

Islamic activism in a multicultural context

– ideological continuity or change?

Fact box

Description of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in the Western world's messages and methods against target groups in Sweden

2017

Malmö University

Docent Aje Carlbon

- The risk of recognizing MB-associated organizations as the most important representatives for Muslims and Islam is that a minority of politically oriented activists with a missionary religious view is given the possibility of advancing their positions in public at the expense of the majority of Swedish citizens with a Muslim cultural background.
- A problem with MB-associated organizations is that they contribute to creating political and social polarization by pitting an imagined "we" (Muslims) against an imagined "them" (non-Muslims). This is an identity politics strategy that pits groups against each other and thereby has a negative impact on democratic rules regarding the debate of factual issues.
- The risk of uncritically allocating resources to MB-associated organizations is that they influence the integration process negatively in that they want to protect Muslims from influence by the majority society by building up a parallel Islamic sector of public bodies, a so-called Muslim civil society.

Publication number MSB1189- March 2018

ISBN 978-91-7383-811-5

MSB has ordered and financed the implementation of this research report (alternatively study report). The authors are solely responsible for the contents of the report.

Preface

Research on the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Islamic activism has grown in scope in recent years. Globalization has led MB-associated activists to move to various parts of the world where they have built up locally influenced activities. Given that MB is a movement with ambitions to change how individuals, communities and states see themselves and how society should be run, there is an interest in finding out more about what the activities of MB-associated organizations mean to Sweden. The contents of this report should be seen as a part of a broader research effort to contribute knowledge about how Islamic activism is expressed in Sweden and other European countries. Since it involves a complex topic, the contents should be viewed as an area of research under development.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 2

Methodological considerations

Interviews

Public documents and literature

Chapter 3

MB's type of Islamic activism

Moderate Islamic activism

Politicization of Islam's message

Distribution of message in Sweden

Islamic identity and dawa

Chapter 4

European organizations linked to MB's tradition

European organizations

Swedish organizations

Organization in the Middle East and the EU

"A school of thought"

Restraint

Chapter 5

Identity politics strategy

Europe and dawa

The civil society

Political representation

Conceivable consequences

Chapter 6

Information influence and democratic values

The enemy in Sweden

Rhetorical impact

Trying to silence opposition

Value of the freedom of speech

Value of equality

Islam's "total nature"

Chapter 7

Summary

Literature

Summary

- The risk of recognizing MB-associated organizations as the most important representatives for Muslims is that a minority of politically oriented activists and missionary activists are given the possibility of advancing their positions in public at the expense of the majority of all those who have a Muslim cultural background.
- A problem with MB-associated organizations is that they contribute to creating political and social polarization by pitting an imagined “we” (Muslims) against an imagined “them” (non-Muslims). This is an identity politics strategy that pits groups against each other and thereby has a negative impact on democratic rules regarding the debate of factual issues.
- The risk of uncritically allocating resources to MB-associated organizations is that they influence the integration process negatively in that they want to protect Muslims from influence by the majority society by building up a parallel Islamic sector of public bodies, a so-called Muslim civil society. This can disadvantage Swedish Muslims who are already in the country and need to establish social contacts outside their family and circle of friends. It can also have an obstructing impact on the Muslims who immigrate here in the next few years as they are at risk of being influenced by ideas and norms that impede participation in the majority society.
- A dilemma of giving MB-associated organizations the possibility of developing their activities is that it means that the state (or other funding providers) offers tax funding to a small group of actors who spread messages that undermine the dominant values in society. The values called into question by activists in MB-associated organizations concern the freedom of speech in religious matters, the value of equality between men and women, the view of homosexuality and sexual minorities, as well as anti-Semitic expressions.
- There is also a risk that MB-associated organizations spread politicized perceptions of Islam that, combined with messages that they and other Muslims are victims of a hostile Western world, can contribute to radicalization of individual Muslims. In other words, MB-associated activists and organizations can have a preparatory radicalization effect on some individuals by influencing them with ideas that mean that they go on to more radical contexts.

1. Introduction

Globalisation in a broad sense has meant that various kinds of Islamic activists have established themselves in society. One of the most successful activist networks in Sweden (and other European countries) is comprised of actors who can be associated with the ideological project formed in 1928 by the Egyptian school teacher Hasan al-Banna (Helbawi 2010; Maréchal 2008). In the shadow of the fall of the Ottoman empire and British colonialism, he built up the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) (*Ikhwan al-muslimun*), a movement many consider to be one of the world's first, largest and most important Islamic political organizations (Rubin 2010:3). Views differ on how many countries in the world MB's ideological perspectives have spread to. For example, Brotherhood member Kemal Helbawy (2010:61) claims that the movement is in around 70 countries of the world while Lorenzo Vidino (2017:5) believes that the movement's message has spread to some 90 countries since the middle of the 20th century.

A background factor in the origins of this report is that MB's original political project that was formulated by al-Banna and his followers fundamentally built on the idea that civil society and the state should undergo a change in an Islamic direction (Al-Anani 2016; Kandil 2015). The political opponents of the activists in the movement in Egypt, as well as other countries in the Middle East, were largely everything perceived to be governed by ideological or symbolic structures other than those considered to be rooted in Islam (the Quran) or the life and deeds of the Prophet Muhammed (the hadiths). The British colonialization of Egypt, the spread of European values and secularism were perceived as threatening and were thereby something that should be resisted with the help of Islamically rooted ideals (Hamid 2016:30). The fact that the actual basis for MB's political projects was to bring about a sweeping change of society and the state means that the interest in organizations in Europe that can be associated with the movement's messages and programmes draws the attention of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB).

However, there are many questions concerning the establishment of this kind of Islamic activism and in a report of this type can only provide tentative answers. What happens to a political project that has grown forth in a special historical and political context when it is to be established in a social and political context new to the ideology? Have the activists and organizations that can be associated in some way with MB's ideological tradition in Europe changed their view of civil society and the state? Are activists with a background in MB's tradition spreading the same messages to the surroundings that the movement has become known for spreading in countries in the Middle East? And, if there are society-changing messages in the European activists' ideology, is this a problem? Without getting too far ahead of the events, it may already be worth noting that the report's conclusion is that the MB-associated activism is mainly an integration problem. The designation "MB-associated" is consistently used in the following to describe the activism conducted by organizations in Europe that are linked in research to MB's political ideas and tradition. There are many reasons for this. It is misleading to talk about the Muslim Brotherhood conducting activities in

Europe as the link between European activists and the parent organization seems to be weak. It also appears as if few European activists have a formal membership in MB because of the stringent rules for membership that govern the organization. Being, as stated in this report, “MB-associated” may mean that an actor is a member or that an actor more or less intentionally uses MB’s traditional political platform.

Accordingly, focus in this report is on which messages are conveyed by actors that can be associated with MBs organizations and programmes. The appropriation also includes identifying the strategies the activists use to influence information in relation to their surrounding society in issues that concern knowledge about themselves and Islam. The objective of doing a descriptive study of this kind is to increase awareness in Swedish society about the rhetoric and narrative of activists. Several different Islamic politically inspired actors are indeed involved in this, but in this particular report, the spotlight is on MB-associated activists’ narrative constructions. Hence, the report is not about what Islam is or about how believing Muslims generally view the religion, but rather the following concerns how a small network of Islamic activists work to influence others with their views.

The content of the following is structured according to certain logic. Chapter 2 addresses some methodological aspects, including the difficulty well-known among researchers in the area to bring about open interviews with MB-associated actors. In addition, an account is presented of what categories of informants were interviewed and what documentation forms the basis of the report’s assertions and conclusions. Chapter 3 addresses the special kind of Islamic activism that characterizes MB as a political and religious movement. The content of the chapter is intended as a starting point to have in mind when reading chapters later on in the report. Chapter 4 focuses mainly on what European organizations international research has highlighted as being MB-associated. The chapter also presents which Swedish organizations are included in the broader European network of MB-associated activities. Chapter 5 highlights that MB-associated organizations in Europe have generally been transformed into identity politics activists, who try in a neo-ethnic spirit to construe “Muslims” as a homogeneous “minority” with common interests without taking into account the ethnic and cultural fragmentation that characterizes all of the Swedish citizens who in some way identify themselves as Muslim or have some form of relationship to the Islamic tradition. Chapter 6 is a more streamlined presentation of strategies that can be said to be a part of what is called information influence. Chapter 7 summarizes central findings and, based on the report’s conclusions, also formulates proposals on how the knowledge area of Islamic activism can be developed.

Given that Islamic activism is a complex subject of research that has not been studied in particular depth in Sweden, it is appropriate to point out that the content of this report does not claim to present a complete account of the phenomenon. The report also does not contain any proposals on political action programmes for officials or others who would like them. Hopefully, the report’s contents can form the basis for researchers and journalists to take up the subject and investigate more aspects than there is room for in a tentative study of this kind.

2. Methodological considerations

The empirical data that forms the basis of the content of this report is a mix of what has been said in interviews of people who have some kind of experience of MB-associated activities and publicly presented goal and policy documents prepared by European organizations linked to the network. In addition to this, there is what researchers who have worked in the subject area of MB-associated European activities have arrived at and what they consider to be difficulties that need to be studied in further detail. Below is a schematic review of some of the report's methodological considerations.

Interviews

Parts of the report's contents are based on interviews with three different categories of informants that were chosen for various reasons. In the report, interviews were conducted with two Swedish citizens who were previously members of MB and have broad experience of the movement's organizations. Moreover, an interview was held with a British citizen and formerly active member of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, England, who was involved as an Islamic activist in the UK for more than two decades. A highly ranked active participant in MB's British equivalent of the Islamic Association in Sweden, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), was interviewed to shed light on the research questions from a different European perspective. Moreover, a former activist in the British Islamic environment was interviewed who had experience from having fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s and of Salafist and MB-associated politics. In addition to this is a British imam who was previously employed by a well-known mosque in London; he was previously active in a charity in England that was dominated by activists in MB's British network. All Islamic activists who were interviewed (except one) have left activism in the framework of MB behind, but are in various ways still involved in the politics surrounding activism's establishment in Sweden, England and the rest of Europe. The rest of the interviews were conducted with persons who in some way has been involved in dialogue with actors from MB-associated organizations, or been object for their shaming campaigns. The language used in the 15 interviews in total was Swedish and English, meaning that no interpreter was needed.

A methodological dilemma that is well-known among researchers who work with issues concerning MB is the difficulty to arrange interviews with people who are active in the movement and open about their activism. "They [MB's activists] often try to avoid publicity," as political scientist Barry Rubin (2010:1) words it. This has characterized the work on this report. A few of the Swedish organizations identified in a European MB-associated network of activists and associations refrained from answering questions about the possibilities of an interview. One person active in an MB-associated Swedish organization was initially positive to being interviewed, but withdrew due to the perception that this was too socially risky. It is of course a shortcoming in terms of knowledge that there is a lack of statements from Swedish environments that are dominated by MB-associated organizations where in interview quotes there are clear formulations about how the activists think with regard to their activities and this is

therefore something that should be developed in future studies in this area of knowledge. Of course, the interviews with former activists cannot compensate for the non-response by active activists as the former lack up-to-date knowledge of what may conceivably be happening “backstage” in the activist circles. The ex-activists have, however, contributed important reflections regarding the ideological logic that hypothetically forms the basis of Islamic activism in Europe as a more general phenomenon. As former “insiders”, ex-activists can contribute to depictions of how a certain environment worked, at the same time that there is always a risk that they are mistaken or have a need to discredit the movement they left with excessively critical points of view. The British activists have been and are active in an Islamic-political scene that seems to demonstrate both similarities and differences with the Swedish equivalent, but a common element is that activists with a background in MB-related concepts have had a prominent position (see Khan 2016; Hamid 2018). However, it generally seems as if the British context differs from the Swedish in the sense that MB-related organizations had a greater influence in the UK in the 1990s than they have today, which has led researchers in the area to begin talking about British post-Islamism (Hamid 2018).

In this report, the use of individual names is avoided to the furthest possible extent to keep individuals from being subjected to unwanted attacks. Several of those interviewed have been subjected to various campaigns where Islamic activists have had the intention of undermining or tarnishing their personal characters. There is no reason to further expose these people to the risk of new attacks. There are also reasons of research ethics to keep from naming people active in MB-associated organizations to keep them as individuals from being assigned a stronger tie to MB’s ideological world than there is reason to assert. There is a lack of adequately supported empirical data regarding individual persons’ ties or membership in MB for it to be justified to bring up individual names. However, organizations are named that are publicly active and themselves say that they work for Islam and Muslims. The organizations make both financial and cultural demands on Swedish society and must therefore count on their activities being analysed and reviewed by journalists and researchers. No organization is, however, tied to the MB-associated network without there being some form of evidence for the assertion.

Two primary conceptual tracks have guided the work on interviews and the report as a whole. One track was about trying to analyse what publicly available *messages* are formulated by MB-associated organizations in Sweden and the rest of Europe. The other was about trying to investigate what kind of message is used in campaigns for *information influence* of ideas, the meaning of which MB-associated activists strive in some sense to control. These two concepts have been used as main tools in the analysis of the empirical materials gathered. The terms themselves form the core of how the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) formulated the assignment before the study began. This report should be viewed as a “window” into a complicated field in which significantly more research is needed from both qualitative and quantitative approaches to identify a more empirically well-supported perception of the politics that control Islamic activism’s establishment in a continent new to this kind of activism from a historical perspective.

Public documents and literature

Besides interviews, the content of the report is based on public documents published by MB-associated organizations in Europe. It is of course no comprehensive presentation of official texts that is taken up, but rather a limited selection that is reviewed and analysed in relation to MB's classical method for social change. Given the report's fundamental premise, that there is a network of organizations in Europe that can be linked to the ideological tradition that was formulated by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, there has been reason to try to analyse whether or not there is some form of ideological continuity between "there" and "here". MB is fundamentally a movement for social change in an Islamic direction where both civil society and the state were a part of the political objectives and this is a reason to try to investigate if activists in Europe have left all or part of the legacy of social change behind.

Since several researchers identify the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE) as the European umbrella organization of MB-associated activism, two of their publicly available documents are included in the study: one where the organization's objectives are emphasized and one that can be viewed as an ideological position paper mainly in relation to a European audience. The latter document, titled "The Muslims of Europe Charter", may need a special commentary. According to FIOE, this document is prepared in cooperation with the 28 nationally rooted member organizations and this means that it is handled in the report as a summary of a kind of least common denominator for the collective of MB-associated organizations on the continent. The starting point for the report is accordingly that this charter (and the objectives formulated by FIOE) in one way or other is common to all MB-associated members in the network, including the Swedish organization IFiS, which according to their own articles of association is one of the member organizations that founded FIOE. This fact, that there is an overall collective ideology for how the Islamically based activities should be conducted in Europe, is no proof, however, that there is complete agreement in various issues between individual activists who are a part of the network. Just like in other collective projects, secular and religious, different individuals and groups go in different directions. The position paper prepared by FIOE is also formulated in such a general manner that it is likely a compromise solution that can satisfy the actors, regardless of the directions in which they are headed. All documents included in this study were written in English or Swedish, which is something that should be developed in future studies, where the messages spread in Arabic, should also be included in the analysis.

In terms of the literature in this area, it quickly becomes clear that there are significantly more empirically based studies about MB in the Middle East than there are about MB-associated activism in Europe. It is worth pointing out to those not well-read in this area that it is not to be recommended to read up on MB's activities in the Middle East and, based on that, draw obvious conclusions about the activities among MB-associated organizations in Europe. Researchers largely agree that MB-associated activities in Europe are fragmented and far from being as homogeneous and

well-organized as in the movement's home country, Egypt. This is why Lorenzo Vidino (2012), one of the internationally leading researchers in this area, talks about "the new Muslim Brotherhood" when it comes to what is happening in Europe. In Europe, activists have been placed in a political and social context where they are a "minority within the minority" where it is not as obvious how to conduct politics in the name of Islam as it is in countries where Islam is the religion of the majority. It is probably reasonable to describe the MB-associated activism in Europe as a movement that is seeking its "identity" in a secularized context where the former enemy, the authoritarian state, is no longer present to direct the efforts against. In the report, however, literature is used about MB's basic *modus operandi* in order to obtain comparative material in relation to what MB-associated organizations in Europe say and what their objective are. This comparison does not claim to be comprehensive, but should instead be seen as an analytical proposal of how it may be possible to investigate the question of whether there is an ideological continuity between the original approach and the thinking (in official documents) that forms the basis of activism in Europe.

3. MB's type of Islamic activism

Since one of the starting points in this report is the assumption that Islamic activism – or Islamism, which is probably the most common term in international research – generally has social and political change as the overriding objective, there is reason to initially problemize the phenomenon. The intention of this chapter is to emphasize two terminological distinctions that are important to have in mind if one wants to understand the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) political project. The one distinction concerns the difference between “moderate” and “radical” activists and the other involves the difference between Islam as depoliticized piety and politicization of the religion's content in a project that aims for the individual, society and state to be governed according to the activists' perceptions of what Islam is.

Moderate Islamic activism

It is probably no exaggeration to claim that the term Islamism in the Swedish context is perceived by many to be threatening and is thereby also attributed a controversial value. This is probably a reason why there is largely a lack of empirical studies in Swedish research regarding this form of religious activism as a Swedish phenomenon. This distinguishes our country from many others in the world where the term is more accepted as an umbrella term for the individuals, groups, parties or movements that work politically based on Islam (see e.g. Hamid 2018; Khan 2016). In connection with the terrorist acts of recent years, some change in the issue of Islamism in the Swedish society has occurred however. Today, it is accepted to discuss and propose measures for what falls under the designation “violent” Islamism, in other words the most extreme variant where the actors believe that terror or military violence is acceptable to force others to submit to a religious view.¹

The consequence of the word Islamism being so intimately associated with armed violence in the Swedish public debate is that there is limited intellectual room for debate and knowledge production regarding the form of Islamism that primarily works within the framework of democratic rules. MB-associated activists in Europe belong to the latter variant of political-Islamic activities where the actors mainly concentrate on finding sympathy for their messages by spreading information and propaganda in civil society and by establishing social contacts in the established political system (see e.g. Vidino 2010, 2012, 2017; Silvestri 2010). They are primarily included in what researchers call “the politics of signification”, that is to say a meaning-creating activity where one tries to convince both Muslims and non-Muslims of various kinds of religious and secular messages and statements (Wiktorowicz 2004-15). MB-associated activists and organisations in Europe seem in other words to work politically in the same way and based on the same democratic premises as any other Western movement, such as the environmental movement or the women's movement. As far as I know, there is accordingly no evidence that activists with ties to MB's European networks have been involved in terror on European territory (also see Vidino

¹ What is called by the collective name Salafism falls outside the scope of this report.

2017-3). This is also pointed out by Olivier Roy (2016:30) in the matter of who was behind the terrorist attacks in Nice and Paris: “none of them belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood (in the case of France, the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France)”. This is also confirmed by the MB-associated umbrella organization FIOE that emphasizes that it stands for an understanding of *jihad* as a defensive action when a sovereign state is subjected to aggression and that it makes an interpretation of Islam that “rejects violence and terrorism” (Muslims of Europe Charter 2008).

In research contexts, a debate has been under way for several years regarding Islamism in general and particularly about the Islamism represented by the Muslim Brotherhood. What kind of movement is it? What does the movement want? Is it a democratic or a radical movement (see Meijer 2012:1-27 for a summary of the topic)? A not uncommon theoretical solution is to make a distinction between “moderate” and “radical” groups in issues related with the political method for social change that is used by various Islamists. Both moderates and radicals strive for society and the state to be governed by their religious interpretations, but the method for achieving this form of government varies between those who see it as a long-term persuasive project and those who want to advance faster and change through armed conflict (see e.g. Hjärpe 2008:9-14). In this context, MB is accordingly a movement that works for an Islamization “bottom up” where Islamic ideas and ideals are gradually put forth in the civil society (Kepel 1994:33). On the other hand, the methodologically radical actors have the ambition to undermine the state’s institutions to thereby introduce an Islamization “top down”. This distinction has been subject to criticism; among other things, there are some who say that the difference is largely meaningless since the moderates and radicals have the same goal with their activism (Bale 2009:19; Tibi 2012:2).

In terms of MB, some argue that it is a violent movement by, for example, pointing to the close relationship between MB and the Palestinian Hamas. In this context, it is not uncommon to quote Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s statements that give religious legitimacy to Hamas’ use of violence and terror in its struggle to expand Palestinian territory (see Farahat 2017:2). In Hamas’ charter (1990:123, Chapter 1, Item 2), the movement indeed says that it “is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood chapter in Palestine”, but this is not necessarily evidence that the parent organization MB bases its activism on violence. The tendency that appears in the literature about MB is, I believe, that there are examples of individual Islamic activists within MB who have been radicalized, but in connection with this, they left the movement to either establish new organizations or they joined an already “violent” context (see e.g. Helbawy 2010). It is difficult to find convincing evidence that MB as an organization promotes terror as a political method even if it is probably possible to find individuals with an MB association who participated in armed conflict.²

Politicization of Islam’s message

Hence, the term Islamism is used by researchers as a designation for how activists in what is called the Islamic movement have politicized parts of the

² One of the most well-known examples of somebody receiving their political training in MB and then going on to violent Islamism is the al-Qaida strategist Abdallah Azzam. Even al-Qaida’s Ayman al-Zawahiri seems to have been inspired in his deeds by ideologists within MB, mainly Sayyid Qutb (Kepel & Milelli [eds.] 2008).

Islamic tradition's historical ideological heritage (see Maher 2017). Jan Hjärpe (2008:12) clarifies the difference between "Islam" as a designation for a "tradition of religious belief and practice...for personal religiousness and perception...the religious tradition in its entire complexity and *Islamism* as a designation of...the religious tradition's invocation for political action. The assertion of religion as a social order". In other words, Islamists have chosen ideas from the Islamic ideological tradition and construed political ideologies from them; a kind of cohesive and meaning-producing system of thought that can legitimize that Islam is something more than non-political piety. Political scientist Bassam Tibi (2012:1), one of those who most ardently argued for the significance of distinguishing the religion Islam from Islamism, formulates the same type of assertion as Hjärpe when he says that "Islamism grows out of a specific interpretation of Islam, but it is not Islam: it is a political ideology that is distinct from the teaching of the religion of Islam". Tibi (*ibid.*) emphasizes that Islam and Islamism are indeed related to one another, but that Islamism is fundamentally an "invention of tradition" that grew forth in connection with social changes in the Middle East at the beginning of the 20th century. The idea of Islamization of the state, mentioned above as a political goal for Islamists is, as pointed out by Dale F Eickelman & James Piscatori (1996:30), a "reinvention of tradition" such that the word state (*dawla*) historically referred to entirely different forms of government than the modern national state. "In the twentieth century, the term [*dawla*] was transformed into *al-dawla al-islamiyya* (the Islamic state)..." (*ibid.*).

One of the most important "inventors" of Islamic ideology is the founder of MB, Hassan al-Banna (see e.g. al-Abdin 1989; Belén Soage 2008, 2009; Mura 2012:69). He constructed a total notion of Islam that was based on the idea that the religion should be seen as a system of ideas, norms and laws that envelope both civil society and the state. Khalil Al-Anani (2016:56) points out that what was typical of al-Banna was that the religion was presented as "a comprehensive creed that should encompass all aspects of human life". Hence, Islam in al-Banna's conceptual world was a matter of personal belief, worship of God, a state, nationality, religion, spirit, deeds, holy text and sword and all of this is written down in the Quran (*ibid.*). Al-Banna accordingly spread the message that "Islam is a comprehensive system, concerned with all aspects of life. It is country and homeland, government and *umma* [Muslim community]. It is ethics and power, mercy and justice. It is culture and law, knowledge and judiciary. It is matter and wealth, gain and prosperity. It is jihad [holy war] and *dawa* [call to Islam], militia and idea. It is true creed and correct worship, indistinctively" (al-Banna quoted from Belén Soage 2009:296)". The perception of Islam as a total system seems to have influenced many Muslims' thinking since it was constructed. Al-Abdin (189:220) believes that this view "has widely influenced religious thinking in the Muslim world". Roald (2014:260) believes that the public circulation of this idea about Islam has been so extensive that many came to believe that this view is the truth about what Islam actually is (see Vidino 2010:54-55). She ties together the spread of al-Banna's idea about Islam with the extensive missionary activities of MB-related ideology that took place in Europe since the 1970s (*ibid.*; see also Maréchal 2015:249). It is of course possible that al-Banna's view has had such an extensive spread that it has become a kind of general perception among both

Muslims and non-Muslims about what Islam is, but this would need to be studied empirically to make conclusions possible about what this area looks like. In any case, the conclusion can be drawn that if somebody considers the message that Islam is a so-called “all-inclusive system that shall encompass every aspect of human life [individual, society and state]”, it is a strong indication that this person (knowingly or unknowingly) has incorporated Islamic concepts into his or her thinking.

Al-Banna’s totalized religious view has been adopted by ideological followers in MB’s tradition. Sayyid Qutb (1980), who in the literature is most known for being the ideologist who contributed to radicalizing Islamic ideology, says in *Milestones* for example that “...when we invite people to Islam, whether they are believers or non-believers, we should keep in mind one fact, a fact which is characteristic of Islam itself and which can be seen in its history: Islam is a comprehensive concept of life and the universe with its own unique characteristics. The concept of human life in all its aspects, and relationships which are derived from it, is also a complete system which has its particular characteristics” (ibid:241). For Qutb, this complete and total system [Islam] is in relation to other so-called jahiliyya systems (ungodliness) of an old or new date, meaning if they are pre-Islamic or created by modern man, such as liberalism, capitalism or socialism. He believed that the Islamists’ task was to Islamize every type of jahiliyya imaginable (ibid.). There is quite a bit to say about Qutb and how he inspired radical Islamism, but in this context he is an illustration of an MB intellectual who incorporated al-Banna’s view into his thinking and politicized this by depicting all other secular ideologies and systems as an enemy to an all-encompassing Islamic religious belief (see Belén Soage 2009 for a comparison between al-Banna and Qutb). Even the contemporary MB-associated leader Yusuf al-Qaradawi adopted al-Banna’s “main contribution to Islamism”, as Belén Soage (2009:564) says, i.e. the message that Islam is an all-encompassing system. “Islam is creed and worship, nation and nationality, religion and state, spirituality and action, Book and sword”, as al-Qaradawi formulates it (ibid.). “We believe in the totality of Islam. Islam is not only spirituality; it is religion and worldly affairs, missionary work and temporal power, creed and law, rectitude and strength. Islam is industry and agriculture. Islam is art. Islam is everywhere”, he also said in a quote that could have been formulated by MB’s founder (ibid.). On one occasion, al-Qaradawi explained: “[Islam] is, on itself, a comprehensive [shamil] doctrine and creed. [Islam] is not satisfied unless it controls society and guides every dimension of life, from entering the toilet to the construction of the state and the establishment of the caliphate” (ibid.). However one perceives the content of Qaradawi’s reflections, they are clear examples of how al-Banna’s message continues to be reproduced by one of the most popular ideological leaders in MB’s global sphere.

The view that Islam is an all-encompassing system where no distinction is made between religion and politics is an idea that is still a part of MB’s activities in Egypt. Al-Anani (2016:65) points out that the current general guide Mohamed Badie points out that MB views Islam as “a comprehensive system encompassing all aspects of life” (ibid.). Badie says himself, Al-Anani points out, that “the Brotherhood does not differentiate between religion and politics. It [MB] views Islam as an inclusive system, it

extends to all life's spheres, it encompasses politics, economics, society, culture, etc. We worship Allah by politics and *da'wa* together and do not separate between them" (ibid.). To repeat the assertion at the beginning of this section, the general guide accordingly expresses that what is typical for Islamic ideology is to dissolve the difference between religion as a private faith and ideology for society and the order of the state.

It is not completely established exactly what status Hassan al-Banna's and Sayyid Qutb's ideas have in the MB-associated network in Europe. In her book *The Muslim Brothers in Europe: roots and discourse*, Brigitte Maréchal (2008a:90) presents the opinion that al-Banna's contribution is "unchallenged" among activists in Europe in part because he is considered to have formulated "a true methodology for the understanding of Islam" (ibid.), at the same time it appears as if there is a higher degree of ambivalence among the activists for Qutb's ideas (ibid.). Experts in MB in Europe otherwise believe that the perception of Islam as an all-encompassing system for human life is a constituent aspect of the religious identity of activists that can be associated with the movement on the continent. Political scientist Dunja Larise (2012:262) argues that the view that Islam should be perceived as "a total way of life" in combination with encompassing al-Banna's gradual change strategy ("bottom up" Islamization), the idea that one belongs to Islam's "middle road" (weigh in all of the Sunni schools of thought in the ideology) and an uncompromising support for the Palestinian cause are the most central aspects of the identity that ties together MB's international networks. Brigitte Maréchal (2008b, 2015:245) also highlights Islam's all-encompassing principle (*Shumuliyyat al-islam*) as important for activists in the MB-associated European network. This also came forth in my interview with one of the leaders of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) in November 2017 when one of the first things he brought up in the talk was that "we [in MAB] view Islam as an all-encompassing system of ideas and ideals that governs our activities".³ To summarize, the aspects brought up above can accordingly be seen as indicators that an individual sympathizes with general parts of MB's concepts, but it does not mean that somebody is necessarily a member of the organization or has sympathies for all parts of the movement's traditional ideological message. When it comes to MB-associated organizations in Europe, official statements are unavailable that confirm that the work in Europe should have the same objective as the work in Egypt, namely that the purpose of the activism would be to "Islamize" the state. Political scientist Sara Silvestri (2010:285) points out, for example, that an MB-associated activist in Europe "is essentially not antagonistic to the state or to secular political institutions at all, but on the contrary seeks a partnership with them". This would indeed be able to be a tactical compromise, but at the same time, it can also be an illustration that MB-associated organizations have adapted to the European reality (ibid.; see also Roy 2007:94-99; Roald 2012). It is accordingly difficult to find publicly available evidence that the classical and long-term objective of MB – to Islamize the state – is of significance for MB-associated organizations in Europe.

³ The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) is one of the 28 member organization in FIOE (Agbor 2009). During the interview, the representative for the organization explained that MAB is not a formal part of MB, but that they follow some MB principles, including the idea that Islam is an all-encompassing system for human life.

Distribution of the message in Sweden

There is reason to believe that al-Banna's message is an ideological starting point for many in Swedish Islamic activist environments. Islamologist Jonas Otterbeck's (2001) review of the periodical *Salaam*, which was published 1986-1998, shows that the authors that *Salaam*'s writers "most often refer to" (ibid:179) are MB ideologists, such as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Sayyid Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (where the latter is the former leader for MB's Pakistani "sister organization" *Jamaat i-islami* whose representatives in Europe can be tied to the Leicester Foundation) (ibid.). The Islamist idea of Islam as an all-encompassing system is, says Otterbeck, "an integrated part of the Islam presented in *Salaam*" (ibid: 191). Judging from Otterbeck's conclusion, it seems as if large parts of the Swedish Islamic activist environment has obtained its "knowledge" of Islam from tone-setting Islamic ideologists with origins in the Middle East (ibid:255). One of the oldest information tests in Swedish about "Islam" in Sweden has the title "Att förstå islam" [Understanding Islam], a test without year, with unclear authorship, but it seems to have been compiled by Mahmoud Aldebe/Sweden's Muslim Association (SMF) in collaboration with the former Swedish Immigration Board sometime in the mid- to late-1980s. The text is permeated by the view that Islam is a total or universal system of ideas that is conveyed from God to all of mankind who should follow the religious rules to satisfy the will of God. Here, it is said, among other things, that "Islam gives people somewhat definite instructions that shall be followed in every aspect of life. The instructions are all-encompassing and include moral, spiritual, social, political and economic sides of existence" (page 9).

The same kind of universal message also permeates the Swedish information from the Islamic Association in Sweden (IFiS) about what Islam is. Here, the association argues, for example, for the view that anyone who "reduces Islam to just a ritual worship lacks understanding of its nature of totality". It is also said that the faith encompasses "all aspects of life" (see Malaekah's text "Vad du inte vet om islam" [What you don't know about Islam]). Roald (2014:256) also points out that the letter sent to Swedish parliamentary parties in 2006 by Mahmoud Aldebe was founded in al-Banna's Islamic view that, because Islam encompasses everything, even that which in a Swedish or Western context is considered to belong to the profane sphere, the Swedish concept of religion must be expanded. None of the Swedish texts presented above refer to Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al-Qaradawi or any other influential author within MB's broader international networks. The assertions in the Swedish information that are taken up above are generally established by verses from the Quran and are generally presented as "Islam", not as a special interpretation of Islam. It is accordingly possible to confirm that what is typical for Islamic ideology is the construction of Islam as a school of thought that should govern essentially everything that people do and that this view has had a somewhat extensive spread in the world since it was constructed by Hassan al-Banna. However, it is unclear if the activists who spread and have spread Islamic messages about an all-encompassing religion also believe that this is an ideal that applies to Sweden or other European countries. When it comes to Sweden/Europe, empir-

ical studies are necessary for it to be possible to draw any more definite conclusions on how the idea of “total” Islam is distributed in the population and what it means.

Islamic identity and dawa

There is, as mentioned, a discussion about MB’s relationship to violence as a method for social change, but it is essentially reasonable to assert that the movement’s fundamental *modus operandi* has generally been about putting into motion a slow social change where people’s “hearts and minds” are influenced through persuasion. Al-Anani (2016) believes that the movement’s founder, Hassan al-Banna, constructed a religiously grounded cosmology for activism the basic contours of which still live on in the movement’s activists in Egypt. Al-Anani makes a distinction between two different objectives for MB. The ultimate goal (“expressive aim”) for the movement is to establish an Islamic state (and preferably a globally spanning Islamic world) where Islamic norms and values govern all people’s actions and thinking (ibid.). This goal can only be achieved, according to Al-Anani, by the activists in the movement realizing other goals at a lower level (“instrumental aims”), such as building a strong and sustainable organization, establishing an effective and comprehensive social network and expanding the social base and expanding the circles for followers and sympathizers (ibid:44-45).

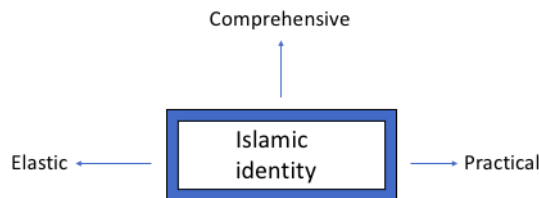


Figure 1. Al-Banna's framework for Islamic identity.

In research circles, there is a critical discussion about MB that is about the movement formulating such vague political goals that it is difficult to know what it wants (see e.g. Meijer 2012:295-321). Al-Anani (2016:55-58) asserts, however, that what is perceived as vagueness in MB was a deliberate strategy for al-Banna when he constructed the frameworks for how the religious identity of the movement’s activists would be built. The Islamic identity shall, according to al-Banna, contain three fundamental components (Figure 1). Islam shall be seen, as noted above, as an all-encompassing or comprehensive faith that includes all aspects of human life (such as private faith, the nation, the state, social relationships); the identity shall be characterized by adaptability and elasticity so it will be practically possible to adapt the religious identity to various political and social contexts, time epochs or

places (ibid.). In addition to this, the significance is emphasized of the political work being characterized by deep faith, precise organization and a long-term and lasting work without rest (ibid.).

The most important “tool” for realizing the goals is to practice persuasion in the scope of what in Islamic circles is called *dawa*. Usually, this word is translated with a “call” to or “missionizing” for Islam (Helbawy 2010: 63-64), but in MB’s interpretation, the term has a broader meaning. For MB, *dawa* is included in the daily “grass roots work” of reformulating people’s identities so that they begin to follow Islamic values (Al-Anani 2016:63). *Dawa* is in other words perhaps the most important tool in MB’s political project to try in the long term to realize an Islamization of the state “bottom up”. In other words, MBs Islamic political model builds on the assumption that an Islamically governed state must be founded in a society where the citizens’ ideas, norms and values are taken from Islam. Hence, according to MB, the Islamization of the state must rest on a solid Islamic set of values in civil society, to use a contemporary concept from Swedish society. Shadi Hamid (2016:81) summarizes MB’s basic model for social change in a simple way: “The reformed Muslim man would raise a good Muslim family. Enough Muslim families, in turn, would give rise to an Islamic society. If society was sufficiently Islamic, then it was only natural that the government would become Islamic as well”. In other words, MB in Egypt has built its political activities on a gradual and slow change process that sooner or later leads to the state being governed by Islamic ideology.

The actual core of MB’s perception of *dawa* can accordingly be summarized with the term Islamic identity. This is clarified by al-Banna’s conceptual world when he points out that the starting point in MB’s political-religious project is to shape the Muslim person’s individual religiousness both emotionally and intellectually like in daily patterns of action (Mura 2012:71). The fifth general guide for MB, Mustafa Mashhur (2000), emphasizes in his book on *dawa* that “the Muslim individual is the main brick in the foundation” [to realize MB’s overriding objective] and for the socialisation process to work, it is of the utmost importance to spread the message (Islam) in lessons, lectures, seminars, bulletins, tracts, papers and journals; to build up a solid organization where the collective has the same direction [to introduce a religious form of governance] and to establish Islamic schools, hospitals, economic and social foundations and media.

To be able to implement the project in the long term, in MB’s view, it is accordingly necessary to build up a public structure of activities and institutions that can expose the individual to Islamic norms and values: an Islamically governed public environment. This way, it becomes possible to create an institutional base for the work to spread the message and persuade Muslims (and others) of the importance of constructing an Islamic identity and practising Islamic norms and values. Hazem Kandil (2015:110), political sociologist at Cambridge, highlights al-Bannas seven-step model for the different phases of social change. “To the extent that the Brotherhood has a plan it is the seven-step design set out in Banna’s *Ela al-Shabab* (To the youth): creating the Muslim individual, whose thinking, emotions and values exemplify Islam; then the Muslim family that lives according to Islam; then the Muslim government that reflects the perfect Muslim society and revives Islamic glory; then uniting all Muslim governments in one organization (a modern caliphate); then reconquering the lost lands of Islam

(Andalusia, the Balkans, Southern Italy, and the Mediterranean isles); and finally assuming ‘tutorship of the world’” (Ibid.). This quote makes it clear that al-Banna meant that the map on the way to an Islamization of the world would be based on the Muslim individual’s religious identity. This strategy, to influence the Muslim individual based on the principle of dawa to begin practising Islam, has also been used by the movement’s activists in Egypt ever since it was formulated by al-Banna. The Muslim Brotherhood member Kamal Helbawy (2010:79) says for example that it is generally the view of gradual Islamization that distinguished MB’s activists at the universities in Egypt from more militant groups. “There were now three Islamic groups operating in the universities and in Egyptian public life [during the 1970s]...the Muslim Brotherhood, which still believed in peaceful reform through the Islamisation of the individual, the family and society, before the establishment of the Islamic state” (see also Rosefsky Wickham 2002:127).

al-Banna is one of the most prominent innovators when it comes to construing Islam as an all-encompassing school of thought that is expected to encompass the majority of everyday acts all the way up to how the state should be run. Even MB’s view of what dawa seems to be an “invention of tradition” that can be linked to the more general change in the view of what Islam is that grew forth in the modernization process in the mid-20th century. Eickelman & Piscatori (1996:35) point out that dawa is mentioned in the Quran (14:46) as God imploring people to seek out the true religion of Islam. They believe that the modern view that dawa is also expected to encompass welfare undertakings (medical clinics, soup kitchens for the poor, inexpensive housing, schools, daycare, etc.) where the state fails is a new interpretation of the religious tradition that is related to faithful Muslims also believing that they have a duty to create balance and justice among people. Linked to the message that Islam is an all-encompassing belief, it would be a failure for Islamic activists if they did not take on social injustices and economic inequality (ibid:36).

4. European organizations linked to MB's tradition

An issue that arose in connection with MSB publishing the preliminary study “The Muslim Brotherhood in Sweden” was that there are activists who can be linked to the movement’s ideological message. This is associated with difficulties in establishing this convincingly, but this does not mean that there is a lack of evidence that this is the case. In this chapter, an account is provided of which European organizations the research in the area presents as being MB-associated in some sense. The presentation begins on a European macro level and then moves on towards Sweden. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on what it may conceivably mean to be linked to MB’s ideological project.

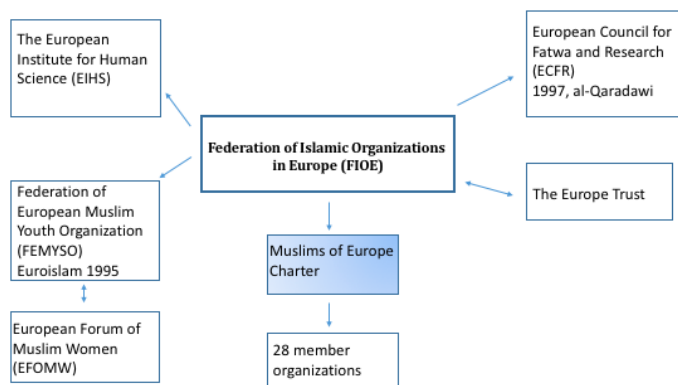
European organizations

The majority of those who study MB in Europe identify the same organizations when they describe the network’s overall organisational structure. On a macro level, we find the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE) based in Brussels that was founded in 1989 (Agbor 2009; Amghar & Khadiyatoulah 2017:56; Colombo 2016a; Colombo 2016b; 2011:495; Khan 2016; Kepel 2004:253; Maréchal 2008ab, 2012, 2015; Pargeter 2013:175-176; Rich 2010:126; Roald 2012:79; Silvestri 2010a:265-287; Vidino 2010:52). Researchers usually describe this organization as an “umbrella organization” for a network consisting of 28 nationally rooted member organizations in various European countries.⁴ As far as I know, there is no detailed research on what kind of operations are conducted in the national organizations, but it seems as if FIOE’s task is to have a coordinating function that builds on a general policy that is prepared with a main European audience in mind (see Muslims of Europe Charter 2008; Maréchal 2012:92). In addition to this task, it can be added that FIOE has focused its efforts for several years on conducting lobby work in the framework of the EU’s structures. Silvestri (2010a:270) points out that FIOE works to encourage Muslims to strive to live according to Islam at the same time that they follow European laws..

Another European organization that is generally linked to MB and FIOE is the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) with two offices in Europe, one in Dublin and one in Leeds (ibid:280-281). ECFR is

⁴ The organisations mentioned most regularly in the research literature are the *Muslim Association of Britain* (MAB) (Pargeter 2013:152-162), *Union des Organisations de France* (UOIF) (ibid:140-146) and *Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland* (IGD) (ibid:164). For those interested in forming an opinion of FIOE’s operations and member organizations, Samuel Etchu Agbor’s Master’s dissertation “Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe” is recommended (2009).

led by the controversial leader Yusuf al-Qaradawi (who lives in Qatar) and the organization was originally founded with the aim of producing *fatwas* (“laws” based in sharia) for European Muslims. Many European Muslims experience difficulties with their religious life in Europe; ECFR’s basic function is to formulate legal religious norms that are adapted to a European context (see e.g. Caeiro 2004).⁵ According to the organization’s charter, it appears as if the 35 legally competent members must be resident in Europe and have a legal degree from an Islamic university in the Muslim world. Silvestri (ibid:282) points out, however, that this is not correct, but rather that the majority come from the Middle East and the Gulf states and that they demonstrate deficiencies in European languages.. Although the organization has a clear European profile, the impression, according to Silvestri, is that ECFR has somewhat strong Arab Sunni Muslim leanings. What influence the organization’s Islamic interpretations have on European Muslims’ thinking is difficult to have a qualified perception of, but I encountered the organization on a few occasions when I interviewed Islamic activists in Malmö. Their perception was that the organization offers a good religious service and they have used Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s formulations in various issues (Carlbom 2012:273). One of the informants, who chose to work within the framework of an activist network other than MB’s, pointed out that he thought the ECFR did a good job “although the majority of the lawyers belong to the Muslim Brotherhood” (he said that he knew the names of several of the members).



Figur 2. Paraplyorganisationen FIOE:s organisatoriska nätverk

The European Institute for Human Science (EIHS) (also known as Chateau Chinon) is another organization established by MB’s European network under the direction of FIOE (Silvestri 2010a:279). This is a place for Islamic education where the goal is to train European based imams; according to FIOE, this institution is one of the most successful initiatives by brothers residing in Europe (ibid). Two of the informants interviewed in connection with this study underwent a year of training at EIHS before they chose to

⁵ ECFR usually summarizes its meetings in a comprehensive document that contains both recommendations and suggestions, as well as fatwas. In one of the documents, from a meeting in Istanbul 6-10 October 2015, the members agreed among other things on it being important to encourage Muslims in Europe to follow European norms that do not “violate definitive Islamic rules” (ibid:7). Moreover, they encourage Muslims to avoid all kinds of extremism and instead practice values such as “tolerance” and “moderation”. Extremism, say the members, “distorts the image of Islam and badly harms Muslims in general and Muslim minorities in particular” (ibid:15).

quit. The Swedish-based informer (the other is active in the UK) says that he was a member of a context with students who professed themselves to follow various interpretations of Islam and that several of his classmates did not identify with any special direction. It was only half of the stay that he was sought out by two study mates from the UK who began talking with him about “the Islamic movement, but which in practice meant the Muslim Brotherhood”. Around the turn of the year 1994/95, at the home of the principal right next to EIHS, he swore the *bay'a* everyone repeats who is admitted to MB (Al-Anani 2016:122).⁶ “In many ways, it felt privileged to belong to this worldwide spiritual network of Muslim activists,” as he formulates it. “I belonged to Ikhwan (the Brotherhood) and it was big”.

The Forum of European Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) is also a European organization that is linked with MB/FIOE and other organizations that are tied to this network (Amghar & Khadiyatou-lah 2017:64; Colombo 2016; Silvestri 2010a:275-276). The initiative to start the youth organisation was taken at the Euro-Islam conference that was arranged on behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Lidingö in Stockholm on 15-17 June 1995. According to my informant, two conferences were held at the conference facility: on the top floor, several renowned researchers met, both Muslims and non-Muslims. At the same time on the floor below, the conference “Young Muslims in Europe” was held, which gathered some 30 young Muslims from different parts of Europe. The youth conference was dominated by representatives from organizations with a connection to MB and similar forms of political ideology, such as Jamat-i islami from the Indian subcontinent and Young Muslims UK (see e.g. Hamid 2018:15-33). Sweden’s Young Muslims (SUM) was involved and arranged the conference and the Swedish organization was represented by SUM. The meeting between the young people was accordingly the start of the formation of FEMYSO and caused one of the participants, the internationally renowned Islamologist Gilles Kepel, at the conference on the floor above to react. In an interview with Bitte Hammargren in Svenska dagbladet on 18 June 1995, he says “I was surprised to see how the youth conference was controlled by the Islamists. They are well-organized, intelligent and have a built-up contact network throughout Europe. With this, they succeeded in taking control over the youth conference, even though they are in the minority among Muslims in Europe” (Hammargren 1995).

The history description (except the quote from Kepel) is included in FEMYSO’s official depiction of how the organization was formed. FEMYSO says: “The first meeting between Muslim Youth Organisations across Europe took place in Sweden in 1995, when the Foreign Ministry of Sweden in co-operation with the Swedish Muslim Youth Organisation SUM (Sveriges unga muslimer), organized an international conference titled ‘Islam in Europe’. The participants at this conference felt the need to establish better communication between the organizations and undertake steps towards greater co-operation and co-ordination. JMF (Jeunes Musulmans de

⁶ Al-Anani (2016:122) points out that there is no fix formula for how this oath is to be said. However, he believes that the following quote illustrates a common variant of the declaration of loyalty: “I pledge with God to abide by the rules of Islam and Jihad for Allah’s sake, and to fulfil and commit myself to the conditions and obligations of the Muslim Brothers, and to listen and obey its leadership whether willingly or not (*fi’l-manshat wa’l-makrah*) as long as he succumbs to Allah. I swear by God on that and he is the witness on my pledge”. By swearing this oath, the member relinquishes his own subjective needs and submits to the will of the movement (ibid.).

France), YMUK (Young Muslims UK) and SUM (Sveriges unga muslimer) were given the responsibility to further develop this idea. In June 1996 a meeting was held in Leicester (UK) with the support of FIOE (The Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe) and the Islamic Foundation (UK). Thirty-five participants attended this meeting representing nineteenth youth and student organisations from eleven countries across Europe. This meeting created strong bonds between those present and resulted in the official launch of the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)” (<https://femyso.org/history/>). This quote illustrates that FEMYSO is a part of an organizational context where several of the cooperative organizations mentioned in the quote are known among researchers to be a part of the broader MB-associated European network (see e.g. Rubin [ed.] et al 2010).⁷

Swedish organizations

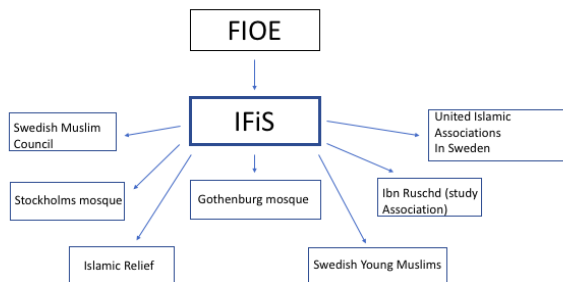
The Swedish member organization in FIOE is the Islamic Association in Sweden (IFiS) whose head office is located in the Stockholm mosque at Medborgarplatsen. The information on membership is not taken out of thin air, but rather obtained from IFiS’ own articles of association, which in the version I have, were adopted in June 2012 at the association’s congress. Under the heading “Status”, point c, IFiS says that “the association is a founding member of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE) and follows its general guidelines” (page 1). Under the heading “Congress”, point g, it states that the European umbrella organization “FIOE (Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe) has the right to send representatives to the congress with a right to speak” (page 4). “Dissolution” is the heading under which IFiS says that “upon a possible dissolution of the association, assets shall be transferred to FIOE (Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe) unless otherwise stated in the dissolution decision” (page 8). The formulations quoted here undeniably give the impression that the relationship between IFiS and FIOE is relatively close. IFiS follows FIOE’s guidelines, has a place open at the congress for FIOE and wants assets to be transferred to FIOE upon a possible closure of IFiS. In other words, members of IFiS follow what is decided in FIOE, an organization that the majority of researchers, as pointed out above, in this area have link to MB (Figure 3).⁸

It is also clear from the quotes that IFiS is not just any member of FIOE, but one of the organizations that was involved in founding the umbrella organization. What this means is not completely clear, but something that should be able to be said is that actors involved in founding an organization are very likely also aware of which other people and organizations are involved in the founding and what the ideological direction of their thinking is. The opposite, that IFiS activists are unaware of who else participated in the founding, seems unreasonable when the establishment of Islamic organizations is largely about obtaining influence in Europe regarding

⁷ Vidino (2017:2, 10) believes that there are three different kinds of MB-associated activism in the Western world. They are 1. “The pure Brothers”: they are formal members and subject to the formal organization’s power structure. 2. “Brotherhood spawns”: organizations that are established by activists with strong personal ties to MB. 3. “Organizations influenced by the Brotherhood”: organizations that are founded by activists that have moved/are inspired by MB’s thinking with unclear connections to the parent organization. The distinctions appear reliable, but unfortunately Vidino does not exemplify what organizations are involved.

⁸ The connection to FIOE is also made clear on IFiS’ own website. Under the heading “charter”, a translated version is presented of the common position paper FIOE worked out together with the 28 member organizations in the 2000s.

issues related to Islam and Muslims: an area where several individuals and political activists struggle to mobilize new followers, money and the preferential right of interpretation in relation to both Muslims and non-Muslims (Kepel 2004). It seems unreasonable that the activists in IFiS would act so unprofessionally that they are involved in building up a European umbrella organization without knowing who they are cooperating with. Moreover, the Swedish Muslim Chakib Benmakoluf, well-known by many in Islamic activist circles, was the Chairman of FIOE for a few years in the mid-2010s (Maréchal 2008b; Roald 2012:79), which further strengthens the impression of IFiS' ties to MB-related European activists.



Figur 3. Swedish organizations in the network of FIOE/IFiS (Islamic Association of Sweden).

In terms of IFiS' ideological ties to MB-associated activism (through FIOE), these are statements that are also formulated by people included in or previously included in Islamic activism. One of my informants in Malmö, who I met during my and Sara Johnsdotter's field work in Rosengård 1995-1998, was responsible for a part of MB's religious propaganda in Europe in the 1980s (see Otterbeck 2001 for an in-depth illustration of the contents of the propaganda). In interviews 20 years ago, he was the one who called my attention to activists who work based on MB's political model having been gathered in IFiS. During our contact in connection with this report, he responded to my direct question that it is the "Islamic Association in Stockholm" that gathers MB activists in Sweden. This person has left MB as an organization because he, as he describes it himself, felt "locked" by being bound by their hierarchical structure (see Al-Anani 2016:99-118). However, he has not left MB's fundamental model for social change. Intellectually, he is still an "Ikhwan", or as he himself formulates it, "I basically have a MB mindset...I see it as important that the individual practices Islam, that the family does so and that it is important to spread Islamic ideas in society". However, he fills the model with a different content compared with when he was involved in more organized work for MB. He seems to belong to the "post-Ikhwan" category that Roald (2012) believes has grown forth in connection with many having left MB's hierarchical organizational structure after some time in Europe.

Another person who seems to have been involved in MB's Swedish network through his earlier activities in the Stockholm mosque is Mahmoud Aldebe who became known for formulating somewhat straightforward statements about, among other things, Islamic "special legislation" in Swedish public life. In connection with the so-called Omar Mustafa case, he worded himself unambiguously regarding which Swedish organizations

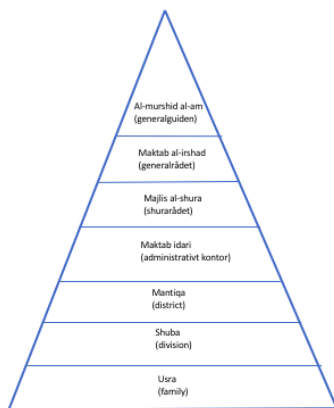
are controlled by activists rooted in MB's ideological tradition. In an open letter, he said among other things that "The Muslim Brotherhood is in Sweden established under the name Islamic Association in Sweden...the large mosque in Stockholm is owned, controlled and governed today by the Islamic Association, which has its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, Ikhwan al-muslimun, which is a religious movement that has an inherent social and political direction...the [Islamic] Association's representatives are active in large parts of organized Islam in Sweden. They control, among other things, the United Islamic Associations in Sweden (FIFS), the Ibn Rushd Study Association (IR, Sweden's Young Muslims (SUM), the Stockholm mosque and the Gothenburg mosque. Through their member organizations, they govern the Muslim Council of Sweden (SMR)" (The letter was downloaded from Torbjörn Jerlerup's website on 07/03/2017). One may note that he uses the word "roots" when he describes what kind of connection the leaders in the organizations have to MB. This indicates, in my opinion, that the tie is mainly ideological such that it is MB's basic Islamic principles that govern the work of the organizations rather than that they are controlled by directives from the Egyptian parent organization. Of course, there may be individuals who are formal members of MB in these organizations, but one should be aware that it is mainly a special way of thinking about social change that has inspired many politically active Muslims (see e.g. Pargeter 2013:136-179).

How should we relate to this kind of evidence that MB-sympathetic activists and operations appear to be a phenomenon that exists in Sweden? The easiest thing to do, as activists in the non-profit sector tend to do, is to dismiss people and assertion as lies based on conspiracy theory thinking (see e.g. Pettersson 2017). Something that indicates that there is some truth to the statements is that those speaking are or have been involved in the Swedish Islamic activist environment for many years. This means that they have a so-called "insider" understanding of which people, organizations and religious ideologies organize the approach in these circles. So they can be viewed as well-familiar with a certain type of Islamic political world of symbolism that non-Muslim citizens do not have access to in the same way because they rarely or never come into contact with the activists. Their insights are accordingly based on them being able to obtain knowledge for several years about how people and organizations relate to one another and how different individuals and groups interpret Islam. This does not mean that they know everything, but they are in a significantly better position than the common man to assess and classify various ideological religious views.

Organization in the Middle East and the EU

In general, the organization MB is thus known for advocating a slow working Islamization process "bottom up" where attempts should be made to persuade Muslims of the message that Islam is an all-encompassing or total system for human life (Al-Anani 2016; Kandil 2015). The work with this in the Middle East seems to be framed in a relatively advanced and hierarchically structured organizational structure that does not seem to have been possible to be recreated in Europe by the activists who sympathize with the movement's *modus operandi*. In other words, judging from what some of the newer research has arrived at, the parent organization MB is on paper

almost comparable to an advanced and well-conceived “apparatus” for socialization of new sympathizers and members of which there is no equivalent in the Western world. This is illustrated in Hazem Kandil’s book *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood* (2015) and in Khalil Al-Anani’s work with the similar title *Inside the Brotherhood* (2016). Below, I take up some basic aspects of MB’s organization and then the description shifts to Europe and FIOE. The emphasis in this illustration is on Al-Anani’s work since it provides the most detailed account of MB’s organization. Because of the complexity of the subject, the illustration is brief: anyone interested in more detail about how MB is organized can be recommended to read those two books.



Figur 4. Muslim Brotherhood vertical structure (al-Anani 2016:104)

Al-Anani (2016:99-117) highlights that MB’s vertical structure is divided into seven levels (Figure 4). The lowest level is *usra* (family) and consists of five to seven individuals who meet weekly to discuss religious and political issues. This level was originally created, according to Al-Anani (ibid:105), to influence potentially new members to MB’s special ideological and religious views, but in recent years, it has, according to Al-Anani, mostly come to be about discussing and planning more day-to-day activities. The next level is *Shu’ba* (division) and it consists of five or six *usar* (plural for *usra*). Al-Anani emphasizes that this is the most important level in MB’s hierarchical structure since *only formal members* are permitted to be involved in its work. It is this level that is responsible for the organization’s social, and political objectives being achieved within a given geographic area. “It runs the Brotherhood’s *dawa*, recruiting, and social activities through its local network”, as Al-Anani (ibid:106) words it. *Mantiqa* (districts) are composed of three to four divisions (*shu’ab*) that meet regularly to discuss implementation of various plans or programmes. To be able to be active at this level, it is a requirement that the person has spent at least two years within MB’s structure. Above the levels addressed so far is the *Maktab Idari* (Administrative unit) that governs the work at a regional level and meets a few times a month to plan activities in a certain area. The third highest level in MB’s vertical organizational structure is the shura council (*Majlis al-Shura*) that is comprised of nine members from shura councils in various administrative units. According to Al-Anani (ibid:107), to be elected to MB’s shura council, one must be at least 30 years old, have been an active member for at least five years and be a member of a shura council in one of the administrative units (*Maktab Idari*). *Maktab al-Irsad* (Guidance Bureau) is the second highest

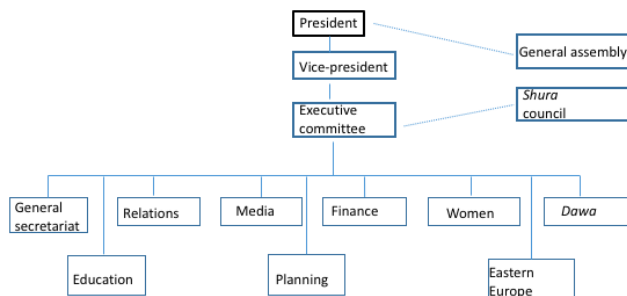
level in the vertical structure and it is here that the highest executive power in the organization is located. The unit's 16 members are elected by the shura council in a secret election process and to be up for a position in this executive committee, one must live up to the requirements of being at least 30 years old, being a member of MB's national shura council and having been active in MB for at least ten years (ibid:108). At the top of MB's pyramidal structure is the *Al-murshid al-'am* (General guide) whose task is to represent the movement in society and to ensure that the lower levels in the organization strive to achieve the movement's objectives (ibid:110). All plans, policy programmes and strategies must be presented to and approved by the general guide before they are put to action, but according to Al-Anani, this does not involve unlimited power as the shura council has the possibility to remove him if he does not follow MB's rules and ordinances (ibid.).

The vertical level is supplemented with a more horizontal level that primarily falls under the "executive committee" (the Guidance Bureau). One of the units is called "Sections" (*aqsam*) and under them fall activities that have to do with spreading the message (*dawa*), socialization (*tarbiyya*), students, charity, workers, farmers, officials, families (*usar*), sisters and external affairs (ibid:105). Another of the units is "Committees" (*lijan*) that work with financial issues, policies, service, law, media, statistics, promotion and the press. The third horizontal unit is called "Units" (*wahadat*) and here are planning issues, elections, camps, sporting activities, complaints and scouts (ibid:105). Al-Anani does not take up any details concerning the exact contents of the various tasks, but the depiction still provides a picture that MB in Egypt has constructed an advanced and modern organizational structure that is nearly "all-encompassing" in its coverage of geographic areas and human activities. One can also confirm that it is relatively difficult to be fully accepted as an "Ikhwan" in this structure as it requires that somebody has been active in the organization for many years to be able to advance upwards in the hierarchy.

When it comes to Europe, there is no evidence that the structure outlined above has been reproduced by activists who sympathize with MB's concepts. What exists in the matter of membership appears mostly to be anecdotal evidence. Muslim Brother Kamal Helbawy (2010:67) points out that *usra* (family) is the lowest level in MB's hierarchy, something that Khaled Hroub (2010:67) comments by saying that this is a network that can be seen as the "backbone of any MB organisation in any country", but this assertion is not supported by any data. One of the informants in this report tried for a time in the 1990s together with a few others to start a *usra* (family), but it does not seem to have worked. "A while after I returned [from studies in France], I spoke with one of the leading figures in the Muslim Brotherhood's Swedish branch about how I as a Swedish-speaker could find a small spiritual study group, called *usra* as almost all internal activities in MB took place in Arabic. We therefore started a Swedish-speaking group, but it didn't take long before it all just petered out." The content of the quote might be interpreted in different ways. On one hand, one could say that there seems to have been MB-associated activists in the country who were prepared to enter an MB-related socialization process. On the other hand, the quote might show that it was difficult, at least in the 1990s when the informant was active as an activist, to bring about MB-associated activism among Swedish-speaking Islamic activists. What is presented about *usra* does not mean that

there are such activities in Europe or Sweden, but there is a widespread lack of published evidence that can prove anything about the phenomenon. In the matter of membership and socialization in MB's concepts, empirical studies would be needed, preferably ethnographic, that can contribute to knowledge development in the area.

FIOE



Figur 5. FIOE:s organisation (Agbor 2009)

The umbrella organization FIOE is organized in a way that shows at least some similarities to the horizontal structure of the parent organization as addressed above (Figure 59). The three top levels of the president, vice president and the executive committee are linked to a general assembly and, like MB in Egypt, a shura council (Agbor 2009:43). Connected to these three, seemingly decision-making bodies, are nine units that, judging from their headings, have different areas of responsibility. Here are a general secretariat, units for education, relations, planning, media, Eastern Europe, finances, women and *dawa* (call to or missionizing for Islam) (ibid.). As far as I know, there is no empirical research done within FIOE that can answer questions about whether or not the units mentioned above conduct any activities at all and how it works if so. Even if there are similarities with the parent organization (units for media, spreading Islam's message, finances, education, the shura council), FIOE's structure on paper shows a less "all-encompassing" activity than MB in Egypt. As mentioned above, the 28 nationally based member organisations should also be added to this description of the organization structure, of which the Islamic Association in Sweden (IFiS) is one.⁹

"A school of thought"

The fact that researchers and former Islamic activists link certain organizations with MB is not evidence that everyone active within the framework of their work is formally a member of MB. Nor is it evidence that all actors in or around the organization sympathizes with MB's ideology or political strategies for social change. However, it seems reasonable to conclude that if somebody is active within the framework of the European or national organizations presented above, it is an indication that one is active within the

⁹ The former Muslim brother Mohammed Louizi says in an interview that FIOE works based on 20-year plans. This information is obtained from an interview in Arabic media with the former chairman Chakib Benmakhlouf who is to have said: "Within the FIOE we have a plan of action over twenty years: we have short, medium and long term plans. Unfortunately, some events that happen from time to time negatively impact the progress of our operation. Some Muslims have quickly felt attracted to marginal skirmishes, and all that has disturbed our global action plan" (see Colombo 2016).

framework for MB-associated activities. In MB's case, this is associated with major difficulties for outsiders to know anything about who are members. As Al-Anani (2016) shows, MB is no political party somebody can become a member of by filling out an application that is sent in with the post. MB's classical process in terms of membership builds on there being several barriers built into the organization that are there to ensure that only the most orthodox activists can enter the movement's core activities and obtain influential positions (ibid.).

A possible membership is preceded by several months of indoctrination where the prospective member will be socialized into MB's special thinking. The recruit will, as Al-Anani (2016:82-99) points out, become a Muslim who constructs his Islamic identity according to MB's assumptions about how such an identity should work. In other words, a member of the movement is expected to internalize an MB-habitus, to use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology. This habitus is characterized by mental dispositions that are typical for MB's perspective of what a social change requires of individual activists (ibid.). "Belonging to the Brotherhood is belonging to Islam as understood by the Brotherhood", as one of al-Anani's (2016:131) informants formulates it. In terms of membership in MB in Europe, to my knowledge there are no studies available where researchers successfully established how many people in Europe are formally members of the organization. Vidino (2017:8-9) probably makes a correct observation when he says that if the identification of the number of MB-associated persons is only about formal membership, it is a matter of extremely few people, perhaps a hundred on the entire continent. But if the identification instead concerns those who have taken in ideas and political methods, the number of MB-associated activists increases (although it is unclear by how much). Speaking about MB in terms of a spiritual and ideological cross-border network is an idea that originally seems to have been formulated by the movement's founder Hasan al-Banna. He saw MB as an idea and creed that was not bound by time and space (ibid:9).

As one of the leaders of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB)¹⁰ formulated it in an interview with me in November 2017, it is reasonable to differentiate between the organization MB and the activists or others who are outside it, but sympathize with MB's ideological model for how Islamic work should be organized. Exactly what it means to sympathize (or be inspired by MB) is not covered by any detailed empirical research as far as I know. However, we can hypothetically imagine that there are variations in the awareness among the activists in and around MB's networks when it comes to what they are involved in. Mahmoud Aldebe, having belonged to MB's activist core in Sweden, probably has a high level of awareness of what he was involved in. At the same time, there may be Muslims who for various reasons are drawn into these circles without being completely clear about exactly what they are getting involved in. Pernilla Ouis & Ann Sofie Roald (2003:310) say, for example, about their time as Islamic

¹⁰ The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) is, like the Swedish IFIS, a member of FIOE. MAB was founded in 1997 on the initiative of the Egyptian "brotherhood creator" Dr. Kamal Helbawy. In an official statement about its tie to MB, the organization said that there is some connection to the movement and that MAB reserves the right to be proud of MB's humane principles, at the same time that the organization feels that it has the right to deviate from MB's ideology or other Islamic activist groups' views (Pargeter 2013:161).

activists in Sweden that they were completely unaware that several of the national Swedish organizations “belonged ideologically to the Muslim Brotherhood (*ikhwan al-muslimun*)”. This was also how it was for one of the report’s Swedish informants who realized that he was involved in European MB’s activities only after a period of training in Chateau Chinon. One of the British imams who were interviewed in the scope of the work with this report was also unaware about which school of thought governed a charity he worked in for a time. “A couple of years ago I worked for an Islamic charity in the UK. However, I didn’t realize until after several months that it was dominated by the Ikhwan network. I became aware when I saw that they distributed typical MB literature, such as books by Sayyid Qutb”. The likelihood is accordingly large that there are a number of young Muslims who feel that they want to do something for Islam and who therefore get involved in one of the associations established in the country for a few year without necessarily having actively sought out organizations inspired by MB’s school of thought. This view is also conveyed by Pia Karlsson Minganti’s (2004) study *Muslima* the data of which seems to have largely been obtained in circles in and around IFiS/Stockholm mosque in Södermalm. The impression one gets from the study is that several of the young women active for Islam seem somewhat uninterested in which Islamic direction they make their own.

Hence, it is misleading to say that MB conducts activities in Sweden and to be satisfied with such a confirmation. As Maréchal (2012) noted, the situation is significantly more complex than if it was about MB-associated activists and organizations in Europe being governed by the parent organization in Egypt. What it essentially seems to be about for the MB-associated activists and organizations in Europe is that they are participants in an Islamic political and ideological network the contours of which are relatively vague. “What makes the Brotherhood so complex is that it consists of various types of superimposed structures, some of them evolving out of the local European situation, while others trace their history back to the organisation’s country of origin”, as Maréchal (*ibid*:91) words it when she seeks to characterize the European part of the movement. Her description is in line with how activists who are a part of this circle themselves describe the relationship between different MB units. FIOE’s first chairman, Ahmed Al-Rawi, highlights that the European activists’ link to MB is basically about the European organizations being involved in a cross-border ideological project (Johnson 2010:198). “We are part of nobody outside of Europe, but we have good relations with the Brotherhood”, as he says. He says that “we are interlinked with them [MB] with a common point of view... we have a good close relationship” (*ibid.*). Here, Al-Rawi formulates roughly the same thing as the deputy chairman of MB in Egypt, Dr. Mohamed Habib, when he describes that there are local “branches” that sympathize with MB’s ideological principles at the same time that they are autonomous enough to weigh in contextual aspects in their activities: “There are entities that exist in many countries all over the world. These entities have the same ideology, principles and objectives but they work in different circumstances and different contexts. So, it is reasonable to have decentralization in action so that

every entity works according to its circumstances and according to the problems it is facing and in their framework”.¹¹ It seems rational for an Islamic movement of MB’s kind to base the work on common ideological premises and at the same time realize that the everyday work must be linked to the obstacles and opportunities provided in different political contexts. Another theoretical approach is to frame the European network as a participation in “a school of thought” (Pargeter 2013:136). A previous spiritual guide within MB tried to clarify what this means: “There are many organizations that do not belong to the Muslim Brothers. For example, Shaykh al-Qaradawi. He is not a Muslim Brother, but he was formed according to the doctrine of the Brothers. The doctrine of the Brothers is a written doctrine that has been translated in all languages...Everyone who believes in this doctrine can be considered as a Muslim Brother” (Pargeter 2013:177).¹²

The advantage of seeing it this way is that it becomes possible to shed light on the complex Islamic political world activists with ideological roots in MB are in and at the same time keep the insight that the movement is based on a programme the basic features of which were formulated by Hassan al-Banna in the middle of the 20th century. Ibrahim Mounir, in charge of MB’s international section, summarized the interconnected groups as a loose coordination between “like-minded groups” during the questioning in the British parliament in connection with the investigation of MB, but that “this coordination does not necessitate adopting the name ‘Muslim Brotherhood’ or its ideology. The only requirement for this coordination is that it occurs under the principle of Islam’s comprehensiveness which focuses on deeds for this world and the hereafter” (House of Commons 2016:22). In other words, the bearing idea seems to be that one perceives the religion based on al-Banna’s construction of Islam as an all-encompassing system for all human life.

Restraint

Among researchers, it is a well-known fact that those who are involved in MB’s network are often restrictive about openly telling about their possible ties to the movement (Pargeter 2013:137). The reasons for why this is so seem to vary. Pargeter highlights that one reason – especially for the first generation that has established several European organizations – is that they bring with them a mentality from the home countries where it was associated with great risk to be too clear about their affiliation with MB. The fear of being open about their involvement in the movement could accordingly put at risk their security in Europe as well, perhaps by the home country’s security service beginning to harass friends or families. Another reason for restraint is that the movement in Europe has had the goal of serving as a gathering force for Muslims on the continent (ibid.). Excessive clarity could accordingly serve to repel many Muslims who do not sympathize with Islamic activists’ world view. Another conceivable reason is also that there is some measure of shame involved in being forced to answer for – in relation to

¹¹ This statement was made in Al Ahrar Daily on 16 June 2008. The interview was downloaded from MB’s international website on 12/05/2017.

¹² In the book *Priorities for the Islamic movement in the coming phase* (1990), Al-Qaradawi is clear that he has MB to thank for his original political socialization: “Wherever I mention the Islamic movement, the movement I mean is the Islamic movement in its all-embracing sense, not any particular movement. However, in most examples I will be citing the Muslim Brotherhood, because that is the movement where I grew up; I experienced all its hardships and good times, and shared in many of the events it witnessed over almost a half-century” (page 4).

secular actors in Europe – what conservative or anti-Semitic MB activists in the Middle East express openly (ibid:138-139). The minority position in combination with appearing as the representative for all Muslims means that the European activists do not want to risk being associated with values that are generally taboo in the European public forum. The latter is something one can observe in terms of MB-associated Swedish organizations that invite guests to their conferences who formulated anti-Semitic ideas that come to the awareness of the Swedish public through, among other things, social media or Youtube (Granstrand 2012).

There appears to be different ways for the surrounding world to relate to this restraint from European activists in MB's network. Some seem to perceive anything other than openly formulated direct admission of affiliation to MB-associated activism as reason enough to take the view that nobody in Sweden works based on MB's doctrines (see Ackfeldt et al., 2017). In studies done outside Sweden, it is not entirely uncommon to assert that the restraint is because activists with ties to MB's religious and social networks practice "doubletalk", meaning that they direct one message adapted to Western values in relation to a non-Muslim European audience at the same time that the authentic and "true" message is directed inwards at a Muslim audience. One of the most renowned advocates of this view is the journalist Caroline Fourest (2008:24-27) who claims that it is virtually built-in to the actual MB movement to practice a strategy of double messages (also see Kepel 2004:280). This argument is also found among researchers, such as Schuck (2015:502-503) who believes that it is almost typical for movements like MB to be vague about their actual political interests or to straight out lie about their affiliation with MB. Whether or not it is exceptional for MB in particular to be ambiguous or practice "doubletalk" or if it might be something that simply characterizes all political activities, even Western politicians and political parties, is nothing that is taken up by the authors quoted here. As Pargeter above shows, one should probably be cautious about too quickly drawing conclusions about the activists' restraint about a possible affiliation to MB or the movement's school of thought being based on a hidden agenda that is set on the actual matter being to take over the Western world's political institutions. "Laying low" about possible ties to MB can just as well be due to the activists perceiving that the political surroundings perceive MB as a controversial movement and therefore choose to act based on a principle of caution.

Under any circumstance, there may be advantages for activists in MB's network to be clearer about what kind of doctrinaire or other ties they have to the parent organization's programme. As Pargeter says, there are many who use the restraint to paint a threatening picture where MB in Europe is working to introduce sharia in the national states where they are active (ibid:139). Others make the mistake, due to ignorance of MB's reformist method, of associating the movement with violence and terror. But of course those with ideological roots in MB are realistic enough to realize the limitations of the possibility of transferring Hassan al-Banna's or Sayyid Qutb's ideas in an unchanged form to Sweden or other European countries. Hence, it is imaginable that a greater openness about possible affiliation with MB's programme could benefit the Islamic activists who, due to the restraint, are subjected to some prejudiced statements. "Many of those who work based on MB's ideology in Sweden seem afraid to say anything about this, but they

don't have to be because Sweden is a democratic society in contrast to many people's home countries," as one of the former activist informants in the report put it in an interview.

In the political environments where MB's ideology was created, it was probably functional to show restraint about their affiliation and keep it secret who the members of the organization were. In a democratic society, where transparency is required, the situation is different. Here, it can instead be the case that this restraint is at risk of creating a suspicion of all Muslims, including those who are traditionally pious without having politicized their faith. To get away from the idea that Islam and Muslims are a homogeneous phenomenon where everyone has an interest in an Islamization of Europe, it is necessary to highlight variations that exist among those who identify themselves as Muslims. Many are today aware that Islamic activism is linked to smaller groups – such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and *Salafism* – and not to everyone who in some way believes in Islam. Instead of contributing to the prejudices about Muslims decreasing, the MB-associated organizations risk contributing to a strengthening of stereotypes about Islam and faithful Muslims. Partly through their restraint or secrecy, and partly by the organizations building their identity politics activities on presenting all Muslims as politically oriented in a homogeneous religious project.

5. Identity politics strategy

Today, there is somewhat extensive research and debate about MB's progress in Egypt and about what the movement wants with its religiously based activism. The possibility of going through all this research in this report is limited so in this section, only the most basic aspects of MB will be illustrated. Given the premise, that MB is a political movement that strives for social change based on a desire to mobilize new followers, the orienting question in this chapter was: has the movement's basic model for social change been changed in Europe or is the MB-associated activism still governed by the classical method and objective?

Europe and dawa

Looking at documents prepared by activists and organizations that can be linked to MB's activities, it is possible to confirm that the principle for social change, *dawa*, is an idea that lives on in Europe as well. This is made clear in the information text presented above, "Att förstå islam" [Understanding Islam], which was published sometime at the end of the 1980s by Sweden's Muslim Association (SMF) with Mahmoud Aldebe (who according to his own words was active in MB's network when the text was prepared) as the project manager. In the text (pages 43-44), the author (unclear whether it is SMF, Aldebe or somebody else) argues that active members of various associations must act collectively to bring order to the *dawa* work. It is important, according to the author, to "balance the responsibility between the duty to protect and serve the Muslim society in the countries of immigration and the duty to carry Islam further to the non-Muslim society" (page 43). The objective for Islamic congregations in Sweden presented in the text lies within the framework of MB's *dawa* method, which is described above, namely "to protect Muslims from slipping out of the Islamic way of living, to actively invite to Islam, to spread information about Islam" and "to obtain Islamic libraries, daycare centres and schools" (page 44). The text's general message is that the Islamic identity must be protected and reproduced in Sweden at all costs; a message that MB's founder Hasan Al-Banna would probably agree with if he were still alive.

Dawa is also included in the MB-associated ideologist's Yusuf al-Qaradawi's arguments for what he believes the Islamic movement should prioritize in its Western activities. He brings up several reasons for this, including that "[the] Islamic presence [in the West] is required for spreading the Message of Islam and getting Islam's voice heard among non-Muslims

through good word, rational dialogue and exemplary conduct". For al-Qaradawi, *dawa* is accordingly a kind of fundamental religious duty for those he considers to be a part of the Islamic movement who are in the Western world. Like the author of the Swedish information text, he says that the target group for *dawa* is non-Muslims, but for al-Qaradawi Muslims are an equally important audience. He believes, among other things, that it is of major importance to the Islamic activists who are in the West to practice *dawa* in the, as he sees it, growing Muslim diaspora on the continent so that they do not fall out of their Islamic identity. One of the most important tasks for the Islamic movement in the Western world, emphasizes al-Qaradawi, is to not let those who live outside their country of origin "to be swept away by the whirlpool of the materialistic trend that prevails in the West" (ibid:88).

Dawa being a living idea in the MB-associated European network is also clarified by Hassan al-Banna's grandson, Tariq Ramadan (2002), who in recent years has had a somewhat prominent role in European public life. In the article "Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?" (ibid.), he discusses among other things the question of whether Muslims have an ambition of the Islamization of Europe and conversion of people. He links the question to various things, including *dawa* (ibid:213). *Dawa* in Europe is, according to Ramadan, a concept that must be redefined – however, he says nothing about what original definition it is that should be redefined – to the meaning of "bearing witness". "Europeans have to understand an important point," says Ramadan, "and sometimes Muslims must be told so as well," namely that "Muslims do have a universal message ('we have sent you but as mercy for the world', Quran), but their real role is to 'bear witness'. *Dawa* means that, wherever a Muslim is, he or she is a witness of Islam's message, through his or her speech, behaviour, and manner of dealing with people. To bear witness is the Muslims' principal role, not to convert others" (ibid.). The principle of *dawa* is accordingly also important for a, compared for example to al-Qaradawi, such a "diplomatic" activist and religiously versed person such as Tariq Ramadan. An, this is a principle that is directly related to the perception that Islamic ideas and ideals are a message that were revealed to all of mankind, not just Arab Sunni Muslims. Ramadan's "new" definition of *dawa* is framed by an interpretation that can be traced to what characterizes MB's view of how an Islamic identity should be construed. In other words, Islam's message shall not just be conveyed in private contexts or in clearly delimited religious contexts like in mosques or Islamic organizations. For Ramadan, *dawa* is a practice that should take place in the daily lives of Muslims when they speak or interact with people in general. It is accordingly possible to assert that Ramadan's view is also framed by MB's overall idea that Islam is an all-encompassing system for human action. Islam, as Ramadan portrays it, is thus something that shall characterize Muslims' actions even in contexts that are not directly related to the worship of God.

FIOE, the umbrella organization researchers link to MB's European network, has built up an organizational structure where they have units for several different areas of responsibility, including a special unit for *dawa* (Agbor 2009:43). To my knowledge there is no research on what the unit works with in detail, but given that *dawa* has been institutionalized, it can be

interpreted as if FIOE considers it to be important that the organization contributes to spreading the message of Islam on the continent. Several of FIOE's objectives are, however, within the scope of MB's general framework regarding *dawa* (FIOE "Objectives" 2017).¹³ One of the most important objectives is, for example, to "introduce Islam and its values" in Europe and create an Islamic culture that is adapted to the European context. Another important objective is to make it possible for Muslims to carry out their religious duties, preserve their cultural identity and safeguard their social and religious affairs. A third objective could be gathered directly from Mustafa Mashhur's book on *dawa* referred to above. For FIOE, it is an objective to encourage Muslims to build up public institutions, such as mosques, schools and other institutions for cultural and social activities (*ibid.*). The same thing is also formulated in the "Muslims of Europe Charter" that was negotiated forth among FIOE's 28 member organizations, namely that Muslims in Europe have "the right, as religious communities, to establish mosques, religious, educational and welfare institutions" (page 5) (see Maréchal 2012: 89-11 for a discussion on the content of this document). Even if FIOE avoids the word *dawa* in its objectives document, it is possible to show similarities with MB's original plans, as they are formulated above, for the importance of practising *dawa* as a strategy to primarily influence Muslims' Islamic identity. Influencing Muslims' religious identity might even be said to be the actual point of building up FIOE and other organizations.¹⁴

The Swedish member organization in FIOE, IFiS, does not use the word *dawa* when they describe the organization's objectives, but the logic in their activities is largely identical to FIOE's – which is not strange since IFiS itself says that it follows the umbrella organization's general policy. Just like in MB's original political project, Islamic identity is in focus in IFiS' work and objectives. The significance of working in various ways for this identity to be able to be reproduced over time runs like a unifying factor through the articles of association. The requirement on new members is, for example, that they must "behave in accordance with the decrees of Islam" (point c under the heading "Membership", page 2). A member shall also "work loyally in accordance with the Association's [Islamic] objectives and aims" (*ibid.*). One might say that this is not a particularly remarkable requirement considering it involves an Islamic association. However, the point is not to shed light on the requirements *per se*, but to illustrate a logic, namely that IFiS' requirements on the members are within the scope of MB's classical Islamic political model for how the political religious work

¹³ FIOE's objectives were downloaded from <http://www.fioe.org/node/173> on 05/05/2017.

¹⁴ In a raid on the home of Youssef Nada, one of those identified as MB's financially most important persons from having managed the bank al-Taqwa, a document was found that many perceive as controversial (Vidino 2010:78-79). The document's authenticity is said to have been confirmed by several European security services and, according to information presented to me in an interview with a security expert who long worked with issues concerning MB, also by a few British researchers. The document is called "The Project" (1982) and contains what some claim is a "plan of approach" for how MB's political projects will be realized in Europe. The document contains several points of departure for what its authors believe the movement should focus its efforts on. Several points of departure are presented, including those that show some similarities with how FIOE formulates its objectives. For example, it is said that participation in the project must avoid political isolation on one hand and on the other work with "permanent education and institutional work" (Fourth point of departure). It is also considered to be important "to construct social, economic, scientific, and health institutions and penetrate the domain of the social services, in order to be in contact with the people and to serve them by means of Islamic institutions" (Fourth point of departure). One should of course be sceptical to this kind of document at the same time that the ideological similarities between FIOE, including IFiS, and the content in parts of this document are somewhat striking.

should take place. The Islamic identity constituted an ideological cornerstone for Hasan Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and their followers and it is central to FIOE and IFiS.

IFiS' objectives also demonstrate similarities with what Al-Anani calls "instrumental aims", i.e. the goals that are at a lower level than the highest goal of the Islamization of the state. The association's objectives are also within the scope of what Mustafa Mashhur (see above) identifies as important tools in the spread of Islamic concepts: an expanded Islamic sector of religiously governed organizations. The most important goals for IFiS are accordingly to "convey knowledge about Islam, its merciful values and its peaceful message based on a contemporary and local context", "support Sweden's Muslims to exercise their religious obligations and preserve their religious and cultural identity" and "encourage the maintenance of public-benefit Muslim organisations and stimulate member organizations and other Muslim associations to take a leading role, develop their competencies and improve the qualitative content of the activities" (page 1). The three objectives "convey knowledge about Islam", "preserve their cultural and religious identity" and build up "public-benefit Muslim organizations", indicates that there are principles that govern the activities for IFiS/FIOE that demonstrate similarities with MB's basic methodological principles as they have been illustrated above. The most fundamental component in MB's plan of approach is to spread (their version) of Islam is the Muslim person's identity, but neither IFiS/FIOE explicitly draw the conclusion that this is an effort that should lead to the Islamization of the state.¹⁵

The civil society

An aspect that can be further clarified to tentatively establish that there are activists in Sweden who can be associated with MB's political thinking concerns the significance the movement has placed on building up an Islamic sector in civil society. For MB in Egypt, the civil society has always been considered to be important for the dawa work. The Muslim brother Kamal Helbawy (2010:74) brings up, for example, that MB in Egypt established an extensive structure of public operations between 1930-1950. At this point in time, MB's "headquarters" governed 2,000 religious branches, 2,000 institutions for charity and social work, companies in various industries, sports clubs, schools and other institutions for education, mosques and Islamic centres and healthcare facilities (ibid.). This "parallel Islamic sector", as political scientist Carrie Rosefsky Wickham (2002:95) designates the phenomenon, also existed when she did field work in Cairo with the aim of understanding how the sector was used in MB-associated activists' urban based dawa work (also see Muslim Brotherhood Review 2015, point 10). Translated to the Swedish debate, it is accordingly a matter of MB in Egypt being known for building up an "institutionalized Islamic parallel society", as political scientist Cristoph Schuck (2013:500) describes it, which they themselves control.

¹⁵ The Ibn Rushd Study Association, which is linked to IFiS, points out in its operational plan for 2017-2018 that Dawa is an important part of the operation's "formative education". "Through the project *Young in Dawa*, we also focus on our young formative educators who usually lecture and teach about Islam" as the association formulates it on page 5 in the plan. Ibn Rushd largely formulates the operational plan in a way that is expected of an organization that is interested in being able to accept government grants. However, it is possible to argue that the association is governed by MB's classical principle of working with what some researchers call "soft Islamization" (Hamid 2016), i.e. a slowly acting attitude-changing effort with the aim of influencing the surrounding society's perceptions of religious ideas in a positive manner.

Looking at what FIOE/IFiS says about their own activities and objectives, it is hard not to see similarities with MB's original plan for the civil society. FIOE highlights, for example, in its manifest for Europe how significant it is for the organization that they have "the right, as religious communities, to establish mosques, religious, educational and welfare institutions" (page 5). The same thing, but formulated slightly differently, also applies for IFiS when they in the articles of association emphasize that the activities shall "encourage the maintenance of public-benefit Muslim organisations and stimulate member organizations and other Muslim associations to take a leading role, develop their competencies and improve the qualitative content of the activities" (page 1). It should be said that IFiS formulates itself in such a general way that the quoted text could apply to just about any kind of activity. What company or institution does not want to be "stimulating", "develop competencies" or "improve the qualitative content of the activities"? But, as pointed out above, one works based on the fact that IFiS follows FIOE's programme for Europe, meaning a programme that researchers' agree is constructed by MB-associated activists (Maréchal 2008, 2015; Larise 2012; Silvestri 2010; Vidino 2017) so it is reasonable in any case to draw the tentative conclusion that IFiS/FIOE is surprisingly close to MB's original programme for civil society.¹⁶

One difficulty that appears in a comparison between MB's classical programme and possible continuity with the MB-associated activists' European activities is that MB is originally a movement that stands for ambitions to carry out a comprehensive social change in an Islamic direction. The Islamic sector in Egypt is largely independent from the state and, as Rosefsky Wickham (2002:95) says, a sector that also competes with the state's institutions about how the citizens' identity in a broad sense shall be construed. It has also been brought up by Kandil (2011) who argued that MB in Egypt established a "cultural" strategy (affect people's norms, values, self-perceptions) with the aim of changing the power relationships without having to confront the state in violent attacks. The strategy has included, as Kandil expresses it, creating "a Muslim civil society" in a broad sense (ibid:39). The Islamic resistance has built on undermining an authoritarian secularism and replacing it with an Islamic order by working to influence Muslims with an Islamic world view that says how they should act and think and spreading this world view in, as Kandil says, different "socialization structures" (ibid:46). This strategy has built on the establishment of a parallel Islamic sector, but has also been focused on broadening sympathies for MB's resistance work among other actors in Egyptian civil society (ibid:48). So MB in Egypt tried to win sympathies among, for example, political parties, in mass media, in various educational institutions by introducing terms such as "democracy", "civil rights", "citizenship", "pluralism" in its political discourse (ibid.). The difficulty of an analysis like this, as mentioned above, is that even the strategy that was used by MB in Egypt to some respects is similar to how MB-associated organizations work in Europe. However, it is important to emphasize that there is an extensive lack of empirical data (interviews) from European based activists who can verify hypotheses that

¹⁶ The former MB member, Mohammed Louizi, says that MB has had the ambition since the 1980s to build up its own spheres in Europe to bring together their Islamic vision with different national perceptions. This is done with the help of the establishment of mosques, schools and other institutions (Colombo 2016b).

even in the area of “the Muslim civil society” there may be ideological continuity between the Egyptian work and the European.

One dilemma concerns the different role that MB in Egypt has (or had) compared with MB-associated activists’ ambitions in Sweden/Europe to build up a Muslim civil society. In Egypt, MB built up a civil society that contributed to creating an alternative welfare sector with activities that the state was unable to offer the population (Clark 2004; Helbawy 2010). This also took place in a situation where the majority of the population in some way could identify as Muslims with some form of tie to the religious tradition. In Europe, MB-associated activists have a minority position in a system that already offers an advanced welfare structure for all residents regardless of their religious faith. In what way can MB-associated organizations like FIOE and IFiS motivate the necessity of, as they say, Muslims having special welfare needs solely based on the fact that they profess a certain faith? In other words, MB’s fundamental model for social change includes taking power over an authoritarian state that lacks respect for human rights. In Europe, as stated a few places in the report, the activists are in a context where the state is democratic, which should mean that the classical goal is superfluous. What remains for MB-associated activists in Europe seems to have been reduced to defending what in identity politics rhetoric is called “Muslims’ identity” as if this is an unchanging essence that is built-in to people’s personality. Here, it is easy to suspect that the MB-associated activism in Europe has been transformed into an “ethnic” career project for aspiring “Muslim” leaders who thanks to the identity politics have been given an opportunity to build up a certain social status (see Silvestri 2010:53).

Political representation

In terms of FIOE's organizational network, it is common in the literature to explain the growth of this in an attempt by MB-associated activists to appear as the most important representatives for Islam and Muslims in Europe (via FIOE at a European level, and nationally through the member organizations, IFiS in the Swedish case) (see Carlbom 2006:45-48). Vidino (2012:65, 2011:6-7) logically argues that one of the most important objectives for all MB-associated organizations in Europe is to be recognized as official or *de facto* representatives for the Muslim group in the respective countries. By becoming the most important dialogue partner for various governments, it becomes possible for the organizations to fulfil two important purposes, according to Vidino (ibid.). One of these is to contribute positively to Europe’s future in part by promoting a harmonious balance in the respective country between “the preservation of Muslim identity and the duties of citizenship”, as it is formulated in FIOE’s trans-European policy document (Muslims of Europe Charter, 2008, point 20). The organizations are of the perception, according to Vidino (ibid:66), that they are the best suited to lead Muslims in the integration process and at the same time contribute to “a moral revival of the rest of society” (ibid.). Another reason for why exactly the MB-associated bodies should lead all Muslims is, says Vidino, their desire to improve the possibilities of mobilizing followers among pious Muslims in general. “The Brothers understand that a preferential relationship with European elites could provide them with the financial and political capital that would allow them to significantly expand their reach and influence inside

the [Muslim] community” (ibid:66), as Vidino concludes regarding the significance of the organizations’ desire for official recognition. Something that may be important to emphasize in this context is that it is not enough for a political movement to possess its own ambitions to appear as an official representative. Just as important, perhaps even more important, is that the established political system recognizes the movement as such (see Wiktorowicz 2004 and Schuck 2013 for a discussion on the contextual conditions that a social movement must handle).

Even though MB-associated activists compared with other ideological tendencies seem to have been most successful in establishing an organizational network in Europe, there are indications that the organizations are facing generational difficulties. Samir Amghar & Fall Khadiyatou-lah (2017) point out that there is a younger generation of Islamists who are critical of MB-associated organizations on the continent having stagnated intellectually and politically. Among other things, the utopian idea of Islam as an all-encompassing system that shall organize social life as lost strength and relevance for activism (ibid:57). Others highlight the complicated and slow recruitment process and the movement’s ambitions to negotiate with various governments lead to treachery against the Quran’s messages that opens up for possibilities, for example, for Salafist activism (ibid:60). The opinions presented above are partly in line with Sadek Hamid’s (2018:15-33) depiction that Islamism of MB’s type had its time of greatness in the UK in the 1990s, in part through the MB-associated organization the Young Muslims UK. In the 2000s, according to Hamid, Sufist and Salafist groups and organizations were more dominant than those inspired by a thinking founded in al-Banna’s world view. At the same time, Sara Khan (2016) argues that an Islamist Salafist coalition arose in the UK that works to radicalize young Muslims and to criticize the government’s anti-radicalization programme called Prevent (ibid:87-119). These are possibly also tendencies that are occurring in Sweden, but it would need more research and debate in the area of Islamic activism for it to be possible to draw any qualified conclusions.

When it comes to political representation, there is also another issue built into the discussion, namely which Muslims are represented by the MB-associated organizations? This question can of course not be answered in an adequately well-founded empirical manner in this report since no opinion measurement has been done of which sympathies for the organizations exist among common faithful Muslims in the country. However, one can say that there is an ideological dilemma built-in to how the organizations themselves present their activities in publicly available documents. Both FIOE and IFiS give the impression that they see themselves as representatives for a monolithic, purely religiously homogeneous Muslim population in Sweden and other European countries. The categories “Muslims” and “Islam” are used in other words in a strongly generalizing manner without nuance (see Muslim Charter 2008). Both the organizations have, for example, the goal of safeguarding and protecting “Muslim interests”, as if they imagine that there is a Muslim minority on the continent where everyone with a background in countries where Islam is the majority religion has an interest in only being defined as Muslims. In other words, the organizations stand for a message in official documents that conflicts with many researchers’ and others’ opinions of the ethnic and religious fragmentation that characterizes

people who in some way have a tie to the Islamic tradition (see Carlbom 2009).

This can probably be analysed in different ways, but the probability is high that the organizations partially formulate themselves in this way to be able to live up to identity politics notions in the established system. Typical for this approach, as Roy (2004:124-143) points out in *Globalised Islam*, is that the term “Muslim” is often used “neo-ethnically” in the sense that it designates an “identity” where religion in a traditional sense is irrelevant to construe an “ethnic group” that did not previously exist. This construction, says Roy, builds on Western categories of what is considered to be significant differences. One of the most important points of departure for this new identity in a European context is that it presupposes that all people with a Muslim background share some kind of Muslim culture regardless of where they have their origins. This construction of “Muslim identity” is popular with both states’ representatives and people who aspire to lead the Muslim “community”. For the leaders, this means that they can “surf the wave of multiculturalism” (ibid:133) by using a language that is understood in the scope of an identity politics view. A possibility accordingly arises for religious leaders to lay claim to speak for “a community entirely comprising people of Muslim origin” (ibid.). MB-associated activists have been skilful in capturing this neo-ethnic discourse in their identity politics project (see Silvestri 2010).

In the Swedish debate about MB-associated activists and other Islamic activism, it has occasionally been asserted that different actors have a political ambition to “infiltrate” the political system with the help of the platforms offered by political parties. Lars Nicander at the Swedish National Defence College asserts for example in a DN interview that he sees similarities between Soviet-inspired attempts to infiltrate the Social Democratic party and Islamists who work for the Green Party (Svahn 2016). “Persons within the party who are close to the Muslim Brotherhood have clearly gained strong foothold in the Green Party”, as he is quoted in the interview (ibid.). The question came up during one of my interviews with a person who was previously involved in Islamic activism in the country for several years. The person in question dismissed with certainty that activists with an MB tie are working to try to infiltrate established political parties or other public institutions. “What it is about,” said my informant, “is that they think that it is important to be visible as Muslims, to show that they have important positions in society, but I don’t believe at all that it should be about there being a carefully prepared strategy to infiltrate.” The informant pointed out that it is important to differentiate between infiltration and a desire to obtain influence. “Sure, Islamic activists want to have influence in society, but that’s a different matter than infiltration.” The informant’s statement is in line with how the activist and researcher Dilwar Hussein (2004:395) responds to the question of why Muslim organizations participate in the political system. “The obvious answer lies in the desire to affect power and to gain power...Muslims are trying to improve their lot by building their capacity to act”. The Islamic activism accordingly seems not to be completely different from other forms of political activism. The MB-associated activism in Europe also seems to be too fragmented for it to be realistic to speak of a movement that forges plans for the Islamization of society “from within”.

Conceivable consequences

MB's classical project – to work long term for the introduction of an Islamic state by persuading Muslims and others from the “bottom up” to construe an Islamic identity (see above) – is no message that is presented by MB-associated European organizations. What appears to be the case when one studies the organizations' own documents is that they kept MB's original “instrumental aims” (Al-Anani 2016:44-45) at the same time that there is a lack of statements about the classical goal of the work's long-term aim, which the quote of al-Banna above clarifies, is the Islamization of the state. The same conclusion has been formulated in the British government's review of MB. Here, no indications were found that MB's representatives openly promoted an Islamic state for non-Muslim countries, but rather “the public narrative of the Muslim Brotherhood focused more on the task of Islamising the individual and community, than the state” (Muslim Brotherhood Review 2015, point 33). If it is so that the long-term goal also remains for the European activists, then it is “backstage” in environments where it is difficult for both researchers and journalists to access. “Frontstage” the activists generally formulate ideas that are adapted to society's dominant value structures (see Goffman 1959:128-129).

Does that said above mean that there are no consequences of the European organizations' activities? One conceivable dilemma for Sweden and other European countries is if the MB-associated organizations succeeded in establishing a well-developed Muslim civil society and what it in such a case would mean. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2000), influential ideology in MB's international networks (Vidino 2012:63; Belén Soage 2009, 2010), offers for example a somewhat contradictory message of what a Muslim civil society may mean for Europe. “I used to tell our brothers in foreign countries, try to have your small society within the larger society, otherwise you will melt in it like salt in water. What has preserved the Jewish character over the past centuries was their small community that was unique in its ideas and rituals and was known as the Jewish ghetto. Try to have your own Muslim ghetto then”. The message is close to the classical MB strategy to build up a Muslim civil society with various institutions for socialization of religious identity and it is possible to perceive it as if Qaradawi believes that it means that Muslims shall protect their identity by, like e.g. Salafists, isolating themselves from the surrounding non-Muslim society. However, this is not what Qaradawi means because at the same time he says “I am not advocating self-isolation and keeping our doors closed to the people around us...what is required is openness without melting, the openness of people with a message who seek to affect and interact...” (ibid.). Exactly what the latter means is unclear in Qaradawi's presentation, but it is easy to perceive it as if his message to Muslims is that they shall protect themselves in their own parallel society and that their participation in a larger society is primarily about spreading the message of Islam. This impression is reinforced by Islamologist Uriya Shavit's (2012:425) pointing out that it is perceived as an almost religious duty for the so-called “middle way” (*wasatiyya*) Islamic activists (al-Qaradawi claims to belong to this view) to spread Islam in the Western world. Who is listening to al-Qaradawi's, or similar, messages is unclear, however.

An impeding circumstance in the work of building up a Muslim civil society is, however, the fact that MB-associated activists are in a socially and religious context where they must convince other Muslims that it is the right way to go. It seems to be far from a given that this is an easy task considering that many Muslims hypothetically do not need to sympathize with the organizations' positions. As pointed out earlier, there is unfortunately a lack of empirical studies among Swedish Muslims for what the sympathies look like for the organizations with an MB association that were assigned the role of representing all Muslims. An indication of what the sympathies look like can, however, be obtained in the report *A French Islam is Possible* (El Karoui 2016:49). In France, the Union of Islamic Organisations in France (UOIF), with an ideological history connection to MB in Europe through FIOE, in recent years managed to come out as one of the most important players in French Islam, thanks largely to the French state's recognition of the organization as a representative for Muslims in the country. The study shows that only 12% of Muslims surveyed feel that they are close to UOIF's views and that one third of the respondents had never heard of the organization (*ibid.*). One should refrain from quickly drawing conclusions regarding the transferability of these results to the Swedish situation. However, it is probably high because, in my opinion, it also reflects the situation in our country where IFiS received a similar recognition from Swedish politicians within and outside various governments.

Another conceivable consequence that enters the discussion about the formation of a parallel Islamic civil society is if such a society can contribute to radicalization in a violent direction. The dilemma with MB-oriented organizations for Sweden and other European countries seems to lie in their activities in the long term possibly constituting a threat to society's cohesive forces, rather than it being a matter of direct encouragement to commit violence and terror. A conceivable consequent of MB-associated activists spreading a politicized variant of Islam in the Muslim civil society is that it inspires some young people to go further in a radicalization process that ultimately includes an acceptance of violence (Vidino 2017:37). The religious ideology in combination with the victim narrative that is spread by the organizations' representatives can, hypothetically, provide to be an ideological "marinade" that can have dramatic consequences for single individuals and society at large (*ibid.*:36). The same types of consequences were also brought up by the British think tank Quilliam Foundation in their analysis of MB in the UK. The think tank believes that MB-associated individuals and organizations over many years have contributed to populizing Islamist ideology and they have thereby also paved the way for more radical groups to succeed in their recruitment efforts (*ibid.*; also see Hamid 2018 and Khan 2016).

6. Information influence and democratic values

MB originally grew forth as an anti-movement with the aim of withstanding the Western world's ideological and cultural influence in Egypt. Hassan al-Banna believed that the country was demoralized due to the Ottoman Empire's fall and European colonization. Shadi Hamid (2016:80) says aptly that MB's Islamism grew forth as a reaction to an overwhelming "brew of secularism, colonization, and authoritarianism". The political project al-Banna constructed was accordingly about standing in opposition to the, as he and others perceived it, major political and social changes that took place in the Middle East in the middle of the 20th century. Given that MB's original ideology was based on defeating and changing a vague (Western values) and concrete (the authoritarian Egyptian state) enemy, is it possible to talk about MB-associated activists in Europe relating their identity politics project at an "enemy" of some kind?

The enemy in Sweden

A clear difference between "there" and "here" is that in Europe it is on the contrary the state that is viewed as a cooperation partner in the activists' project to be recognized as an official representative for Islam and Muslims (Silvestri 2010, Vidino 2012). The insight that the European activism is taking place in a democratic context also appears to be generally spread in the organizational network, which among other things is shown in the official rhetoric emphasizing that FIOE's member organizations have the goal of, based on Islamic principles, "making a contribution to society", rather than living up to the classical objective of the Islamization of the state. Of course, it is possible that individual activists imagine that Sweden and other European countries would benefit from the organizations' view of Islam having a greater influence, but this is not a prominent message in the public documents or interviews with activists. They are moreover in their full democratic rights to believe in such a message.

For MB-associated activists in Europe, the picture of the enemy seems to have shifted from "the authoritarian state" to so-called "Islamophobia" or "racism". The representative for MAB in London emphasized that

the struggle against this is one of the most important tasks for the organization. “There is a machinery out there with an Islamophobic rhetoric that demonizes Islam and Muslims”, as he expressed it during our interview in MAB’s head office in London. The same rhetoric can also be found among Swedish activists in the MB-associated network. The term “Islamophobia” is used in a relatively consistent manner by Swedish activists when they speak publicly in writing and speaking. When the DN journalist Lasse Granstrand (2011) published the news that IFiS had invited Salah Sultan, who made anti-Semitic statements in various media, the then chairman of IFiS Omar Mustafa (2011) responded by saying that Granstrand was one of the actors in the “Islamophobic knowledge regime” that spreads a kind of false information about “Muslims” and “Muslim leaders”.¹⁷ Zana Muhammad (2017), chairperson of Ibn Rushd, also used rhetoric about Islamophobia in a criticism that Magnus Norell had been invited to lecture on the Islamic State (IS) at Umeå University. The perception among Swedish activists within and outside MB’s ideological circle accordingly seems to be that Islamophobia is by far the most serious and most wide-spread problem that Swedish and other Muslims are facing in the Western world.

This is made clear in the alternative UN report “Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report (2013)” which was signed by 17 Swedish Islamic national organizations, of which at least five can be linked to MB’s ideological network as this is described in the report (ibid:2). The objective for the report for the organizations is, as they say, to point out “the many violations of Swedish Muslims’ human rights and civil liberties” (ibid.). The political enemy for the organizations is basically the “Islamophobic racism” that, according to the organizations, affects Muslims in “all” social spheres (ibid:10). The enemy for the organizations accordingly specifically takes on the form of Islamophobia, at the same time that the reader of the report gets the impression that the enemy is everywhere in society as the organizations generally perceive Sweden as a “hostile societal context” (ibid.). In the text, no attempt is made at balancing the assertions about the hostile Sweden, rather the message is a general pessimistic description of the country and its residents. This is despite the fact that Sweden offers far-reaching religious freedom and structural possibilities for MB-associated activists to start and fund a relatively large number of public activities in the name of Islam.

Swedish organizations are of course not unique in spreading the message that “the growing Islamophobia”, as IFiS expresses it, is the foremost enemy they are facing. The British MAB, as mentioned above believes this to be the case, and if one is looking for knowledge about Islamophobia on the organization’s website, one is forwarded to the American activist organization the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), an organization some link to MB-associated activism in the USA (Lappen 2010:161). Here, 35 individuals are pointed out as Islamophobes by name and photo, but here, 43 organizations are also listed at Islamophobic (CAIR “Islamophobia network” 2017). The organizations also have support for their hostile picture of state bodies as the term has found its way into the authority world. The Living History Forum points out that this is a phenomenon that

¹⁷ Anyone who is interested in MB’s ideological historical tradition regarding anti-Semitism can be recommended to read Matthias Küntzel’s book *Jihad and Jew Hatred* (2007). The book shows that several important ideologists within the movement have expressed a strong hate of Jews.

extends back several hundred years in history. The National Council on Crime Prevention (BRÅ) uses the term as one of the categories of hate crimes. The term is also used in the United Nations (UN) to designate one of the largest problems in many Western national states. In other words, MB-associated organizations in Sweden have relatively extensive global support for appointing Islamophobia as one of the most important “enemies”. Given that the MB-associated organizations work to spread Islamic ideals in the public sphere and would like to find an audience for them, it is probably not particularly remarkable that they have named what they call Islamophobia as a kind of main enemy. As many researchers say, social movements of various kinds depend on being able to use the opportunities and obstacles that exist in various political contexts in their mobilization attempts for their cause (see Wiktorowicz [et.] et al., 2004). Widespread “negative” ideas and attitudes in the population are one of the structural obstacles that stand in the way for Islamic ideas to be able to be accepted. At the same time, paradoxically, the widespread notion that Islamophobia is a growing problem is a structural opportunity such that it is a culturally recognized enemy that the state is expected to do something about and therefore allocates financial resources in order for various groups to be able to find a solution to the problem.

There is probably something to what organizations of various kinds say about there being quite a bit of discrimination of Muslims orally, in writing and also in deed. This is of course bad depending on whether it occurs in the Western world or in the Middle East and is something that needs to be addressed with the legislation that is available. The term Islamophobia is, however, a much debated term in scientific circles. One criticism directed at the word is that it emphasizes the difference between reasonable and unreasonable criticism of phenomena that can be linked to Islam in some way. A dismissal of critical opinions directed at hateful statements from radical Islamist groups as an expression of Islamophobia seems absurd (Allen 2010:76). In this case, an aversion or fear of how some activists interpret Islamic ideas is well-founded and reasonable. However, it is unreasonable, as the sociologist Peter Baehr (2011:79) says, to draw far-reaching conclusions about Muslims as a group based on established religious rituals such as praying five times a day, wearing a veil or there being a taboo for many to refrain from pork. Fearing Muslims for such religious givens is, as Baehr says, irrational (*ibid.*). The dilemma with the term Islamophobia is accordingly that it is vague in terms of content in that it is often used in a way that causes important theoretical distinctions to collapse in a manner that seriously impedes reasonable discussions about justified critical opinions in relation to such matters that can actually be valued as anti-Muslim (see Allen 2010 for a review of the discourse in Islamophobia. A reasonable summary of the problem with the term Islamophobia is that it is analytically weak as it combines too many aspects in its meaning-bearing domain, something that at the same time can be a strength rhetorically when it concerns political activism.

Rhetorical impact

Besides the difficulties that are in establishing exactly what term Islamophobia actual describes, the work is effective in what in this report is called activist information influence. This term makes it possible for MB-

associated activists (and others) to dismiss people by diagnosing their personalities instead of confronting their statements in critical debate regarding, in this case, Islamic ideas, as true, false, prejudiced, stereotypical and so on. This, “shooting the messenger”, is indeed a classical argumentation problem, but it does not make it less serious seen in a democratic light. The sociologist Peter Baehr (2011:173-174) explains the democratic problem with the term Islamophobia when he says that it is often used in a way that is “...damaging because democratic politics requires the presumption that people speak as equals in a common public space; that principled disagreement is a legitimate part of a pluralist society; and that conflict and rivalry, within the bounds of non-violence, are normal. Imputing a phobia to someone, conversely, presumes a vertical mode of judgment in which disagreement is considered pathological”.

Dismissing statements as “phobic” may, in other words, mean that one puts oneself above the democratic rules that apply to democratic debate and in connection with this, it also becomes possible to avoid a discussion about certain issues or problems. The term is accordingly useful to defend Islam and Muslims from influence by it being possible to be put to work to stop a discussion that one does not want to have before the debate has begun. The term not only diagnoses political opponents’ mental status. It also shames them through accusations that somebody holds an unfounded distaste for a vulnerable minority. Both psychologizing and shaming are effective in a collective setting like the Swedish one when it comes to influencing, perhaps even “controlling”, information or knowledge as aspects of one’s own ideology of activity that one does not want to be made public. Hypothetically, few people want to appear to be morally questionable by formulating critical statements that, note well, may be correct, but violate collective norms with the implication that one should not criticize or “point out” what is presented as a ‘religious minority’ but in actuality seems to be an ethnically, culturally or religiously fragmented part of the Swedish/European population.

The word Islamophobia and its conceptual world are also effective in the work of constructing a narrative that builds on the categories of “victim” and “perpetrator”. Lorenzo Vidino (2017:3) believes that MB-associated activists in Europe deliberately spread a victim narrative where individual anti-Muslim incidents are over exaggerated to create a mentality among Muslims that is based on Western societies being hostile to both Muslims and Islam (see above in the alternative UN report). Combined with the activists also providing legitimacy to the use of violence in the defence of Muslims and Islam, this means that Vidino encourages some preparedness when it comes to questions about MB in general and violent radicalization. “The spread of this narrative of victimhood mixed with justification of violence should be seen with concern given the massive rise in radicalisation seen throughout Europe during the last five years”, as Vidino expresses it. It is possible that he makes a correct observation that MB-associated actors spread this narrative combination, but he presents no analysis or evidence for how the narrative is constructed. Assuming that Vidino’s assumptions are true, it is possible to imagine that there are risks of the Islamic activists having a structural support for their victim narrative in the surrounding society. If the assertion is correct, this means that large parts of society contribute by providing ideological legitimacy to one of the strongest emotional

drivers in radicalization processes. The notion that the Western world is generally an Islamophobic or racist part of the world is an enemy narrative that is needed for the Islamic activism to be able to flourish (see Shamid 2018:91).

It might seem controversial for some to speak about somebody constructing a victim narrative when it concerns these kinds of issues, but in scientific contexts it is well-known that it is necessary to build up narratives around victims and perpetrators for it to be possible to find an audience for political demands of various kinds (Loseke 2003). For activists, it is generally not enough to show what is objectively probable, but it is important to get listeners of various kinds to embrace the *belief* that a group suffers great hardship under a perpetrator's oppression. Assertions that an Islamophobic Western world discriminates Muslims and Islam is a narrative that is based on the West generally being an oppressor and Muslims generally being a group subjected to this perpetrator. In terms of information influence, it is advantageous to use this kind of narrative for MB-associated activists since it enables influence campaigns from a position of disadvantage instead of a position of advantage. It is a symbolically important role to be able to take on as it is more acceptable to conduct political activism "bottom up" than "top down".

MB as an organization in Egypt appears to be characterized by a somewhat tangible victim culture. Kandil (2015:53-48) believes that there is a widespread conspiracy theory thinking among the activists in the movement that goes back in time all the way to the period when the Prophet Muhammed presented his revelations on the Arabic peninsula. According to Kandil, new members of MB are presented early on to a narrative with the heading "The Conspiracy" (ibid:54). Central in the narrative is that MB is subjected to a "Western-Zionist-Masonic plot" that demands the collective to stick together, that everyone obeys the leaders and is suspicious of most people in the surroundings (ibid.). Collective action is important to withstand the "enemies" in the form of secular "crusaders" and Zionists, as well as Muslims who are inspired by the materialistic attraction of globalization. The USA is highlighted in the narrative as the creator of the conspiracy (through globalization) and is presented as a country of citizens with a "corrupt" nature (ibid.). To my knowledge, there is no publicly presented evidence that MB-associated activists in Sweden or in other European countries embrace these kinds of conspiracy theory views. However, it is hypothetically possible to imagine that MB's victim mentality can be spread in the world in connection with its sympathizers in different countries meeting in different social contexts or sharing each other's views at conferences or in texts. To be able to establish if there is ideological continuity in this issue between different MB-associated units, more empirical research is needed.

In terms of issues regarding information influence, Kepel (2015:86) states that Islamophobia is "the buzzword of the Islamist movement in general". Some authors point out that it is something of a dilemma that is it precisely Islamic activists, or Islamists, that use the term in their rhetoric against most who they perceive as critical of Muslims and Islam in some sense. George Readings et al. (without year:13-15) warn that the unclear meaning of the term Islamophobia can be used by Islamists precisely to dismiss legitimate criticism of their ideology as controlled by an irrational fear of Islam or Muslims. The activists can accordingly use the term in their

propaganda and present themselves as regular Muslims without having to take responsibility for their political ideology (ibid:15). The abuse of the term can also keep many non-Islamists from criticizing Islamism out of fear of being accused of harbouring an “irrational” fear of Muslims or that they are out to start hate campaigns against Muslims. In the view of the authors, a misuse of the term has also made it harder to identify and describe events or practices that really are anti-Muslim (ibid.). One might say that their reasoning here relies on the view that when “everything” negative is dismissed as Islamophobia, then nothing is Islamophobia as the term is often used in a way that does not allow room for any differences between for example Islamism as a political ideology and Islam as a traditional religious belief.

A political camp that is regularly accused more often than others of having ended up in the Islamic “language trap” where the term Islamophobia is central is the left movement, at least the most identity political part of this movement. The British author Sara Khan (2016:134-135) points out that the British left movement often appears as if they adopted an Islamic approach to issues of anti-Muslim discrimination. “It is the duty of the Left...to take a firm stand against racism in all its forms”, as she says, “but instead of just condemning violent attacks on individual Muslims or campaigning over issues like discrimination in employment, the term has been broadened to cover any criticism of religious theology or Islamist ideology”. She points out that this has resulted in many in the left movement promoting a “censorship” of humanists who challenge Islamist ideology or argue for the value of the freedom of speech. “Sections of the British Left have ended up policing national discourse on Islam on behalf of Islamism” (ibid:135). She may employ some rhetorical exaggerations in her argumentation, but at the same time, she sheds light on something that seems to be the case in Sweden as well, where the left movement has adopted an Islamist perspective of Islamophobia. One should probably consider it likely that in its more pure forms, Islamist and leftist ideology fit together very poorly, but the two ideological forms seem to be able to interact in identity politics struggles against the “Western” enemy.

Trying to silence opposition

The term Islamophobia is rhetorically effective as a linguistic means to use when one wants to silence people from expressing critical opinions or preventing some facts from being drawn into the public light, for example, as noted above, having invited speakers to conferences who expresses anti-Semitic messages. Today, it is also common to conduct political activities by staging collective campaigns of various kinds that contain more or less objectively correct assertions about what something or somebody is like. Some of those interviewed in this report have experiences from having been subjected to campaigns where the intention was to prevent them from getting their message out, or undermining them to bring suspicion to the content of what is said. What appears to be the case, based on that said in the interviews, is that it has primarily been activists in the MB-associated network who were initiators of the campaigns.

The campaigns described during the interviews appear to follow a general pattern. When the Islamic activists are reached by information that person X is scheduled to hold a lecture somewhere in Sweden, a campaign is staged where those responsible at the institution that engaged X are

subjected to a more or less intensive smear campaign where X is described as an Islamophobe, racist or generally hostile to Muslims or Islam. One of the informants describes how his boss received a letter with demeaning remarks about the person and the arguments that he presented in the public debate where the senders are people who can be linked to one of the Stockholm mosque's organizations. The senders of the letter also had support from academicians at one of the country's largest universities who, like the Islamic activists, had the intention to undermine X's reputation. "These kinds of strategies are used to prevent people like me from getting my knowledge out to the public sphere and it's taxing since one is at risk of losing friendship ties with colleagues or career paths being closed," says X, who in the day-to-day is employed in the Swedish academic world. Roughly the same thing is described by another informant with extensive experience of debating integration issues. "The campaigns are organized. Every time I am invited to speak somewhere, the organizers have received letters, phone calls or e-mail where they are encouraged to cancel my appearance. This has happened to me several times."

These kinds of campaigns might not work as intended in the individual case, meaning that planned lectures or debates are held despite the attempts to portray the lecturers as ethically reprehensible. However, there is probably a more long-term strategic idea with the campaigns and this is to make it hard for organizers of various kinds to invite lecturers who one knows has a critical message that conflicts with activists at influential mosques, or other activists interested in silencing those they perceive as political opposition. In other words, the campaigns send signals that can, and probably contribute to, the strengthening of the self-censorship among various actors with critical points of view, thereby preventing a free and open dissemination of knowledge and opinion formation within the rules and laws of democracy. Campaigns of this kind – where the objective issues are not the focus, but the character of individuals – are in other words at risk of undermining in the long term the desire to present critical point of view or research results that one imagines will be perceived as more or less controversial (see e.g. Loudry 1994). The threat that is inherent in the campaigns accordingly risks spreading a perception in society that one is at risk of being subjected to aggressive activists' symbolic violence if one expresses messages or opinions that they believe should not be aired in public.

However, it does not only seem to be about the Islamic activists' ambitions to try to silence voices critical to them, but it is at least as important if one wants to understand the possible effectiveness of these kinds of shaming campaigns to understand them in a social context. The campaigns probably work only as long as there is a collective recipient that takes the content of the campaigns seriously and follows the campaigns' inherent message (see e.g. Loudry 1994; Hollander 1994). During the interviews, it came forth that several informants believe that one of the major problems among those in power in Sweden is the collectively spread fear of being accused of racism or Islamophobia. One of the informants, who for several years worked with diversity issues in close cooperation with associations of various kinds, gave several examples of personal experience where researchers, politicians and officials participated in various contexts where they allowed themselves to be guided by self-censorship and refrained from

expressing themselves. “A few years ago, I participated as a guest in a conference in a Swedish suburb where an official of the then Integration Board also participated. We had several topics on the table, including religion. One of the invited Islamic leaders suddenly stood up and said in front of the 200 people in the audience: “if Islamic laws collide with Swedish legislation, I follow the Islamic laws”. The official remained silent. Afterwards, I asked why he was quiet when Swedish legislation was challenged in front of such a large audience. ‘I can’t afford to be accused of being a racist’,” was his brief answer.

This is anecdotal evidence from a Swedish suburb several years ago, but it is possible to claim that it provides a somewhat good illustration of what other informants with experience of lecturing on multicultural issues also expressed during the interviews. The fear of being defined as a racist, perhaps in combination with a colonial guilt (even though Sweden’s colonial adventure was of a smaller scale), has created a compliant response in relation to persons with an immigrant background that means that even direct challenges to fundamental Sweden values are not confronted (see Loudry 1994:455). One might be able to draw the conclusion that the Swedish fear of being defined as a racist or Islamophobe creates a public sphere that is relatively easy to influence with various messages, even those that do not fit into the democratic structure of values that marks public institutions (see e.g. Strauss 2004 for a theoretical discussion of communication in various public contexts).

Value of the freedom of speech

The question whether MB is generally a democratic movement has been discussed for many years. Some claim this to be the case, others claim the opposite and say that the movement’s view builds on the idea of, as one British imam said in an interview with me in the work on the report, “one person, one vote, one time”. The criticism is basically about MB having an instrumental view of democracy where it shall be used to take power to Islamize the state and society. According to Meijer (2012:11), one of the most common accusations against MB-associated organizations in Europe is that they will use the freedom of speech and freedom of association to gradually take over the continent and Islamize it. There is a lack of evidence that activists in the MB-associated network in Sweden are opposed to democracy as a social form for handling differences of opinion in society. On the contrary, several of the organizations are careful to emphasize their democratic mindset (see Musa 2017). In its own presentation, the Ibn Rushd Study Association emphasizes that the association works to “ensure democracy”, that it is one actor among many others “in the democratic structure of society” and that the association is involved in a “democracy mission”. One can probably draw the conclusion that many people and organizations in this network basically have a positive attitude to the structures of democracy, but is it not established that this attitude applies to all values that are often presented as being included in the Swedish democratic “package of values”.

Looking at the ideological content of what is expressed in some of the organizations’ publications, it is accordingly possible to perceive some misgivings about how some of the ideas were formulated. One example concerns the attitude to the issue of the freedom of speech as described in the alternative UN report (see above). In this issue, the 17 Islamic national

organizations formulate a position that expresses a clear desire for the state to go in and influence what kind of information is spread about Muslims and Islam in Sweden. “The government through its various branches, such as the Chancellor of Justice, must ensure that the freedom of speech and freedom of the press is balanced by respect for the rights and reputations of others. In particular the Chancellor of Justice must use its discretion to prosecute offences against the freedom of the press and freedom of expression targeting Muslims. Special attention also needs to be paid to the commentary fields of Internet media outlets” (2013:7). This quote makes it clear that there is a relatively large number of Islamic organizations – both such that can be linked to MB’s ideological tradition and others – in the country that believe that the state should introduce a more stringent control of information, knowledge and statements about Islam and Muslims. One may probably call this a democratically doubtful idea given that it is very unclear exactly what it means to “balance” the freedom of speech in relation to “Muslims”. Which Muslims? What information should be balanced by the state? Who should determine the content of what shall be balanced? Why is it precisely, as the organizations say, “Muslims” who should enjoy the state’s protection from experiencing criticism or offence? Here, there are actually no limitations with regard to “groups” that can begin arguing for the need that the state should influence what information and knowledge is spread about them. The example above is a clear indication that there seems to be somewhat many Islamic representatives in the country who consider it reasonable to introduce state control of Swedish mass media’s news distribution. The same mindset also governs how the organizations perceive Swedish public service television, Sveriges television. “Recognizing that the dangerous and duplicitous attitude towards Muslims is in part caused by the negative representation of Muslims in the media, the government must ensure that the public service broadcast media is socially responsible, fair, accurate, comprehensive and balanced in its coverage” (Alternative UN report).

The quotes presented are clear examples that the organizations recommend an active information influence by the state when it comes to Muslims in general. It does not seem to have occurred to the organizations that it is not always the media themselves that create negative representations of Muslims, but that it is Islamists in different places in the world that act in a way that cause the depictions of Islam and Muslims negative. It is not said straight out by the 17 organizations, but the conclusion that can be drawn by these two quotes is that they recommend state organized censorship of the content of the information spread publicly about Muslims. If this position is based on ignorance of the values that form the basis of Western democracy or if it is the organizations’ strategy to safeguard “the interests of Muslims” – as it is formulated in IFiS’ articles of association – is a question that cannot be answered in this report. The organizations also in this case make statements on behalf of all Muslims, but it is doubtful how representative this censorship supportive attitude is among Swedish Muslims in general who are outside the organizations’ world or do not share their ideological world view.

Value of equality

Another issue that in Sweden is usually framed as a democratic value concerns equality between men and women. This value is, for example, a part

of the democracy view that is the premise for the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) when they review organizations that apply for government grants (see MUCF 2017). Also when it concerns gender equality, organizations that can be linked to MB's network claim that they live up to the Swedish ideal regarding this value. SUM, one of the MB-associated organizations, considers itself, for example, to stand for a promotion of the value of gender equality. Whether or not this is true is a complicated issue that this report does not intend to answer. Here, I only take up a text that I have downloaded several times over the years from SUM's website, namely "Kvinnan i Islam" [The Woman in Islam] which is compiled by Mostafa Malaekah. There are various versions, including a virtually identical text available in English in the text series that is published by the MB-associated organization Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICC) (Khan 2011), but there has the title "The Position of Women in Islam" (<http://www.islamireland.ie/about/publications/>). The texts referred to above appear to be edited variants of the MB-associated Jamal A Badawi's original essay "The Status of Woman in Islam" which seems to have been published in English in 1980 (Shavit 2012:436).¹⁸

With a starting point in *The Woman in Islam*, it is difficult to argue that the meaning of the word equality agrees in an obvious way with the dominant view in Sweden. In a way, SUM, for example, is right when they claim that they are for the value of equality between men and women, but this is a perception that builds on premises different from non-Islamic oriented premises. For SUM, it seems to be about men and women being equal in the eyes of God, meaning the rights and obligations of the sexes are framed by an Islamic discourse. The actual basic assumption is that it is God who has constructed (not man) two biologically different sexes (with the same worth before God), but which due to the biological differences have been assigned (by God) different duties that mean that they complete each other. Expressed in a different way, in this text, the starting point for the value of equality is that men and women are "fixed" beings that, according to Islam, are not changed by social and political circumstances. My assertion is illustrated well by the formulation "Western culture teaches that if things are to be fair between the sexes, they must be identical. Even if men and women are equal in the eyes of Allah, Islam recognizes that they are physically, biologically and emotionally different, therefore certain aspects of life, including clothing, are different for each of them" (Malaekah 2007). Put briefly, men and women are biologically different and are therefore biologically equipped with different general characteristics that require that they dress differently. Anyone may freely express such a view, but it is doubtful to combine it with the secular view of equality that is dominant in Swedish

¹⁸ Dr. Jamal Badawi participated as one of the speakers at the preliminary meeting "Yttrande och religionsfrihet – broar till förståelse" [Freedom of expression and religion – bridges to understanding] that was held in the Swedish parliament building on 16 April 2008, something that is an indication that he is a part of MB's international ideological network. What took place in parliament was a prelude meeting for a conference that was held on the same topic a few days later. Mehmet Kaplan was one of the organizers and Professor Mattias Gardell, Uppsala University, was one of the speakers. Besides Gardell, there were some speakers who represented organizations that can be linked to MB's European network. The Secretary-General of ECFR at the time, Hussein Halawa, was one. Chakib Benmakhlof, former chairman of the FIOE and now chairman of the Islamic independent school corporation Framstegsskolan, was another. Mahmod Khalfi, IFiS, also participated. According to the report from the preliminary meeting I have, the question also arose about a special "legal protection" for "the holy" during the preliminary meeting. The Swedish, or should we say Western, form of the freedom of speech seems to be perceived as a problem by faithful Muslims a bit everywhere in the world and is not just something that is expressed in the alternative UN report.

society. One may even claim that the social-constructivist perception that forms the basis for the Swedish view of equality has been created to get away from the biological essentialism expressed in Malaekah's text.

According to SUM's text, the biological differences God has created also affect how relationships between man and women should be organized. They believe, for example, that "Islam sees the woman's role in society as mother and wife as her most essential roles" (ibid.). In the text, a criticism is formulated of how one perceives that the "Western world" views "the work of taking care of the home and the children as a secondary occupation" (ibid.). That it is precisely the woman who has the primary task of taking care of the home and children is based on the assumption that she is the biologically most suited for this. At the same time, it is pointed out in the text that there is no "decree in Islam that forbids women from seeking work". Women's primary duty is to take main responsibility for home and children while the man's primary duty, as expressed in this text, is to provide for, protect and exercise "general leadership (qiwamah) in the family" (ibid.).¹⁹ This leadership should, however, as it is said, be mutual based on the (divine) fact that "they complete each other" (ibid.).²⁰ One could probably say, without drawing the conclusion too far, that it is not this kind of traditional or conservative meanings that are prescribed by secular definitions of the term of equality.

It is also possible to question how the organizations in the network relate to Swedish democratic ideas by highlighting that, for example SUM and IFiS/Stockholm mosque seem to consider that sharia's family law is a valid legislation for Muslims in the country. For example in the text about women brought up above, the message is that "sharia (Islamic law) recognizes women's full ownership right before and after marriage" (Malaekah 2007). Here, there is also a section on "inheritance laws" with references to what the Quran says (ibid.). Another quote that illustrates the message that these are "laws" with ties to the Quran that are significant to the organizations that highlight Malaekah's text concerns a section called "Equality before the law". "Both genders are entitled to specific rights before the law and before courts", as it is formulated and "justice is genderless (K 5:38, 24:2 and 5:45)...women also have independent legal capacity in financial and other issues" (ibid.). One can of course consider that there are many good Islamically rooted ideas in this text about women's status in Islam – especially if one as in the text compares Islamic ideals with the pre-Islamic era's treatment of women – but the content concerns a different legal tradition than the one that serves as the foundation of the Swedish national state's legislation. The letter "Q" means that the justice question is rooted in Quran verses rather than Swedish legislation and the word "courts" means legal institutions that are dominated by Islamic judges who are specialists in

¹⁹ A similar attitude to gender is formulated by *Hizb ut-Tahrir* on their Swedish website. Here, the organization says, among other things, that "Islam recognizes the biological and physical differences that exist between men and women and has even assigned them different roles and duties". This means, according to the organization, that "the woman's primary role and responsibility is in her home as mother and wife. But this role does not limit her ability to work outside the home. So it is permitted for her to seek employment and even if the responsibility for economic well-being in a family rests on the man's shoulders, she may help out" (<http://hizb-ut-tahrir.se/images/nya-broschyre-pdf/Kvinnan-i-islam.pdf>.)

²⁰ The ideal of the sexes' "complementary nature" is also expressed by FIOE in their charter. A balanced life presupposes, as FIOE says, that "the relationship between man and woman is harmonious and complementary" (point 7). The family ideal according to FIOE accordingly consists of the marital tie between man and woman being seen to be "the natural and necessary environment for the raising of future generations" (point 8).

Islamic legislation. Alternatively, that Swedish courts proceed based on Quran verses when they handle legal matters for Muslims who consider that rules linked to Islam should have the deciding factor in various family issues. In any circumstance, it is unclear how the highlighting of the text of women's status in the scope of sharia should be interpreted by the reader.

7. Summary

- The contents of the report make it possible to draw some general conclusions regarding consequences to Swedish society of prioritizing MB-associated organizations for dialogue, collaboration and resource allocation. The conclusions are the following in concentrated form:
- The risk of recognizing MB-associated organizations as the most important representatives for Muslims is that a minority of politically oriented activists and missionary activists are given the possibility of advancing their positions in public at the expense of the majority of all those who have a Muslim cultural background.
- A problem with MB-associated organizations is that they contribute to creating political and social polarization by pitting an imagined "we" (Muslims) against an imagined "them" (non-Muslims). This is an identity politics strategy that pits groups against each other and thereby has a negative impact on democratic rules regarding the debate of factual issues.
- The risk of uncritically allocating resources to MB-associated organizations is that they influence the integration process negatively in that they want to protect Muslims from influence by the majority society by building up a parallel Islamic sector of public bodies, a so-called Muslim civil society. This can disadvantage Swedish Muslims who are already in the country and need to establish social contacts outside their family and circle of friends. It can also have an obstructing impact on the Muslims who immigrate here in

the next few years as they are at risk of being influenced by ideas and norms that impede participation in the majority society.

- A dilemma of giving MB-associated organizations the possibility of developing their activities is that it means that the state (or other funding providers) offers tax funding to a small group of actors who spread messages that undermine the dominant values in society. The values called into question by activists in MB-associated organizations concern the freedom of speech in religious matters, the value of equality between men and women, the view of homosexuality and sexual minorities, as well as anti-Semitic expressions.
- There is also a risk that MB-associated organizations spread politicized perceptions of Islam that, combined with messages that they and other Muslims are victims of a hostile Western world, can contribute to radicalization of individual Muslims. In other words, MB-associated activists and organizations can have a preparatory radicalization effect on some individuals by influencing them with ideas that mean that they go on to more radical contexts.
- Future research about MB-associated activism should proceed based on some issues of central importance to keep a “minority within the minority” from further strengthening its influence in public activities at the expense of other non-politically oriented Muslims and thereby risking contributing to greater hostility to Swedish Muslims in general. One issue concerns the ideological and cultural mechanisms in the established Swedish system that have enabled a small political group to successfully establish itself as representatives for all who in any way identify themselves as Muslims. How have they constructed messages that are perceived as so meaningful that the recipients can take in, accept and act in accordance with the will of the message? Do the Islamic activists formulate double messages, i.e. are different messages constructed depending on who the intended recipient is?

Literature

Ackfeldt, Anders, Berglund, Jenny, Brusi, Frederic, Cato, Johan, Güney, Dogan, Fazlashemi, Mohammad, Gardell, Mattias, Hjärpe, Jan, Hylén, Torsten, Johansson, Andreas, Minganti Karlsson, Pia, Flensner Kittelmann, Karin, Olsson, Susanne, Otterbeck, Jonas, Poljarevic, Emin, Sander, Åke, Sorgenfrei, Simon, Stjernholm, Simon, Stenberg, Leif, Svensson, Jonas and Törning, Lenita (2017): "Undermålig forskning i svensk myndighetsrapport" [Substandard research in Swedish agency report]. Collectively critical submission against the MSB study "Det muslimska brödraskapet i Sverige" [The Muslim Brotherhood in Sweden] published on an Islamic studies blog in March 2017.

Agbor, Samuel Etchu (2009): *Federation of Islamic organizations in Europe*. Master's dissertation, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University.

Al-Abdin, A Z (1989): "The Political Thought of Hasan al-Banna". *Islamic Studies* 28/3. Pages 219-234.

Al-Anani, Khalil (2016): *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Allen, Chris (2010): *Islamophobia*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (2000): Priorities of the Islamic Movement in the Coming Phase. Pdf copy downloaded from the Internet 28/01/2018. <http://www.theforumpk.com/ebooks/islamic%20ebooks/Priorities%20of%20The%20Islamic%20Movement%20in%20The%20Coming.pdf>. The book is also available for purchase through Amazon.

Amghar, Samir and Khadiyatoula, Fall (2016): "Disillusioned militancy: the crisis of militancy and variables of disengagement of the European Muslim Brotherhood". *Mediterranean Politics* 22/1. Pages 54-70.

Badawi, Jamal A (1980): *The Status of Woman in Islam*. This essay was first published in 1971 in the journal *Al-Ittihad* Vol 8/2, but the version I have was published in the USA in 1980.

Baehr, Peter (2011): "Marxism and Islamism: Intellectual Conformity in Aron's time and our own". *Journal of Classical Sociology* 11. Pages 173-190.

Belén Soage, Ana (2010): "Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi: A Moderate Voice from the Muslim World?". *Religious Compass* 4/9. Pages 563-575.

Belén Soage, Ana (2009): "Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb: Continuity or Rupture?". *The Muslim World*. Pages 294-311.

Belén Soage, Ana (2008): "Hasan al-Banna or the Politicisation of Islam". *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9/1. Pages 21-42.

Caeiro, Alexandre (2004): "The Social Construction of sharia: Bank Interest, Home Purchase, and Islamic Norms in the West". *Die Welt des Islams* 44/3. Pages 351-375.

Carlbom, Aje (2012): "Islamisk sexualrådgivning – ett globalt fenomen" [Islamic sexual counselling – a global phenomenon]. *Sexualitetsstudier* (Plantin & Månson eds.). Malmö: Liber förlag. Pages 254-276.

Carlbom, Aje (2009): "Oförutsedda konsekvenser av dialog med självutnämnda muslimska ledare" [Unforeseen consequences of dialogue with self-appointed Muslim leaders]. *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift* 3–4, 2009.

Carlbom, Aje (2006): "Mångkulturalismen och den politiska mobiliseringen av islam" [Multiculturalism and the political mobilization of Islam]. *Invandrare och integration i Danmark och Sverige*. Gothenburg: Makadam förlag.

Cato, Jonas and Otterbeck, Jonas (2014): "Active Citizenship among Muslims in Sweden: From Minority Politics to Political candidacy". *Tidskrift for Islamforskning* 8/1.

Clark, Janine A (2004): *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Colombo, Valentina (2016a): *Islamophobia and gender at the European Parliament: An Example of MB Monopolisation*. Article from Ikhwaninfo downloaded on 25/01/2017 from <http://www.ikhwan,whoswho/en/archives/809>.

Colombo, Valentina (2016b): "Muslim Brotherhood's silent conquest of Europe". *La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana*. <http://www.lanuovabq.it/it/muslim-brotherhoods-silent-conquest-of-europe>.

Eickelman, Dale F and Piscatori, James (1996): *Muslim Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

El-Hamdoon, Omer (2017): "Welcome to the MAB Magazine". *MAB Magazine* 2017, Muslim Association of Britain.

El-Karoui, Hakim (2016): *A French Islam is Possible*. Research report from Institut Montaigne September 2016.

Farahat, Cynthia (2017): "The Muslim Brotherhood, Fountain of Islamist Violence". *Middle East Quarterly* Spring 2017. Pages 1-10.

Fourest, Caroline (2008): *Brother Tariq: The Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan*. New York: Encounter Books.

- Granstrand, Lasse (2011): "Antisemitisk talare bjöds in av Islamiska förbundet" [Antisemitic speaker invited by the Islamic Association in Sweden]. *Dagens nyheter* March 2011.
- Goffman, Erving (1959): *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Hamid, Sadek (2018): *Sufis, Salafis and Islamists: The Contested Ground of British Islamic Activism*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Hamid, Shadi (2016): *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle Over Islam is Reshaping the World*. New York: St. Martins Griffin.
- Hammargren, Bitte (1995): "Nya nätverk byggs i korridorerna" [New networks are being built in the corridors]. *Svenska dagbladet* June 1995.
- Haslam, Nick (2018): "Concept creep: Psychology's expanding concepts of harm and pathology". In press, *Psychological Inquiry*.
- Helbawy, Kamal (2010): "The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: Historical Evolution and Future Prospects". *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (Hroub ed.). London: Saqi. Pages 61-86.
- Hjärpe, Jan (2010): *Islamismen*. Malmö: Gleerups.
- Hollander, Paul (1994): "Imagined Tyranny? Political Correctness Reconsidered". *Academic Questions* Fall 1994. Pages 51-73.
- Hroub, Khaled (2010): "Editor's note, footnote 7, page 67". *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (Hroub ed.). London: Saqi Books.
- Hussain Khan, Adil (2011): "Transnational Influences on Irish Muslim networks: From Local to Global Perspectives". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31/4. Pages 486-502.
- Hussein, Dilwar (2004): "Muslim Political Participation in Britain and the 'Europeanisation' of Fiqh". *Die Welt des Islams* 44/3. Pages 376-401.
- Johnson, Ian (2010): *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*. Boston: Mariner Books.
- Khan, Sara (2016): *The Battle for British Islam: Reclaiming Muslim Identity from Extremism*. London: Saqi.
- Khan, Adil Hussain (2011): "Transnational Influences on Irish Muslim Networks: From Local to Global Perspectives". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31/4. Pages 486-502.
- Kandil, Hazem (2015): *Inside the Brotherhood*. Cambridge: Polity.

Kandil, Hazem (2011): "Islamizing Egypt? Testing the limits of Gramscian counterhegemonic strategies". *Theory and Society* 40/1. Pages 37-62.

Karlsson Minganti, Pia (2007): *Muslima: islamisk väckelse och unga kvinnors förhandlingar om genus i det samtida Sverige*. Stockholm: Carlsson.

Kepel, Gilles (2015): *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West*. Paris: Gallimard.

Kepel, Gilles & Milelli, Jean-Pierre (2008): *Al Qaeda in its own words* (Kepel & Milelli eds.). London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Kepel, Gilles (2004): *The War for Muslim Minds*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Kepel, Gilles (1994): *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Kortmann, Matthias and Rosenow-Williams, Kerstin (2013): "Islamic Umbrella Organizations and Contemporary Political Discourse on Islam in Germany: Self-Portrayals and Strategies of Interaction". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 33. Pages 41-60.

Küntzel, Matthias (2007): *Jihad and Jew Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11*. New York: Telos Press.

Lappen, Alyssa A (2010): "The Muslim Brotherhood in North America". *The Muslim Brotherhood: The organization and policies of a globalist Islamist movement* (Rubin ed.). New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Pages 161-181.

Larise, Dunja (2012): "Civil Society in the Political Thinking of European Muslim Brothers". *Journal of Religion in Europe* 5. Pages 245-272.

Loseke, Donileen (2003): *Thinking about social problems*. London: Routledge.

Loudry, Glenn C (1994): "Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of Political Correctness and Related Phenomena". *Rationality and Society* 6. Pages 428-461.

Maher, Shiraz (2017): *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of An Idea*. London: Penguin Books.

Malaekah, Mostafa (2003): *Kvinnan i islam*. Text on the status of the woman in Islam from Sweden's Young Muslims 06/12/2016 (see below under Other sources).

Maréchal, Brigitte (2015): “The Historical and Contemporary Sociology of the European Muslim Brotherhood Movement and its Logic of Action”: *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 4. Pages 223-257.

Maréchal, Brigitte (2012): “The European Muslim Brothers’ Quest to Become a Social (Cultural) Movement”. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (Meijer & Bakker eds.). London: Hurst & Company. Pages 89-111.

Maréchal, Brigitte (2008b): “Universal Aspirations: The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe”. *ISIM Review* 22/Autumn 2008. Pages 36-37.

Maréchal, Brigitte (2008a): *The Muslim brothers in Europe: Roots and Discourse*. Leiden: Brill.

Mashhur, Mostafa (2000): *The Path of Dawah*. Kairo: Al-Falah Foundation for Translation, Publication and Distribution.

Meijer, Roel (2012): “The Muslim Brotherhood and the Political: an Exercise in Ambiguity”. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (Meijer & Bakker eds.). London: Hurst & Company. Pages 295-321.

Meijer, Roel (2012): “Introduction”. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (Meijer & Bakker, eds.). London: Hurst & Company. Pages 1-27.

Mostafa, Omar (2011): “Negativa generaliseringar en del av islamofobisk idétradition” [Negative generalizations a part of Islamophobic ideological tradition]. Debate article published on the debate site *Newsmill* 2011.

Muhammad, Zana (2017): “Hatiskt och grundlöst om Ibn Rushd” [Hateful and unfounded about Ibn Rushd]. *Västerbottens-kuriren* September 2017.

Mura, Andrea (2012): “A genealogical inquiry into early Islamism: the discourse of Hasan al-Banna”. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 17/1. Pages 61-85.

Musa, Rashid (2017): “Unga muslimer fick rätt – då är ni plötsligt tysta” [Young Muslims win appeal – and suddenly you are all silent]. *Aftonbladet* November 2017.

Otterbeck, Jonas (2000): *Islam på svenska: tidskriften Salaam och islams globalisering*. Lund: History of Religions section

Ouis, Pernilla and Roald, Anne Sofie (2003): *Muslim i Sverige*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

Pargeter, Alison (2013): *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power*. London: Saqi.

Pettersson, Göran (2017): “Med anledning av rapporten Muslimska brödraskapet I Sverige beställd och publicerad av Myndigheten för samhällsskydd

och berdschap (MSB)” [Due to the report ‘The Muslim Brotherhood in Sweden’ ordered and published by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)]. Debate submission from the Chair of Forum. Downloaded on 20/01/2018 from <http://www.socialforum.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/MSB-rapport170303.pdf>.

Qutb, Sayyid (1980): *Milestones*. Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House.

Ramadan, Tariq (2002): “Europeinization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?”. *ISLAM, Europe’s Second Religion* (Hunter [ed.]). Westport: Praeger Publishers. Pages 207-219.

Readings, George, Brandon, James and Phelps, Richard (2018): *Islamism and Language: How Using the Wrong Words Reinforces Islamist Narratives*. Quilliam Foundation Concept series 3.

Rich, David (2010): “The very Model of a British Muslim Brotherhood”. *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement* (Rubin ed.). New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Pages 117-137.

Roald, Anne Sofie (2014): “The Discourse of Multiculturalism: An Obstacle to Cultural Change?”. *Tidskrift for Islamforskning*, 8/1. Pages 248-274.

Roald, Anne Sofie (2012): “Democratisation and Secularisation in the Muslim Brotherhood: The International Dimension”. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (Meijer & Bakker eds.). London: Hurst & Company. Pages 71-89.

Rosefsky Wickham, Carrie (2002): *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Roy, Olivier (2016): *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State*. London: Hurst & Company.

Roy, Olivier (2007): *Secularism Confronts Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Roy, Olivier (2004): *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Umma*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rubin, Barry (2010): “Comparing Three Muslim Brotherhoods”. *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Pages 7-19.

Schuck, Cristoph (2013): “A Conceptual Framework of Sunni Islamism”. *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14/4. Pages 485-506.

Shavit, Uriya (2012): “The Wasati and Salafi Approaches to the Religious Law of Minorities”. *Islamic Law and Society* 19. Pages 416-457.

Silvestri, Sara (2010a): “Moderate Islamist Groups in Europe: the Muslim Brothers”. *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (Hroub ed.). London: Saqi.

Silvestri, Sara (2010b): “Public policies towards Muslims and the institutionalization of ‘Moderate Islam’ in Europe”. Article missing source, downloaded from book chapter.

Strauss, Claudia (2004): “Cultural standing in expression of opinion”. *Language in society* 33. Pages 161-194.

Svahn, Clas (2016): “Forskare tror att islamister infiltrerat Miljöpartiet” [Researchers believe that Islamists have infiltrated the Green Party]. *Dagens nyheter* April 2016.

Tibi, Bassam (2012): *Islamism and Islam*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Vidino, Lorenzo (2017): *The Muslim Brotherhood in Austria*. Report. Vienna: University of Vienna.

Vidino, Lorenzo (2012): “The European Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood: Myth or Reality?”. *The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe* (Meijer & Bakker eds.). London: Hurst & Company. Pages 51-71.

Vidino, Lorenzo (2011): *The Muslim Brotherhood in the West: Evolution and Western Policies*. Report The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence.

Vidino, Lorenzo (2010): *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan (2004): “Introduction: Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory”. *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pages 1-37.

Other sources

Alternative report sent to the United Nations in response to the Swedish Government’s report. *Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network Alternative Report* (2013) is the title of the report that builds on cooperation between what appears to be 17 Swedish national Islamic organizations. Helena Benaouda/Hummasten, Fatima Doubakil, Elvir Gigovic, Omar Mustafa and Ahmed Siraj are members of the Coordinating Committee for the report. Kitimbwa Sabuni was the Editor. The organizations that collaborated and signed the report are: Sveriges Muslimska Råd (Muslim Council of Sweden), Förenade Islamiska Föreningar i Sverige (United Islamic Associations in Sweden), Sveriges Muslimska Förbund (Sweden’s Muslim Association),

Bosniska Islamiska Samfundet (The Bosnian Islamic Society), Svenska Islamiska Samfundet (The Swedish Islamic Society), Islamiska Shia Samfundet (The Islamic Shia Society), Svenska Islamiska Unionen (The Swedish Islamic Union), Sveriges Islamiska Skolor (Sweden's Islamic Schools), Islamiska Förbundet i Sverige (The Islamic Association in Sweden), Sveriges Unga Muslimer (Sweden's Young Muslims), Forum för lika Rättigheter (Forum for Equal Rights), Ibn Rushd Studieförbund (Ibn Rushd Study Association), Muslimska mänskliga rättighetskommittén (The Muslim Human Rights Committee), Sveriges Imamråd (Sweden's Imam Council), Eritreanska Kulturforumet (The Eritrean Culture Forum), Islamiskt Informationsforum (Islamic Information Forum) and Svenska Muslimer för Fred och Rättvisa (Swedish Muslims for Peace and Justice) (ibid:2).

Att förstå islam [Understanding Islam], information text without year, but appears to have circulated in the Swedish public domain for at least a few decades. The project manager for the text was Mahmmoud Aldebe who appears to have been the Chairman for Sweden's Muslim Association (SMF) at the time of publication. In the preface, SMF thanks the Swedish Immigration Board of the time for support and project grants. It can be downloaded from <http://docplayer.se/4787087-Att-forsta-islam-2002-06-04-www-islamiska-org-2-81.html>. The content of the text lacks references, but anyone well-read on the difference between Islamic ideology and Islam as a traditional faith sees that it is a politicised view of the religion that is spread in the information text.

“Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) of Palestine”. *Journal of Palestine Studies XXII*, 1993. Pages 122-134.

Federation of Islamic organizations in Europe (FIOE) objectives, downloaded 05/05/2017 from <http://www.fioe.org/node/173>.

FEMYSO's history description on how the organization was formed. Downloaded 27/11/2017 from (<https://femyso.org/history/>).

Final Statement the 25th ordinary session of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, 6-10 October 2015, Istanbul, Turkey. 16 pages.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's Swedish brochure about the woman in Islam. Downloaded on 19/01/2018 from <http://hizb-ut-tahrir.se/images/nya-broschyrrer-pdf/Kvinnan-i-islam.pdf>.

Interview with Dr Mohamed Habib, acting Chairman of MB, in the Egyptian daily newspaper *Al-Ahrrar* 2008. The interview was downloaded from MB's international website (*Ikhwanweb*) 12/05/2017 from <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=17267>.

Ibn Rushd operational plan 2017-2018. Downloaded from Ledarsidorna.se 30/01/2018 <https://www.slideshare.net/Johanwesterholm/ibn-rushdverksamhetsplan20172018>.

Islamic Association in Sweden's (IFiS) articles of association from 2012. Downloaded from www.islamiskaforbundet.se 25/11/2016.

Mahmoud Aldebe's letter in connection with the Omar Mustafa case. "Det svenska muslimska brödraskapet i Sverige (*al-Ikhwan al-muslimun*)" [The Swedish Muslim Brotherhood in Sweden (*al-Ikhwan al-muslimun*)]. Downloaded from Torbjörn Jerlerup's website 07/03/2017. <https://ligator.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/mahmoud-aldebe-och-antisemitismen-pa-arabnyheter-info-del-2/>

'*Political Islam*', and the *Muslim Brotherhood review* (2016). Sixth Report of Session 2016-17. House of Commons.

Muslim Brotherhood Review: main Findings (2015). Primary findings in the British government's study of the Muslim Brotherhood. House of Commons.

The Muslim Brotherhood in the UK. Report from Quilliam Foundation, London.

The Muslim Brotherhood "Project". Document found in a raid on the MB-associated banker Youssef Nada (see Vidino 2010:79-80). The document is considered by many to be controversial and can easily be interpreted within the scope of conspiracy theory thinking.

The Muslims of Europe Charter, FIOE's position paper directed at European readers. At the time of the writing of this report, this is not available as FIOE's website is closed. However, the text is available in Swedish under the heading "Fördraget" [Treaty] on the IFiS website <http://www.islamiskaforbundet.se/fordraget/>

The position of women in Islam. Information text from the MB-affiliated Irish organization Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICC) downloaded 21/01/2018 from <http://www.islamireland.ie/about/publications/>.

Presentation av islam [Presentation of Islam]. Information text from the Örebro mosque that is largely similar to the content in the Stockholm mosque's "Vad du inte vet om islam" [What you don't know about Islam] (see below). The text from the Örebro mosque was downloaded on 21/01/2017 from <http://orebromoske.se/om-islam/>.

Vad du inte vet om islam [What you don't know about Islam], information on Islam distributed by IFiS/Stockholm mosque that was downloaded on 20/01/2018 from <http://www.stockholmsmoske.se/islam/>.

Kvinnan i islam [The Woman in Islam], information text (compiled by Mostafa Malaekah) from Sweden's Young Muslims (SUM) that was downloaded on 21/01/2018 from <https://web.archive.org/web/20161023021758/http://ungamuslimer.se:80/kvinnan-i-islam/>. The text can also be downloaded from the Islamiska infor-

mationsföreningen (Islamic Information Association - IIF) www.islam-info.se and from Islamguiden.com/kvinnan-islam. To the best of my knowledge, SUM no longer has a website on the Internet; the organization appears to have shifted to entirely providing information through Facebook. The version I downloaded from SUM was available on 06/12/2016 in the web archive. I also have a copy of the text downloaded on 22/02/2017, i.e. when the organization's website was still up.