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MUSLIM POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE

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JØRGEN S. NIELSEN

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CHAPTER

11

CREATING THE IMAGE OF EUROPEAN ISLAM: THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR FATWA AND RESEARCH AND IRELAND[1]

Adil Hussain Khan

The recent focus on European Islam has sparked an interest in establishing representative Muslim networks that seemingly span the continent of Europe. However, unifying European Muslims onto a single political platform has largely been an elusive process for Europe's Muslim communities. The image of Muslim representation in Europe has been aided by international organisations, such as the European Council for Fatwa and Research, whose prestigious network of esteemed scholars purportedly address the concerns of western Muslims, while acting as one of the few representative voices of European Islam. Although this image of a unified 'European Islam' would indeed, at first glance, appear to be an impressive accomplishment for Europe's Muslim communities, it is not the outcome of local efforts by European Muslims at the grassroots level. Rather, organisations like the European Council for Fatwa and Research are the result of a top-down approach intended to project an image of European Islam. This has shaped the development of Muslim communities in countries, like Ireland, where transnational influences have promoted the vision of a globalised Islam. Efforts to fabricate this image of European Islam have remarkably transformed Dublin into the seat of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, despite Ireland having one of the smallest Muslim populations in Western Europe. This chapter will explore the role of external influences on the construction of the image of European Islam and on the notion of Muslim representation in Europe, with particular reference to the historical development of Ireland's Muslim community.

1. Introduction

The increased focus on the Muslim presence in Western European countries has broadened the ongoing debate about the relationship between religion

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and politics. Whereas secularisation, as it has traditionally been conceived, has evolved as a question of church-state relations, the discourse has long since been expanded to include a more generalised notion of religion itself, as a means to accommodate the various other religious traditions in contemporary European societies. With regards to Islam, this discourse has initiated a re-evaluation of the boundaries between religious authority and political authority, which Muslims have openly contested since at least the crisis of succession that emerged following the death of the Prophet Muhammad. In this respect, the European context has provided a unique framework for the development of the Islamic discourse on religion and politics, which is being furthered through discussions on Islamic law and Muslim polity by contemporary *'ulamā'* and activists alike. However, successfully negotiating religious concerns within a European framework has proved to be a challenge for those who desire to see normative Islamic legal practices included in European postulations of diversity in a way that enables Islamic ideals to be presented as acceptable alternatives to traditional European moral values. This has been made difficult for various reasons, not least of all by the sheer variety of religious and political views throughout the Muslim world, as well as the diverse array of religious outlooks and political perspectives throughout contemporary European societies.

With this in mind, one can see why conflating Muslim voices onto a single political platform might seem like an appealing concept to struggling (or indeed restricted) Islamist organisations in Muslim majority countries, where linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic differences as well as divergent religious interpretations cloud the political arena each election year. For this reason, Muslim unity in the name of religion may have appeared to be far more attainable in a European setting, where the religious aspects of European Muslims' multifaceted identities have come to dominate outsider-imposed categorisations of Islam, since unassuming outsiders tend to overlook the subtleties and diversity of immigrant communities, as if all were monolithic. In this regard, political activists with pan-Islamic visions of the Muslim world might have had an easier time convincing immigrant Muslim communities who live as minorities in foreign settings, such as in Western Europe, that uniting under the banner of Islam is worthwhile, irrespective of other differences. This is not to say that political Islam has been successful in Western Europe or that it has flourished unopposed, but only that it appears to have been easier to convince Muslims that a unified representation of Islam at the European level is more productive for the Muslims of Europe than asserting divergent aspects of one's idiosyncratic identities to outsiders, who are largely unfamiliar with internal debates and are, at times, unaware of the cultural depth of the Islamic tradition. This has led to fierce competition amongst aspiring representatives of European Islam with regards to determining who ought to have the privilege of representing 'Islam' to government officials at the local level, since doing

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so is accompanied by a sense of authority, insofar that it furnishes the group in question with the right to sift through the broader Islamic discourse and portray its own opinions as if they were representative of all Muslims.

Considering the increased desire of European governments to firmly establish Muslim representatives who embody the voice of 'moderate' Islam (Birt 2006: 687–705), Islam in Europe has undergone a process of institutionalisation that was unnecessary in classical times. Likewise, within the Muslim world, the notion of having authoritative representatives who speak for all Muslims is vacuous, since it contradicts the development of the broader Islamic tradition, which is well known to have evolved without a hierarchical clergy (Zeghal 2007: 122–3; Gaborieau and Zeghal 2004). Even Shi'i Islam, with its ostensibly hierarchical framework, has historically remained remarkably non-institutionalised in comparison to Christian traditions. For this reason, authoritative Muslim organisational structures have tended to represent, inter alia, the views of particular governments, sectarian movements, or administrative bodies, but not Islam in its entirety as a religion.

In Europe, however, this process has developed rather differently. Government pressure on Muslim communities has certainly accelerated the institutionalisation of Islam in the post-9/11 era. This has opened the door for political opportunists to take advantage of an uninformed public discourse on Islam in Europe by presenting themselves as the sole representatives of global Islam (Roy 2004; Mandaville 2007, for more comprehensive definitions of globalised Islam). Nevertheless, Muslims and Muslim organisations in Europe have adapted themselves to fit the European mould of special interest groups in hope of establishing themselves as expert religious authorities, which often take the shape of umbrella organisations with a corporate structure.

2. The rise of Muslim umbrella organisations at the European level

It is important to recognise that European Muslims have been organising themselves in various capacities ever since the first waves of Muslim immigrants established viable Muslim communities on European soil. However, the pan-Islamic ideal of establishing a Muslim umbrella organisation appears initially to have originated with the demise of the Ottoman caliphate, in conjunction with the rise of nationalism, when the decentralisation of authority gave way to new political leaders in the Muslim world (Hardy 1972: 175–8). Early pan-Islamic movements, such as the Khilafat Movement, founded in 1919 in colonial India, were short-lived but regionally influential. Others, such as the Muslim World Congress (Mu'tamar al-'Ālam al-Islāmī), founded in 1926, might have experienced a similar fate had it not been revived in 1949 with Pakistani support (see www.motamaralalamalislami.org, last accessed February 2012). These undertakings were expanded within the framework of

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Islamic non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the Muslim World League in 1962, which made an overt effort to canvass European nations in support of Muslims worldwide (Van Bommel 1992: 129).

The notion of establishing an umbrella organisation to serve as a representative of European Muslims first began to take shape in the early 1970s when Islamist activists from political movements in the Muslim world began setting up overarching organisations consistent with their globalised vision of Islam. Amongst Arabic speaking communities, this process was spearheaded by figures who articulated their views in a way that shared the sentiments expressed by popular political parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn). Within South Asian communities in Europe, the rhetoric was appropriately adapted to convey familiar notions of accepted themes from prominent Islamist organisations such as Jama'at-i Islami. It may be worth mentioning that a number of recent publications dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood seem to exaggerate the role of Islamist groups in Europe or otherwise blur the distinctions between the numerous variations of Islamism in the West by effectively treating popular outlets of Islamism, like the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-i Islami, as if they were the same organisation (for examples see Rubin 2010; see also Vidino 2010). This has led to a number of debatable conclusions, regarding the Brotherhood's role in Europe and North America, which ought to be highlighted further but are simply beyond the scope of this chapter. However, one of the most balanced treatments of the Muslim Brotherhood's recent activities in the European context may be found in Brigitte Maréchal's *The Muslim Brothers of Europe* (2008). The most relevant aspects of Maréchal's analysis, for our purposes, include her assertion that the Muslim Brotherhood is attempting 'to impose their presence' in Europe as representatives of Islam (Maréchal 2008: 34). Insofar as this specifically relates to the creation of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, which shall be discussed later, Maréchal highlights the Brotherhood's growing desire to establish recognisable reference points capable of functioning as religious authorities for European Muslims (Maréchal 2008: 237–9). Overall, Maréchal's work provides the most comprehensive source of information regarding the attitudes of individual Brothers in Europe. This includes both Brothers and non-Brothers who were (often jointly) involved in establishing some of the umbrella organisations discussed below from various Islamist platforms, which subsequently have influenced the contemporary Brotherhood's ideology (Maréchal 2008: 73).[2]

One such organisation, the Islamic Council of Europe, was founded in 1973 in London by Saudi diplomat Salem Azzam (1924–2008). Azzam was from an influential Egyptian family with political ties to the Muslim Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna, through his uncle (Vidino 2010: 33, 234, and note 54), 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam (Mitchell 1993: 56), who notably served as the first secretary-general of the Arab League from 1945 to 1952

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(see Coury 1998). The Islamic Council of Europe remained reasonably active, particularly in London and Paris, through the early 1980s and published a number of booklets, including the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* in 1981, which was widely distributed as a delayed response to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Azzam 1981; Azzam 1998: 102–12). This was followed by the drafting of a model constitution in 1983 for would-be Islamic states (Azzam 1983), perhaps in hope that the recent revolution in Iran would spread to other parts of the Muslim world.

Although the success of the Islamic Council of Europe was limited, it paved the way for future umbrella organisations to emerge in later years at the European level (Khan 2011: 493–4). The ultimate failure of the Islamic Council of Europe may have been due, in some part, to the lack of influential representative organisations at the national level, since the process of institutionalising Muslim organisations at the national level did not gain adequate momentum in Europe until the late 1980s. Nevertheless, the creation of the Islamic Council of Europe represents an early attempt at forming a Muslim umbrella organisation at the European level. It also illustrates the desire of Islamist counterparts, such as those who represented ideological strands of the Muslim Brotherhood and those associated with Jama'at-i Islami, to coordinate their efforts on the European front. In one Islamic Council of Europe publication, Salem Azzam collaborated with Khurshid Ahmad, a leading figure of Jama'at-i Islami (Esposito and Voll 2001: 39–53), to produce literature that would appeal to European Muslims from both Arab and South Asian backgrounds (Ahmad 1976, with foreword by Salem Azzam), effectively broadening their respective audiences beyond the scope of their own Islamist platforms.

By 1989 many of these organisational endeavours were consolidated through the formation of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE). Although the FIOE remained centred in Britain, it included other influential organisations in Western Europe, such as France's Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF) (Maréchal 2008: 61; Khosrokhavar 2010: 137), as well as Germany's Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Gorus (IGMG) and Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland (IGD) (Steinberg 2010: 149–51; Vidino 2010: 30). At present, the FIOE claims to be 'the largest Islamic organisation on the European level' representing the voice of European Islam, which consists of 'hundreds of member organisations spread across 28 European States' (www.euro-muslim.com, under the 'About Us' link, last accessed February 2012). In its approach towards establishing a representative umbrella of Europe's Muslim communities, the Islamist ideologies of previous decades were not altogether abandoned despite shifts in Islamist thought, in the sense that political interpretations of Islam have remained a key feature of the FIOE's mission (Maréchal 2008: 174; Caeiro and Saify 2009: 111). The FIOE presents itself as the culmination of previous attempts to mobilise European Muslims, which thereby has succeeded in 'unifying the political

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discourse' with respect to European Islam. This has purportedly been achieved through the FIOE's 'ceaseless [efforts] in seeking to remove the barrier built on fear of the Islamic presence in the West; a fear fed by biased media, and some political forces that advocate hostile language and attitudes against the Muslim minorities' (www.euro-muslim.com, under the 'About Us' link, last accessed February 2012).

3. The European Council for Fatwa and Research

Although the FIOE appeared to represent a political force in European society, it still needed to formalise its agency at the European level to secure its long-term future. To do this, the FIOE established a number of 'specialised institutions' that were capable of representing different strands of the public discourse on Islam at the European level (www.euro-muslim.com, last accessed February 2011). This included the formation of the European Media Association, the European Forum of Muslim Women, and the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations. However, to demonstrate the backing of European Muslims and bolster its political platform, the FIOE needed to incorporate an authoritative body exclusively within the religious sphere of European Islam. As a result, the FIOE assembled the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR). In this respect, the ECFR may perhaps be seen as an attempt to establish a religious authority capable of complementing the FIOE's ambitions of establishing political authority. Thus far, the most extensive accounts of the European Council for Fatwa and Research have been provided by Alexandre Caeiro, whose illuminating expositions have helped shape the course of research for this study (Caeiro 2011: 121–41; Caeiro and Saify 2009: 109–48; Caeiro 2010: 435–49; Caeiro 2006: 661–85).

The first meeting of the European Council for Fatwa and Research took place in London over the last weekend of March 1997 (ECFR 2003: 1; see also www.e-cfr.org, last accessed February 2012). Over fifteen scholars, primarily from the Middle East, comprised the council as an authoritative assembly of *'ulamā'* for European Muslims. A constitution was drafted in the first meeting, which specified five conditions for membership. Although the fourth condition stipulated European residency for each member, a concession was made for additional scholars approved by the majority of existing members. Moreover, the council's bylaws state that the total number of ECFR members who are not in European residence may not exceed 25% (ECFR 2003: 4–5). This was an important step in creating a sense of legitimacy for the council's rulings, since a mufti's familiarity with local customs and practices is imperative in the establishment an authoritative fatwa within the classical framework of Sunni *usūl al-fiqh* (Kamali 2003: 369–83). As such, the ECFR's constitution deliberately attempts to distinguish itself from other authoritative fatwa councils in the Muslim world by adopting a distinctly European flavour. However, the

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extent of the European orientations of the ECFR's members may be called into question, as discussed below.

At present, the most notable figure in the ECFR's executive is its president, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian national who was educated at al-Azhar and is now living in Qatar (Skovgaard and Gräf: 2009). Despite distancing himself from certain aspects of the movement, Qaradawi is widely regarded as the spiritual figurehead for the Muslim Brotherhood's religious ideology (Maréchal 2008: 147–50). Qaradawi enlisted the services of several colleagues with mutual concerns and similar ideals from various parts of the Muslim world in order to establish the core of the ECFR's roster. Other prominent members who shared this spiritual outlook included the ECFR's Lebanese vice-president, Faisal Mawlawi, who passed away in 2011. Although Mawlawi had French ties, he was best known for his central role in a different Islamist organisation, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, which remains active in his native Lebanon (Mawlawi 2008; Maréchal 2008: 150–1). There was also Rachid Ghannouchi, a Tunisian national who until the revolution of January 2011 was living in exile in Britain (Tammimi 2001; Esposito and Voll 2001: 91–117). Ghannouchi has since returned to Tunis to assist the next generation of supporters of his al-Nahda movement in carrying out transitional political reforms (see www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12318824, last accessed February 2012; see also www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12320950, last accessed February 2012). Another important figure was 'Isam Bashir, who held a prominent position in the Sudanese government under Hasan Turabi, prior to Turabi's fallout with the Brotherhood. The ECFR also includes Ahmed al-Rawi, an Iraqi immigrant to the UK who headed the FIOE throughout 2006 (Maréchal 2008: 251; Vidino 2010: 51–2), as well as Ahmad Jaballah, who took over the FIOE's leadership after al-Rawi (Maréchal 2008: 155). On a national level, Jaballah has also played an active role in the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF) (Maréchal 2008: 69, 158; Vidino 2010: 48).

The council's clear preference for scholars with similar worldviews and shared political affiliations necessitated a diversification of the membership roster in order to establish a greater sense of legitimacy. To accomplish its goals, the ECFR needed to devise a way to obtain the backing of European Muslims who did not affiliate with the major organs of the FIOE and hence were less likely to share its ideological persuasions. For this reason, a number of eminent figures in the Muslim world were recruited to give the ECFR a more balanced look and ultimately a greater sense of religious authority. These alternative voices in the ECFR have been represented by various figures since the council's inception. However, three prominent non-Islamist scholars stand out at present. They are: Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, a Mauritanian scholar who currently resides in Saudi Arabia; Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani, who served as Pakistan's former Supreme Court Justice; and Mustafa Cerić, who was till

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recently the Grand Mufti of Bosnia. This move was seemingly appreciated by Europe's less political Muslims who could now look to scholars recognised independently for their contributions to Islamic scholarship.

Despite fluctuations in membership, the council's members in European residence have always been underrepresented, with the exception of those in Britain, France, and Germany (see also Caeiro 2011: 125). The geographic asymmetry in the ECFR's European representation was reinforced by a decision made in the council's second session, which determined that two subcommittees for fatwa would be established in Britain and France to provide relief from the excessive workload accumulated during the ECFR's ordinary sessions (ECFR 2003: 7). Together, these moves undermined the input of significant numbers of European Muslims living beyond the confines of Western Europe's most populous countries. It is clear from its earliest endeavours that the ECFR needed to provide a more equitable representation of Europe in order to achieve ascendency amongst Europeans. At first glance, resolving the issue was a simple matter. With some manoeuvring, the ECFR could expand its scope of influence by involving Muslims from other European countries.

The ECFR subsequently relocated its headquarters to the Republic of Ireland in accordance with its European objectives.[3] From there, the ECFR enlisted as its general secretary Hussein Halawa, the recently arrived Egyptian imam of Dublin's newly opened mosque. Although this certainly broadened the scope of the ECFR's European image, the move left some Irish Muslims confounded, which is an understandable reaction, considering the preceding historical development of Islam in Ireland. For other European countries, like Britain and France, their colonial history has shaped their involvement with the Muslim world for several centuries. However, for a country such as Ireland, which was itself colonised by Britain, the public discourse on Islam has developed rather differently.

4. Historical background of Muslim organisations in Ireland

For the latter part of the twentieth century, Ireland had primarily been home to a transient population of Muslim medical students of South Asian descent, who first came to Dublin from South Africa to escape the educational restrictions of the newly enacted apartheid legislation. As a result, the first viable Irish Muslim community seems to have crystallised in the 1950s, when Muslim students from South Africa began arriving at the campus of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 1952.[4] The Royal College of Surgeons agreed to admit a regular quorum of South Africa's 'Indian' students each year in direct opposition to the apartheid legislation. Although the arrangement was not an official accord between the two countries, it initiated a steady stream of Muslim migration, which enabled an early Irish Muslim community to take shape in the Dublin area (Khan 2010: 44–5).

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In the earliest days, the religious activities of the medical students revolved around organised prayer meetings, charity collections, and *ʿīd* celebrations. Interestingly, most Muslim gatherings took place at a Protestant sponsored halls of residence called Koinonia House where the bulk of incoming international students stayed. However, as mature medical students began branching out into private accommodation around the city, the members of Dublin's Muslim community began making use of alternative facilities beyond the university setting. By January 1959, a few students headed by Yousuf Jhavary managed to form the Dublin Islamic Society, the first formal organisation for Muslims in Irish residence (Khan 2011: 487–8). However, discussions about the construction of permanent mosque facilities did not take place until much later.[5]

In the summer break of 1970, the Muslim medical students of the Royal College of Surgeons decided to solicit donations from friends and family members upon their return home to South Africa for the holidays in the interest of acquiring a mosque site. Although they managed to raise considerable funds from personal contacts, it was still not quite enough to purchase a suitable property for Dublin's first mosque. In 1972, an early Irish Muslim community leader, Tajmmul Hussain Hayat, initiated a major fundraising campaign in which he began to seek donations from various governments abroad. In the same year another early Irish Muslim community leader, Dr Yusuf Vaizie, invited diplomatic representatives from Middle Eastern countries, whose Irish embassies were then based in London, to visit Dublin in connection with student recruitment for the Royal College of Surgeons.[6] Between 1972 and 1973, Vaizie accompanied four RCSI professors to London for additional meetings with diplomatic dignitaries from the Egyptian, Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian embassies regarding these objectives (Khan 2011: 492). These meetings provided embassy officials with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the mosque project through someone who was directly involved. A breakthrough came in March 1974 when the Dublin Islamic Society procured a sizeable donation of nearly £18,000 from King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Interestingly, the donation was arranged through Salem Azzam, the Saudi diplomat in London who, as mentioned above, founded the Islamic Council of Europe the same year (Khan 2011: 492). In this respect, the Dublin mosque project coincided with Azzam's broader efforts to establish multiple Islamic institutions throughout Europe, including his own Islamic Council of Europe, whose funding was assured through his affluent contacts worldwide (Khan 2011: 493–4).

In 1976, just three years after Azzam founded the Islamic Council of Europe, the Dublin Islamic Society purchased its first mosque property in Dublin city centre. Some months prior to the opening of the mosque, the members appointed a new board of trustees to oversee the administrative affairs of the society. As one might expect, four of the five newly appointed

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trustees were South African in origin, which was consistent with the ethnic composition of the Irish Muslim community of the time. However, the fifth trustee selected was Salem Azzam, in appreciation of his role in helping to secure King Faisal's financial contributions towards Dublin's first mosque.[7] Although Azzam was not expected to participate in the daily affairs of ordinary Irish Muslims, he nonetheless acquired an influential role in the direction of Ireland's only Muslim organisation. As a trustee of the mosque with influential connections in London and the Middle East, Salem Azzam was given an authoritative position within the Dublin Islamic Society, despite his lack of involvement with local Irish Muslims at the grassroots level.

The steady increase of Arabic speaking Muslims through the 1980s altered the internal dynamics of the Irish Muslim community once again, since even a small boost in Muslim population figures had a relatively large impact on a congregation of this size. The changing circumstances made it easier for Muslims in permanent Irish residence to reconsider their roles in a globalised context, since the prospering Irish Muslim community remained modest in size yet fluid with continual changes in its student membership. By then, the Dublin Islamic Society consisted of a diverse conglomeration of Muslim medical students and migrant workers with mixed ethnic backgrounds from Africa, the Middle East, and Malaysia. By the early 1990s, however, Dublin's Gulf students were in a much better position to solicit funds for a new mosque project, as the Irish Muslim population continued to grow in accordance with the arrival of refugees from the wars in Bosnia and Iraq (see Bradley and Humphries, 1999, for background information). Shared business ventures between the United Arab Emirates and Ireland made the Maktoum family of Dubai a prime candidate for potential donations (Khan 2011: 502, note 59). Local Muslims had been aware of the Maktoum family's investments in the international horse racing industry, including in Ireland. In addition, it was known that the Maktoum family kept and trained several race horses at family-owned stables situated primarily around County Kildare, prior to the construction of their current facilities in Britain and Dubai (www.godolphin.com, last accessed February 2012; Butler 1997: 101).[8] With this in mind, the rationale is understandable behind the Maktoum family's willingness to fully sponsor Dublin's most recent mosque in Clonskeagh, Dublin 14, after being approached by an Emirati student from the Royal College of Surgeons in 1992. Nevertheless, local Irish Muslims involved in the process contend that the student's influential family background and personal sympathies shaped the subsequent trajectory of the project in way that has proven favourable to the proponents of global political Islam.

A decision was made to build a large mosque in Dublin equipped with full facilities for the future notwithstanding the report of Irish census figures indicating that only 3,875 Muslims were living throughout the Republic of Ireland in 1991 (Government of Ireland 1995: 22). These figures suggest

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that upon construction, the vast majority of Ireland's Muslim population could potentially have fit into the mosque at Clonskeagh at the same time. Nevertheless, the mosque project continued as planned and was completed in anticipation of Dublin's growing Muslim population. The Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICCI) in Clonskeagh was inaugurated by Irish President Mary Robinson and Deputy Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum on 16 November 1996. In addition to the restaurant, mortuary, and residential quarters, the new mosque complex incorporated the site of Ireland's first Muslim National School. Remarkably, the full cost of the mosque's construction and its subsequent maintenance to date, including its extensive administrative staff, has generously been provided in its entirety by the Maktoum foundation.

5. Dublin as the centre of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*

Only months after the opening of the ICCI in Clonskeagh, the inaugural meeting of the European Council for Fatwa and Research took place in London. Within the next five months, the first official session of the ECFR had taken place in Sarajevo in August 1997, which was hosted by the then Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Cerić. By the second meeting in October 1998, the ECFR had conveniently relocated its headquarters to the newly built facilities of the ICCI in Clonskeagh, Dublin 14 (ECFR 2003: 6). The motivation for the move may also have involved financial considerations, since the regular meetings of the ECFR have been fully funded by the Maktoum foundation since at least 1998. Coincidentally, the ICCI's recently appointed imam from abroad, Sheikh Hussein Halawa, was in an ideal position to take over as the ECFR's general secretary, representing the voice of Islam in Ireland. Much to the dismay of local Irish Muslims, imam Halawa lacks conversational fluency in the English language. Nevertheless, imam Halawa has remained an influential figure in the ECFR's secretariat since his timely arrival in Dublin corresponding with the ICCI's opening. This is certainly not to say that Halawa or any other members of the ECFR are incompetent, inept of scholarly ability, or somehow unversed in the traditional Islamic sciences. However, cultural differences and communication issues in particular have drawn considerable attention to the European orientation of the European Council for Fatwa and Research's membership at the local level. These issues have also given rise to internal debates within the Irish Muslim community regarding the suitability of such imams, who were privately selected from abroad and brought in to countries, such as Ireland, with small Muslim populations and limited mosque space.

In a recent posting on the FIOE's website, Halawa elaborated the objectives of the ECFR with regard to the dissemination of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, the jurisprudence of Muslims living in a minority status in the West (Wasatiyya

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online interview with Hussein Halawa, n.d., available through the FIOE's website, www.euro-muslim.com, last accessed February 2012). The basic premise of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* suggests that the minority status of Muslims in Western countries necessitates certain legal provisions, which would otherwise be forbidden in a majority situation. It has been suggested that Taha Jabir al-Alwani, a former ECFR member and the founder of the Fiqh Council of North America, was the first person to use the term in relation to Muslim political participation in America (Masud 2002: 17). However, Halawa has suggested in personal conversation that the development of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, as it is currently understood, was a joint effort by ECFR members under the direction of Qaradawi's intellectual guidance, despite Alwani's usage of the term prior to the formation of the ECFR.[9] The notion of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* has since been both praised and heavily criticised by Muslim scholars worldwide. Notable critics include Swiss academic Tariq Ramadan (Ramadan 2004: 191), who himself claims to have been offered membership to the ECFR on four separate occasions, which he has consistently declined (Ramadan 2005: available at www.tariqramadan.com/Responses-to-the-Muslim-scholars,311.html, last accessed February 2012). Another outspoken critic has been the prominent Syrian scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Bouti, who maintains that the ECFR was set up to fulfil the political aspirations of its members by appeasing Western authorities (ECFR 2008: 3). Such statements are antithetical to the council's purported agenda and have damaged the council's reputation beyond its Islamist base.

The controversial nature of the ECFR's methodology involves a reinterpretation of the traditional legal concept of *darūra* (necessity) in a way that seems to broaden its scope beyond a pressing need by equating it to a *hāja* (lesser need) (ECFR 2003: 162). This has raised numerous questions regarding the validity of the ECFR's rulings, particularly from the scholars of *usūl al-fiqh*, which has further led to a profound sense of scepticism surrounding the council's fatwas throughout the Muslim world. These fatwas have made it permissible for Muslims residing in Europe to take out mortgages in certain situations, which would otherwise have been forbidden (ECFR 2003: 160–8, or fatwa 26 from the second collection of fatwas). It has also made concessions for Muslims inheriting from deceased non-Muslim relatives (ECFR 2003: 148–9, or fatwa 19 from the second collection of fatwas), for Muslim women converts in the West to remain married to their non-Muslim husbands (ECFR 2008: 4; Caeiro 2011: 134–6), and for Muslim women to remove their hijabs (headscarves) under the right circumstances (ECFR 2003: 34–6, or fatwa 6 from the first collection of fatwas). However, it is interesting to note that within an Irish context at the local level, the council's less controversial fatwas seem to have caused the greatest stir.

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6. Regulating Ramadan in Europe

In an effort to promote Muslim unity, the ECFR passed a resolution during its third ordinary session, which declared that it would begin appointing in advance the dates for the months of Ramadan and Shawwal based on astronomical calculations (ECFR 2003: 15–16, 123–4, or fatwa 8 from the second collection of fatwas). Considering the nature of lunar observation, determining the precise dates for the months of the Islamic calendar as well as the dates for Islamic festivals like *'īd al-fitr* (the holiday following the month of fasting during Ramadan) in particular, has become a precarious exercise subject to geographic location and atmospheric conditions. In these regards, the ECFR's decision to use scientific data to calculate the appearance of the new crescent moon for a specific location, which could then be extended for use by the rest of the world, initially appeared to be a simple administrative matter. In Muslim majority countries, questions concerning timekeeping, dates, and calendars are officially addressed by the religious authorities of the state to ensure uniformity in mainstream religious practice across each country. For Muslims in the West however, designating common dates for the observance of Ramadan and *'īd al-fitr* (i.e. the first day of Shawwal) has notoriously posed a problem, due to the lack of recognised Muslim political authorities.

The ECFR's desire to impose a unique date for the beginning of the months of Ramadan and Shawwal for European Muslims was consistent with Qaradawi's claim that 'the objective of this Council is to promote a uniform Fatwa in Europe and to prevent controversy and intellectual conflicts regarding the respective issues wherever possible' (ECFR 2003: ix). Accordingly, the ECFR issued a statement affirming that Ramadan 2010 would end after twenty-nine days of fasting on Wednesday, 8 September, instead of after thirty days of fasting, which remained the only other possibility for any particular lunar month. Therefore, the first day of Shawwal, and hence *'īd al-fitr*, was determined in advance to take place on Thursday, 9 September 2010 through careful lunar calculations, as opposed to its establishment through direct observation (ECFR n.d.).

In anticipation of local compliance with the ECFR's fatwa, the ICCI in Dublin issued Ramadan timetables to its Muslim members, detailing the appropriate timings for daily prayers and fasting throughout the month of Ramadan. To simplify matters further and to prevent any causes for confusion, the ICCI only printed timings for twenty-nine days, effectively eliminating the possibility of a thirty-day month of Ramadan in 2010. This was done in contrast to most other mosques in Europe, whose local administrators typically print timetables for the full thirty-day period, since the length of a lunar month in Islam has traditionally been determined retroactively by the actual sighting of the new crescent moon. In this respect, the moon may or may not be visible on the twenty-ninth night of any given lunar month depending on

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multiple factors. For example, moon sightings may be further complicated by local atmospheric conditions, such as cloudiness or haze, even though sighting the moon would have otherwise been possible on a clear night. Moreover, in many European countries like Britain, the new crescent moon might be visible in southern cities, like London, a day or two prior to becoming visible in northern cities, like Glasgow, due to the angling of the Earth in relation to the lunar orbit, which, once again, makes geographic location rather important in predicting the visibility of the new crescent moon. These issues amongst British Muslims apparently captured the attention of astronomers at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, who for a number of years have listed information pertaining to the visibility of the new crescent moon in major British Muslim centres like London, Manchester, Leeds, and Glasgow.[10] As such, the distribution of a limited Ramadan timetable in Dublin was a clear attempt by the ICCI to address the challenges facing ordinary Irish Muslims at the local level.

For some unknown reason, the ICCI officially refused to acknowledge in advance that *'īd al-fitr* would be celebrated on Thursday, 9 September 2010 as the pre-printed timetables suggested. Perhaps this was an attempt to avoid confrontations with rival Muslims who disapproved of the ECFR's use of astronomical calculations for determining the date of *'īd* before the twenty-ninth evening of Ramadan. However, the Irish Council of Imams, Ireland's national umbrella organisation, which is also chaired by Halawa, held a private meeting in which it concurred with the ECFR's fatwa. As a result of the meeting, participating Irish imams resolved that *'īd al-fitr* 2010 shall be celebrated on Thursday, 9 September in every mosque across Ireland without exception.[11] At approximately 3:00 in the afternoon on Wednesday, 8 September 2010, on the supposed eve of *'īd al-fitr*, the Muslim Association of Ireland (MAI), whose mosque in Tallaght, Dublin 24, is officially listed as the FIOE's headquarters in Ireland, sent out text messages *en masse* declaring that the *'īd* prayers would be held on the following morning in all Irish mosques based on the fatwa issued by the ECFR.[12] The text messages included full citations of the ECFR's website for further confirmation, which seemingly conveyed a greater sense of credibility for the premature decision.

Despite the efforts to coordinate the Muslims of Ireland, it was decided at the ECFR's headquarters in Clonskeagh, Dublin 14, shortly after sunset (*maghrib* prayer) on Wednesday, 8 September 2010 on the night before the declared date for *'īd al-fitr* that Irish Muslims should indeed fast the next morning for the thirtieth day of Ramadan, despite the ECFR's fatwa. Consequently, it was announced that *'īd al-fitr* would now be celebrated on Friday, 10 September 2010 in all mosques across Ireland. In response to the sudden change, a second text message was sent out by the Muslim Association of Ireland shortly after midnight, reiterating that *'īd al-fitr* was conclusively determined by the ECFR to fall on Thursday, 9 September 2010. However, due to a 'lack of commitment' of certain mosques to the ECFR's fatwa, *'īd*

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would now be delayed by one day to Friday, 10 September throughout Ireland in an act of solidarity.[13] The last minute decision of ECFR members to ignore their own fatwa created an even greater sense of disorder amongst ordinary worshipers, which consequently has invigorated a new debate amongst Irish Muslims at the local level.

Considering the logistical problems of overturning the ECFR's decision once the initial text message had been sent, several confused members of the Irish Muslim community experienced great difficulty in determining whether they ought to fast for the extra day on such short notice, since fasting is usually initiated before sunrise, and once again, the second text message was sent after midnight. To make matters worse, a number of Irish Muslims had already refused to celebrate *'īd* on Thursday, prior to receiving the Muslim Association of Ireland's second text message stating that *'īd* celebrations would be moved to Friday. These Muslims were apparently compelled by the fact that they had watched the live broadcast of the voluntary *tarāwīh* prayers being offered in Mecca (on Islam channel) via satellite TV, which rightly indicated that *'īd al-fitr* would not take place until Friday in the holy city. With this in mind, a number of dissenting Muslims must have voiced their objections to the ECFR's fatwa prior to sunset on Wednesday, 8 September 2010.

Although the example of Ramadan 2010 might seem inconsequential, it draws attention to the scope of the ECFR's authority and the extent of its credibility amongst ordinary Irish Muslims at the grassroots level. The fact that the ICCI itself did not adhere to the ECFR's fatwa is an important contradiction, since the ICCI doubles as the international headquarters of the ECFR, in the sense that both organisations are run from the same offices by the same administrative staff. This illuminates the obscured tension between ordinary Muslims and their institutional representatives at various levels. The example also demonstrates how the ECFR, as an external organisation, has attempted to assert itself as a religious authority upon the Muslim population of Ireland, and perhaps upon Muslim communities throughout Europe. Moreover, the Ramadan example raises concerns about the validity of other organisations such as the FIOE and its affiliates. These issues ultimately call into question the very basis of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, which is marketed throughout the world as a legal theory for western Muslims, whereas its western orientations are regarded with a sense of suspicion by local Muslims in Ireland. In this sense, the example of Ramadan 2010 illustrates the process by which transnational organisations have attempted to impose Islamic ideologies upon European Muslim communities.

7. Reconciling additional ECFR fatwas in an Irish setting

Although the case of Ramadan 2010 only constitutes a single example, there are a number of other fatwas which outwardly conflict with the interests of

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local Irish Muslims and perhaps with the interests of other European Muslims as well. In a different fatwa issued by the ECFR, the council authorised the combining of certain daily prayers under special circumstances (ECFR 2003: 115, or fatwa 4 from the second collection of fatwas). Based on similar concerns, the ECFR declared it permissible for Muslims to perform the Friday (*jum'a*) prayer before its usual time when *zuhr* (the noon prayer) begins, as the sun crosses its zenith (ECFR 2003: 18). The reasoning behind the issuance of the fatwa revolves around the unusually long summer days of northern European countries in conjunction with the customary working hours for European employees. Whereas Fridays have typically been regarded as holidays throughout the Muslim world, European Muslims are often obliged to attend the Friday prayers irregularly during their lunch breaks whenever possible.

Depending on the season, the window for initiating the Friday prayer in northern cities like Dublin might either be significantly larger or smaller than in southern European locations like Sicily, such that the variations may constitute hours. Most mosques, including those located in regions where the discrepancy is great, such as in Scotland, would correlate the Friday services with the arrival of the prayer time, irrespective of the season. The drastic seasonal changes make it inconvenient for working Irish Muslims to attend the Friday prayer regularly, since many would require special arrangements to attend the service on a weekly basis throughout the year. As with the fatwa intended to coordinate the observance of Ramadan, the ruling concerning the Friday prayer was intended to provide European Muslims with an opportunity to develop a sense of consistency in weekly religious practices without interfering with professional responsibilities. As a result, the timing of the Friday prayer at the ICCI's mosque in Clonskeagh did not vary for more than 15 minutes each way throughout 2010, despite the seasonal fluctuations in the length of day. The ICCI's decision to implement the ECFR's fatwa appears to have been a genuine attempt to make it easier for working Muslims to participate in the weekly services with minimal disruption to their work schedules. However, the fatwa was not implemented by Dublin mosques, that cater predominantly to non-Arab Muslims, which is an indication that the non-Arabic speaking Muslims of Ireland are less influenced by the Middle Eastern scholars who dominate the ECFR's roster. Overall, the ECFR's fatwas have largely been ignored by mosques that neither collaborate with the FIOE nor support its religious ideology.

Although the ECFR has perhaps received the most attention for its fatwa permitting the use of mortgages under special circumstances (ECFR 2003: 160–8, or fatwa 26 from the second collection of fatwas), the ruling has not been widely accepted by other legal authorities. The administration of the ICCI mosque at Clonskeagh itself continues to issue statements against interest-based loans in accordance with normative Islamic legal interpretations

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regarding such measures. For example, a stack of fliers for distribution inside the administrative entrance to the ICCI warns of the dangers of interest-bearing transactions (ICCI n.d.). Although these warnings may not necessarily conflict with the fatwa permitting the use of mortgages, which even within the ECFR's own framework is presented as a special case, they demonstrate the challenges facing the ECFR as it attempts to balance tradition with the realities of contemporary Western societies.

These issues raise questions about the impact of the fatwas beyond the ECFR's target audience of European Muslims. Although it would be difficult to document, it appears as though the ECFR, at least initially, is having less influence in Europe than amongst more conventional audiences in the Arabic-speaking Middle East where Muslims have closer ties to the ECFR's most prominent members. If this is indeed the case, then there is a sense of irony in the fact that the *fiqh* for western Muslims is being realised in the East, where Muslims appear to be more eager to implement the ECFR's dispensations. This is perhaps due in part to the social pressures associated with the type of independent legal reasoning that responds to changing circumstances with fresh, creative, and perhaps what might be considered within Muslim majority societies as dangerously innovative ideas. Instead, European Muslims seem less interested in having formal religious authorities sanction pre-existing behaviour, which might be a result of the way in which Islam in the West has developed, since normative religious practices of western Muslims have typically been made to evolve in isolation from local religious authorities. This has meant that western Muslims have not been afforded the luxury of waiting idly for the appearance of fatwas that address the dynamic circumstances or the pressing needs of daily life in non-Muslim lands. This would entail to some extent that the ECFR rulings are not necessarily ahead of their time, as most proponents seem to infer, but rather that the ECFR is too late in its attempt to sanction practices such as mortgages, mixed marriages, and headscarf concessions, which are already becoming increasingly widespread amongst western Muslims who have had no recourse to official Islamic authorities. Furthermore, this is not to say that these trends have somehow circumvented Middle Eastern Muslim practices, but only that religious authorities have had little involvement in their development in the West until relatively recently.

It seems clear that most Muslim intellectuals who express serious interest in the ECFR's rulings are considered to fall within Qaradawi's scope of influence, which is problematic from a legalist perspective. Although some members of the ECFR are certainly well versed in the rulings of multiple *madhhab*s (legal schools of thought), the council's reformist outlook is clear from multiple statements that condemn the 'fanatic allegiance to one opinion and the total rejection of others' (ECFR 2003: 13). On its own, this statement might seem quite reasonable. However, within a legalist context its likely function is to dissuade readers from adopting a rigid form of *taqlīd* (adherence to a

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particular *madhhab*), which would effectively counter the underlying premises that validate the council's existence and undermine its religious authority. In this sense, there seems to have been a conscious effort by the ECFR to avoid any methodological favouritism towards any one of the four Sunni *madhhab*s, perhaps as a means of promoting this reformist approach. In an introductory statement about the purpose of *fiqh*, Qaradawi has chosen to cite a quotation from Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 778), an early scholar whose own *madhhab* has long since fallen into disuse, despite its subsequent influence on the development of Sunni Islam (ECFR 2003: *xi*). Within this context, his choice could be interpreted as a rather subtle indication of the ECFR's commitment to taking a broader multi-*madhhab* approach, which remains implicit throughout the council's self-descriptions.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we see that the struggle for religious authority in Islam has pervaded Muslim communities in Europe, not only through the formation of transnational Muslim networks, but also through the sharpening of notions of European Islam. Within the context of Irish Islam, this struggle has exposed an underlying tension between the practised Islam of ordinary Muslims and the Islamic legal rulings being instituted by authoritative umbrellas at national and international levels. This includes the European Council for Fatwa and Research with its headquarters in Dublin's main mosque. Interestingly, the greatest testament to this tension in Ireland is found not in the most controversial fatwas of the European Council for Fatwa and Research as one might suspect, but rather in the uncontroversial rulings which attempt to facilitate the practices of European Muslims through creative means, such as the coordination of Ramadan observances or convenient dispensations in the Friday prayer. The contradictions between the Islamic legal rulings being promoted and disseminated by transnational umbrellas, such as the FIOE and the ECFR, and the daily religious practices of the Irish Muslims who they claim to represent raises doubts about the commercialised notion of European Islam, which is currently being propagated through the public discourse both within and beyond the Muslim communities of Europe. This begs the question of why so much effort has been exerted to establish and publically promote these umbrellas, particularly in European countries with relatively obscure Muslim populations such as Ireland, when Irish Muslims appear to be content pursuing a less grandiose role in contemporary Islam.

The suggestion that the prospect of Muslim representation in Europe has captured the attention of Muslims with political orientations should perhaps have been self-evident in light of the objectives of political Islam. However, the repercussions in terms of establishing authoritative bodies in this way, which have at times been in conflict with local Muslim opinion, are reflected

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in the resulting notion of European Islam. By forming umbrella organisations, such as the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe, which portray the image of Muslim unity, the proponents of political Islam have transformed 'European Islam' into a political platform. However, this notion of European Islam relies heavily upon the hierarchical imposition upon local Muslim communities in European countries, such as Ireland, of authoritative structures, including the FIOE, the ECFR, and even the Irish Council of Imams. This, once again, is visible through the disregard of religious authorities, who serve as self-proclaimed representatives of Europe's Muslim communities, by Irish Muslims who directly and decisively repudiate officially sanctioned legal rulings, as seen in the Ramadan fiasco of 2010.

Within the broader context of contemporary Islam, the function of self-declared representative organs like the European Council for Fatwa and Research is more indicative of a special interest group attempting to create a viable Muslim lobby. By deliberately arranging mosques in an even distribution across the continent and by attaching to them official spokespersons in residence, who indirectly represent little more than corporate employees, a concerted effort has been made to create a visible network of influential figures, which extends well beyond European borders. The names of a few prominent *'ulamā'* and the proliferation of vogue terms, like *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, have been used to substantiate the lobby and to direct its administrators to engage with the European mainstream through a form of political activism. In this regard, the ECFR's inclinations towards establishing a successful lobby in Europe may be found in its fourth declaration of 'Means and Methods' for achieving its broader goals. Here, the ECFR explicitly defends its desire to make 'relentless efforts with the official authorities in European countries to acknowledge and officially recognise the Council, and to refer to the Council in reference to Islamic judgements' (ECFR 2003: 2). This seems remarkably similar to the council's numerous calls in other locations to seek recognition for Islam in Europe, as if the two were the same (ECFR 2003: 11). This implies a strong connection between the ECFR's self-image and its assumed role as symbolic bearer of the voice of Islam, even though this voice may involve a rather focused religio-political orientation, which operates at the expense of Muslims with dissimilar views. This sort of self-image is typical of political Islamist movements whose ambitions involve establishing combined religious and political authorities that represent an idealised notion of Islamic authenticity, not only in Ireland or Europe, but throughout the world. The long term consequences of arbitrarily assuming the role of religious authority over a population may not yet be clear, even though the apparent contradiction in the methodology employed by contemporary political Islamist movements is already evident, as we have seen. By attempting in earnest to enfranchise the Muslim populations of Europe, the Islamists have ultimately left European Muslims disenfranchised.

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For outsiders witnessing this process from afar, there have been two noticeable outcomes, namely the creation of the image of European Islam and the creation of transnational networks that endorse it. It is worth noting once again that the emergence of both phenomena has taken place under the auspices of highly respected scholars and major Middle Eastern funders, which is significant considering that Muslims in European countries, such as Ireland, initially lacked access to both. Nevertheless, this exchange has facilitated the development of a religious infrastructure for Irish Islam in return for tacit network support. In addition, the leverage applied through the presence of private funders who require elitist access has markedly shaped the resulting organisational structures of the gradually developing Muslim communities of Ireland, as well as the landscape of European Islam.

As seen above, there is clear evidence that external influences have targeted Ireland as the hub of a European network, despite the relative insignificance of Ireland's Muslim population. The fact that there has been an attempt to displace local Muslim opinion with rulings endorsed by hierarchical institutions, which view Ireland in terms of its strategic value as an integral component in the creation of a romanticised construct of European Islam, illustrates the nature of political Islam today. The ongoing challenges facing the ECFR in establishing authoritative fatwas in Ireland may be indicative of the discrepancy between the image and reality of contemporary European Islam. However, one should not mistakenly presume that organisations like the ECFR are not influential. In fact, it is this influence itself that has somewhat successfully aided in creating the false perception of European Muslim unity, which subsequently has led to the creation of the false image of European Islam.

9. Epilogue

I would like to note that this paper was written during autumn 2010, and it therefore reflects the situation at the time of writing. Since then, the most prominent members of the ECFR's membership roster appear, at least for the time being, to have gone into some sort of hiatus, even though their names are still associated with the council and are listed in current council publications. I was somewhat surprised to see that virtually none of the ECFR's most prominent members attended the ECFR's Dublin meeting during summer 2011. It was made clear to me while in attendance that various developments have since affected the stability of the ECFR's executive in recent months. However, the absence of key figures at the summer 2011 meeting may be attributed to a number of factors which need not represent a trend, at least for the time being, including Qaradawi's advanced age, his health concerns, and his inability to travel as freely as in previous years. In addition, the ongoing upheaval resulting from the Arab Spring since January 2011 has momentarily distracted several members from their ECFR responsibilities in favour of more

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urgent engagements. In this sense, the future of the ECFR's membership roster appears to be unclear. Nevertheless, these developments only underscore the discrepancy between the ECFR's public image and the reality on the ground, which altogether only strengthens the overall argument expressed above.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the participants of the conference on 'Muslims and Political Participation in Europe' at the University of Copenhagen in October 2010 for their input on the direction of my research. I would also like to thank Dr Yusuf Vaizie, Abderrazak Zeroug, and Oliver Scharbrodt for their critique of earlier drafts of this paper. This research was funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) and the Department of *An Taoiseach* through a postdoctoral fellowship at University College Cork from 2009 to 2011.
2. In this section, Maréchal provides an interesting discussion on the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and certain institutions in Britain, such as the Islamic Foundation and the Markfield Institute, which have primarily been associated with Jama'at-i Islami.
3. A similar step was taken by the FIOE itself in 2007 when it relocated its headquarters to Brussels.
4. Although Muslims, and indeed Muslim students, had certainly been present in Ireland prior to 1952, the incoming students at the Royal College of Surgeons were largely responsible for organising fellow Muslims into a viable community.
5. The subsequent information is based largely on entries in the unpublished *Logbook* of the Dublin Islamic Society and personal communication with Dr Yusuf Vaizie.
6. Until recently, most of Ireland's diplomatic affairs were conducted through existing embassies in nearby Britain.
7. A donation of nearly £18,000 was made from King Faisal's personal finances, instead of the standard procedure of allocating funds through the Saudi Ministry of *Awqāf*.
8. The Maktoum family has since expanded its operations significantly and owns at least eight premier stables with outstanding facilities throughout the Republic of Ireland. These include Kildangan Stud, Ragusa Stud, Old Connell Stud, Ballymany Stud, and Derrinstown Stud in County Kildare; Blackhall Stud in County Wexford; Ballysheehan Stud in County Tipperary; and Woodpark Stud in County Meath. For more information, see the website of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's global breeding operations at www.darley.co.uk, last accessed February 2012.
9. Personal conversation with Sheikh Hussein Halawa at his Dublin office at the ICCI (October 2010).
10. For Ramadan 2011, see <www.rmg.co.uk/blogs/rog/2011/07/start_and_end_dates_of_ramadan.html> last accessed February 2012. Although this particular webpage is not stable, the Royal Observatory typically updates its website with

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a similar timetable for each current year, which should adequately illustrate this example once the webpage expires. In addition, it may be worth mentioning that the website has at least for the last few years supplemented its data with a disclaimer warning that the timings 'may not correspond exactly with the official (religious) sighting of the crescent moon.'

11. Personal conversations with members of the Irish Council of Imams (September 2010), who prefer to remain anonymous.
12. The Muslim Association of Ireland's role as the FIOE's Irish representative further illustrates how multiple mosques are used to create the image of a European network, whereas the Muslim Association of Ireland relies on financial support arranged through the ICCI, Clonskeagh.
13. Generic text messages sent out to the Irish Muslim community by the Muslim Association of Ireland.

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