekke lists the following three reasons as central: 1) Islam's potential for initiating social and political movements, as became clear through the revolution in Iran (1979), 2) the jihadist networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan and their *radical* Islamic movements (my emphasis), and 3) 9/11 and its impact on the interest level of the west in Al-Qaeda and similar networks[4].What is notable within Brekke's central reasons is his use of the term "radical". Brekke has not explained this term prior to his usage, yet he uses the term "radical" in a way which alludes to an agreed upon meaning. At first glance this seeming lack of definition seems short-sighted and not helpful, certainly not for a thesis such as this one where terms and meanings are questioned and evaluated thoroughly before use. However, this lack of further explanation

[1] Brekke, *Fundamentalism,* 3-6.
[2] Brekke, *Fundamentalism,* 6-7.
[3] Brekke, *Fundamentalism, 7.*
[4] Brekke, *Fundamentalism,* 8.

provides an important insight into the rationale around use of terms, as it alludes an implicit meaning behind some seemingly loaded terms. This is something that will be returned to in the case of "radical" at a later stage.

Similar to the term 'fundamentalism', 'radicalism' is not a term that has one agreed upon meaning. As a matter of fact, the term has evolved into almost the opposite meaning of what it once did. 'Radical feminism', 'radical uprisings' and 'radical student movements' are terms that would once have been perceived as positive. Movements such as these were understood as brave and standing up against an oppressive power. Interestingly, this positive perception of "radical" is clearly reflected in some of the responses given in the expert interviews, which I will engage in the analytical chapter of this thesis. .

An interesting thing to note here is how one can – based on the aforementioned terms – argue that speaking out against injustice or racism could be enough for a person to be defined as radical. One can also see the diffuse nature of the term radical if one googles a definition of radical Islam. The top two results are the Wikipedia pages for Islamic extremism and Islamic fundamentalism. So, what makes radical an effective term in the discourse around a militant/extremist/fundamentalist Islam. How do we then go from such a dualistic understanding, in which radical can be used about important democratic movements and fundamentalist religious movements to Brekke's way of talking about radical Islam as something that has negative, fundamentalist tendencies. One answer to this might be found in the definition of radicalization as stated in The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security's plan of action against radicalization and violent extremism (Handlingsplan mot radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme, 2014);

"Radicalization is here understood as a process in which a person to an increasing degree accepts the use of violence to reach political, ideological or religious goals. A radicalization process which leads to violent extremism is characterised by:

- *A cognitive development towards an increasingly one-sided world view, which does not leave room for alternative perspectives.*
- *then a further development where the perception of reality is experienced so acute and severe that violence occurs.*[5]*"*

[5] Regjeringen.no, "Handlingsplan mot radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme."

As we can see, this provides a definition which is more relevant towards the type of use of the term found in Torkel Brekke's work. Although this definition is strictly a Norwegian legal one it does provide an interesting insight. A large focus in this definition is on the use of violence as a factor in being considered radicalized. One can further argue that the relation to the root or nature of something can be understood as a one-sided worldview. It can therefore be considered similar to fundamentalism which was also closely related to returning to the original meaning. Thereby, it seems as though I could have used the term fundamentalism in place of radicalism in this thesis. Despite the apparent similarities, the word "radical" is still the one more often used in reference to the form of Islam that is to be discussed within this thesis. Decidedly so within the Norwegian context, as is also seen through the definition from the Norwegian ministry of justice as seen above. The fact is that although fundamentalism is a factor within radicalization of Muslims in Norway and South Africa, most Muslims would disagree with the understanding of radical Islamists as returning to an original form of the religion, as is seen among Norwegian Muslims in the work *Young Muslim Voices* (2018) (translated from the Norwegian title; *Unge Muslimske Stemmer* by me). In this work young Norwegian Muslims point out how they do not see fundamentalist movements as representative of a 'true Islam' and that the people belonging to these movements pick and choose the parts of the religion that they wish to follow and read different meanings into verses of the Qur'an than what is agreed upon by other Muslims[6]. As previously mentioned Brekke's choice of using the term 'radical Islamic movement' without much further definition may reflect the typical use of the term within a Norwegian context. Brekke's decision to use the word radical seems to reflect the typical Norwegian use of the term, as he does not refer to Al-Qaeda and other "radical Islamic movements" as fundamentalist – but as radical. He also states that the use of this term often portrays *the views* of the people using the term rather than a subject for which the term is being used[7]. This claim means that someone standing outside [radical Islamic movements], seeing what these movements claim to be doing might refer to them as fundamentalist, as a return to the original Islam is something, they [the radical movements] present as an important aspect. However, someone who is a part of the Islamic tradition and has their own understanding of its meaning may be more inclined to use the term radical in describing these movements. For the purpose of this thesis it seems advantageous to utilise the term radical rather than fundamentalist as the main difference is that the term

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[6] Sandberg et al., *Unge Muslimske stemmer,* 197-211.
[7] Brekke, *Fundamentalism,* 3.

radical can be understood as relating to the roots or origins, but not necessarily acting on this. Forming the thesis on the basis that radical Islamic movements are in fact returning to the roots of Islam would be problematic both in the sense of proving such a claim, but also in regard to what one would then be claiming that the roots of Islam entail.

It also seems important to note that the research question relates to the radicalization of Muslim youth, not "radical Islam" and why the latter is still necessary to discuss. Firstly, the research question is related to the radicalization of Muslims, and it therefore seems necessary to use a term which refers specifically to an ideology or movement which comes from that radicalization process. In using a different term such as "fundamentalism" or "extremism", these would have to be consistently defined as being Islamic fundamentalism or Islamic extremism, while "radical Islam" is an established term in discussing Muslim radicalization. Although making another term specific to the area of research might not have been the most difficult thing to do, these terms have other connotations that are more natural than an Islamic one. As mentioned, "fundamentalism" can be argued as having Christian roots, while extremism is often related to right-wing extremists. Meanwhile, "radical Islam", although contested, clearly relates to an Islamic ideology/movement.

Finally, a key reason behind choosing to use the term 'radical Islam' for the purpose of this thesis is closely linked to my understanding of why Brekke chooses to use the term in his work. In a Norwegian context 'radical Islam' has become almost a default term in discussions relating to questions of fundamentalist/radical/extremist Islam. As the research question is how issues of race/ethnicity relates to radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and South Africa it seems advantageous to use the term, which is most frequently used in related discussions, at least within one of the contexts. It will also be interesting to see whether the choice of the term "radical" will be useful for the comparative aspect of the thesis as it largely represents a Norwegian approach. Not only will this make the sourcing of material simpler, but it is also likely to make for easier direct comparison between the two contexts, also on the question of terms. Using "radical Islam" also opens up for a comparative point on terms, as South Africa has a history of using "radical" in a positive way, which will be further explored in the empirical section. Opening for direct comparisons through the choice of terms is an important aspect of the thesis as it allows for an exploration of the context specificity of terms and their use. Additionally, "radical Islam" being a contested term to some degree makes it all the more relevant to use when discussing race and ethnicity issues, as these can also be considered multi-layered term.

2.2 Islamophobia and anti-Muslimism

" ... while Muslims are increasingly the subject of hostility and discrimination, as well as governmental racial profiling and surveillance, and targeting by intelligence agencies, their status as victims of racism is frequently challenged or denied. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to suggest that, instead of highlighting and alleviating anti-Muslim discrimination, the complaint of anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia has, conversely and frequently invited criticism of Muslims themselves[8]."

This excerpt from Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood's article *Refutations of racism in the 'Muslim question'* (2009) quite thoroughly introduces one of the obstacles that needs to be tackled before the main research question is answered. If we are to look at the possible relationship between racial/ethnic issues and radicalization we need to understand whether discrimination of Muslims can, in itself, be understood as racism. And, if so, whether looking at relations between racism and radicalization is an unnecessary complication of the question at hand (because the focus could have been on discrimination of Muslims as a factor in radicalization). To do so, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is necessary. As can be seen in the 'Theory' chapter, CRT gives researchers the opportunity to understand race in relation to other aspects of identity and opens for a broader understanding of possible reasons for changes and continuations in the racial orders of societies. In this chapter it will be seen in relation to 'Islamophobia' as a concept.

As most people know Muslims are not confined to one ethnic group, in fact according to Pew research centre 49 countries in the world have a Muslim majority population[9]. However, most of these countries are not in Europe and therefore the people belong to other ethnic groups than northern or western European, or even the broader, more simplistic category of 'white'. This means that those Muslims who live in Norway or other European countries such as the UK, France, Germany etc. are parts of various ethnic minorities as well as the religious minority. In countries such as South Africa, which has been built up by different ethnic groups coming there through various channels (colonialism, migration within Africa, slave trade etc.) there are so many different ethnic groups, who have become settled groups in society that the minorities are not as constantly and blatantly visible as they are in some

[8] Meer and Modood, "Refutations of racism in the 'Muslim question'," 338-339.
[9] DeSilver and Masci, "World's Muslim population more widespread than you might think".

European countries, which are historically white[10]. This opens up for the possibility that discrimination against Muslims in European countries may be based both on ethnicity and religion. However, the question remains of whether discrimination of Muslims can be understood as a form racism, despite the differences in ethnicity within people identifying as Muslim. To be able to answer this it is necessary to find a definition of racism from which the question can be discussed. In the book *What is racism?* Sindre Bangstad and Cora Alexa Døving provide several definitions and I have chosen one of these to work with here;

"Racism is attitudes and actions that define individuals with assumed or actual belonging to a certain group (and often minorities, particularly immigrants) as so fundamentally different that they are seen as culturally or in some other way inferior and that they should therefore be excluded or can be discriminated against.[11]"

The reasoning behind choosing to use this definition is that unlike other definitions, including the others provided by Bangstad and Døving, it does not include the need for or mention of "race" to define racism. Through this it becomes clear that Islamophobia and discrimination of Muslims, whether seen as two separates or as two sides of one thing can fit into, if not all then at least some, definitions of racism. So, why is there not an overall agreement on this fact. Well, firstly as most people know coming to a general consensus on any topic is hard enough. When we add in the complexity and differences in opinion on topics like race and religion this logically becomes even more difficult.

As I have already touched on the important role terms and definition play for this thesis, it is worth noting that the term Islamophobia itself is a much discussed one. There is disagreement on whether it is a suitable term for what it attempts to define. The word phobia comes from the Greek phobos and can be translated to mean fear, panic fear, terror etc.[12] The reason that many do not find the word Islamophobia descriptive towards what it aims to define is that it is not intended to mean a fear of Islam, in most cases it is used to define attitudes and actions which aim to discriminate Muslims and problematize or in worse cases demonize Islam. This is problematic for several reasons, one of which can be traced back to the excerpt in the beginning of this section. Calling a person, statement or action Islamophobic should be accompanied by an understanding that discrimination is taking place, however the use of the

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[10] Leirvik, *Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog*, 9.
[11] Bangstad and Døving, *Hva er rasisme,* 13.
[12] "Phobia." In *Online etymology Dictionary.*

term phobia implies that the person being accused is acting on the basis of fear, rather than intolerance and discriminatory convictions/beliefs. Thereby, the term used to describe anti-Muslim sentiments to a degree legitimizes those same sentiments through defining them as products of a phobia. I can try to sum up the whole spectre of issues with the use of this term in one sentence. Referring to discrimination and ill-treatment of Muslims as Islamophobia excuses the perpetrators, as they are understood to be acting on a fear and problematizes Islam and Muslims as something/someone to be afraid of. In his article from 1999 Fred Halliday suggests that a more accurate term to use would be "anti-Muslimism". He bases his opinion on several claims throughout his article. I will here highlight three of these claims:

1. Islam is not threatening to win large segments of western European society to its faith, as Communism did, nor is the polemic, in press, media or political statement, against the Islamic faith. Therefore, the attack is not on Islam as a faith, but Muslims as a people.
2. There is not one Islam at which this so-called phobia can be directed, Islam has several law schools and movements within itself and "Islamophobia" as a term contributes to over-simplifying a diverse and multi-directional religion.
3. The use of the term Islamophobia makes dialogue more difficult as any criticism of Islamic practice from outside or inside can be placed under this term and is thereby essentially shut down[13].

The first point that I want to draw your attention to is claim nr. 3. It is interesting that a term which in its intention should be used to identify and call out discriminatory and problematic actions and attitudes towards Muslims may in fact be contributing to a lack of dialogue. The issue Halliday outlines lies in the fact that Islamophobia is an unspecified, generalized term and as its focus is on Islam as a religion legitimate criticism of aspects of the Islamic practice can too easily be given this label and thereby devalued. However, if we were to use the term anti-Muslimism for those opinions and actions that are discriminatory in the way Islamophobia is intended, then it would be easier to distinguish between critical voices and those voices that are simply inherently anti-Muslim. If this was the case, then an argument which aims at criticizing aspects of the religion or ideology would not be placed in the same category as those discriminating/demonizing Muslims as a group of people. This is because

[13] Halliday, « 'Islamophobia reconsidered'», 898-899.

the key aspect to the new term (anti-Muslimism) would be the attitude against Muslims, not a fear of Islam.

The second claim which I have chosen to include in my discussion is based on the term Islamophobia being an over-simplification. Referring to Islamophobia implies that there is one Islam and that all criticism and discrimination is aimed at this one tangible religious group. One Google search let's us know that this is incorrect with information about different groups like Sunni, Shia, Sufi, Ahmadiyya etc. and different law-schools also within each of these categories. Like Christianity is complex and many-faceted, so is Islam and the term Islamophobia implies that Islam is one defined entity, rather than a range of different practices and traditions within a religion. This over-simplification can be argued as perpetuating an understanding of Islam as one and the same. Whereas one might be against violent Salafi-jihadists, the Islam that they follow is likely far away from the Hanafi law-schools teaching of Sunni Islam as followed by a Pakistani Muslim. As mentioned earlier Norwegian Muslims in the book *Young Muslim Voices* find it necessary to point out that "radical Islam" and more "generally practiced Islam" are different things, something that is likely based in their reflections that other Muslims would agree with. The difference between these two branches of Islam are not a topic of discussion when using the term Islamophobia, and thus separations based in vital differences both in ideology and practice are negated. This negation makes a simplified group identity easier to construct and seems to make the process of discriminating Muslims easier as it removes any need for differentiation.

The last claim that I will look at is the one stating that Islam does not pose a threat to Western societies. Looking at the political climate in many western countries in particular it seems logical to assume that many would disagree with this claim. In fact one of the earlier governing parties of Norway, The Progress Party has been known to use rhetoric such as snikislamisering, "sneak-Islamization", which will lead to undermining Norwegian values, and eventually to an Islamic takeover of Norwegian society[14]. For these politicians and the people who follow them Islam is posing a threat to society through its increased presence and influence alone. However, a real threat of Islamic religion or ideology taking over seems, to those outside of this political sphere, unrealistic at best. There is a larger presence of Islam in societies that had earlier barely heard of it, but this has been a natural part of the globalization process that the world has undergone. In fact, the religious diversity in most countries can be

[14] Jensen, Siv. "Dette er snikislamisering."

seen as a direct result of the global contemporary diasporas[15]. People are migrating from and to all parts of the world and they are taking their cultures and religion with them. Halliday points out that Islam as a religion was the enemy during the crusades or the Reconquista[16]. This example [the Crusades] was a case of Christian and Islamic societies clashing and fighting for domain over certain territories, with expansion of their ideologies as a goal. This is not the case for the societies of today. Whereas there was a time where meetings or clashes between certain states by default meant meetings and clashes between religions, this is no longer the case to the same degree as states are to a larger degree separated from religion. In addition, meetings between faith communities today often promote inclusive attitudes and even collaboration across religious differences, particularly in political arenas[17]. One young Norwegian Muslim reflects on this in *Young Muslim Voices*. He states that there is not an ongoing war against Islam, but that there was one during the time of the knights templar, and that their ideology has survived in the freemasons today[18]. In other words, he denies the existence of an outright war against Islam as an ideology but holds on to the opinion that there might be sentiments from a time where this was the case still present in some movements. However, it all the same seems as though the issue for those referred to as 'Islamophobic' today relates more to the followers of Islam (Muslims), the presence of these people within their own non-Muslim majority countries and how this will affect the societies in which they exist. This again strengthens the claim that a more accurate term for 'Islamophobia' would in many, or most cases be 'anti-Muslimism'.

In examining whether discrimination of Muslims can be understood as racism it is interesting also to note how the issues that arise with the use of the term 'Islamophobia' relate to whether or not it can be understood as racism? When using 'Islamophobia' as a term it is more difficult to class it as racism. This is because the term itself relates to a belief system and an ideology, which is much more obscure and can be claimed to not relate to people, but to ideology and belief. Racism on the other hand, in the definition provided earlier, relates directly to actions and attitudes that affect and categorize individuals within certain groups. In other words, use of the term 'Islamophobia' creates a disconnect between the term and the people it actually relates to. In doing so it seems that placing this under the categorization of racism becomes more problematic. As 'Islamophobia' relates to an ideology more than a

[15] Jacobsen, *Verdensreligioner i Norge,* 13.
[16] Halliday, «'Islamophobia reconsidered'», 898.
[17] Goddard, "Christian-Muslim relations: a look backwards and a look forwards", 201.
[18] Sandberg et al., *Unge Muslimske stemmer,* 221.

group of people it could be argued that it is not inherently racist. In fact, Mattias Gardell points out how this disconnect between 'Islamophobia' and racism was used by Anders Behring Breivik, the right-winged extremist mass-shooter behind the 22. July attacks in Norway. Mattias Gardell outlines the disconnect between the two in Breivik's manifesto as being ambivalent. He provides rationales by Breivik which state that, "six decades of multiculturalist propaganda have made most Europeans inclined to reject racist doctrine as scientifically flawed and morally wrong, Breivik urges his fellow patriots to ''avoid talking about race.'' The war against Islam ''is a cultural war, not a race war! If you do believe it is a race war, then keep it to yourself as it is un-doubtfully counterproductive to flag those views.'' Yet, Breivik found the fine line hard to follow. ''At first, I hesitated to include anything including the word race, white or ethnicity as I convinced myself originally that I was first and foremost against Islam.''[19]" This quotation can be hard to follow, however, it is essentially a quote by Gardell, through which he quotes Anders Behring Breivik's manifesto. The reasoning behind including Gardell's outline of Breivik's rationalization of terms is that it clarifies some of the rationale, though be this an extreme example, behind using a term like 'Islamophobia' as opposed to racism. Not only is 'Islamophobia' as a term related more to an ideology, but terms like race, racism, white and even ethnicity are understood [by Anders Behring Breivik] as counter-productive when expressing critical opinions about Islam and multiculturalism. This is not to say that all those who subscribe to notions that Islam may pose some degree of threat to Norwegian society are in alliance with right-winged extremists such as Breivik, but it aims to highlight some of the rationale behind why 'Islamophobia' is a problematic term when attempting to class such attitudes/actions under the definition of racism. If the term anti-Muslimness is used there is more focus on the effect of such attitudes/actions on the people who identify as Muslim. This would also place this form of discrimination more definitely within the (chosen) definition of racism.

Considering the discussion here it seems that the issue in classifying Islamophobia as racism lies more in the term 'Islamophobia' than in the term 'racism'. For the research question this is key as it makes the importance of discourse on these matters all the more evident. At first glance 'racism' is the more problematic of these two terms, yet a brief look underneath the surface reveals why another term may in actual fact bring more need for definition and clarification to the discussion. Findings such as this, in which the different angles of approach

[19] Gardell, "Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe", 141.

become more visible, are part of the reason why Critical Race Theory (explained and expanded on in the theory section) is such a useful approach. This is because it allows for the possibility of looking at the intersections between race and other possible reasons for discrimination.

From this it can be gathered that if the term “anti-Muslimism” is used, then placing discrimination of Muslims within the definition of racism is a natural thing to do. In the context of this thesis that means that power structures and binaries regarding racism and race can also be understood to affect Muslims. Within the empirical section this knowledge will allow for the reflections to be seen as relating not only to race/ethnicity or radicalization, but also to “anti-Muslimism” as racism. In fact, the finding that “anti-Muslimism” is racism means that factors relating to this (anti-Muslimism) or “othering” (this term will be explored further) on the basis of religious identity can also be understood as racism. While the role of race and ethnicity on radicalization of Muslim youth is the main research question, it seems that research regarding racism and its role inherently deals with the role of anti-Muslimism.

3 Situating Islam

To be able to examine the research question adequately it is necessary to first have an understanding of Islam's presence in Norway and South Africa, with a focus on their respective histories. I will here outline and situate the nature and role of Islam within first a Norwegian, then a South African context to create a basis of understanding for the contexts that I have chosen, and particularly for Islam within those contexts. The chapter is focused on the history and presence of Islam in Norway and South Africa and possible similarities and differences that may be relevant to the interviewees' reflections at a later stage. The overall purpose of this chapter, much like the "terminology" chapter is to lay a foundation for the research collected for this thesis and provide an insight into the contexts and existing challenges that my research needs to navigate.

3.1 Islam in Norway

In Norway the presence of Islam is still relatively new, at least when seen in comparison with South Africa. In fact, migration to Norway from Muslim majority countries started quite late compared to most other countries, also in the west. The fairly recent arrival of Islam in Norway may affect the interplay between race/ethnicity and radical Islam. The beginning of immigration into Norway from Muslim-majority countries can be traced back to the arrival of male migrant workers largely from Pakistan, Morocco and Turkey, in the beginning of the 1970s[20]. The majority of the subsequent influx of Muslim immigrants have been through family reunification with these workers as well as refugees from countries like Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Somalia[21]. Because Muslims have been present in Norway quite a short period of time, a lot of them still have strong connections to their countries of origin, both when it comes to religion and culture. However, it is difficult to say how large a percentage of Norwegians are Muslim, as there is no register of religion, belief or spiritual belonging in Norway, except for those belonging to the church of Norway. The closest we will be able to get to a number is through Statistics Norway. They reported in 2017 that there were 148 000 people registered as belonging to Muslim faith communities in Norway. Taking into account those that are not registered to faith communities Statistics Norway estimate the real number to be somewhere between 148 000 and 250 000, placing the

[20] Leirvik, *Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog*, 9.
[21] Jacobsen, "Islamic Traditions and Muslim Youth in Norway." 15.

estimated percentage of Muslims among Norwegian citizens somewhere between 2,8% and 4,8%[22].

This short introduction of the origin of Muslims in Norway allows us to move into the question of how Muslims in Norway identify. Commonly, the first generation of immigrants identify with their country of origin, so Pakistani, Turkish, etc., meanwhile so-called second and third generation immigrants to a larger degree self-identify as Muslim[23]. What one can imagine the shift in self-identification from the country of origin to Muslim does in Norway, is that it creates a broader Muslim community. This community is then, to a lesser degree connected with the different countries of origin and more to the shared experience and bond developed through being Muslims in a historically Christian dominated society. Despite that identifying on the background of religious belonging can be understood as less polarizing than an identification based on country of origin one can speculate in whether it creates a more defined line between Muslim and Christian and minority and majority. The reasoning behind this speculation is that the groupings appearing in this case is not tied to the country one originates from, nor the culture of that country, but rather to religious belonging[24]. Consequentially, while blurring the line between countries of origin, this shift in self-identification can be thought to strengthen the division between different religious belongings. The question of self-identification is an important one for this thesis as it may directly affect the process of radicalization of youth. A more thorough examination of the question of identity in regard to the main research question can be found in the empirical part of this thesis.

An example of the possible polarization between Christians and Muslims in Norway can be seen in an incident from 2004. Carl I Hagen, a Norwegian politician who was at the time chairman of the libertarian party, The Progress Party, gave a speech where he spoke about the prophet Muhammad as a war lord and placed him in direct contrast to a peace-loving Jesus and did so in the name of "us Christians"[25]. This is one example of the ways in which a polarized rhetoric of us vs. them has been employed in political discourse, a discourse that has become more prevalent with the increase of Muslim population in Norway. It is however important to note that both other political parties as well as many Christian leaders went out

[22] "4 prosent Muslimer i Norge?" *Statistics Norway*
[23] Goddard, "Christian-Muslim relations: a look backwards and a look forwards", 195.
[24] Leirvik, *«Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog»,* 15.
[25] Leirvik, *Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog*, 9.

and stated that they distanced themselves from the statements made and the rhetoric employed by Hagen, in fact they had a joint event in which they spoke against what they called Islamophobia and Muslim slander[26]. This was not the first time that Christian leaders went out against the way politicians in Norway spoke about religion. In 1996 Christian leaders issued a statement on how Norwegian politicians in high positions, through their public presence contributed to the segregation of Norwegian citizens based on their religion[27]. This iterates an angle that any discrepancy between Christians and Muslims in Norway may have its origin in a political portrayal of a perceived conflict, rather than an actual inherent conflict between the two religious groups. While looking at these encounters it is important that we do not forget the range of people and meetings within Muslim and Christian dialogue, and thereby the dialogue between majority and minority populations. Christians and Muslims meet in many different places, in different ways, on different levels and so on, the different approaches to each other manifested by these encounters also vary[28]. Meetings between religious leaders in a setting meant for dialogue and between children meeting at school will imply different expectations of approach to and contact with each other. So, although the context for minority-majority relations in Norway may seem as though it would be similar for most groups within this large, Muslim community, it is still different and diverse from individual to individual and between groups originating in different countries as well as different Islamic traditions.

To further highlight the diversity of opinions found among Norwegian Muslims I will outline some reflections by different individuals on the same topic. These opinions are brought to light in two different books which aim to outline the "Muslim-Norwegian" experience.

"There are many imams there [on the internet] who say that people in Europe are like this and this. They say that people like that are shaytan (the devil). (...) But it is not like that. Nobody from Europe comes to me and says, "please drink this beer" or "have that cigarette". Nobody is forcing me to do it[29]."

This quote makes it clear that for some Muslim Norwegians it is important to note that their practice or non-practice is a result of their own choices. Although there may be influences by societies and people around them, when it comes down to it, they are themselves the ones

[26] Leirvik, *Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog*, 16.
[27] Leirvik, *Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog*, 16.
[28] Goddard, "Christian-Muslim relations: a look backwards and a look forwards", 201
[29] Sandberg et al., *Unge Muslimske stemmer,* 99. (My translation)

making decisions on how to act or how not to act, what to do and what not to do. In the above quote the rhetoric by these imams on the internet is referred to. This rhetoric is based on the perception that Muslims living in the west might be easily "corrupted" by the way of life in European societies. For anyone with some insight into discussions and debates among the Muslim community of Norway or in Europe, the views perpetuated by internet imams is quite familiar. What this claim of Muslims in Europe being corrupted does is that it removes the agency of the individuals in question. Their 'muslimness' is presented as wholly a product of their environment and not of their own conscious decisions and reflections.

Another quote which is interesting to me in exploring Islam in Norway is this one;

"That this medium sized Norwegian city [Fredrikstad] has sailed up as a Norwegian extremist-capital has been particularly thought provoking for me. It is just as thought provoking that young Muslims residence have from Bærum, Larvik, Trøndelag and Oslo are radicalized. Because, most Norwegian Muslims, regardless of residency have benefitted from the Norwegian religious freedom[30]."

The interesting part of this to me is that there seems to be an underlying notion that growing up in a country with religious freedom should somehow exempt Norwegian Muslims from becoming radicalized. It only takes a look at one example of a European suicide bomber to see that this may be too naïve a stance. Mohammad Sidique Khan, the leader of the four male suicide bombers in London in 2007 was born and raised in the UK to Pakistani parents. This places him in a group which is often discussed in the context of radicalized Muslim youth. A defining factor for these youths is often that the difference between the cultural and religious practices brought by the parents and the culture that they grow up in can make them casualties of a cultural clash[31]. This culture clash leads some into radical Islam. Benefitting from religious freedom is furthermore a rather vague statement which cannot be discussed further without more background and insight into that area of research. We will, however, be returning to this in the empirical part of the thesis.

As the question being explored here is race/ethnicity relating to radicalization of Muslims it seems important also to outline the nature of radical Islam in the context of Norway, as well as some of the research that has been conducted relating to radical Islam. A piece by the

[30] Rana. *Norsk Islam,* 93. (My translation)
[31] Kabir. *Young British Muslims: Identity, Culture, Politics and the Media,* 75.

Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) from 2019 titled "Those that chose violence and terror" (my translation from Norwegian; "De som valgte vold og terror") outline the backgrounds and fates of around 100 people who went from Norway to Syria to fight for Islamist extremist organizations[32]. These individuals range between everything from Russian immigrants with previous ties to neo-Nazi movements to Somali immigrants raised in Muslim communities to Norwegian converts[33]. In this documentary, the Salafi movement The Prophets Ummah is mentioned as an important actor in the radicalization of several Norwegian Muslims. The nature of their role, though not the focus of this thesis has also warranted mention in the title of a book being published in 2020, written by prominent researcher in the field Sindre Bangstad and Marius Linge called, *Salafism in Norway: The story of Islam Net and The Prophets Ummah*. The group's role and position within radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway will be looked at more closely in relation to the empirical work of this thesis. Other areas of focus for academics in Norway on the topic of Islam has been the relation between Islam and Christianity by academics like Oddbjørn Leirvik and Islam in Norwegian society by individuals such as Kari Vogt. Interestingly several of the Norwegian academics working on Islam in Norway also have ties to South Africa such as Sindre Bangstad and Torkel Brekke who have researched Islam in South Africa as well as Norway.

3.2 Islam in South Africa

South Africa's history of Islam is quite different from that of Norway. The two main factors that differentiate Muslim presence in South Africa from that in Norway are the amount of time their presence has been a reality, and that much of the migration of Muslims to South Africa was involuntary. Muslims arrived in South Africa from two directions and in different time-periods. The first arrival happened along with or shortly after the first colonists arrived at the Cape of South Africa in 1652, these Muslims were workers, political exiles, prisoners and slaves and therefore had little say in their relocation[34]. The second stream came in 1860 as indentured labourers from India, and therefore did not have much choice in their move to South Africa either[35]. The final influx of Muslims to South Africa is numerically insignificant, but was made up of around 500 freed slaves and took place between 1873 and

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[32] Svendsen, Christine, "De som valgte vold og terror."
[33] Svendsen, Christine, "De som valgte vold og terror."
[34] Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism,* 20.
[35] Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism,* 20.

1880[36], this is by far the smallest wave, but also the one of the three in which the wishes and plans of the Muslims migrating might have been a real factor in their move.

This brief outline makes it clear that Muslim presence in South Africa predates Muslim presence in Norway by over 300 years. Naturally this has allowed the Muslims in South Africa to settle into society and be a part of its change and development over a significantly longer period of time. The lack of say in the migration for most could possibly play a role in their relation to their respective countries of arrival, however such an assumption would need to be substantiated. Whereas those Muslims who came to Norway largely came as (what was meant to be) temporary migrant workers, Muslims who came to South Africa were brought there on someone else's volition. One could argue that this would mean that those who chose to move would gain stronger ties to the country they moved to than those who did not.

When it comes to the question of Muslim identity in South Africa, while exceedingly diverse, political discourses have been central in the production of identities through categorization. In the 1800s three racial groups were present in the region, Whites (mainly British and Dutch colonialists), Blacks (Black Africans who had come from different neighbouring countries) and Coloured (a mixed group made up of the remnants of the indigenous Khoisan, slaves, some colonists etc.)[37]. Within this paradigm Muslims almost exclusively belonged within the category of coloured, because as mentioned they were largely brought to South Africa as slaves from countries such as Surinam and Indonesia. However, there is another angle of Muslim identity in South Africa based in Indians who came to the country as indentured workers, from the late 1800's they were classified as "Asian Indian"[38]. This created a larger "Indian" identity which included both Muslim and Hindu Indians. Therefore, there was more of a common identity for these two than there was between Indian Muslims and Coloured Muslims for much of South Africa's history. Although Muslims were part of a religious minority in South Africa – constituting only 1,36 % (roughly 550 000 inhabitants[39]) of the population according to the 1996 census, there was one important factor that made this less of an important identity marker: the institutionalised hierarchy of race. The fact of the matter was that religion was of little consequence in deciding the social standing of South Africans, whilst race meant everything. Thereby, being "Asian Indian" and being "Coloured" meant

[36] Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism,* 20.
[37] Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism,* 19-20.
[38] Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa", 47.
[39] Günther, "Islam in South Africa: Muslims' Contribution to the South African Transition process and the Challenges of Contextual Readings of Islam", 2018.

completely different lives and social standing despite both groups consisting of a substantial number of Muslims. The Indian Muslims' hold on their identity as Indian is comparable to the first Norwegian Muslims' hold on their countries of origin, because the Indian community came as indentured workers to South Africa much like the first Muslim migrants to Norway. Therefore, there was always a strong relation to India for these Muslims and their legal status was only changed to permanent residency as late as 1961[40]. The two different groups of Muslims in South Aftica became all the more visible during the Apartheid regime, an outline of which is seen below;

"Under apartheid, [Indian] Muslims lived in predominantly Indian areas in value-strengthening conditions. On the whole, Muslims and Hindus co-existed in relative harmony on both individual and communal levels with mutual respect for each other's customs, beliefs and practices. The construction of Indian racial identity historically involved ignoring class and caste lines. The racial exclusivity of Indians continued until the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990[41]."

What becomes evident here is that the perceived non-permanence of the Indian Muslims stay in South Africa may very well have been the main reason for their self-isolation and continued strong sense of Indian identity, rather than Muslim identity. However, as with the Norwegian Muslims this seems to have changed as they became more aware of their permanence in South Africa, and particularly after the end of Apartheid when the institutionalised race-divides were lifted. Goolam Vahed's article from 2000 which focused on the Indian Muslims in Durban particularly points out this shift in how identity was perceived;

"New forms of identity are being shaped amongst Durban's Muslims. The new loyalties are based on Islam and contain a determination to maintain and strengthen `old' modes of belonging and structures of meaning. The definition of the salient community has widened, as boundaries are moving beyond language and regional affiliations[42]."

This collective identity was, however, not a factor until the racial segregation in the law was removed as an aspect. Muslims in the Cape, however, were quite early on organising as a community on the basis of Islam. Therefore, it is easier for the works that deal with

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[40] Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa", 49.
[41] Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa", 49.
[42] Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa", 65.

Muslims'/Islam's role in the struggle against apartheid do so without including Indian Muslims, as they were not a defined community such as the Cape Muslims were. Farid Esack, in his book *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism* (1997) states that *"... while there have been notable Muslim personalities from the northern provinces in the struggle against apartheid, the Muslims of the Cape have organized against it as a community on the basis of Islam[43]."* This statement makes it evident that there was notable difference in the method of the efforts made in the liberation struggle. Their respective Muslim identities can, it seems, be seen in relation to how their presence in the struggle against apartheid was organised.

In the same way as in the section outlining Islam in Norway I will end this section with a short introduction to radical Islam in South Africa as well as general areas of research on Islam in South Africa. On the topic of radical Islam an article published in *Terrorism Monitor* by the Jamestown foundation outlined PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) and Qibla (An Islamic movement promoting the aims and ideals of the Iranian revolution) as the two main organizations worth mentioning[44]. These are however, not Salafi movements such as The Prophets Ummah in Norway, but are broader social movements, in which radical Islam has a foothold. Their impact on radicalization to the point of inciting attacks in line with those of Al-Qaeda is not considered noteworthy in the article and the reasoning behind the low possibility of this is thought to be South Africa's neutrality in the so-called war on terror as well as the country's pro-Palestinian stance[45]. Whether this assessment is agreed upon by others, in particular the interviewees for this thesis will be considered further within the empirical chapters. Finally, it seems worth mentioning that there are several noteworthy academics working on topics relating to Islam in South Africa. Among others Abdulkader Tayob has written notable works on the subject and on Islam in general. Meanwhile Sa'diyya Shaikh's work on gender, sexuality and Islam is also worth mentioning. There are many more noteworthy academics in South Africa, including those I have had the pleasure of interviewing and their reflections on the question of race/ethnicity relating to radicalization of Muslim youth will be thoroughly explored.

[43] Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism,* 20.
[44] Botha, "PAGAD: A Case Study of Radical Islam in South Africa."
[45] Botha, "PAGAD: A Case Study of Radical Islam in South Africa."

4 Theories and concepts

This chapter outlines the theories and central theoretical concepts employed in the thesis. The approaches chosen, namely critical race theory, the concept of identity politics and theories of othering create a framework to help unpack and analyse the empirical findings in the best way possible. Moreover, these theories and concepts address the central research question in slightly different ways. The theories and concepts I have selected are key in understanding the topics of race/ethnicity and radicalization and also help problematize these fields of inquiry.

4.1 Critical race theory

The reason for using Critical Race Theory (from here on referred to as CRT) as a method in this thesis is that it provides a critical look at questions of race and racism – topics of central relevance to this thesis. Furthermore, there are aspects to CRT which deal with intersectionality and the interplay between different axis of oppression. Typically, gender-based oppression is seen in relation to racially based oppression. This intersectional framework may allow for an exploration which sees the aspect of Muslims as a minority within the two research contexts in relation to the racial aspect and allows for a more multifaceted approach to address and explore the question of radicalization.

CRT originated in The United States among legal scholars, activists and practitioners in the late 20th century, and their main concern was with the persistence of racism and racial inequality, despite the formal legal changes brought on by the civil rights movement[46]. This means that what initialised CRT was the continuation of racist sentiments, even after racial equality was put into law. The goal of the theory was to be an explanatory framework for the changes and continuities in issues pertaining to race, racism and racialization which went outside of the legal system[47] . Despite this there is a clear activist part of CRT which is crucial for its use and the understanding of it today[48]. By this I mean that CRT goes further than other academic theories on race in that it aims to change the structures of race that are in place, not only explain them. Using CRT as a theory within this thesis not only opens up avenues of exploration along lines of intersectionality, it also aims to draw attention to existing structures

[46] Christian, Seamster and Ray, "New Directions in Critical Race Theory and Sociology: Racism, White Supremacy, and Resistance", 1731.
[47] Christian, Seamster and Ray, "New Directions in Critical Race Theory and Sociology: Racism, White Supremacy, and Resistance", 1731.
[48] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 3.

relating to issues of race and radicalization. Derrick Bell, a law professor at NYU is considered to be the intellectual father of this movement[49]. Other noteworthy names in the USA include Patricia Williams and Charles Lawrence, however there are more noteworthy academics in this field appearing internationally, among other places in Asia, India and Latin America[50]. As the field is still relatively new it is likely that more academics and researchers internationally will expand the scope and content of CRT and make it applicable to particular contextual needs.

What makes CRT an appropriate theory for this thesis is that it is applicable to other areas of research than race. Where some theories that deal with race focus solely on this aspect, CRT has a history of being used and understood in relation to other aspects of identity.

"… intersectionality scholars argue, we cannot fully understand racism without investigating how it intersects and collides with other axes of oppression, such as patriarchy.[51]"

The above excerpt is an excellent example as to why CRT is an applicable theory for this thesis. The goal here is, as previously mentioned to explore the relation between race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth. The fact that being Muslim within the chosen contexts automatically places them in a minority means that the two factors, race and religious identity will be interconnecting categorizations for those that also belong to minority ethnicities. The relation between these two aspects of identity may differ between Norway and South Africa, because as outlined earlier, they have different presences of both Islam and race/ethnicity, historically and today. The aspects of identity chosen, race/ethnicity and Muslim religious belonging, can be understood as intersecting axis of oppression. Although people belonging to one or more minority groups does not automatically mean that one is oppressed it is an identity factor which may result in discrimination or oppression. Understanding the possibility for oppression based in these identities is also important but seeing the connections between different axes of oppression is one of the main goals in using CRT to explore this research question.

Social categories such as race, religion, gender or sexuality do not stand alone and disconnected from other categories, they are connected. Identifying with two categories from

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[49] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 5.
[50] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 6.
[51] Christian, Seamster and Ray, "New Directions in Critical Race Theory and Sociology: Racism, White Supremacy, and Resistance", 1734.

which people are typically oppressed within a society, for example being a woman and being of colour can as mentioned be argued as colliding axis of oppression. Being a racial minority does not mean one is automatically oppressed, but it can be, and has historically been an important factor in oppression. CRT explores not only intersectional oppression from people who do not identify within these groups, but also the essentializing of one category of oppression by people who belong to the same category[52]. Liberation movements might focus on the shared reason for oppression, for example race, and not pay sufficient attention to other existing intersectional categories like gender or sexuality, which are also important aspects of identity and may be connected and added to shared experiences of oppression. As a hypothetical example LGBTQ movements may not recognize that for people belonging to certain religion or ethnic groups, religion or race might not be aspects that can be disconnected from their LGBTQ identity. Although many LGBTQ movements may not intentionally overlook intersectionality, they have been critiqued for developing LGBTQ identity models on upper-middle-class white men, which reflects the most vocal and privileged within the community[53]. The perpetuation of such patterns of inequality is something CRT aims to change. The main reason behind CRT's intent to focus on intersectionality is that in doing so one is removing the structural biases of which people and which oppressed groups have more voice and representation and thereby power[54]. Whether these interconnected categories of religion and race has a role on the nature of radicalization of Muslim youth becomes the key question which CRT as a theory may be useful in unpacking. Meanwhile, the nature of CRT is not a one-sided simple one. In fact, there is quite an array of disciplines in which work on race is prevalent, yet these are not in agreement on what it means or even how to approach it. The gist of this is presented in the quote below, to outline the lack of simplicity regarding terms, also in established theories relating to the thesis;

"*The massive scholarship about race that continues to emerge within every discipline, from literature to psychoanalysis to sociology to theology, has minimal consensus on definition and approach, though the fields are certainly united in being against it—whatever it is.*[55]"

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[52] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 51-58.
[53] Hulko and Hovanes, "Intersectionality in the Lives of LGBTQ Youth: Identifying as LGBTQ and Finding Community in Small Cities and Rural Towns".
[54] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 55.
[55] Heschel, "The Slippery Yet Tenacious Nature of Racism: New Developments in Critical Race Theory and Their Implications for the Study of Religion and Ethics", 4.

This quote sums up the ambiguity and openness that defines CRT, which is likely to be present also in the exploration of the research question here. CRT can essentially include almost anything as long as it is critical to and against the existing racial orders. An example of an angle included in CRT is what is called the black-white binary in American racial studies. This is essentially the idea that the very framework for racial studies reflects a black-white binary, in which non-black minorities have to experience oppression which mirrors that of African Americans in order for the oppression to be considered legitimate[56]. In such a framework oppression or discrimination of an individual from Mexico based on skin colour could be argued as constituting legitimate racism as it would also apply to an African American. However, seen from the perspective of the black-white binary, discrimination based on accent or religion may not be understood as racism as it cannot directly be paralleled with the African American experience of racism. This way of understanding and relating to racism is something that CRT aims to get rid of, as it deems some experiences of racism more important and legitimate than others. Although this particular black-white binary is to some degree particular for the United States there are certainly established frameworks around understandings of racism within the Norwegian and South African contexts. An example of this, which has been explored earlier is how existing discourses of Islamophobia or anti-Muslimism can be argued as legitimizing racism without mentioning race in Norway.

In this thesis, CRT will be used first and foremost to engage and problematize the role of race/ethnicity in the empirical data. Additionally, the intersectional nature of CRT will allow for an interesting exploration of race/ethnicity in relation to Muslim identity.

4.2 Identity politics

When engaging with theory that may help address the chosen research question it seems natural to include an aspect which speaks to individual identity. This because the issues being discussed, of race/ethnicity and radicalization can largely be understood as different between individuals. If this is the case then speaking about patterns and possible links, particularly in everyday conversations in society, may require a certain level of essentialisation of identity. This leads us to the topic of *identity politics.*

[56] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 67.

In an academic context this concept appoints systems of mobilization of politics in which the focus lies only on one aspect of a person's identity[57].Thereby, to understand identity politics, we need first to be in agreement on what constitutes an identity. For the purpose of my discussion I have chosen to stick to Francis Fukuyama's definition as I find that it on some levels challenges the very nature of identity politics. For this reason I would like for the below definition to be kept in mind as identity politics is discussed.

"*The modern concept of identity unites three different phenomena. The first is thymos, a universal aspect of human personality that craves recognition. The second is the distinction between the inner and the outer self, and the raising of the moral valuation of the inner self over outer society. This emerged only in early modern Europe. The third is an evolving concept of dignity, in which recognition is due not just to a narrow class of people, but to everyone*[58]*.*"

This definition opens up an avenue of discussion in which identity is made up of more than one aspect. This is particularly interesting for the issues at hand here because, as previously discussed, intersectionality plays a vital role in the exploration of the research question. With the choosing of this definition of identity there is an implicit understanding that identity is not comprised of one element alone, but that there are different phenomena that need to be combined in order to constitute a modern understanding of the identity concept. The ones Fukuyama outlines are an aspect of all humans which craves recognition, a distinction between inner and outer self where inner self is valued higher and a concept of dignity where everyone should be afforded recognition. The first and the last phenomena are clearly linked as the one outlines the craving for recognition and the other an understanding of recognition being due to everyone. These two phenomena are interesting as they can be understood as affording others the same degree of recognition that is craved by all. This is an interesting aspect to keep in mind, particularly as we move into concepts like intersectionality and marginalization. The final phenomena, where the inner and outer self are distinguished, and the inner is given the most value is definitely relevant in regard to questions of race and ethnicity. By including this phenomena Fukuyama claims that inner self is more important to identity that what outer self is, however, historically and even today, that seems to be an

[57] Leirvik, *Interreligious Studies,* 53.
[58] Fukuyama, *Identity,* 43.

abstracted way of relating to this term. It will become clear how this is an idealistic way of relating to identity in modern society as the concept of identity politics is considered.

The aspect focused on within identity politics can be one of many, but the most common ones are religion, ethnicity, gender and culture. Using only one of several identity markers can be problematic and cause issues both for the individual being defined as well as for the people seeing and processing this kind of identity definition. However, like with most terms there are more than one side to the topic of identity politics, something that will, hopefully, become increasingly clear through this thesis. An important fact to note in regard to my use of the term identity politics is that the definition I am working with has been chosen as it is the most relevant for use in an academic context. This is because the term identity politics has become one that is used to an increasing degree not only in academic contexts, but also in political discussions, media articles and in everyday life by many different people with diverse applications of the term. This results in the term being used and understood quite differently than in the academic definition of it in many instances.

To best understand the meaning of and behind identity politics it seems reasonable to put forward an example of it in practice. A work which can be argued as one of the most important examples of identity political thought in modern day academics is *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington from 1993. In this article Huntington's main claim is that a 'clash of civilizations' can be found as the basis for all of history's wars, battles and conflicts. In his article he outlines eight civilizations and argues that any future conflicts will take place along these lines of civilizations and their differences. An interesting point to note is that some of his categorizations (the Islamic civilization, Hindu civilization, Buddhist civilization etc.) are based in the notion of religion being the foundation for their existence, while 'Western civilization' for example is based in geographic positioning, a point we will return to. At first glance his categorization and notion appear over-simplified, however, one thing in particular lends his rationale enough credibility to make it worth taking a closer look. What lends Huntington's theory an initial impression of innovation is his definition of civilization. Early in the article Huntington outlines how civilization in the way he uses it is not a synonym for nation states, and how nation states as main actors in global affairs is something new and has only become the norm within the last few centuries[59]. This simple, but necessary clarification introduces a new dimension to the discussion which opens for the

[59] Huntington, "The clash of civilizations?", 24.

possibility that Huntington's reflections go beyond what is readily apparent. By this I mean that his arguments are not based around the civilizations one associates with present societies, which gives the impression that he has found more effective groups to which society should be divided than the nation states which may seem natural. At the same time, however, Huntington's categorizations appear rigid and as mentioned do not follow the same lines of reasoning for their divisions. Some of the civilizations are based in geography and some in religious belonging, which begs the question of which civilization a Hindu living in a western country would belong to, or a Christian in a Muslim majority country. This brief introduction to Huntington's thesis is important as his work establishes an identity political lens through which to understand the world.

There have been several waves of criticism aimed at Huntington's article, with the discussion following the 9/11 incidents in the United States as one of the more critical and illegitimating reactions to the work. Less than a month after the 9/11 attacks in New York, Edward Said wrote an article that exemplifies one angle of critique which is prevalent in the meeting with Huntington's work in this time period. The title of the article, *Clash of Ignorance,* provides an opening into the nature of Said's criticism of Huntington's work, in particular, the ignorance Said argues it exhibits. Said's article is clearly affected by and a product of the events from a month earlier, but more important than this for his reflections is the rhetoric that emerged in the aftermath of the attacks. The rhetoric in question is essentially one in which 9/11 was seen as a consequence of a clash between 'the West' and 'the rest'. Huntington's article perpetuated the polarizing rhetoric of 'the West' and 'the rest' and thus makes his work key in understanding identity politics in modern society. Said argued that as the attacks on the twin towers happened the division of civilizations presented in Huntington's work suddenly became a reality and inspired some politicians, particularly in the West. Said points out how the discussion among politicians and media outlets quickly took to a rhetoric based on Islam vs. the West, and that Huntington's work was used as justification for claims of inherent difference and hostility between perceived 'Western' and 'Islamic' civilizations[60]. This over-simplification and focus on only one aspect of identity for civilizations that include millions of individuals with millions of complex identity constellations is a prime example of why Huntington's work contributes to an essentialized identity politics. Said's article offers alternate discourses, such as powerful and powerless communities, reason and ignorance or

[60] Said, "The clash of Ignorance".

justice and injustice to challenge Huntington's simplistic divisions[61]. In addition to this, Said examines the reasons why the Western powers were so willing to adopt Huntington's classifications in the aftermath of 9/11. One of Said's key points is that the civilizations presented by Huntington are not separate entities. Through globalization and migration there are many Muslims living in the Western world. However, he states that fluidity, ambiguity and scepticism (which characterize the global order) do not provide practical guidelines, so battle orders based on simple notions like 'good vs. evil', 'freedom vs. fear' or similar rhetoric ('the West' vs Islam) are necessary[62]. Said's compelling argument bases itself on the understanding that Huntington as well as the people drawing on Huntington's work came from a place of practicality and fear rather than hostility or purposeful villainizing. The fluidity and ambiguity which may be more representative of civilizational identity would most likely not be as straightforward and reassuring for the general public as a simple battle order of 'The West' versus 'Islam'. 'The West vs. the rest' rhetoric, particularly adopted by political individuals, can be considered a result of identity politics. The time directly following the 9/11 attacks was one characterized by anger, confusion and fear. Using a rhetoric that simplified identity to 'Islam' and 'The West' could be understood as the easiest portrayal of the events, to simplify and essentialize them for discussion and media portrayal purposes. However, this rhetoric became problematic as it opened for the idea that 'Islam' and 'The West' are clashing civilizations which are inherently oppositional. This may not have been as problematic a notion in earlier times, when these civilizations were to a larger degree separate. Said, however, outlines that due to the presence of identities relating to other civilizations in most places today, like Muslims in Western countries, such a headstrong rivalry rhetoric can be argued as damaging. Furthermore, I would argue that there is a "clash" in the discussions surrounding Huntington's work which is blatantly visible, that is the one between "identity politics" and "identity" as terms. In fact, the definition of "identity" as written by Fukuyama and used as the basis for the understanding here can be argued as being directly opposed through Huntington's work and placing of people into large, over-simplified definitions of civilization. Identity politics is defined by Merriam Webster dictionary as; "*politics in which groups of people having a particular racial, religious, ethnic, social, or cultural identity tend to promote their own specific interests or concerns without regard to the interests or concerns of any larger political group*[63]*."* The definition itself certainly has

[61]Said, "The clash of Ignorance".
[62] Said, "The clash of Ignorance".
[63] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "identity politics."

negative undertones, which make it difficult to understand the explanation of "identity" provided by Fukuyama as being usable in the context of identity politics. However, the empirical research will also provide reflections and opinions on how "identity" and "identity politics" can be understood in relation to each other and the main research question, so we will move on from this apparent clash of definitions for now.

In regard to Huntington's article, Said goes on to draw in the aspect of fear as he states that Islam is no longer at the fringe of the West but in the centre of it (through globalization), which is seen with relation to the memory of the Arab-Islamic conquests of the seventh century[64]. The topic of fear, as mentioned earlier is not one that Huntington directly discusses but Said seems to think that it nonetheless shines through in the rhetoric and argumentation taking place both in Huntington's work as well as in the reflections made by people based on his work after 9/11. The topic of 9/11 and the continued mentioning of Islam vs. 'the West' also raises the question of 'Islamophobia' and its role connected to questions of identity and identity politics. An explanation based in fear of Islamic presence, might be seen as a mediating factor when it comes to the portrayal of Islam as it entails that the negativity comes from a power struggle rather than reflecting an outright denigration of an 'Islamic Civilization'. This brings us to the possibilities of discourse that Said presents as alternatives to Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations'. As mentioned previously, Said suggests terminology such as justice vs. injustice or powerful vs. powerless[65]. Changing the rhetoric in such a way Said opens up for a discussion of the apparent strife which directly addressed the problems arising within the context of ideological and/or religious conflict (specifically the 9/11attacks) without discriminating and alienating based on static civilization identities.

Huntington's work ironically reflects the same rhetoric which is used by what one can argue is the opposing side of the clash, namely the 'Islamic civilization'. Mohammed Usman Rana, a Norwegian medical doctor, commentator, author and columnist points out in his work how one of the most well-known members of the Norwegian Islamist movement The Prophets Ummah in a speech in front of parliament in 2012 spoke about how Norway is at war with Islam[66]. The same rhetoric about wars of civilizations is thereby clearly being used also by radical Islamists themselves. My take from this is that for the purpose of understanding radicalization, any simplification of existing societies such as the one Huntington presents

[64] Said, "The clash of Ignorance".
[65] Said, "The clash of Ignorance".
[66] Rana, *Norsk Islam,* 97.

will create a basis for discrimination and segregation. Although the grounds on which the lines between Huntington's civilizations are being drawn are not the same as the lines between nation states they still provide a grounding for an us vs. them rhetoric.

In regard to how the concept of identity politics will be used as an analytical tool in this thesis there are a few focus points. Firstly, the concept of identity politics can be understood as a framework around identities, much like the ones discussed in regard to CRT. This means that seeing the empirical work in the light of both identity politics and CRT opens up for a discussion of the essentialization of identity (be it racial/ethnic identity, Muslim identity, radical identity etc) and how this can affect the radicalization processes within the contexts of Norway and South Africa. As identity politics is used by others to define which aspect of the identity is of relevance it will be interesting to explore whether this definition of identity can impact radicalization processes among Muslim youth. Both identity politics and CRT also deal with the question of systems and structures and being able to relate the empirical findings to existing structures and systems in the contexts through CRT and identity politics may prove key in understanding the role of race and ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth.

4.3 Othering

An interesting aspect to engage when we examine minorities in general, and also in the context of my research is that of 'othering' or 'the other'. In his book *Interreligious Studies* Oddbjørn Leirvik mentions among others the views presented by Simone de Beauvoir and Edward Said on the topic of 'othering', in which the term connotates alienation and disassociation[67]. 'The other' is essentially the person or persons who are being affected by an othering process, the person or group of people who are disassociated or alien from a group considered to be the norm. An interesting aspect in defining 'the other' presented by Leirvik is that of Levinas, in which relating to 'the other' can be associated with a difference that is respected as well as responsibility that is irreducible[68]. What this means is that Levinas' understanding of "the other" is not that it is inherently negative. In fact, the difference making one "other" is associated with respect as well as a degree of responsibility. However, de Beauvoir and Said's understanding are more in line with the identity political viewpoint as it

[67] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 54.
[68] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 54.

is commonly used, which is why it is relevant to include here. Although identity politics can be different things it became clear from the previous section that it is most commonly used in an attempt to essentialize and take away from the complexity of identity in order to present one overarching opinion or view (as in Huntington's work). Othering discourses have proven prominent within religious identity politics where one sees a tendency towards viewing groups outside one's own religious convictions as the other, which may be synonymous with being a threat or an enemy[69]. This becomes a relevant angle to the main question at hand as the research focuses on aspects of Islam in two countries where it is not the majority religion. Therefore, I suspect that, and will explore whether, there will be similar tendencies around the "othering" of Muslims, as well as perhaps the nature of identity politics surrounding Muslims as a "threat" or "enemy".

In exploring the topic of 'othering' of Muslims or Islam there is a discourse in place that is relevant to consider. The discourse has changed over time. In medieval time 'othering of Muslims was done largely through a Christian normative thinking. The focus points in this period were; a.) Islam being a violent religion which grow through use of the sword, b.) Islam being a self-indulgent religion, c.) Islam being a conscious perversion of truth, thereby inherently false and d.) Muhammad being the anti-Christ[70]. In contemporary discourse there have been two clear elements added to the 'othering' process relating to Muslims which can still be seen; a.) criticism of Sharia law as opposing human rights and b.) Criticism of Islam as inherently oppressive of women, as opposed to ideals of modern feminism[71].

It seems through this outline that the dominant pattern within this discourse, as outlined by Leirvik, is to delegitimize aspects of the Islamic belief system. An interesting thing to note is that the medieval discourse was largely based in Islam going against the Christian norms, with calling it false and referring to Muhammad as the anti-Christ. In the contemporary 'othering' discourse the focus seems to be more on Islam going against secular/non-religious rights and equalities. This is an interesting development and speaks to how the process of 'othering' is dynamic and will develop along with the societies it occurs within. Basic knowledge of the historic and contemporary discourse surrounding 'othering' of Muslims is

[69] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 54.
[70] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 55.
[71] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 55-56.

important in exploring the question of race/ethnicity issues relating to radicalization in Norway and South Africa.

The first point on the topic of 'the other' which I find important to discuss is that for something to be 'other', something must also be 'self'. The term has no meaning if it does not stand in relation to something already defined as self. Or to say it as simply as possible for something to be 'other' it must be 'other than' something else. So, the existing status quo is by definition something else than "the other". For the thesis question there are two existing "selves" worth seeing in relation to their respective "others". These are the racial self and the religious self. In the Norwegian context being a person of colour places you within a group that can be defined as 'other' as much as being Muslim does. In the South African context, however, it seems likely, based in the long history of different races and ethnicities, as well as religion and the role of these factors, that the degree of 'otherness' caused by either of them can be argued as less than in Norway[72]. This claim has been elaborated in the background chapter *Situating Islam*. Essentially this might allow for an argumentation that the aspects of identity discussed (race/ethnicity and Muslim or even radical Islamist identities) both create lower levels of alienation and disassociation within the South African context than they do in the Norwegian one.

Due to the nature of my research question, 'othering' seems a relevant concept to consider. This is particularly the case because both the contexts being explored, Norway and South Africa, are non-Muslim majority. Thereby, Muslims might be considered inherently 'other', which may in turn contribute to the radicalization of Muslim youth. If the empirical findings reflect such a reality, then it will be important to problematize the kinds of 'othering' processes that emerges in the data. Furthermore, the historic and contemporary discourse surrounding 'othering' of Muslims may prove important to consider so as to evaluate whether these discourses inform processes of radicalization in Norway and in South Africa.

[72] Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism,* 19-20.

5 Methodology:

5.1 Methods used

In this thesis I have employed qualitative research method, however, before this a positioning of the researcher will be presented. The reasoning for this is that it gives an insight into the thought process behind several of the choices made in conducting the research for this thesis. In addition, the position of the researcher can be an important factor in examining the empirical findings as it may impact the approach to and understanding of the findings. This is not to say that the opinions and reflections of the interviewees have not been the most weighted, but rather that reflections on research positionality are important so as to highlight the researcher's implicit biases. After outlining this the explanation of qualitative research in the form of expert interviews is explored. The method of expert interviews is used to present interviewees opinions and reflections on the relations between race issues and the radicalization of youth. This method allows for a rich presentation pertaining to the experiences and knowledge among the interviewees. Expert interviews also allow for more attention to details as the general knowledge is already in place and need not be focused on to the same degree as had the interviewees not been considered experts. I have also used a comparative method to best explore the similarities and differences between the chosen contexts of Norway and South Africa. As the thesis is essentially a product of cross-cultural research, a comparative method gives room for direct comparison between the two contexts, using the same methods of approach for both contexts. This makes it easier to see the findings in Norway and South Africa in relation to one another. This chapter provides a rationale for the methods chosen as well as a description of how they are used. Additionally, it will outline why these methods are suitable to answer the research question.

5.2 Role of the researcher

Before I go into the methods used, I believe it necessary to outline my own positioning as a researcher going into questions of how issues of race can be seen in relation to the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and South Africa. My mixed-heritage background is pertinent to understanding my keen interest in the chosen research question. My mother is Norwegian, born in 1970 and raised in Norway. My father is South African, born in 1965 and raised in Apartheid-era South Africa. My father belonged to the classification “coloured” during Apartheid and was, along with his family, forcefully removed from his home at the age of 5 and placed in a coloured area of one of South Africa’s larger cities. My mother grew up in a small town in the South West of Norway and can remember the first time she saw a non-white person. Despite their closeness in age my parents grew up with completely different understandings of and experiences with the topics of race/ethnicity. The knowledge that my parents’ relationship and my very existence would have been illegal had it happened less than 10 years earlier made my interest in race relations a part of me for as long as I can remember. In addition to this I lived the majority of my Primary school years in South Africa and have travelled back and forth between the two countries my entire life. This has made me contemplate about the differences and similarities between Norway and South Africa and been vital in shaping my desire to research topics relating to both contexts. The fact that both countries have a Christian majority, yet such visible differences in how questions of religious belonging are dealt with is interesting to me. In addition, the question of radical Islam is one that is raised and discussed quite often in Norway. Notably, in South Africa, where Muslims also make up an important part of the demographic, it is in my experience seldomly discussed. Being a person of mixed heritage and having grown up in both contexts, I have personal experiences as to the difference in understanding of, and practices in regard to, religion in general and Islam in particular within these countries. My ethnicity/race places me in a minority group within both contexts and I have first-hand experience with how minority groups are treated within the contexts. While it is true that my mixed heritage has influenced the choice of research topic, there are also other concerns that inspired my interest in this topic. As I am currently in Norway I find it natural to have that context as a point of focus. South Africa seems to be a good choice for comparison as there is quite a lot of research done there by Norwegian academics as well as others. In fact, research on Islam in South Africa is widespread both by local academics and foreign ones, including Norwegians. The existing research on South African Islam by Norwegian academics makes it all the more relevant as a

context with which the Norwegian situation can be compared. Furthermore, there has been widespread research on the topic of race in South Africa, again by both local and foreign academics. The presence of Norwegian academics also within this area of study makes South Africa all the more suitable for a comparative analysis. The South African context has a racial history which is widely known and documented. The infamous nature of South African racial policies is multi-faceted and, thereby so is most research which deal with this topic. When it comes to my role in choosing radicalization of Muslim youth that is slightly less tied to my heritage. Being of the heritage I am means that I do not fit into the visual classification of 'ethnic Norwegian', however my straight hair and lack of more typically 'African features' make me less easy to pin down as mixed than my siblings. Thereby, people in Norway often assume from my appearance that I am middle Eastern and thus Muslim. Especially when starting university, I realised that I often ended up, by default in the foreigner/Muslim group of people. I did not mind this and much of my interest in Islam grew out of the relations made through this initial dynamic. This also sparked an interest in the perceived relation between racial/ethnical identity and religious identity in Norway. In South Africa, I have never experienced that my appearance bore with it an implicit religious belonging. As mentioned, radical Islam has for quite some time been a much-discussed topic in Norway. Questions surrounding the processes and events leading up to Norwegian youth going to fight in Syria have been debated vigorously. From this I began to wonder whether it would be beneficial to see racial issues and radicalization not only as separate topics, but also as possible intersecting categories. Lastly, I see the histories of Islam in the two contexts as different enough that the current understandings of possible relations between race/ethnicity and radicalization among experts may be seen in direct relation to their context's respective histories.

5.3 Cross-cultural research

Cross-cultural research is a broad category which essentially includes any research being performed using more than one culture as a research area. A more detailed explanation of such a research approach is that; "Cross-cultural research can be defined in an anthropological sense to mean any kind of description or comparison of different cultures. It can also be used in the sense of systematic comparisons that explicitly aim to answer questions about the

incidence, distribution, and causes of cultural variation[73]." For the purpose of this thesis I find this useful. The goal of my research is to explore and compare differences pertaining to race/ethnicity and the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and South Africa. I find it important to have a systematic approach to the exploration and comparison, this is to best provide direct insight into whether issues of race/ethnicity can be understood in relation to radicalization of youth within the chosen contexts. The cross-cultural approach is thereby all the more suitable as it is a systematic method of approach. I also aim to examine why such difference (if there are differences) occurs, and what this means for the understanding of radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and South Africa. Cross-cultural research method is quite broad and can include several different sub-methods, the ones I have chosen to include are comparative design and expert interviews. Although these can be understood as methods in their own right, I choose to see them as sub-methods of cross-cultural research as the way in which they are used pertains to that genre. I will go into these before introducing the empirical data as well as the issues and limitations that occurred when conducting my empirical research.

5.4 Comparative design

Comparative design is quite simply the study of two different cases using the same methods. Within cross-cultural or cross-national research Bryman, relying on Hantrais, outlines that such research occurs "when individuals or teams set out to examine particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries with the express intention of comparing their manifestations in different socio-cultural setting…, using the same research instruments either to carry out secondary analysis of national data or to conduct new empirical work[74]".

This method is suitable for this thesis as it nicely outlines the comparative intention of the research being done. The effect of race/ethnicity issues on the radicalization of Muslim youth is being compared with a focus on the contexts of Norway and South Africa. The intention is to see whether the two countries – with very different histories when it comes to race/ethnicity politics and the presence and role of Muslims – experience similar or different roles of race and ethnicity on the radicalization of Muslim youth. The reason for choosing

[73] Mertens, "Cross-cultural research", 227.
[74] Bryman, Social research methods, 72.

these two countries is that their histories with Islam and the nature of Islam's presence today may result in different approaches to and portrayals of radicalization of Muslims. Both Norway and South Africa are also countries where Islam is present today, but they have very different timelines in regard to the history of Islam and histories of race/ethnicity. The use of comparative design is vital within this thesis as it opens up for a direct comparison between the two cases being examined.

Although comparative design as a method is used in most of the social sciences there is some disagreement surrounding it as a method. Historian James Beniger was of the opinion that all social science is inherently comparative and that all knowledge is created through comparison with other knowledge[75]. From this I gather that he finds the explicit definition of research within social science as comparative to be unnecessary. However, for the purpose of this thesis the direct comparative nature of the research is an important part of the construction of the work. Thereby, comparative design seems to be a useful and necessary method for answering the question of the role of race/ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and South Africa. One person who agrees with the necessity of stating this explicitly is political scientist Giovanni Sartori. He presents the opinion that the difference between explicit and implicit comparison needs to be considered, and that comparative method should be reserved for research that is consciously and explicitly comparative[76]. As this is the case with this thesis it seems that the use of comparative method is most suitable.

In order to explore the research question, an interview guide was formed which can be used without alteration in both of the countries being examined. The interview guides are found in the appendices[77]. This allows for an interview situation in which the questions are identical, and therefore any answers given are more easily examined and compared than had the questions been different. Hantrais' outline of comparative design does not state that it is dependent on the exact same questions, but on using the same research instruments, in this case interviews. For the research question being explored here though, it would be easy to go off track and/or veer outside the originally planned parameters. To reduce this as much as possible I decided that the questions would be identical for the people in the same groups within both contexts, something I will return to. The goal of the interview guide was to create questions which were open-ended. In this way, the interview questions do not allow for

[75] Beniger, "Comparison, Yes, But – The Case of Technological and Cultural Change", 35.
[76] Sartori, "Compare Why and How: Comparing, Miscomparing and the Comparative Method", 15.
[77] Pages 92-94

yes/no answers but may elicit rich and detailed responses. I also decided to develop questions that were specific enough that the interviewees could relate them to their own context and keep their answer within the scope of the thesis' main theme.

5.5 Expert interviews

In choosing interviews as my main qualitative research instrument the question of who to interview and how to structure the interview became an important one. Choosing an ineffective method can be the making or breaking factor of a thesis. In an attempt to create a certain degree of continuity between the comparisons, I chose to limit the scope of interviewees to two groups. The first group consisted of academics, who in some way or other work within the field of Islam and radicalization (from here on referred to as 'academics'). The second group consisted of imams. These two groups are, in my understanding experts on the topic I research as they, in different ways, engage with and see the interplay between the different aspects of identity examined here, through their work. The reason behind choosing the two different expert groups is that the academics are experts through their research work, and as such may provide insight into my chosen research area. I also think that when exploring a question that has not been previously researched, the inclusion of interviews with academics provide reflections and standpoints which ground the research and lends it a level of depth and insight which would be difficult to attain through secondary sources alone. The imam's expertise comes from everyday interaction and contact with their communities, which makes them interesting people to interview. They have insight into the way in which individuals experience the interplay between racial issues and Muslim identity, also in the process of radicalization. Simply put, the academics have an in-depth knowledge of questions relating to race, religious identity and radicalization from their own research and the imams have primary knowledge on these same topics from interaction with and relation to Muslim communities. As mentioned earlier I kept the Interview guide identical for those belonging to the same groups in each context. Between the two groups, however, there was variation in the last three questions, which related more to the role of people in similar professional positions as themselves in dealing with the topics discussed.

The method of expert interviews is a debated one, as there are different opinions on the usefulness of such interviews. However, I believe it is an effective and useful method of

research as it reduces the time-consuming process of data gathering, particularly for a master's thesis project. Additionally, my expert interviewees also have practical insider knowledge[78], which allows for collecting information that goes beyond interviewees respective professions. In addition, expert interviews provide insight into areas that have not been researched thoroughly, as with the connection I am intending to explore and where finding relevant interviewees might prove difficult[79].

The aim with choosing academics and imams in both countries is to get opinions and knowledge from two different groups who have insight into the realities of the people the research topic concerns itself with. The reason why I chose to interview experts rather than radicalized Muslim youth, for example, is that in Norway, in particular, there are strict laws and regulations around terrorism and radical movements. Getting into contact with youth who either currently are or previously have gone through radicalization processes would be difficult as they are likely incarcerated, outside the country engaging in jihad or under surveillance, and therefore unlikely to speak about their experiences. The thesis could have focused on interviewing youth not involved in radical Islam about their understandings of and relations to radicalized youth in their communities. However, these youths would not necessarily be easier to get hold of and the process of finding and coming into contact with them would be more time consuming than getting hold of imams and academics. Simultaneously, I assume that the experts as interviewees are more used to being asked questions on controversial topics such as race and radicalization and are therefore more comfortable answering these. Finally, although my reason for choosing to conduct expert interviews was a combination of factors mentioned above, the determining factor which finally decided it for me was concerns linked to access. Although I could have found Muslim youth to interview, establishing sampling criteria and deciding on other demarcations (e.g. gender, age, background, how long in Norway/South Africa, race, practising religious) would be time consuming. When choosing academics and imams I had access to the interviewees both in Norway and South Africa through the networks of my advisor or my faculty in general. My advisor played a role as a gate opener for me to find interviewees, particularly in South Africa, this allowed me to focus on the nature of my interviews and thesis generally, instead of spending more time and effort on finding suitable interviewees. Despite the

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[78] Bogner, Littig and Menz, "Generating Qualitative Data with Experts and Elites," 2-3.
[79] Bogner, Littig and Menz, "Generating Qualitative Data with Experts and Elites," 2-3.

rationale provided here for the choice of interviewees, I experienced some difficulties, something I will be returning to later in this chapter.

5.6 Conducting the research; research setting, procedure and process

There were four expert interviews conducted for this thesis. Two of these were in South Africa and two in Norway. The interviews all took place over an eight-month period, between July 2019 and February 2020. The two first interviews, with the South African imam and the South African academic were conducted in Cape Town, South Africa in July and August of 2019. The interviews of the Norwegian academic and imam were conducted in Oslo, Norway in November 2019 and January 2020. Getting in touch with the interviewees was done mainly through a process of gatekeeping. This entails that I got in contact with my interviewees through established connections someone else has, in this case, my supervisor and other professors at The Faculty of Theology at UiO. My supervisor, Nina Hoel had contacts in South Africa from her time living there, studying and working and this gave me a point of entry to contact them about being interviewed as part of my research. In the case of the Norwegian interviewees they were contacted using connections by another professor at the faculty (Oddbjørn Leirvik) as well as on my own accord. In regard to the process of the interviews there were certain things I wanted to take into account. I aimed to conduct the interviews in surroundings that were relatively free of background noise as an audio recorder was used. In addition, the comfort of the interviewees was an important factor in deciding where to conduct the interviews as they would be more likely to speak freely in an environment they felt secure in. Based on these factors the South African imam was interviewed at his house, the South African academic at a café, the Norwegian academic at his office and the Norwegian imam in a classroom at his mosque. The interview with the South African academic was in the least favourable location, a café. However, largely due to the fact that the interview was not conducted in the city he lives in and thereby possible quiet locations were rather limited. The time spent in each interview also varied and ranged between 50 minutes to 2 hours 45 minutes. The difference in time spent with each interviewee was due to the amount of time available as well as some of the lengthier reflections of the academics.

5.7 Analysis of data and ethical considerations

Regarding analysing the findings there were some steps taken. Firstly, I formed the categories from which I wanted to look at the empirical findings. These are the same categories that can be seen as the chapter headings within the analysis, 'Problematizing "radical Islam" as a "threat"', 'Relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity', ' Key factors other than race/ethnicity' and ' Race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth'. Using these categories I worked through each of the transcripts and found the reflections that best related to the category and allowed for the most fruitful discussion. The transcription was done verbatim, however the quotes included here have been slightly edited to make them understandable and grammatically correct.

The issue of ethical considerations is one that needs to be taken seriously when dealing with interviews. Therefore, there are specific guidelines in Norway for how one can conduct qualitative research in an ethical way. These considerations are made by and have to go through the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (from here on NSD). My interview guide, identical to the one used for the interviews and attached here had to be submitted to NSD and approved before any interviews could take place. In addition, I had to develop a consent form which would be given to the interviewees to sign. The consent form also needed to be approved by the NSD. My research project, including interview guide and consent form, was approved by NSD on May 8th, 2019. The main focus in terms of ethical considerations was to have anonymity for the interviewees. This has been upheld by not mentioning names, place of employment, mosque they belong to etc. The possibility for indirect identification is, however, present as those familiar with the views or reflections of the interviewees on subjects discussed may recognize them. This comes with the fact that I have chosen expert interviews, and therefore some of the interviewees are internationally known for the research they have conducted and published on similar areas of study. Subsequently the possibility for such an indirect identification was acknowledged in the consent form that they signed.

5.8 Limitations

When going into the process of collecting data for this thesis my goal was to interview 6 people, either two academics and one imam from each country or two imams and one academic from each country. The reason for this fairly small sample is that I wanted to elicit rich and detailed narratives. Quite possibly, the academics and imams would share different opinions on questions relating to race/ethnicity and radicalization, also within the same context. If my interviewees conveyed different views also within their own contexts, it would make for even more interesting comparative analysis. As the thesis will show I ended up interviewing four people, one imam and one academic within both contexts. I will now go into the reasons for this limited sample size. One point that seems necessary to outline, however, is the attempt at finding people with concrete knowledge on the research area as well as enough experience relating to questions of race/ethnicity and/or radicalization that they could be understood as experts. The academics interviewed both have large parts of their work on Islam and how that intersects with societies. They also both have backgrounds in religious studies and have conducted parts of their educations outside their countries of origin. This means that although they are different in many ways there is a degree of a common basis for their knowledge. The imams interviewed are both imams from Sunni-Islamic traditions and both have parts of their theological education from Pakistan. This means that they have a certain degree of common ground in their theological understandings, which makes direct comparison between their reflections more easily possible and relevant. All my interviewees are men, this was not intentional, and my original aim was to also have one woman from both contexts. However, finding female interviewees in my chosen contexts doing research on the topic of race and ethnicity's role in the radicalization of Muslim youth proved difficult, particularly if I was to stick with the area of religious studies. In terms of imams, although there are some traditions from which I would have been able to find female imams there are few of these and getting hold of them would be a challenge in itself. Additionally, there is controversy around the topic of female imams in general. Therefore, including women who are imams, would create the need for specifications, explanations of traditions and gender-related analysis, which I, at this time, did not want to venture into.

With this in mind I would also like to outline some of the challenges and advantages with having a limited sample of four. One immediate challenge that presented itself was the lack of possibility of making generalizations. Although it is still relevant to look at similarities of

statements and understandings between the interviewees, seeing their reflections as anything more than the reflections of individuals is not possible. In other words, their interviews cannot be understood as representative for their context as a whole but rather need to be understood as the opinions and reflections of one individual within that context. As these are expert interviews however, this is not really a problem as their reflections as individuals can in themselves be valuable. Additionally, the limited number of interviewees allowed me to have them expand on their answers and reflections to a larger degree than what would have been possible had there been a larger sample size.

6 The role of racial and ethnic issues on radicalization of Muslim youth: exploring the empirical

6.1 Findings: analysis and discussion

The findings made within the context of working on this master thesis are largely based in interviews. In an attempt to explore diverse views as well as different approaches to the question, '*What is the role of race and ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and in South Africa?',* I made the decision to interview two separate groups of people, these were active imams within both my chosen contexts (Norway and South Africa) and academics who have worked on the topic of Islam, but also on the topic of race within these two same contexts. I have one representative of each of these groups within both contexts. The positions of my interviewees made it natural to include longer quotes. This is because their reflections on the questions at hand are the essential sources for my research and allow me to reflect on the question with their expertise as the foundation. To best answer the main research question, I have split my empirical findings into four different sections, which are all seen in relation to or as a part of answering the main research question. These are; *Problematizing "radical Islam" as a "threat", Relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity, Key factors other than race/ethnicity* and *race/ethnicity and the radicalization of Muslim youth.* The first section deals mostly with a discussion of terms and relates to the background chapters on terms and definitions. The second section deals with the possible intersections between racial/ethnic identity and religious identity, without going into the topic of radicalization too much. This is done to create a basis for general discussion and understanding of identities intersecting before radicalism is brought into the discussion. The third section focuses on key factors of radicalization other than that of race/ethnicity, this is so that radicalization can be understood in relation to other factors that may have impact on radicalization of Muslim youth. Lastly, the fourth section examines the interviewees' reflections on race/ethnicity and the radicalization of Muslim youth. The chosen structure allows for the final section to be seen in relation to the former three sections, which opens up

for a discussion which takes into account angles surrounding the topics of race/ethnicity and radicalization which are not dependent on their relation to each other.

6.2 Problematizing "radical Islam" as a "threat"

As pointed out in the "Terminology" section, the question and definitions of terms are an important factor when approaching the role of race/ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth. The value of terminology is something that is not lost on students and academics of religion and thereby not on me either. Additionally, as was outlined in the *Methodology* chapter, a key aspect of CRT is acknowledging who has voice, representation and power[80]. This aspect is the reason why the problematization of the terms "radical Islam and "threat" are important. The Exploration of this relates to the question of who has power of definition. As racial structures can often be seen as parallel to power structures (marginalized racial groups will also have less power) problematizing the existing discourses on "radical Islam" will provide a look into the same structure that decides discourse on race. It is also worth mentioning, that despite race and ethnicity's role being the main focus, there is also the religious/theological aspect relating to Islam and radicalization within Islam. With this in mind, I chose to stick to the terms "radical" and "radicalization" as they are the ones most often used by media in Norway and are the terms most people, at least within that context, relate to in the discussion around an extremist, violent jihadist Islam. The rationale behind the choice of these terms is outlined in the "radicalism and fundamentalism" chapter. In addition, I opted to use the term "threat" in the first question of the interview guide, which is as follows, *"How would you define the threat of radical Islam?"* The use of this term [threat] is because public discourse in Norway often uses the Norwegian equivalent of this term, "trussel". The Norwegian Police Security Service also publishes an annual report called "trusselvurdering" which translates to 'threat review'. The report can be argued to be the main source through which the Norwegian state provides information on radicalization to the public. Furthermore, starting my interviews off with such a potentially loaded question, without providing a further definition of the term "radical Islam" allowed for a look into how my interviewees understood and related to the question. This approach also gave a foundation of the individual understandings of and approaches to "radical Islam". This in turn gave an

[80] Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: an introduction,* 55.

insight into how later reflections and rationales could be understood. I will begin by outlining the take of academics on the term "radical Islam", and in doing so it seems worth noting that out of the whole questionnaire, both people interviewed in the capacity of being academics within the field spent the longest time answering this first question. One might suspect that this is due to the fact that it was the first question asked and that they therefore had more thoughts around the themes in the beginning. However, it seemed to me that they found it necessary to clarify the terms both for themselves and for me so as to best answer the question posed. Simultaneously, despite both the South African and the Norwegian academic seeing a need to clarify the term "radical Islam" they do so in different, but also similar ways.

The South African academic I interviewed started off by informing me of the danger of assumptions in writing a thesis, and the importance of being aware of one's own assumptions, as well as the need to clarify and define problematic terms. When this interviewee began to speak directly in relation to the question posed, he said;

"Okay? so when I think about the threat of radical Islam, I have to ask myself, who is asking the question, the threat to who and to what, before I begin to think about, so who is asking the question for example, when one sees a snake, the snake is a threat, but to who, through human lens the snake may be a threat, but the snake is not a threat to the environment that he or she inhabits. And so, who defines the human and who has given the human being the privilege, I mean a few days ago there was a group of lions. Yeah, there was a group of lions that were reared by this guy. And they were all still young and he had just fed them, and he turned their back on them and they attacked him. And then whoever was in the vicinity, they killed all three lions. Okay. So, the lions also have existences of their own. Why did three lions have to be sacrificed to save one human being and the assumption in all of this is that in the hierarchy of life, that the human life is more precious than three lion lives. So, whose perspective do you come to with a question like this?"

My reasoning behind choosing to begin with this reflection is that it poses an interesting point, particularly for my discussion. The South African academic opens for the idea that understandings of radical Islam as a threat can be dependent on who is asking the question and how it can be understood in context. This reflection is really one of authority. Who is afforded the authority to define threats, and which factors must be met for something to fit in under the category of a threat? So, essentially, this reflection suggests that one should consider the person asking the question's position on and approach to both radical Islam and

the notion of radical Islam being a threat. This raises the question of my positioning as the researcher asking this question. In the South African academic's opinion that is an important factor in how the question is answered and reflected upon. As mentioned in the part of the methodology where I considered my position as a researcher, I have several reasons for choosing this research question. I am a researcher with a background in religious studies, something that is also bound to affect the way in which I approach the subject. I have not gone into the exploration of this question from the angle of legislation as a law student might or of economic as a business student might. When approaching this question, I focus on understanding religious identity and racial/ethnical identity within the chosen contexts of Norway and South Africa and their role in regard to each other. Through doing this I begin looking into the role of racial and ethnic issues in the radicalization of Muslim youth. Me being the researcher and asking the question also provides me with a power of definition. I am the one who has asked the questions and shaped the arguments, something I need to be aware of. When approaching topics such as racial/ethnical identity and religious identity there are clear power structures in play historically as well as today. Therefore, being aware of my own placement within these structures (being a woman of colour, but also living in a first world country with free access to education, healthcare etc.) is key to seeing the research question as well as the interview questions as products of this placement. The nature of my approach is an interesting point as we move further into the findings of my research as it is something to keep in mind when assessing the various responses and reactions from my interviewees. Furthermore, the reflection by the South African academic seems to strengthen the reasoning behind looking at both contexts used for the thesis as differences in perception and opinion may in fact be based in the different geographical placements/perspectives of the interviewees. The South African academic goes on to explain how he understands the term "radical Islam" for the purpose of the interview;

"So, if I'm just a Westerner or a global northerner, then I would say that radical Islam, and I think we have an understanding by what we mean by radical, even though we haven't articulated it we have an understanding of what we mean by it, we're talking about an Islam that has aspirations to political power, Islam that centralizes a very literal interpretation of the earliest State and not as mediated by later jurors, the fuqaha and the later but you know, what did the prophet do what does the Qur'an say, a very textualist, literalist approach, a disregard for modernity, a contempt for modernity and a willingness to undertake their Islam as the governing political and moral. And moral largely interpreted in the sexual sense, you

know often when it comes to religious fundamentalism morality is not about ethics is not about justice, it's about sex. Who wears what? who does what to who? in the sexual sense. So, the desire to see the political system the model ethos being the dominant and enforceable one that everybody adheres to. That's my kind of usage, for this for this purpose, of the term, Radical Islam."

What this interviewee understands as the most important aspects of radical Islam is a combination of a wish to return to an unmediated understanding of the textual within the religion and an aspiration to political power. The first aspect of this is interesting as it relates to the introductory question I asked in this thesis regarding the use of radical over fundamentalist. It seems here that the South African academic is of the opinion that radical Islam when broken down is inherently fundamentalist, as it is understood to centralize the earliest understandings of Islam. The interviewee outlines how "radical Islam" is one in which the mediations of later jurors is disregarded and the question of what the Qur'an says and what the prophet did are the ones that need to be considered. This understanding of "radical Islam" as also fundamentalist coincides with my own conclusions in the background chapter "radicalism and fundamentalism". It is also noteworthy that the South African academic brings up the topic of sex and the sexual. He is clear in his opinion that religious fundamentalism to a large degree relates to sexual morality. Although this is not directly related to the main research question it is still an interesting reflection. As one discusses the idea of radical Islam as a threat this reflection opens up to the possibility of it being a threat to modern ideals, such as feminism and/or LGBTQ-movements.

The Norwegian academic interviewed presented a slightly different approach to the question, and went as far as offering an entirely new term to use instead of radical Islam;

"Well, first of all, I mean it depends on what you mean by radical Islam, right? So I kind of prefer the term Salafi-Jihadism which is what we have, you know post. Al-Qaeda, basically been looking at right. So, it's an interpretation of Salafism which is quite a composite phenomenon, right? But, we're looking at a specific ideological interpretation of Islam that emerges and crystallizes in the course of the 1990s. Right? So, one of the sort of pivotal moments here is the emergence of al-Qaeda and their thinking and what they did with this was obviously to. I mean there are a lot of lineages right but if we start with this lineage going back to Sayyid Qutb, what is interesting here is that Qutb's enemy was the near enemy. So, in his mind, corrupt and secular regimes of the Contemporary Middle East in his lifetime.

1950s, 1960s, right, particular target was Arab nationalism, right which he saw as an attempt to westernize Muslim societies, right? What al-Qaeda does with this heritage, right, which, also ended up, you know in with Qutb's milestones and so forth in the context of Qutb's radicalization in Egyptian prisons, was of course to translate the endorsement of violence and terror as a political means to translate that into an endorsement of violence and terror against the so-called far enemy, right? So, this was now a quintessentially global struggle against the West right? It was no longer a struggle limited, to what radical Islamists saw as the kind of stooges of the West in their own societies? Right?"

At first glance the main focus of this interviewee seems to lie with the political aspect of radical Islam. The interviewee does not really go into the fundamentalist aspect which the South African academic does. However, this interviewee presents Salafi-Jihadism as an option instead of using the term radical Islam. Salafi-Jihadism is very simply defined as a branch of Salafi-Islam which supports violent jihad as a political means. This means that there is a fundamentalist aspect also in the Norwegian academic's definition, as Salafism can be understood as an orthodox, fundamentalist movement within Sunni Islam.

In summation both academics are in agreement on political aspirations as a defining factor in determining "radical Islam". This is the main point on which they are in direct agreement. It also becomes evident that the Norwegian academic, although it is not explicitly stated, understands "radical Islam" as a fundamentalist movement. This can be inferred through the proposal of the term Salafi-jihadism as an alternative, which has fundamentalist implications. Both the academics present reflections which are easily seen in relation to the terminology chapter "radicalism and fundamentalism", thereby, it is evident that such a clarifying chapter was in fact important in relation to the research.

The other dimension of this question lies in the definition of Islam as a "threat". As mentioned, the choice of wording in this question was deliberate to elicit an understanding of the interviewee's standpoints from the very beginning of the interview.

As seen in the first quote presented, the South African academic interviewed focused largely on the aspect of authority and power of definition when considering how and to what degree radical Islam could be considered a threat It seems this interviewee is adamant in the opinion that a person's context and placement in the larger global society will influence how one

perceives radical Islam and to which degree it is understood as a threat. He continued by saying:

"Do they [radical Muslims] present a threat? Now the question is do they present threat to who? I think there are two large constituencies, and I risk being simplistic. The one is the larger non-Muslim/Global North context and they often mean the same thing, in a country like Sweden for example or the United States. I can well imagine that the vast majority of Muslims synonymize their anxieties about radical Islam with that of the state and the larger people."

This reflection by the South African academic is an interesting one. He suggests that Muslims in majority non-Muslim, global north societies are likely to share the opinions on radical Islam that the state projects. and mirror the understandings of the majority in the same state. Essentially, two Muslims with similar ethnical and religious backgrounds who live in two different contexts whether they are both in the global north or not may very well develop opinions on this matter. This is because their opinion is likely to reflect the society in which they reside to a larger degree than each other's opinions. Applying this perspective to my research, it would be likely that the opinions of Norwegian Muslims and that of South African Muslims would differ, not necessarily because of an inherent difference in their belief or understanding of Islam, but because of the context in which they are embedded. This opens up for a reflection on whether the threat of radical Islam can really be assessed from a neutral, objective standing, or whether such an assessment will always be dependent on the opinion and reflections of one's context. If I were to take this a step further, it seems reasonable from this understanding, in which context is key, to question whether the threat review presented by The Norwegian Police Security Service also can be understood as context dependent. Such an understanding would be grounded in the fact that the threat review is based in a western, Norwegian understanding and assessment of what constitutes a threat. Simultaneously, it seems that the very essence of such a threat review must be to focus on the Norwegian perspective, as the intent of such an assessment is to have an overview of what may be a threat to Norwegian society. However, this focus on the issue in a Norwegian context can be argued as keeping the focus of the Norwegian public on their own societies. The constriction the focus in this way may subsequently, inhibit the public's ability to see threats to Norwegian society in relation to the global threat level, or the threat level in a society other than their own. Moving away from Norway, in the case of any general public's opinions on radical

Islam's role to themselves and their life it may also seem natural that they are a part of the society in which they live and that their anxieties will therefore mirror those around them. What may in actual fact be the case is that the question of Islam as a threat is not one that can be answered as simply as yes, it is a threat, or no it is not a threat. The Norwegian academic interviewed spoke about the idea of radical Islam as a threat as such;

"So, this was now a quintessentially global struggle against the West right? It was no longer a struggle limited, to what radical Islamists saw as the kind of stooges of the West in their own societies? Right? And that has obviously been very real and significant threat in Western societies since the 1990s, but more so it has been a threat to Muslim societies, right? If you look at casualties' and numbers from the violence and terror inflicted by Salafi-Jihadist outfits, you know Muslims happen to be vastly over-represented, right?"

This quote is a continuation of the quote represented earlier, which is why there is some repetition. What is done here, which the South African academic did not focus on, is place the understanding of threat within more than one context. The Norwegian academic pointed out that the threat of radical Islam moved from being one aimed at western stooges within Salafi-Jihadist's own societies to also being an issue in the western societies themselves. What is meant by this is that the focus of Salafi-Jihadist movements used to be to remove the impact and influence of subordinates of western society within their own context. However, the nature of the threat they pose globally has expanded to also be present in western/global north societies. This reflection is, however, followed by, perhaps, the most central point of the quote, that the group, which has been most negatively affected and has seen the most real effects of radical Islam, is not western societies, but Muslim ones. Knowing how dramatically Syria has changed over the course of a few years and how people flee from countries in which radical Islamist groups reign makes it evident that the most direct threat by radical Islam on everyday life is in Muslim-majority, non-western countries. This is something that will be explored further in relation to other sub-categories in this analysis as well as the main research question at hand. It seems safe to assume that this is the reasoning also behind the South African academic's choice not to focus on the western perception of the threat of radical Islam. Such an opinion can perhaps be traced back to this interviewee's own point, that the opinions of people reflect the societies in which they are. Again, however it may not be as simple as this, the South African academic made a point which also seems to be worth exploring;

"The second thing is that Europe, the global North has done a huge amount historically and politically to feed this, to transform traditional Islam into radical Islam. Now inside the Islamic tradition we've always had jihad. And jihad had always had war connotations to it, but it also had many other connotations to it and these connotations competed quietly, gently at times and sometimes the sultans would, and then sometimes at ordinary level for most Muslims and sometimes you know, we only look at Imperial Islam and we think this is Islam or imperial jurisprudence. But underneath all of this, Anthropologists, sociologists who look at society. We've always known about the strength of the other jihads and that regardless of what happens in Istanbul or in Baghdad, the other Islam was always alive and vibrant and so in the seventies with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Jihad was removed from our fiqh textbooks and it was weaponized and militarized and internationalized on a scale that we had never seen before that."

The reason that this excerpt is interesting to me is that it places a certain level of responsibility for the radical Islam we see today on the global north. Although this is in itself not entirely new, as wars in the Middle East and western treatment of Muslim people and countries is something that is often brought up in the discussion of radical Islam. The South African academic takes a more theologically historical approach. He speaks not only of the Islamic traditions of jihad, but also about the impact of the global North on traditional Islamic jurisprudence, *fiqh.* This reflection questions the origin of the very foundation of what many relate to radical Islam, weaponized jihad. This is also a term which is relevant in the Norwegian academic's response, quite simply because the term he offers instead of radical Islam, Salafi-Jihadism, is based in this idea of a weaponized jihad. The South African academic's point here might be lost if one only has the understanding of jihad as a weaponized, holy war. Jihad is a word which means different things and can be understood in different ways dependent on context. The word itself stems from the verbal root j-h-d which can be translated to mean "striving" or "struggle" on the path of God. Although jihad is more often translated to mean "holy war" it can be interesting, in light of the South African academic's claim, to note that Muslim scholars distinguish between the "great" jihad and the "little" jihad. In this distinction it is holy war, which is defined as little, whilst the great jihad is the struggle within oneself to improve and control behaviours[81]. In other words, the form of jihad which one hears most about, holy war, is considered less significant to Muslim scholars

[81] Campanini. The Qur'an. The basics, 138

than the jihad in each individual. This is interesting as it goes against the conceptions that are prevalent, particularly in western discussions and understandings of radical Islam and speaks to the importance of discourse. Although the term jihad is not necessarily referring to a weaponized jihad, this is how it is most commonly used. The fact that the term is used without clarification strengthens an understanding of "jihad" as always relating to a physical holy war. However, had the nuances of the term been presented when it was being used in media and in public discourse then it might not be as easy for it to be weaponized and militarized in the way the South African academic presents. This broadening of the definition of jihad creates room for interpretations, which are not solely tied to the term as meaning a physical "holy war". It also makes it clear, once again, that the understanding of terms, as well as the discourse surrounding them, is key in exploring the research question. This finding is further cemented by the fact that the discussion of the interviewee's reflections is equally dependent on clarifications of certain terms. In this case, to understand the academics' reflections on radical Islam clarifications on the term jihad were needed, as it is not sufficient to understand it in the way it is presented through media and everyday conversation within a western, non-Muslim society.

Both academics interviewed reflected on the use of terms; the imams interviewed reflected on the implications and possible biases behind the question of radical Islam as a threat to some degree, but not to the extent that was seen from the academics. It is worth noting that the Norwegian imam reflected less on the use of the term radical Islam than the South African one. This may of course be due to several factors, but the imams belong to the same Islamic tradition and have also received parts of their Islamic education in the same country. Taking this into consideration it seems likely that some of the difference in reflection can be attributed to the difference in context. Thereby, looking at differences in the answers provided, may give further insight into how context and surroundings may impact the relation between racial/ethnical issues and radicalization.

On being asked the question, *"How would you define the threat of radical Islam?",* the South African imam paused for quite some time before answering, and when the answer was given the words seemed tentatively chosen;

"It depends on what you define as a threat. And, you know how you would define radical Islam. So, I don't believe that an Islam, that is so called moderate, which means, and you would be able to relate to it somewhat I think, which doesn't say anything about social

injustices. Like during the Apartheid era, if you spoke out against racism, you were regarded as a radical, even though you may never have advocated violence, but you're just saying that this is wrong. And, you're preaching it in the mosque and others are saying, well you should, you're not supposed to preach like that in the mosque you know and you say well why not? It [racism] affects the mosque, because if we have, you know, in South Africa we have black churches, we have white churches, we have coloured churches, even the churches are divided, right? So, it depends on how you define radical Islam, you know?"

What we see here is that the South African imam quickly took to problematizing the use of the term radical. It is also interesting to note that he does so in a way which speaks to South African history. Additionally, he immediately correlates the word radical with a political opinion. In his example of how radical Islam would be understood during Apartheid era South Africa he outlines a use of the platform afforded as an imam for the political purpose of speaking out against Apartheid. Although I chose this quotation primarily to point out the duality of the term radical, it does strengthen the previously made point on the political aspirations of a radical Islam. This is worth mentioning as the South African imam's reflection clarifies that a radical Islam, in the sense of a political Islam, is not necessarily one that promotes violence, but rather any Islam which takes a political stand. If one subscribes to this understanding of "radical islam", then it is certainly problematic to refer to it as a threat without defining further what one means by "radical". Furthermore, not defining "radical" more closely might insinuate that all forms of political Islam are a threat. For example, in the case that the South African imam outlines such an opinion [not speaking out against social injustices] would automatically align one with some problematic political views. He does this by pointing out that during the Apartheid era, speaking out against racism was considered "radical", and he would be referred to as radical. At that time the norm within the country was racial segregation, and the imam's point becomes that "radical Islam" can be a term used for any form of the religion which goes against the structural norms in the society within which it exists. This also relates to the concept of "othering" as one could argue that "radical Islam" within the South African concept has been used to describe a form of Islam which is "other" than that of the majority. The opinion of the South African imam is directly influenced by South African history. The South African imam notes how the term "radical Islam" is problematic given the nature of the use of "radical" during apartheid. It seems that the influence of the South African imam's contextual history is key in his reflection, which makes the Norwegian imam's response to this same question all the more interesting;

"The threat of radical Islam is serious, and it's very dangerous and we have seen in recent decades how it has impacted the Muslim Community and the world community and the security around the world especially here in Europe because we live here. So probably we feel it [the impact of radical Islam] more, but it has devastated the societies in the Muslim World. It has become very difficult to live and this radical Islam has become, it is very violent."

It is clear in the response of the Norwegian imam that he has a very different approach to this question than the other three interviewees. The Norwegian imam immediately correlates the term "radical" with a violent Islamic ideology which is a danger to several communities on a global scale. The Norwegian imam is, much like the others, quick to bring the discussion out of the western context and into a more globally conscious one. However, the fact that the Norwegian imam did not find it necessary to define "radical Islam" to a larger extent before assessing it as a danger can be seen as reflective of the discourse around the use of the term "radical" in Norway. Whereas the use of the term radical has been present and noticeable both in regard to those advocating equal rights and violent extremists, also within Islamic communities, this has not been the case in Norway. As outlined in the chapter situating Islam in the context of Norway, the Norwegian debate, particularly in media, has been characterized largely by the use of the term "radical Islam" without much nuance pertaining to context or different opinions and identities among recipients.

On the question of whether radical Islam is a threat, the South African imam answered in a way that is not necessarily directly linked to the reflections given by the other interviewees.

"Am I a threat to the existing global world order? Yes, most certainly! I am embracing and I am very happy to be that [threat]. Because the global order is not just. And, I am not talking about it [the global order] from a specifically kind of bigoted Islamic perspective. I am talking about humanity at large. There will be many others who don't share my faith, who don't have any faith, right? Who don't embrace any of that [religion], but would probably resonate with what I am saying. I don't believe in challenging or threatening the global world order with violence. I am a non-violent activist. And I also don't believe in using narrow, you know, bigotrist, kind of divides, but affirming the dignities of all human beings. I do think there are fringe Muslim groups, like there are in other religions, and in no religions, who do not respect the dignity of human beings and do not sanctify and reverence human life. So the reason for ISIS, combative Jihad – and I am using that term because we get different forms of

Jihad – is not merely the aggression of the enemy, but also the unbelief of the enemy, which includes, Muslims like myself, who do not subscribe to their puritanical interpretations of Islam. So, consistent with this mindset they [combative jihadists] elevate their beliefs and dogma over the sanctity and the sacredness of human life."

What is interesting about this reflection is that the South African imam sees "radical" as an appropriate term to use about himself. He does this as he questions whether a threat can be defined as those who question and present an opposition to the existing world order. This is interesting as it goes deeper into the ambivalence of the term threat as well as the understanding of radical Islam than what the other interviewees did. The reflection made by the South African imam relates also to the power of definition, in the sense that he indirectly asks what/who decides what constitutes a radical Islam. When taking this into consideration it becomes evident that there are aspects of being a part of a "radical Islam" in South Africa which parallel with being Muslim or being "non-white" in Norway, as it can be understood as an "othering" factor. This find will be important as race and ethnicity's role on radicalization is more directly explored. It seems right to end on this reflection, as it hits the very core of why terms need to be defined more closely and why assumptions of what "threat" and "radical Islam" can mean. The South African imam's main focus lies in the fact that anyone who questions the existing world order are in some way a threat. Being a "threat" to the world order, according to the South African imam, only becomes a problem if people are willing to use violence to reach their goals and if they do not respect the sanctity of human life. This take on radical Islam as a threat is an interesting one as it essentially normalizes radical ideas and makes the claim that radical notions or even threats to established societal order are not necessarily negative. Furthermore, being a "threat to the global world order and even being "radical" can in fact be useful in combatting injustices on a global scale. These global issues cannot be essentialized to being only about one thing and looking at "radical Islam" is also looking at an Islam that is vocal against race issues such as the ones focused on in this thesis. This is why the terms of "radical Islam" and "threat" were necessary ones to explore in the context of understanding the role of racial and ethnic issues in the radicalization of Muslims in Norway and South Africa. What makes the notion of "threat" and "radical" problematic is when the "radicals" presenting a threat advocate violence or other means which negatively impact the existence of others to reach their goal.

6.3 Relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity

Before looking into the possible connections between race/ethnicity and radicalization it seems logical to examine the relation between Muslim identity and race/ethnicity. The reasoning behind this is that any relation found between these two would likely also extend into a meeting of radicalization and race/ethnicity. Essentially, the exploration of the relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity is undertaken in order to extrapolate meaning which relates to the main question of race/ethnicity relating to radicalization of Muslims. I can readily admit that this question is based in my own understanding of possible interplay between race/ethnicity and religious identity, impacted by being situated in Norway. This became more evident in the evaluation and analysis of the information gained through my interviews. As mentioned in the background chapter, *Situating Islam*, in the part focused on the Norwegian situation, Muslims in Norway come from a variety of countries and belong to many different ethnicities. The majority of Muslims in Norway belong to non-European ethnic groups, meaning that they to a large degree do not mirror the appearance of so-called "ethnic Norwegians", meaning white. This opens up for the possibility that Norwegian Muslims belonging to different ethnic groups would to some degree synonymise their identity of Muslim with that of being non-white, as these are both factors placing them outside the majority. As explored in the terminology chapter "Islamophobia and anti-Muslimism" it is also the case that discrimination on the basis of being Muslim is a form of racism. Thereby, relating race/ethnicity to Muslim identity may be an important factor in understanding the role of issues of race and ethnicity in the radicalization of Muslim youth.With this in mind, it is interesting to note how Muslim immigrants in Norway have traditionally self-identified when arriving in this non-Muslim majority country. The usual occurrence when it comes to self-identification in Norway is that the first generation of Muslim immigrants largely identify with their country of origin, so Pakistani, Turkish, etc. meanwhile so-called second and third generation immigrants (people born in Norway to immigrant parents or even grandparents) to a larger degree self-identify as Muslim[82]. On the one hand, this can be understood as speaking to a development from generation to generation as to whether these Muslims in Norway self-identify as Norwegian or not. On the other hand, however, it seems that both these self-identifications, country of origin or Muslim, are based in being a minority of some sort. The first being an ethnic/racial minority and the second being a religious minority within a

[82] Leirvik, *«Islam og kristendom konflikt og dialog»,* 15.

traditionally Christian-dominated society. What actually separates the two forms of self-identification is the size of the minority group. A grouping of Muslims in Norway would naturally be larger than groupings of all the separate ethnic minorities that make up the larger Muslim minority. This change in self-identification is pointed out by the Norwegian academic interviewed;

"So, on the one hand you have this process of categorization, whereby I'm looking at you and I decide you know, which characteristics of your personal identity is salient right? But it's also a question of self-identification and self-categorization. But these, when it comes to Muslims, for example, these processes are mutually reinforcing, right? So, if we look at the specific Norwegian context, there was an intertwined process in the 1980s. I think this is where it starts, right? So in public discourse in Norway, and I've sort of tried to encourage Norwegian historians do have a look at this but no one's ever picked me up on it, right. Because there is an important discursive shift in the 1980s some time and I think it has to do with the Rushdie Affair in Norway. Which in Norway lasted basically from 1988, the time of the fatwah and the global sort of mobilization among certain sections of the Muslim population in the West as well, and to 1995 or 1994 with this attempted murder on the Norwegian publisher William Nygaard. So, in the context of this entire process [of identification] there's two things happening. Firstly, there's a change of categorization, right? So, people who in my youth, I am born in [early 70s]. So, I still remember a time when people when referring to people of Muslim background would speak of Pakistanis, Turks, Moroccans and often in quite derogatory ways, right? So, the most derogatory thing you could hear in public discourse in the early 1980s about people in the, or of Pakistani background would be Paki, right? But that changed, so that you know all people of Muslim background whether they were practicing Muslims or not, and we have to keep in mind that many Norwegians of Muslim background are not really practicing Muslims. Right? Well, we all know this, right, to the extent that we, who have any contact with people from Muslim backgrounds, we've seen people, you know drink wine, having meals at restaurants, right, like any other. Or beer for that matter, but there was a simultaneous process here in which Muslims, people of Muslim background mobilized on the basis of their religious identification, right? So, they themselves, or those involved in sort of public mobilizations against the Satanic Verses [making reference again to the Rushdie affair] also increasingly started to identify as Muslims, right?"

The interviewee points out a shift in discourse among Norwegian Muslims by highlighting not only a time-period, but also one defining event, the Rushdie affair. The Norwegian academic points out that no historic research has been done investigating his claim regarding the discursive shift in Norway. The interviewee's claim opens up for an interesting interpretation in regard to my research question. Essentially his observation suggests that the shift in the self-identification of Muslims in Norway did not originate in identity being less attached to ethnic background, but rather in a need to group together as a larger, united Muslim minority group in the face of one specific event. The claim made suggesting that the Rushdie affair may have had an effect on the self-identification of Muslims in Norway is even more believable when we think of other events which saw a change in how Muslims identify follow. One example of an event which had this effect on the self-identification of Muslims is 9/11[83]. After 9/11 Muslims in the global north saw a need to stand together as their faith and beliefs were scrutinized by the societies, they had made their homes. If we use the effect which followed 9/11 as a guide and consider the argument by the Norwegian academic that the Rushdie affair had some of the same implications, then it becomes understandable that it would impact the way Muslims in Norway self-identified in this time. Judging by this it would seem that within the Norwegian context the relationship between ethnic/racial identity and religious identity is largely shaped by the events and attitudes of the larger non-Muslim society surrounding them, not only on a local level. Events taking place outside the Norwegian context, like 9/11 and the Rushdie affair, can also impact the self-identification of Muslims in Norway.

As for the relationship between the factors of race/ethnicity and Muslim identity in South Africa it is likely to differ from the Norwegian one based in two main reasons. These reasons have both been outlined in more detail in the chapter, *Situating Islam* and were important factors in the reflections made by both the South African imam and academic. These two main reasons are the long history of Muslims and Islam in South African society, as well as the lack of focus on the ethnical/racial profile of Muslims in South Africa, despite knowing that they can mainly be placed within the coloured or the Indian ethnic groups. When it comes to a relationship between Muslim identity and racial/ethnic identity the South African academic interviewed reflected like this;

[83] Said, "Clash of ignorance".

"So, for Muslims race is not intrinsically connected, or there is a very thin relationship between race and religion, between race, religion and ethnicity. So, in South Africa, for example, people shift identities, you are a coloured person, yes, but coloureds aren't assumed to be Muslim. If you are Malay, you are assumed to be Muslim. If you are Indian, you can either be Hindu, Christian or Muslim, so it's not connected. And, so in the South African context it's [race and religion] not connected. But at the same time there's a strong connection between ethnicity and culture and to the extent that culture or that these ethnicities are also cultural identities. Like, you get Malay food and we live in coloured communities, but this is Malay food and we have lived there for 350-60 years, so it's not like we've just arrived from Bosnia, we've just arrived from Iraq and we're carrying our food with us now."

This reflection is interesting as it uses racial categories which can be traced directly back to Apartheid era South Africa but are in contemporary South Africa natural parts of the everyday language. Whereas the term Indian can be understood as those with Indian ethnic background, the term coloured is one implemented through the 1950 population registration act by the Apartheid state in South Africa as describing those who did not fit into one of the other two categories (black or white). The categories were altered over the course of the Apartheid regime, but the coloured category was essentially a category for those who could not be placed in a "purer" category because of the inherent mix within those South African people categorised as coloured. The South African academic's use of the term coloured does however not seem to root in the Apartheid understanding of it, but it is rather used to exemplify a disconnect between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity. These terms do not carry connotations of religious belonging, like the Muslim term of identification in Norway does. It seems that self-definition as Muslim in Norway to some degree negates the importance of ethnicity/race and makes religious belonging more important as a marker for identity. In South Africa the opposite tendency seems to be more prevalent, in which racial categories with origins in Apartheid politics are the main markers of identity and religion is largely understood in relation to the racial categories. Using the racial terms in the way that the South African academic does makes clear, once again the nearness of the South African interviewees to the historical context in which they exist. We saw this same understanding of terms with a basis in an apartheid narrative in the South African imam's reflection on the use of the term radical in the previous section.

The reflections of the imams are particularly interesting to me on this question as they have a daily interaction with the Muslims of their mosques and might thereby have insights which are built up over a longer period of everyday interactions. This may allow them insights into the experiences of different individuals in their mosques and thereby help them understand the question on a more individual level than had they studied the community and its individuals from the outside. Also, imams have been educated in Islamic theology to have the position that they do. This may allow them to reflect on the theological aspects of a relation between the Muslim identity and ethnic/racial identities. The South African imam reflects on the question of the relationships between racial/ethnical identity and Muslim identity as such;

"You know, Islam, like Christianity is a universal religion, and seeks to kind of, embed itself within a cultural tradition. Within an ethno, ethnic. But does not promote ethnocentricism, right? Often religion gets intertwined with ethno- ethnocentric nationalism, right? And the religious identity, it's called, ethno-religious kind of conflict. A great example is that of in the Baltics you know, where Serbs, the Serbian ethnic identity is kind of embedded within an interpretation of the orthodox Serbian church. The Croats have done the same thing [intertwined religion and ethno-centric nationalism] in terms of you know, construing Catholicism. So, if you're a Croat, you're a Catholic, right? But it doesn't necessarily need to be that. So, the Balkans is a useful example of ethno-religious conflict."

We see here that the South African imam points out how Islam is a universal religion, which can essentially be placed within any cultural/ethnic tradition. If this alone was the case, then the question posed here would be left obsolete as Islam and any ethnic/racial identities should be compatible and non-problematic. However, as this reflection in its entirety shows, that is most often not the outcome. For many the meeting point between religious identity and ethnic identity becomes a problematic one. Which identity is more important, and where should your allegiances lie? The ethno-religious conflict that the South African imam points to in the quotation, the Balkans, is based on a tension between national and religious identity. This point of tension is likely to become more clear for people who emigrate and arrive in a country with a lesser general knowledge about their country of origin, but think that being Serbian means being a member of the Serbian orthodox church, or that being Iraqi means being Muslim. As the South African academic pointed out, one of the reasons why South African Muslims have the option to identify as Muslim without having to tie that to a different ethnic identity is that Muslims have been present in South Africa for such a long time. The

question of time spent in a country and how this affects the relationship between these two factors is also one that the Norwegian imam speaks to;

"Yeah, usually, what I hear when I talk to people is that the Islamic identity is always, here in this country, it is always related to the national identity or even ethnic identity but not necessarily all the time and it's, I think it's also normal. You know that, imagine you are coming to a new country. So, and you are a grown-up person, you miss your own country, you miss your own people. So, you will probably find circles where you can sit at least once a week or you know, exchange some experience until you are established. So, the, this relation between ethnic and religious or national and religious I think it's normal. So, so far as it's not dangerous. I mean in the sense that, particular ethnicity or you know nationality has its own I should say challenges survival or even if there is a case where ethnicity wants to rule over everything else. The ultra-national, so it has been a positive. It has been a positive experience so far. And it'll take, it'll take time until, perhaps the next generations of Muslims, the younger generations of Muslims, they will probably feel more for the Norwegian identity than the identity of their parents."

The first thing to note within this reflection is that the imam points out that Islamic identity and national/ethnic identity are always related *in this country*, referring to Norway. The fact that he points out that this is the case in Norway could be taken to imply that it is not so other places. This can of course be due to different factors, but it seems likely that it is at least partially due to the way that Islamic societies in Norway are structured (based in country of origin, as outlined in the background chapter, *situating Islam*). Furthermore, the Norwegian imam points out that holding onto a sense of national/ethnical belonging is not positive if it turns into an ultra-national ideology which takes over more inclusive ways of thinking about religion and nationality. He is also clear in his belief that the younger generations of Muslims in Norway will grow up to feel a stronger relation to Norway than to their parents' countries of origin. In comparison to the statements made by the Norwegian academic, as well as the reflections made on account of the situation of Muslims in Norway and their self-identification an issue arises. The belief presented by the Norwegian imam, though it might seem the most logical one stands out among the reflections due to one key factor: the Norwegian imam does not discuss the role of the majority population of Norway in the self-identification of Muslim minorities. What seems to be a recurring theme is the notion that

events, and attitudes present within the larger majority society are important in determining the nature of Muslim self-identification, something the Norwegian imam does not mention.

Another aspect of the discussion surrounding Muslim identity is that it is not always self-identification that is the main concern. A lot of the time, particularly where Muslims represent a minority it also important how others identify you. A term that comes to mind in this regard is identity politics. In an academic context this term assigns systems of mobilization of politics foregrounding one particular aspect of a person's identity[84]. The aspect focused on vary from case to case and between individuals, but the most commonly focused on aspects in "identity politics" are religion, ethnicity, gender and culture[85]. The use of only one of several aspects of identity when describing an individual can be seen as problematic and can cause ripple-effects, in the sense that it may permanently affect the way individuals see themselves and others and further impact the way they interact with their society. Thereby, an identity political determination of identity may have consequences not only for the individual in question, but also for the society and larger community around, as relational structures are affected. However, as became apparent through my interviews there is a side of identity politics which can be argued as necessary and in fact be an important tool for minorities and non-hegemonic groups in general. The quotation by the Norwegian imam is interesting to look at in the context of identity politics. The nature of how Muslim identity is determined in relation to Norwegian identity lies, in his understanding, largely in how long the community has been present in the country. Simultaneously, what makes the question of Muslim identity in regard to racial/ethnic identity particularly interesting in an identity political setting is the fact that Muslims are in a minority within both the contexts of this research, Norway and South Africa. When asking the interviewees about the possible effects and harm that may come from identity politics in the meeting between the identity markers of race/ethnicity and Muslim identity they were not given a definition of identity politics. They were, quite simply presented with the question, *"To what degree do you think identity politics are harmful in the meeting between race/ethnicity and religious identity?* In the same way as the question concerning radical Islam as a threat, this question leaves the understanding of identity politics to each individual interviewee. This is so that their reflections would represent their own understandings of "identity politics" and open up for a discussion which also reflects possible nuances in the understanding of the term. Interestingly all the interviewees reflected on the

[84] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 53
[85] Leirvik, "Interreligious Studies", 53

fact that identity politics is not one sided, and that it can be necessary in certain cases. The South African imam interviewed had the shortest reflection on this question, presented in its entirety below, yet it manages to bring up an important aspect in the question of identities:

"*Yeah, I don't really embrace Identity politics, but I am also not an idealist, you know. And I know that identity politics is something that, that is there in society and that people do have this, remember, this existential need for identifying or answering the question of who am I? The question is how do you help people to be able to construct identities. So, you can't live without an identity, but how do you construct an identity which is healthy? In terms of both for yourself as well as affirming the dignity of the other."*

Here the South African imam makes it clear that identity and having a clear grip on how one identifies is an important thing for most people. At the same time, he highlights the responsibility people have to help others construct identities which are useful and not harmful to the society they are in. So, with this logic, identifying strongly with your ethnic minority group or with your minority religion is not harmful, unless it promotes the view that other groups are inferior to one's own. This can be considered as tying into the concept of 'othering'. It appears as though the South African imam's reflection can be understood in such a way that identifying with a certain group is not problematic unless it promotes an 'othering' of those outside that group. What we see among radical Islamist movements is that they are not only negative towards non-Muslims, but also towards Muslims who do not practice Islam in the way they think is right. Now, if we take the South African imams reflection as our basis, then identifying as a radical Islamist or even subscribing to ideas of radical Islam would be fine, if that did not interfere with the existence and dignity of 'others'. This might sound problematic on first hearing it, but essentially it just means that people would be able to identify as and with anything they want as long as part of that identification does not deny dignity in the existence of others. In such a train of thought ethnic/racial identification or Muslim identification should not be problematic, as long as it is confined to affirming one's own identity, and not that of others. This, we know is seldom the case as self-identification often implies different or similar identities to others. As mentioned, there was a pattern in the replies which made it clear that identity politics cannot be understood as a one-sided negative thing. The South African academic's response also spoke to this;

"*I'm concerned about two things. The one is the identity trumping the question of praxis. So, you are a woman you are black, transgendered and that becomes the primary thing that I*

need to be cognizant of when I deal with you and so do I now disregard the fact that you are a shitty person, the fact that you are arrogant the fact that you are exploiting your domestic worker. Do I now essentialize you and say black people can never get up to shit. Because Muslims are victims, they can never be abusers of their wives and if they are that's not the issue. I must and, I don't have to deal with it, because the context is islamophobia. So, I have issues with the essentialization of identity. That's the one large problem that I have. the other problem that I have is what happens to issues in the middle of all of this, the issues of class if you are a middle class or a wealthy white woman you have a far greater chance of negotiating your way out of whether it is gender-based violence or sexual harassment or any, you're still facing the problem. But if you are a working-class person. So, the absence of the question of class, of economic marginalization the absence of the larger struggle against power and imperialism for me, I'm troubled by this. So, look. I think that in the context of religious identity, identity politics are important. Women, black people, gay people, people who've been marginalized on the basis of who they are or who they are becoming they have to push and force the normative centre to recognize them and the normative centre is going to be disrupted it is going to be troubling for the normative centre, the cleric, the priesthood, the imams. The religious bodies is this coming on but this is in the same way that black struggles in South Africa challenged and discomforted white normativity. So, identity politics is disruptive, but it is an important disruptive. It is an inevitable and necessary disrupter."

The reflection here can be discussed in the context of intersectionality. When examining the reflection by the South African academic here it becomes evident that in practice as well as in theory intersectionality is a necessary topic to discuss. In the reflection it is pointed out that essentializing one aspect of identity does not excuse bad behaviour or negate other aspects. What this does is it opens up for an approach which lines up with that of Critical Race Theory as the need to examine several aspects of identity in order to reflect on questions such as that of identity politics. Something else which is important to note in this quote is the recognition of essentializing identities. The interviewee states that for some, identity politics are an important tool in being recognized. This can be taken to mean that some groups are dependent on essentializing part of their identity in the attempt to have this part recognized in broader society. In his opinion, the disruption of the status quo is necessary to create change, and this disruption needs, in some cases, to be simplified to the point of drawing focus only to one struggle or one axis of oppression. The element of disruption and of seeing the necessity of disruption in order to create social change can be directly transferred to (or from) a CRT

approach to race. As was mentioned in the section on CRT an important part of that theory is in examining why racial structures and biases remain in place even after non-racial policies have been put in law. Drawing on the South African academic's reflection it seems that a disruption of the norm is necessary to create lasting change. With this in mind, it may be the case that changes in legislation are not sufficient. What is necessary for marginalized groups to be seen and recognized, according to the South African academic, is a disruption in which the part of their identity that is not recognized has the focus. As CRT largely concerns itself with the goal of bringing about social change it seems that a disruption which is identity political may be necessary to force a reconsideration of existing structures.

Similarly, the Norwegian imam's reflection on this question relates practical issues that come with essentializing identity, such as overlooking other factors and/or putting less effort into considering other factors as important.

"*I think that's harmful. I mean, this is a big, if, okay, if we are in a war with some country then we can say, okay. This is their enemy soldier, or the enemy whatever penetrated the lines and created chaos and so on. But if we have a young man who is, whose parents happened to be from somewhere else and he is diff, he looks different than the, what should I say, white person. Then I think there is a huge injustice done to this person. Because the crime he has committed or extremism he has committed has been associated with his colour of skin or his, what could, should I say or his religion, religious affiliation. I mean we should see that the problem is not ethnicity. We should not disregard it, right, but we should not isolate it and say okay he is extremist because he's Muslim. He is extremist because his parents are coming from such-and-such place or he is extremists because he has an, another type of colour. I mean, we should try to see the deeds, we should try to see the actions what has been done."*

This reflection is interesting to look at from the perspective of CRT. The Norwegian imam is clear in his opinion that one cannot discount the possibility of aspects of identity having an effect entirely. However, he is of the conviction that one should not isolate one aspect of identity and focus solely on this. It is interesting to see this also in connection with the history of self-identification in the Norwegian context. As has been outlined earlier there has been a gradual shift among Muslims in Norway from identifying with countries of origin to identifying as 'Muslim'. The point that the Norwegian imam makes about needing to see more aspects of the identity than the religious or racial one thereby becomes even more interesting to see from the perspective of CRT. This is because in some cases such as with the

Muslim population of Norway essentializing identity seems to be an effort in building a larger minority community. Meanwhile the nature of this action can be argued as a form of identity politics and as going against the notion of intersectionality, in that the Muslims themselves choose to look at only one aspect of their identity. Perhaps the defining factor in this discussion is in who is choosing which aspects are relevant. Essentially, there is a possibility that identity politics when chosen as a method for self-identification can be good and is more likely negative when the defining aspect of identity is decided by others. This avenue of discussion will be returned to.

Turning to the Norwegian academic's reflection on the question of identity politics brings about an interesting angle as the discourse around 'identity politics' as a term is drawn into question;

"*I think my problem with the very term identity politics as it is being used in present political discourse also in Norway, is this notion that identity politics is what racialized others do, whereas there's no such thing as white identity politics right? In fact, the dominant politics of our time, the dominant identity politics of our time is a politics of white hegemony. Which may or may not, you know, according to circumstances be intertwined with the identity politics of white supremacism right. and that form of identity politics is hardly ever referred to when we talk about identity politics in public discourse, right? And there's a reason for that right? You have this perception, perspective, right? And I must say I'm ambivalent about this whole traditional so-called critical whiteness studies, but there is an important insight in that very intellectual tradition and that has to do with the insight that you know, white identities are almost in white majoritarian societies they are unmarked, right so it gets doesn't get noticed. and that also means that there's a lack of critical self-reflection on the part of many people with a background in sort of the white majority of these societies. you have to start somewhere, and you have in many cases there were no, no other options for people who couldn't mobilize that sympathy in wider society then to start building solidarities on the basis of shared identification. In say racial, sexual or gender terms, right? So, if you look at the actual history of the Civil Rights struggle in the U.S. If we look at the history of the struggle for LGBT rights, if we look at the feminist struggle, where does it start, it starts with what is for all extent and purposes a form of identity politics, right? Yep, which, in which one part of your identity becomes the salient marker for the claims that you make right? And so I think you know in the contemporary usages of the very term identity politics there is a sort of*

complete misreading of rights-struggles in modern societies, and that's not to say that you know, there isn't a sort of, an identity politics which can be harmful, that can be divisive."

The Norwegian academic brings up the topic of existing binaries. As mentioned in the theoretical outline of CRT it deals with existing frameworks of discourse in societies, which was exemplified by the black-white binary. What the Norwegian academic does in the reflection above is that he questions the validity of identity politics as it is largely based in a white-normative context. Whereas the other interviewees to a larger degree focused on the danger of identity politics in itself it can seem as though the Norwegian academic place more emphasis on the context within which it is employed. His reference to LGBT movements or feminist movements and the necessity for an essentializing of identities to champion those causes make it clear that there are cases in which identity politics can be a necessary tool. His reflection is mirrored in the earlier reflection by the South African academic where identity politics was referred to as a necessary disruption.

The reflections provided when considering the relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity are important ones to keep in mind also as relating to the main research question. As the goal is to outline the possible role of race/ethnicity on the radicalization of Muslim youth, understanding the relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity is key. As has become clear through the quotations above is that intersectionality and the possibility of identifying with more than one group becomes central. However, it is also worth noting that in order to promote certain social movements or reforms highlighting one aspect of identity that is shared with an oppressed group may be necessary. What should be taken from this section is that the relation between race/ethnicity and Muslim identity differs, depending on societal structures, in what context the different aspects of identity are being fronted and by whom.

6.4 Key factors other than race/ethnicity

I will outline the three things that each interviewee though were the most relevant in the radicalization of Muslim youth within their own contexts, this is to highlight which areas they claim as relevant to the radicalization discussion, as well as to outline similarities and difference between the two different interview groups as well as the two different contexts examined. This is done because the goal with this research is to gain insight into the role of race/ethnicity issues in the radicalization of Muslim youth according to experts. Hence,

looking at other factors the experts consider pertinent to processes of radicalization in their contexts may help in building a more thorough understanding of their opinions and reflections regarding the role of race/ethnicity on radicalization.

South African academic:	Norwegian academic:	South African imam:	Norwegian imam:
Need for an activist Islam	**Narratives of victimhood among Muslims in general**	**Islamophobia**	**Lack of understanding of and information on Islam**
Individual reasons: Psychological factors, individual trauma, feelings of inadequacy etc.	**Youth more prone to criminal behaviour**	**Lack of integration**	**Lack of knowledge and experience inherent in youth**
Yearning for a more just world	**Socioeconomic marginalization**	**Global injustice**	**Injustices within global society**

There are particularly two factors I will be going into when discussing the responses given by interviewees. These are the two that can be considered as occurring from more than one interviewee and are illustrated in the table above with two different colours, blue and brown. The factor that is highlighted with brown text is not entirely identical but speaks to the same reasoning. This is that the radicalization of Muslim youth can to some degree be based in things that are inherently 'youthful'. The Norwegian imam points out that there is a lack of knowledge and experience that is present in all youth and that may be important in the process of radicalization. Similarly, the Norwegian academic speaks to the fact that youth are more

prone to criminal behaviour in general, and that this would mean that they are naturally also overrepresented in criminal behaviour relating to radical Islam. This factor is an interesting one as it presents the possibility that youth in itself is an aspect of identity which needs to be considered when examining the process of radicalization within the chosen group. The factor highlighted in blue is one that is outlined by three out of four interviewees, injustice in society/the world. Radical Islam is largely understood as a problem and as having a negative impact on the global world order. The fact that three out of four experts interviewed see those youth who are radicalized as susceptible to the process largely due to a feeling of injustice is therefore interesting. Essentially, the three interviewees agree that many youths undergo radicalization processes with the intent to create a more just world. Although all the interviewees who mentioned this intent see joining radical Islamic movements as a misguided effort there is agreement among the three on positive intention as a key factor in the process of radicalization. This can be argued as reflecting the issue of clashing identities, discussed in the theoretical chapter on identity politics, where the perspectives of Huntington and Said were discussed. I argued that the rhetoric surrounding radical Islam and events such as 9/11 are informed by an 'us' vs. 'them' rhetoric. It was also pointed out that the rhetoric of 'us' vs. 'them' is used frequently by radical Islamic movements. The 'us' vs. 'them' discourse together with general discourse on Islam and Muslims in the global north may be contributing to a disconnect between the Muslim aspect of identity and identification with immediately surrounding society. As the reflections of the interviewees will show, being "other" in the society in which they exist, while there are Muslims experiencing war, displacement and poverty, may create a desire to be a part of the 'ummah' and do something with injustice towards other Muslims. How this recognition of global injustices is translated into taking action in the form of joining radical Islamist movements is something that the South African academic presents a hypothesis on;

"So, just looking at all of this in the world, this, on the one hand and on the other hand amongst Muslims throughout the world there is a strong sense of being a part of the ummah. You know, it's kind of fascinating how you can't, you won't have a Catholic lamenting the time when we lost, when the church lost the war in Spain and has been reduced to the Vatican, but you have many, many Muslims lamenting the fall of Al-Andalus. How we were, and remember when we were, the glory of our maths and algebra and science, so there's a strong yearning among many, many Muslims, you know to kind of get back into that. It's mostly innocent lamentation. But sometimes that lamentation gets awoken by the insult of

another invasion, the insult of another destruction of a Muslim country. So, there is a sense of rage, you know at the injustice is in the world and this injustice is often seen in a very narrow sense. It doesn't mean it's completely unfounded but in a very narrow sense, it is the global North's imperialism and cultural arrogance, its political imperialism and cultural arrogance."

What this reflection does is give us a starting point when examining the role of global injustices in the radicalization of Muslim youth. An important term that the interviewee is using is ummah. Ummah is an Islamic concept meaning *Muslim community.* Ummah can be defined as, "A fundamental concept in Islam, expressing the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims from diverse cultural and geographical settings[86]". Belonging to the ummah, a larger Muslim community, and seeing injustices being committed to other members of that community in the form of wars, invasions and destruction is according to the South African academic an important factor in mobilizing youth to join radical Islamic movements. Joining a radical Islamic movement to fight a perceived unjust treatment of people belonging to the same community can be argued as a noble cause. So, how does this want for a more just world for the ummah result in actions that are, in many ways harming and endangering Muslims themselves. The focus on global injustices seem to reflect some terms which have been brought up earlier, such as the normative structures of power. Within these some groups are permanently losing out, and this seems to be part of the reason for radicalization among Muslim youth. The want for a more just global order as well as feeling that people similar to oneself are being discriminated against in the existing structure are likely effective in turning youth into activists for radical Islam and even violent jihadists. The young people who we are discussing here do not live in Muslim-majority countries and thereby receive much of their news and information about what is going on in those [Muslim majority] countries through TV, internet and other media platforms. Youth is also a time when many start looking for and shaping their own identities and religious identity, will for many become an important part of this. If we take the factor of a need for an activist Islam different than that in the mosque into consideration it becomes clearer, why radical Islam may seem like a viable option for these youths. They are looking for an Islam that is more activist according to the South African academic, at the same time, according to the Norwegian imam, they may be lacking in knowledge and understanding of the Islamic tradition around them. When they then find a

[86] "Ummah." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*

form of Islam in which activism is key, without having a thorough understanding of other directions within Islam they may be more susceptible to radicalization processes. The concrete backgrounds of individuals who have turned to radical Islam is particularly interesting when looking at the European context and those who have not only joined radical Islamic movements but travelled to Iraq and Syria to serve as foreign fighters. This seems particularly relevant regarding one group joining radical Islamic movements outlined by the Norwegian academic;

"What is, has been striking to me in the Norwegian context but also to certain extent in wider Europe is the extent to which a lot of Salafi-Jihadist recruits those that ended up as far as foreign fighters in in Iraq, and Syria have actually been and with reference to this to my mind, very highly problematic terminology, right, but they have been ethnic Norwegians, right? So, if we look at this specific cohort that came out of Lislebyveien, this famous street in Fredrikstad, right? Where you have 11 people all of a sudden traveling right, to Iraq and Syria what they share is an underprivileged background, of course, right? So here we are talking about social economics, right? They also seem to share kind of, you know troubled, criminal quasi criminal background, right."

Although this quotation outlines other factors in addition to race, it is interesting to look at the racial aspect. The Norwegian converts that the interviewee refer to come from less fortunate socio-economic backgrounds and have earlier ties to crime in various degrees, however they are what is referred to as "ethnic Norwegians" (white). The youth referred to in the quotation live in one of the world's wealthiest countries and look like the norm within that country, yet are not benefitting from that or fitting into the larger society around them. The fact that they are vulnerable in terms of social standing and their shared background in quasi criminal environments make them "others" within their society, in the same way that belonging ta different race or ethnicity might make somebody else vulnerable. Thereby, these youths become suitable candidates for radicalization processes through "othering" based In criminal affiliations and socio-economic factors. These processes of "othering" are reminiscent of those that often come with being racially or ethnically "other". Many Muslims are of the opinion that radical Islamists do not follow Islam, and that they lack knowledge on basic principles within Islamic tradition and faith[87]. Thereby, radicalized Muslim youth are also

[87] Sandberg et al., *Unge Muslimske stemmer,* 196-200.

"other" than Muslims as a larger group. An interesting factor among this group of youth that the Norwegian academic refers to is that they belong to the ethnic majority in Norway, so one would think that issues of race/ethnicity would be less likely to affect their road to radical Islam. What seems likely within this group is that they are drawn to the sense of community presented through the ummah. Despite being shunned and seen as not following or understanding Islam by other Muslims they join a community of jihadists who are often similar to themselves. The factor of wanting to do something about global injustices proved to be a reoccurring one among the reflections made by the interviewees. This is interesting to consider in relation to the understanding of "identity" which was presented in the chapter *Identity politics* under the section *Theories and concepts.* Here it was outlined that an important factor in defining identity is the craving for recognition of self and the understanding that everyone is due recognition. When discussing these factors in defining identity they were referred to as idealistic, however this same idealistic idea of what it can mean to join radical Islamist movements seems to be prevalent based on the reflections of the interviewees. Thereby, before moving into the chapter that deals directly with the question of race and ethnicity's role in the radicalization of Muslim youth it becomes clear that identity and recognition of that identity, whether it be racial or religious, is important for many people, perhaps particularly youth.

6.5 Race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth

On the question of the role of race/ethnicity issues on radicalization the interviewees have very different opinions. Firstly, we will look at whether or to what degree they think issues of race/ethnicity are relevant in radicalization processes, then whether dealing with such issues would be beneficial in handling radical Islam. It quickly became clear that this question might be decidedly more relevant to a Norwegian/European discourse than a South African one. This, as previously mentioned is likely a reflection on the positioning and nature of my own placement and studies in relation to this question. However, as I looked into the interviews conducted and began my own analysis it became clear that issues of race/ethnicity in the meeting with radicalization in South Africa may not be inconsequential. The South African imam and academic seemed to be in agreement in the opinion that this question is not that relevant within their respective context. The South African imam saw it necessary to go outside his immediate surroundings to reflect on how race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth may be connected;

“But what happens is, no matter how hard the young person tries, to be a Norwegian citizen, speaking the language, you know the way it should be spoken, doing all, because of the pigmentation of his or her skin, right? And other kids pick this up at home right? They're not evil, they're just you know, infected by this disease of, xenophobia and racism and so on. In a moment of crisis or whatever, you know, kids fall out with each other, they maybe kicked a ball somewhere and they didn't like it and then he calls him a "Paki" or calls him a bad name, right? Or, it could be worse, and so the kid goes back home and feels, kind of hurt, and this builds up, and the Islamophobia, which is out there, as well, doesn't help, Because, what happens is that, the kids see something on television, they hear their parents speaking about these Islamic terrorists. This young man, has been hiding his religion and so on, but they have a discussion in class and , you know, the discussion is that these Muslims are terrorists, and he's a Muslim, and he's not, you know, identifying, you know. So, all of this stuff makes for young people to become very angry. I've tried hard to fit in, right? And, I, no matter how hard I try, you know? They're never gonna accept me. And so, the next trigger is, maybe he goes to a mosque, maybe he listens to a sermon, you know of a radical preacher, who may capture his imagination.”

What is once again brought to our attention here is the connection between feeling like you do not belong and being attracted to a radical Islamic group. Much like the example presented by the Norwegian academic of the ethnic Norwegians who were radicalized, this example presents a case of not fitting into society. In this example, however, the factor causing “otherness” is ethnicity rather than criminal activity or socio-economic standing. What makes the factor of ethnicity/race different from that of socio-economic standing or criminal affiliations is that people cannot choose their ethnic/racial belonging. Although one is born into a certain social class and the effects of surroundings and upbringing are widely recognised in studies of class and structures, these can in theory be changed. In the Norwegian context education, including higher education is free and, thereby, people do in theory have the same opportunities to be educated, which can be seen as a step towards gaining social footing. This is not pointed out to undermine or belittle the difficulties of lower socio-economic conditions or ties to crime. Rather, it is to note that race/ethnicity is, unlike affiliations with crime or lower economic standing, entirely unchangeable. Now, in a country like South Africa which has the nickname The Rainbow Nation due to the many different colours and ethnicities that make up its people, being a different ethnicity than those in your immediate surroundings will be, if not unproblematic at least not as noteworthy. In Norway

on the other hand, the historic whiteness of the people set a person of colour apart from the majority population. As outlined earlier, within CRT this is referred to as existing racial structures or binaries, where 'structures' refers to the hierarchy or order of race relations in a society and binaries are structures that are decidedly two-parted. The existence of racial structures and binaries is one of the important factors to consider when dealing with issues of race. This opens the question up to be centred around whether the differentiation of young people on the basis of race/ethnicity is the way in which it can play a role in radicalization processes. Meaning, whether processes of 'othering' on the basis of race/ethnicity by the majority population is how it can become a factor in a young Muslim's radicalization process. In other words, the factor of race may not be as important in regard to radicalization in countries such as South Africa, where there is a more diverse ethnic blend, and being something other than the majority does not put you in as visible a position of "other". If this is the case, then it may still be beneficial to look at a connection between the two. However, one might consider it beneficial to focus on the more general notion of race/ethnicity as grounds to be discriminated against and ostracised. As the South African imam points out, an interest in radical Islam may in reality be based in a desire to fit in and be accepted, and the Muslim ummah is a likely a factor in attracting youth to Islam, whether the community they turn to for acceptance is radical or not is mostly dependent on exposure. However, when reflecting on the possible relation between race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth in South Africa the South African academic has a clear opinion on why this is not a topic of discussion;

"So, typically jihadists who travelled to fight jihad come from an Indian middle-class family. Most of these jihadis in South Africa come from Indian families. We haven't had a single black African. We haven't had a, well there's a case that seems to be going nowhere with two converts from the coloured community and they became Muslims, it's a case in Johannesburg. The Thulsie brothers, the case is going nowhere. We had a case of a young girl who was taken off the plane in Cape Town, as she was going to join ISIS. Nobody asked if it was an Indian girl or a coloured girl. So that's an interesting thing to see how we took it."

The South African academic presents two interesting aspects of his context in this reflection. On the one hand he says that most of the jihadis in South Africa come from Indian backgrounds, and that there have not been any black South African jihadists, and only one pair of coloured South Africans worth mentioning. He goes on to outline an example of a

South African girl who was stopped from going to join ISIS and how her ethnic belonging was in this case not a topic of discussion. At the same time as saying this he says that nobody asked whether it was an Indian or a coloured girl, implying that these two racial/ethnic backgrounds are the most likely ones. So, despite claiming that racial/ethnic belonging is not of any interest in the South African discussion on radical Islam he places almost all cases of jihadi activists within the same ethnic category, Indian South Africans. The ethnic background of South African radical Islamists is not the only thing that unites them, as most of them originate in relatively wealthy middle-class families. Another point that has been mentioned previously is that South Africans with Indian ethnic backgrounds make up the majority of all Muslims in South Africa so, perhaps the fact that most radical Islamists in South Africa have been Indian is due to them constituting the majority of South African Muslims in general. Still, it seems strange that a country whose history is so intrinsically connected with concepts and perceptions of race/ethnicity would not have any connections between these and radicalization processes. However, the answer to this may lie in a development of Islam in South Africa in recent years. After outlining some of the political reasons which may be relevant to a smaller degree of radicalization in South Africa, the South African academic goes into an understanding of changes in South African Islam and how that may be affecting the radicalization presence as well as process.

"... we're not sitting with a serious radicalization problem but when we do have it, it comes from the Indians. It comes from the Indian Muslims, it comes from middle class upper middle class and wealthy Indian Muslims and I'm not quite sure what the reason for this is, Malay Islam for want of a better description, or coloured Islam and I'm using these words very tentatively as well. I was about to say is, along with Malay and Indonesian is generally much more relaxed form of faith. Indian Islam in South Africa has for the last 50 years or so has become more formal, more legalistic. More Wahhabi-like and in the indo-pak context it would be described as more Deobandi-like. the Deobandi are the theological cousins of the Wahhabis, okay. And, and the other forms of Islam that is often described as Folk Islam or low Islam, or rural Islam, the Islam that in anthropological literature that's described as Islam of the shrine rather than the Islam of the mosque, that Islam has kind of receded in South Africa and the Islam of the mosque is becoming more popular, but also more sophisticated, so you have seminars you have workshops, you have many of these Muslim imams studying at universities. So, there's a more sophisticated Islam emerging and as part of this sophistication some people also becoming Wahhabis. But the Wahhabi Islam is not, it is

like the Judaism of the yeshivas where the Orthodox Jews are not necessarily Zionists. They're not necessarily politically militants. Just leave us and our Tora-studies alone, for God's sake, literally for God's sake, for the sake of Hashem, you know. So yeah, so it is connected to ethnicity. It's largely Indian and that needs to be probed, and it's fascinating because these Indians they also settled South Africans, I think in your case [Norway's case], you're also dealing with alienation. You're dealing with alienation, you're dealing with racism, you're dealing with islamophobia and you're dealing with just a sense of newness, a sense of non-belonging and those aren't factors that exist in South Africa, but it is an interesting question that needs more exploration. About why no coloured Muslims. Why only Indian Muslims and why only upper middle-class or wealthy Indian Muslims?"

Here the South African academic outlines a change in the nature of Islam in South Africa, from something largely based in practice and personal conviction to a more institutionalised, law-heavy religion. Because the traditional Islam in South Africa has been so-called folk Islam the more Deobandi, Wahhabi like traditions are quite new within the communities in question here. What this seems to be contributing to is that Indian South African Muslims from middle-class backgrounds, who have the option to research and connect with others online and through mediums similar to those available in Europe and places with a larger degree of radicalization find these same groups and movements. Similarities to Europe are also seen in the appearance of the Qibla movement in South Africa. This movement was formed in the early 1980s to promote the ideals and goals of the Iranian revolution in South Africa and form an Islamic state[88]. This shows that radical Islamist movements, within the South African context can also be understood as responses to global injustices against Muslims and attempts to handle this injustice. The change in the nature of the religion being practiced or the need to deal with issues of global injustice does not provide a definite answer as to why it is commonly the Indian South Africans who become radicalized, but it does provide grounds for speculation around their traditional understanding of Islam. The South African academic also outlines socio-economic standing in the group most present in radicalization profiles in South Africa, and interestingly it is the opposite to that outlined earlier in the Norwegian context. This may, as mentioned allow them to research and connect with radical movements and groups outside of the country and they have the financial freedom to leave South Africa to join radical Islamist movements. Particularly when

[88] Botha, "PAGAD: A Case Study of Radical Islam in South Africa."

considering the role of ‘othering’ which has proven to be an important factor when considering the other reflections presented so far. Based in the reflections around key issues other than race it would seem that being an ethnic minority might make radicalization among Indian South Africans more similar to the processes which the South African imam gave for Norwegian Muslims being radicalized. The South African imam does, however, make one reflection which is interesting when looking at this intersection between race/ethnicity and radicalization among Muslim South African youth.

“This is a new theory that I am advocating, which hasn't happened in South Africa yet. But, the same thing that I explained to you about Europe, right? I have been kind of saying that we have large amounts of, migrants from other African countries in South Africa. People are saying every one out of every 10 South Africans is a foreign national. Huge amounts of Somalians for example. Now, the same thing that I am saying about Europe. A Somalian child could be born from immigrant parents, living in Bellville [area in Cape Town] or something and then, when he's going to school, right, he's called, because of xenophobia a "makweri", you know this is a word that they use which means that they don't speak Xhosa or Sotho. And he can develop resentment for South Africa. Because I'm trying to be South African, but, right. Get a radical preacher from Shabaab, and some of them might be here, or go online, and God forbid he’ll do something here. Do you see that scenario? I mean there's, thank goodness it hasn't happened. But, we did have, a year ago a, Somalian that went into a mosque and slit the throats of worshippers there. They said that he was mentally deranged, you know, that was the explanation, so I, would say that that for me, again I'm looking at an area that is under-explored.”

So, here an aspect is presented which at first glance does not really relate to the Indian South African representation among radical Islamists but does relate to the question of race/ethnicity and radicalization. Essentially this reflection presents a concern that there may arise a situation which mirrors that of the patterns within European radicalization. At the same time, we can see that both the South African interviewees voice the opinion that the possible connection between these two aspects of identity are under-researched within the South African context. What this means, for this thesis is that beyond outlining the general trends and hypotheses presented by the different interviewees it may be difficult to examine possible links on a deeper level within the South African context. However, the fact that the majority of radicalized South African Muslims have come from the smallest ethnic group does seem

like an interesting pattern to explore. What can be considered is whether the Indian South African community is small enough that there might be common factors within this community that are not as openly available to those outside, such as information and opinions gained through sermons or attendance at mosque. With the Norwegian example of the street in Fredrikstad which produced many of the most infamous Muslim Norwegian foreign fighters there was a common background and community factor. Although this thesis does not have sufficient evidence to make a conclusion on this reflection, the possibility itself is worth noting.

The apparent lack of research on the possible connections between race/ethnicity and radicalization in South Africa is not necessarily a hinderance for the thesis but may just mean that an important part of the comparison lies in the way the South African interviewees reflect on the question and their differences in perceptions. The last part of the reflection by the South African imam is interesting as his portrayal of xenophobia leading to radicalization is quite similar to the manner in which European Muslims are radicalized. The xenophobic influence on radicalization can on the Norwegian side of this discussion be understood as race/ethnicity being an 'othering' factor which makes people of other ethnicities more susceptible to radical Islamist ideas. This in the same way that economic or social factors may be key in making ethnic Norwegians more susceptible to such ideas. The Norwegian academic also outlines a problem in the unwillingness in Norwegian society to see racism or racist tendencies within itself.

" ... whenever I asked so-called ethnic Norwegians to explain to me what they think of when they hear the very term racism I'm bound to get the response that places racism in other times and other places, right so typically apartheid South Africa. We're okay with the notion that apartheid South Africa was racist, right? We're okay with a notion that Jim Crow South in the US was racist, right? What we're not okay with is the notion that racism as a term has any application to present-day Norway, and that creates a dissonance a great deal of dissonance on the part of people coming from racialized minorities themselves who experienced various sort of subtle and not so subtle racism. Achille Mbembe, this great post-colonial, South African based, originally from Cameroon philosopher and political scientist has this term non-racism. Which is all about how you know racism is implicated in various parts of our daily lives, you know. How it, it gives license to the idea that you know I should be at liberty to freely insult and kick downwards, right? That's my right in the in the name of free speech I

have that right and there's nothing whatsoever you say which, which has any bearing of on, on that right of mine, right? And to me, that's very problematic. And I think you know dealing successfully with, with, with Salafi- Jihadism, radical Islam if you like, would require us to also be able to reflect upon sides of our own societies, which are not all that pleasant to talk about. That means actually listening in a profound sense to the experience of racialized minorities, but also to be able to relate to the dark chapters of Norwegian history."

Problematizing the lack of introspection in Norway around issues of racism may in fact be a key part of unwrapping the possible connections between race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth. It can also be seen in direct connection with CRT. As was discussed in the theoretical chapter an important aspect of CRT is recognizing trends and issues which maintain racial structures and hinder societal change and development[89]. If it is the case that Norwegian society has a problem with seeing racist tendencies within itself then it seems likely that seeing the effects of such tendencies on radicalization processes would also be difficult. Especially in a society which until 2008 officially used terminology such as first-generation immigrant about people who have themselves immigrated and second-and third-generation immigrant about people with different ethnic background who have been born in Norway[90]. Essentially, this creates an image in which the majority population is not willing to give people with other backgrounds full status as Norwegians, and are also not willing to reflect on the negative impact rhetoric such as this may have on people who identify as Norwegian, having been born and raised in the country. One can argue that such opinions of what constitutes being Norwegian is giving these individuals and their children permanent identities of 'other'. The Norwegian academic points out that the people in Norway who tend to place racism in other times and other places are those so-called ethnic Norwegians, the ones who fit into a historical idea of what the Norwegian person looks like, meaning white. It seems logical that this is the group who would have the least need to reflect on contemporary racism in Norway, as they are the ones least affected by it. However, their lack of willingness to address the possibility of racism in Norway further solidifies the "us" and "them" mentality already present.

As mentioned earlier religion can also be an 'othering' factor, particularly in countries with one clear historical religious tradition. Despite the traditional Norse religion in early

[89] Christian, Seamster and Ray, "New Directions in Critical Race Theory and Sociology: Racism, White Supremacy, and Resistance", 1731.
[90] Andreassen, Kristina Kvarv. "Ny betegnelser om innvandrere."

Norwegian/Scandinavian societies, it is well-established that the dominant religion (at least since the early 1000s) has been Christianity. As outlined in the chapter “Terminology” the role of language and rhetoric is an important one. Terminology which implies ‘otherness’ also in official documents and definitions is creating a distance and alienation between Norwegians with Muslim immigrant background and the majority Norwegian society. The existence of the State Church in Norway up until 2012 may also have impacted this ‘othering’ process as one can argue the lack of separation between church and state gave the impression that being Norwegian and being Christian are synonyms.

In the South African context, the question of racism has been more openly discussed and dealt with. Therefore, we cannot assume that a connection here is based in a distancing from the issues such as in the Norwegian context. Taking into consideration the reflections made by the South African academic it seems that the openness and understanding not only around race/ethnicity, but also around different strains of Islam are key in the low amount of radicalization in South Africa. He explains this by outlining what happens to South African Muslims who choose to return from foreign jihadist missions;

“Okay, so I'm taking a break from Jihad, so I’m back in South Africa. What happens to you? Very simple you get visited by the security police by our intelligence agents at your house. They have a one-on-one meeting with you. They make it clear to you that they know all the stuff that you've been up to. They know what your record is. They know what your background is. We've been watching you. Okay, that's a part of the past, we’ll be keeping an eye on you. Don't get up to any of your shit here. Okay? They will examine the guys links and his friendships. They will examine the influence of the local mosque on him. But in a pleasant way, they will speak to the Maulana directly. In a look Maulana, you know, you've got these two, three guys in your congregation how well do you know them? What do we do to get show to ensure that they don't get up to further shit? So, they draw the Maulana in, not in a conspiratorial way. It's an open and frank meeting that they have. And this is no harassment of the family, there’s no possibility of the guy going to jail. Nothing gets done. Nothing gets done and nothing happens. There's no bomb blast that goes off in South Africa. There's no intensification of security. There is no Islamophobia. There is no drama in the news. Muslims don't feel that we are being singled out. So, nothing happens. So South Africa has just been exceptionally sensible in how it deals with this question.”

The reaction by the South African state through the security police succeeds in a few things. Firstly, a reaction that is not based on criminalisation seems less likely to create a feeling of “otherness” and separation from society upon return. This most likely means that it is easier to change one’s mind when in Syria or whichever place one travelled to and return home. For Norwegian jihadists the knowledge of awaiting prosecution upon return might be a key factor in why people who go to other countries to fight a jihad are less likely to return, even if it does not live up to their expectations. This prosecution is likely to be a further othering factor for returning jihadists and, thereby, add onto existing factors which led to the original radicalization.

The findings in regard to race/ethnicity and its relation to radicalization of Muslim youth have made the importance of intersectionality and considering factors in relation to one another all the more visible. Additionally, it has become clear that the contexts explored have vastly different approaches to the issues of race/ethnicity and of radicalization and that, therefore they are not as easily compared as originally thought.

7 Conclusions

The main objective of this thesis was to explore the role of race and ethnicity issues on the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and in South Africa. Furthermore, the thesis aimed to outline the reflections and opinions of experts within both of these contexts and how these can be understood comparatively as well as in relation to existing discourses on race/ethnicity and radicalization within the contexts.

The theoretical framework for this thesis was Critical Race Theory, identity politics and theories of 'othering'. The thesis has aimed to explore the reflections and opinions of the experts through these theories, in order to understand the findings also in a larger, existing context of discourse. I have argued for the suitability of these theories as well as the methods of comparative design, cross-cultural research and expert interviews to best answer the research question posed.

One of the purposes of this thesis has been to explore an aspect of identification (race/ethnicity) with processes of radicalization which has not been researched previously. In exploring this link within two contexts there has also been an aim of outlining whether a possible link might be dependent on context and societal influence.

This thesis aims to open up for further research on the possible links between race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth, both in the Norwegian and South African contexts, but also in others. Exploring the findings based in expert interviews (presented in this thesis) with ones made through interviews with Muslim youth who have undergone processes of radicalization would allow for a more thorough investigation of the research question.

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Appendices

Interview guides:

Questions for academics:

1. How would you define the threat of radical Islam?
2. In what ways do you think that race/ethnicity relates to religious identity?
3. In what way (if any) would you say issues of race/ethnicity are relevant in the radicalization of Muslim youth in your context?
4. How would you say that the relation between issues of race/ethnicity and religious identity (particularly Muslim) has developed in your context?
5. If you were to name three factors that are key in the radicalization of Muslim youth in your context, what would they be?
6. To what degree do you think that dealing with issues of race/ethnicity in your context would help in dealing with issues of radical Islam?
7. To what degree do you think identity politics are harmful in the meeting between race/ethnicity and religious identity?

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8. How would you assess the relevance of research on race/ethnicity and its possible intersections with radicalization in today's multi-cultural and inter-religious societies?
9. In your opinion, how does media's portrayal of radicalization affect the focus of academics working within this field?

10. Do you think there is a hesitancy to bring up issues of race/ethnicity in the context of radicalization due to fear of backlash in the form of racism and/or Islamophobia? In your opinion, how can such hesitancy (if it exists) be handled?

<u>Questions for imams:</u>

1. How would you define the threat of radical Islam?

2. In what ways do you think that race/ethnicity relates to religious identity?

3. In what way (if any) would you say issues of race/ethnicity are relevant in the radicalization of Muslim youth in your context?

4. How would you say that the relation between issues of race/ethnicity and religious identity (particularly Muslim) has developed in your context?

5. If you were to name three factors that are key in the radicalization of Muslim youth in your context, what would they be?

6. To what degree do you think that dealing with issues of race/ethnicity in your context would help in dealing with issues of radical Islam?

7. To what degree do you think identity politics are harmful in the meeting between race/ethnicity and religious identity?

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8. How would you characterize the responsibility of mosques/religious leaders in handling issues of race/ethnicity and the radicalization of youth?

9. In your opinion, does the situation of the mosque historically affect the way in which issues of race and radicalization are dealt with?

10. Who do you think are most negatively impacted by radical Islam and the portrayal of radical Islam today, and why?

Consent form:

UiO : **Faculty of Theology**
University of Oslo

Name of researcher: Ylva Ined Basterman Risnes (telephone: +47 482 566 07, email: yirisnes@uio.no)

Supervisor: Associate Professor Nina Hoel (email: nina.hoel@teologi.uio.no)

Are you interested in taking part in the research project: ***"To what degree do issues of race/ethnicity manifest themselves in the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and in South Africa?"***

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to explore whether and how issues of race/ethnicity are relevant in processes of radicalization of Muslim youth. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
The project is a MA-thesis project in Religion and Diversity studies. The purpose is to explore whether there is a link between issues of race/ethnicity and the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norwegian and South African contexts, respectively. Research shows that a focus on the relationship between race/ethnicity and radicalization is under-researched, and the thesis thus aims to examine this perspective. Ultimately the goal is to provide new insight into the discourse on radical Islam which may help in identifying ways to minimize the amount of youth who are radicalized.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo is responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate because you are either a) an imam in South Africa or Norway, or b) an academic working within field of Islam and who are invested in questions pertaining to radicalization.

What does participation involve for you?
If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve a personal interview. The interview will take approx. 1 - 1,5hrs. The interview includes questions related to issues of race/ethnicity and radicalization of Muslim youth in your context. Your answers will be audio-taped, and the researcher will be taking notes during the course of the interview. The key focus of this study is your opinions and experiences. Ultimately your answers will be included as part of a Master thesis. The thesis where this interview data is used will use made-up names and will as far as possible not include any descriptions that might identify you as the participant.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to this information. No one else will read (or hear) your responses to the interview questions. The data emerging from the research will be stored in a secure and appropriate manner. I will employ services for sensitive data (TSD) to collect, store and analyze data.

I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.

The thesis where this interview data is used will use made-up names and will as far as possible not include any descriptions that might identify you as the participant. However, due to your position as an academic/imam it might be the case that your opinions/perspectives on the theme in question is known, either through publications or from being a public figure who is socially engaged. In these cases, the researcher cannot assure or maintain complete confidentiality.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end June 2020. Once the project is finalized all personal information will be deleted. However, data will be stored without personal information, that is, anonymized. The audio recording will be destroyed by the end of the research project.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with the Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo. Associate Professor Nina Hoel, nina.hoel@teologi.uio.no
- Student conducting the research: Ylva Ined Basterman Risnes, yirisnes@uio.no
- Our Data Protection Officer: Maren Magnus Voll, University of Oslo. M.m.voll@admin.uio.no NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader

Student (if applicable)

(Researcher/supervisor)

Consent form

If you have any questions concerning this form of consent, please ask the researcher before you sign this form.

I have received and understood information about the project "*To what degree do issues of race/ethnicity manifest themselves in the radicalization of Muslim youth in Norway and in South Africa"* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

- I have been informed by Ylva Ined Basterman Risnes (the interviewer) about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study
- I have received, read and understood the above written information regarding the study
- I give my permission for the interview to be audio-taped
- I give my permission for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, June 2020
- I am aware that the results of the study including personal details about belief, will be anonymously processed.
- I may, at any stage during the interview, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study

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(Signed by participant, date)