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Majority *versus* Minority: 'Governmentality' and Muslims in Sweden

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Abstract: This article deals with the Muslim community in Sweden in view of the majority–minority dynamics with focus on how values, attitudes, behaviors, and practices of the Swedish majority influence Muslim minority communities and how majority society's approach to Muslims and Islam influences both the relationship Muslims have with non-Muslims and the understandings that Muslims have of Islam.

Keywords: 'clash of civilizations'; global conflict; 'Swedish values'; equal opportunities; media; Scandinavian populist parties; Islamic changes

1. Introduction

The 'clash of civilizations' thesis was much debated in the 1990s. Promoters of the thesis regarded the 9/11 attacks as a confirmation of its truth. Whether intended by Huntington or not, the thesis came, particularly after the 9/11 attacks, to be a depiction of the struggle between 'the Islamic' world and 'the Western secularized' world. It is thus pertinent to ask whether this Al-Qaida attack on US economic and political symbols of power was really a clash between these two 'civilizations'? It seems more plausible to analyze this violent event in view of other factors. First, there is the globalization of the media which boomed in the 1990s, particularly with the spread of satellite television. Until 1996, the Arab world had strict national censorship for the distribution of news. With the launching of the satellite Arab-medium TV-channel Al-Jazeera, most Arab-speaking families got access to news from all over the world as well as to critical political analyses of their own political leadership and of the relation between 'the West' and 'the Rest'. It seems thus that political rather than civilizational factors better explain 9/11 and its aftermath.

A second political factor in the conflict between 'Muslim regions' and the 'secularized West', at least until the Arab uprising of 2011, was the US and European support for dictators in the Arab world, including Hosni Mubarak, Saddam Hussein, Ben Ali, and Muammar Gaddafi. This support of the Arab elite left the political opposition in a state of powerlessness, creating a notion of Muslims as a global powerless minority *versus* the 'West' as a global powerful majority.

A third important factor, cultural rather than political was and is the globalization of the 'Western' entertainment culture. As it is the 'low culture' rather than the European classical culture which is spread all over the world, the Muslim consumers in particular have the impression of a 'Western' degenerating culture with sex and violence as the main ingredients. With the growth of satellite television and the Internet in Muslim regions, the entertainment industry has taken a hold of Muslim youth. Islamist resistance to 'Western cultural imperialism' is incorporated into a general political resistance against a global powerful majority, 'the West'.

The 'clash of civilizations' thesis in terms of the 'Islamic' *versus* the 'Western secularized' world seems to be less a clash between two big civilizations and more a conflict between groups identifying themselves with one or the other of these two 'civilizations' who tend to fight against 'the others' either orally or by physical violence. This global conflict has saturated the public debate in many receiving countries, and Muslims have to a great extent become 'the immigrants'. To link the global struggle to the relationship between majority societies in the West and the Muslim immigrant minorities, it is important to regard the situation in each country with Muslim immigrants within a pattern of a dynamic interaction between majority and minorities.

2. Case-Study: Sweden

As shown above, it is important to look at various aspects of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in order to understand its complex dynamics. Within nation states in today's receiving countries it is important to analyze religion (or anti-religion), ethnicity, majority *versus* minority aspects, *etc*, in order to estimate the relevance of Huntington's conflict theory in each nation state. This study will focus on one aspect of this complex issue, namely the majority-minority dynamics. How do the values, attitudes, behaviors, and practices of the majority influence minority communities in a given country? This article takes Sweden as a case study in order to examine how majority society's approach to Muslims and Islam influences both the relationship Muslims have with non-Muslims and the understandings that Muslims have of Islam. The main presupposition of this study is that the dynamics between the majority non-Muslim population and Muslim minorities shape behaviors, attitudes, and social and religious developments within Muslim communities.[1]

Although Sweden is the main case study, it is necessary to make some comparisons between the Swedish situation and the other Scandinavian countries, Norway and Denmark, in order to anticipate the consequences of the particular majority-minority dynamics in Sweden. Politically speaking, the three Scandinavian countries share both common political characteristics and similar public welfare service systems. But as the discussion below will indicate, these similarities do not necessarily mean that the three countries share the same political climate and value system.

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[1] The majority-minority dynamics influence even developments in the majority population. However, this perspective is outside the scope of the present study.

Two different topics will be discussed in order to look at how the relationship between the majority non-Muslim population and Muslim minority communities influences the latter's behavior: (1) the coverage of immigrants in the media; (2) the Swedish populist party, the Sweden Democrats, and its political role. There will also be a discussion of Islamic developments in Sweden in view of the Muslim minorities' intentional and unintentional responses to majority discourses.

The empirical material in this study is mainly based on extensive fieldworks with interviews and observations in Muslim communities mainly in Sweden, but also in Norway and in Denmark, from the 1990s onwards [1–4].

3. Sweden as a Receiving Country

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sweden was mainly a sending country [5]. From the 1930s onwards, however, Sweden became a receiving country, with the Turkish-speaking Tartars from Finland and Estonia settling in Sweden as the first Muslim community. The Tartars established the first Islamic congregation in 1948 ([6], p. 14). Despite the increased immigration beginning in the 1940s, including the first wave of guest workers from Southern Europe, Turkey, Morocco, and Pakistan, the Swedish authorities did not have a particular immigration policy [7]. It was not until the government restricted the immigration in the mid-1970s that a particular attitude towards immigrants was launched, characterized by the words 'equality' (jämställdhet), 'freedom of choice' (valfrihet), and 'partnership' (samverkan) [8]. These buzzwords must be understood within the framework of the Human Rights declaration and of the 1966 International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPP), ratified by Sweden in 1971. The latter states every people have the right to 'self-determination' by freely determining "their political status" and freely pursuing "their economic, social and cultural development" (Article 1). Although these rights are mainly linked to territorial majorities, Article 27 introduces the rights of minorities "to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language", thus indicating minority rights even in political and social development. This Swedish approach to immigrants in 1974 can be regarded as a forerunner to the concept of 'multiculturalism' ('mångkulturalism') and the 'multicultural society' (Det mångkulturella samhället), introduced in Sweden in the early 1990s ([3], p. 43).

The number of Muslims living in Sweden today is difficult to determine, primarily because religious affiliation is not measured in the census. A general estimation is that in 2010 there were around 400,000 Muslims in Sweden, constituting approximately 4.5 per cent of the total population [9]. A SST (The Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities) statistic from 2011 gives the number of 110,000 Muslims registered in Muslim congregations [10].[2]

4. 'Swedish Values'

In Swedish public discourse, lofty ideals of democracy, individual rights, tolerance, and equal opportunities across racial, sexual, religious, gender, and age borders, are frequently promoted. In

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[2] Even this number is not reliable as some individuals might be members of more than one organization. Moreover, this number includes only those congregations registered with a Muslim National Organization. It is important to note that for instance the big mosque in Malmö, The Islamic Centre, is independent and its members are not included in the SST Statistic.

order to offer a brief overview of Swedish society, two prominent social traits, individualization and equal opportunities, will be discussed. Moreover, the notion of 'homogeneity', an underlying and implicit trait in both official policy and public space, will be examined.

4.1. Individualization

The Swedish individualistic approach is likely the result of the historically strong bond between the monarchy and the peasants, a bond shaped by the general absence of feudalism in Sweden [11]. The Social Democratic policy of the People's Home (*Folkhemmet*) [12], which first arose in the interwar period, might be a product of this historical trait, but whatever the case, this social model reinforced the individual trait on behalf of family bonds. Berggren and Trägårdh claim that, viewed globally, Sweden is the country where the individualization process has developed the most [13]. They argue that resources in Sweden are oriented towards the individual citizen rather than the family or organizations. Swedish society, they maintain, is based on "a social contract offering the individuals maximal liberation with minimal moral consequences" ([13], p. 74). This individualism is in contrast to the collectivistic social pattern common in many of the homelands of Sweden's Muslim immigrants, where the family, rather than the individual, tends to be the social core.

4.2. Homogeneity

An important aspect in the relation between Scandinavian majority society and Muslim communities is the general concept of 'equality', also one of the buzzwords in the Swedish approach to immigration in the 1970s. The concept is linked to a perception that, prior to the waves of immigration arising in the mid-twentieth century, Sweden was a strictly homogeneous society. There is a claim for conformity (this goes also for the two other Scandinavian countries) in which differences in views and appearances are regarded as problematic, and the tendency is to homogenize the Swedish majority as well as minorities through "the discursive praxis of equality" ([1]; [14], p. 186). The claim for homogeneity has to be regarded as one of the reasons of the segregated urban spaces. In immigrant-dense areas, schools have few and in some cases no 'ethnic' Swedish pupils, and meeting places between the majority and Muslim minorities are few. It is mainly through the media that various groups obtain information about each other. Due to the way that media reports often focus on that which is different and problematic as opposed to what is familiar and recognizable, the 'we' *vs*. 'them' narrative becomes reinforced in the Swedish majority as well as in Muslim minority communities.

According to Sander, Sweden has been built on the notion of "one nation, one people, one religion" ([15], p. 272). He links the segregation of Muslims in Sweden to this idea of "a common culture and religion, including common manners, norms and value system, as well as a common way of thinking in general" ([15], p. 273). One important trait in this homogenization of culture is discussed by Ehn and Löfgren. In their discussion of how elites maintain cultural hegemony, they refer to the opposing strategies of either antagonizing subcultures or incorporating cultural expressions of various sub-cultures in society [16]. In Sweden, it seems probable that the authorities, in a homogenizing manner, have largely chosen the strategy of incorporating subcultures. One example is feminism. The American scholar Joyce Gelb claims Sweden to be a country of "feminism without feminists" thus indicating an incorporation of sub-cultures into governmental policy [17]. Gelb sees

this phenomenon as a problem-solving strategy in order to avoid significant conflict between the state and civil society in general, and she concludes that due to this strategy, feminist theory has not had a real impact in Sweden. It is interesting to look at her statement in view of how male Social Democratic leaders have proclaimed that they are feminists,[3] even though they have failed to fight strongly for issues such as equal salary for equal jobs, a crucial claim within feminism. A similar trend can be seen on environmental issues, where more or less all political parties have incorporated parts of the environmental program of the Environmental Party (Miljöpartiet) [19]. Following Gelb, Ehn, and Löfgren, Swedish patterns of conflict resolution have incorporated parts of conflicting ideologies rather than the whole.

This claim for homogeneity might be one reason—despite the Swedish individualistic approach—that the pattern for incorporation of new groups in society is built on a corporatist membership model [20].[4] Soysal describes this model as that corporate groups, "defined by occupational, ethnic, religious, or gender identity—are emphasized as the source of action and authority" ([20], p. 37). Thus the collective identities of immigrants are stressed and through such multicultural policy the community becomes the locus for agency.

4.3. Equal Opportunities

The value of equal opportunities, particularly equal gender opportunities, has a strong hold on Swedish society.[5] The equal gender legislation of the late 1970s was to a great extent linked to immigration. Instead of importing foreign labor, women in general should take a more prominent role in society [23]. Already in 1971, the tax legislation had changed from joint taxation to separate taxation for married couples. This new legislation created a need for many families to have more than one salary. From a feminist perspective, this new legislation empowered women, enabling them to enter the labor market and to leave the domestic sphere where they had been subordinated to and economically dependent on their husbands.

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[3] The Social Democratic Prime Minister at that time, Göran Persson, proclaimed that he was a feminist in January 2002, and the present Social Democratic opposition leader , Stefan Löfven stated that "I am a convinced feminist" in his inauguration speech in January 2012 [18].

[4] This corporatist model has to be regarded in view of the historical growth of 'interest groups' (intresseorganisationer) in Scandinavian countries.

[5] It is important to note that at least up until 2002 women have been most actively involved at the lower levels of society. The Grant Thornton Report from 2002 indicates that Norway, Denmark, and Sweden have a quite low percentage of women in management or on boards of directors. Ireland topped the list with at least one woman on 72% of its boards of directors. Norway had only 52%; Sweden, 51%; and Denmark, 47%. The low scores of the Scandinavian countries are regarded as the result of the family pattern in Scandinavia, with frequent divorces, working grandparents, and few families with domestic helpers. In Ireland, divorces have been less common, most grandparents are at home helping with childcare, and domestic helpers are common [21]. See [22] for the development of equal opportunity in Swedish legislation.

5. 'Governmentality'

Up to the end of the 20th century, the claim for homogeneity in Sweden has been handled both through a united school system and through a united public space. The state's monopoly on television[6] as well as the strict regulations for establishing private schools made television and the public school system the means for the particular implicit power system which can be understood in the Foucaultian concept of 'governmental rationality' or 'governmentality' [25]; through socializing all citizens into particular norms and modes of action, the citizen's internalized self-governess or self-discipline[7] creates a fruitful soil for a homogenous society. According to Foucault, the state's responsiveness to its 'population' (through bio-politics) is the basis for the state's prosperity, and "the aim of the modern art of government, viz., to develop those elements of individual lives in such a way that their development also fosters the strength of the state" ([26], pp. 251–52; [27], p. 10). Moreover, Foucault speaks in terms of

> [T]he tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public *versus* the private, and so on; thus the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality ([25], p. 103).

The two examples above of how Swedish prime ministers incorporate parts of feminist and environmentalist thought and practice, but not feminism or environmentalism *in toto*, can illustrate Swedish responsiveness to the 'population' and the general 'tactics of governmentality'.

From the late twentieth century, however, three main interlinked factors have changed. First, the increase of immigrants (read: Muslims) have transformed the cultural setting in Sweden. Despite the perception of homogeneity, Sweden has in fact not been homogenous in the sense that there have always existed cultural differences in terms of north/south, west/east, rural/urban, high-educated/ low-educated, *etc*. However, the new cultural constellation, with persons with different appearances (clothing as well as skin complexion and hair colors) and with different views on 'Swedish' values, has created a notion of heterogeneity and parallel value systems, a contrast to the notion of 'the Swedish homogeneity'.

Second, the opening up for the establishment of private schools funded by the governments have made it possible, at least in praxis if not in theory, to socialize children into a different value system than the 'Swedish'. The norms that children in these schools internalize might not be within the boundaries tolerated by society or the state, and the principle of 'governmentality', the aspect of citizens' self-governess or self-discipline according to tolerated norms, loosens up while the discourse of the majority and its control over citizens' minds to a great extent weakens.

Third, since the late twentieth century, governmental control of public space through media, particularly national radio and television, has weakened drastically with the advent of cable and

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6   The Swedish state's TV-monopoly ended, when the first commercial Scandinavian TV-channel, TV 3, was launched December 31, 1987. To avoid Scandinavian legislation's prohibition of commercial TV-channels TV3 sent to the three Scandinavian countries via satellite from the head office in London [24].

7   Foucault links self-government to morality ([25], p. 91). Although his discussion of self-government is linked to the state power it is also reasonable to see self-government in terms of how through the art of governing, individuals will be socialized into a moral self-governing system.

satellite dishes. The fragmentation of public space has various implications. As it comes to the youth, whether majority or minority, they watch American sit-coms and reality shows more than Swedish 'educational' programs. Thus, the internalizing of 'Swedish values', even for the majority youth population, is at stake. Moreover, the immigrant population tends to watch the national satellite television programs of their countries of origin, or for the Arabic-speaking population in Sweden, the various Arab-medium news channels portraying international events in a fashion quite differently from Swedish news program [2].

As a result, the Swedish value systems have loosened in recent decades, and the system of 'governmentality' as a means of controlling the population's attitudes, norms, and practices has become more complicated than it used to be. The episode of a young Muslim woman, born in Egypt and raised in Sweden from the age of four, who served as a kindergarten teacher and who claimed her right to wear a face-veil at work, illustrates the gap between legislation and norms which have arisen in this newly fragmented public space. As politicians and public employees wanted to ban the use of face-veil, the woman complained to the Swedish Ombudsman that she was a victim of ethnic discrimination. The claim for change in the legislation of what is 'acceptable' clothing and what is not was put forward in the following debate. The debate indicates how norms for acceptability have previously been well internalized; there has been a common public recognition of what is approved or disapproved of in the public sphere, making for instance legislation on clothing unnecessary. But in Foucault's words: "A power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms" ([28], p. 144). The general tactics of 'governmentality' is therefore also about broadening, narrowing, and moving the borderlines according to socio-political and cultural public discourses. With the fragmentation of the public sphere, public norms become less homogenous and less obvious, but, despite the weakening of governmental control of its subordinates, it is still mainly the authorities who can decide or place limits on what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' through bio-politics, legislation, media, and policy-making.

6. Majority-Minority Dynamics in Sweden

It is obvious that there are conflicting issues between the majority in Sweden and the Muslim minorities. One important issue is the Swedish involvement in Afghanistan, as well as the authorities' lack of public criticism of Israeli policy on the occupied Palestinian territories. Although important, these issues fall outside the scope of this study. This study's purpose is to examine Swedish internal affairs as it pertains to the majority-minority relations.

The concept of 'governmentality' is a convenient analytical tool for examining the relationship between the majority population and minority communities in a country like Sweden with its underlying claim of homogeneity.

7. Muslims in Media

In order to evaluate how the media can influence the relationship between the majority and Muslim minority communities in Sweden, it will be fruitful to compare the Swedish approach to that of Denmark and Norway. To a certain degree, both the media and the Danish authorities, with the latter's embracing of the populist party, The Danish People's Party (Det Danske Folkepartiet), along with that

party's hostile discourse towards Muslims and Islam, tend to have a quite hostile attitudes towards immigrants, which in the Danish context has become synonymous with Muslims [29]. In Sweden, on the other hand, there is a general wariness and caution in the portrayal of immigrants in general. In between the two extremities lies Norway, where public discourse tends to oscillate between the two positions, as will be indicated below.

When it comes to the images of Muslim immigrants in public discourse, the difference between Sweden on the one side and Denmark and Norway on the other can be illustrated by the media discussion of Islam and honor killings after the Kurdish-Swedish woman, Fadime Sahindal, was killed by her father in January 2002. In Sweden, Islam was mentioned as a possible accomplice to the killing in the days that immediately followed. After a relative of the family told the national television that the family has no Muslim background (which it indeed had, although the father had no religious inclination) ([30], p. 29), the public debate shifted its focus to Kurdishness rather than Islam, with the understanding that the killing was a result of women being victimized by men in general. In the two other countries, honor killings and Islam remained as the primary explanations in public debate for the killing of Fadime, with the prohibition in Islamic law against marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men viewed as the cause of her death ([30], pp. 29–30). (Interestingly, the man Fadime had a relationship with was also probably from a Muslim background, as his father was a refugee from Iran.)

Another important aspect is how the media handles the naming and describing of criminals. In October 2012, the text-television of the national TV-company DR1 broadcast breaking news on three wanted criminals. All three criminals were identified by name, and two of them had obvious Muslim names. In a large Danish newspaper BT in November 2011, the names of both the murdered person and the suspected murderer were released, and both names were Muslim. In contrast, in Sweden, names are only released in the media after the person(s) has been tried and found guilty by a court. Even the victim is seldom identified by name since this is regarded to lead to speculation as to whether she/he has a non-Swedish name. This is clearly an attempt to reduce anti-immigrant sentiments. In two immigrant-dense towns in Scania, in southern Sweden, three women were murdered by close relatives with immigrant backgrounds in the period between April and July 2012.[8] In all three cases, names and additional information that could link the victim or the killer to immigrant milieus were not released.

Even when a program on Islamist organizations and their close cooperation with government officials in Sweden was broadcast on national television in December 2009, there were no follow-up television reports, and there were few reactions in the Swedish press. Both in Denmark and in Norway, such programs tend to set off a chain reaction in the press, with news programs on most television stations as well as daily newspapers conducting follow-up reports in which experts and Muslims of various stands are interviewed.

The caution showed by the Swedish media, and the informal directive of withholding names and information that might stigmatize immigrants in general and Muslims in particular, might be regarded in view of 'governmentality'. As stated above, in Sweden, there has been a tendency to embrace parts of conflicting ideologies or ideas, such as 'feminism' and 'environmentalism', in order to keep the

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[8] The information of the killers' 'immigrant background' was given to me by two journalists working in the national TV company SVT.

social homogeneity and avoid open conflicts. Thus, by embracing and promoting immigrants as part of the 'Swedish', it is possible for the authorities to accept and promote cultural and social traits found among immigrant communities that are within the limits of the 'acceptable', limits which are continuously regulated according to legislation and the majority discourse. When relating extremist issues, politicians, journalists, and experts on Islam tend to use the recurrent narrative that although some Muslims are terrorists, have extremist views, or belong to criminal gangs, this does not extend to all Muslims in Sweden [31].

The aim of promoting self-governess or self-discipline has been largely successful, at least as it comes to many leading Muslims in Sweden. The general awareness of how immigrants are portrayed in the media and how the political parties tend to protect immigrant rights might be a reason why many Muslims leaders express loyalty to the 'Swedish system'.[9] Moreover, the emphasis by most political parties on engaging Muslims reinforces this sense of loyalty towards the Swedish authorities and society. In a study of Muslims in positions of leadership in various political parties, all expressed that they felt their views were accepted and listened to by their party fellows ([3], p. 161). One prominent Muslim politician from a party that actively supports homosexuals' rights in all fields of human life, including the adoption of children, expressed his support for such rights even though he is a practicing Muslim. "If we, the Muslims request equal rights, then we also have to accept that this request also goes for other discriminated communities in society, such as for instance the homosexuals."[10] Other practicing Muslims from various parties expressed that they did not support homosexuals' rights, but as members of parties who did, they chose to just withdraw during such discussions and refrain from taking an official stand. This is an example of 'governmentality'; Muslim immigrants have internalized the notion of homogenization and abstain from explicitly express their divergent view on homosexuals, a view which is not within 'the acceptable' in Swedish society.

8. Populist Parties

All three Scandinavian countries have populist parties with parliamentary representation. But whereas in Norway and Denmark these parties not only wield significant influence, directly and indirectly, but also cooperate with other parties in Parliament, in Sweden, the newly established Sweden Democrats are more or less boycotted by the other parliamentary parties. In this case, the Swedish authorities have not employed their strategy of embracing conflicting ideologies. An ethnic Swedish political activist from the centre-right ruling party, the Moderate Party (Moderaterna) explained to me: "The Sweden Democrats are racists, and we do not cooperate with people who distinguish between races and religions". In view of the concept of 'governmentality', Swedish authorities have not included 'hostility towards immigrants' into what is socially acceptable. In Denmark, the strength of the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti) after the election in 2001 made other parties respond positively to their propositions in Parliament. Interestingly, Norway's Conservative Party (Høyre), which is in a position to win the election in 2013, has pushed the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not by opening up for a possible cooperation with the

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[9]   Interviews with Muslim leaders from various Islamic associations, 1996–2012.

[10] This informant is in his late thirties and came to Sweden from a southern European country as a toddler. He has an explicit Islamic identity.

Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet), a populist party.[11] This is in contrast to the Conservative Party's firm opposition to the Progress Party in 2001, when the former's party management insisted that such cooperation would be a "nightmare scenario" [33]. The reason behind the differences between Sweden and the two other countries might, apart from that the populist parties in Denmark and Norway have a longer experience in politics, be as simple as pure pragmatism. The percentage of the immigrant population in Sweden is much higher than in Denmark and Norway [34]. Moreover, in all the three Scandinavian countries, coalition governments have become the rule rather than the exception, and the major political parties might be in need of the populist parties in order to form a government. In Sweden, the Sweden Democrats is still a small party with less than 10 per cent of the voters. In October 2012, the Sweden Democrat announced a zero tolerance for racist expressions within the party [35]. Only time will tell whether this new approach, together with the potential growth of the Sweden Democrats, will make the party more housebroken from the public viewpoint.

It is interesting to note that the Liberal Party (Folkpartiet), a party with governmental representation, launched a proposition with more demands on immigrants, demands that overlap with those of the Sweden Democrats. These include demands for immigrants to possess a certain amount of Swedish language proficiency when applying for citizenship, for unemployment insurance to be withdrawn if immigrants reject a job offer, and that social service or state-sponsored economic support for immigrants should depend upon their participation in specific activities. These demands generated massive criticism from other political parties as well as in media [36].

Furthermore, 'banal nationalism' is strong in both Norway and Denmark where there is emphasis for example on flags as well as 'Norwegianness' and 'Danishness'. In Sweden, such nationalist manifestations are less frequent. A common notion is that this lack of 'banal nationalism' is linked to the fact that Sweden has not had war on its soil for approximately 200 years, a marked contrast to Denmark and Norway in light of the German occupations of the Second World War. This lack of expressed national sentiments might explain the fact that the Swedish populist parties have been less successful than their counterparts in Denmark and Norway. Since the local government election of 2008, however, the Sweden Democrats have started to become more visible in the public sphere, and in the parliamentary elections in 2010, the party gained parliamentary seats. The party has its strongest support in Scania, a region with many Muslim immigrants.

The public debate has to a certain extent changed as the Sweden Democrats have increased their influence in the public space. However, when the head of the party announced in the newspaper *Aftonbladet* that "Muslims are our greatest foreign threat" [37], he was attacked by most political representatives as well as the broader public. He was even sued for "frenzy against an ethnic group", a criminal offence in Sweden. In contrast, in Denmark and even in Norway, politicians and the media can be much more outspoken in their criticism towards Muslims without fearing legal proceedings ([38], pp. 69–77). Many Muslim politicians in Denmark have been questioned for their "Islamic values", and some of them have been forced to leave the political scene due to heavy media campaign against them [39]. Muslim politicians in Sweden have not been questioned in this way.

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[11] According to the Official Poll January 16th, 2013, The Conservative Party got 32.2% and the Progressive Party 16.8% of the votes [32].

The 'governmental rationality' of the Swedish rightist government (2012) is to include the immigrants, regarding them as a beneficial source for social development in Sweden. The populists, however, are outside what is regarded as acceptable, at least for the time being. The government's policy towards the Sweden Democrats reinforces the accommodating attitude towards immigrants, particularly Muslims, as some leading politicians within the Sweden Democrats have an expressed anti-Islamic or Eurabian sentiments [40].

9. Developments in Swedish Muslim Communities

Researchers have anticipated an individualization process among Muslim youth in Scandinavia [3,41]. One study of Pakistani children and youth in Norway indicated that the younger generations of Muslims developed *integrated plural identities* and became both 'Norwegian' and 'Pakistani'. Muslim youth tend to embrace individualistic 'Norwegian' values such as freedom, democracy, gender equality, *etc.*, yet they also embrace more collective values identified with their parents' worldview, such as belonging to a group, a religion, *etc.* [41]. There are similar findings in Sweden on issues such as gender relation and the relationship between individual and collective rights ([3], pp. 165, 201–03).

The gender equality policy in Scandinavia has influenced Muslim communities. Many practicing Muslims from second- and third-generation immigrant communities claim that "Islam *is* gender equality" ([3], p. 20). In contrast to their children, most of the first-generation practicing Muslims believed that "[i]n Islam we do not have gender equality" ([3], p. 20). This generational difference reflects the variation in socialization and public discourse. First-generation Muslims link Islam to the gender values they were socialized into in their homelands. One example of this might entail the belief that demonstrating respect for women means that male relatives must provide women with protection and economic support. However, those Swedish Muslims who have attended Swedish schools have internalized a different value, the value of gender equality. This is understandable given that gender equality saturates the entire educational system in Sweden.

This difference in understanding can be linked to Bobby Said's perception of 'Islam' as the *master signifier*, *i.e.*, Islam becomes a reference point with different content in varying contexts [42]. 'Islam' becomes 'the incarnated good', and despite the variation in content, this *master signifier* maintains the interpretive framework as Muslims believe in 'Islam' and create its content in varying contexts. Thus, Islam becomes that which is 'good' in each and every context. In many of the countries of origin of Swedish Muslim immigrants, including Afghanistan and the Arab countries, public discourse has set the standard of what is 'good' for women, namely to be protected, whereas in Sweden the 'good' is equal gender opportunities. For Muslims born in Sweden, what is 'good' goes even for other Swedish values such as individual rights, democracy, tolerance, *etc.* A practicing Swedish Muslim woman with Lebanese-Palestinian parents talked about the importance for women to take individual responsibility for their Islamic practice. "If you wear a hijab because your parents or your husband force it upon you, you will have no divine reward (*ajar*). To wear a hijab is an individual choice".[12] Her mother, however, expressed a different view: "I want my daughter to wear hijab because that make her a decent woman, and God wants women to be decent dressed and not to be temptresses, creating chaos

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[12] Interview with 'Huda' 27 years, July 2002 in Sweden.

(*fawda*) in society."[13] The mother's view indicates a collectivistic view of Islam as a social system, regarding social order as well as family values and family coherence as important Islamic values.

The governmental policy of equal gender opportunities is also reinforced in the material world. The same Swedish system that creates the need for both men and women to enter the labor market also affects Muslim communities. Many Muslim immigrants in Sweden have lower educational levels in comparison to the majority population. Many also have difficulties learning the Swedish language, an important prerequisite for getting a job. Therefore, many Muslims are dependent on economic support from the state, which means that even refugee and immigrant women must actively seek employment. Sweden has social programs with courses and training for women that help them acquire a stronger position in the labor market. This has created a change in gender structures in Muslim communities toward a much more egalitarian system of labor division, a contrast from the countries of origin where women mainly work in the domestic sphere.[14]

Another example that reflects Muslim adaption to Swedish homogeneity is the view on sharia among Muslim leaders in Sweden. Prior to the parliamentary elections of 2006, the leader of the Swedish Muslim Association (Sveriges Muslimska Förbund), Mahmoud Aldebe, wrote an official letter to the political parties. The letter was published in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* on April 27, 2006. In the letter, Aldebe asked for legislation giving Muslims the right to take leave on religious festivals, to have a mosque in every city, to have particular days for men and women in the local swimming pools, and to have sectoral legislation in family legislation issues [43]. Aldebe argued that the law on freedom of religion in Sweden is built on an 'individualized understanding of religion' whereas Muslims focus on 'the collective expressions of religion' [43]. On the following day, Aldebe modified the content of the letter in a press release in the same newspaper. He withdrew the claim for 'sectoral legislation' for Muslims, asking instead for the possibility of dispensation in certain cases [44]. It is interesting that the strongest criticisms of Aldebe's claim on sectoral legislation came from within the ranks of Sweden's Muslim leadership. The spokesperson of one of the largest Muslim national organizations, Mehmet Kaplan, rejected Aldebe's claim: "He [Aldebe] cannot be a spokesman for all Muslims. This is the role he put on himself when he wrote 'Muslims believe' and 'Muslims demand'" [44]. Kaplan agreed with some of Aldebe's claims, such as the right to take leave on religious festivals. Still, Kaplan insisted that the request for sectoral legislation was totally unreasonable. Even leaders within Aldebe's own organization rejected his claim publicly [44].

Aldebe, who has a Palestinian-Jordanian background, is a first-generation Muslim immigrant who came to Sweden as an adult. Kaplan is of Turkish origin and came to Sweden at the age of one. Through his Scandinavian upbringing and education in Swedish school, Kaplan is well socialized into the system of self-governess. He is fully aware of what is and is not 'acceptable' in public space. It is likely he would agree with the majority discourse. Therefore, the issues he agrees with in Aldebe's letter are all acceptable claims according to 'governmental rationality', whereas the claim for sectoral legislation, particularly in regards to the gender issues that Aldebe focused on, are far beyond what is

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[13] Interview with 'Huda's' mother, July 2002. She was 59 years at the time of the interview in July 2002, and she came to Sweden in 1989, 46 years old.

[14] Personal observation in Arab-speaking communities in Sweden and Norway.

acceptable. Kaplan is an example of what Foucault sees as a citizen's internalized self-governess or self-discipline.

10. 'Governmentality' and Socialization

In Sweden, Muslim communities tend to be regarded as 'problematic'. This is due largely to social problems that are linked to class, low educational levels, and a lack of social networking within majority society, as opposed to religion or Islam. However, in Muslim minority communities as well as in the majority population, one encounters individuals from a wide array of class, educational, and employment backgrounds and levels. With the social mobility of some second- and third-generation Muslim immigrants and the change of Islamic discourses from patriarchal to equal rights, the stereotyped image of Muslims as 'deprived victims' (read: Muslim women) or as 'oppressive patriarchs' (read: Muslim men) may gradually change. The constellation of Muslim communities in Sweden, together with particular features of Swedish state policy, influences the situation in Sweden. As Muslim youth are socialized into Swedish realities, they might gradually internalize Swedish identities and loyalties. As discussed above, the wariness in the media that affects how Muslims and Islam are covered, as well as the official policy towards the populist Sweden Democrats, has already created fertile soil for Muslims, including those of the first generation, to feel loyal to the Swedish authorities.

More important is that the newer generations of Muslims will ask different questions than their parents, and they will get different Islamic answers to some of the same questions asked by their parents, as indicated above in the discussion of Islam *vs.* equal gender opportunities. The strong emphasis on equality, particularly in regards to gender, might impact the Islamic discourse on gender as well as on tolerance towards religious and social diversity. Muslim youth's activism in Sweden promises new tendencies in Muslim understandings of the Islamic sources. However, whether new generations of Muslims will experience a true 'sense of belonging' [45] to Swedish society depends not only on changes within Muslim communities. It depends also, to a great extent, on the art of government, *i.e.*, the aspect of 'governmentality', and on how well the majority population manages to incorporate parts of nonconformist thinking and to enlarge the boundaries of what is acceptable. Moreover, the particular art of 'governmentality' in Sweden might be a reason for the relative avoidance of conflicts, in the Huntington sense of civilizational clashes, between the majority and the Muslim minorities. Many Muslims, particularly those born and raised in Sweden, are socialized into the art of self-governance, according to that which is socially acceptable or unacceptable, making their attitudes and behavior, to a lesser or greater extent, well-tuned into the majority way of life.

Although this study focuses particularly on Sweden, Danish and Norwegian material has also been included. A study I conducted in Norway in 2004 shows a similar trend of loyalty and changes towards more individualistic attitudes and behavior among the descendants of the first generation of Muslim immigrants [3]. This is true even though the Norwegian media has a much more critical attitude towards Muslim communities than the Swedish media. This might indicate that although the dynamics between the majority population and Muslim minority communities is important, the system of 'governmentality' is also an influential factor when it comes to the internalization of 'Norwegian' or 'Swedish' values. As Muslim youth attend public schools together with the non-Muslim majority, the

values and behavior promoted in the majority discourse will probably play a role in their socialization process and in the process of construction of their identity.

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