



## Nikolai Häußermann

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**Member of Department since**  
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**Position/ Function**  
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**About the person**

Studies of history, German studies, Philology, Economics/ Politics and Philosophy in Heidelberg (2002-2007). State Examination in November 2007. Study of Philosophy and Arabic in Paris (Sorbonne, University of Paris III) 2008. Teacher in training at Schule Schloss Salem 2009/10. Since 2010 teacher at Erasmus-Widmann-Gymnasium Schwäbisch Hall.

**Dissertation Project: *Al-Qaeda: "Qamis Uthman" - Evolution of a Global Protest Organization (1970-2003)***

On September 11, 2001, shortly after the second aircraft crashed into the southtower of the World Trade Center, the observing world media clearly considered this event as: "The day that changed the world forever". So, "9/11" became the first self-declared historical event in global history by the world media. Afterwards, the media designed an appropriate history of "evil", which seeks to destroy the West in the form of a powerful "fanatical and religious terrorist organization" by the name of al-Qaeda and his terrifying, strange leader adorned with turban and beard, Osama bin Laden.

Such a power of definition of the world media certainly provokes the historian, who sees himself challenged in his field of influence and deceived in his efforts for "enlightenment". Therefore the topic of "al-Qaeda" leads a shadowy existence among serious historians. Historians have to wait until "the smoke of history" (Gadamer) has disappeared and a better view is possible.

Probably this view is possible after the death of Osama bin Laden and after the Arab Spring. The smoke dissipates and allows the historian to obtain an interesting understanding of many insightful sources, which have hitherto gone unnoticed by Westerners also because of the language barriers for the Arab region. In the light of these internal documents, the history of the "religious-fanatical terrorist organization" al-Qaeda suddenly appears to be very different, very unfanatical, very pragmatic, very non-ideological, simply quite different from the image designed by Western media (and some Arab media). Nevertheless, the willingness of al-Qaeda to use force needs to be explained. This thesis attempts to answer this question by a historical checkup of the newly discovered documents (up to the 70s) in the light of the systemorganizational theory of Niklas Luhmann. The system theory needs to be expanded and the whole theory building redesigned according to the newly developed social subsystem "protest" and its evolutionary function, which Luhmann only indicated. In this new light, it is clear that the evolution of al-Qaeda has not primarily been due to ideological or social circumstances, but depends rather on functional and organizational points ("autopoiesis") within the subsystem "protest".

The presumptions of this thesis are: First, al-Qaeda, a protest organization, was disproportionately exaggerated by the western political battle cry of "terror" to fulfill a primary function as a central part of the "axis of evil" - this suggests the metaphor "Uthman's shirt" ("Qamis Uthman") for al-Qaeda (Fadil Harun, the secretary of al-Qaeda). Second, due to the first thesis, the great effect of 9/11 can not be traced back to a significant cause (al-Qaeda), but 9/11 is primarily a matter of selfirritation by the evolving global society. Of course, the question then remains: where does this "selfirritation" originate?

**Prizes**

- Scheffel-Prize of the Literary Society of Karlsruhe
- Politics-Award of the city of Stuttgart

**Key activities in research and teaching**

- Systems theory and Post-Structuralism
- Arab and American History
- Phases of transition in Civilisations (especially from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages).