

Press-book

Dr. Florence
Bergeaud-Blackler

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Anthropologist



Professional Profile : Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, PhD in Anthropology (HDR), is a university professor and prominent researcher currently affiliated with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) within the Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcité (GSRL) research unit, part of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) located on the Condorcet Campus of Paris Sciences et Lettres University in Aubervilliers.

Academic Credentials : Florence's academic journey includes a Doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Bordeaux and a habilitation to direct research granted by the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS). Her comprehensive education and extensive research experience have solidified her reputation in the academic community.

In 2024, Dr. Bergeaud-Blackler was honored with the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, recognizing her contributions to academic and public discourse in France and beyond. The same year marked the establishment of the Centre Européen de Recherche et d'Information sur le Frérisme (CERIF), which she leads. Under her guidance, CERIF co-organize a pivotal international scientific conference on Islamisms in Europe in May 15, 2024, in Paris.

Research Focus : Dr. Bergeaud-Blackler has initially specialized in the study of Islamic normativities within a secular context. Her approach integrates pragmatic sociology and the economics of conventions to explore the intricate relationships between economics, religion, and politics in a globalized setting. Key questions she addresses include the role of the economy in shaping religious norms, the penetration of religion into economic spheres, whether markets can convey religious norms, and if religious norms mirror specific economic rationalities. This line of inquiry has led her to probe the processes of Salafi indoctrination, considering both its fundamentalist and political dimensions, which interact with neo-liberal, post-modern political and market logics to foster the development of halal ecosystems.

Publications : Dr. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler is a prolific writer, having authored numerous scholarly articles and books. Her most recent publication "Le Frérisme et ses réseaux" (Brotherism and its networks) has achieved bestseller status in France, reflecting its significant impact within the academic and societal discourse. This work has been translated into Danish and sparked considerable debate in Denmark, evidencing its broad international appeal. Additionally, preparations are underway to release a German and swedich editions, further extending its reach and influence across Europe.

Main published books (in addition to dozens of academic papers) :

- "Le frérisme et ses réseaux, l'enquête", Odile Jacob Editions
January 2023
[TN : "Brotherism and its Networks"]
- "Cachez cet islamisme". Boîte à Pandore Editions, 2019
- "Le Marché halal ou l'invention d'une tradition." Le Seuil Editions, 2017
- "Halal Matters: Islam, Politics and Markets in Global Perspective," Routledge Editions, 2016
- "Les Sens du Halal: une norme dans un marché mondial", CNRS Editions, 2015
- "Comprendre le halal", Edipro Bruxelles Editions, 2009

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Dr. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler's Press-book

Selection of articles published in Europe in 2023-2024

Table of content

FRANCE :

- **Le Figaro** - Florence Bergeaud-Blackler : "A program to destabilize our societies has been at work for forty years.", by Jean Chichizola, 09-06-24.
- **Le Point** - "The Muslim Brotherhood Does What They Say and Says What They Do, Listen to", by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, 10-19-23
- **Le Point** - "Why We Support Anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler", by collective, 03-21-23
- **Le Figaro Magazine** - "Europe : Islam under Brotherist Influence", by Judith Waintraub, 01-20-23
- **Le Figaro TV** - Florence Bergeaud-Blackler: "The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe Spreads Their Ideology Through Influencers", by Armelle Favre, 01-20-24.

DENMARK :

- **Berlingske** - Five Stars : The Author Takes the Lead in the erbal Battle Against Islamism, by Peter Nedergaard, 06-17-24.
- **Weekendavisen** - "The Proselytizers and the Secret Order", by Soren K.Villemoes, 06-20-24.
- **Zetland** - "The Social Democrats talk about Islamic infiltration in our society: I met the main thinker behind this awareness. 'We are on the brink of a civil war,' she says.", by Mathias Mencke, 06-22-24.

NETHERLANDS :

- **Wynia's Week** - "The Muslim Brotherhood are masters of Deception", by Kleis Jager, 02-04-23.

NORWAY :

- **Dagen** - "Alert on Islamism in Europe: A Matter of Time", by Birgit Opheim, 08-20-24

GERMANY :

- **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** - Im Visier der Bruderschaft, by Von Jürg Altwegg, 09-05-23.

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler : "A program to destabilize our societies has been at work for forty years."

by Jean Chichizola

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler holds a PhD in anthropology and is a research fellow at the CNRS. In 2023, she published *Le Frérisme et ses réseaux, l'enquête [TN : 'Brotherism and its networks']* (Odile Jacob editions)

LE FIGARO – How would you define imams like the one from Les Bleuets in Marseille?

FLORENCE BERGEAUD-BLACKLER – I would describe it as brothero-salafism." These imams or preachers, now from the second and third generations, were initially trained by the Muslim Brotherhood, who came from the "bled" (their homeland) to study or do business in France. Then the Saudi pietist Salafist wave arrived via Algeria, challenging the "hypocrisy" of the Brotherhood (mostly Tunisians and Moroccans), who were seen as too calculating and politically engaged, to the detriment of piety. Brothero-salafists, like the imam from Les Bleuets, are politicized figures with a societal project that is rooted in Brotherism, but their ethics are grounded in rigorous Salafist practices. This does not contradict the historical Brotherhood and allows them to reach popular suburbs, where ostentatious piety is highly valued, while political activism is met with suspicion.

What are the relationships between the Muslim Brotherhood and frère-salafists?

The first generation that came to France, the historical Muslim Brotherhood of the UOIF, was composed of individuals born in the 1950s-1960s, like Amar Lasfar, Fouad Alaoui, or Tareq Oubrou. There were groups from Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, etc. In the 1970s-1980s, they methodically trained preachers across France: men, women, and youth. The generation born in France was excluded from decision-making, constantly relegated to the status of "youth" who were seen as lacking knowledge of Islam and Arabic. Some of these young people immersed themselves in the Arab-Islamic world under the influence of Wahhabism, Maliki teachings, or currents from the Indian subcontinent, like Jamaat al-Tabligh, and became more zealous than their mentors, even accusing the Brotherhood of being a corrupt sect aligned with the French state, harshly criticizing their strategic softness on issues like the headscarf or the UOIF's involvement in the Conseil Français du culte musulman (*TN: French Council of the Muslim Faith.*) Pure Wahhabis issue warnings against the Brotherhood. The brothero-salafist generation remains wary of the historical Brotherhood but uses their communication tools, such as national or regional Muslim gatherings, spreading their ideas in the suburbs, while competing with another movement, also linked to the Brotherism : the indigenism of the PIR, led by Houria Bouteldja, which is far less pietistic and targets the more educated and secular left.



Brothero-salafism, as seen with the imam of Les Bleuets, helps attract young people to a disciplined Salafism without fully adopting Wahhabism, which would depoliticize them too much. This process of Islamization focuses on political and societal issues. The fight against Islamophobia, a brilliant Brotherhood strategy designed to discredit any criticism of Islamism, also aims to re-educate and raise awareness about Islam among non-Muslims. This is its core. Women are supported by networks controlled by the Muslim Sisters, targeting women who are isolated at home, who have demographic strength, but also intellectuals who wear the veil, work, and contribute to societal transformation leading to a universal Islamic society.

Is the government's policy effective in addressing these phenomena?

In its crackdown on explicit provocative speeches in mosques, the (*TN : french*) Ministry of the Interior, under the outgoing Gérald Darmanin, has taken high-profile expulsion measures. He has targeted not only jihadist rhetoric but also Islamist discourse on norms that contravene the values of the Republic, which is a step in the right direction. The events of October 7 and the wave of antisemitism have also contributed to a firmer response from the government. However, we should now address the root causes of this issue, which means naming and better understanding the problem.

A highly structured and systematic program aimed at destabilizing our European societies, which I call *brotherism*, has been at work for forty years. The left views this hypothesis as conspiratorial, while the right takes it seriously but refrains from engagement for electoral reasons and to avoid being associated with the far-right, which has turned this fight into a caricature.

...

How can we explain that Islamism continues to progress, especially among younger people?

First, there is a responsibility on the part of some media outlets. Islamism remains a taboo topic. To the point that, when discussing antisemitism, we continue to seek the causes of its rise following October 7th within the far right, even though it's enough to read, watch videos, or visit an Islamic bookstore—easily accessible in most major cities—to see that what is taught to Muslims aligns with the Hamas charter. How will we be able to discuss these issues in our post-truth era, at a time when even universities and major scientific institutions boycott or even exclude those who simply want to understand and make others understand?

I live in an academic environment influenced by far-left ideology and blind wokism, which for the past 30 or 40 years has claimed that if you talk about the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe, it's only because you want to distract people from socio-economic problems and that, in essence, you're racist and Islamophobic, which justifies silencing you.

Why this "willful blindness"? Perhaps because people don't want to see what they've sometimes actively contributed to for the past 30 years... If the left, of which I am a part, did a real soul-searching, it would be so painful that it might never recover. The left remains attached to parties allied with Islamism, like La France Insoumise (LFI), because it knows its responsibility is significant, and that the far left might find a few right-wing politicians are also not beyond suspicion, but this remains within political parties. On the left, however, the entire social fabric—anti-racism associations, housing rights groups, LGBTQI, so-called environmental organizations, etc.—has allied with Islamism and its indigeneist cousin out of opportunism.

Some colleagues nearing retirement confide in me: *"You're right, but we can't say it."* Telling the truth would mean admitting we were wrong, and that's painful because everything is documented, and nothing disappears. Prominent, sometimes brilliant sociologists have said nonsense about Islamism without ever knowing anything about it, trying to save what they believed was an inclusive secularism.

What can be done?

Education and training for citizens. Against a low-intensity war, citizens need the intellectual and legal means to defend themselves from indoctrination and aggression in their neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. People often ask, won't this lead to a witch hunt? It's a legitimate question. We must be scrupulous and fair, but we can't remain in denial and do nothing. A friend recently reminded me of a quote from Jean-Pierre Dupuy, who said, approximately: denial is when you don't want to believe what you already know. Each people the worldview of Islamists, their political and societal aims. They have the right to hold this worldview, to want to impose it and convert others. You won't stop them by force or imprisonment, but only by your determination to defend your own values. What's frightening is that you hear people saying: Why not the Muslim Brotherhood?

Some are willing to abandon secularism and even convert. Especially on the left, because the left shares with the Brotherhood the ideas of multiculturalism, globalism, and a "revolutionary" project. There's still a belief in a temporary alliance with Islamists. This old dream hasn't faded. Islamists think the same, but they have history on their side. Islamism always ends up devouring the left.

Does this explain, in your view, why some left-wing elected officials understand or support Islamism?

Some LFI members are in a seditious mindset; they seek the breakdown of the secular Republic and its intellectual (with their obsession with deconstructionism as both means and end in universities) and physical disarmament (with their incessant attacks on the police, for example). These are utopians who seem to have no other dream than a tabula rasa, a destruction of roots to rebuild everything. It's absurd—have they ever been in a garden?

How could the situation evolve?

Islamists are convinced that if they can win over a growing number of Muslims, they can impose their values, their way of life, their social organization. It starts with the subjugation of women, who are first attracted by a colorful hijab and Muslim pride, then through mental and physical re-education. We know that the Islamist dynamic always pushes for greater confinement, with the end of women's presence in public spaces as seen in Afghanistan. From what I've learned with the halal market, it's always the "most halal" who wins in the end.

I've attended meetings where modern, educated women in skirts ended up deciding that, if you had to cut off a thief's hand according to sharia, well, maybe it wasn't such a bad idea... I mention this in my book.

You've been under police protection for a year and a half after receiving death threats following the publication of your book on the Muslim Brotherhood. What is your situation today?

I'm still under protection. I don't pay attention to threats on social media anymore—it's a bit depressing. I'm still ostracized, although paradoxically I have discreet support from many colleagues. My career is blocked, and internal "alerts" are raised against me. Disagreements are normal, but there's no debate, and that's what I suffer from the most. My book was published in Denmark in June and sparked public debate. It will be published in Germany, where there's strong interest. In Sweden, where my book will also be published, the press is starting to take an interest in the Islamophobia accusations aimed at silencing researchers. In France, I was named a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur (*TN: Chevalier of the Legion of Honor*), and I'm very grateful for that. But on the other hand, I'm forced to give lectures in universities and research centers abroad...

Interview by Jean Chichizola.

The Muslim Brotherhood Does What They Say and Says What They Do, Listen to Them

by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler*

OP-ED : The attacks on the school system and secularism have explicit intellectual underpinnings from the Muslim Brotherhood.

We cannot fully understand the Islamist attacks—both literally and figuratively—against the School and secularism without taking into account their intellectual foundations.

It is unlikely that these numerous attacks, carried out since 1989 with the high-profile case of the Creil headscarves, would have continued with unbroken regularity over three generations of Muslims born in Europe if they hadn't been thoughtfully planned.

The European Muslim Brotherhood has set itself the mission of establishing an Islamic society using the tools of Western societies, which they believe they can guide, offering them the morality and meaning they lack. The Brothers think through what they do, and they do what they think with formidable patience. They have a long-term project that they work on for their individual and collective salvation: bringing together Muslims (the Islamic nation or Ummah) to establish a global Islamic society. I have described its origins and methods in 'Le Frérisme et ses réseaux' [TN : 'Brotherism and its networks'] (Odile Jacob edition).

A Priority: Education

The priority of the Brotherhood is education, which is their primary mission and has been a topic of reflection for half a century in Europe. This gave rise to a fundamental document in 2000 in Doha (Qatar) that anyone interested in legalistic forms of political Islam should read.

It was in Château-Chinon, France (IESH), that, as early as 1993, they called for the development of a "strategy for Islamic cultural action in the West" under the auspices of Icesco, an international organization specializing in education, science, and culture, and a branch of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). (Icesco aims to be to the OIC what UNESCO is to the UN.)

This 30- to 40-year plan, whose main points I will outline here, proposes the establishment of structures designed to prevent any risk of Muslims assimilating into the cultures of the countries their families emigrated to. The Brotherhood not only wants to discourage four generations of Muslims from integrating, which for them is synonymous with de-Islamization, but they also offer them an active program and structures to benefit from the financial, technological, which is addressed to all Muslims but can be read by anyone with internet access, the Brotherhood justifies their strategy as follows: education must contribute to improving Muslims' quality of life, helping them adapt to their environment while allowing them to present a "positive image of Islam."

The entire document translates ultra-proselytizing terms and ideas, which could shock a Western reader, into expressions and words from the semantic field of multiculturalism.** Here, the aim of promoting a positive image of Islam is to suggest that populations from Muslim-majority countries have a natural vocation to become "Muslim citizens" engaged in the propagation



and intellectual advantages of Western tradition while remaining within the Islamic normative framework and actively contributing to its expansion. In this polished programmatic document, of Islam.

Protecting Muslims "from cultural invasion and alienation"

Improving the "quality of life" consists, as the document specifies, of "correcting" non-Muslims' perception of "Islamic culture" by explaining that it is much more than a religion—it is a way of life, a civilization. Muslims must follow "the commandments of Allah, His prohibitions, and adopt the generous Islamic ethics, [...] acting within the framework of Sharia, which is based on two principles: enjoining good and forbidding evil." It is worth noting that a Muslim cannot merely be a believer and practitioner for themselves; they must encourage others to do the same.

Since Islam offers a way of life, not just a religion, Muslims require a specific environment. The document makes it clear that Muslims must be protected "from cultural invasion and alienation" and guaranteed cultural security and immunity, so they do not lose their Islam, which is simultaneously their culture, law, and natural civilization. This must be achieved through the creation of a specific environment with its own institutions (associations, community groups, and businesses) and through constant efforts to adapt the surrounding environment to Islamic specifics. To help convey what authentic, integral Islam is and to incorporate the Muslim perspective into the political, economic, social, and cultural environments in which they live, it is necessary to build relationships with various segments of the Western press that influence public opinion locally and internationally. Actions must follow "a unified Islamic cultural plan" in immigrant communities to preserve their Muslim identity so that their children can pass it on and integrate it in turn. The Islamic economy partially fulfills this role by offering Muslims a halal version of products, as well as consumption spaces, entertainment, and halal media. Education should prepare them to enter this normative space.

The Brothers behind this Icesco document also propose the establishment of "Islamic action leaders" attached to Islamic cultural organizations and centers, who, with the support of modern technology (the Internet), the organization of conferences, colloquiums, and scientific and cultural workshops, can swiftly and broadly implement the clauses and provisions of this strategy.

The Family as the Core of the Social Unit

For this strategy to be effective, the family must be strengthened as the core of the social unit, and children must be taken out of public (secular) schools, whose influence is driven by a "burning desire to uproot the Muslim child." Drawing on sociological and psychological studies, the Brothers explain that it is only natural for this aggressive influence on the Muslim child to negatively impact their abilities and adaptation to school. Western schools must be prevented from destroying the structure to which the child unconsciously refers, by methodically and systematically attempting to demolish the values they hold from their family and Islam, which is much more than a religion in the Western sense of the term.

The West can benefit from the virtues of Islam and Muslim potential "if it decides to recognize that Islam is a religion, a culture, and a civilization" and if it initiates a dialogue with Muslim communities and minorities in the West. However, the Brothers warn, "if it remains focused on the desire to assimilate them into its milieu, it is better to highlight with much regret that the current crisis will persist." Therefore, the West cannot ignore Islam as a civilization without creating problems, while it could instead benefit from it positively.

The Brothers Do What They Say and Say What They Do

To achieve this, the Brothers recommend appealing to European institutions (the European Council and the European Parliament) to support their "cultural" and educational projects, preparing a "rigorous plan" to support Muslim intellectuals and educators, and convincing Western educational authorities to include Islamic education courses in official public school curricula, as has been done in Belgium (where they have already made significant inroads).

The document proposes creating Islamic schools and education faculties exclusively for Muslim children, which would be funded through charitable bequests, donations from governments of Islamic and European countries, and European charitable associations.** A scientific body, supervised by Icesco, along with an Islamic observatory in Europe, would be responsible for developing a teaching methodology specific to private Islamic schools, with the possibility of coordination with European educational authorities.

Lessons would be disseminated by a Federation of European Islamic Schools. The strategy also includes encouraging both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences to engage with Islamic arts and literature through a plan for halal entertainment and leisure programs, particularly for children and cultural broadcasts.

Since the adoption of this strategy by OIC countries in Doha, the Brotherhood's program has been in progress, operating through two movements, *push* and *pull*. On one hand, they pursue a separatist effort to push Muslims out of secular environments and into the halal space, and on the other hand, they work to attract, seduce, and ultimately accommodate the broader environment. The goal is to gain Western society's acceptance of this fundamentalist, integralist, dogmatic, supremacist, and expansionist form of Islam, presenting it as the only valid interpretation while delegitimizing all others. The Brotherhood has not only convinced a portion of Muslims but has also influenced non-Muslims by instrumentally employing the multiculturalist argument, which some refer to as creolization.

The separatist agenda of this document is clear, but it has been hindered in France by laws like the 2004 ban on the hijab. This is why the accommodation strategy has become more prominent than separatism, which works better in countries like Belgium or the UK. In France, where secular networks are numerous and vigilant, the Brotherhood focuses on accommodating the environment with their useful allies, through influence, infiltration, and systematically accusing opponents of Islamophobia. To understand the assaults on the Republican School in our country, we must keep the Muslim Brotherhood's program in mind.

The attacks (murders), offensives (abayas), refusals to participate in certain lessons, and protests documented in the Obin report and *Territoires Perdus de la République* by Georges Bensoussan in 2004 are not merely the result of an inability to integrate (as Muslim children and those from other cultures and religions succeed in doing so); they are also the ideological product of a legalistic Islamism that today exerts a troubling mental influence over millions of French Muslims and non-Muslims. When we know that a large majority of young Muslims believe that Sharia takes precedence over the laws of the Republic, and that most educational and training institutions, as well as Islamic centers, are dominated by the Brotherist ideology, the growing difficulties faced by the school system are hardly surprising.



Women wearing abayas in Lyon. © Mourad ALLILI/SIPA

This is the core of the problem, but also where part of the solution lies. To address the issue, we must shift our perspective and look in the right direction. Teachers need to be trained to understand this ideology and how it influences the way children think and perceive the world outside of school. Self-blame is pointless, as not everything that happens to us is the result of our own doing. The Brotherhood does what they say and says what they do. Let's listen to them.

**Doctor of Anthropology (HDR), CNRS Researcher, author of 'Le Frérisme et ses réseaux' [TN : 'Brotherism and its networks'] (Odile Jacob edition).*

Europe Islam under Brotherist Influence

In "Le Frérisme et ses réseaux, l'enquête" [TN: 'Brotherism and Its Networks'] excerpts of which we are publishing as a preview, the anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler reveals how the Muslim Brotherhood, the most secretive of Islamist organizations, succeeded in making the European Union the advanced base for their world conquest project.

by Judith Waintraub

In "Le Frérisme et ses réseaux, l'enquête" [TN: 'Brotherism and Its Networks'] excerpts of which we are publishing as a preview, the anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler explains how the Muslim Brotherhood, the most secretive of Islamist organizations, succeeded in making the European Union the advanced base of their project to conquer the world.

From the beheading of Samuel Paty outside his school to pro-burkini protests in swimming pools, and the "March against Islamophobia" in Paris, their shadow looms without their direct involvement ever being established. Was the torrent of hate on social media against the teacher "guilty" of showing Charlie Hebdo cartoons to his students orchestrated by the Muslim Brotherhood? There is no evidence to confirm this. Activists from the Citizens' Alliance, pushing for modest fashion in municipal establishments, deny any ties to the Brotherhood. Likewise, the now-dissolved CCIF Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France (TN: *Collective against Islamophobia in France*), responsible for the 2019 protest, denies such links.

The significant achievement of Florence Bergeaud-Blackler's investigation is revealing that these seemingly unrelated events all serve a common objective: to subject Europe to the censorship of Islamic fundamentalism, whether through terror, pressure, or persuasion. Her book sheds light on a comprehensive picture, of which daily news only reveals the most salient details.

A researcher at CNRS, Bergeaud-Blackler is also the author of "Le Marché halal ou l'invention d'une tradition" (1) [TN: *The Halal Market or the Invention of a Tradition*]. In it, she describes the development of halal standards fueled by globalization and its use for political-religious purposes.

From the beheading of Samuel Paty outside his school to pro-burkini protests in swimming pools, and the march against Islamophobia in Paris, their shadow looms without direct involvement ever being confirmed. Was the wave of hate against the teacher who showed Charlie Hebdo caricatures to his students orchestrated by the Muslim Brotherhood? Nothing proves it. Activists from the Citizens' Alliance, promoting modest fashion in public institutions, reject any connection with the Brotherhood. The same goes for the CCCIF, now dissolved, which organized the 2019 protest.

The immense merit of the investigation published by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler is in showing that these seemingly unconnected events all serve the same objective: subjecting Europe to the norms of Islamic fundamentalism through terror, pressure, or persuasion. Like her previous work, "Le Marché halal ou l'invention d'une tradition" (TN: *The Halal Market or the Invention of a Tradition*), this new book offers a comprehensive view of a reality that only surfaces in the most prominent headlines.

She exposes what she calls the "Islam-system" based on its founding texts, real action plans where the intellectual leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood meticulously describe the methods now being implemented in Europe. Analyzing the Brotherhood's nebulous networks, she identifies organizations and associations that are direct extensions of the group, as well as those that have become channels of influence due to the infiltration of Brotherhood members. They cannot act openly; the Muslim Brotherhood has a bad reputation in Europe and is banned as a terrorist group in most Arab countries, including Egypt, where it originated.

Submission

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler also dedicates several chapters to the accomplices of this international Islamist movement within European institutions, as well as in France and Belgium, where she frequently travels. She shows how the Belgian capital has become the "Caliphate of Brussels" through a Brotherhood-led infiltration of the media, institutions, and the associative world. This, she argues, has been aided by the cowardice and submission of most actors in Belgium's political and media landscape.

Alongside fellow anthropologist Fadila Maaroufi, she founded the Observatoire des Fondamentalismes [TN: *Observatory of Fundamentalism*] in Brussels in 2020. "Its creation shook up the small world of secular Belgian associations, which had never addressed these issues," she notes. For a master's thesis on the indoctrination of women in Brussels, Fadila Maaroufi, born in Belgium to Moroccan parents, spent three years undercover in a mosque controlled by fundamentalists.

Together, they also launched *Café Laïque* in Brussels, a café-restaurant where renowned authors give lectures on threats to secularism and the various manifestations of woke culture. On December 15, they invited Caroline Eliacheff and Céline Masson, respectively a child psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, who co-authored "The Factory of Transgender Children" (2) to raise awareness about the dangers of promoting gender transition among children. Masked activists stormed the café, shouting and throwing excrement. None of Belgium's major media outlets reported on the attack. ■

** (1) Seuil editions, 272 pages, €20. **

** (2) L'Observatoire editions, 112 pages, €12. **

By Judith Waintraub

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The Cultural Battle of the Muslim Brotherhood

Bergeaud-Blackler exposes the Islamists' strategy, aiming to introduce separatism across various fields while relentlessly denouncing "Islamophobia."



The Strategy of ISESCO

The subversive work on international law can be exemplified by the very explicit strategy of ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), which owes much to the directives of Qaradawi. The technique used by the Muslim Brotherhood to wear down secular democracies revolves around the "right to difference," a right that doesn't exist as such but which they derive from the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in the United Nations Charter. As we've seen, the Brothers believe that the technological and economic power of the West makes a military conquest unlikely. Instead, they aim for Western democracies to fall through education and culture (the realm of ISESCO), much like the Muslim world succumbed in the 18th century.

In the late 1980s, the European Brotherhood drafted a strategy to reinforce the sense of belonging to the *umma* among Muslim communities settled in the West. This strategy was published in Qatar, one of the main financial backers of the Brotherhood's global movement, by ISESCO. This organization was created to mirror UNESCO for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (itself modeled after the UN) under the title *Islamic Cultural Action Outside the Islamic World*. The goal is to give substance to the Brotherhood's supremacist ambition by developing a program designed to prevent Muslim minorities from adopting local laws and principles derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The document, published in both English and French, outlines a plan to "build the personality of the Muslim being," ensuring that they engage in daily life while "respecting Allah's commands

, avoiding prohibitions, and embodying Islam's generous and tolerant ethics, based on goodness, righteousness, fairness, and duty, acting in accordance with Sharia, which is founded on two principles: commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong." This strategy aims to protect against "cultural invasion and alienation" and to "guarantee the cultural security and immunity necessary for the development of the Muslim personality."

ISESCO's document is a roughly 100-page text, confusing, disorganized, and repetitive. Though unsigned, certain specific passages relating to France suggest a close alignment with the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood at the IESH (European Institute of Human Sciences) in Château-Chinon. The focus is on educating the younger generations born in the West, whom Islam must not lose, as they will be the messengers spreading the religion of the chosen people across the world. The Brothers explain that Muslims are not "assimilable" and will only cause problems for Westerners if they continue to ignore their specific need to be guided by Islam.

This argument echoes the stance of Morocco's king, who seeks to maintain control over the Moroccan diaspora in Europe. Due to their Muslim identity, they "continue to suffer from racist tendencies, especially when practicing certain religious rites and observing religious precepts." They are seen as victims of "prejudices" when they are blamed for terrorist attacks, which are labeled as "dishonorable and isolated acts to which (Islam) is entirely foreign."



The market at Gare du Midi, in the center of Brussels.

Teaching Secularism in Schools: A Hindrance to the Balanced Development of Muslim Children

The teaching of secularism in schools is seen as an obstacle to the balanced development of Muslim children who have been exposed to Western values and local customs: "Some of the problems faced by immigrant children in Western countries are partly due to school curricula that treat Muslims and Westerners equally and are essentially secular in nature. Indeed, it is difficult for a child who has received a secular Western education to escape from it, as they are deeply immersed in it. As a result, these Muslim children and youth are taught Western values and internalize local customs and ways of thinking."

To counter this, the strategy is to implement "an appropriate and healthy Islamic education in the West, with carefully developed curricula aimed at raising awareness, promoting acculturation, providing guidance, and ensuring social protection (for Muslims), in accordance with the letter and spirit of Islam." The ultimate goal is to "achieve sustainable cultural development of Islamic societies within non-Muslim countries." In short, the aim is to shield the Muslim identity from local values to create a sustainable Islamic ecosystem in non-Muslim countries. This effort even seeks to "protect [the Muslim identity] from cultural invasion and alienation, ensuring cultural security and the immunity necessary for the development of the Muslim personality by educating it in the principles of Islam and Islamic culture."

ISESCO calls on Islamic countries to maintain ties with Muslim minorities through communication technologies, "using the full range of media tools to ensure lasting, fruitful relationships and communication." The development of halal educational media since the 2010s is one outcome of this strategy.

«The indoctrination of women is a necessity, for it is their responsibility to educate the children.»

Under the pretext of ensuring that Muslims have "a positive self-image inspired by Islamic spirituality," the Muslim Brotherhood demands respect for the sacredness of Islam from both Muslims and non-Muslims. As we have seen with the promotion of the ambiguous concept of Islamophobia, the prohibition of blasphemy remains a cornerstone of their plan.

This strategy subverts the principles of universal rights by claiming the necessity of separating from them (especially for young people) "to protect them from any assimilation into their surroundings, thus enabling them to preserve their cultural specificity within the framework of the right to difference, which has now become a fundamental element of human rights and a pillar of cultural diversity, now one of the foundations of international law, in reference to the United Nations Charter" (sic).



The Gare du Midi market is the largest in Brussels.

Finally, the strategy advocates for the development of Islamic education to promote "the teaching of Islamic values and ethics alongside scientific and cognitive training." Only Islamic education, it argues, can "design and develop educational visions and methods capable of sparing children from the characteristic problems of life in a Western environment and freeing them from the cultural divide they suffer from."

SOROS' OPEN SOCIETY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

Since the early 2000s, the NGO of American billionaire George Soros has played a decisive role in spreading the term "Islamophobia" within academic and educational circles. The Open Society European Policy Institute, the Brussels-based branch of the Open Society Foundations network, funded extensive studies on the "Muslim issue" aimed at advising European policies for a more "inclusive" society.

The report authored by Tufyal Choudhury, advisor to Open Society UK from 2006 to 2015, resembles a genuine manual of the Muslim Brotherhood. This researcher, specializing in national security issues, focused on combating jihadist radicalization by proposing reintegration programs for jihadists and defending human rights. He is among the activists who, through the Open Society, promoted the theory that if Muslims do not distance themselves more from Islamism, it is because anti-terrorist police forces are not trustworthy. He thus proposed "his solutions," which involved granting more political autonomy to Muslims, exactly what the Muslim Brotherhood seeks.

The report includes several recommendations, such as increasing Muslim participation at both national and local levels on political and educational matters. Local educational authorities are encouraged to explore the possibility of providing single-gender education as an option for parents in areas with a high Muslim population. It is suggested to establish "procedures for disseminating best practices to meet the needs of Muslim students" and to replace Anglican schools with Muslim schools where Muslims are numerous.

The report also advises facilitating Islamic practices in public spaces, especially in educational institutions: "The government should set up a student loan system that does not require Muslim students in higher education to act against Islamic rules regarding the payment and receipt of interest." It continues, "Universities and other institutions of higher and lower education should ensure that prayer facilities (including necessary sanitary installations) are available for Muslims on all campuses; that food compliant with Islamic dietary requirements is available in student cafeterias; and that no Muslim student is forced to wear clothing that contravenes Islamic rules of modesty and decency."

Additionally, the report suggests that universities and other educational institutions should develop official policies on Islamophobia as part of their equal opportunity and racial relations policies and should create sensitive procedures for reporting incidents of religious harassment and discrimination both on and off-campus.

*«The subversion of
universal rights is at the
core of the Muslim
Brotherhood's global
strategy.»*



The new housing in Brussels-City, in the heart of the capital.



A grocery store that shows its true colors in Molenbeek.

Schools should take all possible measures to verify the factual accuracy of representations of Islam in the textbooks and library books they use, and to ensure that they include photos of Muslim students in a non-tokenistic way in textbooks for all subjects. [...] Local educational authorities and schools should ensure that where citizenship is taught as a subject, it is taught in a manner that is sensitive to the particular issues faced by Muslims as British citizens. This may require the development of specific materials related to Muslims and citizenship that schools can use both with Muslim students and in the context of fostering intercultural understanding and respect. [...]

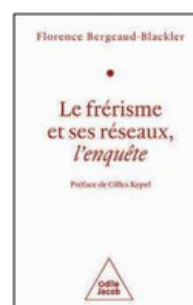
In another report, Choudhury (2017) explains that Muslims have been denigrated and dominated, and consequently, Islamic activism is a step toward civic integration. He explains that Muslims partly identify with Islam in reaction to a society that rejects them, that Muslim men have been dominated, and thus they react by mobilizing a strong, even radical, identity.

According to him, Muslim identity can play a role in shaping the sense of masculinity among young Muslim men, who may construct a "strong" Muslim identity to resist stereotypes of weakness or passivity. In other words, one must accept the violence of men, if they are Muslim, to prevent them from feeling humiliated and turning violent: "Activism for ethnic and Islamic causes, even when conflictual, has accelerated Muslim integration. Such participation allows engagement in other forms of civic and political participation. While Muslim identity politics can be an important trigger for mobilization and participation, the process of participation itself is transformative, and individuals are then more likely to engage in broader processes of civic engagement."

«Research on "Islamophobia" diverts funds that should be used to study Brotherism.»

He thus concludes that the salvation of the United Kingdom lies in religion, that religious authorities can solve the problem of radicalization: "The quality and trust in religious leadership are essential because the success in fighting radicalization consists of providing Muslims with the knowledge and ideas necessary to confront extremist groups." In this way, he can endlessly ignite the fire while pretending to extinguish it.

by Judith Waintraub



Le Frérisme et ses réseaux, l'enquête, [TN : 'Brotherism and its networks']
by Florence Bergeaud-Blackler,
Odile Jacob éditions, 416 p. :
24,90 €. Parution
january 25th 2023

Why We Support Anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler

*Since the publication of her book *Le Frérisme et ses réseaux* [TN : Brotherhood and its Networks] published in January 2023, anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has been the target of a smear campaign denounced by 800 signatories.*

by Collective*



Since the release of her book *Le Frérisme et ses réseaux* [TN : Brotherhood and its Networks], published in January 2023, our colleague, anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, has been the target of a smear campaign through press articles, slander on social media, pressure on her publisher and employer, and even death threats. She is now facing the fate of the few researchers and scientists in Europe who have boldly exposed the proselytism of the Muslim Brotherhood within the European Union. The Brotherhood and their useful allies do not appreciate having a spotlight shone on their activities and are displeased with the attention the book is receiving.

The Brotherhood and its Ecosystem

A dedicated and courageous researcher, Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has spent over thirty years investigating Islamic norms in Europe, becoming one of the leading experts on the subject. This work led her to conduct an in-depth, well-documented, and sourced investigation into a sensitive and under-researched topic: the Muslim Brotherhood and its ecosystem in Europe.

As a researcher and civil servant at CNRS, she enjoys complete independence and freedom in her research. However, she has not received sufficient support from the humanities and social sciences departments, which tend to avoid addressing the Muslim Brotherhood, allowing its worldview to quietly shape research in these fields—what the anthropologist calls the "Islamization of knowledge." Despite these challenges, she has managed to analyze the origins, organization, system, key figures, and funding sources of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe, which notably includes support from the European Union.

The EU allocates tens of millions of euros to Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated NGOs and their various fronts, diverting funds intended for studies on racism, Islam, and Islamism in Europe towards research on the misleading theory of Islamophobia. A Democratic Society Must Defend Its Researchers

Our colleague has been publicly insulted by those who have clearly not read or understood the book and who are labeling it "Islamophobic" and comparing it to anti-Semitic literature, even going so far as to liken the author to Drumont (!). These excesses are typical of the methods used by the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological companions and allies. Their goal is to obscure the facts by erecting a barrier designed to destroy any critical thought and debate that this book is meant to foster. This old tactic aims to criminalize the author, her work, and anyone associated with them. Publicly denouncing, defaming, and insulting an author, accusing them of the worst offenses, seeks to politically, intellectually, and socially isolate them, deterring anyone else who might wish to pursue similar research, engage in discussion, or critique "the Muslim Brotherhood and its networks," thus recognizing the book's significance.

The normal and expected reaction of a democratic society is to defend its researchers against all threats and to ensure the conditions for open scientific debate. We, as researchers and academics, call on our institutions—the University, CNRS, and research centers—to fully support Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, as we do here.

[*The full list of signatories can be found here](#)

[Video]

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler:
"The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe Spreads Their Ideology
Through Influencers"

For the past week, protests have been taking place across France, as well as in Europe and around the world, in support of the Palestinian people. According to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, anthropologist and author of the book "Le frérisme et ses réseaux, l'enquête" (Odile Jacob, 2023), these protests are the result of a latent ideology that has been established in the West by the Muslim Brotherhood over several decades.

by Armelle Favre



Five Stars



The Author Takes the Lead in the verbal Battle Against Islamism

By Peter Nedergaard

The French anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has written the most comprehensive work on Islamism to date. She is also very clear about what the West should do.

Radicalization is not due to poor integration.

It is the reverse radicalization that prevents integration.

This is just one of the many key points from the book by French anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, titled "Broderismen" [TN : Brotherhood]

This book is an extremely well-documented critique of Islamism in all its forms. However, it is important to emphasize that it is not a critique of Islam and secular Muslims, who also suffer from Islamism.

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler calls the Islamism that exists in the Western world "brotherism." This is because Islamism has deep roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, and also because the term "brother" is a common expression of politeness in Islamic circles.

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has been affiliated with the CNRS for many years. Since her studies, she has been researching Islamism and its impact on French and European societies. In this book, she synthesizes her research, many years of field studies, and extensive readings of texts and strategies formulated by the Islamist movement.

Additionally, the author has the advantage of reading Arabic, knowing the Quran, and following the flow of Islamist pamphlets over the years. She also draws on all relevant French and English-language research on the subject.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Egyptian teacher Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949). His grandson, Tariq Ramadan, was one of the main advocates of so-called Euro-Islam, which sought to interpret Islam in a modern European context. However, this initiative ended when Tariq Ramadan was accused of sexual harassment a few years ago, according to the book.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been the most active Islamic movement for nearly 100 years. Since its founding, its goal has been to unite all Islamic branches into one large unified movement. The objective is to establish a borderless Islamic society.

A Broad Spectrum

The Brotherhood has an intellectual, political, and religious profile. This broad spectrum gives the movement great flexibility, including its ability to connect with anti-racist and anti-capitalist movements.

According to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, the Brotherhood seeks to present itself as moderate in contrast to violent jihadists. But among its followers, the goal remains to establish an Islamic society that dominates secular society. Bergeaud-Blackler does not mince words. She believes that the Brotherhood's moderate image is a facade. And a successful one. She thinks many people underestimate the power of the movement and its ability to infiltrate organizations and other movements. The Brotherhood is not an innocent cultural association for Muslims living outside their countries of origin, as it is often perceived by researchers, the public, and politicians in Europe.



The Brotherhood's strategy has always been not to reform Islam in any way. The strategy is not for Islam to adapt to Europe but for Europe to adapt to Islam.

One of the main techniques used by Brotherhood representatives to dismantle secular democracies is based on the "right to difference." According to the author, if you don't get special rights on this basis, you are labeled a victim of Islamophobia and racism.

****What Are the Obstacles to Integration?***

It is a frightening read, but at the same time an excellent book.

Finally, it makes clear calls to Western citizens. As mentioned, we must stop thinking that when Muslims turn to radical Islam, it is because they are poorly integrated. The opposite is true. It is Islamism — "brotherism" — that prevents integration.

According to the book, we must also stop listening to the "screaming machine" against so-called Islamophobia. A society that wants to defeat brotherism must overcome the sense of guilt. It must acknowledge its mistakes, but without the West cultivating this remorse.

Moreover, Western societies must equate Islamist condemnation of apostasy or Muslim "heresy" with hate crimes. That is, as real offenses against which the true victims — Muslims who speak out against brotherism — must be protected.

Finally, Westerners as a whole must have more courage for freedom of expression. No matter how improper it may seem in certain circles.

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler herself is at the forefront in this area.

By Peter Nedergaard



Broderismen - Sådan undergraver islamister de vestlige samfund
[TN: Brotherhood: How Islamists Undermine Western Societies]

Author: Florence Bergeaud-Blackler.

With a preface by: Thomas Hoffmann.

Translation: Niels Ivar Larsen.

Number of pages: 444.

Recommended retail price: 299 kroner.

Publisher: Forlaget Presto.

The Social Democrats talk about Islamic infiltration in our society: I met the main thinker behind this awareness. "We are on the brink of a civil war," she says.

By Mathias Mencke

At the moment, there is a book you need to know about. It's called "Broderismen" (Brotherism). It's a book that is changing Danish politics. Yes, maybe even our society. What we think of each other. What we believe about our fellow citizens. I am on a rooftop in the center of Copenhagen, during a sold-out debate about this very book. The tickets sold out fast. And here, there are several prominent guests from the Danish right wing. Next to me is the Chairman of the Folketing's Legal Affairs Committee, Steffen Larsen from the Liberal Alliance. This is a book that many have been waiting for. Just look at the sales: the first printing sold out in just two days. The third is already being printed. It is currently the best-selling book in Denmark. It is, according to the publisher, quite exceptional for an academic book – one of those books that look boring with footnotes, strange foreign words, and sentences that are far too long.

The book's subtitle is "How Islamists Undermine Western Societies", and it addresses one of the year's most heated internal political debates. The debate about whether certain Danish Muslims are secretly infiltrating our society – our nurseries, the police, and pharmacies – with Islamic values.

And there is a direct link between the book and the speech by the Social Democrats' spokesperson on immigration, Frederik Vad, in the spring. At least, the woman who initiated the translation of the book says that she sent the manuscript to Vad in confidence several months ago. Maybe, she says, it gave him the courage to talk about infiltration. I will return to this.

The Berlingske reviewer calls it "a frightening read, but at the same time an excellent book" and gives it five stars. In *Weekendavisen*, the critic writes that the book is "a must-read if one wants to participate in the debate Frederik Vad has started."

So I did. And I interviewed the author behind it.

If there is one debate that has characterized Danish politics in this millennium, it is the immigration debate. It was in 2001, shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attack, that Anders Fogh Rasmussen came to power and, aided by the Danish People's Party, seriously began talking about immigration issues. About poor integration. About how multiculturalism – which I had learned about in school – had failed.

Everything changed. Gradually. Slowly, what was abnormal to talk about became normal. Suddenly, people were talking about social control and honor-related violence in Muslim communities. The words changed. Social housing areas became parallel societies, then ghettos. Several parties emerged. They echoed. And suddenly, one day, the hardline stance became mainstream.

Shake hands if you want to become a citizen. Lose your citizenship if you commit a crime. The jewelry law. Asylum applications processed in Rwanda. Child marriages. Take off the velvet gloves and embrace Danish values. Some began to talk about assimilation instead of integration. But then it seemed that something was happening. As if the values debate was fading. It felt like politicians lacked screws to tighten the bolts. And Lars Løkke – now moderate – started talking about completely absurd laws. Other issues came up. Elections were supposed to be decided on climate, the elderly, and healthcare. No more value battles.



But now it has resurfaced, and these months, there is a struggle over how much space it should take up again. From the Folketing podium, Frederik Vad almost revitalized the immigration debate in April. We have reached a new awareness. The first – he said – was about the number of immigrants. The second stage was about integrating immigrants, their education, their work, and their contribution. Now – he said from the podium – we have reached a new stage:

"The third awareness is what we are facing now. And it hasn't really penetrated, I think, much of the population, and not here in Christiansborg either. And that's the awareness that work, education, housing, association life, and a clean criminal record are not enough if one uses their position to undermine Danish society from within," Frederik Vad said.

It's no longer about integration, no, it's about something bigger. Something deeper. Something darker. Infiltration. What values... what "spirit" do foreigners – who are seemingly well-integrated – bring into the labor market and civil society:

"A parallel society is no longer just a residential area in Ishøj. It can also be a desk in a public administration. It can also be a pharmacy in Northern Zealand."

No matter what one thinks of the debate, I think it's important to engage with its arguments. With curiosity and a critical mind.

A few hours before the rooftop debate, I meet the French author Florence Bergeaud-Blackler. In France, she regularly receives death threats. But here, there are no security guards. This has been the case since she published her book. Last year, a debate at the Sorbonne University in Paris was canceled at the last minute for security reasons.

Broderismen is her third and most controversial book. The one that made her both famous and infamous.

Over more than 400 pages, Florence Bergeaud-Blackler analyzes, based on documents, testimonies from defectors, and her own anthropological fieldwork, how a global Islamic network called the Muslim Brotherhood has infiltrated the West for decades. But that's not all. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler describes something even more important: how the relatively rare members of the Brotherhood have secretly – with cunning and ingenuity – spread their messages like a mist among Muslims in Europe, so that many today follow the Brotherhood's Islamism – often without being aware they've been infected by their ideas.

For Florence, it is not society that is responsible for the failure of Western integration. Rather, it is Islamist forces that are destroying integration and pushing Muslims to turn their backs on democracy.

The mist has a name, she says. Brotherism. And this "ism" is what she believes has spread across Europe over the last half-century. And it is spreading and infiltrating all parts of society. Schools, the police, the military, administrations, political parties. Pharmacies in Northern Zealand and the canteen at Panum.

For too long, we have ignored the threat, the anthropologist thinks. Europe is at a crossroads. It's now or never, she says. If we do not recognize the power of Brotherism, we will end up with pockets of society that escape democracy. Pockets that only obey Allah, and that divide the world into halal – what is permitted – and haram – what is forbidden. Pockets that work for Sharia law.

"This is the first step," she says.

"The second step is an eternal internal war, until it eventually becomes violent. And then, all extremists will fight each other, and a civil war will break out. A civil war awaits us if we do nothing."

For Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, there is no doubt. Brotherism is here, and it has a clear goal in sight: to create an Islamic Europe.

Alright, let's take a brief historical look back. What is the Muslim Brotherhood, really? The Brotherhood Florence talks about was founded in Egypt 100 years ago. From the beginning, its ambition was to re-establish an Islamic caliphate. The movement was repressed, and several members left for Europe in the 1950s. All this is fairly well documented.

Since then, the movement has led a quieter life. Some researchers believe that the Brotherhood has lost its influence in Europe and that its leaders have abandoned the goal of a European caliphate. Others, like Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, believe the opposite: that the Brotherhood has grown stronger and that the goal of Islamic domination is still very much alive. The caliphate is the lifeblood of the Brotherhood, she says.

This was also demonstrated by a controversial thesis from Lund University last year. It indicates that a small circle of people with close ties to the European leadership of the Brotherhood controls the largest mosques in Sweden and several private Muslim schools. It also concludes that the Brotherhood has infiltrated several Swedish political parties. Among them, a former Minister of Housing and a member of the Riksdag for the Moderates are associated with the Brotherhood. The author of the thesis was later reported to the police for violating research ethics laws. The case was reviewed and dismissed.

There is thus disagreement about the Brotherhood's current power. When Florence Bergeaud-Blackler began her research, many still argued that the Brotherhood didn't exist at all in France.

It was the early 1990s. Florence was standing outside a mosque in Bordeaux. She was writing her doctoral thesis when she first encountered men from the Muslim Brotherhood. She describes the meeting at the Bordeaux mosque as one of the most decisive moments of her life.

"I said, okay, I'm an anthropology student, and they accepted me because they wanted something else from me. They wanted my conversion, and they wanted me to help them spread their ideology at the university."

A few weeks passed, she recounts, before she realized that the men in the mosque were part of the Brotherhood. No one said it directly, but she understood by following their conversations and religious teachings. The books they used were all written by leading thinkers of the Brotherhood.

"And I understood that all these people were part of the Muslim Brotherhood and had connections with very influential people."

How were you sure it was the Brotherhood back then?

"Because of their references and what they were teaching. And also because by following them to the different places where they had meetings, the Muslim sisters, since I was of course in the women's department, they practiced what their mentors told them to do to practice their religion. So, it wasn't just about praying correctly or going to the mosque. It was much more than that. It was about building a community compatible with Sharia."

Florence, then in her late twenties, went to her thesis supervisor's office. She needed to talk about her experiences. But then, something happened. Something that, according to Florence, marked her career. Her thesis supervisor dismissed her. He didn't want to hear anything about the Muslim Brotherhood. It couldn't be true.

"It doesn't exist in France. And don't say that, otherwise you'll be playing into the hands of the far-right."

This last point is interesting. Because today, there's little doubt that Florence Bergeaud-Blackler's research is being used politically. Marine Le Pen, leader of the nationalist Rassemblement National party, has openly expressed her support for her. And earlier this year, Florence was invited to speak at a nationalist conference where, among others, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was present. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler is controversial. She has no platform in public service media. In conservative newspapers like *Le Figaro* and *Le Point*, her books are praised, while *Le Monde*, the French equivalent of *Politiken*, believes she's seeing ghosts. Yes, there are radical Islamists who dream of a caliphate. And yes, there are probably more in the West. But to say there is an invisible Brotherhood spreading, indoctrinating, and infiltrating all spheres of society is going too far, writes the newspaper.

The thesis is written by Sameh Egyptson, and *Weekendavisen* has written a good article on the subject. But according to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, *Le Monde* is wrong. For her, everything is connected. The Brotherhood has a plan that it is patiently implementing. The main evidence of the plan to undermine the West is a letter. Let's take a closer look.

We head to Switzerland. It's 2001—shortly after September 11. Local police intercept a 14-page note linking the Brotherhood to al-Qaeda. According to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, the document was written 20 years earlier—around the 1980s.

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler writes in her book that the document "seems to have been deliberately written with vague formulations, as if anticipating that it might fall into the wrong hands."

After examining the more than 40-year-old letter, the anthropologist states that another, more recent plan was discovered by German police in 2009. A seemingly four-year plan that "confirms the progress of the initial program." A plan that individuals linked to the Brotherhood managed to keep hidden from German intelligence for years.

I am the reference and consult the end of the book. I want to verify where Florence Bergeaud-Blackler gets the information that Islamists are deceiving intelligence services. There's a link. To my great surprise, it leads to a media outlet called Dehai News. An Eritrean news site with a homepage that looks like something from the 1990s. The site features a commentary by a German social-democratic politician and Islamist blogger. It indeed discusses how Islamists allegedly played cat and mouse with intelligence services, but is this proof? After the story was published, I was informed that the German Islamist blogger's commentary was initially published on a platform called Eeradicalization.com. This platform no longer exists, which is why the Danish translation chose to provide the link to the Eritrean news site, where the blog is available today. It's the same blog, but with two different links appearing in the French and Danish versions of the book.

I ask Florence if organizations can't change their nature. I mention that Christian movements in Denmark have become less fundamentalist and that parties like Enhedslisten have abandoned the revolution.

"I can prove that this argument is wrong. They haven't changed their plan, but they've adapted their method. They don't want to tell us what they want, because we would oppose it. So, they're not stupid. They're smarter than us because they know us better than we know them. And they manage to stay secret by being deceptive, by lying, because in some cases, that's allowed."

Florence repeatedly says that the Brotherhood operates in the shadows. That its members speak in double language. She uses words like cunning, deceit, and manipulation to describe how the Brotherhood infiltrates or indoctrinates other Muslims. She even believes that many Muslims are unaware they are fighting the Brotherhood's battle.

In the book, the author questions individuals who claim to have broken away from the organization. She writes, for example, about one person: "It is not illogical to speculate that he could still be active in the Brotherhood's extremely secret strategy to infiltrate European institutions."

Perhaps it's passages like these in the introduction that lead Florence Bergeaud-Blackler to write that she must "expect to be accused of promoting conspiracy theories."

At the beginning of your book, you write what I would call a kind of disclaimer, where you say it's not a conspiracy theory. Why did you write that?

"I had to do it because when I started explaining—meaning, a few years ago, when I began explaining that these people have a plan, a direction. They have a goal. And when I say that in my lectures, there are always colleagues who tell me that I'm a conspiracy theorist. A conspiracy theorist is someone who wants to use the idea of a conspiracy, who wants to invent a conspiracy, to gain power over people, to scare them. That's not my goal. My intention is to describe a society, a group of people aiming for a goal,

which is God's plan, which is very common in Islam and other religions. And this dimension is essential to understanding their strategy, how they act. And of course, this is mentioned to reject and discredit all my analyses. No, I'm not a conspiracy theorist. I'm not trying to scare people."

Some of your critics might say that the reason they call your book a conspiracy theory is that they see a lack of documentation. You use terms like "they have a secret plan," "a program no one talks about." Isn't that precisely what conspiracies are?

"Conspiracies are created by people who want to influence the population because they have a subversive project. They can't use political means to impose it on you, so they use other means. It's not vague. I show it clearly in my book. People who say it's imprecise, it's because they haven't read my book. And when they urge everyone not to read my book, it's because they want to silence me. They don't want me to say what I've seen," she says.

(Please also see the clarification at the bottom of the article.)

However, it seems that the forces wanting to silence Florence are becoming quieter. Her assumptions about Islamist infiltration are gaining ground. After my interview today, she went to the French Embassy to talk about her research. And here, back at the packed debate event on the rooftop in Copenhagen, the anthropologist is far from being canceled.

There are journalists from several media outlets. A member of Parliament. The president of the Association of Clerks. A member of the National Integration Council. Influential debaters like Eva Gregersen—whom my colleague Mahamad-Bakher Sabah interviewed last month—and Yaqoub Ali, who was one of Denmark's most notorious Islamists. Sofie Danneskiold-Samsøe, the reader at the Copenhagen Professional College, who had met Frederik Vad in an interview for **Politiken** but was later disavowed

"And you also told me that I could read your manuscript, but that I shouldn't share it with anyone. But in fact, I shared it with just one person. And that was Frederik Vad, several months ago. So, I think that's also why he felt safe saying the things you back up in your book."

Applause echoes.

I can't shake off Birgithe Kosovic's words. Imagine if Frederik Vad had indeed read the manuscript of **Broderismen** before writing what he called one of the most important speeches of his life. Imagine if his third acknowledgment is truly based on **Broderismen**.

Of course, I requested an interview with Frederik Vad. But he wrote in a text message that he won't be giving any more interviews before the summer holidays. I also asked if he would simply confirm or deny whether he had indeed received the book several months ago, as Birgithe Kosovic claims. "No comment," he wrote.

But it seems that Frederik Vad was at least aware of the book, long before he spoke at the podium in Parliament. Because on social media, I see that Vad started talking about **Broderismen** in a debate as early as January—just six months before the book's publication and the introduction of the term in Danish. On January 30, 2024, Frederik Vad asked a director of the Institute for Human Rights if they had any recommendations for preventing **Broderisme**. The man from the institute replied that he had never heard of the word before.

A response that prompted Frederik Vad to write:
"I can provide some feedback on **Broderisme**."

By Mathias Mencke

The Proselytizers and the Secret Order

Last year, anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler published her book "Broderismen" [TN: Brotherism] – How Islamists Undermine Western Societies, garnering both recognition and criticism in France.

Soren K.Villemoes

First, the recognition: the book received favorable reviews in "Le Figaro" magazine and was awarded the literary prize of the year by "Revue des Deux Mondes", a magazine that honors high-quality French literary publications dealing with current and relevant subjects. She also received the "Science and Secularism" award, presented at the Paris City Hall.

However, in some academic circles, there was more criticism. The book was criticized for being more polemical than analytical, for suspecting Muslims, and for a number of methodological weaknesses. In summary: for being unscientific and activist. Her former colleague, researcher François Burgat, even called her an "intellectual fraud" on Twitter. However, she also received the support of 172 French scholars and academics in an open letter published in "Le Point".

The reason for this open letter was not only the criticism from some peers, but also the fact that Florence Bergeaud-Blackler later received death threats from Islamists. For some time, she even had to live under police protection in France. Currently, a 36-year-old man is serving a 15-month prison sentence for threatening her, she told *Weekendavisen*, which met her at a hotel in Copenhagen.

30 Years of Stagnation

So, what exactly is written in this book, now translated into Danish, that has caused such outrage in France? In *Broderismen*, Florence Bergeaud-Blackler attempts to describe how the secret and obscure movement of the Muslim Brotherhood, through the infiltration of various social institutions, ambiguity in public debate, the manipulation of various useful idiots, and proselytization among Muslims, seeks to pave the way for their grand vision: an Islamic world order, also known as the Caliphate. A project they have been pursuing since their founding in Egypt in the 1920s—and secretly since the 1950s when they were banned.

Her book is based on studies that began 30 years ago, when she conducted fieldwork among Muslim women in Bordeaux for about a year and a half. She was fortunate enough to be invited into a religious study circle that was otherwise closed. There, she noticed the books the women were studying. They were written by figures such as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi—major names of the Muslim Brotherhood.

"I returned to my university and said I thought I had been introduced to a part of the Brotherhood. But my thesis supervisor and his colleagues all said, 'No, no, that can't be true. It's impossible because the Brotherhood doesn't exist in France. You're new and you're probably mistaken,'" she recalls.

At the time, there was really only one academic book dealing with Islamism in France: *Les banlieues de l'Islam* by Gilles Kepel, published in 1989.

"So I read it with great interest, but my thesis supervisor told me not to read Kepel, or else I might end up playing into the hands of the far-right," says Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, who wasn't particularly interested in politics at the time and considered herself left-wing. "That was how you survived in that world," she adds.

"All of this dates back 30 years, and nothing has changed. We have exactly the same problems today.

And these people still don't want to hear about the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe. If you say the Brotherhood exists, if you document it in black and white, you're attacked. You're disqualified and threatened," she says.

However, she hasn't been completely disqualified in everyone's eyes. The same Gilles Kepel wrote the preface to the French version of her book. In the Danish edition, the preface was written by Islamic studies professor Thomas Hoffmann.

The Secret Plan

According to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, who obtained her PhD in anthropology in 1999, the dominant narrative in French research circles is that Islamists are not motivated by religion. Rather, they are seen as the product of, and a protest against, socio-economic conditions. However, they are not presented in this way in her book. In it, Islamists are ideological actors who draw on the traditions, myths, and narratives of Islam to promote and ultimately achieve a politico-religious utopia. They develop plans and strategies to influence the societies they live in, with the long-term goal of establishing an Islamic state.

When Florence Bergeaud-Blackler uses the term *broderisme*, it's because she does not wish to focus solely on the Muslim Brotherhood and its members, she explains. These members are relatively few and operate mainly in the shadows. She also wants to draw attention to all those they manage to influence.

"The thesis of my book is that we are all influenced by the ideology of the Brotherhood. Even if we are not Muslim. Their ideology has spread across Europe over half a century. It is an ideology, much like communism, that can influence everything, from the most militant to the very institutions of society," she says.

"It's important to distinguish between the few people who are formally members and have been integrated into the secret network, and all those around them who spread their ideology, often without even realizing that it's the Brotherhood's agenda they are following. People who have been shaped by – and whose perception of Islam has been formed by – the Brotherhood often don't even realize it themselves," she says.

One of the most influential ideological figures of the Brotherhood in modern times is the scholar and imam Yusuf al-Qaradawi. When he died at the age of 96 in 2022, he had written more than 120 books on Islam. In 1997, he co-founded the European Council for Fatwa and Research, which has since produced many religious rulings showing the "right" Islamic path for Muslims in Europe. According to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, a central element of this ideology is the concept of Islamophobia, perceived as an ever-present threat against Muslims in the West. She explains Qaradawi's credo as follows: the outside world hates Muslims because Muslims are better than everyone else.

It is this combination of superiority and victimization that, according to Bergeaud-Blackler, makes for a particularly seductive narrative for many Muslims in the West. It contributes to fostering opposition between Muslim minorities and the surrounding secular society. And when these two groups come into conflict, the solution is always for the surrounding society to change to accommodate Islam—never the other way around.

This idea is also supported by another influential Islamist thinker highlighted by Bergeaud-Blackler: the Pakistani Abul A'la al-Maududi (1903–1979).

"He also wrote about 100 books on how to reconcile Islam with a modern, highly technological society. I call him the engineer of the Islamic system. His idea is not that Islam should adapt to modern societies, but that these societies should adapt to Islam. *Broderisme* is a modern ideology, largely created to function in democratic, liberal, and secular societies, especially in Western Europe," she explains.

One way to achieve this is by creating modern solutions for living an "Islamic" life in these secular societies. This can be done, for example, by increasing the availability of halal products and by creating Islamic banks, schools, cultural centers, and mosques. And by demanding tolerance in public institutions for various Islamic symbols and practices such as prayer rooms, veils, the celebration of holidays, and halal food in canteens. By cultivating and demanding acceptance of an increasingly widespread form of Islamic life, Muslims in the West could eventually mature towards the establishment of a future Islamic state. According to Bergeaud-Blackler, the Brotherhood has been particularly successful in this area.

"Religiously, their ideology has become hegemonic in France in my opinion. They have the ability to unite all the diverse Islamic groups in the country, from liberals to Salafists, and they have also established a network of mosques and cultural centers throughout the country."

Infiltration

Another method they use is adopting democratic language, for example by referring to various rights and calling for tolerance and diversity, while actually seeking to establish a theocratic, undemocratic system. Democratic language can be used to get many well-meaning non-Muslims to serve their agenda. The Brotherhood also uses *entrism*—a term referring to a particular strategy once used by communists to infiltrate and influence social-democratic parties from within, steering them in a more revolutionary direction.

"In Egypt, they tried to gain many followers by doing social work among the poor. That doesn't work in European welfare societies, where there are social safety nets. So they have to find other ways to gain influence and spread their ideology. They are willing to use *entrism* in public sectors like the school system, where they can intervene on issues related to religion. This way, they can step in and offer help as 'Muslims' and teach this correct religious doctrine to students. They have people specialized in different areas. Some go into the world of sports, others into universities or political parties," she says.

According to Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, the Brotherhood has been successful with its strategies and has managed to spread its worldview among French Muslims. She reads a few figures from the French public opinion institute IFOP from 2023. 78% of French Muslims consider secularism (the secular state) to be discriminatory towards Muslims. 57% believe that Muslim girls should be exempt from swimming lessons. 50% think that Muslim students should generally be exempt from courses that offend their religion. 75% believe there is only one true religion, and the same percentage also thinks that religion should take precedence if it conflicts with science. According to IFOP, the religiosity of French Muslims has only grown stronger over the years during which they have conducted surveys on the French view of religion.

So the big question remains: what does Florence Bergeaud-Blackler think should be done?

"First and foremost, we need to inform people about their existence and how they operate. The public must know that this group exists. Their methods are legal, so it's not something that can be fought with law enforcement. In the long run, this will lead to violence if we don't talk about them and their methods, and if we don't explain their strategies. Our choices are between information and violence. Because, ultimately, the society they seek to establish is incompatible with democracy," she says.

This is why, in her view, it is crucial to overcome a number of obstacles standing in the way. Particularly the accusations of Islamophobia, used as a tool by anti-racist activists to make subjects like Islamism and the Brotherhood taboo.

"They have been observing us for 40 years, while we, out of arrogance, ignored them. We saw them as ridiculous people, but they were far more Machiavellian than we were. We won't win this way," concludes Florence Bergeaud-Blackler.

By Søren K. Villemoes

The Muslim Brotherhood Are Masters of Deception

The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood has successfully infiltrated European and national institutions. They collect tons of European subsidies by presenting themselves as an effective barrier against racism and the far-right. Anyone who dares to criticize them is accused of "Islamophobia." But what exactly are the Muslim Brotherhood plotting?

By Kleis Jager

French anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler answers this question in an impressive study that has just been published. She debunks the idea that the organization, founded in 1928 in Egypt, has reconciled itself with democracy. Their goal is nothing less than the establishment of a global Islamic society. And to start, self-doubting Europe must become compatible with Sharia law. However, the Brotherhood never says this openly because a wise theocrat knows how to play the game in a modern rule-of-law state.

Bergeaud-Blackler is associated with the prestigious CNRS, the National Centre for Scientific Research, and one of France's foremost Middle East specialists, Gilles Kepel, has written a glowing foreword for her work.

1. What do you argue in this book, **Le Frérisme et ses réseaux** (The Ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and its Networks)?

"I describe how the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood has developed, even beyond the organization itself. **Frérisme**, as I call it, is neither a theological current nor a school of law. It is a movement with a mission. It seeks to inspire all Muslims to work toward the same goal: the caliphate, or more precisely, a global Islamic society.

A central concept for the Brotherhood is **wasatiyya**, which means 'Islam of the middle way,' a notion developed by Yusuf Qaradawi (1926–2022), one of the leading figures of the Muslim Brotherhood. This ideology should be understood as a concrete action plan. They attempt, by drawing on all components of Islam—from the most liberal to the strictest—to realize the ultimate prophecy of Islam's conquest of the world, making it compatible with Sharia law.

Most often, the Brotherhood operates within the bounds of the law, but sometimes they rely on jihadists when necessary: the end justifies the means."

2. After the beheading of Samuel Paty in October 2020, Amsterdam Imam Yassin Elforkani advocated for a blasphemy law in the Netherlands. Is the ban on insulting the Prophet an end that justifies the means?

"Indeed, this is a very good example of the Brotherhood's ambivalence toward violence. To protect society from jihadists, blasphemy should be criminalized. According to this imam, murder will stop only if everyone remains silent first. He has absolutely no understanding of the fundamental value of freedom of expression in a democracy."

3. In your view, the Muslim Brotherhood is very present in European institutions. How did they conquer Brussels and Strasbourg?



Kamerlid Kauthar Bouchallikht van GroenLinks met haar fractievoorzitter Jesse Klaver, 1 april 2021. Bouchallikht was vice-voorzitter van Femiso. 'Alles ademt Moslimbroederschap'. (Beeld: Peter Hiltz/ANP/Hollandse Hoogte)

"The Muslim Brotherhood are not great theologians, but they are excellent strategists. They quickly understood the importance of institutions like the European Union and the Council of Europe—organizations that are politically weak but culturally and financially powerful.

Moreover, the Brotherhood lacked space to develop politically, and culturally, they faced competition from mosques controlled by countries of origin, what is known as consular Islam. That is why, in the beginning, they focused their energy on associations, universities, schools, businesses, and also on Europe.

In Brussels, they seize every opportunity to sit on commissions to increase their influence on European soft power. They always present themselves as the ideal candidates to fight against racism, discrimination, radicalism, or the far-right, thereby securing millions of euros from European taxpayers.

They have been very successful in popularizing the concept of Islamophobia. Europeans have learned to stay silent and look away to avoid offending anyone. Islamophobia has achieved the same status as anti-Semitism at the level of the United Nations and the European Union.

Think also of the famous campaign for the hijab by the Council of Europe. This campaign, launched by the anti-discrimination and inclusion division, featured posters showing portraits of women, with one half wearing a hijab and the other half without. The hijab was associated with the words 'beauty,' 'freedom,' and 'joy.'

Anyone who protested against this campaign, like the French government, was naturally accused of Islamophobia and far-right extremism.

This allows them, whenever they encounter resistance, like when France protested the European hijab campaign, to cry out loudly, 'Islamophobia!'

All this works so well because European institutions are eager to collaborate with moderate Muslims, but they are unable to define what 'moderate' means. Brussels officials also have no idea who the people presenting themselves as moderates really are. So, they take them at their word."

4. In your view, the Muslim Brotherhood has dominated all Islamic trends since the late 1980s.

"Absolutely, to see this, one only needs to visit the annual congress of 'Musulmans de France,' formerly known as the UOIF (Union of Islamic Organizations in France), the federation created in 1983 by the Muslim Brotherhood. This three-day event always takes place at the old terminal of Le Bourget, near Paris. Tens of thousands of faithful attend.

You can attend conferences on various political and religious topics, and in the hangars, you can join workshops on food, education, and healing through prayer. At the stands for Palestine or Syria, you will meet Salafists and jihadists with long beards and military pants. And a bit further, in the bookstore stands, you will find intellectuals with their neatly trimmed beards.

In short, everyone is there. Only the Brotherhood is capable of bringing all these people together. You will never see a Muslim Brother preaching at the Great Mosque of Paris (which is controlled by Algeria), but the rector of this mosque is always present at Le Bourget. The Brotherhood is a kind of godfather who has made it clear to everyone: do not cause problems with us, and we will support you when you need us. Nothing is possible without their consent."

5. Why do the Muslim Brotherhood always deny being part of the Brotherhood?

"The Brotherhood's success lies in its mystery, especially in an environment like ours, where transparency is the rule, and people expect you to say what you are doing or intend to do. As theocrats, they have no regard for this convention. For them, democracy is just a means to an end.

Take, for example, the 1990 'Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.' With this declaration..."

"The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), at the proposal of the Muslim Brotherhood, formulated human rights based on Sharia law. Note the wording: the term 'man' in 'human rights in Islam' includes everyone, even non-Muslims. This highlights that Islamic society is a supremacist project where a non-Muslim can only exist if they respect the legal system and, as a dhimmi, pay a special tax."

6. In what way is the Muslim Brotherhood dangerous? Surely we don't need to fear a global caliphate?

"Theocracy is indeed the long-term goal. But in the meantime, they seek to destabilize us by attacking freedom of expression and creating a climate of fear and guilt—you're an Islamophobe!—that prevails. This has a very concrete impact because we do not form a united front to push back against this attack. The Brotherhood is very skilled at concealing their intentions; they are masters of deception. They do this, for example, by seeking temporary allies like LGBTQI groups, who hold completely different values. In the Brotherhood's plans, it is literally written that it is permissible to temporarily ally with infidels if it is beneficial in the long run.

The result of all this is deeply saddening. Since the assassination of Samuel Paty, teachers are afraid of saying something wrong, and some prefer not to address certain topics anymore. The Brotherhood's influence is growing, imposing its norms on us, and preventing us from teaching our values. It's as simple and terrible as that."

"I'm not familiar with his book, but it seems Wagemakers aligns with the position of Olivier Roy (a well-known political scientist and specialist in Islam).

*Roy also claims that Islamism is doomed to fail, and that they abandon their supremacist ambitions once they discover the virtues of democracy. This is very naive. Erdogan, democratically elected, has shown that this theory is absurd, as Turkish expansionism has a clearly 'caliphate' nature. The soothing rhetoric currently plays an important role in the Muslim Brotherhood's strategy to lull their adversaries to sleep.

I can also add that Arabic-speaking Middle East specialists do not necessarily have the best perspective on the Brotherhood's activities in Europe and the rest of the world, where I focus my research."

8. The Muslim Brotherhood often has prominent women among them. Is this a deliberate choice?

"That's right, educated women wearing the hijab have a much better image than men. They are seen as educated and peaceful, as women working hard for their emancipation. That's why men now prefer to stay in the background in photos, letting women take the front stage. The men accept this because they know it's good for the cause."

9. Dutch MP from the GroenLinks party, Kauthar Bouchallikht, was vice president of Femysa, the youth branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Bouchallikht claims she never noticed any involvement of the Muslim Brotherhood in Femysa. How credible is that?

"As I said, deception and concealment are part of their strategy. Deception is allowed if it serves the plan. In my book, I dedicate several pages to Femysa, showing that there is no doubt about their origins: their language, methods, and networks all reek of the Muslim Brotherhood.

I also emphasize that Femysa's activities are legal, and deception is obviously not prohibited. It is up to our institutions not to be manipulated. We should be smarter than the Brotherhood, but sadly, we are not."

10. For Bouchallikht, issues like racism, LGBTQI exclusion, climate change, and feminism are closely linked. How can such a progressive agenda be compatible with a conservative religion like Islam? Can we speak of 'Islamism-wokism'?

"The connection between climate policy, social justice, and human rights forms the core of Femysa's new discourse. It's a form of greenwashing. Parties like GroenLinks are very attractive to the Brotherhood as 'cuckoo parties': they lay their eggs in the nests of progressive organizations to have others hatch them. Exactly like the cuckoo bird. The Brotherhood finds woke themes interesting because they weaken the West: woke ideology fuels divisions. Intellectually, it's very poor, but wokeism is a formidable weapon against an enemy that doubts itself.

I find the term 'Islamism-wokism' unfortunate because it suggests a fusion, an impossible synthesis. Islamism merely exploits woke ideology.

For example, intersectional feminism, the woke version of feminism, paved the way for 'Islamic feminism.' It's an absurd notion, but it is now an excellent way to secure grants and university positions.

Similarly, the fight against racism offers the opportunity to institutionalize Islamophobia. And so-called decolonial thought—the idea that countries like the Netherlands and France are constantly oppressing minority people of color—provides many opportunities to organize anti-Western campaigns.

The Brotherhood has time, and they can always discard their useful idiots when they are no longer needed. All of this is written in texts drafted in Arabic, then popularized in the Islamic world in English and Urdu. I'm not making any of this up."

By Kleis Jager

Alert on Islamism in Europe: A Matter of Time

While a French professor claims that Islamists are working to make European democracies "compatible with Sharia," a Norwegian professor expresses disagreement. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, who has conducted research on Islamism for over 30 years, is now facing death threats. She is employed at the CNRS in Paris.

By Birgit Opheim

Her book, **Brorskapet. Slik undergraver islamister vestlige samfunn** [TN: *Brotherism*], was released last January. Since then, she has received numerous death threats and now lives under the protection of the French police.

Paving the Way for the Caliphate

In her book, Bergeaud-Blackler describes how "the secret movement" seeks to pave the way for their ultimate vision: an Islamist world order, also known as the Caliphate. This is to be achieved by infiltrating various social institutions, speaking ambiguously in public debates, manipulating "various useful idiots," and proselytizing among Muslims.

A Threat

In a 13-minute lecture organized by National Conservatism and available on YouTube, she explains why this form of Islam is a threat. Bergeaud-Blackler clarifies that Islamism in Europe does not use physical violence. Instead, it attacks the rules, laws, and values of European societies with the aim of altering and undermining them from within over time. She claims that the goal of the Muslim Brotherhood has never changed since the organization's creation in 1928; it has always been to rebuild the Caliphate.

Soft Pressure and Infiltration

The method varies depending on geography, the professor continues. In Muslim-majority countries, violence or political participation may be relevant. In Europe, what is called "soft power pressure and infiltrationism" is used—gentle pressure and infiltration. Bergeaud-Blackler says that one goal in Europe is to create an elite that could hold influence. Muslims in Europe are not to assimilate but rather to become true ambassadors of Islam. European cultures must become accustomed to fundamentalist Islam, which takes the Quran literally. Sharia, which is traditional Islamic law, must not be adapted to changing human values and norms, "as it is the absolute standard." "The Muslim Brotherhood has found Europe to be a particularly hospitable and attractive place," the researcher comments.

According to her, Europe could become a model for the Muslim Brotherhood.

"Europe is secularized and de-Christianized and needs a new moral and spiritual framework that Islam can provide.



The Muslim Brotherhood views European democracies as weak and easily influenced," she adds. The first thing that needs to happen is for them to become what she calls "Sharia-compatible."

"They believe that European societies will submit to Islam once they understand and experience that it is the best system. Of course, this won't happen tomorrow, but one day it will, and it's only a matter of time," Bergeaud-Blackler states in her speech.

Incompatible with Democracy

The researcher points out that becoming a member of the Muslim Brotherhood is not a personal choice. Football stars, singers, bank directors, and professors are all influencers who will spread the Muslim Brotherhood throughout various sectors of society, the professor believes.

She says that women must give birth to children and wear the veil but must also be part of the professional world to raise educated children. She notes that the Muslim Brotherhood's project is incompatible with democracy.

"They are building what they call 'an Islamization of knowledge,' which consists of taking Western ideas and critical thinking and turning them against the West itself."

Funding Research Against Islamophobia

One of the tools used is the fight against Islamophobia and racism. She describes this as a massive re-education effort aimed at, among other things, the media.

"The Council of Europe and the European Commission grant substantial sums to academic research on Islamophobia and to programs across Europe that fight racism," Bergeaud-Blackler notes. "This is seen as promoting integration and inclusion," she says. "But this comes at the expense of research on Islamism, which is considered taboo."

Critical research on Islamism is accused of being racist, far-right, and is sometimes threatened or deprived of resources, explains Florence Bergeaud-Blackler. She issues an appeal:

"We need support for this research, or it will simply disappear," she says.

Recognition and Criticism

In France, there have been a series of bloody attacks carried out by violent Muslims, such as the attack on the satirical magazine **Charlie Hebdo** (2015), the Bataclan attack the same year, and the beheading of teacher Samuel Paty (2020). Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has received both recognition and criticism for her book in her country, writes Søren K. Villemoes in the Danish newspaper **Weekend-avisen**: **Le Figaro** gave it positive reviews, but she was also criticized for suspicion towards Muslims, lack of scientific rigor, and activism.

In Denmark, where many now talk about "Swedish conditions" due to gang activity and Muslim infiltration of social institutions, the book was very well-received after its release this summer. "Critics praise it, readers are eager to buy it, and weeks after its release, the book is still widely debated," writes Waleed Safi, also in **Weekendavisen**.

No Evidence of Secret Organizations

Bjørn Olav Utvik, a professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oslo, has read parts of Bergeaud-Blackler's book and describes it as academically weak.

"She constructs an image that there is a plan to conquer the entire world, including Europe, and create a caliphate. When one hears 'plan,' one generally thinks that someone is planning and that there is a center coordinating and leading the project."

Utvik dismisses the French researcher's depiction of secret organizations.

"There is no evidence that such a thing exists," he says. He believes the researcher takes any expression of promoting something related to Islam as part of a centralized plan. As an example, Utvik mentions that Muslims are encouraged to pray and fast during Ramadan, for women to wear the hijab, and to raise funds to build mosques.

Utvik refers to the **Great Commission** in Christianity and says it's not considered abnormal for those who are convinced and know the path to salvation to want to convince others.

People Must Choose Their Leaders

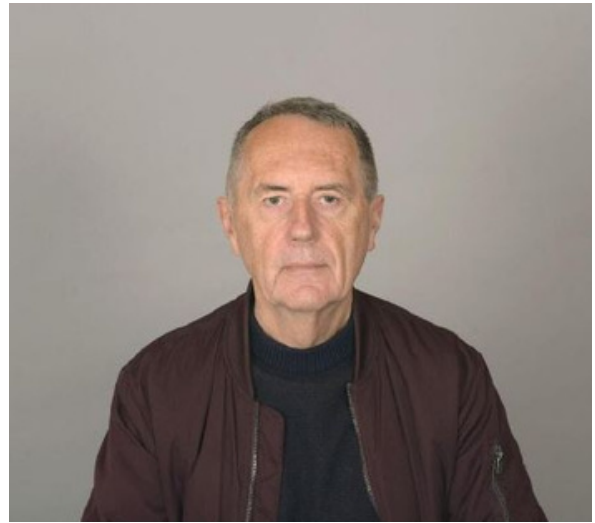
[BO for Dagen]: But isn't Bergeaud-Blackler's starting point that Islamism and the Muslim Brotherhood's project are incompatible with democracy?

"The Muslim Brotherhood has clearly stated for at least 40 years that if one wants governance according to Islamic principles, it must be democratic. The people must choose their leaders. There are others, like ISIS, who think differently."

[BO for Dagen]: Here, you describe the Muslim Brotherhood almost as a democratic structure?

"Yes, I've spent a lot of time in Egypt and have met many Muslim Brothers, their opponents, and political competitors. I've read their programs, followed their activities, and had discussions with them. They have sought to promote their cause politically by participating in elections."

Utvik says that despite the fact that states in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria control almost everything and have not allowed civil society to develop, the Muslim Brotherhood has managed to build strong organizations with deep roots among the people. "Not Anti-Democratic in Principle"



Bjørn Olav Utvik is a professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oslo.

"The question of Sharia and the desire for countries to follow Islamic law is a long-standing debate," says Utvik, who has written a book on Islamism. He raises two key points regarding democracy: The first is who should pass the laws. If Islamic clergy seize power, that's not democratic, but the Muslim Brotherhood wants to pass laws in accordance with their interpretation of Sharia if they gain a majority in parliament. As long as people have the chance to choose differently in the next election, it's not anti-democratic in principle."

The second point is how Sharia is interpreted. "The Muslim Brotherhood is not the most conservative, but they cover a wide spectrum. They were a huge organization before being repressed in Egypt."

Extensive Research on Islamism

The professor from the University of Oslo also disagrees with Bergeaud-Blackler's claim that many resources are dedicated to fighting Islamophobia and racism at the expense of research on Islamism.

"No, there has been a lot of research on Islamism in France, but I think she doesn't like that research. Except for Gilles Kepel, who wrote the preface to the French edition of her book. He's a researcher on Islamism and supports her."

Claims Must Be Critically Assessed

Shoaib Sultan, who currently works as a communications advisor at Statkraft and has previously worked for the Anti-Racist Center and as Secretary General of the Islamic Council of Norway, emphasizes that it's important to protect freedom of expression and academic freedom and states that the death threats against Florence Bergeaud-Blackler are unacceptable.

"At the same time, we must critically assess her claims, especially when they verge on Islamophobia," he writes in an email to **Dagen**. Sultan believes that claims about Muslims infiltrating social institutions and using ambiguous language create distrust and fear towards Muslims in general.



Shoaib Sultan is a politician from the Green Party (MDG), a writer, and an employee of Statkraft.

"Suspecting Muslims who want political change undermines democracy. In a democracy, all citizens have the right to participate in political processes and work for changes they believe in. Muslims participate in social life like other citizens and contribute to the economy, culture, and well-being of society. Suggesting that their participation hides an agenda is unreasonable and harmful to social cohesion and trust."

Viewing Muslims Through a Security Lens

Sultan is concerned about Bergeaud-Blackler's criticism of research on Islamophobia and racism. He states that research on Islamism has especially developed after September 11, 2001, in a climate of fear and suspicion towards Muslims.

"Bergeaud-Blackler seems to want to maintain this climate, which contributes to division and misunderstanding."

The research climate following the terrorist attacks in the U.S. 23 years ago has often been characterized by a tendency to view Islam and Muslims through a security lens, which has contributed to generalizations and prejudice, Sultan argues.

"By maintaining a climate of fear and suspicion, we risk undermining the very liberal democratic values we seek to protect. Generalizations and suspicion do not contribute to security but rather increase polarization and distrust in society," says Shoaib Sultan.

One Nation: Ummah

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler stands by her positions, and in France, authorities have frozen 25 million euros of Muslim Brotherhood funds in the country to limit the group's activities.

As early as 2019, French intelligence services reported that around 50,000 members of the Muslim Brotherhood, designated as terrorists by Egypt, live in France.

"The Muslim Brotherhood doesn't want any Muslim to escape their control. You can be whatever you are as a Muslim, whether liberal or Sufi. But you must act for the Islamic community, regardless of your beliefs, regardless of your personal inclinations."

She specifies that the Muslim Brotherhood opposes any state structure.

"For them, there is only one nation: the Ummah, the 'Islamic nation.'"

By Birgit Opheim

Research on Islamism: In the Crosshairs of the Muslim Brotherhood

Since her study on the Muslim Brotherhood network, French anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has been under police protection. She receives no support from her university or colleagues

By Von Jürg Altwegg



Death threats and defamation lawsuits abound. A storm of online hate, supported by various literary reviews, has been unleashed by a book published in January. Its author is the renowned anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, who has been studying the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood for three decades. She coined the term "Frérisme" [TN : 'brotherism'] to describe the Brotherhood's ideology, accusing it of "religious supremacism." This ideology unites all branches of Islam and aims to conquer the non-Islamic world. Its goal is to establish a theocracy incompatible with democracy, "even if it takes centuries." Her book *Le frérisme et ses réseaux* (published by Odile Jacob) comes with a foreword by Gilles Kepel, a leading French expert on Islam, who links "Frérisme" to the concept of "atmospheric jihad" from his bestselling work.

Florence Bergeaud-Blackler is now under police protection. Her book has been compared to the anti-Semitic classic *La France juive* by Edouard Drumont. In the online magazine *Orient XXI*, Rafik Chekkat accuses her of "Islamophobia" and promoting an "atmosphere of conspiracy," equating "Frérisme" with new forms of anti-Semitism. "I receive death threats weekly," scoffs François Burgat, a retired professor from the French state research institute CNRS, whom Bergeaud-Blackler criticizes for his connections to Qatar and Tariq Ramadan. She portrays him as a key figure in the Muslim Brotherhood's influence network.

Newspapers widely quote Chekkat and Burgat, debating the "scientific validity" of the anthropologist's work. However, the intellectuals who defend Bergeaud-Blackler's credibility, such as Élisabeth Badinter and Boualem Sansal, are not given the same platform. Hundreds of scientists have signed their petition in solidarity with the threatened researcher.

Feminism and Islamism

Bergeaud-Blackler has been criticized for lacking "field research." *Libération* points out that she is "neither a historian, political scientist, nor sociologist," yet she dares to equate "Frérisme" with "the globalization of Islam" and compare it to "the great totalitarian systems of Nazism and Communism." *Le Monde* titled its review of her book "Vulgarization and Activism," while another article was called "The Late Fame of a Researcher with an Unconventional Career."

Bergeaud-Blackler was originally a computer scientist in the aviation industry before pursuing a second career in anthropology. She has been studying Islam since the first headscarf controversies in France. "I was young, 25 years old," she told the F.A.Z. "I found the stance of young women who defended the headscarf as a symbol of their freedom rather unfeminist. That intrigued me and I wanted to study it academically."

For a year, she traveled and spoke with these women, becoming involved in their religious circles. Behind their discourse, she discovered the Muslim Brotherhood and resisted their attempts to intellectually co-opt her, witnessing their sectarian side. She saw how they indoctrinated young people with shocking images and stories from Israel to mobilize them in support of Palestinians. Today, more than half of French Muslims oppose the headscarf ban, which was only enshrined in law after systematic provocations. Bergeaud-Blackler attributes the mutation of feminism into an Islam-compatible "neo-feminism" to the Brotherhood's strategy.

For the past decade, she has been employed at the state research institute CNRS. During this time, she wrote two books about the "halal business," which she describes as a "modern invention." She details how the halal standard has expanded from meat to virtually all consumer products and services, thanks to an "alliance between capitalism and Frérisme." She cites companies like Nike, Adidas, and other international brands as examples.

Islamism versus Secularism

The "Halal Way of Life" they promote aligns with the "secret plan" of the Muslim Brotherhood. The French intelligence service estimates there are fifty thousand members. Bergeaud-Blackler believes the actual number is much lower, but none will ever admit to being members. She is aware this may sound like a conspiracy theory, yet the undeniable pieces of the puzzle paint a clear and disturbing picture.

After the Sorbonne canceled an event featuring her, she was received by Interior Minister Gérard Darmanin. The "Law Against Separatism" passed two years ago grants the police new powers to monitor violent groups.

"Thanks to this law, instigators and agitators were also punished after the murder of Samuel Paty," says Bergeaud-Blackler. A group dedicated to "combating Islamophobia" was dissolved. She was disappointed by the response of the Minister of Research, Sylvie Retailleau, who attended the meeting and seemed to consider cancellations and postponements a new norm. "This should not happen," she said.

Free research is in danger. Projects critical of Islamism receive little funding, and veterinarians took an interest in her halal research. While her employer covers her legal fees, "they haven't defended me against the attacks." Even her colleagues have not supported her. It was only after weeks of threats that the CNRS spoke out against the death threats.

When the anthropologist traveled to Berlin, a German police officer replaced her French protector. "Only a few of us researchers still critically study Islam. It has more to do with the politicization of the topic than the threats themselves," she says. Her colleagues abroad wish they had a tool like France's anti-separatism law. "France is both mocked and praised for its stance against Islamism. It is France's responsibility to lead this fight, especially since Muslims' hatred toward France is fueled by its secularism."

Religious Supremacism

Bergeaud-Blackler argues that this politicization also shapes EU research policy, which is "obsessed with political correctness" and avoids offending any minority. She mentions a project that required parallel research into Muslim radicalization and far-right extremism.

Until now, debates on political Islam have followed a productive demarcation line: Gilles Kepel's observation of "Islamic radicalization" versus Olivier Roy's theory of the "Islamization of radicalism." Radicalism has long been a constant in politics. After the June riots, one might hypothesize—though only as a wish—that the rioters, lacking any political perspective, may have taken a step toward integration by adopting French rebellion and radicalism. This was true of earlier immigrant generations. But since the migration from the Maghreb following the Algerian War, this mechanism no longer works.

By Von Jürg Altwegg