“Violence and the Good Life”: Foreign Fighters in Syria and Spain

Dietrich Jung

Wednesday, August 16th
11:00am-12:00 pm
UVic, Hickman Building, Room 110

This lecture puts current Jihadist war volunteers into historical perspective by comparing the foreign fighter phenomenon in contemporary Syria to the civil war in Spain (1936-39). Many have assumed that modernity would produce rational, self-interested and expressive individuals and a peaceful, law-abiding world. The phenomenon of foreign fighters raised in liberal democratic societies therefore appears to be a pathology of modernity. Is it possible that violent radicalization represents an alternative “good life” to the dominant liberal narrative?

Dietrich Jung is a Professor and Head of the Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark (SDU). He holds a MA in Political Science and Islamic Studies, as well as a Ph.D from the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Hamburg, Germany. He has large field experience in the Muslim world and his research covers the modernization of the Muslim world, wars and conflicts in the Middle East, world society theory, historical sociology and the sociology of religion.