

# ***When sharks attack***

## ***- How individual experience and collective framework aid sense-making***

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## Abstract

This thesis will have the recent attack on a cultural centre and a Jewish synagogue in Copenhagen on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of February as its focal point. The attack was carried out by a young man who left two victims dead and several police officers wounded before he was located the following morning. As the perpetrator was shot by the police during his apprehension, there was no immediate answer to the questions about his motivations for carrying out the attack, thus leaving the Danish population – along with the entire national and international press – to make their own assumptions.

In the days following the attack, the news coverage was naturally dominated by the attack, including background information, eyewitness accounts, political comments et cetera. One of the stories attracting most attention was the interview by the Danish National Broadcasting Corporation, DR Nyheder, with a young woman, Janni Nielsen, who laid flowers for at the site where the perpetrator was shot by the police. This story prompted many different reactions varying from disgust and contempt to admiration and appraisal. One of the people reacting to this gesture was the politician, Søren Pind, who subsequently posted a quite controversial comment on his own Facebook page.

This thesis will provide an introductory exposition of meaning as a psychological concept. This theoretical part of the thesis will have evolutionary psychology as its starting point for a brief discussion of possible adaptive benefit of a sense-making capacity. This introductory theoretical exposition leads to the definition of meaning as *a product of the process facilitated by human consciousness, that the individual employ in order to organise itself in relation to the environment*. Sense-making is thus a process that enables the individual to discern patterns in the environment and act accordingly, thereby entailing a self-regulatory function.

By means of an interpretative phenomenological analysis of comments posted on three different Facebook pages related to the attack and the subsequent gesture of laying flowers for the perpetrator, I have examined how the sense-making process occurs under these circumstances. The analysis disclosed three dominant themes that the commentators attempted to make sense of: 1) the attack itself and the perpetrator's actions, 2) Janni Nielsen's gesture of laying flowers for the perpetrator, and 3) Søren Pind's motivations for posting the controversial comment. These three main themes displayed different aspects of the sense-

making process, insofar they prompted different assumptions. Consequently, the sense-making process revolving the attack itself was characterised by causal explanations and a wish to place responsibility, thereby either identifying with or alienating the perpetrator. The sense-making process related to the second theme of laying flowers was dominated by assumptions about Janni Nielsen's morality that facilitates either accept or rejection of her professed intentions. In relation to the third and final theme, that of Søren Pind's motivations for posting the controversial comment, the sense-making process is based on preconceptions about him, by which the individual attempts to assess his underlying motivations.

An additional tendency disclosed by the analysis was the use of imagination. This was found in relation to all three. By means of imagination the individual is enabled to fill in the gaps between the different pieces of information as well as navigate through the meanings offered by others. Consequently, the sense-making process is a creative and dynamic one that functions as a tool for practising theory of mind. The sense-making process thus exceeds mere information processing insofar it is a dynamic and creative process with a self-regulatory function that enables the individual to organise itself in relation to the environment.

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## Introduction

In February 2015 a young man carried out a double attack in Copenhagen. First he opened fire outside a local cultural centre hosting a debate on freedom of speech and later outside a Jewish synagogue hosting a bar mitzvah party. Two people were shot dead. The perpetrator was apprehended the following morning and subsequently shot during an exchange of fire with the police thus leaving people, be it survivors, accidental passers-by, relatives, politicians, or journalists to their own assumptions about his motives for carrying out such an attack. In the days following the attack, the Danish media were dominated by people queuing up to share their opinions and assumptions about the attack in general and the perpetrator in particular: more or less serious attempts to do a profile on the then alleged perpetrator, the government and the opposition blaming each other for not taking the terror threat seriously, teachers asking for funding for further training in order to cope with cultural differences in the schooling system, academics proposing theories of how marginalised youngsters become radicalised et cetera. Consequently, people in general (readers, viewers, listeners, users) were not only faced with the problematic endeavour of making sense of the attack itself, but also to navigate in the jungle of different and often conflicting explanations offered by the various media and proclaimed experts. Naturally, many people joined the public debate by writing letters to the editor, giving interviews, or writing comments or features for various media. Among these was Danish author and journalist, Hans Davidsen-Nielsen, who wrote a piece for the national newspaper *Politiken* entitled *Hajen dræbte Finn fra filmklubben (The shark killed Finn from the film club)*, in which he reveals his own perspective on the attack. As an introductory remark, he admits to having made a slightly inappropriate comment on the then very recent attack on the editorial office of the French satirical weekly magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*. On this occasion, he inadvertently compared the risk of being killed by terror to the risk of being eaten by a shark. As shark attacks in Denmark are admittedly unthinkable, this comparison is very illustrative of his believing that the risk of a terror attack in Denmark is equally and vanishingly small.

Only a little more than a month later he was, however, faced with a situation that required him to reconsider this conclusion, as his acquaintance was one of the victims of the attack in Copenhagen. Because he knew the victim of this attack, albeit

peripherally through a film club, he was quite simply forced to make sense of the situation in a way somewhat dissimilar from the attack at *Charlie Hebdo*. As such, he denies that this particular attack is a terror attack, but rather a young man's attempt to gain the fame and attention he strived for but assumedly did not achieve alive. He thus concludes that he will not succumb to fear but continue to live his life in the safe belief that both terror and shark attacks do not happen in Denmark. Consequently, his acquaintance, Finn from the film club, was killed by a shark rather than a terrorist.

This account is only one of many occurring in various newspapers after the attack but it illustrates the people's need to make sense of something completely unexpected and seemingly incomprehensible. Naturally, Hans Davidsen-Nielsen's situation is unique as he knew one of the victims and thus had a slightly different perspective on the attack than most people. Nevertheless, ordinary people, in this case meaning people who did not experience the same personal implications of the attack as Hans Davidsen-Nielsen, still shared their thoughts, opinions and reactions with friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, and others. However, due to advances in modern technology, we no longer need to confine ourselves to communication with people we have some kind of relation to, as we are able to profess our opinions and share our views on the world to an unspecified and unknown receiver by means of the internet. As such, we have the option to communicate in a quite different format that is still relatively new to us and is only just starting to become of interest for qualitative research.

In this thesis I will examine how the sense-making process manifests itself on three different Facebook pages related to this recent attack in Copenhagen. I will do this by providing an introductory exposition of meaning as a psychological concept, before proceeding to a discussion of the validity of the claim that people do indeed have an innate need for meaning. By adopting the perspective of evolutionary psychology, I will thus attempt to sketch out possible adaptive benefits of a capacity for sense-making<sup>1</sup>, before arriving at an appropriate operational definition of meaning

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis I will adopt the common practice of using the term sense-making to describe the process by which the individual constructs meaning, rather than alternative terms as meaning-making or

that will serve the present purpose of examining the sense-making process. Succeeding this theoretical part of the thesis, will come my interpretative phenomenological analysis of comments posted on three different, but interrelated Facebook pages, in the days following the attack in Copenhagen in February. Conclusively, I will discuss the results of the analysis in relation to the introductory exposition and summarise by suggesting the possible implications for future research.

## **Research Question**

In this thesis I wish to examine how meaning as a psychological concept can aid our understanding of the process, by which individuals attempt to make sense of themselves in relation to the environment. In order to do so, I will conduct an interpretative phenomenological analysis of comments posted on Facebook in the days following the recent attack on a cultural centre and synagogue in Copenhagen on February the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2015.

## **Meaning as a Psychological Concept**

The notion that humans have an inherent need to make sense and construct meaning is widely accepted in psychology as well as in many other scientific disciplines (see for example Baumeister, 1991; Proulx & Heine, 2006; Steger, 2009 for review), and has been approached from a variety of angles. One of the very first to treat the subject of meaning from a psychological point of view was the Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl. Inspired by his own life as a survivor of several years of imprisonment in concentration camps during World War II, he developed some very innovative theories about the necessity of finding meaning in one's life. The focal point of these theories today known as one of the cornerstones in humanistic and existentialist approaches to therapy was the assumption that the will for meaning is the primary motive of human existence. He was convinced that people need a sense of purpose in order to survive – and that radical deprivation of a purpose in life would irrevocably lead to death (Frankl, 1959).

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meaning-construction. This I will do for reasons of practicality and simplicity, rather than as a sign of subscription to a certain psychological theory.

Since Frankl, numerous other attempts have been made in order to explain this elusive phenomenon of meaning. One example is the American biologist and neuroscientist, Walter Freeman, who proposed a biological definition of meaning intimately linked to intentionality. To him, meaning is something that emerges when the brain creates intentional behaviours and then changes itself in accordance with the sensory consequences of those behaviours. As such, meaning is achieved through action in the world and in turn, the self is altered by that action and its associated meaning (Freeman, 1999a; Freeman, 1999b). Freeman proposed this perspective of meaning after having conducted experiments with olfaction in rabbits, where he failed to find invariance in the stimuli provided and the reaction in the rabbits' brains, but nevertheless recorded how differently the rabbits reacted behaviourally to the stimuli (Freeman, 1993). He thus concluded that the rabbit brain did not respond to an automatically coded message, rather the individual rabbit uniquely determined the meaning of the stimuli registered by the brain.

Among other noteworthy examples is the American psychologist, Jerome Bruner, who devoted a considerable amount of time and energy to reintroduce meaning as *the* central concept in psychology (Bruner J. , 1990). He argued that psychology as a scientific discipline should be organised around the meaning-making and meaning-using processes that we constantly find ourselves engaged in, as the human experience is inevitably immersed in culture and thereby hold the key to understanding how the individual and culture are interrelated. Bruner thus claims that humans are innately attuned to certain kinds of meaning, as is for example the case of children's motivations to acquire language. As opposed to American linguist and philosopher, Noam Chomsky, who believes language acquisition to result from an innate capacity for acquiring the syntactical structures of language (Chomsky, 1959), Bruner contends that it is the child's innate 'readiness for meaning' in a cultural sense that invokes a desire to construct narratives and thereby attributing meaning to language (Bruner, 1990, p. 70f). This, however, does not mean that Bruner denies a biological aspect of meaning and the sense-making process (indeed he is even thought to be the one introducing the term *the biology of meaning* according to (Modell, 2003, p. 206f), rather he regards it of secondary importance, as biology can restrain meaning whereas culture shapes it.



These examples, that of Frankl, Freeman and Bruner, are just three among a great number of theories including the concept of meaning as a psychological concept. They are quite obviously exponents of three very different approaches to the study of psychological phenomena, and therefore incomparable in many ways. What they do have in common, however, is the fact that they both use the word ‘meaning’ in order to refer to the result of a mental process without offering any definition or elaborations of what this particular use of the word entails for the perceived process – thus leaving the word to be somewhat self-explanatory and the notion of meaning as elusive as ever. Naturally, we do not need to define every single word every time we use it – surely such an objective would equal an impossible and futile task – but there seems to be a great general neglect regarding conceptual attention to the word meaning. Perhaps this is caused by the risk of conceptual circularity when trying to define this particularly elusive word, but this is a point of discussion I will delay to the following section. For now it will suffice to sum up by simply stating that meaning certainly proves a valuable and relevant concept in psychology, despite the difficult endeavour of defining the word.

In the following, I will nevertheless attempt to provide such an exposition of meaning as a psychological concept, although it will be restrained to suit the general purpose of this thesis. I will do so by adopting the claims of an innate and human capacity for meaning as the focal point, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for proposing an operational definition of meaning for the impending interpretative phenomenological analysis of the sense-making process, by which meaning is constructed.

### **The Meaning of Meaning**

The claim stated above, that meaning is a particularly elusive notion can easily be illustrated by the fact that it is impossible to define the word without using meaning, and one would thereby inevitably encounter some circularity in the effort to define it. The difficulty of providing an adequate and all-encompassing definition of *meaning* is also proven by the various meanings of the word. When looking for a definition in a dictionary one gets suggestions as varied as ‘what is meant by a word, text, concept, or action’, ‘implied or explicit significance’, ‘important or worthwhile quality’ or simply ‘purpose or intention’ (see for example the *Oxford Advanced Learners*

*Dictionary* or *Politikens Nudansk Ordbog*). Although most people would agree that this is probably as close as we can get to a clear definition of the word, we are in fact only left with rather obvious or self-evident statements about meaning or examples of what the word might refer to. To define meaning as 'what is meant' only defers the problem to another word class, i.e. from noun to verb and thus creating a de facto circular argument. This kind of circularity is also evident in the second example, that of 'implied or explicit significance', where the word meaning has been substituted by significance. This word, however related, also seems to have a more specific positive connotation of value, importance and usability, something the word meaning occasionally – although not always – imply. The same connotation is to some extent also characteristic for the definition of meaning as 'important or worthwhile quality'. Put simply, this definition can be seen as an extension to the claim of a human need for meaning, as the satisfaction of such a need would indeed and undeniably entail something important and worthwhile for the individual, but nevertheless fails to produce any information about the concept itself. Finally, however tempting it is to make meaning synonymous with purpose, this is a definition that can be readily applied to meaning in an existential context, as is the case for Frankl's notion of meaning but seems less applicable in other contexts as for example the meaning of language, images and even behaviour.

Given these obvious shortcomings of the rather perfunctory common sense definitions of meaning, it might be fair to note that ordinary dictionaries normally aid a linguistic rather than semantic understanding of the different entries. One could therefore argue that it would be more appropriate to look elsewhere for definitions of *meaning* in a psychological context, as for example more scientific dictionaries or encyclopaedias devoted to the field of psychology. However, these particular reference works often fail to even offer an entry labelled meaning (as is the case of the *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology* and *Gads Psykologileksikon*), or otherwise provide a very limited and narrow definition depending largely on one single and specific context, as for example meaning as experience in phenomenology, meaning as attitude in social psychology or meaning as information processing in cognitive psychology. Such definitions do of course reveal some – and indeed relevant – aspect of meaning, but we are nevertheless still left without a general and all-encompassing definition. As meaning is inevitably an ambiguous and elusive concept to define, I

will for now leave the common sense definitions of meaning and proceed to an elaboration of meaning as the result of an innate and uniquely human mental process.

### **Evolution and the Innate Need for Meaning**

Naturally, it is presumptuous to claim an innate human need for meaning without at least providing a preliminary definition. For present purposes, I will, however, delay a little longer and instead begin at the very beginning and exemplify why we need to bother defining the concept at all. In order to do so, I will briefly turn to evolutionary psychology and its capability to provide a theoretical foundation for exploring universals in humanity.

Markus (2014, p. xii) states that *people's capacity to be shaped by the meanings that are pervasive in their environments, to make meaning, to share these meanings, and to build worlds according to these meanings is their great evolutionary advantage*. This statement is intuitively appealing, as a great deal of the human experience indeed seems to evolve around an impressive array of meanings. Every day we are faced with a demand to make sense of the world and our own existence in it by dealing with the concept of meaning, as for example the meaning of the languages we speak and what politicians say on the news, the meaning of the weather forecast and the shopping list just found in pocket – not to mention the meaning of our own actions and the decisions we make about how we want to live our lives. It would thus be impossible to deny the pervasiveness of meaning, which seems to be not only an essential but also an unavoidable part of human existence. To claim that this capacity is a great evolutionary advantage is equally appealing. Although nature provides countless examples of how animals all over the world survive and evolve through impressively complex and highly specialised processes, no other species has the same cultural variation as do humans, and only few – if any – have adapted to the same range of conditions. As the human consciousness, and with it the capacity for meaning, is amongst the most obvious characteristic distinguishing us from other animals (Gärdenfors, 2003; Høgh-Olesen, 2009a; Høgh-Olesen, 2009b), it seems reasonable to assume that the human consciousness therefore holds a key to understanding the evolutionary success of the human species (Modell, 2003; Workman & Reader, 2008).

## **Methodological Considerations**

However intuitively appealing such reasoning might seem, there are some methodological considerations one must bear in mind when making assumptions about the evolutionary development of such characteristics. First and foremost when speaking of evolutionary advantages, it is imperative to note that evolution itself is deprived of both purpose and agency. It is thus important to bear in mind that natural selection is not the result of an active selector but a passive random process that occurs because offspring generally resemble their parents for genetic reasons. Occasionally genetic mutations will introduce new heritable variations that either aid or harm the individual's chances of survival and reproduction. Due to these naturally and randomly occurring variations, some individuals will be more successful than others in terms of reproducing their genes and passing them on to future generations. These genes will thereby become more prevalent within the species at the expense of genes that did not afford a similar advantage. Thus, evolution does not equal improvement or perfection of either the species or the individual but favours the genes, insofar that they use the species or the individual to reproduce themselves (Dawkins, 2006; Kalat, 2009; Workman & Reader, 2008).

Following this logic, it is naturally appealing to see the human mind as a result of such a process and use its existence as proof for its adaptive benefits. Nevertheless, one must be aware of the risk for circularity in the argumentation when making these kinds of judgements about assumed connections between human characteristics and evolution: if the adaptive benefits of human consciousness is proved by its universality, the proof for the universality is the fact that it has adaptive benefits. Evolutionary psychology therefore profits from providing ultimate explanations for human behaviour, thoughts, and emotions but runs the risk of being self-explanatory without adding much new information to the study of the human psyche.

Evolutionary psychology has attended to this problem mainly by seeking additional support from other scientific disciplines. Behavioural genetics has contributed with findings from twin, sibling, and adaptation studies and has thereby provided a foundation for estimates regarding the heritability of certain human behavioural traits such as intelligence, obesity, personality, and addictiveness. However, a correlation between certain genes and certain traits or behaviour does not suffice as proof of

whether the trait in question is adaptive or not. Consequently, we could not increase the validity of Markus' claim even if we did engage in the rather futile and somewhat impossible task of mapping out all the genetic prerequisites for human consciousness.

Alternatively, evolutionary psychologists might turn to comparative methods, e.g. cross-cultural psychology or evolutionary biology. In case of cross-cultural psychology, the basic assumption is that if certain traits are supposed to be adaptive, they will be present in all people irrespective of cultural particulars. In order to study the occurrence of assumed universal traits, cultures with strong and enduring hunter-gatherer traditions have become essential, as they provide a unique foundation for studying humans under conditions similar to those our ancestors are assumed to have adapted to, i.e. the upper Pleistocene period more than 10.000 years ago, commonly referred to as Environment of Evolutionary Adaption (EEA) (Workman & Reader, 2008). Even though this kind of research is aimed at avoiding the ethnocentric tendency of much psychological research to generalise from samples drawn exclusively from Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic (WEIRD) populations (Chiu, Kwan, & Liou, 2014; Heinrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), much of their validity nevertheless rests on the assumption that these hunter-gatherer cultures have not developed much in the intervening millennia. As for the latter case, that of evolutionary biology, the attention is primarily directed at other primates. As humans have evolved under conditions similar to those of many other animals – and other primates in particular – it is reasonable to assume that we have evolved to deal with common problems (e. g. finding food, avoiding predators, rearing offspring) in similar ways. Occurrences of certain traits across different species thus indicate that such traits are indeed adaptive and result from evolutionary development. One of the main disadvantages of this type of research, however, is that although such knowledge is valuable for many purposes, we do not have a fixed base line for making comparisons, as we do not know at what point in time the evolutionary path of humans separated from that of other primates. To sum up, none of the comparative methods completely evade the problem of circularity, as they generally lack a fixed basis for comparisons between cultures or species respectively.

The conclusion to be drawn from these methodological objections to evolutionary psychology is that scientists have to be very meticulous when making assumptions about the perceived adaptive benefits of human traits and behaviours. However, despite the obvious lack of a fixed baseline when comparing present human traits and behaviours to those of our ancestors or those of other primates, we do have some knowledge about humans in the EEA period. Due to archaeological excavations we know that the human species lived in groups rather than alone, that these groups survived by hunting, foraging and later by primitive forms of agriculture, they practised sexual reproduction and prolonged childrearing, fashioned both tools, weapons, clothes, ornamentation et cetera (Workman & Reader, 2008). Furthermore, the process of evolutionary development is a very slow one, so even if we had data from the EEA period as a fixed baseline for making comparisons, the results might still not be significant. Consequently, although none of the abovementioned methods for improving the validity of evolutionary psychology completely evade the problem of circularity, they still provide some support for evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology is therefore by no means deprived of a factual foundation but has a unique opportunity to propose alternative and/or additional perspectives when studying the human psyche.

Despite these methodological objections to evolutionary psychology, there are several reasons to agree with Markus' assumptions that the capacity for meaning has certain benefits for the human species. These reasons will be the focal point of the following section. In the following I will thus refrain from rather futile discussions of the degree of evolutionary advantage that a capacity for meaning has afforded, and instead elaborate on the possible adaptive benefits. This I will do in order to examine what such a sense-making capacity entails, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for the oncoming phenomenological analysis of the sense-making process related to the Copenhagen attacks.

### **Adaptive Benefits of Creating Meaning**

When claiming that the human consciousness is the key to understanding the success of our species, the existence of such a consciousness does not bear any proof in itself. However, for human consciousness to reach its present state of development and prevalence, the advantages presumably outweigh the disadvantages. Such disad-

vantages are mainly related to the fact that the human brain is comparably larger than any other mammal when compared to body size (Brüne, 2008): as this unusually large brain implies an equally large head, humans are faced with increased risk of possibly fatal birth complications for both mother and child – as well as the obvious disadvantage of children being dependent on their parents for several years before being able to survive by their own means. Also, the brain is responsible for a considerable amount of the accumulated energy consumption, forcing humans to spend many extra hours being vulnerable as prey whilst sleeping. Furthermore, the size of the head is assumed to have caused humans to engage in bipedal walk in order to allow for the spinal cord to provide extra support for the head despite being more visible to predators. The disadvantages of storing a human brain and consciousness are thus quite obvious, and the question remains: what function of human consciousness outweighs such disadvantages?<sup>2</sup>

At this point it might be appropriate to reintroduce the concept of meaning, as it can exemplify some of the main benefits of human consciousness. According to (Baumeister, 1991, p. 17f), the function of meaning is to aid the process of discerning patterns as well as controlling and regulating oneself. In order to illustrate how these two functions can aid human survival, I will continue the evolutionary terminology and claim that life is a series of efforts to survive and reproduce by adapting to the environment. In this endeavour, the ability to discern pattern is a clear advantage as it allows for the individual to anticipate future events and take precautions accordingly, by either avoiding them or using them to its own advantage. By discerning patterns humans have a unique opportunity to act before impending danger approaches, and to prepare for unavoidable dangers. A capacity for meaning thus enable humans to act rather than react, as for example the farmer who can make predictions about the summer being warm or cold, wet or dry, thereby taking appropriate precautions when sowing, fertilising, harvesting in the same way that the politicians can make predictions about demographical distribution in the population and raise the retirement age in order to prevent a future deficit and possible decrease in welfare

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<sup>2</sup> It might be appropriate to note, that there is not any consensus amongst scientists – evolutionary biologist, psychologists and others – about the existence of such a thing as consciousness or the scientific usefulness of such a concept **Der blev angivet en ugyldig kilde.** For want of a better term, and in accordance with the common practice, I will nevertheless proceed with the word consciousness in order to explain the mental state characterised by the experience of perceptions, thoughts, and emotions as well as an awareness of the external world and our own existence in it.

and standard of living. This ability to discern patterns is not only employed in situations concerning life and death but is constantly, although not always consciously (Modell, 2003), employed in all our interaction with the environment and other individuals in it. Consequently, meaning allows for the individual to respond to the environment in a more effective manner, as it enables the individual to consider alternatives, consult values, compare long term and short term consequences, and prioritise goals. Consciousness and its capacity for meaning thus liberate the individual from the present by allowing for the consideration of alternatives based on both past and possible future events.

The capacity for sense-making might also have had important implications on the development of human sociality as meaning also has a regulatory function that aids the social alignment of behaviours (Baumeister, 1991). The negative effects of solitary imprisonment, exile, isolation, and loneliness have been studied and documented extensively and suggest an innate need for humans to belong to social groups and have contact with other people. As such, the advantages of living in groups rather than alone are self-evident in many cases and can be observed across different cultures (Workman & Reader, 2008). Although the benefits are quite obvious on a general level, i.e. increased survival rate and reproductive success for a specific group or the human species as such, it is not without considerable cost for the individual. Living in groups is by no means effortless, and the individual is constantly faced with demands to sacrifice personal goals and rewards for the greater good. In order for individuals to profit from group membership, there must be some balance between personal sacrifices and collectively achieved rewards and it is mainly up to the individual to secure this balance (De Schriver, 2009; Ellis, 2011; Nissen, 2009; Toft, 2009; Wilson, 2011). Naturally, there are countless examples of how cultural practices aid the individual in this endeavour, varying from mild degrees of social control as for example childrearing to extreme demands of conformity proposed by political or religious ideologies. Nevertheless, the individual is faced with a demand to make decisions about how to compromise between the conflicting interests of the group and the individual: Is selfishness a better strategy than altruism? Will aggression or kindness increase the chances of reaching my goal? Do short term benefits outweigh possible long term drawbacks? By means of this capacity, humans can make assumptions and estimations about the consequences of their actions and thereby make deci-



sions that enable them to live together relatively peacefully. Consequently, a capacity for meaning is not only essential in order to discern patterns in the environment but also in other people's behaviour thus enabling the individual to self-regulate by making appropriate behavioural adjustments and thereby securing long term benefits at both the individual and the collective level. A capacity for sense-making, and with it an ability to discern patterns and act accordingly might therefore have developed as a prerequisite for human sociality, which undeniably is among one of the most important prerequisites for the continuous survival and reproductive success of the human species.

As I have hoped to illustrate with this section, a sense-making process that enables to individual to discern patterns in the environment and act accordingly does indeed seem to afford certain benefits. Due to the methodological considerations a complete and definitive evaluation of the validity of Markus' statements that the ability to deal with meanings is *the* great evolutionary advantage of humans will, however, be somewhat impossible.

### **Approaching a Definition of Meaning**

So far this exposition of meaning as a psychological concept has displayed possible adaptive benefits of the sense-making process, by which the individual constructs meaning. In relation to present purposes we might thus conclude that the sense-making process is a feature of the individual's consciousness, by which the individual relates to the environment and organises itself accordingly. In the following I will summarise the theoretical exposition by providing a brief discussion of its implications for present purposes. This will result in an operational definition of meaning that will constitute the focal point of the oncoming empirical part of this thesis.

With Markus' (2014, p. xii) statement that *people's capacity to be shaped by the meanings that are pervasive in their environments, to make meaning, to share these meanings, and to build worlds according to these meanings is their great evolutionary advantage* as the starting point, I have now displayed some essential aspects of meaning. Firstly, meaning is intimately linked to the human consciousness, insofar it constitutes the prerequisites for the sense-making process. Secondly, this sense-making capacity seems to have some adaptive benefits, as it enables the individual to

interact in the environment as well as other individuals in a more appropriate and effective manner. Due to some of the methodological inadequacies associated with evolutionary psychology it is, however, impossible to validate Markus' claim that the capacity for sense-making is *the* evolutionary advantage.

So what does this exposition entail for the concept of meaning as a psychological concept? Most importantly, the capacity for meaning is intimately linked to human consciousness, insofar this is the prerequisite for meaning to exist. This, however, does not mean that meaning is located in the brain in the sense that we can expect to find a specifically demarcated part of the brain, which we can label capacity for sense-making. Neither is meaning located in the environment since it cannot be fixed in neither time nor space and nor can it be seen to float around in the empty nothingness between subject and object. According to the introductory statement put forward by Markus (2014), meaning is at the same time pervasive in the environment and something the individual makes and is able to share with others. At first sight, this might seem as a self-contradiction but it nevertheless bears some importance to understanding how meaning relates to the world and to the individual: meaning is not a physical or a material thing, that is, it does not have a spatial location or a chemical composition. As such, it cannot be seen, weighed, felt, tasted, smelled, or heard but as shown above it still has an omnipresence in human lives. Although meaning and physical matter are two essentially different things, they are both equally real and mutually interacting insofar they both have the power to affect the other. Meaning for example has the power to alter physical matter in the case of designating the border between countries. These borders are generally the result of political resolutions – or negotiation of meanings – which then prompt the necessity of building military fortifications and customs facilities. The opposite can be illustrated in the case of natural disasters where for example water, wind, volcanoes, and earthquakes in an instant can alter the value – and meaning – of physical objects such as houses or cars considerably. Consequently, meaning is intimately related to the physical world, yet fixed in neither time nor space. The question thus remains: when does meaning come in to existence? In continuation of this theoretical exposition of meaning and sense-making, I will argue, that meaning enters the physical world when humans employ their consciousness in their interaction with the environment. Although meaning un-

doubtedly affects the physical world and vice versa meaning depends on the human consciousness to do so (Baumeister, 1991, p. 27).

To summarise this exposition of the human need for meaning, I will conclude that *meaning is a product of the process facilitated by human consciousness, that the individual employ in order to organise itself in relation to the environment*. Consequently, meaning is the result of a mental process, by which the individual attempts to make sense of its interaction with the environment. This sense-making process thus enables the individual to discern patterns and act accordingly, thereby assuming a self-regulating function.

### **Implications for present purposes**

As the theoretical exposition and the final definition of meaning displays, the sense-making process is in this perspective a constant and continuous process, that occurs whether the sense-making individual is consciously aware of it or not. This conclusion might have afforded the impression that the sense-making process is one that occurs automatically and smoothly, always providing the individual with the most optimal foundation for acting appropriately and effectively in accordance with the environment. I will argue that this is not the case. Although we might not always be consciously aware of the existence of such a sense-making process and its implications, the unpredictability of human lives inevitably forces us into occasional unfamiliar situations where we find ourselves struggling to make sense of the situation. This topic will be the focal point of the empirical part in the following section.

As illustrated very eloquently by Hans Davidsen-Nielsen in the introduction, attacks such as the recent one in Copenhagen are extremely rare in a Danish context and prompts many different reactions. Even now, several months after the attack, the media are still treating this particular topic on a daily basis and in many different ways. Many features in various newspapers are thus still concerned with the aftermath of the attack, by for example encouraging more surveillance in the public space, calling for more political initiatives to aid the prevention of radicalisation of youngsters in disadvantaged neighbourhoods or criticising the poor re-socialisation opportunities for ex-convicts and so on and so forth. Naturally part of this ongoing debate and unchanged focus in the media is at least partly prompted by the continu-

ous updates about the police investigation of the attack as well as various politicians' attempt to profile themselves before the upcoming election. A narrative of the attack is thus still in the process of being created by slowly and meticulously connecting the different pieces.

However, in the days following immediately after the attack this narrative was still inconsistent and disconnected, leaving the sense-making individuals to connect the different pieces of information for themselves. As the perpetrator was shot during his apprehension, there was no easy means of satisfying a need for making sense of the attack. Consequently, this attack can provide a valuable case for examining how the sense-making process occurs under circumstances that render it impossible to discern patterns easily – because the information is either scarce, inconsistent or lacking altogether. In a situation such as this individuals must thus exert themselves in order to make sense of a suboptimal factual foundation as well as navigate through the vast array of alternative and sometimes even conflicting meanings offered by others. In order to examine how the sense-making process occurs under such circumstances I will in the following conduct a phenomenological analysis of comments posted on Facebook in the days immediately after the attack.

### **Background to the Cases**

In 2005, the Danish author Kåre Bluitgen was searching for an illustrator for his children's book, *Koranen og profeten Muhammeds liv (The Quran and the Life of Muhammad)*. This proved a difficult endeavour as the then recent murder of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh and the attack on a teacher at Copenhagen University after a reading of the Quran caused several illustrators to decline the assignment with reference to fear of similar threats and reprisals. Ultimately, Kåre Bluitgen found a willing illustrator on the condition of guaranteed anonymity but the episode instigated public debate about artists' use of self-censorship. On the 30th of September 2005, a national Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* ran an article entitled *Muhammeds ansigt (The Face of Muhammad)* in which they had invited forty Danish illustrators to stand up for their right not to be intimidated into self-censorship. The result was twelve very different illustrations of the prophet Muhammad: some were satirical and critical, others were more neutral or bore explicit reference to the current debate and the author Kåre Bluitgen. The article and one illustration in particu-

lar, that of Muhammad portrayed with an ignited bomb hidden in his turban, caused international offence amongst Muslims. On the 19th of October 2005, eleven ambassadors from Muslim countries requested a meeting with the Danish Prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in which he was expected to engage in discussions about possible consequences for *Jyllands-Posten* as well as dissociate himself from declarations made from other politicians. The Prime minister declined with the contention that the Danish government could not and would not interfere in any Danish publication process. After this, the crisis – which is now known as the Muhammad cartoons crisis – seemed to escalate rapidly with the recall of ambassadors in Denmark, boycotting of Danish products in many Muslim countries, issuing a fatwa against Danish forces in Iraq as well as specific death threats to the illustrators and general threats to Denmark and other countries admitting sympathy.

Although this episode took place nearly a decade ago, the consequences of the Muhammad cartoons crisis is still evident in many areas of Danish society. The illustrator who portrayed Muhammad with a bomb in his turban, Kurt Westergaard, has been the subject of several assaults with intent to kill and has since been living under constant special police protection. Each of these attacks has caused re-ignition of the debate about freedom of speech and reprinting of the original illustrations from 2005. Several planned or attempted terrorist attacks on both people and buildings can be linked to the original Muhammad cartoons crisis, amongst these for example the suicide attack on the Danish embassy in Islamabad in June 2008 and the prevented terror cases from Vollsmose September 2006, Bispebjerg September 2007 and Stockholm/Copenhagen December 2010 as well as the attempted murder of the historian and journalist Lars Hedegaard at his home in Frederiksberg in February 2013. The alleged common denominator for all these attacks has been perpetrators whose motivation to a certain extent stems from offence caused by the Muhammad cartoon crisis. Due to these cases and others, the general assessment of increased terror risk in Denmark is still maintained and the issue of preventative measures and handling of specific threats have been ever-enduring themes in national Danish politics.

The Muhammad cartoons crisis also had consequences outside Denmark's borders. In Sweden a different issue had similar consequences for the artist and professor of art history, Lars Vilks. In Sweden 'roundabout art', is a slightly condescending term

used to describe the type of art that is only suitable to fill in gaps in public spaces. In 2006, such a sculpture in Linköping in South-eastern Sweden portraying a concrete dog and a huge steel circle was vandalised and the artist was commissioned to produce a new piece. Before it was completed, a homemade wooden dog appeared in the roundabout and during the following months, dogs were placed in roundabouts all over Sweden in similar ways. This episode, as well as the recent Muhammad cartoons crisis, became the inspiration for Lars Vilks' contribution to the annually recurring exhibition at Tällered Hembygdsgård near Karlstad entitled *Hunden i kunsten* (*Dogs in Art*). The year before, the theme was cats and on this occasion one of the contributors created a painting of the then American president, George W. Bush with fur and whiskers. With the assumption that the same rules apply to chiefs of state as well as religious figure, Lars Vilks' presented three sketchy drawings of such a roundabout dog portrayed with the prophet's head. On the day of the opening of the exhibition, however, the curator decided that it would be improper to display the drawings in view of recent events in Denmark. Lars Vilks then attempted to find alternative ways to display his drawings but this proved a difficult endeavour due to security considerations at various galleries. Ultimately, a local newspaper printed the drawings as a protest. In the following years, Lars Vilks has been exposed to several attacks and has since been forced to live under special police protection.

This particular case considers the attacks at Krudttønden and a Jewish synagogue in Copenhagen of the 14th and 15th of February 2015. Krudttønden is a local cultural centre situated in one of the older and more fashionable areas of Copenhagen, and holds facilities for hosting a great variety of events like theatre, concerts, lectures, and workshops. On this particular day, a public debate meeting entitled *Kunst, blasfemi og ytringsfrihed* (*Art, Blasphemy and Freedom of Speech*), was hosted by Lars Vilks Komiteen (The Lars Vilks Committee). The committee was founded as a society with the explicit purpose of arranging public debate meetings with Lars Vilks in Copenhagen and support his right to freedom of speech and to draw, think, and speak freely. This debate meeting was held in the wake of the terror attack on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* to commemorate the anniversary of the fatwa issued against Salman Rushdie with the aim of discussing the possible necessity of borders for artists and the extent to which political agendas disfigure the artistic expression. During the meeting, a young man, later identified as Omar Abdel Hamid

El-Hussein, opened the glass doors into the foyer and fired approximately forty shots into the room. One of the attendees who stood in the foyer was killed by shots in the chest while two bodyguards and a policeman were injured. The young man left Krudttønden and managed to escape the police. The police searched the area extensively but the perpetrator did not show up again until shortly after midnight where he killed a young man and injured two policemen guarding the entrance to a Jewish synagogue hosting a bar mitzvah party. During the day, police investigation led to an address in North-western Copenhagen where the perpetrator stayed in between and after the two shootings. This address was kept under surveillance all night and when the perpetrator returned to the address early in the morning he was challenged by the police. He replied by opening fire and was shot dead by the police shortly afterwards.

As the on-going police investigation is still expected to last several months, this course of events is not yet finally confirmed. Neither is the facts concerning the young man, now identified as Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, although he is now officially referred to as the perpetrator.<sup>3</sup> However, there is some information available about the perpetrator's background, which I will briefly dwell on as it does have some relevance for the following analysis. Omar El-Hussein was born in 1992 to parents who came to Denmark from Palestine after staying some time in a refugee camp in Jordan (Skjoldager & Sheikh, 2015). He grew up with his younger brother in Mjølnerparken, a disadvantaged neighbourhood on Nørrebro in Copenhagen, appearing on the official albeit renowned Danish list of ghettos because of its association with increased crime rates, overrepresentation of immigrants, low education level et cetera. His parents were later divorced, whereupon he continued to live with his father in the Nørrebro area, while his mother moved to Jordan. He nevertheless kept in contact with his mother and visited her several times thus spending several years in Jordan (Frich, 2015). In the media he is often described as an intelligent but unmotivated young man who did not take much interest in his education despite his occasional good grades. He apparently became increasingly aggressive and reclusive dur-

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<sup>3</sup> I will therefore proceed by adopting this common conduct and refer to the young man as the perpetrator rather than alleged perpetrator, terrorist or attacker et cetera. This I will do partly for simplicity reasons and partly in order to avoid anticipating the conclusions of the police investigation and to maintain focus on the descriptions and explanations put forward in the data rather than my own judgments about the event.

ing his teenage years but found some affinity in a local thai-boxing club. Nevertheless, he seemed as frivolous with his training as with his education at VUC, an upper secondary education centre for adults. Despite his newfound interest, he still kept a connection with his friends from Mjølnerparken and became gradually affiliated with a local street gang. He was apprehended and convicted for minor offences including possession of hachis and weapons (Nielsen, Seidelin, Borg, Albæk, Gaardmand, & Lavrsen, 2015). Eventually, he was kicked out of the boxing club and in 2013 he was also expelled from the school due to an attack on a young man on the S-train in Copenhagen, leaving the victim in a critical condition with several stab wounds and a seriously injured main artery. Omar El-Hussein later explained in court that he had recently been attacked by someone he thought to recognise on the train and that he felt he was in danger of being attacked again and thus acting in self-defence (Dahlin & Stræde, 2015). He was sentenced to serve two years in prison and was released in December 2014. During his imprisonment, he expressed a wish to travel to Syria in order to fight for Islamic State something, which instigated the Prison Service to add his name to a list of radicalised prisoners shared with PET; the Danish Security and Intelligence Agency (Frich, 2015). Several media have subsequently speculated that he became radicalised during this imprisonment and that this is the cause for his attacks in February.

## **Method**

### **Data collection**

The studied corpus in this paper consists of comments made on three Facebook pages. The focal point of all three pages is the motivations for some people who decided to lay flowers on the pavement where the perpetrator was shot by the police early Sunday morning on the 15th of February. Particularly one young woman, 30-year old anthropologist Janni Nielsen, became exposed to the media after professing on her Facebook page a wish to lay flowers at this site as well as in front of Krudttønden and the Jewish synagogue. The following day on the 16th of February, she laid a bouquet of yellow tulips on Svanevej where the perpetrator was shot and was on this occasion interviewed by DR Nyheder, the news division of the Danish National Broadcasting Corporation. In a short video clip used in the national news that evening, she explained that she feels compassion for the perpetrator's relatives as well as



a need to share her grief that 'we have Danish youngsters in Denmark who lose faith in our society and are willing to kill others and themselves for it' (Video: Sørensen & Ammundsen, 2015). She emphasises that she does not 'have any sympathy for neither killings nor attempted killings or for any of Omar's actions' but nevertheless has a certain appreciation of the co-responsibility of society to prevent such tragic events.

DR Nyheder subsequently published this story and the appurtenant video clip on two platforms: their Facebook page and their regular webpage. On the Facebook page, the video clip was posted with an invitation to profess opinions about laying flowers for the perpetrator, which immediately prompted many emotional responses, positive as well as negative. On the regular webpage, the coverage included an additional link to the Facebook page of Danish politician and Member of Parliament for Venstre (a centre-right party), Søren Pind, who posted a photo of the flowers along with the comment 'Blomster for en fej usselryg på Svanevej. Dette er billedet, nogen ikke VIL se. Det viser, der desværre er et dem og os. Det afgørende er så hvem vi og de er. Det vil tiden og diskussionen vise' (Flowers for a cowardly wretch on Svanevej. This is the photo some people WILL NOT see. Unfortunately, this shows that there is a them and us. The crucial point is, then, who we and they are. Time and discussion will tell). The data used in the present analysis consists of comments made on three different Facebook pages: that of Janni Nielsen, DR Nyheder and Søren Pind respectively; all three originating from and referring to the occasion of laying flowers for the perpetrator.

I have chosen these three pages as the foundation of my data collection as they have a thematic common denominator yet still act as exponents for three different perspectives on the issue in question: Janni Nielsen is a private person professing her personal opinions and willingly defending them, Søren Pind is a publicly known and occasionally controversial politician posting a rather provoking comment without further explanation or commenting<sup>4</sup>, and DR Nyheder is the national broadcasting

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<sup>4</sup> Except for one similar comment commenting the later removal of the flowers by the perpetrator's friends.

company instigating a debate without further involvement<sup>5</sup>. My reason for choosing these three pages is predominantly that the topic of laying flowers for the perpetrator seems to have prompted more comprehensive and explicit comments compared to other stories about the attack, thus providing a more solid foundation for the analysis.

As mentioned, all three pages are retrieved from the same social media platform, Facebook, in order to secure a minimum of comparability within the data as opposed to using different platforms. Furthermore, all comments made on the three sites cover a limited time span of a few days starting with Janni Nielsen's initial comment on her Facebook page on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February and the subsequent comment made between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, continuing with the coverage run by DR Nyheder on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent comments made between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> as well as the statement posted by Søren Pind on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent comments made between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup>. As for my particular choice of Facebook as the site for data retrieval, this is the result of several considerations. Firstly, Facebook is ideal as it is to this day still the biggest and most commonly used social medium. This ensures a greater demographic diversity than more specialised and subject specific social media directed at a specific target group regarding age, occupation, hobbies et cetera. Secondly, Facebook is more encompassing than competing social media platforms as it has integrated many different features on the same platform thus creating a framework where people are less likely to hide behind fake accounts when professing their opinions as for example is the case of more anonymous blogs or public debate rooms where the use of aliases is more common. Thirdly, I have chosen Facebook because it allows for longer comments than for example Twitter, which has a maximum of 140 characters per tweet, and therefore contains less comprehensive and more disparate pieces of data. Although many comments on Facebook are not longer than tweets, the format of no character limitations, makes it possible to elabo-

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<sup>5</sup> As DR is subject to politically adopted guidelines for ensuring public service, these debate sites are not guided or shaped in any way by the broadcasting company. The only interference in the debate is the introduction encouraging commentators to remember a civilised tone and requesting a reasoned and sober debate as well as noting that the debate will be monitored. However, I have occasionally come across comments made by commentators directed at DR Nyheder encouraging deletion of a certain comments that no longer appear on the site indicating some interference in severe cases, i.e. comments containing statements that violates the law, in this case particularly racism and/or encouragement to violence and terror. These comments seem to be deleted indiscriminately without further marking or explanation.

rate on one's opinions if one wishes to do so – which many people do indeed take advantage of.

Although all comments constituting the corpus of this study are retrieved from the same social media platform and revolve around the same topic, a few comments on the differences between the three pages are appropriate. Janni Nielsen acts in this context as a private person who nevertheless also has a somewhat more professional interest in the attack and the perpetrator. From the information publicly available on her personal Facebook page, one learns that she works as Democracy Project Assistant for a Danish non-governmental development organisation, Mellemløst Samvirke<sup>6</sup>, and that she has previously worked with or at least been acquainted with street gang member prospects. Also, she comments regularly and vividly on issues concerning women's rights, social politics, integration et cetera. Naturally, Janni Nielsen uses her Facebook account to promote her own ideas, opinions, and interests but she is more likely to do so as a private person than as a public figure such as the politician Søren Pind. Consequently, the people posting comments on her Facebook page are people who know her one way or the other. Therefore, the comments retrieved from her Facebook page are generally also kept to a more kind tone, although some people still hold and share conflicting opinions. Also, she engages in direct dialogue with the people commenting, as for example answering question, elaborating on arguments and clarifying points.<sup>7</sup> This dialogical character is not prevalent on any of the other Facebook pages chosen for this study – assumedly because such interaction would be too time consuming (and perhaps not of interest) for Søren Pind and impossible for DR Nyheder due to their public service obligations. However, where DR Nyheder is acting as a corporation (despite the fact that some, for us, unknown employee would have acted on behalf of this corporation when posting the video and the introductory remarks), politician Søren Pind acts in the realm between a private person and a public corporation. He acts in this context as a semi-private person rather than exclusively a private person or a public figure or cooperation. Regarding the style and content of comments made on his semi-private Facebook page, most comments are directed at him personally as is the case of comments made on Janni Nielsen's Facebook page. These comments commonly profess either agreement

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<sup>6</sup> The Danish division of ActionAid.

<sup>7</sup> These comments made by Janni herself in the thread on her Facebook pages are marked by '(\*)'

or disagreement quite explicitly. However, the tone in the comments differs considerably as people who choose to comment generally seem to agree with Janni Nielsen, or at least sympathise with her way of arguing, whereas people with only comparatively few exceptions generally seem to disagree with Søren Pind. On the Facebook page of DR Nyheder the distribution of agreement and disagreement is more evenly distributed. As such, there is a vast difference in the way that people share or verbalise their level of agreement. The majority of the comments on Janni Nielsen's Facebook page are emotional declarations of agreement with her; occasionally even followed by explicit signs of admiration and thanks for putting into words what they have not been able to themselves. In the case of the few examples of disagreement with Janni Nielsen, these are kept in a respectful and emotionally neutral tone. The exact opposite is the case regarding comments made on Søren Pind's Facebook page, where the majority discloses disagreement with him in a very emotional and even hostile and aggressive way. The relatively few comments that do express agreement with him are quite short and emotionally neutral. This is perhaps not surprising when considering that the opening statements in the three comments are likely to set the tone, deliberate or not, for the following comments and debate (Janni Nielsen discloses empathy for the perpetrator and accept for laying flowers, Søren Pind shares none of those feelings and acknowledges it openly and DR Nyheder neutrally encourages others to debate the balance between right and wrong in this particular situation). Furthermore, there are, as mentioned above, differences regarding both the sender and recipient on the different pages: people commenting on Janni Nielsen's page has some personal relation to her, whereas the commentators on Søren Pind's Facebook page would know him as a politician, perhaps not personally, but as a public figure. He himself is less likely to know the commentators on his page, personally or otherwise. On the Facebook page of DR Nyheder there are to some extent convergence between both the sender and recipient, as people profess ideas to an unspecified mass, i.e. users of DR Nyheder. In some cases the debaters post comments directed at other debaters, but these are rarely dialogical as is the case on Janni Nielsen's Facebook page. Rather they serve as a tag to clarify that a particular comment is linked to a specific comment or debater and not the general topic in question.

So much for the introduction to the corpus. In the following I will thus proceed to the analysis of the comments posted on the three Facebook pages constituting the corpus. This I will do by initially describing the analysis procedure and presenting the results, before proceeding to the discussion of their implications.

### **Analysis Procedure**

The comments appearing on the three Facebook pages were submitted to an interpretative phenomenological analysis, as described by Langdrige (2007). I have chosen this particular phenomenological approach since the corpus is of such a kind that other phenomenological approaches would prove somewhat inadequate. Descriptive phenomenological psychology or critical narrative analysis for example presuppose more coherent and extensive data foundations in order to provide a thorough description of the lived experience and/or carry out extensive analysis of the construction of narratives. By using the interpretative phenomenological analysis, it becomes possible to discern themes across the different comments. Naturally, thorough descriptions and extensive analyses of the lived experience would be of interest as well but ideally such research should be carried out using data consisting of more comprehensive narratives as autobiographical accounts or semi-structured interviews. As the corpus at hand is made up by relatively short and disconnected statements from a couple of hundred people, it undeniably entails limitations regarding reliability and validity when attempting to make assumptions about the existence of some common denominator in the research participants' psychological incentives. The interpretative phenomenological analysis is particularly appropriate for present purposes as it allows for identifying meaning units across the corpus, i.e. the different comments made by different people<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, the interpretative phenomenological analysis suits the purpose of this thesis insofar as it provides a methodological foundation for the examination of how individuals attempt to make sense of an unexpected and seemingly incomprehensible attack.

According to Langdrige (2007), there are four main stages to an interpretative phenomenological analysis: 1) reading for overall meaning, 2) identifying emerging

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<sup>8</sup> There are, however, a few exceptions of people commenting more than once on the same page (as is the case with Janni Nielsen's Facebook page) or commenting on more than one of the three Facebook pages (some people have commented on the pages of both DR Nyheder and Søren Pind as well as Janni Nielsen who has posted comments on all three pages).

themes, 3) identification of links between themes, and 4) organisation and naming of emerging themes. All four stages have been performed on the comments from each of three Facebook pages thus constituting three separate cases. The first stage is relatively straightforward and quite obvious as the aim of this stage is to familiarise oneself with the data by extensive reading – and re-reading – the corpus. Normally, this stage will include transcribing e.g. an interview but because the data in this case already appeared in writing, I used this stage to trim the corpus. Due to the large number of comments made on especially Søren Pind's and DR Nyheder's Facebook pages, I made a decision to only include comments relevant to the topic in question, i.e. comments that deal with making sense of the attacks and laying of flowers for the perpetrator. I used three selection criteria:

1) **Relevance** for the topic in question. As such, all comments containing irrelevant information have been left out (comments on weather, other news et cetera),

2) **Linguistic/semiotic content**, in the sense that words are the means of communication. This means leaving out all comment only consisting of grammatical signs (e.g. '!' or '...'), emoji symbols (e.g. smileys, hand gestures, hearts, flowers) and links (e.g. pictures, articles, other Facebook pages, whether or not related to the present topic),

3) **Explicit mentioning of the perpetrator**, either by name or by using nouns as a metaphor in the comments. Therefore comments related to the topic in question without reference to the perpetrator are not included in the corpus (e.g. exclamations as 'you are all stupid', 'I don't understand what you are talking about' or 'I am against terror'). Consequently, I selected comments to be included in the corpus by listing the different words used to describe the perpetrator on the three Facebook pages (e.g. his first name, metaphors, elaborate descriptions) as shown in Table 1. This list is not definite, as more descriptions could have been included, as for example the more generalising 'one who takes lives' or 'criminals like him'. I have chosen to exclude such implicit descriptions consisting of several words, as they illustrate a tendency of generalisation that is already visible in comments containing explicit references to the perpetrator. It is worth noting that not all of the words used to describe the perpetrator were present on all three pages. Also, some comments contain more than one descriptive word but they will nevertheless only appear once in the

corpus. The result of this stage is a corpus constituted by 399 comments (18 from Janni Nielsen's Facebook page, 219 from Søren Pind's and 171 from DR Nyheder) all commenting on the attack in Copenhagen on February the 14th and 15th in general and the issue of laying flowers at the site of the perpetrator's death in particular. The big difference in the number of comments included from the different

<b>Table 1 – Selection criteria</b>		
<b>Janni Nielsen</b>	<b>Søren Pind</b>	<b>DR Nyheder</b>
Omar	Omar	Omar
Gerningsmand	Terrorist	Terrorist
Dreng	Gerningsmand	Gerningsmand
Person	Mistænkt	Hund
Menneske	Hund	Psykopat
Mand	Psykopat	Idiot
	Ekstremist	Morder
	Idiot	Dreng
	Morder	Person
	Dreng	Menneske
	Person	Mand
	Menneske	Sjæl
	Mand	Væsen
	Kujon	
	Rotte	
	Dyr	
	Sjæl	
	Væsen	

Facebook pages reflects the number of comments on each page in general. An excerpt of the comments from each of the three Facebook pages is listed in the Appendices A-C.<sup>9</sup>

During what Langdrige has named the second stage, the selected comments were worked through several times in order to discern the initially emerging themes. Due to the rather disconnected quality of this particular corpus as well as the short length of most comments – many of the posted comments consist of only one or two sentences – it quickly became evident that it was more or less impossible to gain much insight in the individual life worlds and/or the individual experience of the attack itself. At this stage of the analysis, I therefore concentrated on discerning the different themes that people attempted to make sense of. This minimised the risk of a phenomenological reduction where I impose meaning on the data rather than letting the data ‘speak’ for itself. Consequently, the list of initial themes presented in Table 2<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Because of the large data corpus only the comments used as examples in the discussion will be included in the appendices. However, as there are only 18 comments in total in the data corpus from Janni Nielsen’s Facebook page, all of these are to be found in the appendices.

<sup>10</sup> Normally, the results of this stage, i.e. a list of initial themes, are listed chronologically. However, as the data corpus here consists of disconnected comments all made the first couple of days following

reflects the questions people attempt to address by their assumptions thus addressing the themes of *what* people are trying to make sense of. Furthermore, the initial themes are presented in random order as the usual practice of organising themes chronology is somewhat irrelevant in this case where the data consist of comments made by several hundred different people. Finally, this stage was carried out on all three cases simultaneously in order to allow for themes emerging in one case, if ap-

<b>Janni Nielsen</b>	<b>Søren Pind</b>	<b>DR Nyheder</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perpetrator’s conditions in life</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s personality</li> <li>• The state’s responsibility</li> <li>• Encouraging cohesion and solidarity</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s responsibility</li> <li>• Sympathy for the victims</li> <li>• Distinction between understanding and sympathy</li> <li>• Symbolic value of flowers</li> <li>• Acknowledgement of lacking facts</li> <li>• Belief in changing circumstances and changing youngsters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatives’ right to grieve</li> <li>• Comparison with Lundin and Breivik</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s deserving flowers or not</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s actions cannot be forgiven or excused</li> <li>• Distinction between grief and sympathy</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s conditions in life</li> <li>• Acknowledgement of lacking facts</li> <li>• Encouraging pride and nationalism</li> <li>• Symbolic value of flowers</li> <li>• Politicians’ responsibility</li> <li>• Discouraging hatred, division and generalisation of Muslims</li> <li>• Encouraging cohesion and solidarity</li> <li>• Encouraging grief in privacy</li> <li>• The parents’ responsibility</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s personality</li> <li>• Our/the system’s responsibility</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s responsibility</li> <li>• Encouraging sympathy for the perpetrator’s relatives</li> <li>• Distinction between who the perpetrator was and who he became</li> <li>• Rejection of responsibility</li> <li>• Encouragement to be strong and face the truth about present threats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatives’ right to grieve</li> <li>• Distinction between who the perpetrator was and who he became</li> <li>• Symbolic value of flowers</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s actions cannot be forgiven or excused</li> <li>• Encouraging cohesion and solidarity</li> <li>• Acknowledgement of lacking facts</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s conditions in life</li> <li>• Encouraging indifference</li> <li>• The perpetrator’s responsibility</li> <li>• Our responsibility</li> <li>• Parents’ responsibility</li> <li>• The system’s responsibility</li> <li>• Immigrants and Muslim’s responsibility</li> <li>• Encouraging preventative measures</li> <li>• Encouraging sympathy for the victims and their relatives</li> <li>• Encouraging cohesion and solidarity</li> <li>• Distinction between the perpetrator’s actions and person</li> <li>• Comparison with Lundin and Breivik</li> <li>• Rejection of responsibility</li> <li>• Sympathy and antipathy for people laying flowers</li> <li>• Terrorism or not</li> </ul>

the attack, chronological order is of lesser importance. I have thus chosen to list the initial themes randomly.



appropriate after consulting the data, to be transferred to the two other cases and thereby ensuring a more comprehensive and exhaustive analysis. Due to the many repetitions on Søren Pind's and DR Nyheder's Facebook pages the number of themes do not reflect the number of comments included in the corpus from each page.

<b>Table 3 – Final table of themes</b>			
<b>Making sense of...</b>	<b>By means of...</b>	<b>Thereby either...</b>	<b>And reacting with...</b>
The perpetrator	Placing responsibility	Accepting (partial) responsibility	Identification with the perpetrator
		Denying responsibility	Alienation of the perpetrator
Janni Nielsen	Judging morality	Accepting Janni's arguments	Admiration
		Rejecting Janni's argument	Disgust
Søren Pind	Assessing motives	Agreeing with assumed motives	Concern for the future
		Disagreeing with assumed motives	No concern/indifference

Langdrige's third stage involves establishing links between the different emerging themes. Initially, this stage requires that one takes a step back from the individual themes in order to discern a more general pattern while simultaneously returning to the corpus continually in order to check the emerging analysis. Furthermore, one must bear in mind that this stage must be carried out in accordance with the corpus rather than in accordance with psychological theories as the themes should emerge from the data without being driven out or forced to fit particular psychological theories. This stage is quite dynamic and the initial themes might have to be broken up further or discarded if they do not fit anywhere in the emerging pattern. The original lists of initial themes emerging from the comments on the three Facebook pages were in this case transformed much as I used this stage of the analysis to systematise and categorise the initial themes emerging from stage two. This was done by organising the subordinate themes according to the main theme by addressing the themes of *how* people attempt to make sense. Consequently, some of the themes from stage two were discarded or changed in order to produce the table of final themes presented in Table 3 in which the I have organised and named the themes that emerged during stage 4. At this final stage, the emerging themes in all three cases were compiled into one single list of final themes. This I have done in order to illustrate the result of the

interpretative phenomenological analysis of all three cases and thereby delaying the implications of the differences between them to the analysis and subsequent discussion below.

## **Analysis**

In this section, I will elaborate on the analysis resulting from the four stages described above. I will do so by discussing each of the three main themes individually. By doing so I will show how each theme emerged from the data and how it relates to the present purpose of examining the sense-making process occurring on the three different Facebook pages in the days following the attack. In order to do so, I will provide numerous examples from the corpus and discuss how each theme relates to the present definition of meaning as product of the sense-making process by which the individual organises itself in relation to the environment. In the following three sections I will thus elaborate on each theme, thereby retrieving points about the sense-making process at play under these circumstances. The implications of these points will subsequently be discussed in a summarising section.

### **Making Sense of the Attack and the Perpetrator's Actions**

As I have set out to examine the sense-making process occurring in the wake of an unexpected attack, recent in both time and proximity, it is not surprising that the perpetrator's actions constitute the most dominant theme in the corpus. Consequently, this theme was very evident even during the first readings of the data (the first stage of the analysis). The mere words used to describe the perpetrator himself clearly reflected the level of either identification with or alienation of the perpetrator (see Table 1): when the commentators identify with the perpetrator and accept partial responsibility they are calling him by his first name or refer to him as for example *poor young lad, who got his values wrong* (SP-177)<sup>11</sup>, *a soul gone astray* (DR-145), *a lost*

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<sup>11</sup> For simplification reasons the different comments quoted in the discussion will be referred to by initials indicating the Facebook page in question (JN for Janni Nielsen, SP for Søren Pind, and DR for DR Nyheder) followed by a number indicating the location in the appendices. All English translations of the comments appearing in the discussion are my own translations. I have strived to provide translations as close to the original as possible regarding punctuation, colloquial language et cetera. However, misspellings I have not attempted to translate for obvious reasons. Certain words have been used wrongly in the Danish original but are substituted by the correct word in the translations. This I have done as the error is quite obvious in Danish (e.g. being *galt afmonteret* (wrongly disassembled) as opposed to *galt afmarcheret* (fig. to have it all wrong) (DR-150) since it is equally difficult to translate as the misspellings and it impairs the meaning considerably. The original comments in Danish never-

*soul* (DR-3) or *a victim* (DR-71) as opposed to people denying any responsibility and consequently dehumanise him by referring to him as *this 'human being'* (SP-110), *stupid swine of a person* (SP-50), *the abominable creature* (SP-114), *despicable fundamentalist islamist dog of a perpetrator* (DR-165), *disgusting rat* (SP-206).

During the second stage of my analysis, it became evident that the commentators were particularly preoccupied with providing assumptions about the perpetrator's motivation for carrying out the attack – either by proposing possible causal explanations or by evaluating the causal explanations proposed by others. As the lists of initial themes in Table 2 illustrates, many comments thus revolved around the issue of the perpetrator acted as a free agent or not, e.g. discussing whether the perpetrator or the state/government/society is responsible, whether his parents are to blame or not, or what initiatives might have prevented the perpetrator from carrying out the attack. During the third stage of the analysis, this initial theme of agency was split up further and organised according to the characteristics of the possible causal explanations provided by the commentators. The result is shown in Table 3 where the characteristics of the causal explanations were labelled *inherent dispositions* and *circumstantial prerequisites* during the fourth and final stage. I have chosen these labels in order to indicate a difference in the level of agency attributed to the perpetrator as either acting on his own merits or being influenced by external factors, i.e. the extent of his free will and therefore guilt.

The labels of inherent dispositions and circumstantial prerequisites, however, are not to be seen as a reference to two distinct dichotomous and mutually exclusive categories but as the opposite ends of a continuum displaying different degrees of agency. The two labels are thus meant to be indicative of the level of agency attributed in the explanation models, varying from 'he knew what he was doing, it was his own fault' to 'he is a victim himself, being influenced by external factors'. When using the label inherent dispositions, I therefore wish to illustrate that a great deal of the explanation models displayed in the corpus explain the perpetrator's actions as deriving from some faulty personality or lacking moral, as for example: *I believe daily that people do their best. And endure as long as possible. I am not sure that Omar was strong in*

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theless appear in unedited form in Appendices A-C (with the odd exception of removed spaces between lines for space-saving purposes.)

*this regard* (JN-3), claiming that he was *a lost human being who lost his life in his insanity* (SP-120), and that *taking the lives of other people is only a darkened soul's actions* (DR-27). These examples illustrate that many individuals attempt to make sense of the perpetrator's actions by reference to an assumed inherent 'glitch' that might explain why he could carry out such actions.

The explanation models based on assumed inherent disposition can take different forms, varying from the very unambiguous statements such as *The man was obviously mentally ill, otherwise he would not have become an extremist* (DR-158), *Surely the only thing sick is that he could (no longer) express himself with words, but had to use violence as a tool* (DR-13), and *No normal human being would perform such a sick and evil action* (SP-18) to more vague explanations referring to the perpetrator as: *A poor sick man* (DR-44), *He was a lonely, confused and failed human being* (DR-3), and the more detailed explanation that *Perhaps he was a frustrated and despairing human being who simply gave up* (SP-76).

At the opposite end of the continuum, the individuals are more concerned with providing explanation models based on perceived external factors. A considerable amount of these explanation models refers to specific individuals and/or authorities, particularly the perpetrator's parents with statements like *when a young man can commit such an atrocity, there must have been a neglect from the parents* (DR-133), *Something must have gone wrong in his upbringing, or the lack of it, since he could do such a terrible thing! The boy has obviously been lacking the care and love that his parents could have given him!* (DR-98), and *I wonder if something went wrong in his childhood, I wonder if he has been brainwashed by the opinions of his relatives as one often hears about, honour killings and other things are often not uncommon here in DK anymore, so could it be that the parents have their part of the guilt, that their mentality is simply too far from ours* (SP-54). As is also evident in this last example, some of the comments also make clear connections between his background, i.e. his upbringing in general and the parents in particular, and possible religious and/or ideological motivations for the attack: *Perhaps the mother and father dragged little Omar to the Mosque time after time, in order to listen to a sick imam, who preaches killings and vengeance to all who does not share his sick attitude* (SP-140)

or noting that it is *sad that the potential he must have had as a little boy, should be smashed by a twisted ideology* (SP-96).

The parents are not the only ones to be held accountable for the perpetrator's actions, as many of the explanation models refer to institutional authorities either explicitly, e.g. *As Janni says we as society have a responsibility to pick up the youngsters who find it difficult to take root in Denmark* (DR-97) and *These young boys who become radicalised by powerful forces; we must as society stick together and help by showing another way* (DR-9), or implicitly by referring to the perpetrator as *The poor young man, who was so deceived and misled that he commits actions that would inevitably cost his life* (SP-20), stating that *Life makes us who we are* (DR-16), or asking *For who has failed here..... The man had a reputation. They knew about his intentions..... Why did he walk in the streets freely????* (SP-62) with an implied accusation directed at the police and the intelligence service.

What all these different explanation models have in common is that they aim to establish the level of agency displayed in the perpetrator's actions. This is important in relation to present purposes of examining the sense-making process as it reveals an aspect of meaning as holding an element of directedness towards the future. This element can be seen to illustrate Baumeister's (1991) claim that meaning has two functions, insofar it enables the individual to discern patterns and act accordingly, thereby entailing a self-regulatory function. The explanation models exemplify the discerning of patterns, as the individual connects and make sense of the different pieces of available information. These explanations models, however, affects the subsequent reaction towards the environment. Consequently, the meaning constructed affects both the individual and the way the individual relates to the environment.

In order to illustrate this, we might consider some of the comments displaying causal explanations that effectively and explicitly place the responsibility for the attack with specific individuals or authorities, e.g. the perpetrator's parents or the politicians. The individuals that subscribe to these explanation models direct their (re-)actions towards the people who they believe responsible for the attack: *I would prefer a resolute tidying amongst the religious, who incite and persuade to murders and killing. Out of the country with them. Change the law so it can be done* (DR-28), and

*Those who influenced him should stand forward and explain themselves – and change their attitude* (SP-20). In these cases where responsibility is placed with external parties, the sense-making individuals cannot self-regulate by changing their own behaviour. This entails that the uncertainty and anxiety promoted by the attack must be overcome by alternative measures such as demanding action from the responsible party, in this case the politicians and the unspecified ‘brainwashers’. The meaning constructed in these cases results in the individuals directing their reactions towards the people they believe to be responsible for the attack.

One particularly illustrative example is the following, where the commentator encourages the parents to ‘tighten up’ the upbringing of their children: *A BIG MISTAKE IN THEIR UPBRINGING, little boys are allowed to do EVERYTHING and then they keep little girls on such a tight leash that they have no say in anything [...] tighten up on your boys so they know how to become normally functioning in this society* (DR-130). This example is particularly illustrative as it contains both a clear accusation directed at the parents, cf. the reference to ‘upbringing’, and an implicit encouragement to other parents in a potentially similar situation to learn from the mistakes of the perpetrator’s parents. This commentator can thus be seen to construct meaning, that does not only entail discerning of patterns, i.e. it must have been the parent’s fault, but also affect the reaction towards the environment, as her request is not only directed at the parents in this particular case, but parents in general.

When assigning the responsibility and agency to external factors, either partly or completely, the perpetrator’s actions in this way become more apprehensible to those who find the ‘random boy gone mad’ explanations somewhat implausible or perhaps too unsettling. This tendency thereby resembles the concept of scapegoating in social psychology where the individual or group in question is relieved of unpleasant feelings such as guilt, frustration, and anxiety by either projecting the feelings onto someone else or blaming an out-group for imposing those feelings on oneself or the in-group (see for example Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939; von Franz, 1964). In this case, the unpleasant feelings an unexpected attack such as this is likely to induce can be relieved to some extent by placing the responsibility for it on scapegoats such as the parents or the government.

Some cases, however, do not fit this pattern as neatly as the abovementioned examples. Some comments tend to illustrate the exact opposite because the commentators assume at least partial responsibility for the attack themselves. This tendency does not fit the scapegoating theory but might be explained by Baumeister's (1991) claim that one of the two functions of meaning is to regulate oneself. For some of the commentators, this might be done by relieving themselves of their unpleasant feelings by attributing agency and responsibility to a scapegoat but for others it seems to be a more effective strategy to adopt the role as the responsible agent. By adopting at least some part of the responsibility the individuals accept that they will have to change something themselves in order to prevent similar situations in the future, e.g. by encouraging a softened rhetoric: *The rhetoric has become WAY too hard and hate begets hate.... [...] We as society must also stick together so that others will not be driven into extremist affiliations by abandon the hard rhetoric* (DR-22), by initiating preventative measures: *We must embrace the youngsters and insist on dialogue, adult contact and set the necessary boundaries. Prisons do nothing good for the young. They need treatment and therapy, until they can contain their own anger* (DR-27), and *Why wait to make an extensive effort until they end up in the jug – and not even here anything proactively is done in order to change his life trajectory* (JN-4), and not succumbing to equally dark forces: *Let us not be led by fear, hatred and violence. It only leads to more violence, hatred and fear, but instead stick together and lead the way for the Denmark we desire* (SP-123). Consequently, these examples also illustrate some element of action directed at the future for themselves, rather than directed at an alleged responsible external party. This is perhaps most evident in Janni Nielsen's case as she repeatedly and eloquently maintains her statement that society (herself included) has co-responsibility for the attack whilst simultaneously and explicitly expressing doubt: *The state has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has a co-responsibility for making sure that children and youngsters in DK grow up in a society that acknowledges their rights – to give them an optimum childhood [...] but does not have means to reach them all. And does not get it at all should we get a right-winged government [...] Perhaps other young men [...] also feel that the state disclaims all understanding and responsibility* (JN-4). In this example, Janni Nielsen expresses doubt in the current government as well as in the shadow government and does not appear to trust either to assume their part of the responsibility. Since she does not trust the government to take appropriate action she

must therefore take action herself. Indeed her interview with DR Nyheder and her vigorously commenting on all three pages can be seen as such an action. Although her sense-making process resulted in an explanation model that requires her to take at least some responsibility for the attack, the meaning constructed in this process still has an effect on how she interacts with the environment subsequently.

In order to summarise, we might conclude that the attempts to make sense of the perpetrator's actions and the attack itself revolves around two different kinds of causal explanations. These explanations aid the individual to self-regulation by having an effect on how the individual subsequently interacts with the environment – either by adopting some degree of responsibility and acting accordingly by encouraging others to do the same, or by assigning responsibility to external agents and thereby encouraging these to take the necessary precautions in order to prevent similar cases in the future.

### **Making Sense of the Gesture of Laying Flowers for the Perpetrator**

The second theme emerging from the analysis also appeared during the first readings of the data. This is not surprising as this gesture of laying flowers for the perpetrator was the event that ignited this particular debate on Facebook in the first place. Consequently, this theme is also evident on all three Facebook pages. During the second stage of the analysis the theme revolving around the flowers reflected a very clear tendency to either reject or accept the reasons presented by Janni Nielsen (see Table 2). Many of these comments contained discussions about whether or not the perpetrator and/or relatives deserved flowers. A clear parallel is thus drawn to the first theme here. However, during the organisation of emerging themes at the third stage of the analysis, it nevertheless became evident that the gesture of laying flowers constitutes an independent theme as the comments related to this theme displayed very different tendencies as opposed to the first theme. These differences were mostly evident in the fact that the explanation models in this case were not concerned with agency, but took the shape of moral judgments. As a direct consequence of this, the labelling at the fourth stage resulted in subordinate themes relating to Janni Nielsen's morality and the commentators' reaction. This will be elaborated further in the following.



This difference between the first theme (related to the perpetrator) and the second theme (related to Janni Nielsen laying flowers at the site of his death) is most likely caused by the rather obvious fact that there is not the same level of doubt concerning Janni Nielsen having a free will or not. This makes any assumptions about causality and the level of agency somewhat irrelevant. As she speaks quite openly and willingly about her reasons for laying flowers the commentators simply have more information to discern patterns from and thereby make sense of. The explanation models related to this theme thus assume a different form as they predominately revolve around establishing the validity of her proclaimed reasons for acting as she does.

As mentioned above, one of the most obvious distinctions displayed in the comments under the second theme is that of either accepting or rejecting of Janni Nielsen's reasons for laying flowers for the perpetrator. Commentators that agree with her tend to do so quite unambiguously, for example by addressing their comments to her personally. This is naturally evident on her own Facebook page where, as previously mentioned, the commentators seem to be people she knows quite well or with whom she is at least acquainted: *Hi Janni. I have been watching a bit over the last few days and I have to say that I understand where you are going with this* (JN-11), and *Janni Nielsen you wry lass* (JN-13), thus indicating a certain free and easy tone, which is not present on the Facebook page of DR Nyheder in the same way. On DR Nyheder's Facebook page, her name is used as a pronoun rather than a greeting, as the comments are still directed at the general audience (the other commentators, i.e. everybody and no one in particular). Her name is thus only used to direct a certain part of the comment at her as for example *That is surplus energy Janni. All respect to you* (DR-90). In these cases, the directedness towards the environment is thus very evident, as the commentators direct their comments at Janni Nielsen personally.

However, not all comments referring to Janni Nielsen by name are kept in this friendly tone. A few of the comments that express disapproval of her decision to lay flowers are also directed at her personally: *What an amazingly big-hearted and understanding woman, that Janni. I really hope she could get the same understanding and tolerance out should her daughter be in the way of a sick man's insane shooting* (DR-142), expressing a clear scepticism towards Janni Nielsen's apparent goodness, or *Stop yourself Janni!* (DR-148) expressing an even clearer disapproval of her ac-

tions and motivations behind them. Regardless of the tone, the use of Janni Nielsen's first name clearly illustrates how the sense-making process has an element of directness towards the environment as well as the future.

The difference in tone when referring to Janni Nielsen by using her first name is also evident in the subsequent professing of opinions: the commentators who know her – to a lesser or greater extent – profess their opinions in a much more assertive and nuanced way than the unknown commentators on DR Nyheder's Facebook page. In relation to the present purpose of examining the sense-making process, this distinction is important as it illustrates the importance of the context when the individual attempts to organise itself in relation to the environment. As the commentators on Janni Nielsen's Facebook page in general have the obvious advantage of knowing more about her as a person (her opinions, her values, her experiences et cetera) they simply have more information to discern patterns - and thereby construct meaning – from. This additional information is not available for the individuals commenting on DR Nyheder's Facebook page as they only have the introductory video to make sense from.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Janni Nielsen's friends or acquaintances profess their opinions in a very assertive way, even when they disagree or only agree partly, as for example the following: *Even though the two of us disagree on many things... I think it is very nice that you laid a bouquet (JN-13), I have to say, Janni, that I think it is a bit far out. No offence to you personally and so be it if you want to lay a flower although I personally believe it is wrong (JN-18), or: on some points I agree with you. [...] So I can easily sympathise with your attitude and that you laid a flower. Would I have laid a flower where he was shot? No, I probably would not (JN-11).* As these examples illustrate, the commentators who are to some extent acquainted with Janni Nielsen tend to draw on their background information about her and accepts her premise for laying flowers although they do not share the same perspective on the attack.

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<sup>12</sup> Naturally, there is no way to know whether or not people actually watched the video before engaging in the debate. Some comments (not included in the corpus) did indeed bear witness to that by either asking who Janni Nielsen is or why people keep referring to her or simply posting follow up comments admitting that their previous comment should be read with the proviso that they did not see the video.

Although assertive statements like these are also present on the more public Facebook pages of Søren Pind and DR Nyheder they seem to be more the exception than the rule as people generally profess their opinions a lot more unambiguously, whether negative: *To Janni: would you also lay flowers for a perpetrator who killed your father, brother, or children? It is really incomprehensible to me. Help! Against stupidity and misunderstood goodness, we all fight in vain* (SP-15), *She is mad, as in COMPLETELY mad!* (DR-74), and *She must be an idiot!! How some people can sit and snivel and say 'a life has been lost' is beyond me* (DR-75) or positive: *Janni Nielsen shows strength, compassion and benevolence, and refuses to be filled with hatred or anger. She is the terrorists' worst enemy. If we were all like her, the terrorists would have lost long ago and the world would be a better place* (DR-96), *I think Janni Nielsen has the right view of humanity. She has no relation to the killed Omar but it is the thought that counts* (DR-107), and *One cannot but help be moved by a human being like Janni. It is so beautiful that she can have so much love to spare and thinks this way about Omar and his family even though he committed such a terrible atrocity. Very inspiring* (DR-120). These examples do not only display a difference in the level of unambiguity on Janni Nielsen's own Facebook page as opposed to those from DR Nyheder and Søren Pind but also a difference in the level of agreement with her arguments and motives. Or to phrase it differently, the commentators on these Facebook pages make statements that clearly indicate either acceptance or rejection of Janni Nielsen's professed reasons for laying flowers, whereas the commentators on her own Facebook page more willingly outweigh her perspectives against their own.

This difference in assertiveness can thus reflect a difference in the readiness to take the perspective of others into account when making sense of their actions. This indicates an ethnocentric starting point as the commentators have their own perspectives and opinions as the starting point for their attempt to make sense of Janni Nielsen laying flowers. When someone says for example that *Supporting Omar's family by laying flowers is supporting TERROR* (DR-6), *He shot at the police, why honour the idiot with flowers!* (DR-59), *It is wrong to show one's sympathy for a terrorist, end of discussion* (DR-91), or *I think it is distasteful! I think no one should mourn a cold-hearted killer!* (DR-103) they clearly reject Janni Nielsen's claim that she is laying flowers in order to acknowledge part responsibility and show compassion for the

perpetrator's relatives. This hard tone can to some extent be assigned to the general tendency on Facebook - and on the internet in general - where the tone is much harder than in real life interaction between people who do not know each other (cf. recent cases of online bullying, stalking and harassment et cetera directed at both public figures and private individuals). Furthermore, some of these comments might be the result of people's ignorance about Janni Nielsen's professed intentions (cf. footnote 12). However, it is also possible to view these comments as indications of the difference in the individual sense-making process, by which some commentators inevitably will reach conclusions that are inconsistent with Janni Nielsen's professed intentions and opinions.

Using Baumeister's (1991) terminology, these individuals can be seen to have constructed meaning by discerning different patterns than the individuals agreeing with Janni Nielsen have. This could be due to different starting points considering available background information. If one is attempting to make sense of scarce information, in this case flowers (that are normally associated with signs of affection or tribute) and a dead perpetrator (with the immediately negative associations), the emerging patterns of meaning might reflect an apparent dissonance. Although the sense-making process also has a social aspect (cf. (Markus, 2014)) allowing for the different meanings to be able to be shared and negotiated between individuals, the sense-making process nevertheless seems to have a slightly ethnocentric starting point as individuals use their own perspectives and opinions as the premise for making sense of others.

This, however, does not mean that all comments related to the theme of Janni Nielsen's gesture of laying flowers are equally ethnocentric when making assumptions about Janni Nielsen's morality. On the contrary, a fair amount of the comments display provisos concerning the gesture of laying flowers: *Is she aware that her actions appear as if she sympathises with the terrorist???* (DR-45), or *Pardon me, but do you think it is beautiful to lay flowers for the perpetrator? One only does that to pay a tribute to something. Shameful* (DR-167). These two examples illustrate that the sense-making process is not ethnocentric in a rigidly blind way. Rather, it is a matter of having oneself as the starting point for making assumptions about other people

and their actions (more on this point in the following, cf. the *Discussion* section below). In the first example it is pointed out that Janni Nielsen might not know how others could – and indeed do – interpret her actions. In the second, the commentator not only displays the ethnocentric point, i.e. one only lays flowers to pay a tribute but also offers Janni Nielsen the opportunity to take this alternative meaning into consideration. The ethnocentric starting point is thus not a determining factor for the result of the sense-making process; rather it is a contributing factor that enables the individual to take different kinds of perspectives into account when interacting with the environment and other individuals in it.

As noted above, Janni Nielsen's actions of laying flowers cannot be explained by circumstantial prerequisites – as could the perpetrator's – because she is most obviously a conscious and reflective agent. When people fail to acknowledge her intentions and therefore disagree with her actions they make sense of her actions by attributing intentionality in accordance with her (by them) assumed – and in this case lacking or faulty – morality.

Consequently, commentators who are acquainted with Janni Nielsen take the background information about her into consideration when attempting to make sense of her actions, whereas people who do not know her substitute the background information with assumptions about her morality as the premise for making sense. The succeeding emotional reaction of contempt and disgust for Janni Nielsen and her laying flowers is thus consistent with the premises for the individual sense-making processes rather than Janni's own professed intentions and opinions. As such, the sense-making process seems to be including both an individual level, i.e. the ethnocentric starting point, and a collective level where the emerging meaning is shared and negotiated between individuals. The difference in tone on Janni Nielsen's and DR Nyheder's Facebook page can thus be seen to reflect a difference in the way the commentators balance and between the patterns they discern for themselves and the meanings offered by others.

### **Making Sense of Controversial Political Comments**

This third and final main theme disclosed by the interpretative phenomenological analysis differs somewhat from the other two themes in that it is only evident on Søren Pind's Facebook page. Like the other two themes, this theme was equally evi-

dent in the data at the first stages of the analysis as the two previous themes albeit on only one of the Facebook pages. I have therefore chosen to include it as a main theme. During the second stage of the analysis (see Table 2) it became apparent that this theme had relevance for present purposes as a many of assumptions presented in comments retrieved from Søren Pind's Facebook page was related to the endeavour of making sense of his reasons for posting the picture and subsequent comment (see Fig. 1). At the organisational third stage of the analysis, this theme was still quite dominant due to the large number of comments directed at him personally, and as this tendency did not seem to fit as a subordinate theme of any of the two other main themes I acknowledged the attempt to make sense of his motivations as a main theme in itself.



**Fig. 1** The picture posted by Søren Pind on his Facebook page

This theme is somewhat related to the previous theme of laying flowers for the perpetrator as the sense-making process in both cases revolve around the difficulty of making sense of other people's actions. As illustrated above, the commentators on DR Nyheder's Facebook page tended either quite categorically to accept or reject Janni Nielsen's professed intentions of laying flowers according to their own assumptions about her morality. People who know her on the other hand were able to profess their disagreement in a much more assertive and nuanced way. As Søren

Pind is a public figure in his capacity as a highly profiled politician for Venstre, a centre-right party – previously as Minister for Development and Minister for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration and currently as a Member of Parliament – most people would be familiar with him and/or his policies to a lesser or greater extent.

I will argue that this fact can explain why the commentators on his Facebook page seem to make sense of his comment in a slightly different way than Janni Nielsen's friends and acquaintances attempted to make sense of hers. It is, however, not equally possible to divide Søren Pind's commentators into categories of either knowing him or not knowing him as it was in case of Janni Nielsen, where this difference was not only possible but also quite evident on both her own Facebook page and the Facebook page of DR Nyheder. The essential difference here between the cases of Janni Nielsen and Søren Pind is that he is a public figure known – and at times even notorious – for his somewhat radical and controversial opinions, leaving most commentators with at least some preconceptions about him, both personally and politically.

A consequence of this is seen in the way the commentators refer to their preconceptions about Søren Pind when commenting: *Those flowers sting my eyes as well as in those of many others! Let us have them removed! I assume you agree with me Søren?* (SP-15), *Søren Pind you have always hated people like us, just admit it, and now you have even more power to hate us* (SP-73), and *Søren Pind, you are and always will be a racist swine* (SP-82). Although Janni Nielsen's commentators on her own Facebook page also took their preconceptions about her into consideration, it is done here in a much more explicit way. The preconceptions are in the case of Søren Pind much more indicative of the opinions professed than it was in the case of Janni Nielsen.

These examples also illustrate another important difference between the cases of him and Janni Nielsen: the commentators most frequently use his name when making accusations or expressing their disagreement in a very vivid language directed at him personally and only in the odd case as a reference directed at the other commentators as the audience. In fact, the majority of all the comments on Søren Pind's Facebook page is directed at him personally, either by addressing him by either his first or his

full name or by using pronouns such as ‘you’ and ‘your’ showing a familiarity with him and the opinions the commentators expect him to have. Furthermore, this use of his name as a way to address comments directly at him is also used in a quite sarcastic and condescending way. This is for example seen when commentators use his surname in puns in order to ridicule him: *To be called Pind and not to comprehend a ‘stick’<sup>13</sup> are apparently two things that go together* (SP-10), *shove your ‘stick’<sup>14</sup> in Pape, you are fools* (SP- 91) or referring to him as *Walking ‘Stick’<sup>15</sup>* (SP-201). This condescending tone is also visible in a slightly gentler way for example when commentators address him with the title Mr which is a formal way of addressing authorities with a certain respect but nevertheless is quite uncommon in Denmark: *I have always liked you Mr. Pind, until now!* (SP-112) or *It is not crucial who we, they or you are, Mr. Pind* (SP-18). In these comments the otherwise respectful and formal title takes on a derogative connotation that in effect act as a kind of backhanded compliment. These subtly hidden snide remarks are also evident in some cases where the commentators adopt a seemingly nice tone but proceeds by serving some rather derogative points: *Dear Søren. Even a 6-year-old is smarter than you* (SP-127) and *Dear Søren Pind. Your skills as a statesman are somewhat lacking with those kinds of comments on Facebook. Unfortunately* (SP-124).

Another difference between the cases of Janni Nielsen and Søren Pind is the fact that the latter completely abstains from replying to any of these comments despite numerous requests and the personal addressing. Whereas Janni Nielsen engages in discussion with her commentators on her own Facebook page and comments elaborating comments on both Søren Pind’s and DR Nyheder’s Facebook pages, Søren Pind only comments once by posting an additional comment with a link to an article about the later removal of the flowers. Janni Nielsen engages in a discussion with her commentators in order to defend her view that *we as a society have co-responsibility for making sure that our youngsters do not become so out of their depth as he was, and that we as citizens have co-responsibility for embracing all youngsters walking around with a desperation within them because they do see themselves as Danes*

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<sup>13</sup> In Danish ‘pind’ means ‘stick’, and the original sentence in Danish to *ikke fatte en pind* literally translates into *not comprehend a stick* in the sense that one does not understand a thing.

<sup>14</sup> In this example ‘stick’/‘pind’ is a euphemism for penis, with a reference to Søren Pape Poulsen, who recently took over the leadership of The Danish Conservative Party.

<sup>15</sup> In Danish ‘walking stick’/‘vandrende pind’ means stick insect.



(Video: Sørensen & Ammundsen, 2015). By engaging in direct conversation with her commentators and elaborating on her points through comments on her own Facebook page as well as on the ones of Søren Pind and DR Nyheder, Janni Nielsen continuously negotiates meaning related to the attack with her commentators. This leads to both agreement: *On some points I fully agree with you. As society we have a responsibility to reach these children before they come marginalised. And before they end up committing such terrible actions* (JN-11) and disagreement: *But I still don't think that it can be 'the others' fault' unless he was kidnapped and raised by Boko Haram for 10 years, and subsequently set free in the streets without reaction from any authorities* (JN-10).

As Søren Pind in effect denies his commentators this opportunity, they are left with less conducive requirements for negotiating meaning. Although Facebook as a social media platform is ideal for constructing, sharing and negotiating meaning collectively, the process is complicated considerably when the opening party presents the meaning emerging from his sense-making process in the shape of a statement and then subsequently abstains from further elaboration or negotiation. Once again, it is necessary to bear in mind that he in his capacity as a public figure has a different role than Janni Nielsen and cannot be expected to reply to every single comment on every single topic. However, regardless of his reasons for not entering into a discussion and negotiation of meaning it has a very clear effect on his commentators who seem to become increasingly aggressive and insistently opinionated in their comments: *You Søren and your policy carry the responsibility for the fact that WE have failed the young man, his family and his people in Palestine. You Søren divide OUR country into us and them. YOU should be ashamed. YOU should apologise to ALL the families of the dead* (SP-53), *Shame on you, clown* (SP-84), *You are so black/white in your argumentation. It is mean and cowardly!* (SP-172) and *You are definitely one of the World's worst politicians* (SP-109). These examples illustrate a rather more adamant tone in the comments. Naturally, it is worth bearing in mind that Søren Pind is the kind of politician that people tend to love to hate and might thus be even more exposed to the general hardened tone on Facebook than Janni Nielsen.

This might also illustrate another feature of the sense-making process by which the individual organises itself in relation to its environment, as many of these opinionat-

ed statements also illustrate how the meaning offered by Søren Pind affect the commentators and their view on the future. Some of the few commentators for example express unconditional agreement with his perspective on the attack. The interesting thing in these cases is that the agreement is often succeeded by a rather worried or pessimistic view on the future: *It is 'us' against 'them'. A clash between cultures. The left-wingers and Muslims always say that it is 'isolated' extremists. How many episodes before it is not isolated? [...] Reality check to his parents, thanks! Where were they? And the three immigrant guys in the picture? Who are they? Probably gang related and they must be identified (SP-28), We are at war, ladies and gentlemen, whether you understand it or not. It is not a question of hatred but of realism. So for once try to open your eyes and face the truth. Søren Pind is only passing on the truth (SP-36), and I do so agree with you. I think it is so disrespectful that one allows oneself to grieve in public for such a wretched person [...] It can make me very sad that we apparently feel equally sorry for the wretched person's family as the innocent victims?? Where is the moral code in this? I do not get it! (SP-121).* The exact opposite is the case when the commentators do not agree with his opinions and his view on the attack. When the commentators do not share his perspective on the attack or his pessimistic view on the future they appear more emotionally neutral insofar as they react to Søren Pind's comment only with indifference or more or less vigorous attempts to rectify his perspective on the attack: *He is a human being, did your parents not teach you that a human being is a human being no matter what? (SP-70), Shut up Pind. People are trying to share the grief of the perpetrator's family (SP-83) and Søren Pind – it is getting increasingly worse with your outpourings. I suppose the young man had a mother, a father and perhaps siblings? Let the poor people mourn a son or a brother who was led astray (SP-165).* Here, these commentators reject the meaning offered by Søren Pind because of its irrelevance to their own sense-making purposes.

What this illustrates then is that the sense-making process not only entails discerning patterns in the environment by connecting pieces of information to one's preconceptions, but also entails a sorting and prioritising of the available information. In cases where information does not fit one's preconception, the individual might simply disregard this information. In the second theme some pieces of information, most obviously Janni Nielsen's professed intentions, were left out because they were not con-

sistent with the ethnocentric starting point, and thereby prompting a different reaction towards the environment. In this case information is discarded for simply being irrelevant, thus not prompting the same reactions directed at the environment or the future.

## **Discussion**

Although the starting point of the empirical part of this thesis was the sense-making process related to the recent attack in Copenhagen, two other main themes evolved from the corpus as a result of the analysis. These two additional main themes have been included in the analysis and the subsequent discussion as they aid the elaboration of the sense-making process at play in the corpus. The three main themes thus reflect the main topics that the commentators attempt to make sense of in the three cases constituting the corpus: 1) the attack itself and the perpetrator's actions, 2) Janni Nielsen's gesture of laying flowers at the site of the perpetrator's death, and 3) the controversial comment posted by Søren Pind.

The sense-making process differed on various points between the three themes. In case of the first themes, the commentators can be seen to make sense of the attack by attributing agency to the perpetrator. The level of agency of the perpetrator was particularly evident in the placing of responsibility on either the perpetrator himself or external agents. By making external agents partly or completely responsible for the attack, the perpetrator is made less unpredictable. This enables the sense-making individuals to take precautions in order to prevent similar situations in the future – either by taking appropriate action themselves or by demanding that the responsible parties do. The second theme also prompted a sense-making process related to self-regulation although it took a different shape. As Janni Nielsen openly and readily provides explanations for her actions her gesture of laying flowers cannot be assigned to the impact of external factors. Consequently this sense-making process revolves around attributing intentionality as the commentators either accept or reject the premise put forward by Janni Nielsen herself. The commentators thus use their own judgements about Janni Nielsen's morality as the premise for making sense of her actions, thus in effect imposing their own meanings onto the environment. This theme thus revealed that the sense-making process in question has a very ethnocentric starting point. The third and final theme also revolved around an ethnocentric

starting point as most commentators would have some kind of preconceptions about Søren Pind. This entails a sense-making process where no additional information is offered, leaving the commentators to either incorporate or discard the implications of Søren Pind's comment in the sense-making process. Although the sense-making process also has an ethnocentric starting point in this case, it is not necessarily determining for how the individual subsequently relates to the environment. In some cases, the meaning offered by Søren Pind is simply discarded and does consequently not have the

Consequently, the results of the interpretative phenomenological analysis offer some support to Baumeister's (1991) claim that meaning has two functions insofar as it enables the individual to discern patterns in the environment and to self-regulate by acting according to the meanings constructed as a result thereof. Furthermore, it illustrates Markus' (2014) claim that people do both create and share meanings – regardless of the degree of evolutionary advantage such a capacity might afford. But the analysis also reveals something else about this human capacity for meaning and the appertaining sense-making process: it is not exclusively a matter of discerning patterns passively lying around in the environment waiting to be discovered and used as a means of self-regulation. Rather, it is a dynamic and creative process, where meaning is constantly being created, negotiated, re-interpreted, changed, discarded, replaced, recreated et cetera. The sense-making process is thus not a mere computational processing of information, where sensory inputs are labelled with a certain meaning and then stored for future use, but an ongoing, interactive process, by which the individual organises – and re-organises – itself in relation to the environment. This creative and dynamic feature of the sense-making process can be seen in the corpus as the individuals generally do not have much information to discern patterns from. The interesting thing is that they quite happily employ their imagination to make assumptions, and then using the meaning resulting from this exercise to self-regulate, by acting *as if* it was true. By means of imagination, the individual can attempt to make sense of the situation by connecting the different available pieces of information into more consistent explanation.

This is a particularly interesting feature of meaning as it is evident in all three themes. In the case of the first theme, the media covered the attack repeatedly and

extensively in the days, weeks, and even months following the attack but as most of the comments used in this study were posted in the days immediately after the attack – and before the alleged perpetrator became the confirmed perpetrator – not much information was known at that point in time. Naturally, some media were very diligent indeed and provided quite thorough profiles of the perpetrator only a few days after the attacks. It is, however, not possible to examine whether or not the commentators have had access to these profiles in news papers, news reports on TV et cetera and thereby assess the factual foundation for the alleged facts offered about the perpetrator in the corpus. Consequently it seems only appropriate to consider these assumptions as expression of rumours, conjectures and speculations rather than undisputed truths – thus implying that the assumptions presented may or may not be reflecting reality.

When trying to make sense of the situation, the individual is consequently left with disconnected pieces of information of varying quality and reliability. The interesting thing here is that the individuals that comment do not seem to struggle with this lacking informational foundation – rather, they seem to compensate by filling in the gaps by inventing or imagining the lacking pieces. This is for example evident in the comments above regarding possible religious and/or ideological explanation models but it is perhaps even more evident in the following comments stating that *It is a pity that Omar has become brainwashed by ISIS videos on the internet* (DR-30) and claiming that *his brain and soul has been washed by those fucking islamists... probably because of a vulnerability from cultural limbo and the honour-crap several Middle-eastern Danes are dragging each other down with* (JN-13). The common denominator for these two comments is that they are both phrased *as if* they were stating the obvious and absolute truth. Given the background information briefly shown in the *Background to the Cases* section above it seems reasonable to assume that religious and/or ideological convictions may have played some role in the perpetrator's motivation but in my research I have not come across information that would irrevocably validate such claims. Naturally, such information might have been held back due to the ongoing police investigation but in that case it would be withheld from the commentators as well and not only from me. When the individuals make such opinionated assumptions, indicating that they have found *the* explanation model

and thus writing with a certain authority, they seem to be content with filling in the gaps of the missing pieces by means of imagination.

The same tendency is evident in the second theme where people make up their own explanations for Janni Nielsen and others who lay flowers for the perpetrator rather than incorporating the explanations she provides for herself. People simply state that it is *Deplorable that a murderer is praised and his actions defended.. Yuck..* (SP-186), *People are crazy in this world, do people love terrorists today or what?* (DR-48), and *One does not praise and honour such a person...* (DR-119) clearly indicating that they, the commentators, have created a meaning that is quite different from that of Janni Nielsen and now impose it on the environment as if it was true. The use of imagination in the sense-making process is perhaps even more evident in the comments where it is assumed that people laying flowers must be the perpetrator's relatives: *This young man also had family and friends. Shame on you, Søren Pind, for not letting them mourn this tragedy* (SP-22), *He has family and friends who mourns, we should be big-hearted enough to let them lay a flower* (DR-47), and *I understand that family etc. want to commemorate him, but I think they ought to do it at home* (DR-153). In these cases, it is clear that the commentators sometimes make their statements on assumptions they believe to be true and form their opinions accordingly.

In case of the third theme, this employment of imagination can for example be seen in the abovementioned preconceptions about Søren Pind's possible ulterior motives for posting his controversial comment. Many of the comments disagreeing with Søren Pind have the premise that he only makes such statements in order to promote division and xenophobia or in order to promote his own political career. This is for example implied when people refer to him as a *career prostitute* and *media prostitute* (SP-178), when they encourage him to *stuff all your election crap* (SP-91), when they state something like *I know we are approaching an election, but to use this tragic event to create xenophobia and fear is shameful* (SP-202), or when they ask *Surely, you are hopefully not so cynical that you only write such things to get cheap votes?* (SP-94) thereby implying that it is exactly what he does. In these examples, the commentators employ their imagination to make sense of Søren Pind's motive for posting his comment. The assumptions once again become the premise for either

agreeing or disagreeing with the person they are trying to make sense of, as was the case with Janni Nielsen in the second theme.

As these examples illustrate, the use of imagination seems to be an essential part of the sense-making process. This calls for an addition to Baumeister's claim that the function of meaning is to enable the sense-making individual to discern patterns in the environment and subsequently act in accordance with these patterns. In this particular case, the sense-making process of discerning patterns is a difficult endeavour as there is not much information available for the commentators to discern such patterns from. I will argue that such an addition might take the form of the innovative theories of a *New Science* (Vico, [1744]/1997) proposed by Italian scholar Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). Amongst other noteworthy notions Vico thought meaning to be embodied in our total affective interest in the world (Edie, 1969; Modell, 2003). Thus far there is concordance between Baumeister's and Vico's notions of meaning that the existence of meaning is somehow dependent on both the sense-making subject and the surrounding world regardless of the latter being labelled as world, environment or culture. When claiming that Vico's work on meaning can act as an addition to Baumeister's notion of meaning, it is because of the fact that Vico goes on to claim that meaning is constructed through imaginatively entering into the minds of others (Berlin, 1969; Modell, 2003; Vico, [1744]/1997). Vico thus in effect anticipates the much later notion known from cognitive sciences as *theory of mind*. Theory of mind is nowadays a generally accepted notion in psychology although it is mainly used from the perspective of cognitive psychology. Nevertheless, this notion of theory of mind bears some importance for present purposes, as it is somewhat similar to the notion proposed by Vico. Whereas theory of mind generally refers to a computational process, whether innate or acquired, Vico treats this notion as a type of knowledge superior to other forms of knowledge insofar it constitutes the means by which individuals can gain knowledge about human creations.<sup>16</sup> By introducing the concept of

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<sup>16</sup> This perspective of theory of mind thus draws on Vico's epistemology, which is based on his *verum factum* principle (initially presented in Vico, [1710]/1988), by which he refutes Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum* principle. He does this simply by stating that neither observation nor logical deduction can verify truth, and continues by claiming that only the creator can obtain full and complete comprehension of truth. Human beings can thus aim for, but never achieve, true knowledge about the physical as it is seen as God's creation. Consequently, human beings can only achieve true knowledge about their own creations, for which reasons humanity and social sciences in general, and history in particular, are considered ideal sciences by Vico.

imagination in the sense-making process, it thus becomes possible to gain a better understanding of how the sense-making process occurs.

This addition of an imaginative element in the sense-making process is quite evident in the corpus and consequently in case of all the three Facebook pages. Some of the most evident examples of this revolves around the issue of feeling empathy by being able to relate to the situation of the perpetrator's relatives: *I have also constantly been thinking about the boy's parents, about his mother. Her son was almost the same age as mine. I would like to show my compassion, but I don't think I would lay flowers there* (JN-14), *I could easily imagine that I would be needing a place to show my grief and despair had Omar been my friend or a close relative* (SP-35), and *At least I know that if one of my relatives were shot because of such an action, I would still ne sad to loose him. So I would only be happy to see people lay flowers for him even though his actions were wrong* (DR-106). As these examples illustrate, the commentators often take hypothetical scenarios into considerations when attempting to make sense of the present situation. The commentators make sense of the relatives' situation by imagining how they would feel under similar circumstances and uses this as the prerequisite for imposing meaning on the gesture of laying flowers for a dead perpetrator. However, being able to put oneself in the mind of other does not necessarily mean that the sense-making process results in empathy and identification with the individual one attempts to make sense of: *I would be ashamed and embarrassed to know a person who commits such actions. I would keep it to myself privately.. I don't get it..!* (DR-113), and *If my friend should do something similar I would not lay flowers for him. It is an insult against the victims* (SP-80). In these cases the commentators put themselves in the situation of the relatives by means of imagination, but nevertheless fail to arrive at the same conclusion as the commentators mentioned in the previous examples. In the last example this is even exemplified by implying that the compassion resulting from the imagined situation of the victims (and assumedly their relatives) outweighs the compassion for the perpetrator's relatives.

Consequently, the use of imagination in the sense-making process thus enables the individual to navigate through a vast array of alternative meanings – not only the meanings shared by others, but also the hypothetical meanings as resulting from al-



ternative sense-making processes. By adding this element to the sense-making process it becomes evident how individuals relate to the world not only by either incorporating or discarding information but also by prioritising and evaluating the implications of the meanings constructed as a result thereof. By means of imagination, the individual gains a tool to exercise theory of mind in practise and thereby filling the gaps in the discerned patterns by simply imagining, or inventing, the missing pieces and consequently acting *as if* it was the absolute truth. Imagination thus enables the individual to interact with the environment in a much more nuanced way than if the sense-making process merely entailed simple information processing. Furthermore, this employment of imagination functions as a tool for practicing theory of mind, by which the individual can make sense of other people in addition to making sense only by discerning patterns in the environment. The sense-making process is thus a dynamic, creative and ever-pervasive one that characterises all interaction between individuals as well as between the individual and the environment.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has evolved around the topic of sense making with the aim of examining how meaning as a psychological concept can aid the understanding of the process, by which individuals attempt to make sense of themselves in relation to the environment. In order to do so I have examined the concept of meaning and the appurtenant sense making process from two different but mutually complementary approaches. Consequently, this thesis is constituted by two parts, that is a theoretical and an empirical part.

The theoretical part entailed an introductory exposition of meaning as a psychological concept. This exposition adopted the theoretical foundation provided by evolutionary psychology with the claim that the human capacity for meaning, including the ability to both make, share and be shaped by meaning, is the great evolutionary advantage as its starting point. Due to the methodological considerations associated with evolutionary psychology it is a rather impossible endeavour to validate such a claim, but it nevertheless had some importance for the present topic as it prompted a discussion of possible adaptive benefits such a capacity. These benefits were mainly associated with Baumeister's (1991) claim that meaning has two functions, insofar it

enables the individual to discern patterns in the environment and to self-regulate by acting accordingly. A capacity for meaning thus enables the sense-making individual to interact with the environment in a more effective manner. The preliminary conclusion of this theoretical part of the thesis thus led to the formulation of an operational definition of meaning as a product of the process facilitated by human consciousness, that the individual employ in order to organise itself in relation to the environment.

In the latter part of the thesis I have examined the practical implications of this definition in an empirical study. This study concerned the sense-making process occurring in the wake of the recent attack on a cultural centre and synagogue in Copenhagen on February the 14th and 15th 2015. By means of an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the comments posted on three Facebook pages in the days following immediately after the attack three main themes were disclosed. These main themes reflected the three topics the commentators most frequently attempted to make sense of: 1) the perpetrator's actions and the attack itself, 2) the subsequent gesture of laying flowers at the site of the perpetrator's death, and 3) a politician's motive for posting controversial comments related to the attack and the flowers.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the sense making process differed considerably between the three main themes. In order to make sense of the perpetrator's actions the commentators provided explanation models that effectively attributed different levels of agency to the perpetrator. The different explanation models thus prompted different reactions towards the environment, requiring the sense-making individual to either accept or deny at least partial responsibility. The second theme of laying flowers prompted different explanation models, as the sense-making process was in this case concerned with the morality displayed in the gesture of laying flowers. In this case the commentators used their own opinions and perspectives on the attack at the starting point for the sense-making process, thereby either accepting or rejecting the professed intentions for laying flowers for the perpetrator. The same was to some extent the case in relation to the third theme of the politician's motives for posting a controversial comment. However, in this case the commentators relied heavily on their preconceptions about the politician. These preconceptions were indicative of the subsequent reaction, but also prompted indifferent reactions insofar

that the meaning offered by the politician was deemed irrelevant and consequently discarded.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the analysis revealed that Baumeister's concept of meaning was lacking an element to describe the dynamic and creative aspect of the sense-making process. Consequently, I introduced the notion of Vico ([1744]/1997) that the individual enters the minds of others by means of imagination. This notion provided a theoretical foundation for understanding how the sense-making process occurred under the circumstances constituted by the attack. As the commentators were left with scarce and disconnected information about the attack and the perpetrator – and furthermore had to navigate through the many meanings offered by others – they employed imagination in order to fill in the gaps. This notion of imagination functions as an addition to Baumeister's concept of meaning in a way that allows for the sense-making individual to imagine alternative meanings and the possible outcomes of alternative reactions to them. The sense-making process thus exceeds mere information processing, as it constitutes the means by which the individual relates to and interacts with the environment.

This new perspective on the sense-making process has implications for future research insofar it facilitates a new role for imagination as an universal component of human sense-making and not only an activity indulged by idle children and irrational daydreamers. Consequently, this approach to the study of human interaction with the world might have implications for the psychology of religion that has traditionally been much occupied with somewhat reductionist perspectives. In these perspectives religious experience are often assigned to either 'glitches' in already well-known and well-documented mental process or as side effects of other psychological phenomena. However, by adding an element of imagination to the sense-making process it becomes possible to study the psychology of religion on its own merits as part of the process employed when attempting to make sense of the world as well as one's own role in it.

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## Appendix A – Comments from Janni Nielsen's Facebook page

1	(* Du simplificerer Omar, hans situation og hans valgmuligheder helt vildt. Det scenarie, og hvor vanvittigt langt de to muligheder ligger ift. hinanden, er relevant for sådan nogle som dig og mig. For ham kunne det have været at valgmulighederne var; blev hjemme og føl dig uønsket og overflødig eller gå ud og blev noget værd, hvis du gør som nogle hjælper dig til at gøre og fortæller dig er rigtigt - og siden de har hjulpet dig ud af kriminalitet, så kan de vel ikke være gennemsyret af ondskab og sindssyge. (Det er sgu svært at gengive rationalitet i en hjernevaskets perspektiv, som jeg også forestiller mig som et muligt scenarie (og stadig spekulation).)
2	(* Du ved (måske især), hvor meget jeg tror på at unge kan og vil rykke - og hvor meget, det hele afhænger af om de selv vil det. Det er hele præmissen for at kunne arbejde med unge; at man ser de gode intentioner i dem og formår at vande deres spirer af motivation og ambitioner. Jeg er desværre bange for, at der er en sandsynlighed for at Omars liv har været mere grusomt end du og jeg kan forestille os. Lad os som sagt vente og se, hvad der kommer frem om ham og hans liv - og valg og muligheder i det hele taget.
3	(* Jeg tror dagligt på at mennesker gør deres bedste. Og udholder længst muligt. Jeg er ikke sikker på at Omar var stærk på den front. Forklaringen på det må vi afvente.
4	(* Mine blomster bliver, som beskrevet, lagt for at vise min medfølelse til hans familie og venner samt min sorg over at han er havnet - og ja: selv har valgt at være - i den situation, som han var i igår. Min sorg over at et menneske ender med så meget had til sin omverden er lige så stor ifm. Breivik og Lundin. Som du omtaler med deres navne, præcis som Omar skal. For han havde et navn og var et menneske. Præcis som du og jeg. Og ligesom du og jeg var meget påvirkelige som børn, så var Omar det også - og han var juridisk set et barn for bare 4 år siden. Uzma skrev tidligere i dag en opdatering, hvor hun forklarer hvordan en ung mand beskriver at han står i gæld over for Broderskabet og ikke vil stemme til valget, fordi de fik ham ud af kriminalitet og siger at det er haram. Omar var også kriminel og havde sandsynligvis også tilknytning til en religiøs gruppe. Hvorfor formåede DK ikke at få ham ud af kriminalitet? Hvorfor når vi ikke vores unge i tide? Hvorfor venter vi med at lave en massiv indsats til de ryger i spjældet - og ikke engang her gør man noget proaktivt for at ændre hans livsbane. Man isolerer ham yderligere. Værdsættelse, reelle muligheder, anerkendelse af unges potentiale og den nødvendige støtte kan være svaret. Staten har ratificeret børnekonventionen, og har et medansvar for at børn og unge i DK vokser op i et samfund, der anerkender deres rettigheder - for at give dem en optimal barndom. Jeg kender flere, der formår at nå de unge kriminelle på Nørrebro, men de har ikke midler nok til at nå dem alle. Og får det slet ikke, hvis vi får en blå regering, der blot vil fordømme og (fængsels-)straffe sig til forandring. Hvornår har det i sig selv ført positiv forandring med sig? Resocialisering og en reel mulighed for - og redskaber til - et godt liv. Det tror jeg er det, der virker. Omar er måske forstyrret mentalt - det ved vi ikke endnu. Måske var han også på stoffer, som Breivik var. Jeg siger ikke at m ikke selv har et ansvar - jeg understreger bare her statens ansvar og muligheder for at handle konstruktivt og fremadrettet, hvis den fokuserer på at forstå baggrunden og forebygge og ikke KUN ved at fordømme og umenneskeliggøre Omar og hans handlinger (fordømmes skal de selvfølgelig!). Måske føler andre unge mænd (som også oplever at de ikke har handlekraften til at få det liv, de ønsker) også, at staten fralægger sig al forståelse og ansvar og allerede nu dømmes dem uden for pædagogisk rækkevidde - hvilket jeg desværre tror vil marginalisere dem yderligere.
5	(*) Niks. For mig er han Omar. Og det vil jeg selv ha' lov at bestemme, hvad jeg lægger i
6	Alle har brug for at høre til. Hvem vil invitere en bandidos-rocker ind i sit fællesskab? Hvem ville invitere Omar ind? De skal jo have et reelt (!) alternativ, før de kan vælge det frem for det andet.
7	Danmarks Radio har lige filmet og interviewet mig om det på Svanevej. Jeg blev stillet spørgsmålet, om jeg kunne forstå de, der synes, at det er meget radikalt at lægge en blomst foran bygningen (hvor der var skudhuller i døren). Jeg håber at folk forstår, hvorfor jeg gør det. Vi skal netop stå tættere nu, så derfor nytter det ikke at mistænkeliggøre og udstille Omar selv, hans venner og familie som umenneskelige, hvilket jeg synes at begrebet "terrorist" har en snert af i sig. Igen; lad os afvente et større billede af Omar og hans liv. Men lige nu er det lige så vigtigt at holde sammen (allesammen!) som det er vigtigt at fordømme drab og drabsforsøg.
8	Det er så rigtigt, Janni. Omars familie og venner fortjener den samme medfølelse som ofrenes. For dem har tragedien sandsynligvis været længe undervejs. Tak til dig for altid at sige, hvad jeg tænker. Og tusind tak til de, der lytter til de unge mennesker, som ellers aldrig er blevet lyttet ret meget til.
9	Fint - men lad os nu kalde ham Gerningsmanden eller noget lignende. Jeg er bange for at der ellers snart dukker støttesider for stakkels Omar op på Facebook
10	Fint nok. Men synes dog stadig ikke at det kan være "de andres skyld" medmindre han var blevet kapret og opdraget af Boko Haram i 10 år, og derefter sat fri på åben gade uden nogen form for myndigheder greb ind. SÅ kunne jeg se en klar pointe. Men jeg tror blot på ingen måde hans baggrund kommer tæt på sådanne grusomheder, og nok nærmere noget i retning af "vred ung mand". Der har man så et valg; Vil jeg bruge dette til noget konstruktivt/forandre/forbedre eller vil jeg lade min personlig frustration gå ud over andre. Der har man ALTID et valg, medmindre du er ved at sulte ihjel i Somalia og vælger at blive pirat for at overleve - ligeså forrykt, men dog en smule objektiv forståelse.  - Mht hans forsvar angående drabsforsøget, er det hvad de fleste voksne ansvarlige mennesker havde læst som en dårlig undskyldning/nødløgn, når du er ved at ryge i fængsel. Den havde jeg nok også brugt...
11	Hej Janni  Nu har jeg fulgt lidt med de sidste par dage og jeg må sige at jeg godt kan forstå hvor det er du vil hen. På nogle punkter er jeg også helt enig med dig. Vi har som samfund et ansvar for at nå disse unge mennesker og jeg tror heller ikke at der er nogen der er ude for pædagogisk rækkevidde - der er muligheder for alle. Og vi har alle et ansvar for at nå disse børn inden de bliver marginaliseret. Og inden de ender med at begå så forfærdelig en handling. Så jeg kan sagtens sympatisere med din holdning og at du har lagt en blomst. Vil jeg have lagt en blomst hvor han blev skudt? Nej det ville jeg nok ikke. Vi står nemlig i en situation hvor han har skudt og dræbt uskyldige mennesker. Hvad end denne mand er opvokset i, så retfærdiggør det ikke hans handlinger. At lægge en blomst ved hans grav må jeg sige at jeg synes er en anelse markant og også respektløst overfor hans uskyldige ofre. Har du også været ude at lægge blomster hos ofrene?  Vi har som samfund et ansvar og vi har i dette, ligesom i mange andre tilfælde, fejlet. Faktum er dog at han er gerningsmanden, han har skudt og dræbt uskyldige, det er et valg han har taget hvor forstyrret han end er. Derfor ville jeg ikke lægge en blomst til ham ligeså

	vel som jeg heller ikke ville gøre det ved terrorister som Anders Breivik eller bin laden.
12	Ja, men jeg ville nu hellere bruge tid på at finde fornavne for de skudramte betjente - og lægge blomster på deres respektive stationer. Måske ikke i Omars smag, men What the Hell...
13	Janni Nielsen din skæve tøs Jeg snakkede netop i morges med min køremakker om hvor forfærdeligt det må være for Omar's familie at hans hjerne og sjæl er blevet vasket af de fucking islamister... formodentlig pga. sårbarhed fra kulturel limbo og det æresgejl og stolthedspis som flere unge mellemøstlige danskere går og trækker hinanden ned på. Selv om vi to er uenige om mangt og meget... så syntes jeg det er rigtigt fint at du lagde en buket. Patetisk at nogle hætteklædte "brødre" er så små at de på den mest platte måde skulle fjerne blomsterne "fordi det ikke er muslimsk skik at lægge blomster for de døde" ... de pisser på den hånd der rækkes frem til forsoning!... det viser hvor stærk den syge udlæning af religion er. Varmt knus fra Als
14	Jeg har også tænkt hele tiden om drengens forældre, om hans mor. Hendes søn var næsten i det samme alder, som min. Jeg vil gerne vise min medfølelse, men jeg tror ikke at jeg vil gerne sætte der blomster. Det er fordi efter min mening kan være en forkert signal at jeg støtter Omars aktion. Men jeg respekterer selvfølgelig din mening.
15	Jo, men livet er ikke som en bowlingkugle, som ansvarsløst ruller af den snævre bane med stor sandsynlighed for at 'ryge ud'. - Og hvordan kan du automatisk konkludere, at det må være nogle andres (manglende) ansvar? Du skrev jo selv, at vi skulle vente og se, hvad hans baggrund er. Måske var han lænket til en pæl i 22år og sultet og trænet koldblodigt som en rottweiler... (Hardly the case) Eller måske havde han en so-so (ej grusom) opvækst med få midler, og synes så tilfældigvis at det var alle andres skyld. - Hvem ved?.. - Jeg skal hverken have Bandidos eller grusomme Omars døde lig på kaffe, blot for at svare på din quiz
16	Man kan godt forstå og analysere baggrunde, og gøre dette på objektiv vis. Og det tror jeg helt sikkert også er en naturlig del af hele efterforskningen omkring ham. Men forståelse er ikke lig med dyb medfølelse og sympati for en person - uanset hans handlinger. Og nu var han ikke længere 12 eller 18 - han var 22år. Et voksent og selvstændigt individ. Jeg tror ikke han led af hverken autisme eller var mentalt retarderet - eller på anden måde var svært handicappet. - men mere væsentligt her synes jeg er, at modsat jeg selv, så ser du i meget høj grad mennesker som styret/bestemt af alle eksterne faktorer. Altså at det må være nogen eller noget andets skyld end ham selv. Samfundet, regeringen, kommunen, HF-studiet som var for hårde, fodboldtræneren som var lidt for striks, kæresten som slog op lidt for usympatisk osv. osv. osv. Den logik har jeg meget svært ved at følge, og det fordrer at man helt fritager det enkelte individs personlige bevidsthed, handlen og ageren. Det er altid bestemt/afledt af noget andet. - Det er jeg naturligvis helt uenig i, for det er jo netop denne selvstændige even til at tænke og vælge, som adskiller os fra dyr og planter.
17	Suk!!!! .... der skal meget til at rumme det ævl der kommer ud af munden på denne unge mand... ven til Omar.... mmmhhh?????.... hvornår er man offer og hvornår er man "muslimsk" aktionær.
18	Synes det er lidt langt ude, Janni, må jeg ærligt talt sige. No offense til dig personligt, og fred være med det, hvis du vil lægge en blomst, selv om jeg personligt synes det er forkert. Men at lægge en blomst symboliserer jo samtidigt respekt og sorg for den dræbte - og det synes jeg ikke rigtigt er på sin plads her... - Men det der egentligt får mig til at skrive, er at du gør ham til et offer ved dels at kalde ham 'Omar', som om vi alle samme kendte og holdte af ham. Og dels at han jo kun var 12 år for 10 år siden... Ja, men sådanne irrelevante refleksioner gælder jo også ift. at Bin Laden kun var 12 år engang, og Breivik kun var 12 for nogle-og-20år siden... Det fritager da ikke et voksent menneske fra at stå til ansvar for sine umenneskelige handlinger, når man er 22år. Og selvom det ikke er klart, hvad hans baggrund er, tror jeg ikke man skal forske i århundreder for at komme frem til at enten dårlig opdragelse, dårlig omgangskreds, dårlig/absurd fortolkning af en religion, er de typiske ingredienser i galninge-cocktailen. Men det fraskriver ikke personen fra at have 100% koldblodigt og uhyrligt ansvar for sine handlinger. - Ville du i øvrigt skrive det samme om f.eks. Peter Lundin? For jeg opfatter det som en form for glorificeret medfølelse - endda til gerningsmanden.

## Appendix B – Excerpt from DR Nyheder's Facebook page

3	alle har masser af godt i sig,nogle har desværre også noget dårligt af forskellige oversager,men man må respektere at nogle mennesker kender ham som en god ven osv ligesom med f.eks jønke eller andre volds og drabsmænd.han var jo bare en fortabt sjæl,ingen er født som et dårligt menneske
6	At støtte Omars familie ved at lægge blomster er at støtte TERROR.
9	Blomster viser at vi kan tilgive. Disse unge drenge, der bliver radikaliseret af stærke kræfter, må vi som samfund stå sammen om og hjælpe ved at vise en anden vej
13	Dem der kalder blomster ytring og ytringsfrihed, havde Omar et budskab med sine handlinger. Er det ytring, ytringsfrihed? Ved I overhovedet hvad kunst og udtryk er. Eller bruger man bare "magter" når det kommer til ens gode. Hold lige ytringsfrihed ude, eller skal vi ikke kalde det ikke-voldelige ytringsfrihed. Måske skal man holde det der og ikke provokere andre til at gå over stregen. Folk kalder ham syg og sindsyg. Det eneste syge er vel at han ikke kunne udtrykke med ord (mere), men må ty sig til vold som hans redskab. Giv alle dem som har givet ham dette redskab skylden.
16	Der er et menneske bag den forfærdelige handling. Ingen mennesker bliver født onde. Vi har familie, venner og nære relationer. Livet gør os til dem vi er.. Jeg formoder det er tanken bag..
22	Det er HELT okay..... Der er altid en grund til folk bliver som de bliver... Selv vi som samfund er medskyldig.... Retorikken er blevet ALT for hård og had avler had.... Alle har brug for et tilhørsforhold og denne dreng er blevet drevet ud i det forkerte tilhørsforhold og med til dette er også den hårde retorik og fremmedhad der bliver lagt for dagen... Hvad andet er der at gøre end at hade igen ... Vi må også som samfund stå sammen om at andre ikke bliver drevet ud i ekstremistiske tilhørsforhold ved at droppe den hårde retorik. Det er det jeg synes blomsterne symbolisere - og ikke den frygtelige og onde handling for den behøver ingen blomster
27	Det er jo tragisk at ende sit liv på så grusom en måde, at tage andres liv er jo kun en formørket sjæls handlinger. Jeg græder for de handlinger den unge mand har begået. Han liv har gjort os ydmyge overfor lignende skæbner i fremtiden. Vi må favne de unge og insistere på dialog, voksenkontakt og sætte de nødvendige grænser. Fængsler gør ikke godt for unge, de må i behandling og terapi, indtil de kan rumme deres egen vrede.
28	Det er rigtigt nogen er hans familie, nogen elsker ham. Måske. Så skulle de måske have opøst sig lidt før. Han er en simpel morder - og der er ingen undskyldning for mord - hverken af religiøs eller anden art!. Han har ret til ingenting. Man kan vælge at håne ham og nedgøre ham efter hans død - eller man kan lade være. Følelser hjælper ingenting. Han blev dræbt i ildkamp med politiet - og vel egentlig et held der ikke blev dræbt flere. Jeg ville foretrække der blev ryddet håndfast op blandt de religiøse, der opildner og forfører til mord og drab. Ud af landet med dem. Lav loven om så det kan lade sig gøre. Hvis ikke det er godt nok her - så er det ud!. Der er masser af steder hvor der praktiseres lige netop det der ønskes!.
30	Det er synd for Omar han er blevet hjernevasket af isis videoer på nettet.
44	En stakkels syg mand. Godt han fik fred og blomster
45	Er hun klar over, at hendes handling virker som om hun sympatiserer med terroristen ???
47	Et mennesker er et menneske også selvom han har dræbt. Han har familie og venner der sørger, vi bør være store nok til at give dem ret til at lægge en blomst.
48	Folk er skøre i den her verden elsker folk terrorister i dag eller hvad
59	Han skød på politiet hvorfor ære idioten med blomster!
71	helt gennerelt mener jeg at man kan sørge for alle ofre også ham der skød for han må også kunnet betragtes som et offer i den her triste situation for grunden til at han gør det han gør må være at han er blevet manipuleret så meget at han har mistet alt form for sund fornuft og dermed mente at han kunne tillade sig at gøre det han gjorde... det hele er sørgeligt og ens tanker må gå ud til alle de dræbtes familier også pistol manden. hans familie må vel også føle at de har mistet en person som de vel på et tidspunkt må have elsket. også selv om at de ikke kan stå bag hans handlinger.
74	Hun er væk, som i HELT væk! Borgernes ansvar??? Omg!!! Manden er 22 og må tag ansvar for sig eget liv!!!
75	Hun må være idiot!! Hvordan nogle kan sidde og flæbe og sige "et liv er gået tabt" fatter jeg ikke. Det var en psykopat vi alle skal være lykkelige over ikke længere kan gøre andre fortræd.
90	I Danmark, er vi humane. Selv efter en gerningsmands død og forfærdelige handlinger, sørger nogle over et forspildt menneskeliv på en knægt som er født her, og som samfundet på en eller anden måde, mistede til terror. Det er overskud Janni. Al respekt til dig.
91	I mener hvor terroristen der dræbte uskyldige mennesker, blev dræbt? Det er forkert at vise sin sympati til en terrorist, færdig slut.
96	Janni Nielsen viser styrke, medmenneskelighed, næstekærlighed og nægter at lade sig fylde med had eller vrede. Hun er terroristernes værste fjende. Var vi alle som hende, havde terroristerne tabt for længst og verden ville være et bedre sted.
97	Jeg deler Janni's holdning. Der er ikke ok det han gjorde. Men det er trist at et så ungt menneske tager andres liv og selv mister sit. I stedet for at sprede mere had ud bør vi tage fat i hvad der har drevet ham til at gøre det. Sim Janni siger har vi som samfund ansvar for at samle de unge op der har svært ved at finde rod i Danmark.
98	Jeg har ingen sympati eller medfølelse! Kunne aldrig finde på at bruge en krone på en mand som Omar! Der må været gået et eller andet galt i hans opdragelse eller mangel på samme, siden han kan finde på noget så forfærdelig! Drengen har tydeligt manglet omsorg og kærlighed som hans forældre kunne have givet ham! Man som forældre videregiver værdier til sine børn, de værdier Omar har fået med fra barnets ben har vidst ikke været de rigtige. OG han blev kun 22 år, så i mit hovede er man stadig barn (lille voksen) som stadig har brug for mor og far og hvor var de? Så igen medfølelse her fra! Mor til 2!
103	Jeg synes det et usmageligt! Jeg synes ingen skal sørge over en kold morder!

106	<p>Jeg synes ikke personen fortjener blomster for den handling han lavede. Men når det så er sagt skal man tænke på at hans familie stadig har mistet et familiemedlem og det er ikke fedt at miste nogle man holder af, uanset om han har gjort en god eller dårlig handling. Jeg ved i hvertfald at hvis det var et af mine familiemedlemmer der blev skudt på grund af sådan en handling, ville jeg da stadig blive ked af at miste ham. Så jeg ville da kun blive glad for at se folk ligge blomster til ham selvom det var forkert det han lavede. Så alt i alt ville jeg sige at det er okay at folk har et hjerte der er stort nok til at kunne ligge blomster der hvor han døde.</p>
107	<p>jeg synes janni Nielsen har en rigtig menneskesyn . Hun har ingen relation til den dræbte Omar , men det bare tanken der tæller, han har også en mor og en far som har mistet deres 22 årige søn. Ham Omar har sikkert ikke haft en god barndom fordi hans liv har altid været pladret af kriminalitet osv . Mindehøjtidlighed efter min mening gir ingen mening. Der dør hver dag mennesker over hele verden, i dk man høre hverdag trafik ulykker hvorfor holder man ikke højtidlighed for dem. Jeg er i mod menneske drab.</p>
113	<p>Jeg ville skamme mig og Være flov over at kende et menneske der begår sådanne handlinger. Ville holde det meget privat for mig selv .. Forstår det ikke.. !</p>
119	<p>Man hylder og ærer ikke sådan et menneske...</p>
120	<p>Man kan ikke andet end blive rørt over sådan et menneske som Janni. Så smukt at hun kan have så meget kærlighed tilovers og tænke således om omar og hans familie selvom han begik en frygtelig ugerning. Meget inspirerende.</p>
130	<p>Nej det er ikke synd for Omar , man dræber bare ikke noget , som vi dansker for skyld for vis. Vi har nogen uopdragen børn er at vi ikke opdrager dem rigtig , så burde de kigge tilbage på hans forældre , EN STOR FEJL I DERS OPDRAGELSE , drenge børn må ALT og så holder de deres pige i så stammer snor at de ikke har noget at skulle have sagt , SÅ TAG OG STRAM OP PÅ JERS OPDRAGELSE PÅ JERS DRENGEBØRN ! i lave jo dem til små kriger og ballade mager , og jers kvind/ piger er så velopdraget , stram op på jers drenge , så de kan finde ud af at blive normalt fungerende her i dette samfund ,,,,,,,,nogen danske forældre får deres børn fjernet de har så stærke problemer med ders børn,,,så i burde have fjernet jers dreng når de ikke kan finde ud af og opføre sig som et menneske og ikke som en. VILD DYR</p>
133	<p>Når så ungt menneske kan begå så grusom en handling, må der være nogle forældre der har svigtet.</p>
142	<p>Sikke dog en fantastisk storsindet og forstående kvinde, hende Janni.. Jeg vil virkelig håbe hun kunne finde samme forståelse og tolerance frem den dag hendes datter står i vejen for en syg mands vandvidsskyderi.. Og lægger en blomst til ham også som for at vise sin sympati.. Han var jo bare en stakkels ung mand i dagens Danmark, der var offer for vores mangel på respekt overfor hans elskede profet.. Wauw hvor gad jeg godt være lige så godt et menneske.. Det er jeg desværre ikke. Jeg ønsker ham død for de gerninger der har forvoldt uskyldige mennesker så meget skade og ulykke. Og jeg ønsker på ingen måde at vise andet end foragt for ham!</p>
145	<p>Smukt at man kan se forbi had og vise kærlighed for en vildfaren sjæl.</p>
148	<p>Stop dig selv Janni! Prøv og hør, for det første blev de første blomster fjernet af hans egne "brødre", fordi det ikke er muslimsk tradition at lægge blomster. For det andet så er hende Janni Nielsen endnu et bevis på et pladderballe følsomt Danmark. Hun har ret i vi ikke skal tabe folk i samfundet, men synes nu hun må vise det på en anden måde end at lægge blomster ved en morders grav! Jeg har INGEN sympati for en person der vælger at gøre sådan noget, ligegyldig hvilken religion, hudfarve, race, politisk overbevisning osv. Sådanne mennesker fortjener sgu ikke en blomst! Man er sin egen Lykkes smed og der er noget hedder eksistentialisme. I Danmark har man en mulighed for at træffe en række fornuftige valg, for at skabe sig et godt liv. Omar traf det valg at blive morder!!!! Han kunne have valgt SÅ meget andet. Enough said! Det fortjener kraftedme ikke en blomst!</p>
150	<p>Sympatien bør nok rettes andet steds hen - men det er da trist, at et ungt menneske var så galt afmonteret</p>
153	<p>Synes det er respektløst overfor de mennesker gerningsmanden skød.. Kan godt forstå at familie mm vil mindes ham, men det synes jeg de bør gøre derhjemme ...</p>
158	<p>Sørgeligt at han overhovedet blev lukket ud igen . Manden var jo åbenbart mentalt syg , ellers var han vel ikke ekstremist ....</p>
165	<p>TV2 har lige vist et klip hvor den usle fundamentalistiske islamistiske hund af en gerningsmands vestlig fjendelige venner forsvarer ham og fjerner blomsterne som er lagt til ham, fordi det at lægge blomster ikke er Haram. Samtidigt siger de til journalisterne at de håber han nu er i himlen. Hvad fanden bilder disse islamistiske gale hunde sig egenligt ind? Så er det kraftedme i gang med at få ryddet op PET.</p>
167	<p>Undskyld synes du det er smukt at ligge blomster til en morder? det gør man kun når man hylder noget..Skamligt</p>

## Appendix C – Excerpt from Søren Pind's Facebook page

10	<p>At hedde Pind og så ikke fatte en pind er åbenbart to ting, der hører sammen. Blomsterne er ikke til den formodede - læg mærke til ordet formodede - gerningsmand, men til hans efterladte, der lige nu står uforstående og med en stor sorg. De bliver lagt for at vise disse sørgende mennesker, at det er ok at sørge, at det ikke er deres skyld, og at det danske folk - her nok især københavnere - føler med dem, der har ondt. Nu er det jo så ikke lige en følelse, der plager venstrefolk, men prøv alligevel, om ikke du i en glemt afkrog af dit hjerte kan finde bare en lille smule medlidenhed med den unge mands efterladte.</p> <p>Og husk så, at vi stadig taler om en formodet gerningsmand. Så længe, det ikke er fastlagt, at dette er gerningsmanden, så er der vist en anden, der fortjener ordet usselryg mere - vi er ikke i det vilde vesten med først hængning, så dom - men med din indstilling nærmer vi os den vist.</p>
15	<p>De blomster river mig og mange andre i øjnene! Kan vi så få dem fjernet! Det må du vel give mig ret i Søren? Sikke dog en usmagelig hån mod de to døde og politibetjentene og deres familier! Søren i politikere har mange ting, der skal sættes på plads og pointeres!" Til Janni, ville du også lægge blomster ved en gerningsmand, der slog din fader, bror, eller børn ihjel ? Det er virkelig uforståeligt for mig. Hjælp! Mod dumhed og misforstået godhed kæmper vi alle forgæves,.....derfor er kampene så store og lange.</p>
18	<p>De uforstående og uskyldige efterladte må vel gerne vise deres sorg. Det var en fej handling! Drengen er død!! Intet normalt menneske vil udføre en så syg og ond handling! I stedet for at opfordre til had, så mener jeg vi skal lære at forstå hvorfor det gik så galt og gøre alt for at undgå at det gentager sig. Det er ikke afgørende hvem vi, de eller du er Hr. Pind!</p>
20	<p>Den stakkels unge mand, der er blevet ført så meget bag lyset og på vildspor, at han begik handlinger, der måtte koste ham livet. De, der har påvirket ham, bør stå frem og forklare sig - og ændre holdning.</p>
22	<p>Denne unge mand havde også familie og venner.</p> <p>Skam dig Søren Pind, for at ikke give dem lov til at sørge over denne tragedie. Det er lidt som om du dømmer deres sorg over denne forfærdelige hændelse som du dømmer ham.</p> <p>De er ikke skyldige i det her og det er ikke i orden du taler så nedsættende om disse mennesker.</p>
28	<p>Det er 'os' mod 'dem'. Kulturkamp. Altid siger venstrefløjen og muslimer at det er 'enkeltstående' ekstremister. Hvor mange episoder før det ikke er enkeltstående? København, Paris, Sydney, Belgien, Canada, Mumbai, Boston, Madrid, London, New York!</p> <p>At lægge blomster for den mand er en joke og dem som gør blåstempler ham som menneske - hvilket er det sidste han kan betegnes som.</p> <p>Hans familie? Ja hvad med dem? Manden er blevet prøveløsladt 3 gange for domme vedrørende våben og vold. Reality tjek til hans familie tak! Hvor var de?</p> <p>Og de 3 indvandrere fyre som står der på fotoet? Hvem er de? Banderelaterede sikkert og de skal indentificeres.</p>
35	<p>Det er usmageligt, når en politiker bidrager til at opstille fjendebilleder. Du aner ikke hvorfor folk lægger blomster. Jeg ville ikke selv gøre det, men jeg kan sagtens forestille mig, at jeg ville have brug for et sted at vise min sorg og fortvivlelse, hvis Omar havde været min ven eller et nært familiemedlem. Skal det nu til at være forbudt at sørge hvis man er udlænding?</p>
36	<p>Det er utroligt at vi lige nu ser i nyhederne ser unge kriminelle fjerner blomster fra stedet hvor gerningsmanden døde og samtidig hylde manden og Allah . Samtidig siger en af de unge kriminelle at alle der tegner profeten m en bombe skal dræbes og at gerningsmanden var en helt . Samtidig læser jeg mange hundrede dobbelt moralske danskere skrive på Søren Pinds opslag at det hele er vores skyld og at man skal have lov til at sørge for ham . Er det det ' i vil ha / at vi bøjer os og siger det er vores skyld og at vi bare skal tage i mod ? Vi er i krig mine damer og herrer om i forstår det el ej ! Det er ikke et spørgsmål om had men realisme . Så prøv for en gangs skyld at se sandheden i øjnene . Søren Pind fortæller bare sandheden videre. Jeg vil gerne at vi er et multi etnisk samfund men ingen religion eller præferencer for radikale foreninger skal styre det danske demokrati !</p>
50	<p>Du da godt nok en tosse Søren Pind... Lige meget hvor dumt et svin en person er så har personen familie og det helt i orden at familien sørger over et tabt medlem...</p>
53	<p>Du Søren og din politik bære ansvaret for at VI som samfund har svigtet den unge mand, hans familie og hele hans folk i Palæstina. Du Søren deler VORES land i os og dem. DU burde skamme dig. DU burde undskylde over for ALLE de dodes familier</p>
54	<p>En HEL masse nævner familien, jeg synes også familien skal nævnes men det er for at se dem efter i sømmene, for hvorfor ender en så ung mand med at lave så alvorlig en forbrydelse ? er der mon gået noget galt i hans barndom er han mon blevet hjernvasket med holdninger af de nærmeste som man så tit høre om, æresdrab mm er jo heller ikke ualmindeligt her i DK efterhånden, så kunne det tænkes at familien har deres del af skylden , at deres mentalitet bare ligger så langt fra vores .</p>
62	<p>For hvem er det der har fejlet her. .... Manden var kendt for sit. De kendte til hans intentioner. .... Hvorfor gik han frit på gaden ?????</p>
70	<p>Han er et menneske, har din forældre ikke lært dig, at et menneske er et menneske uanset hvad?</p>
73	<p>Han er også et menneske som os andre han har også nogen efterladte der vil lægge blomster for ham . Vi ved jo ikke hvad der præcis er sket om det overhovedet er ham eller om det er den lange varetægtsfængsling der har givet ham de psykoser . Søren Pind du har altid hadet folk som os bare indrøm det og nu har du endnu mere magt til at hade os</p>
76	<p>Han var måske ikke terrorist. Måske var han en frustreret og et opgivende menneske som ikke ville mere. Der er jo ingen politiske budskaber, ingen religiøse budskaber, men der er motiver nok til et hævnøgt på dem som måske i hans øjne svigter og forråder og stigmatiserer.</p>
80	<p>Helt enig, Søren Pind. Det giver virkelig en forkert signal at lægge blomster ved gerningsmanden. Det kan efter min opfattelse virke særdeles provokerende for ofrene og deres familier - og det er da ofrene, som man skal sørge over. Hvis det var min ven, der havde gjort noget tilsvarende, ville jeg ikke lægge blomster hos ham. Det er en hån mod ofrene.</p>
82	<p>Hold nu kæft med alt det race pis... Det kan jo være hans familie, der er jo stadig noget kærlighed til manden uanset om han er terrorist eller ej.</p> <p>Og jeg synes at jeg læste nogen bekendte fjernede blomsterne og ønskede at Herren var barmhjertig ved ham..</p> <p>Søren pind, du er og vil altid være et racistisk svin, du er ikke accepteret af mig og det rigtige danske folk</p>
83	<p>Hold nu kæft Pind. Folk prøver at føle med den mistænkte familie.</p>

84	Hr Søren Pind, vi er enige om en ting, den formodede gerningsmand er en ussel fej hund. Men trist læsning at du som politiker er lige så ussel !!!! Ham der blev skudt på Svanevej er kun af medieerne og nu dig konkluderet terrorist. Så vent dog for fanden med at konkludere en skid fot PET og polititi officielt har sat navn på. Og vi vil respekteres som danskere kristne og lægger blomster, så respekter dog at det gør man så ikke som muslim. Skam dig klovn.
91	hvis han var blevet behandlet ordentligt i sin barndom var det aldrig sket. alt håb og medfølelse til hans familie. stik din pind i pape i er nogle tosser selv de fleste psykopater har gode sider har svært ved at se jeres gode sider. alt jeres valglort stop det skråt op
94	Hvor mange tåbelige opdateringer har du tænkt dig at berige os med i lyset af denne tragedie Søren? Kommentarerne i denne tråd viser, at der da heldigvis stadig er mange danskere - uanset tro, eller mangel på samme, som forstår at adskille det, at vise respekt for de efterladte (forældre, søskende, venner), med det at sympatisere med en afsporet persons ugeringer. At der så utvivlsomt sidder afstumpede individer rundt omkring, som ønsker at skabe splittelse og ufred, er en anden snak. Men som politiker burde du holde dig for god til at dømme og generalisere på baggrund af et enkelt foto. Du ved ikke hvem personerne er og hvorfor de er der. Prøv nu at være en statsmand, der udviser rummelighed, næstekærlighed og vilje til forsoning, i lyset af en tragedie, frem for at drage forhastede konklusioner og opildne til mistænksomhed og splittelse. Du er forhåbentlig ikke så kynisk, at du bare skriver den slags for at fiske billige stemmer, vel?
96	I det mindste kan Søren, og de unge er kom forbi, blive enige om at der ikke skal ligge blomster. Trist for hans familie, både at skulle lide over tabet, og over skammen ved det han har gjort. Og trist at det potentiale han må have haft som dreng, skulle smadres af en forskruet ideologi.
109	Jeg forsvare ikke personen som stod bag de grusomme drab. Men eftersom jeg læste beskrivelsen på billedet: "De viser, der desværre er et dem og os". Det er så fordomsfuldt Søren Pind ! Du burde da have fuld forståelse for at hans nærmeste har fået det dårligt. Disse mennesker har ret til at sørge over personens død! Og de viser intet "vi" og "de". Egoisme er en dårlig ting. Du er helt klart en af verdens dårligste politikere. For dette opslag danner helt klart had og splittelse. Hvis gruppen "os" hører under den gode del, vil jeg let påstå at du hører under "dem". Lorte politikere. I er ikke andet end idioter, hyklere, forrædere som ødelægger samfundet.
110	Jeg føler Ingen sorg over dette 'menneske' kun afsky... og læser man udtalelserne fra nogle af dem som Idag har lagt blomster så er det ikke kun familie.... men nogen som kan tolkes til at være på samme ideologiske side som ham selv.... men til alle jer her som kommentere hr pind, så pointere han bare det åbenlyse vi har i det danske samfund individer som ikke vil os godt... og som Søren også siger så ved ikke hvordan vi får fundet dem... eller hvordan vi får forhindret der kommer flere....
112	Jeg har altid kunne lide dig Hr. Pind, indtil nu! Nu viser du endelig dit sande jeg frem for offentligheden, for du kender åbenbart ik ordet "kærlighed" men kun til og opildne til had og splittelse, med dine ikke så skjulte budskaber! Jeg sympatiser ik med den unge mand, men hans familie og venner må da for helvede gerne sørge over en tabt søn, bror, fætter og ven! Jeg er ik i tvivl om, at havde det været en fra din familie eller omgangskreds der begik samme forbrydelse, ville du også være chokeret og ked af det! ALLE har ret til og sørge over de døde, for du kender ik deres historie, men kun den sidste kapitel!
114	Jeg overvejer selv at lægge en blomst. Ikke for det afskyelige væsen, som myrdede uskyldige, men for den glade og gode lille dreng, som han garanteret var engang. Det kan man godt sørge over uden overhovedet at hylde hans gerning.
120	Kære Søren .. tror faktisk ikke at sympatien er gået til en morder.. men til et fortabt menneske der i sin sindsyge har mistet livet. Ingen er født onde.. var det han gjorde i orden, nej. Var det noget Han fra barns ben var sat i verden for at gøre , nej.. Han blev tabt et sted på vejen... Og det er vores alles ansvar.. Sympatiserer jeg med ham som terrorist , nej.. som et fortabt menneske - ja
121	Kære Søren Pind Er så enig med dig. Jeg synes det er så respektløst, at man tillader sig at sørge i det offentlige rum over så usselt et menneske der likvideringer andre mennesker uden tanke for at de tager et liv fra nogen, som intet har gjort. Det kan gøre mig meget trist, at vi tilsyneladende har ligeså ondt af det usle menneskes familie som er de uskyldige ofre?? Hvor er det moralske kodeks henne her? Jeg fatter det ikke! Tænker ingen på hvis det var ens egen familier, der var blevet skudt ned med koldt blod? Vi snakker så meget om at provokere og sover andres følelser. Disse handlinger provokerer mig, og sårer mine følelser !
123	Kære Søren Pind selvom han er en gerningsmand og jeg synes det er så forfærdeligt det han har gjort og den smerte han har påført dem hvis liv han har taget og deres familie, det er så grumt at det er til at tude over - kan man vel også sende tanker til gerningsmandens forældre i form af en blomst, han var jo deres lille barn . Det må være meget svært at forene sig med at ens barn har gjort det han har gjort, det må være svært at acceptere. Blomster bliver lagt for at mindes og sørge - man kan også sørge over at denne gerningsmand valgte at bruge sit korte liv så destruktivt og derfor lægge en blomst for at minde ham og andre om at livet er en gave og at vold og had ikke er løsningen. Lad os ikke ledes af frygt,had og vold. Det fører kun til mere vold, had og frygt, men i stedet stå sammen og vise vejen for, det Danmark vi ønsker. Jeg ønsker så inderligt et fremtidens Danmark, der fortsat har ytringsfrihed, kunstnerisk frihed uden censur, barmhjertighed og omtanke, hvor vi kan færdes frit og møder hinanden med med et åbent sind.
124	Kære Søren Pind. Dine statsmandsevner lader meget tilbage at ønske med den slags kommentarer på Facebook. Desværre. Nogle har lagt blomster. Det er sikkert ikke for at fejre en morder, men for at mindes en afdød.
127	Kære Søren. Selv en 6-årig er klogere end dig. Manden havde en mor, en far, en bror, en søster, andet familiemedlem eller personer som nok holdte af ham. Også selvom de måske tager afstand fra hans handlinger.
140	Måske har den mor og far slæbt lille Omar ned i moskeen gang på gang , for at høre på en syg iman,der prædiker drab og hævn over alle der ikke deler hans syge indstillinger !
165	Søren Pind - det bliver da værre, og værre med dine udgydelser. Den unge mand havde vel en mor, en far og måske nogle søskende? Lad dog de stakkels mennesker sørge over en søn eller en bror, som kom på afveje.
172	Søren Pind, DU er en af dem der spreder had og graver kløfter mellem danskerne... Du er så sort/hvid i din argumentation. Den er fej og kujonagtig!
177	Søren Pind: Du bedes venligst vare din mund. Uanset Omars handling, så har han familie og venner, der sørger over ham. Du har som politiker et større ansvar end mange andre for IKKE at give udtryk for disse holdninger, der blot opildner til mere had. Uanset jeg tager dybt afstand fra hans handlinger, var han ikke andet end en stakkels ung knægt, der havde fået værdierne helt galt i halsen. Hvad gjorde du som politiker og privat-person for at undgå dette?

178	<p>Søren pind: du er bare en karriere luder der kun lyder intellektuel blandt uintelligente mennesker. Hvad med at tage diskussionen op med dannede folk din kujon. I politikere vil kun diskutere indbyrdes da i alle spiller under de samme spille regler, men mød dog folket på gaden, der ik spiller efter spille reglerne og derfor ik ska spin de hele væk så folket sidder tilbage med et orakel svar, hvor alt kan forståes som man vil og du/i politikere ik kan stilles til ansvar for jeres udtalelser.</p> <p>Kan du bevise at Omar har udført disse forfærdelige handlinger og hvis han har kender du så motivet og hvordan det er sket. Hvor har han våbnet fra, hvad motiverede ham (manden var overhovedet ik religiøs), hvorfor skød politiet ham i hovedet (likvidering), ku de ik nøjes med ben eller arm, hvad skete der med ham under hans sidste varetægt tilbage 2013 m.m</p> <p>Søren pind du er en medie luder ligesom de fleste politikere, du tror at dit slips og jakkesæt gør dig pålidelig, intellektuel, her dine klamme briller, men det er bare en skal, facade for de får du taler til. Du og dine ligesindede politikere udfordres til på direkte tv at debattere terror, Melleløsten, islam og hvad i ellers fejlt på afstand udtaler jer om, så hele Danmarks befolkning kan se hvor råddent æblet er inden i.</p>
186	<p>Sørgeligt at en morder hyldes og hans gerninger forsvares .. Føj ..</p>
201	<p>Vandrende Pind - hvor er du bare usmagelig med din Bush retorik.</p> <p>Du slår plat på en tragisk situation begået af et anti-menneske til at skabe had.</p> <p>Du har ingen indre svinehund - du har alene en svinehund, der opildner til had.</p> <p>Naturligvis skal han ikke have blomster, men hold da op hvor er du lav</p>
202	<p>Ved godt vi går en valg periode i møde men at bruge denne tragiske handling til at skabe fremmedhad og frygt, er skammeligt. Som mange andre har skrevet herinde er der nok også nogle der savner Omar og samtidig tager afstand fra hans handlinger i weekenden. Er det forkert Søren? Må man ikke savne en selvom han endte på afveje?</p>
206	<p>Vil aldrig kunne få sympati for sådan en forrædder! Det samme hvis en dansker havde lavet terror. Klamme rotte..</p>