

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim Brotherhood is perhaps one of the most contested Islamic organisations in the world. Founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt, it established a counterweight to the growing Westernisation of the country under British rule. It is, furthermore, regarded as the oldest Islamic organisation that turned Islam into a political activist ideology. In Egypt itself, the Brotherhood rapidly became more popular as it supported Islamic issues, such as the Palestinian revolt in 1936, and more so as the Egyptian monarchy collapsed and politics became radicalised. With its paramilitary youth organisations, it followed a militant trend that the political parties had already pioneered. It distinguished itself, however, by establishing a secret organisation, which developed into a terrorist cell that plotted the assassination of public figures and carried out bomb attacks on Jewish warehouses and institutions. Banned in 1948, its leader Hasan al-Banna was assassinated in 1949. Since then, the Brotherhood has experienced a bumpy history. Legalised in 1950, it supported the military takeover of the Free Officers two years later, only to become involved in an unequal power struggle ending, in 1954, in its renewed banishment. The subsequent period of trial (*mihna*) would last until the early 1970s when President Sadat released the Brothers from prison. The agreement was made that they were allowed to operate and exercise *da'wa*, as long as they did not become involved in politics. Aside from a brief clamp-down on their movements just before the assassination of Sadat, the honeymoon with the regime would last until the end of the 1980s, when, once again, the regime started to distrust the movement and its intentions. Despite the Brotherhood's participation in elections in coalition with political parties or as independents, even winning 88 seats in 2005, over the last twenty years, its leaders have been constantly harassed, arrested and released in a cat and mouse game with the Mubarak regime.

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Relations with the state remain tense, and not only in Egypt. In all the countries where the Brotherhood has established branches after World War II, this most prominent representative of political Islam has run into trouble. In Syria, the Brotherhood was banned and membership was made a capital offence after the Hama uprising in 1982. In Jordan, the Brotherhood worked together with King Hussein for a long time, but later came into conflict with the monarchy on the issue of peace with Israel. In Saudi Arabia, the Sahwa movement, heavily influenced by the Brotherhood, eventually collided with the Saudi state in the 1990s. In Tunisia, the Ennahda Party was evicted and many of its leaders, such as Rachid al-Ghanouchi, settled in Europe, where they helped to build a new network of organisations inspired by the Brotherhood.

The presence of the Brotherhood in Europe dates from the 1960s, when leaders such as Said Ramadan and other refugees from Egypt and Syria settled there to escape persecution of the military regimes. As the different chapters of this volume make clear, these migrants never intended to stay and mainly saw Europe as a base to recuperate and eventually reclaim the homeland from the regimes that had banished them. To what extent the rapidly expanding student organisations were part of the Brotherhood remains unclear. In Spain and Germany, the local organisations set up by Egyptians, Syrians and others were extensions of the Middle Eastern organisations of which they were members. In France and the UK, relations were looser and more informal. What is clear is that these organisations gradually became more involved in European society, by helping to build mosques and Muslim societies with and for migrant workers from Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan and India. It was only in the 1980s and 1990s, when many of the students and migrants decided to stay in Europe, that these communities started to build the network of Muslim organisations that today cover the continent.

This network consists primarily of national organisations. In Britain, the first student organisations, the Muslim Students Society (MSS) and the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), were founded in 1961 and 1962 respectively. The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) was founded in 1997, and was followed a few years later by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). In France, the first student organisation, the Association of Islamic Students (Association des étudiants islamiques de France, AEIF), was founded in 1963. The Federation of Islamic Organisations of France (Union des organisations islamiques de France, UOIF) was founded in

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1983, followed by its youth and student organisations and its educational centre in Chateau Chinon. In Germany, the Islamic Community in Germany (Islamische Gesellschaft Deutschland, IGD) was established in 1963. Most of these organisations joined the national umbrella organisations that were founded in the 1990s or early in the new millennium. Concurrently, they organised themselves in European associations, such as the the Islamic Council in Europe (ICE), the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE, UOIE in French), and the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECRF), of which Yusuf al-Qaradawi is the most prominent member. These European organisations, in turn, often have contacts with transnational counterparts, such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the Muslim World League, or financiers in the Gulf.

This book deals primarily with the establishment and expansion of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe since the 1960s, when its European affiliated branches began to acquire their own dynamics. But clearly developments concerning the Muslim Brotherhood across the Mediterranean cannot be ignored. Due to constant personal, intellectual and financial transnational contacts, the Middle East and Europe have influenced each other. For this reason, we have divided the book into three sections. The first section focuses on more general European and transnational trends within the Brotherhood and Brotherhood-affiliated organisations. It also poses general questions, such as: what are the transnational relations?; are they centrally organised, or should we regard them as networks? In addition, the nature of these organisations will be discussed along with the long-term trends, such as the secularisation of the movement. In the second section, more attention is given to developments in specific countries. Despite a number of prominent works, the history of many of these national organisations is still to be written.¹ Responses to the Brotherhood

1 The existing literature on the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe is still small. The most prominent works are Brigitte Maréchal, *The Muslim Brothers in Europe: Roots and Discourse*, Leiden: Brill, 2008; Brigitte Maréchal, *Les Frères musulmans en Europe: Racines et discours*, Paris: PUF, 2009; Brigitte Maréchal, *Sociologie de la mouvance: Comprendre la complexité organisationnelle des Frères musulmans européens*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain (Collection Islams contemporains), (forthcoming), Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010; Xavier Ternisien, *Les frères musulmans*, Paris: Fayard, 2005; Samir Amghar, 'Europe Puts Islamists to the Test: The Muslim Brotherhood (France, Belgium and Switzerland)', *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 63-77; Vincent Geisser, 'L'UOIF, la tension clientéliste d'une grande fédération islamique', in Amel Boubekeur and Abderrahim Lamchichi (eds.), special issue *Musulmans de France*, of the journal *Confluences Méditerranée*, Vol. 57, (Spring 2006), pp. 83-101; Frank Peter, 'Die Union des Organisations Islamiques de France und die Tradition der Muslimbrüder im Zeitalter

are also dealt with. The third section deals with ideological issues. It focuses on the complex intellectual and ideological heritage of the Brotherhood. It also demonstrates, iterating other chapters, that the Brotherhood, both in Europe and the Middle East, has gone through profound changes and is likely to continue to do so in the coming years.

Burdens of the past

It would be naive to think that research into the Muslim Brotherhood could be carried out in a political vacuum. The movement's political ambitions, totalizing ideology and violent history have dogged the movement itself. Moreover, it has put a heavy burden on its current leaders and affiliated organisations, which are always pursued by its past and held in suspicion. At a time when Islam is regarded as a threat to the West and the Brotherhood is considered to be one of its most important political movements, the Brotherhood has come to embody this threat. Thus, researchers are immediately confronted with its negative image. Any volume on the Brotherhood should, therefore, address this negative image and try to separate the valid arguments from the spurious ones.

A cursory glance on the Internet and in newspapers shows that the differences of opinion run deep and emotions evoked by the Brotherhood regularly reach new heights. A dividing line in Europe runs between those politicians, journalists and researchers who believe, on the one hand, that organisations associated with the Brotherhood promote the integration of Muslims into European society and those, on the other side, who regard them as an obstacle to integration. In the eyes of the latter group, the Brotherhood is the main force spurring the Islamisation of Europe. Conservative and right-wing American organisations, such as the NEFA Foundation or the Hudson Institute, also focus on the Brotherhood from the angle of a potential threat to security and to the democratic rule of law. In Europe, opinions are divided. In France, *Le Figaro* is consistently critical of the Brotherhood and its affiliated organisations, calling them *intégristes*. The more nuanced *Le Monde* is more neutral. In the UK, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Evening Standard* as well as *The New Statesman* can be considered highly critical of the Brotherhood, while *The Guardian*

der Integrationspolitik,' in Dietrich Reetz (ed.), *Islam in Europa: Religiöses Leben heute*, Münster: Waxmann, 2010, pp. 145-17. The Brotherhoods organisations are, of course, mentioned in more works. See for instance, Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States*, New York: Palgrave, 2004.

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takes a less caustic stance. In the Netherlands, the leftist *de Volkskrant* is posed against the rightist *De Telegraaf*. The public disputes on the Brotherhood are constantly fed by academics and journalists with highly charged books, like Sylvain Besson's *La conquête de l'Occident: Le projet secret des islamistes*.² Some intellectual leaders, such as Tariq Ramadan, have attracted more controversy than others.³ Yet the division is not simply between the right and the left. The left is also divided on the issue. In addition, all intelligence agencies seem to be very suspicious of the organisation, with perhaps the German *Verfassungsschutz* the most extreme. It has designated the Brotherhood as 'totalitarian', and thereby thrown a constant shadow over its affiliated organisation, the Islamische Gesellschaft.

Against this background, we have identified eleven different arguments that are regularly repeated in the media against the Muslim Brotherhood in general, and the Brotherhood in Europe in particular.

Ideological enemy

Critics regard the Brotherhood as one of the main enemies of Western values and concepts such as democracy, freedom of speech, pluralism and tolerance. It is presented as the counter-Enlightenment. The main threat that political Islam poses, personified by the Brotherhood, is that it does not recognize the division between state and religion. Implementing the *shari'a* in Europe is seen as the ultimate goal of the Brotherhood. Its affiliated educational organisations promote the 'Arabisation and re-Islamisation' of its students and, as such, block or obstruct the integration of Muslims into European society.⁴

The new strategy of the right side of the political spectrum is to accuse Brotherhood-affiliated organisations of being homophobic, sectarian and reactionary (turning the clock back).⁵ Prominent spokesmen of the Brotherhood have been targeted, such as the London-based Kamel El-Halbawy,

2 Sylvain Besson, *La conquête de l'Occident: Le projet secret des islamistes*, Paris: Le Seuil, 2005. Parts of the book have been translated into English, see 'The Muslim Brotherhood Project' (Continued) Patrick Poole, 11 May 2006. www.frontpagemag.com/Printable.aspx?ArtId=4475.

3 Caroline Fourest, *Frère Tariq: Le double discours de Tariq Ramadan*, Grasset, 2010, 2nd ed.

4 Steve Merley, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium*, NEFA Foundation, 14 April 2008, p. 13.

5 Shiraz Maher, 'Grounds for Optimism if the Government Can Choose Wisely,' *The Times*, 26 September 2008.

who is accused of spreading ‘hate speech’;⁶ the ubiquitous Azzam Tamimi who has been accused of supporting suicide missions;⁷ and the Qatari-based sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi who is accused of being the spiritual leader of a vast complex of organisations that try to impose Islam on Europe.⁸ The common method to discredit these bêtes noires is to concentrate only on their worst utterances, which are endlessly repeated. For instance, most Europeans will only know Yusuf al-Qaradawi as the sheikh who defended the suicide attacks of Hamas. Likewise, the former head of the Muslim Council of Britain, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, will mostly be known for his remark at the height of the Rushdie affair that, ‘death is too good for him.’⁹

Implicit in this negative portrayal of the Brotherhood is that Islam cannot change and that especially political Islam is dangerous and will always remain so.

Smart and disciplined

Another accusation is that Brotherhood-affiliated organisations are (too) smart, with the connotation that they are devious, crafty. Thus, members of the French Union des organisations islamiques de France (UOIF) are supposedly younger, better educated, and more urbanised than its main competitor the Coalition of Muslims in France (Rassemblement de musulmans de France, RMF). The RMF draws its leaders from first-generation Moroccan guest workers, who are considered to be more traditional and belong to a lower social class.¹⁰

The UOIF is also considered to be extremely well organised, sometimes even to the extent that it is regarded as a cadre party that systematically trains and indoctrinates its members.¹¹ This is also said of the Muslim Brit-

6 Nick Allen, ‘Academics “urge the targeting of Children”,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 January 2009.

7 Paul Goodman, ‘Our Moderate British Mosques Threatened by “Modernisation”,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 November 2007.

8 Xavier Ternisien, ‘L’UOIF ‘s oppose à la parution d’un recueil de fatwas,’ *Le Monde*, 24 May 2005.

9 Jonathan Freedland, ‘We Need to Engage with All Strands of Muslim Opinion,’ *The Guardian*, 12 July 2006.

10 Catherine Coroller, ‘L’islam en France entre paralyses et religieux pieux,’ *Libération*, 7 June 2008, and Thierry Portes, ‘Le conseil régionaux consacrent l’islam en France plutôt que l’islam de France,’ *Le Figaro*, 14 October 2003.

11 Thierry Porthes, ‘Remous à la Consultation sur le culte musulman,’ *Le Figaro*, 8 February 2003.

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ish Council, the working committee of which is compared to ‘the Communist Party in prayer’.¹²

Duplicity

The most commonly heard accusation is that Brotherhood-affiliated organisations speak with a forked tongue. While they present themselves as democrats towards the European authorities, with the purpose to acquire good standing and influence, its leaders are suspected to actually be intolerant militants when speaking to their own following.

Another means of discrediting the Brotherhood is to point out the persistent popularity and influence of its historic leaders, specifically those who condoned or promoted violence, such as the Egyptians Hasan al-Banna (1906-49) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), and the Pakistani Abu A’la al-Mawdudi (d. 1973). The Brotherhood’s slogan, ‘Allah is our goal, the messenger is our model, the Quran is our constitution, jihad is our means, and martyrdom in the way of Allah is our aspiration’ is cited ad nauseam.¹³ The main French organisation, the UOIF, is often characterised as ‘retrograde’, ‘communitarian’, ‘isolated’, and unwilling to adapt to French society, all the while pretending to be democratic and accepting of the French republican system.¹⁴ In France, some talk of the ‘secret ambitions’ of the UOIF and its ‘*discours de façade*’,¹⁵ or ‘*le double langage*’.

Terrorism

The Muslim Brotherhood is frequently associated with terrorism. Some critics regard it as the source of all Islamic terrorism, of which Al-Qaeda is the latest manifestation.

However, the most common way to discredit the Brotherhood and its affiliated organisations is to link them to Hamas, regarded by the United States as a terrorist organisation. For instance, the image of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE)¹⁶ has been tarnished with the

12 David Cohen, ‘Q: Do You Condone the Stoning of Muslim Women Who Have Committed Adultery?’, *The Evening Standard*, 25 October 2006.

13 Jacqueline Remy and Boris Thiolay, ‘La face cachée de l’UOIF’, *L’Express*, 2 May 2005.

14 Thierry Porthes, ‘Remous à la Consultation sur le culte musulman’, *Le Figaro*, 8 February 2003.

15 Jacqueline Remy and Boris Thiolay, ‘La face cachée de l’UOIF’, *L’Express*, 2 May 2005.

16 In French, Union des organisations islamique d’Europe (UIOE).

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brush of having 'strong ties to Hamas'.¹⁷ Similarly, the Belgian al-Aqsa Foundation¹⁸ and the French UOIF have both been accused of supporting the pro-Palestinian organisation, Comité de bienfaisance et de secours aux Palestiniens (CBSP).¹⁹

Financial links

No less suspicious are the financial links of the Brotherhood. Often the Muslim Brotherhood is supposed to be financed by the Gulf States, and especially Saudi Arabia. This is particularly the case for the European FIOE, which supposedly derives most of its income from these sources.²⁰ In France, for instance, the UOIF was suspected of acquiring funds originating from the Gulf States to financially support Muslim girls who might be banned from schools during the veil affair in 2003-04.²¹ This financial link with groups and organisations on the Arabian Peninsula is generally regarded negatively and is used to emphasise the foreign nature of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe.

Secrecy

The Muslim Brotherhood is often portrayed in the same way as the communist movement during the Cold War. The Brotherhood supposedly works 'clandestinely', and some Brotherhood-affiliated organisations such as the Islamic Forum of Europe (IFE) and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) are perceived as 'fronts' for a much larger hidden international Brotherhood organisation.²² The same accusation was made against the Dutch Federation of Islamic Organisations in the Netherlands (Federatie Islamitische Organisaties Nederland, FION).²³ Members of these fronts are believed to 'infiltrate' European societies or specific institutions in order to 'subvert' them for Islam. In this manner, the IFE supposedly became 'a

17 Steve Merley, *The Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe*, NEFA Foundation, 1 October 2008.

18 Ibid., p. 5.

19 Jacqueline Remy and Boris Thioly, 'La face cachée de l'UOIF,' *L'Express*, 2 May 2005.

20 Steve Merley, *The Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe*, NEFA Foundation, 1 October 2008.

21 Thierry Portes, 'L'islam français a franchi un cap décisive,' *Le Figaro*, 3 September 2003.

22 Ed Husain, 'Radical Departure,' *The New Statesman*, 15 February 2010.

23 Janny Groen, 'Kamer: spoeddebat over islamitische conferentie in A'dam' [Parliament: emergency debate on the Islamic conference in Amsterdam], *de Volkskrant*, 21 April 2010.

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secret party within Labour'.²⁴ The suspicions of secrecy and subterfuge are likewise directed against the financial relations of these organisations.²⁵

Secrecy is, furthermore, one of the most recurring elements in press articles and public prosecutors' accusations against the Brotherhood. In fact, one of the most persistent trends in current discussions on the Brotherhood is to link its affiliated organisations directly to the Muslim Brotherhood. There have been numerous trials to try to reveal this or that Muslim leader is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Such was the case for the German Ibrahim El Zayyat, and the Dutch Moroccan Yahia Bouyafa.²⁶ Almost all of these cases, however, have been won by those accused of (secret) links with the Brotherhood.

The new Comintern

The accusation of secrecy is often associated with the existence of a Comintern-like central organisation, mostly assumed to be located in Egypt, which directs its 'branches', according to a preconceived plan to Islamise the West. The typical way to exaggerate this perceived threat is to present sophisticated organograms with a multitude of associated organisations and interlinking networks covering the whole of Europe. This network is referred to as the 'global Muslim Brotherhood'.²⁷ At the centre of this pyramid stands the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE, or UOIE in French),²⁸ established in 1989 and located in London. National organisations are attached to it, such as the French Union des organisations islamiques de France (UOIF), the German Islamic Society (Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland, IGD), the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), and the Dutch Federation of Islamic Organisations in the Netherlands (FION).²⁹

24 Pamela Geller, 'Jihadis Infiltrate Highest Echelons of Power in US and UK...and the West,' Atlas Shrugs, 1 March 2010.

25 Xavier Ternisien, 'Un réseau en quête de reconnaissance,' *Le Monde*, 22 June 2006.

26 Janny Groen and Annieke Kranenburg, 'Bouyafa met argusogen bekeken' [Bouyafi under scrutiny], *de Volkskrant*, 21 December 2009.

27 Steve Merley, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Belgium*, NEFA Foundation, 14 April 2008, p. 1.

28 L'Union des organisations islamiques en Europe is located in Leicester.

29 For instance, the French UOIF has a student organisation called the Association for Muslim Students in France (Association des étudiants islamiques de France, AEIF), which is associated with the Syrian Brotherhood, a youth organisation called Jeunes musulmans de France (JMF) and a student organisation called Etudiants musulmans de France (EMF). It is through such networks that the UOIF is able to organise massive rallies each year in May at Le Bourget Airport, which have expanded from 60,000 persons in 2000 to 150,000 in 2010.

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It is also disconcerting to consider the extensive mutual links that the leaders of these organisations have and the number of positions they hold simultaneously. One representative of this multitasking is Ibrahim El-Zayat, who used to be head of the IGD, became the leader of the FIOE, is married into Milli Görüs, acts as a representative of WAMY and also has extensive business interests.³⁰ Likewise, Rached al-Ghannouchi is suspected of being a representative of the French UOIF, which he helped found, as well as the British MAB.

The association with communism is underlined by the supposedly intensive training of the members of these Brotherhood-associated organisations, their cadre party mentality and their complete loyalty to the central idea of the Islamisation of Europe. Association with radical left-wing partners only reinforces this image. Most newspapers find it logical that MAB worked together with the Trotskyite Socialist Worker's Party in the Iraqi and Afghanistan anti-war movement.³¹ Their intellectual capacity and language skills make the members of the Brotherhood, like the communists, only more suspect.

Undoubtedly, the most spectacular accusations are made in the United States. President Barack Obama has been seen as being linked to the Muslim Brotherhood via advisors such as Rashad Hussein, who was closely associated with the Muslim Student Association (MSA) of the United States and Canada.³²

Anti-semitic

The Muslim Brotherhood has always been accused of being anti-Semitic. In 2004, the Simon Wiesenthal Institute in Paris asked France to ban the UOIF due to allegations that the organisation was supporting Hamas.³³ One of its most popular preachers, Hassan Iquioussen, had been accused of the same offence. A cassette of his speeches revealed a long list of stereotypes.³⁴ Secular organisations, such as the French 'SOS Racisme', boycotted

30 Pamela Geller, 'Nazi Youth Circa 2010: Muslim Brotherhood Establishes New Youth Organisation,' *Atlas Shrugs*, 9 March 2010.

31 'Busy Year Expected for Activists in Canada,' *Edmonton Journal*, Ottawa, 30 November 2009.

32 Pamela Geller, 'Obama's Hafiz, Rashad Hussain, Muslim Brotherhood in the White House,' *Atlas Shrugs*, 15 February 2010.

33 Xavier Ternisien, 'Le Center Simon-Wiesenthal veut faire interdire l'organisation islamique UOIF,' *Le Monde*, 5 November 2004.

34 Cécilia Gabizon, 'Le prêcheur vedette des banlieues professe un antisémitisme virulent,'

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a demonstration in 2004 on account of the UOIF's participation, stating that the UOIF's positions on anti-Semitism and the position of women and homosexuals were unclear.³⁵ In 2009, the UOIF attacked the Jewish organisation, Cirf, affirming its anti-Semitism in the eyes of its critics.³⁶ In Germany, the authorities as well as civil society keep a particularly close eye on anti-Semitic statements by groups that are associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. In particular, the German wing of Milli Görüs has repeatedly attracted negative attention on account of alleged anti-Semitic tendencies.

Moderate Islam

Another theme as part of the arguments against the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe is that the organisations associated with it are blocking the growth of a moderate form of Islam. In France, moderate Islam is represented by the Paris Mosque.³⁷ In the UK, it is promoted by the Barelwis and Sufis. These centres and groups represent a much larger part of the Muslim community in Europe, but receive much less government support – both in terms of money and in terms of political attention – than the Brotherhood. The question always posed is, why support organisations that have a political agenda if there are apolitical candidates around that represent the much larger group of non-political and moderate Muslims?

Taking advantage of the democratic structure in Europe

By far the most fundamental accusation is that the Muslim Brotherhood is taking advantage of the freedom of organisation and expression in Europe in order to take over the continent and Islamise it. Especially the new laws adopted from the 1960s to the 1980s, permitting religious diversity (in Spain and France), allowed the Brotherhood to establish a bridgehead in Europe and to build its extensive infrastructure. For instance, the UOIF was established in 1983. By 2006, it ran 35 mosques and Islamic centres, had made financial contributions to 150 others and was associated

Le Figaro, 28 October 2004.

35 Catharine Coroler, 'Antiracistes divisés, défilé parisien clairsemé,' *Libération*, November 2004.

36 Cécila Gabizon, 'L'UOIF attaque des institutions juives de France,' *Le Figaro*, 16 April 2009.

37 Thierry Porthes, 'Remous à la Consultation sur le culte musulman,' *Le Figaro*, 8 February 2003.

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with 300 other Muslim organisations.³⁸ In Spain, new laws in the 1960s paved the way for the first Muslim associations to be founded, while the Agreement with the Muslim Community of 1992 allowed them to extend their activities. In Germany, the IGD expanded its network throughout the country after having built its mosque in Munich in 1967 and becoming integrated into the national Muslim umbrella organisation.³⁹

However, it is assumed that the Brotherhood is not exclusively interested in the expansion of its networks of mosques and specific organisations, such as youth and students associations. Once official umbrella organisations had been established to represent the indigenous Islamic voice, it became even more important to be recognised as the main interlocutor with the government. Many critics believe that it is through their discipline, zeal, and intellectual bent that Brotherhood-affiliated organisations are widely over-represented in these organs. For instance in France, UOIF has succeeded in becoming one of the three major partners of the state in the national umbrella organisation, the French Council for the Muslim religion (Conseil français de culte musulman, CFCM). It saw the foundation of this body in 2002 as an excellent opportunity to become a major player in the field. It gladly signed the agreement with then Minister of the Interior, Sarkozy, who, to the chagrin of critics, considered the UOIF to be 'orthodox', rather than the more politically pejorative 'intégriste'.⁴⁰ Predictably, the UOIF used the elections to the CFCM to combat its close rival, the Paris Mosque, which is linked to the Algerian state, and the Fédération nationale des musulmans de France (FNMF), heavily supported by the Algerian state.⁴¹ The powerful position it held was disproportional to its real strength, representing only 200 of the 995 mosques in France,⁴² and perhaps only 150,000 of the 3 million Muslims in France.⁴³ Even if the government was embarrassed when the 'fundamentalist' UOIF won so many votes,⁴⁴ it was incapable of preventing the organisation from deliver-

38 Xavier Ternisien, 'Un réseau en quête de reconnaissance,' *Le Monde*, 22 June 2006.

39 For more on the Spanish and German Brotherhood, see Elena Arigita and Rafael Ortega, Chapter 9, and Stefan Meining, Chapter 10 of this volume.

40 Xavier Ternisien, 'Les élections des représentants de l'islam de France auront lieu les dimanches 6 et 13 avril,' *Le Monde*, 25 February 2003. For the critique, see, Thierry Porthes, 'Remous à la Consultation sur le culte musulman,' *Le Figaro*, 8 February 2003.

41 Daniel Licht, 'L'islam de France au forcing,' *Libération*, 11 December 2002.

42 Xavier Ternisien, 'Le renouvellement de CFCM mobilise plus de mosques,' *Le Monde*, 7 June 2005.

43 Jacqueline Remy and Boris Thioly, 'La face cachée de l'UOIF,' *L'Express*, 2 May 2005.

44 Catherine Coroller, 'Sarkozy défend l'islam de France,' *Libération*, 18 June 2003.

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ing the vice-president of the CFCM.⁴⁵ The UOIF is, furthermore, accused of politicising Muslims who, before the first elections in 2003, were not interested in politics.

In Britain, the same disproportionality has been noticed. Many complain about the power of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), considered to represent 600 affiliated Muslim institutions but only 40 percent of the mosques in Britain.⁴⁶

Political allies

Once inside the halls of power, critics discern that the Brotherhood tries to put its plan of infiltration into practice, even becoming the ally of the state in its struggle against terrorism.⁴⁷ In the UK, for instance, members of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) were appointed by the government to the Mosques' and Imams' National Advisory Board (MINAB) to fight extremism.⁴⁸ But many believe that, 'far from being an ally in the fight against extremism, the MCB is part of the problem.'⁴⁹ After the attacks in London in July 2005, critics pointed out that the MAB had not done enough to prevent radicals from joining its organisation.⁵⁰

In Germany, critics were able to point to the same close relations with the state. Muslim organisations supported by government funding were discovered to be radical. This happened with Muslim Youth Germany (Muslimische Jugend Deutschland, MJD), founded in 1994, and a member of the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO). It obtained a subsidy from the state in 2002 and 2003. But after it published a text calling for war against the United States, the subsidies were withdrawn. It was subsequently monitored closely by the institution for the protection of the constitution, the *Verfassungsschutz*.⁵¹

45 Catherine Corollier, 'Cinq millions de musulmans d'une seule voix: Islam,' *Libération*, 21 December 2002.

46 Madeleine Bunting, 'The Venomous Media Voices Who Think no Muslim is Worth Talking to,' *The Guardian*, 16 August 2006.

47 See for instance, Charles Moore, 'Ideology Carries the Real Menace, not the Passenger with a Shotgun,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 November 2007.

48 'Our Moderate British Mosques Threatened by Modernisation,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 November 2007.

49 Stephen Pollard, 'Why do We Kowtow to the MCB?,' *The Spectator*, 23 January 2010.

50 'Muslim Chiefs Do not Vet Groups for Extremism,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 August 2005.

51 'Muslimische Osterfest in der Eifel Taz,' *Die Tageszeitung*, 26 March 2008.

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Critics attack politicians for having invited these organisations to participate in the national umbrella organisations. The former mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, the former Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, and the former Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, are often accused of naiveté in bringing the enemy 'into the heart of government'.⁵² Subsequent politicians, such as Ruth Kelly, the former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, are meanwhile applauded for having taken a tougher line towards the MCB, demanding that it adhere to 'freedom of speech, equality of opportunity, tolerance, and respect for the rule of law'.⁵³

Due to the activities of these critics, cooperation with these Brotherhood-affiliated organisations has become more controversial. Many organisations refused to take part in the huge anti-war demonstration in London in 2003, or in Paris on 7 November 2004 at the demonstration against racism, anti-Semitism, and discrimination, because Brotherhood-affiliated organisations were also involved.⁵⁴

More complicated

This volume is meant to contribute to the discussion on Brotherhood-affiliated organisations. It aims to show that the role of these organisations is a far more complex story than that which is typically portrayed in the press or the political arena. Moreover, it investigates the extent to which the various arguments against the Muslim Brotherhood can be considered valid, one-sided or unfounded.

Terrorism

It is undeniable that the different branches of the Brotherhood in the Middle East have been involved in violence. It is, likewise, possible that individual members have been involved in terrorism. But it is also clear that many of these branches in the Middle East have evolved over the years (see Zollner, Chapter 13, and Meijer, Chapter 14). They all now condemn violence; some of them explicitly condemn their own violent past, as seen in the case of the Syrian Brotherhood.⁵⁵

52 Martin Bright, 'One Minister Who Understands the Problem,' *The New Statesman*, 23 October 2006.

53 Ibid.

54 Sylvie Pierre-Brossolettem 'Les liaisons dangereuses,' *Le Figaro*, 6 November 2006.

55 Roel Meijer, *Towards a Political Islam*, Clingendael Diplomatic Paper, No. 22, July 2009.

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The main issue now at hand is the right to wage a defensive jihad, which is recognised in Islamic law and which the Brotherhood, in the case of Hamas, has applied in opposition against Israel and the Sunni resistance in Iraq against the American invasion. Regardless of whether one considers this to be wise or not, this does not necessarily make the Brotherhood as a whole, let alone its European affiliates, terrorist organisations. It would be wise to look beyond the notorious pronouncements of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Azzam Tamimi in support of suicide missions and try to understand the background behind these remarks and the role these leaders play within a broader context.

It is also clear that Brotherhood-allied organisations are aware of the problems. For instance, Yusuf al-Qaradawi has not been invited to the annual rally of the UOIF at Le Bourget since 2000, and UOIF has been cautious in its relations with the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East.⁵⁶

Networks

Although critics might speak of a cadre party, it is highly unlikely that the Brotherhood organisations in Europe are able to maintain the same discipline as in the Middle East. There, as Anne Sofie Roald argues (Chapter 3), the different branches are under constant control and faced with repression. Rather, as Steven Brooke, Lorenzo Vidino and Brigitte Maréchal have argued (in Chapters 1, 2 and 4 respectively), the Brotherhood should be regarded as a network of interpersonal relations, where the centres of power are constantly shifting and changing. Despite the hierarchy in Europe, FIOE and ECFR as the central points of focus, it would appear that alliances are fluid and are more linked to individual persons than the larger organisation they represent (see Chapter 4).

Internal differences and disputes

As with all conspiracy theories that try to portray the enemy as a solid front, the critics often forget that the Brotherhood has been wracked with internal disputes. For instance, the Brotherhood in Egypt supported the Khomeini revolution in 1979, while those branches in Saudi Arabia (organised in the Sahwa) did not. Likewise, the Brotherhood in Egypt supported the invasion of Kuwait in 1990-1, in opposition to the Kuwaiti branch, which was opposed. During the first years of the American invasion of Iraq, the

56 Xavier Ternisien, *Les frères musulmans*, Paris: Fayard, 2005, p. 268.

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tested against. Even within France, as Cédric Baylocq (Chapter 7) shows, the main imam of Bordeaux, Tareq Oubrou, differs on such issues as *mixité* (gender mixing), the Judeo-Muslim dialogue and the veil with such a prominent French national figure as Faysal Mawlawi.

Also the ethnic divisions between Arab and non-Arab Muslims should not be overlooked. Although the Turkish Milli Görüs and the Pakistani Jama'at-i Islami are kindred organisations, rumours abound concerning internal difficulties. As a minority within a minority in Europe, the Arab predominance in many Brotherhood-affiliated organisations is not always perceived as beneficial.

Strength

For the same reason the strength of the Brotherhood has been widely exaggerated. In particular, the conspiracy theorists take far too seriously many of the pronouncements that the Brotherhood and its affiliates make about their own size and influence. In that sense, the critics of the Brotherhood and the Brotherhood's leaders share a strange common interest, outdoing each other in statements about the scope of the organisation. In the Netherlands, the FION was able to provoke protests against its intention to organise an international conference in Amsterdam. Dutch rightist newspapers fanned the flames, but in the end the conference went by unnoticed. Even the influence of such august institutions as the ECFR is unknown. We know what it does, but not if its opinions are accepted. As Brigitte Maréchal states (Chapter 4), with regard to the *The Charter of the Muslims of Europe*, it is not clear that its claim to represent 400 affiliates can be substantiated.

As all the authors in this volume point out, the Brotherhood in Europe was founded by students who had fled the Middle East. And it remains, basically, an elitist organisation. Nowhere have the Brotherhood-affiliated organisations succeeded in becoming mass organisations.

Neither has its position as an interlocutor with the state always been that advantageous. In France, many Muslims complain about the meekness of the UOIF, which has exchanged official recognition for support of its constituency. In fact, this seems to be the universal flaw of the Brotherhood: becoming interlocked with the state in a pas de deux that revolves around the issue of power, rather than mobilising its followers.⁶⁰ Its moderation and its good relations with the former Minister of the Interior, Nicolas

60 Ternisien, *Les frères musulmans*, p. 259.

Sarkozy, has led to critique from the youth of the UOIF, organised in JMF, who argue that the UOIF has become ‘notablisé’.⁶¹ The Collectif des musulmans de France criticised the UOIF of spawning the ‘new Muslim notables of the Republic’.⁶² Even the critical *Le Figaro* confirms that the UOIF’s position as an interlocutor with the government has alienated its support among the young.⁶³

As a result, the Brotherhood in many countries is in decline or has been challenged by other groups, such as the Salafis, who are less likely to make compromises. This is especially the case in France.⁶⁴ In the UK, Innes Bowen (Chapter 5) points out that the MAB is basically in decline after having reached a highpoint during the anti-Iraq war march in 2003. Several members of the MAB have become so well integrated that they have joined the Conservative Party and are running for seats in Parliament. The British Muslim Initiative (BMI) found out that maintaining ties with foreign radical groups while trying to strengthen its ties with the government simply did not work.

Localisation and individualisation

Another flaw in the criticism is that critics do not make a distinction between the branches in the Middle East and those in Europe. They neglect these groups’ tremendous differences, which are growing, as several chapters in this volume make clear. Brigitte Maréchal shows (Chapter 4) how the FIOE is becoming an independent organisation that has adapted itself to the European situation. It has developed a specific European project as a social movement, accepting diversity, freedom of speech and organisation as well as equality. Cédric Bayloq (Chapter 7) demonstrates how religious concepts and especially practices are changing with regard to *da‘wa* and *mixité* simply due to the pressure of social and cultural circumstances. These local circumstances induce Brotherhood-affiliated organisations to revise their concepts and create a European version of Brotherhood heritage.

61 Xavier Ternisien, ‘Critiqué par sa base, l’UOIF entretient l’ambiguïté et suit le mouvement,’ *Le Monde*, 19 January, 2004.

62 Catharine Coroller, ‘CFCM: les organisations en guerre avant réélection,’ *Libération*, 11 June 2005.

63 Cécilia Gabizon, ‘L’Union des organisations islamiques de France arrive essouffée à son rendez-vous annuel,’ *Le Figaro*, 5 May 2006.

64 Mohamed-Ali Adraoui, ‘Salafism in France: Ideology, Practice and Contradictions,’ in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*, London/New York: Hurst/Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 364-383.

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Ideological flexibility and adaption

Most authors in the volume agree that what makes the European organisations affiliated to the Brotherhood, that is, really Brotherhood organisations, is their ideology. Critics often refer to early publications, often translations of Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb into local languages.⁶⁵ Although there might be differences, they all refer to Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and other thinkers, like Faysal Mawlawi, Rached al-Ghanouchi, Tariq Ramadan and others. These thinkers are, however, so diverse that one wonders what really holds them together.

The section on the intellectual dimension of the Brotherhood in this volume has addressed this issue explicitly. Barbara Zollner (Chapter 13) and Roel Meijer (Chapter 14) show, in detail, how the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has changed over time, gradually adapting to new circumstances in the Middle East. John Calvert (Chapter 12) illustrates that much misunderstanding exists about such a complex thinker as Sayyid Qutb. Qutb is always associated with violence in the West, but his thinking is much more differentiated and therefore cannot be so easily disregarded by the members of the Brotherhood, even if they want to. Carrie Wickham (Chapter 11) demonstrates, furthermore, that most members of the Brotherhood do not see any contradictions between democratic, pietistic and activist concepts derived from different sources.

In Europe, the pressure to change is even stronger. As Steven Brooke states (Chapter 1), Brotherhood-affiliated members share a common vocabulary and a common outlook, but much of this is 'context-driven'. He, as well as Lorenzo Vidino (Chapter 2), point out the flexibility of the ideology. In France, the UOIF has accepted *laïcité*, tolerance and has adopted a discourse of citizenship (*citoyenneté*).⁶⁶ Further distinctions can also be made: some leaders might, for example, support Yusuf al-Qaradawi on some issues but not on others.⁶⁷ Significant changes have been made over time. The British MCB opposes discrimination 'in all its forms' and has lifted the boycott of the Holocaust Day.⁶⁸ It has also actively supported

65 Jacqueline Remy and Boris Thioly, 'La face cachée de l'UOIF,' *L'Express*, 2 May 2005.

66 Catherine Coroller, 'L'OUIF soufflé le chaud et le froid,' *Libération*, 28 March 2005.

67 Inayat Bunglawala, 'Targeted by the New McCarthyites,' *The Guardian*, 25 November 2009.

68 David Edgar, 'Preachers of Pluralism,' *The Guardian*, 29 October 2008.

police investigations into terrorism.⁶⁹ Its close ties to the government have, however, soured.

It seems that, in the European context, it is more useful to look at ideological and practical changes that are made on a daily basis in relation to *mixité*, headscarves, and citizenship, rather than to keep on pointing at the continued reference to Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. Cédric Baylocq (Chapter 7) makes the case that, in the end, ideology and especially practices are determined much more by circumstances than by texts written by the historical leaders.

In this regard, Anne Sofie Roald (Chapter 3) offers an interesting insight into the future where, due to political interaction with other political players, the Brotherhood might become even more pragmatic and, ultimately, secularised. In Europe, this process will likely be accelerated as the strong organisational base, in which most members of the Brotherhood in the Middle East are enclosed, falls away. Innes Bowen (Chapter 5) illustrates this point in the UK, where the Brotherhood has taken part in coalitions such as RESPECT and STOP the War Coalition. This also implies an ideological transformation, as it is clear that the demonstrations were organised in the name of human rights and civil liberties in Iraq and Palestine, rather than Islam per se.⁷⁰ For instance, during a vigil in February 2008, different organisations, some of them associated with the Brotherhood, demanded 'respect, equality and parity for all Britons, irrespective of race and creed'.⁷¹ A major step in that direction was taken when the MAB organised a protest demonstration against forms of art it found offensive. There, the MAB argued that, 'an artist has the right to free speech and express him or herself, but people also have the right to protest'.⁷²

As several authors point out, the Muslim Brotherhood has also been affected by the individualisation of belief in the service of personal fulfilment and individual success. The consumerist Islam is not very conducive towards a disciplined mass party in its old form. In this regard, all the chapters make clear that the Muslim Brotherhood is not able to evade the general trend of becoming a more ethical, rather than a political, Islamic organisation. Brigitte Maréchal (Chapter 4) supports this trend when she argues

69 Jason Burke, 'Londonistan,' *India Today*, 23 July 2007.

70 Anas Altikriti, 'Historic Rally,' *Morning Star*, 15 February 2003.

71 'Muslims hold London Vigil to Demand Equal Citizenship,' UPI/IRNA, 16 February 2008.

72 Tim Walker, 'Maple's Exhibition Poses Questions that Anger Muslims,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 October 2008.

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that the FIOE is more firmly based on an Islamic ethos than on a political programme. Cédric Baylocq (Chapter 7) shows that Tareq Oubrou has adopted this trend by embracing Sufism, and that other examples abound. Meanwhile Frank Peter (Chapter 6) points out that European critics are mistakenly looking at the *shari'a* discourse of these organisations instead of their ethical messages. Charges by the German *Verfassungsschutz* that the Muslim Brotherhood represents a totalitarian ideology would therefore appear to unnecessarily complicate relations with the organisation.

Challenges

Despite this call for a more conscientious analysis of Brotherhood-affiliated organisations in Europe, there are reasons for being critical thereof.

One of the pressing issues is their secrecy, both on the level of the organisations as well as the flow of their money. Some movements seem to be aware of the need to create greater transparency. In 2006, the UOIF published *Qu'est ce que l'UOIF?* (What is the UOIF?).⁷³ Yet, as Edwin Bakker points out (Chapter 8) in the Dutch case, as long as these organisations do not commit themselves to transparency, the non-Muslim population and the media in the different European countries will remain distrustful of Brotherhood-related organisations, and right-wing newspapers will continue to play upon these suspicions. Moreover, intelligence services will keep on monitoring them. The suspicions are fed by the categorical denial of all the organisations' leaders that they are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Stefan Meining (Chapter 10) shows how the suspicions between the *Verfassungsschutz* and the IGD feed on each other. Thus, both sides have become locked into an endless game of accusations and denials, which derives from the misconception that the Muslim Brotherhood is an anti-democratic, totalitarian movement opposed to the German Constitution.

Another consideration is the tendency of the Brotherhood to claim that they represent the Muslim communities in Europe and their attempts to become those communities' interlocutor. This attempt has been exposed in France, the United Kingdom (Chapter 5) and other countries, and it has been vehemently attacked in the press. Nonetheless, the disproportionate influence that the Brotherhood-affiliated organisations exert through such organs as the UOIF, the FIOE and the

73 Xaxier Ternisien, 'Un réseau en quête de reconnaissance,' *Le Monde*, 22 June 2006.

ECRF, as Lorenzo Vidino (Chapter 2) warns, could pose adverse effects for the integration of Muslims into European society.⁷⁴

Neither are Brotherhood-affiliated organisations very democratic. In France, the members of the UOIF have to pledge their allegiance to the organisation.⁷⁵ However, in the accounts of other organisations, like the German Islamitische Gemeinschaft Deutschland, democracy features prominently.

Finally, the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood itself still poses problems. Although one should look at the daily influence of, for instance, the ECFR, the major ideological lines are still not exclusively positive. Even if many of the authors in this volume are able to explain it, the most perplexing aspect of the Brotherhood is the peaceful coexistence of the most contradictory currents of thought. This is evident in Egypt (see Chapters 11 and 12), but is also apparent in Europe.⁷⁶ In this sense, the Brotherhood does resemble the Communist Parties, which in the 1980s took a long time to shed their revolutionary Marxism and the violent overthrow of capitalism. Seldom does one come across someone like the British leader, Dilwar Hussain, who expresses his distress about the ideas of Sayyid Qutb (Chapter 5).

However, not only do more radical and moderate groups coexist next to each other, also the ideas of so-called progressive reformers, such as Tariq Ramadan, are not always clear. Without going so far as to call them part of '*le double langage*', and acknowledging their many differences with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Roel Meijer (Chapter 14) argues that these organisations remain ambiguous. In the end, the same totalising tendencies as those found in the Muslim Brotherhood are discernable, pressing fundamental ideas of freedom, tolerance, and equality in the service of promoting an identifiable Brotherhood programme of belief (*iman*) as the core concept. This tendency seems to be confirmed in the analysis by Brigitte Maréchal (Chapter 4) of the FIOE's *The Charter of the Muslims of Europe* in 2008. The charter is an ideological attempt at mobilisation and integration, but ultimately is 'rather a disordered melting-pot of concepts, where numerous themes are juxtaposed to each other on an equal footing'.

74 See especially Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

75 Xaxier Ternisien, *Les frères musulmans*, p. 273.

76 See for instance, Maréchal, *The Muslim Brothers in Europe*, pp. 89-187.

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