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Björn Herstad

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Sweden and the Muslim Brotherhood

**– is Islamism a natural part of a multicultural society or
is it a threat to our civilization?**

Abstract

A historical parallel of the mood of operation by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to the way the organization is operating in Europe is identified. The organization has a very pragmatic ideological view allowing it to align with the political elite in EU and countries such as Sweden. It uses multiculturalism, the fight against Islamophobia and a claim of being representative for all Muslims as the three main bases to leverage influence. The Islamism it represents must be regarded as fundamentalist because it is advocating Islam as a total system encompassing all areas of life and demanding long-term subjugation.

In Sweden individuals from Muslim Brotherhood associated groups have entered high-ranking political positions and managed to channel significant governmental funds to build schools, mosques, relief services and “educating” newly arrived immigrants and prison inmates. Due to the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is trying to create an Islamist parallel structure it controls, and at the same time try to facilitate governmental support for these efforts and lastly due to the fact that it advances an ideological position in conflict with core Western values, it must be considered a threat to Europe and civilization as we know it.

Key words: Muslim Brotherhood, Sweden, EU, Multiculturalism, Islamophobia, Islamism, political Islam, Integration

Introduction

*"Some think, wrongly, that Islam is limited to religious, spiritual and devout practice. As for us, we consider Islam as governing the temporal as much as the spiritual"*¹ – Hassan al-Banna founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The absolute best-organized Muslim group inside Europe is the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). It's not just any other group instead it was the most important player during the Arabic spring and by democratic vote conquered the Egyptian presidency. It has spread to all countries in the Islamic world and established important associated groups such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. The road there was long though, they started in 1928, and has since step-by-step built a vast social movement on an Islamist base and controlling an array of social institutions permeating society. The different moods of operation this group has used are ranging from paramilitary, political assassinations, educational efforts, religious functions, mutual aid societies, democratic parties, alliances with liberals and the left, street protest, to lawyer court activists. In Egypt, the military finally stepped in and put an end to the Islamization for now.

In Europe, this group has instead used its pragmatism to form an alliance with high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats in support and advancement of multiculturalism and the combat of Islamophobia. With mass-immigration and particularly Muslim immigration how to handle Islamism is a hot topic; are they allies in the integration process or are they instead enemies because their goal is an Islamist Europe?

¹ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 63

This study will connect the Muslim Brotherhood's Egyptian history with recent findings in Europe and particular Sweden. Sweden is interesting among others for being the country in Europe that most upholds multiculturalism as a positive value and has seen the fastest increase of Muslim population. The number of Muslims was estimated to 8.1%, roughly 800 000 people, in 2016.² We will later describe traces of an institutionalized Islamism in the country advanced by Muslim Brotherhood associated groups and organizations. In Poland the situation is different, estimates say that less than 0.1% of the population is Muslim.³ Although the Liga Muzułmańska/Muslim League, which was founded in 2001 and now operates at least eight cultural centers around Poland and has an active student wing on many campuses, is associated with the Muslim Brotherhoods European umbrella organization.⁴ The Muslim League is also reported to be involved in a political struggle with the Lipka Tatars, who has since the 14th century been living in Poland, over who should be invested with the representative power over Muslims living in Poland today.⁵

Hypothesis

For this study we will use a clear-cut hypothesis – Muslim Brotherhood (from now on also called “MB” or “the brotherhood”) is a long-term threat to Western societies. To prove, or possible falsify, this hypothesis we will break it down in three supporting arguments or research questions.

² Hackett, C. (2017), *News in the numbers*/ Pew Research Center

³ Hackett, C. (2017), *News in the numbers*/ Pew Research Center

⁴ <http://islam-krakow.pl/eng/2014/02/06/about-muslim-league-in-poland/>

⁵ Wiktor-Mach, D. (2008), p. 34-35

a) *For MB moderate Islamism is an opportunistic position and not a principal position:* We will investigate if MB is in fact challenging Western values as such. If their position is Islamist in a principal or fundamentalist sense (Islam as a total system) or if their moderate string is in fact pragmatic in the sense that it permanently can accept to subjugate to Western society and its values.

b) *MB is building an Islamistic parallel structure in society "the Muslim community".* [Building and maintaining a collective identity]: We will investigate evidence that MB is in fact building an infrastructure supporting an islamistic parallel society separated from the majority culture.

c) *MB is using existing structures and ideas to protect and advance their values and their infrastructure.* [Facilitating political opportunity structures]: We will investigate if MB is using existing societal structures such as parties, the court, NGO:s etcetera to support and advance Islamistic values and an Islamistic infrastructure.

We will answer these questions using sources from Sweden and a broader literature study. The findings in Sweden are intended for a common Western understanding of the issue.

Theory and methodology

As a methodical tool organizing empiricism is used, meaning that the present situation should be understood in the light of historical events. Empirical evidence from the current investigation will thus be related to other researchers historical description of MB. The underlying theoretical framework used to formulate the hypothesis is social movement theory and the assumption that a movement's ambition is to transform

society in accordance with its belief structure, ea. a movements historical mission. The b) and c) questions above are derived from key concepts in this field of study such as collective identity and political opportunity structures.

Disposition

This paper will start with MB's history in Egypt; from it's founding to the taking of power and ultimately losing power. Thereafter we will cover the MB network in Europe. The ideological complexity of Islamism will be addressed and the positioning of MB in that context. Next the multicultural paradigm, EU and their relationship with MB will be investigated. Then we trace Islamism in governmental structures in Sweden and cover the major MB associated organizations operating there. We will end with a discussion about our findings and relate them to our hypothesis and suggested further research.

Once upon a time in Egypt...

*"The prophet is our leader. The Quran is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our greatest hope"*⁶ – The Muslim Brotherhood motto

The history of the Muslim Brotherhood starts in an Egyptian city called Ismailia. This is not an ancient city, instead, it was founded in 1863 when the Suez Canal was built and is situated halfway between Port Said and Suez. Here the channel administrative headquarter was placed and in many ways, the city signals a new and modern Egypt. In fact, the city was named after the then Egyptian ruler Ismail Pasha

⁶ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 1

know for saying “*My country is no longer in Africa; we are now part of Europe. It is therefore natural for us to abandon our former ways and to adopt a new system adapt to our social conditions.*”⁷ As a ruler, he initiated modernizing and industrializing projects in the country.

Egypt, although an autonomous province under the Ottoman Empire until 1914 when it became a British protectorate, was in practice already controlled first by France and later by the British Commonwealth. For example in Ismailia itself a British military base was established in 1882. Regardless of foreign interference the local rulers such as Ismail maintained some areas of autonomous decision-making.

It was in this city a schoolteacher named Hassan al-Banna together with a small group of workers from the Suez Canal Company in the year 1928 decides to establish “*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*”, better known as the Muslim Brotherhood. Foremost it was a social and religious society and not necessarily a political one. The practical work concentrated around local projects such as building a mosque and some school and medical facilities. Al-Banna explained the foreign and capitalist domination of the Egyptian and Muslim population with Western influence on the Muslims themselves. He held the view that the abandonment of Sharia and the Muslim way was the root cause of the state of affairs. He taught that Muslims regardless of their personal beliefs, if they do not practice Islam practically private and in their social interactions then they are comparable to infidels.⁸

A recurring theme in Islamist circles was this anti-Western thought, that offered an explanation to the current state

⁷ Scham, S. (2013), p. 313-318

⁸ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 487-489

of affairs in their home countries saying that the native elite was under Western influence and this was the reason that the Muslim population was suffering. Islamist mobilization could thus be thought of a response to Western efforts to undermine the Muslim culture and society as such.⁹ There is a debate in what regard al-Banna could be described as an Egyptian nationalist that falls a little outside this study. Clear is that he considered Egypt as the natural leader of both the Arab and Muslim worlds.¹⁰

Three years after it's founding the groups headquarter moved to Cairo and a rapid growth started. In 1938 memberships were estimated to over one hundred thousand and by 1949 it was the largest popular movement in Egypt with perhaps half a million active members. It is believed that the organization's support with money, personnel and supplies to the Arab general strike in Palestine in 1938 established it as a movement with high social capital among the general population in the Arab world.¹¹ The social goodwill it leveraged in Palestine later made it possible to establish Hamas as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Entering the political realm

The most rapid growth took place between the years 1932 and 1952, which is interesting because it was at the same time the organization faced state repression.¹² Ziad Munson argues for that circumstances such as that the control of British government over Egypt created an rather alienated

⁹ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 48-49

¹⁰ Soage, A. (2009), p. 15-16

¹¹ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 488-489

¹² Munson, Z. (2001), p. 487-488

population vis-à-vis the regime, the collapse of the previous widespread support for the nationalistic Wafd party due to its cooperation with the British during the Second World War and lastly the establishment of Israel and Jewish settlers in Palestine which create a common conception of a unified goal for Muslims (in stopping this settlement). MB rhetoric became more and more directed against the British influence leading to the first ban of the organization. However, their main activities were aimed locally and consisted of practical endeavors such as building schools, mosques, clinics and different social institutes and social aid programs.¹³

By 1941 the organization openly challenged the government and thereby ultimately British rule. The Muslim Brotherhood demanded the expulsion of all foreign troops from the country not only in speeches and propaganda as before but it now also entered the election with their own candidates for parliament. After state repression started, leaders were imprisoned and meetings were banned. But these measures by the government were relaxed rather soon probably due to the Second World War that led to a lack of focus. During these days the “*secret apparatus*” was created, this was a paramilitary group connected to the Brotherhood in charge of protecting leaders and all military endeavors. As soon as the repression relaxed the Brotherhood put in a higher gear and was considered to be at the center of the popular unrests that peaked in 1947, this in combination with the findings of large arms depots forced the authorities to ban the organization once again and jail the leadership as well. As retaliation, the organization assassinated the Egyptian prime minister. The

¹³ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 495-499

Egyptian police answered with killing MB funder Hasan al-Banna.¹⁴

The organization formed a decentralized and federative structure with semi-independent branches, facilitating a three level membership structure; assistant, related and active.¹⁵ The process to integrate an active brother is said to take around 5-8 years. The view they have on societal change is mirrored in this process of gradual integration and indoctrination,¹⁶ with increasing responsibility and commitment in each step for the individual. It is argued that this federative structure made it possible to address different societal conditions that was very diverse in Egypt depending on region such as industrialized or agrarian or different urban areas, wealth and educational levels and social strata. MB often incorporated existing social network in its social branches as a way to advance forward and the federative structure made it possible to integrate these and at the same time offer some level of autonomy.¹⁷

The federative structure also helped the organization to withstand state repression; a system was evolved where direct operational control over the national organization was invested in different provincial leadership and in the case of police activity the leadership changed to another province according to a planned random pattern. As a consequence the Muslim Brotherhood maintained a functioning organization even when the state banned them and targeted repressions to combat them. As an indicator of the success of this model, in every single branch of the organization a rally was

¹⁴ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 488-489

¹⁵ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 497-498

¹⁶ Norell, M. (2016), p. 6

¹⁷ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 497-498

organized on the same day the organizational ban was lifted in 1951.¹⁸

Nasser dictatorship and state repression

The new MB leader was no less than a former High-Court judge named Hasan Ismail al-Hudaybi. He managed to keep the organization functioning although more than 4000 of its members were imprisoned and the organization was formally banned. Social unrest continued however and in 1952 a group of officers known as the "*Free Officers*" took power. They had extended links to the Muslim Brotherhood and as soon as they took power the Brotherhood was allowed to restart their political and social activities. The honeymoon was short though; in 1954 a Muslim Brother tried to murder al-Nasser, the leader of the Free Officers. The move was not popular within the officer cadre and the Muslim Brotherhood was once again banned and thousands of its members were imprisoned or exiled.¹⁹ The new leadership of officers was nationalists and wanted to modernize the state and society. In the effort of consolidation power and make their ambitious project possible they aimed at creating an all-powerful state. The early Muslim Brotherhood probably realized that they needed to take the state as such in possession if they were to have any success with their goals, hence their bold move. But as soon as they set that ambition the full power of repression was directed their way and between the years 1954 and 1974 large parts of the leadership was imprisoned and tortured.²⁰ This triggered a great flight to Europe and

¹⁸ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 497-498

¹⁹ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 489

²⁰ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 45

many from the Muslim Brotherhood moved and continued their operation in exile. We will come in to greater length of this in the next chapter.²¹ The MB social infrastructure was though intact, with schools, clinics, mosques and social aid; in fact the Nasser regime found it necessary to maintain and fund the structure because it had become an important part of the Egyptian social and economical millue and if it stopped functioning the regime feared civil unrest.²²

In 1974 the MB leadership that had been imprisoned was released. The first thing they started to do was to establish their dominance in Islamist circles. This is probably a necessary step for a successful movement when the leaders are fully focused on internal fractioning and forcefully unites organizations, networks and individuals to one powerful movement.²³ The leadership of the MB concluded on a non-confrontational strategy vis-à-vis the regime in Egypt and started the building of a counter-hegemonic culture strategy. To do this they worked both practical and ideological. They evolved a worldview for Muslims on how to think and act and they spread this worldview or ideology through social intuitions and social work. In so doing they offered a concrete example of an alternative to the current regime.²⁴

The maxim *“Let us build on what unites us and forget what divides us”* was used by MB to create powerful alliances and relationships with different secular groups, unions and so on, many socialistic or liberal leaning and even feminist.²⁵ The MB is a very patient organization, their spiritual leader

²¹ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 2

²² Munson, Z. (2011), p. 501-502

²³ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 45

²⁴ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 46

²⁵ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 47

Youssef al-Qaradawi has stated that societies are established on cultural values and that it is first when these values have been established in accordance to the organization's beliefs it is possible to discuss politics. They targeted different organizations, parties, volunteer groups and so on to use these as socializing structures to spread their ideas. To be able to do this they had to rely on more loosely connected structures of activists and not only formal members that had been an easy target for the security agencies.²⁶ Direct alliances between MB and liberal parties have not been uncommon in the Middle East. It is proposed that these parties tried to capitalize on the popular support of Islam and thereby win votes and electoral seats with these alliances. For example the liberal al-Wafd in 1984 became the largest opposition party in parliament due to entering an alliance with the MB. Because of the fact that MB representatives later demanded that the party should implement Sharia regardless of the political program of the party the cooperation broke down but a new alliance was soon formed. This time with the socialistic al-Amal party who later was completely overtaken by the MB. This new alliance was complemented with a third organization, the liberal al-Ahrar party. Together they constituted the largest opposition group in parliament.²⁷

Mubarak alliance to counter radicals

During the Mubarak rule the Muslim Brotherhood would not speak about revolution, and it appears as if a deal was struck with the regime. Mubarak accepted the MB presence

²⁶ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 48-49

²⁷ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 50

in society although restricted from direct politics and in return they should fight militant Islamism.²⁸ The MB however did not lose focus on long-term goals and targeted among others teachers. This effort seems to have paid off: in a 1997 survey over 85% of elementary school teachers self-described as Islamists. MB targeted other professions as well and it is estimated that over 21 professional syndicates suffered the fate of a direct takeover.²⁹ The most important social institution was the mosques though. And the MB never seized to integrate with them. They constituted the prime area for socialization and the creation of feelings of belonging and commitment and hence also social conformity.³⁰

The regime was not calm however and the history and relationship with Mubarak is a pendulum. For example in 1995 all Islamist candidates to parliament were detained, and the MB “socialist” party al-Amal was later suspended. Court rulings about the protection of Islamic morals and customs, that MB advanced through its different legal bodies, was ignored by the state. Social institutions were taken over by the state on masse, including sixty thousand mosques. Thousands of MB individuals were imprisoned and their homes were raided. The state widened the definition of terrorism to include disturbance of public order to easier target MB associated operations.³¹

Despite all this, during the 1990th and 2000th MB emerged as a significant popular force and in 2005 it held the majority of the opposition seats in parliament, advocating a *“democratic, civil state with an Islamic frame of*

²⁸ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 46

²⁹ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 51

³⁰ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 52

³¹ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 521

reference".³² But due to state repression the scene changed fast and Mubarak himself described MB as a direct threat to Egyptian security. A new wave of confiscating assets, imprisoning of members and so on started. As a side note there are evidence that the Egyptian secret police helped the MB in the 2005 election, to use their popular support to relax US pressure on democratization of the country. The thought was that if democratization means Islamisation, US might accept looking the other way around.³³ All this has lead to a debate within the academia where some focus on MB:s ability and success of permeating societies social fabric and others on MB:s inability and failure to handle state repression.

The Brothers take power and then lose it

The Arabic Spring in 2011 consisted of popular protests demanding a change in the political participation in many Arab countries. From West these activities were many times considered to represent a democratization and liberalization process. The protests were broad and incorporated different thoughts and agendas. Probably a large driving force was even non-ideological and more populist with resentment of what was considered a corrupt political class. It soon however became clear that the dominating player and the most well structured organizational block inside these protests was no other then the Muslim Brotherhood.

Their multileveled membership structure and federative organizational model made it possible to negotiate different forms of commitment with different persons and groups and

³² Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 521

³³ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 55

this step-by-step introduction by individuals offered an introduction to their network with very low initial thresholds. By facilitating an easy incorporation and smooth passover in each individual case the ideological and socialization process could start.³⁴

The Arabic Spring marked the end of Mubaraks power and he was forced to step down. After an interim period with the military that promised to facilitate democratic elections the Muslim Brotherhood managed to get their own candidate, Mohammed Morsi, elected as president in 2012. The reign was short; already a year later a military coup was carried out bringing general Sisi to power. This was a very brutal takeover that included the Rabaa massacre where more than 1000 of Muslim Brother members and supporters were killed.³⁵

The Arab Spring has lead too what has been described as a twin shook for MB with the formation of the Islamist State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the military coup in Egypt by general Sisi. This has also lead to an ideological split according to some observers inside the MB. The Arab political system has shown itself reluctant to incorporate Islamist participation in the political structure. Hence a tension has arisen between the old guard of gradualists and reform focus with a younger generation of leaders more revolutionary oriented. Interesting here is that it is this new generation who combines a more cross-ideological view with a revolutionary agenda. This new generation has now taken power over the organization, helped by Egypt's regimes harsh treatment, arrests, and even some deaths of previous leadership segments.³⁶ Some might protest to that last description and

³⁴ Munson, Z. (2011), p. 500-501

³⁵ Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 4

³⁶ Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 1-5

point to the fact that more radical MB leaders inspired by ideological streams influenced by Salafist was advancing already before the Arab Spring. For example in 2010 key positions was concurred by this new generation in the powerful MB Guidance Council.³⁷

The harsh treatment followed in more Middle-Eastern countries, and in Saudi Arabia as well as in the United Arab Emirates MB was designated a terrorist group. In Tunisia the MB party Ennahdas sat in a coalition 2011-2013 when it voluntarily stepped down from power in the aftermath of a social turmoil. Many grassroots became alienated because MB remained in support for the regime. In Kuwait the parliament dominated by Islamists was dissolved twice in 2013. In Jordan the MB party PJD is struggling with an alienated base of supporters thanks to its loyalty stance towards the king.³⁸ How to facilitate the integration in the state without threatening the ruling elite and at the same time keep credibility in the broad based social movements they are steering, demanding social change and an Islamist agenda, is a question not easy to answer, as it seems.

Brothers in Europe

*“Islam will return to Europe as a conqueror and victor, after being expelled from it twice [...] I maintain that the conquest this time will not be by the sword but by preaching and ideology.”*³⁹ Yusuf al-Qaradhwai, spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.

³⁷ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p.522

³⁸ Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 5-10

³⁹ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 166

During the 50s and 60s we saw a great movement of Egyptian and Arabic students and political refugees to Europe and particularly West Germany. After Nasser established diplomatic relations with East Germany, West Germany thought it was a good idea to welcome the fleeing Islamists and offer a safe harbor.⁴⁰ Some proposed that the belief that Islamism eventually would take power and hence a good relationship might facilitate profitable economic deals was a driving force.⁴¹ This was happening at the same time as a broader immigration from the Muslim world to Europe started.⁴² But the creation of the different Islamist organizational bodies initially consisted of political refugees and students. Seeing the harsh treatment in the Arab world their focus started to shift and the building of transnational movements with primary focus in the West started.⁴³

Key element in the building of these organizations was individual leaders. One such leader was Said Ramadan who had lead the Brotherhood paramilitary troops in Palestine, had served as al-Bannas personal secretary and later even married one of his daughters. This man moved to Geneva in 1958 and founded or co-founded Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland (IGD), the Muslim World League and Islamische Zentrum Genf (IZG).⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 2

⁴¹ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 66

⁴² Vidino, L. (2009), 166

⁴³ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 64-65

⁴⁴ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 2

A trans-European network evolves

In Geneva many important organizations and international positions are situated and access to this infrastructure made it possible to also put pressure on Nasser and the Egyptian government via Western governments and international organizations connected to UN. With this a process started that changed the Islamist movement: before they were very much involved in a nationalist logic such as in Egypt but in the West they became transnational operators.⁴⁵

Said Ramadan served as IDG:s president for its first ten years of existence. The IZG was later taken over by his sons and the IGD was headed by one Ghaleb Himmat. Across Europe Said Ramadan helped and supported the creation of Islamist structures and organizations. In Ireland we have the Dublin Islamist society (DIS) for instance that received his help and in return they helped with donation for the creation of the construction of a mosque in Munich. The DIS was created by Ahmed Elkadi, who later also became an important figure in the US and consolidated many organizations there.⁴⁶ The DIS was originally described as a local initiative to help students practice their Islamic belief and study Islamic literature but the focus on global perspective and the involvement in a global network of Islamists seems to be existing from the beginning. Today the European Council for Fatwa and Research lead by Yusuf al-Qaradawi is operating with the Irish city as its base.⁴⁷ This development took part in many European countries, and the Irish case is just one of many examples.

⁴⁵ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 64-65

⁴⁶ Khan, A. H. (2011), p. 490

⁴⁷ Khan, A. H. (2011), p. 486-491

Saudi funding and terrorist allegations

From the very beginning financial flows from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have contributed to MB projects and the building of mosques.⁴⁸ The Irish DIS eventually constructed a mosque with the help from the Saudi King Faisal's personal funds, opened schools and later changed name to the Islamic Foundation of Ireland.⁴⁹ The credit to make this financing happen is given to a diplomat named Salem Azzam. He later directed large funds from primary Saudi Arabia to found MB organizations and activities all around Europe. His family was represented in the early MB leadership through one of al-Bannas close companions named Abd al-Rahman Azzam.

With an international supporting network, local facilities such as mosques, intellectual support and cash MB fast appeared as the main organizing force in Europe for Islam as such. This was done through among others the organization Islamic Council of Europe (ICE) and later the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE) – the latter is represented in all European countries and function as the MB:s European umbrella organization.⁵⁰

Himmat Ghaleb who was the IGD leader after Ramadan founded the Bank al Taqwa which is considered to be the Muslim Brotherhood's bank. Through this bank and a series of companies strategically positioned for tax purposes intelligence agencies have accused Himmat for having channeled considerable funds to groups such as Hamas and the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front besides being one of the main financiers of different mosques and Islamic centers

⁴⁸ Lebl. L. (2013) p. 111

⁴⁹ Khan, A. H. (2011), p. 492-495

⁵⁰ Khan, A. H. (2011), p. 493-495

throughout Europe including the official magazine of the Muslim Brotherhood named *Risalatul Ikhwan*. In 2001 the US state agencies designated him as a terrorist financier and he stepped down as president from the IGD because of that.⁵¹ This organization is described as the most influential in Germany, founded by MB leader Said Ramadan as described above, and is considered to continually promote MB ideology.⁵² Worth mentioning is the growing presence of Sharia finance supporting parallel societal structures. It has peculiarities such as it prohibits investments in western defense industry and all transactions are submitted a 2.5% Jihad tax called *zakat*. *“I don’t like the word donations, I like to call it Jihad with money, because God has ordered us to fight enemies with our lives and our money”* as MB:s spiritual leader al-Qaradawi simply put it.⁵³

An elite group directing local organizations

It has been commented that the many Muslim and Islamic organizations operating in Europe both locally and internationally may be governed by a very small elite group of MB associated Islamists. Evidence suggests that this sometimes creates local friction with what has been described as *“corporate imams”*. The power of these local structures such as in Ireland has shifted from the local members and a democratic processes to international umbrella organizations controlled by the MB.⁵⁴ From the beginning it might be the case that the flight to Europe and the establishment

⁵¹ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 2

⁵² Khan, A. H. (2011), p. 490

⁵³ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 114-115

⁵⁴ Khan, A. H. (2011), p. 497-498

of organizational structures in Europe was done with the intent of creating pressure and accumulating support for the return to their home countries and to take power there. But this has changed and from at least the 80s focused shifted for the European MB to strive to create a structure for Islamizing Europe as such. To do this they describe themselves as advocates and champions for the Muslim population and Muslim interests in Europe.⁵⁵

The understanding of Muslims in this context has been described as “*neo-ethnic*” because it predisposes that all immigrants who have some roots in an Islamic context, regardless of active beliefs and different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, are considered to be part of this unified block of Muslims in Europe. This is a perception so called identity politics activists and Islamist leaders are both in favor of it. The latter aspiring of a leadership position over a unified Muslim political and cultural block.⁵⁶

Infact MB sometimes contests that they are an organization saying instead that they represent a current of thought.⁵⁷ “*We do not have an international organization; we have a organization through our perception of things*”.⁵⁸ This is probably an effect of the learning process from Egypt where a decentralized organizational structure was a prerequisite not to be shut down by the government. Now it’s used as a tool in the process of more effective integrating in European structures. This leads to the effect that personal and financial ties, ideological statements and actions must be considered

⁵⁵ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 69-72

⁵⁶ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 45

⁵⁷ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 109

⁵⁸ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 173

to understand the organization's influence and reach.⁵⁹ The organizational model for the international Muslim Brotherhood has as a consequence been described as situated half-way between a pyramidal hierarchical organization and a flexible network. The structure has even been compared to a franchises business.⁶⁰

Among researcher however there is an consensus that the organization de facto exists in Europe.⁶¹ Some have pointed at similarities with the FIOE organizational structure and the MB in Egypt. It is worth noting that it is hard to advance inside the brotherhood and they select for certain traits and ideological "*clearness*". They even expect that an aspiring member should incorporate psychological predispositions in certain ways as well as adapt their individual identity in a Muslim brotherhood understanding.⁶² The international MB has stated on its international webpage "*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*". But MB members are notorious known for being vague of their belongings both ideological and organizational.⁶³ Worth mentioning is also that Europe already has a state influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood – the part of Bosnia and Herzegovina called the Federation of Bosnia

⁵⁹ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 110

⁶⁰ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 69

⁶¹ Norell, M. (2016) p. 14

⁶² Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 32-37

⁶³ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 35-36

and Herzegovina making up half of the country. MB played a large part in creating international support for military intervention towards Serbia in the 90s and is now an integral part of the state structure itself.⁶⁴

Islamism and its roots

*"I pledge with God to abide by the rules of Islam and Jihad for Allah's sake, and to fulfill and commit myself to the conditions and obligations of the Muslim Brothers, and to listen and obey its leadership whether willingly or not as long as he succumbs to Allah. I swear by God on that and he is the witness on my pledge"*⁶⁵ – the Muslim Brotherhood oath.

Islamism is a belief that the political realm should be built on an Islamic base. It is not an own form of Islam but one practiced in a political sphere. It's this base that should govern the state and society. It has been described as Islam as a total system a view with deep historical roots.⁶⁶

Islamism in its modern sense appeared in the 19th century in the writings of intellectuals such as Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935)⁶⁷ followed by Abul Ala-Maududi (1903-79), Hassan al-Banna (1906-49), Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) och Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1926-).⁶⁸ Some researchers consider Islamism as an *"invention of tradition"* and not a part of Islam as such even if it is based on the

⁶⁴ Magnusson, K. (2018), p. 26-31

⁶⁵ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 26

⁶⁶ Norell, M. (2016) p. 3p

⁶⁷ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 44

⁶⁸ Norell, M. (2016) p. 4

Islamic belief.⁶⁹ Others point to an older tradition with Islamic teachers such as Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-92).⁷⁰ But even in the Muslim world itself Islam many times is understood as a total system and the difference between Islam and Islamism is faded regardless of this is a traditional view or a view imposed by Islamist propaganda. In the case of MB they see Islam as a total system.⁷¹ Islamism bears with it the idea of a golden age and believes that during the time of Prophet Mohammed an uncorrupted society and way of life was present.⁷²

It is actually first with the establishment of MB itself that an effective embodiment of Islamism was created. Ideologies are normally ineffective until a strong movement represents them.⁷³ Mainstream Islamism favored by MB advocates a reform-oriented view called *islah*, starting with the individual. The idea is that Islam should step-by-step permeate society and that process can be started here and now at an individual level. However this individual change should lead to a wider societal shift in Islamist direction.⁷⁴ MB is known for advocating a strategy of avoiding confrontation with the system and instead penetrates it from within. They have done this with a flexible and pragmatic attitude towards policies when dealing with the political establishment in Europe. The result is striking; they are operating with governmental support in many countries.⁷⁵ To do this, MB intellectuals have described the European territory as “land of

⁶⁹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 17

⁷⁰ Norell, M., (2016) p. 4

⁷¹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 17-18

⁷² Norell, M. (2016) p. 4

⁷³ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 44

⁷⁴ Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 5

⁷⁵ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 171

preaching” in what seems to be the creation of a new legal category in Islamist thought. By this they mean that because the Muslim minority is free to advance Islamism interests it is not the “*land of war*” and while it is not Islamic it cannot be “*land of Islam*” either.⁷⁶ Although worth remembering is that non-Muslims are supposed to convert or submit, otherwise this fact in it self is considered as violence directed towards Islam and force is then considered as acceptable as a self-defense measure in this case. The ultimate goal being to govern the whole world as an Islamic state and obstacles in the way, if permanent, must be removed.⁷⁷

Jihad incorporates not only fighting but also da’wa, which is the conversion and proselytizing activities. This is a pragmatic choice rather than principal and can confuse observers. War is only necessary against those how resist Islamization in the long run.⁷⁸ MB is in practice advocating and advising for the creation of Muslim ghettos and the creation of parallel societies,⁷⁹ making it clear that their vision of Europe is another Europe than the existing one.

Yusuf Al-Qaradhwai, the spiritual leader of MB, has expressed the view that Muslims in Europe has a unique position and the possibility to be the leading force in the Islamic future. In Europe they are free to advance the Islamist quest in contrast to most Middle-Eastern countries where Islamists are kept in check by a forceful state and severe repression.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 172

⁷⁷ Norell, M., (2016) p. 3-4

⁷⁸ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 109

⁷⁹ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 172

⁸⁰ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 172

The Salafists – the face of radical Islam

The thinker, writer and former MB leader Sayyid Qutb had time to contemplate MB's failure while in Egypt jails for 20 long years, probably suffering from torture as well.⁸¹ He started to described Muslim rulers as infidels (kafir) because they did not implement Sharia in a strict sense. In so doing they denied, in his opinion, the authority of God and it is thereby justified to conduct Jihad and armed rebellion directed at the state. These thoughts later merged with the Wahhabite school focusing on Muslim rulers duty to be loyal to fellow Muslims and dissociate from non-Muslims. This version of Islamism was evolved and defined in the numerous training camps that were set up in Afghanistan and Pakistan and from which al-Qaida emerged. It was here that the shift from the near enemy to the far enemy took place. The fight against US, Israel and "*Christianization*" takes prominence before the fight against the "*infidel*" Muslim rulers. In Egypt there is nevertheless an increase in violence directed towards the military from Salafist groups. Regardless of focus they agree on the need of establishing a global Islamic state, the Caliphate and the fight against all "*cross-worshippers*". A disturbing point is that these groups do not believe that Islam makes a relevant distinction between military and civilian hence accepting also civilian targets.⁸²

The Salafist has had some presence in Europe since the mid-1980s but was primary divided in small groups. This started to change in the 90s when al-Qaida appeared as a Salafist power center and in that way helped to consolidate

⁸¹ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 45

⁸² Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 26-28

different groups. With veterans from places such as Afghanistan and Chechnya integration processes started developing a European network of Salafists. The London Mosque in Finsbury Park is considered to be the number one Salafist radicalizing platform in Europe.⁸³ The Dutch domestic security agency wrote a report warning for the spread of al-Qaida ideology inside European Islamist groups. In the UK alone MI5 stated there are some 4000 suspected terrorists and over 200 Islamist networks.⁸⁴ In Sweden the domestic security agency, SÄPO, is reporting an increase in violent islamists from 200 in 2010 to several thousands in 2017. SÄPO is “crediting” IS propaganda this new situation where these milieus also are more or less integrated and not fragmented on small groups as before.⁸⁵

Another large group is the so called quietist Salafist or peaceful revolutionaries. The largest organization operating in Europe advocating radical Islam is Tahrir al-Islami who advocates the creation of a global caliphate and the overthrow of democracy, but they are not themselves developing capacity to violence as it seems. The question of whether or not they advocate violence in trusted small groups has been debated; several researchers and defectors have stated that this is in fact the case.⁸⁶ But they are not themselves as an organization involved in violence. In Egypt, Salafist movements have started to partake in elections and thus accepting some democratic principles. There are at least four Salafist parties in Egypt and they differ mostly in what degree they want to

⁸³ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 168

⁸⁴ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 170

⁸⁵ Baas, D., “Skräcksiffran: tusentals radikala islamister i Sverige”, *TT/Expressen.se*, 16th of June 2017

⁸⁶ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 171

give the state a purely religious function.⁸⁷ An example of a Salafist group that also has moved towards the MB position is Ajnar Misr. It seems to accept Egypt as a nation-state and refers to the regime as tyrants instead of, as before, the much more uncompromising term *kafir*.⁸⁸

The “moderate” Muslim Brothers

It is argued that one of the prime marks of MB ideology is its lack of distinctiveness (that in a Muslim context appears as non-extremist) always trying to position itself in the Islamic mainstream and addressing everyday issues in Muslim life.⁸⁹ An important element in their ideology is also the presences of an anti-Western theme preoccupied with Western influence in Egypt – poverty and declining morality are normally understood in that context. The solution the Muslim Brotherhood proposes is the general acceptance of Islamic teaching and a belief that the Muslim community is one single unit that needs to resist Western influence.⁹⁰ The organization teaches that individuals themselves must practice the change and via the large number of social institutions they consistently show the millions of Egyptians that they are contributing to end poverty, combat diseases and so on.⁹¹ The similarity with the work in Europe is not too distant where MB is offering Muslims a cultural and religious safe haven creating a Muslim infrastructure to preserve their identity and ability to live their original culture.

⁸⁷ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 525

⁸⁸ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 531

⁸⁹ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 504-505

⁹⁰ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 489-490

⁹¹ Munson, Z. (2001), p. 501-502

As presented for the public in Egypt a “*democratic, civil state with an Islamic frame of reference*” is advocated by MB and by that is understood basic separation of power, rotation of power and some general political rights combined with Sharia. For instance, the MB considers it the states responsibility to uphold Islamic social norms.⁹² But the Arab Spring has lead to a need to rethink these analytical categories.⁹³

The brotherhood was not able to govern Egypt or at least was not prepared for the deep state and the following state coercion. President Morsi deferred from radical reforms also in the army, and instead he tried to promote General al-Sisi who was already the head of military intelligence. It seems like they believed that by cultural power or personal inspiration this would make the military accept them. This unpreparedness by the previous leadership created doubts among the members about their capabilities and the effectiveness of chosen strategies. A younger generation of leaders stepped in and took charge of MB in Egypt, and these were in favor of cross-ideological cooperation and more accepting to pluralism, but at the same time confrontative and revolutionary oriented.⁹⁴ This new youthful leadership has openly questioned the organizations principles of non-violence, supporting revolutionary measures instead of evolutionary ones, which has lead to a shift where the previous Salafist and MB ideological dividers are eroded.⁹⁵

The shift in the official rhetoric that has occurred is dramatic although it draws its strength from the organizations

⁹² Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 520-522

⁹³ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 519

⁹⁴ Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 6

⁹⁵ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 519-520

history itself. In an statement on MB:s official Arabic website in 2015 we read: *“We must prepare our selves... for a lengthy, uncompromising jihad, in which we seek to become martyrs”*.⁹⁶ The same article refers to al-Bannas *“Secret Apparatus”* that fought in Egypt and carried out assassinations and to the Jihad Brigades who fought Jewish settlers, but also the MB rovers which was a physical preparation program/subdivision, aimed at giving Muslims the physical and mental mindset they needed to conduct jihad. On the English website the rhetoric is normally not that explicit. Although, they have for example referred to a Fatwa that describes the overthrow of the Egyptian regime as a legal duty.⁹⁷ The Sisi-regime has often been called butchers and a call for vengeance has been addressed several times on the webpage. This can be interpreted as MB accepting a religious reference and legitimization upon the use of violence, and with that a broad range of options directed against the regime and all its personnel is then justifiable in their eyes.⁹⁸

Moderate as in opportunistic

The researcher Lorenzo Vidino has proposed a model where Islamism is understood as a tripartite pyramid. In the top we have the violent Jihadists, second the so-called peaceful revolutionaries or quietists and at the base the MB:s seemingly democratic version of Islamism. The point he makes is that the different ideological positions give mutual support instead of being conflicting positions. The base represented

⁹⁶ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 529

⁹⁷ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 529-530

⁹⁸ Ranko, A. & Nedza, J. (2016), p. 529-530

by MB is hence working to radicalize the European Muslim population.⁹⁹ While it is true that al-Banna believed that parliamentary democracy was compatible with Islam,¹⁰⁰ the Muslim Brotherhood also advocates Islam as a total system built on religion, life and state.¹⁰¹ It is not far fetched to suspect that they have a purely pragmatic and opportunistic view on where inside the Islamist spectrum they position themselves. MB seems to accept to act as a conveyor belt for radicalizing individuals who later can be recruited by terrorist organizations.¹⁰² It has been suggested that the only thing that is keeping mainstream Islamism from supporting ISIS is excesses in brutality and terror and not necessary any contradicting view of core ideological positions, such as the creation of a state around Islam and Muslims, implementation of Sharia and so on.¹⁰³ Researchers have also suggested that in times of Islamist terror politicians are looking for Muslim counterparts to conduct a dialogue with. In Sweden as in most Western countries this mean the MB, hence, Salafist terror is used to leverage influence by MB. Their different strategies, in some ways, enhances each other.¹⁰⁴ We are then, as it seems, in the area of Islamist opportunism.

I propose that MB is opportunistic in its attitude towards others and are happy to form alliances and reframe their way of communication. Calling MB moderate Islamist then appears to loose meaning; the moderate part becomes a tactic and a situational approach and do not affect core values.

⁹⁹ Vidino (2009) p 166-168

¹⁰⁰ Soage, A. (2009), p. 15-16

¹⁰¹ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 68

¹⁰² Lebl, L. (2013), p. 111

¹⁰³ Hamid, S., McCants, W. & Dar, R. (2017), p. 22

¹⁰⁴ Norell, M. (2016) p. 20-21

Instead the relationship to the moderate/radical paradigm is pragmatic and opportunistic, because their goal is already set.

Multiculturalism, EU and Islamophobia

"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" – Yusuf al-Qaradawi, spiritual leader of MB.

Multiculturalism as a policy

Bottom line, multiculturalism teaches that all cultures are equally worthy of respect. This leads to the position that a minority culture should have the same status as the majority culture. The one upholding Western values becomes an offender who does not respects the rights of other cultures,¹⁰⁵ and some even propose that this multicultural perspective recreates a colonialist and Eurocentric pattern.¹⁰⁶ As a working definition I will use Mats Wikströms take on multiculturalism as *"a political idea of how an ethno-culturally diverse liberal-democratic polity ought to accommodate and manage diversity. [...] (i) ethno-cultural diversity should be publicly endorsed for the greater good of the whole of the polity; and (ii) minority groups (immigrant and domestic) should be formally recognized as minorities and protected from discrimination and assimilatory pressure..."*¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 107

¹⁰⁶ Aman, R., (2012) 1019-1024

¹⁰⁷ Wickström, M. (2015) p. 513

EU strife towards a global leadership position in human rights and multiculturalism. At the same time EU tries to break down the different national identities and replacing them with a common European one. It is suggested that for now this European identity is too weak both to attract second and third generation Muslim immigrants and it is too weak to support any commitment from the native populations fighting threats against society's core values. EU policy has also worked to strengthen parallel societies and weaken national identity both in its patriotic and nationalist forms. Multiculturalism seems to be used by EU as a unifying concept to overcome nationalism.¹⁰⁸

The underlying reason is probably that the current European elite recognizes its lack of democratic support and hence implements technical measures to advance European integration. The assumption is that people would resist if they understood. The doctrine of the EU project is then not democracy but European integration as such.

Europe has seen a change in rhetorics about multiculturalism among several European leaders now criticizing the concept. But multicultural policies actually expanded nevertheless. Between the years 2000 and 2010 twelve countries expanded its multiculturalism legislation and policymaking and in only three a decreased level of multiculturalism was noticed. Further the correlation between multicultural policies and immigrant naturalization is high.¹⁰⁹

EU is combating its lack of democratic legitimacy with references to moral authority and as an advocate of human rights vis-à-vis the member states. EU institutions forcefully

¹⁰⁸ Lebl, L. (2013), p.104-106

¹⁰⁹ Bloemraad, I. (2015), p. 599

combat any critique of the chosen path and anti-immigration parties in the member states are labeled as extremists. At the same time they fail to give Muslims a possible way forward towards assimilation in Europe.¹¹⁰ As a measure of the level of assimilation success it is enough to consider that most of the Islamist in Europe are second-generation immigrants.¹¹¹

The discussion is mirrored in the academia and it is not uncommon to find political statements that a priori denounces a nation's right to uphold its culture *"If social identities are an important part of a person's overall identity and a source of self-respect and self-esteem, as suggested by SIT, then it seems harsh and rather demeaning to expect immigrants to abandon their own culture. In line with this, most immigrants appear unwilling to accept a process of assimilation in order to be regarded as citizens."*¹¹² We will look at Sweden more closely later on but it is evident that actual policies in Sweden took this perspective. Assimilation was viewed as a violation towards the immigrant. They were not thought to be able to maintain happiness if they could not fully express their cultural uniqueness. Later this was rationalized as a way to also enrich the host culture under the term cultural-enrichment.¹¹³

EU as the Brothers bride

Islamists when in Europe had to recognize the dominant political values and taking a favorable position vis-à-vis democracy. This was a prerequisite to establish themselves as

¹¹⁰ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 107

¹¹¹ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 169

¹¹² Reijerse, A. et al. (2013) p. 615

¹¹³ Tawat, M. (2014), p. 215

speaking partner to the political elite.¹¹⁴ In aligning themselves to multiculturalism they presented a model of integration without assimilation and have been to some extent successful because their members are normally well educated and they promote a concept of a good Muslim as a person who radiates social success.¹¹⁵

MB is very effective in using various proxies to integrate at the European level, and the two most known are the already mentioned Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE) and the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO).¹¹⁶ The former appears to have a coordinating function for the MB associated network in Europe together with the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) who develops interpretations on Sharia, so called fatwas, in a European context.¹¹⁷ The MB is tailoring its strategy after the EU integration and multicultural policies and positions itself with advisors and as spokesperson for the whole Muslim community.¹¹⁸ Another organization on European level worth mentioning is the European Institute for Human Science (EIHS), sometimes referred to as the Chateau Chinon, its purpose is to produce and educate imams serving the Muslim communities in Europe.¹¹⁹

Worth nothing is that FIOE has as one of its stated goals to work for that individual Muslims are promoted and advanced inside EU and governmental structures.¹²⁰ EU is on their part advocating a “*post-national*” position in the effort

¹¹⁴ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 66

¹¹⁵ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 74

¹¹⁶ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 5

¹¹⁷ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 24

¹¹⁸ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 5

¹¹⁹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 25

¹²⁰ Norell, M. (2016), p.19

to supplement the underlying nation-states. In this effort they have been accepting towards the MB as their agendas overlaps although the goals might be quite different. The MB has its own Islamist version for Europe, a Europe governed by Sharia law.¹²¹ The FIOE clearly states as a goal for all its member organizations to build up Islamic institutions and infrastructure in Europe such as schools, mosques and welfare institutions.¹²²

Islamophobia as a tool

On an international level MB has received help in advancing their agenda from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an international governmental organization consisting of over 50 member states. They want Europe to implement and enforce prohibitions of criticism of Islam.¹²³ OIC is funded among other by Saudi Arabia and the country is considered to be the driving force behind the organization. The goal for the organization is to 1) promote Islamic teaching, 2) combat defamation of Islam and 3) safeguard Muslim minorities rights. The organization has an office in Brussels and has opened an “*observatory of Islamophobia*”.¹²⁴

MB tries together with OIC to divide the concept of human rights and multiculturalism, they have for instance been very successful in implementing the word Islamophobia in EU and its member states. This has been an effective tool to silence critics of Islam and Islamism. People find they risk prosecution and at the same time face the possibility

¹²¹ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 101-102

¹²² Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 40

¹²³ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 101-102

¹²⁴ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 112-114

of violent retribution such as in the case of the murder of Theo Van Gogh, the Charlie Hebdo massacre and violence connected to the Danish Muhammad cartoon publications.¹²⁵ They also by the targeting of what they consider to be Islamophobic expressions, has managed to smoothly align themselves with different anti-racist groups and government bodies working against similar issues.¹²⁶ This call EU has willingly observed and implemented legislation to counter so called hate speech.¹²⁷

It seems like the ambition to form a positive view of Islam in the general public is a cause MB is dedicated to. The problems facing Muslims is understood in terms of the majority society's negative view towards Islam, hence effort is invested in cooperation with EU and other governmental agencies to change this view. What is conceived as a negative interpretation of Islam is labeled as Islamophobia. In so doing critics moral and psychological disposition is question instead of answer to raised questions given. In so doing they are turning the discussion from societal change policies to individual Muslims, and critique against Islam is consider as an attack on these and not part of a political or ideological debate.

In Sweden, particular the Islamist youth wing, has appropriated more terms from the radical left such as structural racism, white privilege and so on. This is a very important strategic position because MB can fall back on being misunderstood and misinterpreted by a misogynic surrounding, as a permanent victim with no own responsibility for the situation. In so doing they are also tapping in to a larger discourse

¹²⁵ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 110

¹²⁶ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 74

¹²⁷ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 116

about integration problems arising from Islamophobia in the majority population, with this discourse functioning as a secular support for the MB.¹²⁸ In so doing they are protecting an Islamist agenda in a multicultural structure of a unified Muslim minority where critique of for example Sharia is seen as critique of the Muslim community as such.¹²⁹

The MB network proposes in public materials that minorities should be on an equal level with the majority and that a pluralistic system where majority beliefs and culture are not allowed to dominate the minorities should be advanced.¹³⁰ It is noted that the MB associated organizations is using islamophobia in a very defined way and in according to FIOE guidelines. Researchers are attacked with the epitete and they try to ban lectures about Islamism from universities with this method. They characterizes even Sweden as a hostile country for Muslims, a position they have some resonance for from governmental institutions.¹³¹

The term is criticized for being analytically weak and because it is used in a way to diminish the distinction between hate, fear and rational arguments about Islam and Islamism, the term is better understood as a tool for political activism than for any analytical purposes. As such it poses a democratic problem because critiques of Islam is not able to discuss their arguments – instead they risk ostrachism and to be personally questioned on a psychological or moral ground. It is also proposed that this victimhood that the threat from Islamophobia is implementing on the Muslim population in Europe is a very strong emotional factor in an

¹²⁸ Norell, M. (2016), p. 21-22

¹²⁹ Norell, M. (2016), p. 26

¹³⁰ Norell, M. (2016), p. 26

¹³¹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 49

ongoing radicalization process.¹³² The European left has taken it on itself not only to promote anti-racism but also anti-Islamophobia, and it is shown in countries such as UK and Sweden that the left is targeting researchers who challenges an Islamist worldview as Islamophobic. In so doing they are supporting an Islamist understanding of the Muslim minority as well as restrict freedom of speech and silence researches.¹³³

In Sweden it is well known that campaigns are carried out directed towards researches that try in public to debate Islamism. These are collective campaigns aiming at intimidating and ostracizing, contacting journalists, person's managers, colleagues or rental agencies describing them as racist and Islamophobic and in that way creating a very effective pressure. In Sweden this kind of description of a researcher, journalist, civil servants or politician might be very problematic leading to a self-imposed censure. "*I can't afford being labeled a racist*" is one Swedish civil servant supposed to have said as a response to why he did not challenge an Islamic leader on a public meeting, who stated that Islamic laws trumps Swedish laws and that he always would follow the Islamic law if there was a conflict.¹³⁴ This has according to Aje Carlbom created a millieu in Sweden where Islamists are able to change the public discourse without even facing criticism due to the fear of being labeled a racist. Muslims, even when they are stating something contradictory to Swedish culture or beliefs, are not challenged.¹³⁵

¹³² Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 48-52

¹³³ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 53-58

¹³⁴ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 53-58

¹³⁵ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 55-60

Representing all Muslims

In EU the MB is describing itself as representing the whole Muslim minority. As advocates for multiculturalism and moderate Islam their organizations are perceived as best choice for EU officials and different governments. The fact that they also are internationally organized helps as well and they are an convenient partner in making backdoor deals, a practice common in EU due to lack of democratic support. MB:s uplifted position vis-à-vis the EU establishment is in the next step used by MB to leverage influence among the Muslim population and a spiral of increased influences starts.¹³⁶

The Muslim population in Europe is increasing fast due to both immigration and high birth rates. Many are living in worn down and criminal struck areas, which give extra fuel to radicalization and a longing for a more traditional way of life and identity might be close at hand. In some countries we have even seen the advent of Islamic parallel societies and the demand to locally implement Sharia. In a process of exclusion Islamist can drive away non-Muslims and step-by-step take control over an area.¹³⁷

The EU does not have any strategy to counter this development with parallel structures. Instead EU policies support this development.¹³⁸ The European Muslims are not homogenous; they have diverse backgrounds and different relationships to Islam. Islamism is an ideology supported by a minority of Muslims. Even the Islamist organization themselves are in some way divided along ethnic lines. The MB is dominant in the Arabic community, Millis Görüs (ICMG) dominates among

¹³⁶ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 111

¹³⁷ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 103

¹³⁸ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 104-105

the Turks and in UK the South Asian dominated Islamist organization Jamaat-i-Islami is powerful.¹³⁹ The connections are though vast between the organizations and Millis Görüs is a big factor in Germany and the cooperation with the MB:s IGD is good. Financial activities with the by US designated terrorist Himmatt is known and the Bundesverfassungsschutz has described the organization's goals as "*the establishment of an Islamic state and social system*". Nevertheless their political advancement is not halting and the German establishment seems open to affiliate with theses organizations. A striking example is the case when the Berlin Catholic Academy invited Ibrahim el-Zayat, Himmatt's successor as IGD president, to represent the Muslim view. In Germany the Islamists have also created an umbrella organization called the Zentralrat der Muslime, so these three interlocking organizations, Zentralrat, IDG and ICMG representing the same Islamist ideology are together charged with representing the Muslim minority in Germany and seems to have more or less free access to politician and journalists.¹⁴⁰

In France we find the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF), even charged with official functions in the country¹⁴¹ and in Italy it is the Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia (OII) as the dominating organization, both MB linked.¹⁴² In UK we have the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).¹⁴³ In Belgium the Ligue Islamique Interculturelle de Belgique (LIIB) and in Switzerland we find three main organizations LMS, CIG and FCI.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 109

¹⁴⁰ Vidino, L. (2005), p. 3

¹⁴¹ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 68

¹⁴² Vidino, L. (2005), p. 5

¹⁴³ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 173

¹⁴⁴ Amghar, S. (2008), p. 68

The MB is offering a dual strategy of radicalizing and penetrating, which becomes very effective due to the fact that they manage to position themselves as the favorite Muslim partner for most European governments. By these governments they acquire legitimation and power in the Muslim community and this leveraged position and influence they use to radicalize the same community.¹⁴⁵ In an alternative UN report 17 different Muslim organizations in Sweden prompted, most with known MB connections, that Muslims in the country should be considered as one minority. Not different ethnic or national groups but one distinct minority with one interest.¹⁴⁶

Sweden – best in class

*"I ask the Swedish people to open their hearts [...] It will cost, we will not be able to afford much else but it really is humans who flee for their life."*¹⁴⁷

Fredrik Reinfeldt, Prime Minister 2006-2014.

Multiculturalism as nationalism

Sweden was an ethnically homogenous country more or less up to the mid 60s. The social-democratic vision of society, the so-called "*folkhemmet*", (lit. people's home) stipulated that the social welfare and equality in the nation was dependent on ethnic and cultural homogeneity. For instance the social-democratic Prime Minister Tage Erlander, in parliament, as

¹⁴⁵ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 173-174

¹⁴⁶ Norell, M. (2016), p. 25-26

¹⁴⁷ Eriksson, N. & Karlsson, P., "Fredrik Reinfeldt: Öppna era hjärtan", Aftonbladet, 16th of August 2014

late as 1965 saluted and cherished the racial homogeneity in Sweden, seeing it as a key factor for social stability and progressiveness.¹⁴⁸

The societal and intellectual changes that Sweden's post-war immigration has led to is nothing less than a revolution: both the constitution of the population as well as the very concept of Sweden was changed.¹⁴⁹ Today all mainstream parties and major media corporations in Sweden forcefully support multiculturalism.¹⁵⁰ The shift represented a complete turn of the policies towards immigrants who were no longer Swedes in the making but minorities whose ethno-cultural differences should be maintained and protected.¹⁵¹ Sweden is as a consequence today internationally known for its equality, solidarity and democracy as well as for generous immigration policies and a welfare state governing it all.¹⁵² Sweden is actually in the absolute top among countries adopting multicultural policies and naturalization among immigrants – only Canada and Australia can compare.¹⁵³

These three countries were also the early adopters of multiculturalism; Canada (1971), Australia (1973) and Sweden (1975). The changes were driven and implemented by a domestic elite and did not correlate to the majority vote.¹⁵⁴ Ethnic minority activists seem to have been contributing to the implementation.¹⁵⁵ In Sweden the first big debate started in a 1965 article in Sweden's most influential newspaper by a

¹⁴⁸ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 515-516

¹⁴⁹ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 512-513

¹⁵⁰ Schall, C. E. (2014), p. 371

¹⁵¹ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 526-527

¹⁵² Dahlstedt, M. & Vesterberg, V., (2017) p. 228-229

¹⁵³ Bloemraad, I. (2015), p. 599

¹⁵⁴ Bloemraad, I. (2015), p. 600

¹⁵⁵ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 524-525

member of the Jewish minority named David Schwarz arguing for multiculturalism. Leaders from the Finnish and Estonian minorities soon joined Schwarz in this campaign. They argued that it was a natural step in the progressiveness for society to leave behind authoritarian and reactionary models. The implementation of the idea went via the academia aligning a core group of academic activist who managed to depoliticize the concept.¹⁵⁶

Ten years later the Swedish parliament unanimously accepted proposition 1975:26 (*Regeringens proposition om riktlinjer för invandrar- och minoritetspolitiken m. m.*) and changed the constitution to include that Sweden should become a multicultural society.¹⁵⁷ In fact already a year before proposition 1974:28 (*angående den statliga kulturpolitiken*) had been passed and was a clear promotion of multiculturalism and a celebration of ethno-cultural diversity.¹⁵⁸ It has been pointed out that multiculturalism in these days was understood as an intra-European concern, a diversity of people sharing very similar cultures and an adherence to the liberal democracy, and these policies were in Sweden as well as in Canada and Australia pushed by minorities sharing the same Western civilization.¹⁵⁹ The current discussion with concerns about minorities challenging moral and civilizational concepts was not an issue when multiculturalism was introduced in Sweden.¹⁶⁰ The term in Sweden, multiculturalism (*mångkultur*), has been supplemented with diversity (*mångfald*) probably to remove the term from the immigration

¹⁵⁶ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 518-522

¹⁵⁷ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 512-513

¹⁵⁸ Tawat, M. (2014), p. 203-204

¹⁵⁹ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 522

¹⁶⁰ Wickström, M. (2015), p. 525-526

issue but also in a more postmodern sense to be able to include different kinds of identities such as homosexuals and others. These are concepts very hard to criticize in the public debate in Sweden¹⁶¹ and empirical studies are more or less absent.¹⁶²

The Swedish national day can be given as an example, today instrumentalized to celebrate diversity, to put focus on multiculturalism as a core value and identity of the country.¹⁶³ In fact it has been suggested that the Swedish attitude towards national identity is very ambivalent. The national day itself is a new creation and only became a public holiday in recent years. At the same time nationalism is considered un-Swedish and what in fact happens is a “*process of multicultural iteration, where Sweden’s relationship to diversity is restated and refined.*”¹⁶⁴ The waving of the Swedish flag or singing the Swedish national anthem is sometimes considered as a provocation and is problematic outside a strict sports context. Swedish practical integration problems often differ from a very unproblematic and positive picture that political policymakers are trying to create.¹⁶⁵ The advancement of multicultural policies also impact Swedish schools that have been criticized by the government school agency for not enough using “*mother-thong*” language for educational purpose in their curriculums.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Norell, M. (2016), p. 24

¹⁶² Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 14

¹⁶³ Schall, C. E. (2014), p. 355-356

¹⁶⁴ Schall, C. E. (2014), p. 369-370

¹⁶⁵ Schall, C. E. (2014), p. 357

¹⁶⁶ Nilsson, J. & Bunar, N. (2016) p. 409

Muslim Brotherhood and the Swedish model

Knowledge about the Muslim Brotherhood and even Islamism has been limited in Sweden. A report from the home defense agency (MSB) states that Islamism has not been allowed to be discussed in the academia and at the same time Islamists through the MB has positioned themselves as the main representatives of Muslims living in the country.¹⁶⁷ MB was present in Sweden from the late 70s due to immigration and in the beginning of the 80s the brochure “*to understand Islam*” was published. It was published by the main Muslim association at the time and has been described as a “*blue-copy of MB polices towards societal change.*”¹⁶⁸ Apparently this brochure was produced in cooperation with the Swedish immigration agency¹⁶⁹ and the editor was a self-described MB activist.¹⁷⁰

In Sweden the power over MB is exercised in a council called a “*Shura*”, lead by an “*Amir*”. The leadership rotates on a regular basis and the whole council often consists of a dozen people. Next level and also the lowest level is the family or “*Ursa*”, consisting of five to ten people. The latter meet on a weekly basis.¹⁷¹ MB in Sweden has worked in a masked way and normally never acknowledges their organizational or ideological belonging. Instead it is the Islamska förbundet i Sverige (IFIS) that is the main organizational body and many organizations have arisen in a way to both interact

¹⁶⁷ Norell, M. (2016), p. 7

¹⁶⁸ Norell, M. (2016), p. 9 original in Swedish “en avskrift av MB:s generella policy för samhällsförändring.”

¹⁶⁹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 20

¹⁷⁰ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 38

¹⁷¹ Norell, M. (2016), p. 9

with the Swedish society and receive government funding. It is believed that the Swedish MB also has administrative control over the MB branches in Norway and Finland. The organization IFIS denies any organizational bounds to MB but acknowledges an ideological inspiration.¹⁷²

The home defense agency (MSB) states that MB has established a complete dominating position in the Muslim civil society in Sweden. This position was facilitated by millions in governmental funding; the amount is not known and consists of local, regional and national parts. Swedish taxpayers in this way are funding the world's largest Islamist organization to establish itself as a significant factor in the country. It is believed that the position as representative for the Muslim community and speaking partner to the authorities has gone the furthest in Sweden.¹⁷³

The most known organization in Sweden besides IFIS and their youth wing Sveriges Unga Muslimer (SUM) are a) Islamic Relief, channeling Swedish foreign aid to Muslim receptors b) Studieförbundet Ibn Rushd, educational federation receiving large funds to facilitate studies in Islam and Islamophobia for instance, c) the Stockholm Mosque, one of the largest and the absolutely most centrally positioned mosque in Sweden. IFIS headquarter is here and politicians and authorities normally visit and communicate with this mosque in questions concerning Muslims.

Extensive social contacts have been established with the elite.¹⁷⁴ This mosque is describing sharia as a set of fixed principles that govern society.¹⁷⁵ And IFIS itself states that

¹⁷² Norell, M. (2016), p. 10

¹⁷³ Norell, M. (2016), p. 10-11

¹⁷⁴ Norell, M. (2016), p. 11-12

¹⁷⁵ Norell, M. (2016), p. 16

*“the one who reduces Islam to only ritual and worship lacks an understanding of its total nature”*¹⁷⁶ and adds that the Islamic belief encompasses all areas of life. But to the Islamist their view is described as simply Islamic.¹⁷⁷

Also in organizational logic IFIS bears similarities to traditional MB structures and way of operation, a member needs to act in accordance with Islamic customs and beliefs to be admitted and also be loyal to the organization’s goals and directives. The organization’s goals are describe as to spread knowledge of Islam, preserve a cultural and religious Islamic identity and construct Muslim civil infrastructure. All goals are in alignment with MB in Egypt and the FIOE. We have in the history chapter described the kind of social institutions MB has been able to construct and it is sometimes described as an Institutionalized Islamistic parallel society controlled by the brotherhood themselves.¹⁷⁸ The Swedish researcher Aje Carlbom has even stated that the alignment of IFIS policies to original MB policies is *“surprising”* although he seems to mean that the absence in Europe from a repressive state makes the original MB goal of taking over the state as such superfluous.¹⁷⁹

We have covered FIOE, the European umbrella organization that collects 28 national organizations, and the Swedish IFIS is a formal part of it. In fact it was money from the Swedish state department that financed a big pan European Islamist conference establishing the youth wing FE-MYSO. Connections to the global Islamist scene are also vast

¹⁷⁶ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 20 original in Swedish *”reducerar islam till bara rituellt dyrkan saknar förståelse för dess totala natur”*

¹⁷⁷ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 20-21

¹⁷⁸ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 40-41

¹⁷⁹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 43

with everything from study exchanges and conferences to engagements with Hamas¹⁸⁰ or even with Islamist militia in Syria.¹⁸¹ Also, the governing law of IFIS confirms its adherence to FIOE, it state itself as one of its founders and grants it the right to send representatives with the right to address the General Meeting, some of the policy documents produced on a European level is also said to represent their organizations ideology.¹⁸²

It has also been shown when categorizing articles in the Swedish Islamist paper Salaam that MB-ideologues such as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al- Qaradawi och Sayyid Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (former leader of MB associated Jamat i-Islami) appear frequently. That the kind of islam that is proposed to the readers is islamist in the sense of a total system covering both society and state.¹⁸³

A fatwa for the Green Party

Before the election in 2014 a fatwa, a religious binding instruction, appeared in Sweden advocating “*all muslims to take a stance against racism and islamophobia*” by voting for the green party, Miljöpartiet. The fatwa was later removed from the web and Imam Sheikh Abu Raad said that the recommendation to vote green was part of a pre-study and not the fatwa itself.¹⁸⁴ This man had some years before received government financing for “*building bridges and fight against*

¹⁸⁰ Norell, M. (2016), p. 14

¹⁸¹ Norell, M. (2016), p. 12

¹⁸² Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 12

¹⁸³ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 20

¹⁸⁴ Sheikh Abu Raad, “Förtydligande om min fatwa, www.gavle-moske.se , 9th of September 2014

islamophobia". He received almost half a million euro to build an informational webpage that among other stated that it was forbidden for Muslims to be friends with non-Muslims and that homosexuals should be killed.¹⁸⁵ The same mosque has also been known for celebrating IS-warriors but when the local newspaper wrote an article about it they became targeted in a lawsuit and started to be described as islamophobic.¹⁸⁶

Nevertheless, how come this fatwa appeared? Why the Islamist positive view on Miljöpartiet? We can probably find the main reason in the man Mehmet Kaplan, member of the Green Party governing board and since 2006 member of parliament who right after the election in 2014 took office as the Swedish minister of housing. The Iman in the main MB mosque in Stockholm Mahmoud Khalfi described it to Arabic media as a "*breakthrough*" for islamists in Sweden and said he was very happy for the normalized relationships between the Swedish political elite and Swedish MB close organizations.¹⁸⁷

Mehmet Kaplan is the previous chairman of the MB associated Muslim youth organization SUM. The political commentator Mohamed Omar (previous islamist leaning) has reported how he as early as 2007 had been invited to the Swedish parliament to have dinner with Kaplan and the MB leadership in Sweden together with representatives from the Turkish embassy. One of the rooms was temporary converted

¹⁸⁵ "Gävleimamen ansvarig för radikal hemsida", Gefle Dagblad, 1th of July 2015

¹⁸⁶ Gullberg, A., "Här är fem frågor som GD vill att imamen i Gävle att svara på" Gefle Dagblad, 20th of July 2015

¹⁸⁷ Norell, M. (2016), p. 20

to a mosque.¹⁸⁸ During a demonstration in Stockholm 2014 Mehmet Kaplan made the Muslim Brotherhood sign holding up four fingers and said *“I want to greet you all with the salute that has become the symbol for the people’s will in Egypt, namely rabia.”*¹⁸⁹

He is also reported being very close to the Turkish government and the ruling AKP, an MB associate party. The Turkish government has appointed another Miljöpartiet member, a man called Rafet Candemir, to be their promoter of people of Turkish descendants in Sweden. They are active in trying to advance the careers of people like this and are throwing in government support with the hope of both advancing the Turkish diaspora and bringing it closer to the Turkish government outlook. Kaplan and Candemir have been appearing together in different public functions astonishing 17 times between the years 2013-2016, both in Sweden and in Turkey.¹⁹⁰

He is not an isolated example in the party, for instance local politician in Miljöpartiet and youth leader in Gothenburg (the second largest town in Sweden) on live TV also made this MB sign not long after the scandal with Kaplan.¹⁹¹ Mohammed Tamsamani, president of Förenade Islamiska Föreningar i Sverige (FIFS), an organisation founded by Mehmet Kaplan,¹⁹² and local politician for Miljöpartiet in the municipality Solna,

¹⁸⁸ Omar, M., “MEHMET KAPLAN - ETT ISLAMISTISKT TROLL I SVERIGES REGERING?”, Det goda samhället, 13th of June 2015

¹⁸⁹ Forsberg, O. & Dickson, S., “Forskare: Miljöpartiet kan ha infiltrerats av islamister”, Aftonbladet, 22th April 2016

¹⁹⁰ Jönsson, O., Lundström, K., & Dahlin, M., “Kaplan umgås med Erdoğan’s man i Sverige” svt.se, 18 april 2016

¹⁹¹ Svensson, O. & Nygren, S., “MP-man gör omstritt tecken I SVT-sändning”, Aftonbladet.se, 22th of April 2016

¹⁹² Westerholm, J. “Stackars miljöpartiet”, Ledarsidorna.se, 1th of May 2016

did an internship in the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.¹⁹³ And Yasri Khan who was known for his refusal to shake any woman's hand, was by the election board to the governing board of Miljöpartiet proposed as a member. But after public pressure he withdraw his candidature.¹⁹⁴ Another Miljöpartiet member Kamal al-Rifai made headlines when he invited the world famous Imam Salman al-Ouda, know salafist and alleged for being one of Osama Bin Ladens inspirations.¹⁹⁵

Mehmet Kaplan was later forced to resign from being housing minister for Sweden but this was not due to the islamist connections; instead he had been accused of meeting "right-wing" extremists.¹⁹⁶ A narrative better fitting in Sweden for creating indignation among the medial elite. He had appeared on the same dinner as the Swedish leader of the so called "Gray Wolves", a pan-Turkish nationalist organization previously known for political murders of left leaning activists and minority groups such as Armenians and Kurds. The group seems to have good connections to the ruling party AKP and may also has moved in an islamist direction and seems well integrated in the Swedish islamist millue.¹⁹⁷ The affiliation with this group was commented as "*having angered people not normally critical to Kaplan*".¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ Fröjd, G. "Miljöpartiets ljusskygga bröder" frojdh.se, 23th of April 2016

¹⁹⁴ Holmqvist, A., Wågenberg, J., & Karlsson, P., "Yasri Khan lämnar politiska uppdrag efter kritikstormen" aftonbladet.se 20 april 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Jeppsson, J., Karlsson, P., "MP-politiker bakom kritiserad inbjudan" Aftonbladet.se, 27th of April 2016.

¹⁹⁶ Jeppsson, J., Svensson, O., & Karlsson, P., "Kaplan: Jag väljer att kliva åt sidan" Aftonbladet.se, 18th of April 2016

¹⁹⁷ Svensson, N, "Politikerna åt middag med högerextrema Grå Vargarna" Expressen.se, 13th June 2018

¹⁹⁸ "Ramberg: Löfven lät mer bekymrad än Kaplan", Ekot/Sverigess radio.se, 18th April 2016

Lars Nicander, head of the department of asymmetric threats at the Swedish Defense Academy concludes *“I see a similarity to how Soviet communism acted during the Cold War when they attempted to infiltrate various democratic parties, and that methodology we can see examples of today when people close to the Muslim Brotherhood, which is an Islamic party, apparently received a large foothold within the Green Party.”*¹⁹⁹

A back-room deal with the Social-Democrats

The Social democratic party has a former Christian branch called *“Broderskapsrörelsen”*. Today it is called *“Socialdemokrater för tro och solidaritet”* and brings people together of many faiths in support for the social democratic party in Sweden.²⁰⁰ In 1999 an agreement was reached between Broderskapsrörelsen and the Muslim Brotherhood in the form of Sveriges Muslimers Råd (SMR). They agreed on the construction of a parallel society and advancement of Muslims in the party structure.²⁰¹ The agreement was the results of multiple conferences and meetings that had started all the way back in 1994 but took more formal form two years later and on at least one of the conferences representatives from the Muslim Brotherhood’s European umbrella, FIOE, were present together with high-ranking social democrats.

The man Mahmoud Aldebe was one of the Muslim representatives, he later in 2006 wrote a letter to the members of parliament demanding parallel judicial structure for the

¹⁹⁹ “Forskare: ‘Miljöpartiet kan ha infiltrerats av islamister’” tv4.se/Aftonbladet.se 22 April 2016

²⁰⁰ <http://trosolidaritet.se/> visited 20 June 2018

²⁰¹ Norell, M. (2016), p. 20

Muslim population. Some key points from this collaboration according to themselves in their project report is the transformation of Broderskapsrörelsen to a multi religious organization also encompassing Muslims, education of imams and secular Muslim leaders in the Swedish organizational framework, facilitating high ranking contacts, and a high rate of Muslims voting Social democratic. But the whole document is ending in “*Strategy and goals*” where different numbers of Muslims in the Swedish governmental structure on a social democratic mandate is given.²⁰²

One such Muslim we may suppose was Omar Mustafa president of Islamska Förbundet, a MB associated organization, and elected member of the Social-democrats governing board. He entered as a member only in 2010 and three years later he was elected to the most powerful board in the party. He was forced to step down after only 6 days due to a media campaign where it had come to the public’s knowledge that he had been arranging conferences with Muslim lecturer advocating anti-Semitism and the like. But the Social democrats never condemned him or his views but only stated that his “*method*” of inviting people with these views was not acceptable.²⁰³

Liberals and the Muslim schools

During the years 2010 and 2014 a man named Abdirisak Waberi was a member of parliament for Nya Moderaterna, the largest center right party. This man was president of IFIS

²⁰² “Delaktighet identitet & integration”, Rapport 4/99, Broderskapsrörelsen och Sveriges Muslimska Råd

²⁰³ Näslund, L., “S: Därför tvingades Omar Mustafa avgå”, svt. se, 17 April 2013

up until his entry in the parliament.²⁰⁴ But also during these years he publicly appeared with FIOE on gatherings with for instance EU-dignitaries.²⁰⁵ He even assumed the position as vice president of the FIOE and head of their PR department.²⁰⁶ He is reported having said, "*Islam has only one definition*"²⁰⁷ The party found it reasonable to nominate him to the defense committee, a position he also assumed and held for all four years in parliament.²⁰⁸

Between the years 1998 and 2010 he was headmaster of Römosseskolan in Gothenbourg and 2006 to 2011 president of Sveriges Islamska Skolor/ Swedens Islamic Schools.²⁰⁹ Recently he open another Islamic school in the town of Borås.²¹⁰ ²¹¹ The Muslim Brotherhood is by Swedish researcher Magnus Norell considered to have built a large school cooperation called "*Framstegsskolan*" operating different Muslim schools.²¹² This "*Framstegsskolan*" (eng. Progress School) is actually the same organization as "*Sveriges Islamska Skolor*" who has changed name.²¹³ The operation is financed by the Swedish government and on their webpage they list six member schools and five more cooperating schools. Waberis

²⁰⁴ IFIS press memo: IFIS rådsmöte nr 5, 2nd of October 2010

²⁰⁵ FIOE press memo: "FIOE celebrates the New Hijri Year in a gathering of dignitaries in Brussels", 23th of November 2012

²⁰⁶ FIOE press memo: "FIOE held celebration in Brussels on the occasion of Hajj and blessed Eid-ul-Adha", 23th of November 2011

²⁰⁷ Norell, M. (2016), p. 20

²⁰⁸ Riksdagen.se (Swedish parliament) register over MP:s assignments

²⁰⁹ CV from Abdirisak Waberis official web page

²¹⁰ Netskar, S., "Rektor: Vi känner oss utpekade", svt.se/väst13 th of February 2018

²¹¹ Stjärnered, P-O., "Muslimsk friskola får öppna I Borås" svt.se/väst, 13th of February 2018

²¹² Norell, M. (2016), p. 30

²¹³ <http://framstegsskolan.se/om-oss/> visited 20th of June 2018

previus school Römosseskolan is listed as a member but the new school in Borås is not yet listed so including the new Borås School twelve schools may be considered open associated with the structure.²¹⁴

Institutionalized Islamism?

Already in 2011 it was identified more than 50 cases in the US where conflict of law issues were addressed between Sharia and State law, because mostly MB linked legal groups tried to advance Sharia based judgments.²¹⁵ The number today is unknown. Also in Egypt the court was targeted and they made efforts to use existing laws for their purposes.²¹⁶

A recent case in Sweden concerned nämndeman Ebtisam Aldebe from Centerpartiet, a liberal/centrist party. This woman is the wife of Mahmoud Aldebe who made the original deal with the Social-democrats about advancing Muslims inside the party structure. She was high profiled in media in 2018 when a case regarding a man hitting a woman became public. She had let him go free in what seems as references to sharia law.²¹⁷ This was all part of the official court protocol. Several cases were later identified where she had as a “*political judge*” deterred from normal procedure.²¹⁸ She has also been reported when as a member in “migration court” she declined Christian converts asylum.²¹⁹ The

²¹⁴ <http://framstegsskolan.se/> visited 20th of June 2018

²¹⁵ Lebl, L. (2013), p. 118

²¹⁶ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 53

²¹⁷ Sidenvall, J., “Sharia i domstolen”, Smålandsposten, 5th of March

²¹⁸ Skoglund, K., “Nämndemannen har gått emot juristdomaren tidigare”, expressen.se, 5th March 2018 /

²¹⁹ Janzon, E., “Nämndemannen var med och fällde konvertiter”, Världenidag.se, 6th March 2018

Christian newspaper Världen Idag reported already in 2011 about several cases connected to Aldebe where she had tried to decline Muslim converts to Christianity asylum.²²⁰ Centerpartiet did not take any measures until 2018.

The perhaps biggest Muslim event in Sweden each year is Muslimska Familjedagarna (eng. Muslim family days) arranged in coordination with Islamiska Förbundet (IFIS), Ibn Rushd and Sveriges Unga Muslimer (SUM). They state that more than 5000 are visiting the event.²²¹ Often several radical speakers are invited and in 2018 one of them was Noured-dine Khademi, known as a strong believer in implementing sharia who has on several occasion advocated for his followers to go to Syria and fight as part of jihad.²²²

Ibn Rushd has institutionalized its connections to the Swedish government as a “*studieförbund*” (eng. Federation of education) taking on some semipublic functions. For instance they have access to the asylum seekers to give them a “*meaningful occupation*”, all funded by the government.²²³ Other projects give them access to prison inmates for educating them in Islam.²²⁴ This is happening at the same time as the 58-year-old Swedish citizen Tarif al-Sayyed Issa, MB activist, was killed in Syria while fighting the Syrian government. His death was saluted by the Muslim Brotherhood

²²⁰ janzon, E., “Nämndeman tveksam till religionsbyte”, Världen idag, 4th of April 2011

²²¹ <https://www.muslimskafamiljedagarna.se/> visited 20th of June 2018

²²² Westerholm, J., “Imam Jihad gästar de Muslimska Familjedagarna i Kista”, ledarsidorna.se, 30th of March 2018

²²³ <http://www.ibnrushd.se/asylverksamheten/> visited 20th of June 2018

²²⁴ <http://www.ibnrushd.se/vara-projekt/> visited 20th of June 2018

and they described him as a “*martyred brother*”.²²⁵ This man was a known Muslim Brother in Sweden and joined the Fath-army who collaborated with al-Qaida and took part in ethnic cleansings of Christians. Three of his sons are active Islamist and one former president of Sveriges Unga Muslimer (SUM), another is employed by this same educational federation – Ibn Rushd.²²⁶

Islamic Relief is another organization heavily financed by the Swedish government. They have a strong presence in Syria and states that they have helped over four million people.²²⁷ This organization is actually labeled as a terrorist organization by the United Arab Emirates because it has so strong MB ties.²²⁸ SIDA (the Swedish relief agency) has granted financing for Islamic Relief on many occasions, for instance in Tchad²²⁹ and Gaza.²³⁰ Islamic Relief is also listed as one of three public sponsors for Muslimska familjedagarna together with Framstegsskolan and a travel agency specialized in Islamic pilgrimage.²³¹ In 2013 SIDA announced that Islamic Relief is one of their “*strategic partners*”.²³²

²²⁵ Andersson Lundberg, H. & Hamadé, K., “Svensk medborgare död efter dåd med bilbomb i Syrien” *expressen.se*, 3rd of March 2018

²²⁶ Westerholm, J., “Muslimska brödraskapets utbredning i Sverige inte okänd”, 3rd of March 2018 /

²²⁷ Islamic relief press memo: “Sju år av krig i Syrien – detta har Islamic Relief gjort”, 16th of March 2018 <http://islamic-relief.se/sju-ar-av-krig-i-syrien-detta-har-islamic-relief-gjort/>

²²⁸ “Islamska förbundet terrorstämplas”, TT, 15th November 2014

²²⁹ Islamic relief press memo: “Sida beviljar insats i Tchad”, 22nd of June 2010 <http://islamic-relief.se/sida-beviljar-insats-i-tchad/>

²³⁰ Islamic relief press memo: “Stöd från Sida för insatser i Gaza”, 22nd of June 2010 <http://islamic-relief.se/stod-fran-sida-for-insatser-i-gaza/>

²³¹ <https://www.muslimskafamiljedagarna.se/> visited 20th of June 2018

²³² Sida.se “OM SAMARBETET MED DET CIVILA SAMHÄLLET: Stöd till humanitärt bistånd genom civilsamhället” updated 23rd of June 2016

To end with we can mention that public Muslim prayers from Mosques are now become a reality in Sweden. Both in Västerås and in Karlskrona the authorities have given permission for the local mosque to make their prayers in speakers outside addressing the public nearby.^{233, 234}

Discussion and conclusions

“Tolerance is the patient endurance of an evil” Tomas ab Aquino

State coercion and the counter-hegemony strategy

The difference between islamistic groups is not so much a question about their goals but instead a question about political method.²³⁵ And they can study history as well as we. The coercive capacity of the Egyptian state has shown that a counter-cultural strategy is not enough. This is actually also what Antonio Gramsci thought; the counter-cultural strategy was intended to culminate in a physical takeover. Much of moderate Islamist thought represented by foremost the Muslim Brotherhood has been preoccupied not with directly challenge the ruling elite but with building from beneath structures permeating society and leading to its gradual Islamization.²³⁶ In his 2011 analysis Hazem Kandil wrote clear-sighted *“the likely outcome of culturally successful*

²³³ Sjögren, N., “Nu är det klart – premiär för böneutrop i Växjö” svt.se/Småland, 25th of May 2018

²³⁴ Hallberg, M., “Ja till böneutrop i Karlskrona” svt.se/ Blekinge 18th of May 2018

²³⁵ Norell, M. (2016), p. 13

²³⁶ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 37-41

counterhegemonic strategies is heightened repression, and thus failure to take power [...] My analysis emphasizes how control over the organs of repression remains the final arbiter of political power."²³⁷

To uphold their hegemonic position modern rulers use consensus-enhancing mechanisms. So the opposition needs to 1) attack the current hegemony 2) build a counter-hegemonic position, an ideology 3) develop an organizational structure aimed at infiltrating or penetrating social structures and 4) judge when the moment has come to take power, ruthlessly violent and overthrow competing elites or the ability to use coercion.²³⁸ For Gramsci the cultural, social and intellectual position of the movement must be supplemented by force and the power to suppress opposition. In fact in one of the last writings of al-Banna he states that it would be "*a crime [...] not to seize power from the hands of those who violate Islam*".²³⁹ What holds for Europe in that regard, where all countries seem to lack the capacity or at least the will to use state coercion toward these groups?

The naïve question at hand – can a purely counter cultural hegemony strategy be successful? The evidence of Egypt points in the other direction. The presumption is that the ruling elite somehow voluntarily will step down under cultural pressure. This the MB has had a lot of time to evolve thoughts around. The successful Islamists have instead combined a counter-cultural strategy with strategies who at least neutralizes the states coercive power, for example Pakistan (1977), Iran (1979), Sudan (1989), Turkey (2002) and other cases where Islamist needed to conduct prolonged warlike

²³⁷ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 40

²³⁸ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 41-42

²³⁹ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 43-44

conflicts before they could take power such as Afghanistan (1989), Lebanon (1989), Somalia (1991), Iraq (2003) and Palestine (2006).²⁴⁰ An objective to change politics in a fundamental way, as in the case with Islamists, inclines the necessity to determine how to confront state institutions of repression because these will be used against them if successful. In fact the cultural strategy never in it self can face the coercive effort by the state, instead preemptive counter-coercion ability has to be created.²⁴¹

But some researchers such as Samir Amghar suggest that MB do not target state control, that it has learnt its lesson and instead *“like any social movement [...] aims to influence social change and to bend the behavioral rules dominant in society in order to impose its own values.”*²⁴² This he suggests is founded on the idea of changing the world without taking power. Some go even further such as Irene Bloemraad who suggest *“multicultural accommodation not only produce nested identities, but perhaps also generates even stronger attachment to the state.”*²⁴³ But in the same paper she has to admit that there are no positive effects of multicultural policies regarding trust among immigrants from the second generation and onwards.²⁴⁴ It is hard not to consider some of this research as consisting of wishful thinking. A discussion about wheter the European MB has changed ideological to encompass multiculturalism or if it is a tactical maneuver due to their minority position needs to be based

²⁴⁰ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 59

²⁴¹ Kandil, H. (2011), p. 57

²⁴² Amghar, S. (2008), p. 76

²⁴³ Bloemraad, I. (2015), p. 597

²⁴⁴ Bloemraad, I. (2015), p. 600

on realistic assumptions.²⁴⁵ In fact multiculturalist policies are not very far from the tactics that MB has used from the beginning with its focus on re-islamisation on the individual level and gradually pushing its beliefs on families, groups, the state and society. The model is from a MB perspective a mean to islamisation and not a model for integration²⁴⁶

It has been suggested by Lorenzo Vidino that the future social harmony in Europe regarding its Muslim minority rests on the ability to remove the appeal to Muslims in Europe of the lower levels of the pyramid which otherwise acts as catalysts and conveyor belts for more radical expressions. The higher levels of the pyramid must forcefully be targeted with suitable legal means.²⁴⁷ He touches on the view that the Muslim Brotherhood is conducting a counter-cultural strategy and at the same time supports or gives energy to more radical elements that can confront the state as such if needed.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a long-term threat

We proposed three supporting arguments in determining if MB is to be considered a long-term threat to Western societies. First “*a) For MB moderate Islamism is an opportunistic position and not a principal position.*”

In the chapter of Islamic roots we have covered the opportunistic view the MB seems to hold toward belief structures that is not Islamists. They seem to be happy to collaborate as long as Islamist positions can advance. We will conclude with a quote: “*We believe in the totality of Islam. [...] Islam is not satisfied unless it controls society and*

²⁴⁵ Norell, M. (2016), p. 17-18

²⁴⁶ Norell, M. (2016), p. 27-28

²⁴⁷ Vidino, L. (2009), p. 175

*guides every dimension of life, from entering the toilet to the construction of the state and the establishment of the caliphate” Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.*²⁴⁸

“b) MB is building an Islamistic parallel structure in society “the Muslim community”. [Building and maintaining a collective identity]: We have shown that the Muslim Brotherhood both in Egypt and in Sweden is trying to create parallel structures with schools, educational centers, mosques etcetera and they are actively trying to implement the belief that the Muslim population is one and obviously best represented by the Muslim Brotherhood.

“c) MB is using existing structures and ideas to protect and advance their values and their infrastructure.” [Facilitating political opportunity structures]: The multicultural agenda and commitment to combat islamophobia in Europe is a political opportunity structure for MB.²⁴⁹ They are not waiting for things to happen by themselves and for example in the case with the alternative UN report backed by 17 Islamic national organizations a clear message of repression of free speech is delivered, focused on restricting criticism towards Islam and Muslims.²⁵⁰ As we have shown they have managed to channel government funds to their structures both in Sweden and in relief efforts in the Muslim world. In this way they are able to build status among Muslims globally thanks to Swedish taxpayers. We have also seen instances of Sharia in the court of law and high-ranking officials using their positions to advance Muslim countries and Muslim persons interests.

²⁴⁸ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 18

²⁴⁹ Norell, M. (2016), p. 24

²⁵⁰ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 56

The conclusion can only be one – The Muslim Brotherhood is a threat to Europe. MB is actively trying to change the civilization towards an Islamistic one. It has been suggested that relevant conclusions is hard to draw from comparing MB in the middle east with the activism in Europe. The underlying assumption is that a shift of enemy might have occurred and hence also a shift in ultimate goals.²⁵¹ However it is clear that the organization is showing consistency in ways of operating and also ideological consistence, given the elements of ideological pragmatism, historic evidence of violence and current evidence such as verbal in Egypt and physical such as in the case in Hamas, a shift to a violent perspective can be expected when Islamism do not longer advance in Europe on a voluntarily and /or entristic way.

We need to know more about how deep the institutionalized Islamist penetration has gone in countries such as in Sweden. We need to stop the funding of groups like MB using government means and we need to develop strategies to counter them. In the case of Sweden parties need to be prepared for how to counter infiltration and they have to resist the temptation to win Muslim votes by making alliances with islamists. We also need to form a realistic view of these organizations. Furthermore it is also necessary to better understand the need of a unified and dominant cultural expression in a country giving the overall framework for the societal interactions.

²⁵¹ Carlbom, A. (2018), p. 13

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