From Da‘wa in Europe to European Da‘wa: The Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafiyya in France and Britain

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Abstract
This article aims to present and compare two influential Islamic movements in Europe: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafiyya by analyzing both texts produced by these movements and interviews conducted with activists of both movements in France and Great Britain. Despite their many disagreements over political, religious and social aspects of Muslims and Islam in the West, both movements use da‘wa as an instrument for gaining support among Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe. The article will focus on their activities, institutions, and level of influence in France and Britain, and the significant differences in their methods of using da‘wa.

Keywords
Islam in Europe; Muslims; Muslim converts; Conversion to Islam; Muslim Brotherhood in Europe; Salafiyya in Europe; Da‘wa; Da‘wa in Europe.

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Introduction

Despite their many disagreements over political, religious and social aspects of Muslims and Islam in the West the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafiyya both use daʿwa as an instrument for gaining support among Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe¹ and this article will examine the activities of these two movements, their institutions, and their level of influence in France and Britain respectively - especially the significant differences in their use of daʿwa. The analysis of European Muslim Brotherhood manifestos and Salafi texts, backed by interviews conducted with activists of both movements in France and Britain, are analyzed and form the methodological basis of this article.

While Muslim Brotherhood affiliated organizations in France and Britain only regard the Muslim population as their potential target group for daʿwa, the Salafiyya affiliated movements usually try to access both Muslims and non-Muslims. This major difference has remained constant because the Muslim Brotherhood affiliated movements perceive themselves as cultural, religious and social centers for Muslim individuals and communities whereas Salafi organizations see the spread of Islam in the world as their main objective.

One thing that has been significant in this regard over the last decade has been a significant rise in the diversity of means used for proselytization due to the technological advantages offered by the internet and social media. Only about fifteen years ago, the distribution of Islamic content was limited to hard copies such as printed materials, video and audio cassettes and CDs, all of which were part of the merchandise distributed in some mosques. Today, however, it is easy to see the prominent increase of Islamic content conveyed through every possible channel in the new media or even through music, urban graffiti art and other forms of mass-culture. The article discusses the two movements in France and Great Britain, the gradual developments in daʿwa and compares and contrasts the different methods of daʿwa each uses.

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¹ This article does not aim to compare Salafiya and Muslim Brotherhood ideologies in general and/or to analyze the differences between the two in a historical, theological or cultural context. This article will only refer to both ideologies as they are represented within the context of the local European organizations that are mentioned in the following text.
The Muslim Brotherhood in France and Britain

**Historical Background**

In 1928, when Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, wrote his main treatise on da’wa and Islamic education, the term da’wa had not been used for more than a century.² Al-Banna interpreted this term to mean an invitation or call and declared that all Muslims should accept this call as an instruction to stand tall and reject the western values of globalization that were distancing the importance of the role of Islam to the lives of Muslims. In 1962, after being persecuted by the secular Egyptian government, many members of the Muslim Brotherhood left Egypt, among them Hasan al-Banna’s daughter Fatima and her husband Said Ramadan, one of al-Banna’s executive officers and his right-hand man. They fled to Switzerland where they opened a Muslim Brotherhood center and this center became one of the first bases for the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe. Even today, the Muslim Brotherhood has a tremendous impact on the Muslim population of Europe since it controls most of the Muslim community’s bodies on the continent that represent its interests in the European Parliament.

A clear example of this is the Brussels based Forum for European Muslim Youth and Student Organizations (FEMYSO), which is an umbrella group that both represents 42 national and international Islamic student and youth organizations in 26 European countries and acts as a lobbyist to the European Parliament.³ FEMYSO is not only related to the largest Islamic umbrella organization in Europe, the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE), which includes the UOIF (Union des Organizations Islamiques de France), the MAB (Muslim Association of Britain), the UCOII (Unione delle Comunità e Organizazioni Islamiche in Italia) and many others but is also strongly connected to the global movement of the Muslim Brotherhood.

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This connection is not only expressed through many economic, political, ideological ties but even by marital ties since the Muslim Brotherhood activists in Europe tend to encourage arranged marriages and wed their children to each other. These ideological ties are supported by another Europe-based organization: the European Council for Fatwa and Research, whose president, Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, has also been the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood for the last few decades. As this Dublin-based organization is the sole Islamic institution of jurisprudence in Europe that is certified to issue fatwas (legal rulings) regarding legislation affecting Muslim minorities in the West (fiqh al-aqaliyyat), its function as a prestigious legal authority for European Muslims that provides religious guidance on various topics, has endowed it with great influence. As a result, the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood has already been taught and spread throughout Europe for more than 50 years and can be encountered not only in institutions, politics and culture, but has gradually become the mainstream ideological movement among European Muslims in some countries.

**The Muslim Brotherhood in France**

Like the original Muslim Brotherhood organizations in the Middle East, the French branch also has a structure based on the three principles of having a central bureau and being devoted to education and charity. They work through four main organizations: UOIF (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France), FNEM (Fédération Nationale de l’Enseignement Privé Musulman), IESH (Institut Européen des Sciences Humaines) and CBSP (Comité de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens).

The UOIF, which is an umbrella-like organization of more than 200 smaller Muslim organizations, was established in 1983 by two students affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood – Abdallah ben Mansour from Tunisia and Mahmoud Zuhair from Iraq. The

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UOIF, headed by Amar Lasfar, coordinates most of the Muslim communities’ activities in France, including the annual meeting of Muslims in France (RAMF – Rencontre Annuelle des Musulmans de France) in La Bourget, where all the prominent Islamic activists meet for seminars, lectures and informal talks about the future of Islam in France. Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who was still allowed to enter France in March 2000, was invited to the annual meeting by the UOIF as an honored guest to emphasize UOIF’s connection to the global Muslim Brotherhood. His speech there, as reported on the UOIF official webpage, focused on the Muslims’ role in France:

There are more than four million Muslims here in France, that could make a great impact on the elections. If we don’t present our own Muslim candidates, we should at least vote. Muslims here should learn the political program of each and every party and vote for the candidate that represents our Muslim interests most of all.7

The idea of the importance of political influence in France was relatively new for Muslims in the year 2000, although it was not new for the global Muslim Brotherhood. Tariq Ramadan, another frequent guest of RAMF and the symbol of the French-speaking Muslim Brotherhood in Europe has, for more than a decade, been declaring that the real call to Islam – or in other words: da‘wa – is Muslim visibility in every aspect of social, educational, economic and, of course, political life.8 Although the UOIF began losing its religious influence among French youth, who became more radicalized by

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Salafi preachers from 2005 onwards\(^9\) it still plays a prominent social role among Muslims in France and is the biggest Islamic organization in French-speaking Europe.

The FNEM is a network of private Muslim schools that the UOIF has been trying to establish since 2014. It is still a small project of six schools but has made a promising beginning in spreading the teachings of Hasan al-Banna among young children. Education is the natural way to implement da’wa, and, together with the schools for younger generations, the Muslim Brotherhood has also established a European college for training imams in order to teach student imams how to implement da’wa among Muslim communities in Europe.

**Da’wa studies in France: IESH-trained Imams**

Until 2009 detailed information about imams was rarely available for various reasons, one of which was the clear distinction between official imams who were financed by the state and community leaders who did not officially identify themselves as imams for fear of being inspected and subsequently supervised by the authorities who, since 2001, have shown distrust and suspicion about them. Due to the government’s adoption of a new policy after 9/11, French authorities launched an operation against radical Muslims who were preaching against the values of democracy and civil rights. At the end of this operation the Minister of the Interior from 2009-2011, Brice Hortefeux, stated that France had expelled 125 radicals since the year 2002, twenty-nine of whom were imams and radical preachers who had been inciting against France and the West.\(^10\) A prominent example, widely covered by the media at the time, was the case of an Algerian-French imam from Lyon who was banished from France in April 2004 by the Ministry of the Interior for preaching in favor of polygamy and the death sentence for women who committed adultery.\(^11\) One of the last imams to be expelled during this operation


was Ali Ibrahim al-Sudani of the Hamza mosque in Pantin, a suburb near Paris, after he was found guilty of incitement against the French Republic. When asked why he was doing this he replied that he was only implementing da‘wa.12

There are about 1500 official mosques and thousands of unofficial prayer rooms in France, with at least one imam per mosque/prayer room, although some mosques have more than one imam. As of 2014, most of these imams had received their training in Muslim states and were “imported” into France. The largest official “imam supplier” state to Western Europe is Turkey and these imams receive a retainer from the Turkish government during their stay in Europe on what is called “a mission”. They also have the right to have a permanent working visa which is extended every four years. Turkey also exports imams mostly to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Germany, while France also has a contract with Algeria under which many imams emigrate from Algeria to small French cities to serve in local mosques, especially in neighborhoods inhabited by immigrants of Algerian origin.13 10-15 percent of the imams in France come from Turkey but there are no details regarding the other 85-90 percent as nobody really knows where they come from and what training they have had. In 2005, there were only a few locally-raised imams in Europe, mainly because there was a lack of proper training facilities for imams and other Muslim scholars. Hence, most of the current imams in Europe have been “imported” from Turkey and the Arab states while the local imams that do exist are usually second-generation immigrants who are self-taught volunteers from within the immigrant communities.14 Since 2005, local Muslims have been given permission to study in Turkey, Egypt or Saudi Arabia in order to become certified imams and return to their European homelands as trained professionals.

In 2004 there were more than 1000 imams in France, most of whom only worked part time. Only 45 percent received an official

14 Ibid.
retainer and the rest were unofficially paid by the community. Sixty imams were financed by Turkey, eighty by Algeria and two by Morocco while Saudi Arabia financed twelve imams who were not of Saudi origin but had graduated from Saudi universities. Less than 20 percent of the imams were born in France and more than 50 percent of the imams were over fifty years old. Only one third of the imams spoke fluent French, another third spoke French moderately well and the rest did not speak French at all and preached in Arabic. This was sometimes awkward, since most of the believers in the community were French-born and needed the assistance of translators to understand the preacher.\textsuperscript{15}

A series of steps taken by the French government in the early 2000s changed the way Muslims were represented in France and provided new possibilities for training imams in Europe without sending them to the Middle East. The Muslim Council of France (Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman – CFCM), established in 2003 in order to represent French Muslims in the republic, formed a committee for founding an institute for training new imams in France.\textsuperscript{16} The main reason for this was the need for imams who came directly from the French Muslim communities, spoke fluent French and were aware of the problems French Muslims were encountering in their everyday lives, as opposed to the Middle Eastern imams who mostly had the mentality of their old homelands. The establishment of such an institute also satisfied the government’s need to clear Muslim communities of the extremist, and sometimes even Jihadi, content that the non-local imams were importing from the Middle East.\textsuperscript{17}

The head of this committee, Abdallah Busuf, a man of Moroccan origin from Strasbourg, together with Hamza Gharbi, of Algerian origin who was working in the Grand Mosque of Paris, issued a report that recommended the formation of a program for new imams that focused on the French language and France’s history, instead of


\textsuperscript{17}Bobineau, \textit{Former des Imams}, pp. 23-25.
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continuing with the existing training schemes that only focused on Islamic history in Egypt and Arabic. This report also recommended establishing a faculty of Islamic theology and suggested that the training of imams be left in the hands of Islamic private institutes so that the government would not have exclusive control which would make it possible for the Muslims to trust them and not suspect the newly trained imams of being government proxies.\(^{18}\)

Along with these suggestions, the French Ministry of the Interior formed another committee, made up of both Muslim and non-Muslim experts, that recommended the new imams be taught academic courses in civil law, constitutional law and civil rights, with a special emphasis on these subjects in the French context.

Since the CFCM had to deal with Muslims of different ethnicities and multiple cultures, it was difficult to get the sides to arrive at an understanding about the agenda of this representative body. An agreement about the need to teach social sciences alongside traditional Islamic religion studies was, however, achieved despite the colossal dispute this suggestion caused among the representatives, some of whom wanted to sideline social sciences as being irrelevant for imams and teach them only Islamic studies.\(^{19}\)

The agreement on curriculum contents led to the formation of a unique Europe-based imam-training program, which eventually came under the auspices of IESH (Institute Européen des Sciences Humaines, est. 1990), and was affiliated with the UOIF (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France), the French branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.\(^{20}\) Since 2009, IESH has been the only recognized institution of higher education that has had the ability and the privilege of training imams for France and exporting them to all European countries. Hence, IESH has become the only official institution that can spread da’wa through its imams to all parts of Europe. Once again, the Muslim Brotherhood ideology has prevailed over other Islamic movements’ ideologies due to the Brotherhood’s

\(^{19}\)Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy*, p. 79.
organizational infrastructure and ability to maintain a united, intelligent Muslim representation before the French government.\textsuperscript{21}

IESH has built a diversified program for imam-training that includes several secular courses, such as French civil law and French history, but mostly comprises courses in theology: Qur’an, Hadith, legal ruling and a course named Da’wa.\textsuperscript{22} A talk with one of the students revealed that the da’wa course provides vast knowledge about da’wa methods which include references to Hasan al-Banna’s books. Waleed Abadi, a former student at IESH, stated during our interview, that

> It is clear that the main agenda IESH imam-training courses set is the need to embrace Islam and disseminate it among all people. We, as imams, are supposed to use the knowledge and training IESH gives us and spread the word of Allah in the world.\textsuperscript{23}

When asked what kind of da’wa IESH was teaching, he said that, after the teachings of the Qur’an and the Hadith, importance was placed upon the teachings of Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

We study and teach about Islam, the unity of Allah – \textit{tawhid}, about the principles of a righteous society. A righteous society is first and foremost Muslim, and it must live according to the laws of the shari’a. All Muslims should live according to the laws of the shari’a, the laws of Allah.\textsuperscript{24}

IESH has two branches in France, one in the densely Muslim-populated Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis and another in Château-Chinon. It also has a branch in Germany and two branches in Britain, one in Wales and the other in Birmingham. These branches

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} IESH Department of Theology Annual Program (private brochure).
\textsuperscript{23} Interview with Waleed Abadi (the name is changed at Mr. Abadi’s request), March 26, 2015.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
are used as colleges for Arabic and Islamic studies since they also prepare teachers for Islamic schools and Muslim communities. Graduates from IESH are to be found in all parts of Europe and the Americas as they are in high demand as Western-trained imams. The connection of IESH to the European branches of the Muslim Brotherhood is definite since both the head of IESH France, Ahmed Jaballah (previous head of the UOIF) and the head of EISH UK, Ahmed al-Rawi (former president of the FIOE: Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe) are also members of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) headed by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Hence, it is highly probable that the message IESH institutions have been delivering to the Muslim masses in Europe will not in any way contradict the message of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology.25

The Muslim Brotherhood in Britain
As is the case in France, Muslim Brotherhood affiliated organizations in Great Britain are well-organized and outspoken. The most prominent organizations there are the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB), founded in 1990; the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), founded in 1997; and the Cordoba Foundation, founded in 2005. There are also numerous women’s and children’s organizations, as well as an active youth branch called Young Muslims UK (YMUK). The most prominent figure associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Britain is Iraqi-born Anas al-Tikriti who established the Cordoba Foundation after he left the MAB, which had thrived under his leadership but lost most of its influence after he left. This is a Muslim advisory group that claims to aim at “bridging the gap in understanding between the Muslim world and the West”. Due to the controversial activities of the MAB and the Cordoba Foundation, Prime Minister David Cameron ordered an inquiry into the Muslim Brotherhood organizations in the UK in 2014 and, on December 17th 2015, the conclusions of the committee of inquiry were published along with the findings of the preliminary review. These stated that the Cordoba Foundation, MAB and many more organizations “are

contrary to British values and have been contrary to British national interests and national security.”

The abovementioned inquiry placed the British Muslim Brotherhood under threat and they moved their main headquarters to Graz, Austria immediately after the inquiry started and some of the bank accounts of activists, including those of al-Tikriti and his spouse, were closed by the HSBC for investigation.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Britain, like its counterpart in France, focuses on education so, after the IESH college for training imams was opened in Paris, another branch was opened in Birmingham in 2009 under the name of the European Institute of Human Sciences (EIHS). Unlike IESH Paris, however, the British branch has no imam-training program, mostly due to the differences in the needs of the Muslim communities in the respective countries, but also because there is less demand for Muslim Brotherhood-trained imams in Britain since the Muslim population in the UK prefers other Islamic currents for various historic, cultural and ethnic reasons.

Thus, although they are well-organized and part of a global Muslim Brotherhood movement, the local British Muslim Brotherhood organizations have failed to make their ideology mainstream for the majority of British Muslims. In France, however, the Brotherhood has far more supporters and ideological legitimacy among the Muslim masses.

Most of the da’wa activities are initiated and conducted by Salafi movements and organizations in Britain while the MAB and the Cordoba Foundation are active mainly in the background. There is a distinct division between the theological and political domains between the two currents with the Muslim Brotherhood being responsible for all political rallies and initiatives among the Muslims of Britain and the Salafis taking charge of the ideological education of the masses – through da’wa.

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The Salafiyya in France and Britain

**Historical background:**
By the time the Salafiyya ideology began to gain many followers among Muslims in France and Britain in the 1990s the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organizations were already well-based and well-known among Muslims in France and Britain. The idea of Salafiyya, or returning to *al-Salaf al-Salah* – the path of the righteous ancestors, however, was not strange to European Muslims especially because of the spread of Saudi Islamic centers in the West in the 1980s.²⁹ The Salafi concept of a united Islamic Ummah, or nation, was a well-known Muslim Brotherhood concept as was the Salafi message in general:

> We are a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea.³⁰

The absence of significant differences between the two ideologies allowed the newcomer Salafi activists, imams and teachers to access the same European Muslims who were already attending mosques, Islamic classes and schools managed and financed by Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organizations in Europe, before they widened their target group to non-Muslims as well.

The Salafiyya movement in Europe is represented by two main currents: Jihadist Salafism and missionary Salafism both of which are visible in the European arena, mostly due to the media attention they attract. The Jihadi Salafis are well-known because of their violence and the acts of terrorism they began to carry out in the 1990s and mid-2000s. Later, with the rise of the Islamic State, they also became identified with the fierce propaganda of jihad and radical Islam. Missionary Salafism attracts attention to itself mostly by conveying the message of Islam openly through public and social media channels and on the streets. Although the Jihadi Salafis use da‘wa to call upon Muslims to join their ranks in the war in Syria or

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in the war against the West, the main focus of their use of da’wa is to emphasize the importance of bringing the Muslim and non-Muslim masses closer to Islam.\textsuperscript{31}

**The Salafiyya in France**

The first representatives of the Salafiyya who arrived in France in the 1990s were ex-militants of the Salafi wing of FIS (Front Islamique du Salut – Islamic Salvation Front), who had fled the Algerian regime and had become refugees in France. A decade later, when the second generation of Muslim immigrants was being raised in France, the Salafis played a prominent role in their re-Islamization since most of these youngsters had little knowledge of the Islamic part of their identity and sought knowledge about Islam.\textsuperscript{32} The most prominent figures in early French Salafism were Abdelkader Bouziane in Lyon and Abdelhadi Doudi in Marseille. In Paris, the most prominent centers of Salafi preaching were in the suburbs – *les banlieues* – which became the main arena for the teaching of Salafi ideology and the promotion of Salafi values.

As part of their competition with the Muslim Brotherhood in France for the same target group, the Salafis invested greatly in education as they established a private network of Salafi schools and pre-schools called Oumma schools. While the Oumma network focuses on a private Islamic Salafi-based curriculum of Qur’an, Hadith, Sunna, etc. Oumma’s website promotes da’wa in all forms and offers to donate money “to educate the mothers and fathers of tomorrow,”\textsuperscript{33} as well as to help spread the “Word of Allah” or the Qur’an. This is done in tandem with the “Paris da’wa” association, which is a missionary Salafi organization that promotes da’wa on the streets of Paris.\textsuperscript{34}

Unlike the UOIF and other Muslim Brotherhood organizations, the Salafis approach not only Muslims but also non-Muslims since, according to their theological view, the main mission of a Muslim

\textsuperscript{31} Amghar, *Salafism and Radicalization*, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, p. 38


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
is to bring Islam into the world. Some of the Salafi principles of da’wa include the basic Islamic teachings, such as tawhid – the belief in God’s unity. This principle is the basis of Islamic thought and all other principles are secondary to tawhid which, according to many Islamic scholars, should have the following specific characteristics:

There is only one Creator and He is connected to all he has created. Allah defines the world He created by His own existence and the world defines Allah’s existence by being created.\(^{35}\)

One of the main meanings of tawhid is the belief that a man can change the world by his deeds and the principle of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is the main reason for carrying out da’wa.\(^{36}\) The obligation to make the world a better place derives from the principle of accountability mentioned in the Qur’an as hisbah:

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity (Sura al-Imran, 104).

The preachers who claim that implementing da’wa is especially important in non-Muslim lands, such as Europe, usually rely on the following Qur’anic verse:

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors. (Sura al-Imran, 110)

According to the teachings of many Islamic da’wa movements and groups in the world, specifically in France and Britain, the main


reason for practicing da‘wa in the West comes from the need to change the world and make it a better place. From an Islamic legal point of view, until the twentieth century, the world was divided into two parts: Dar al-Islam, the abode of Islam, where Muslims could live under Muslim rule, and Dar al-Harb, the abode of war, where Muslims could not live. The transition of territories from Dar al-Harb into Dar al-Islam could take place using either da‘wa, that is peaceful preaching that leads to the Islamization of major parts of the population, or by jihad, such as when Muslim armies conquer new lands. In the 20th century, due to massive Muslim immigration to Europe, the need has developed to change definitions and to establish new grounds for the right to live outside of Dar al-Islam. One of the most resonant legal rulings issued on the right to live in non-Muslim lands was a fatwa issued by the Lebanese shaykh Faysal al-Mawlawi, a former Vice-President of the Dublin-based European Council for Fatwa and Research. Mawlawi’s fatwa defined European states and the West in general as safe places for Muslims to lead their lives according to Islamic law, the shari‘a. He proposed they stop calling Europe Dar al-Harb, since there was no war between Muslims and non-Muslims who live in Europe, but rather an “abode of agreement” – Dar al-‘Ahd – or Dar al-Shahada and Dar al-Da‘wa, meaning that these non-Muslim lands have laws and amendments that protect civil rights, among which is the right to freedom of faith. This means that Muslims are not prohibited from living according to the laws of the shari‘a as long as they do not clash with Western civil laws. Democracy allows Muslims in Europe to remain Muslims and not compromise the principles of tawhid and shahada. Moreover, these non-Muslim lands are open to da‘wa, hence the name Dar al-Da‘wa fits them better now than Dar al-Islam.

In contrast to the UOIF, Salafi the organizations in France are more internally oriented and do not allow any participation in political or government activities because of the prohibitions that exist in democratic countries which, according to the Salafi view, are considered to be shirk – belief in something other than Allah and the shari’a as His law.

The emergence of the Islamic State movement influenced the Salafis in France with the ISIS ideology super-radicalizing the already radical Salafis. Soon every terror attack in France, such as the Charlie Hébdo or Bataclan attacks, was contributing to the further radicalization and inspiration of Salafi activists despite the mass arrests made among them after each attack. It now appears that, even though the UOIF is still predominant among French Muslims, the Salafiyya is gaining strength and supporters especially among the younger generations.

The Salafiyya in Britain: Street-Da’wa in Britain – Mission Da’wah

There are various Muslim movements in Britain that are making efforts to practice da’wa in every way possible through teaching courses in mosques to Muslims, selling CDs and booklets about Islam in the streets and engaging in religious talks with non-religious strangers in parks and shopping centers, etc. Since the 1990s, da’wa preaching has gained special popularity among Salafi groups in Europe. One of the latest examples of this phenomenon is a movement of educators who have embraced Islam and are engaged in a mission to convince humanity to act and live according to the laws of Islam – Mission Da’wah. This Cardiff-based movement was established by an activist named Abdurraheem Green (born Anthony Vatswaf Galvin Green in 1962) who converted to Islam thirty years ago and, since then, has been proselytizing Islam in Hyde Park and expanding his activities to other locations in London.

This organization, which uses all possible online and other platforms in order to gain as much access to their target groups as possible, is considered to be relatively small and independent since

43 ”Mission Dawah” is a registered name of an organization http://www.missiondawah.com/.
it is not connected to any world-wide Islamic organization such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Nevertheless, they make themselves highly visible and approachable by organizing meetings and prayers in Leicester Square in the center of London and on every central street in the city during the prime hours after work. Their activities are high profile due to their populist methods of street da’wa-practice and their extravagant use of social networks to spread their message and widen their influence by making da’wa messages go viral. Mission Da’wah treats the message of Islam as a product that needs to be marketed and once every few weeks they launch exciting projects that help them to spread the word even more efficiently.

For instance, one of the projects they launched in 2014 was “Only one verse,” in which every person who wanted to practise da’wa had to choose only one verse from the Qur’an and teach it to everyone one met on the street, on public transportation, on the way to work, in the office, to neighbors, in the local market, etc. This way, a person did not need to recite the Qur’an, be a trained imam or even to know Arabic. One’s desire to spread the “word of Allah,” combined with the one verse one had learned, was enough to practise da’wa everywhere one went. This “special offer” of Islamic knowledge went so viral that it reached millions of people without their being much effort invested in content or manpower.

Mission Da’wah relies on the IERA, the Islamic Education and Research Academy established by Green and his associate Hamza Andreas Tzortzis (a Greek Orthodox Christian who converted to Islam) for its educational center. Mission Da’wah’s main objective, according to their website, is to


motivate and empower members of the local community to make da’wa a key part of their life and to join their local da’wa team.\textsuperscript{48}

Mission Da’wah aims to establish a “mass movement” that practises da’wa through training and mobilising a network of \textit{du’at} or Islamic missionaries. As they state on their website, Mission Da’wah will either partner with or develop teams of local, trained volunteers whose activities will be coordinated by more advanced local team leaders. This will be achieved by taking them through a series of training programmes and providing additional support with practical tools for spreading da’wa and other physical, financial and human resources.\textsuperscript{49}

These local teams will be developed nationwide and will eventually become part of a vast network in which all activities will be continuously monitored with findings informing further improvements to make them more effective and efficient. The local team leaders will receive ongoing da’wa training, after which some will be considered for appointment as full-time \textit{du’ats}.\textsuperscript{50}

Mission Da’wah is training da’wa teams and they have developed a methodology that can fit any target group. For instance, they have flowcharts that show how to convince Christians, Buddhists or Jews to accept the fact that their beliefs are completely compatible with Islam and that they are, in fact, already Muslims.

An example of how to approach a Christian is explained on a flowchart with the following content:

\begin{center}
You should start with heart softeners, such as – Muslims also believe in Jesus and Mary – they are mentioned in the Holy Quran. And then, once they are ready to listen, ask them if they believe in the Trinity. If they admit they believe in the Trinity, recite them verses from
\end{center}

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\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.
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the Quran regarding the impossibility for God to give birth to children or to be born, because Allah is unique. Ask them how Trinity is possible and if they cannot explain, tell them about din fitra - that everybody is born Muslims and after their parents and environment influences them, they become Christians, Jews, etc., but in their essence - all people are Muslims.51

These charts were developed by Dr. Fazal Rahman, the founder of another da‘wa movement in Britain, but are reused by da‘wa missionaries from Mission Da‘wah as well.52

When the IERA: Islamic Education and Research Academy, opened branches in Sweden and Canada, Mission Da‘wah became an international movement and is contributing to the spread of Islam and to the training of new du‘at (agents of da‘wa) all over the world.

One of the strategies of Mission Da‘wah’s activists is to use every possible event in Britain, or anywhere else, for proselytising in order to make an impact. For instance, in 2014, the FIFA World Cup was held in Brazil and Mission Da‘wah sent their du‘at to the championship. These da‘wa agents set up their stands and tables all over Rio de Janeiro and practiced street da‘wa by approaching passers-by, giving them brochures with information about Muhammad and Islam and asking them to join Islam. Abdurraheem Green himself even made it up to the statue of Jesus the Redeemer and stood on the steps leading to the statue, in order to greet Christians who had come to visit the place and pray, in his efforts to convince them to convert to Islam.53

Mission Da‘wah activists claim a high rate of success in converting thousands of people to Islam and these statements are fortified by numerous videos online that show these populist “conversions”

made on the streets in which passers-by cooperate with their du’at and recite the Shahada three times.\textsuperscript{54}

Although there are numerous Salafi populist movements like Mission Da’wah in Britain, France and other European countries, the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated da’wa institutions like IESH do not perceive them to be competition, mainly due to the differences in approach and target audiences. While Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated groups and institutions mainly seek to influence Muslim communities, Salafi populist da’wa groups turn to Muslim and non-Muslim individuals in their attempts to reach as many people as possible and convert them to Islam or to bring them closer to Salafiyya.\textsuperscript{55}

Together with this Salafi influence on Muslim youth in France and Britain has been noted as having become a radicalizing factor in the last decade, especially since the war in Syria and the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. This might well be a sign that the Salafi da’wa for shari’a law could be only a preamble to calls for jihad.\textsuperscript{56}

**Conversions in France and Britain: From Da’wa in Europe to European Da’wa**

Mission Da’wah was neither the first to adopt an upfront approach nor was it the first to promote da’wa in Britain or in Europe in general. According to Bernard Goudard, the then head of the Department of Religion in the French Ministry of the Interior, in an interview to the New York Times in February 2013, the number of converts per year in the last quarter of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century had doubled and added that

> The phenomenon of conversions to Islam is visible and has had far-reaching consequences, especially since the year 2000.\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56} Angel Rabasa, and Cheryl Benard, Eurojihad: Patterns of Islamist Radicalization and Terrorism in Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 27-50.

According to Goudard, there are about six million Muslims in France, 100,000 of whom are converts, which means that, since 1986 when there were only 50,000 converted Muslims in France, the number of converts has doubled. Islamic associations in France do not agree with Goudard and claim that his numbers are wrong since there were 200,000 converts in France in 2013. This significant inconsistency in information about the real number of converts in France derives from the prohibition placed on publishing religion-based or race-based demographic statistics in the republic, which is based on the principles of _laïcité_ and the separation of state and religion.

Goudard claims that the biggest variable in the statistics about converts is the younger age of converts nowadays and, according to Gilles Kepel’s research into the densely populated _arrondissements_ of Paris some youngsters are converting to Islam in order to fit in with others in their neighbourhoods:

In the poor parts of Paris a process of reversed integration has occurred since Muslims became the majority in these neighbourhoods. People are starting to convert to Islam in order to fit in socially. Most of the converts are men under the age of 40 and some of them are saying that because of their predominantly Muslim environment they have been influenced to become Muslims as well.

Samir Amghar, a Muslim sociologist and expert on radical Islam in Europe, claims that in some of the neighbourhoods with a Muslim majority even the non-Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan because they want to be a part of a collective and are seeking a sense of common identity and belonging. Collective social traditions provide them with these experiences and do not isolate them as a minority in their own towns. Amghar claims that in the harsh social and economic reality of these poor neighbourhoods, Islam represents a sort of haven or shelter from the hardships of their daily lives.

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
It is a way to resist modernization, globalization and the alienation they bring and to return to a society that emphasizes traditional family values and a general clear sense of order in all aspects of life. Islam’s strict commandments makes the world seem easier to people and it gives them peace, once they embrace Islam.\textsuperscript{60}

In Marseille, as in Paris, the rate of conversion has “increased so rapidly it is unbelievable, since 2010,” states Abd al-Rahman Ghul, the previous imam of the Grand Mosque of Marseille and chairman of the local branch of the CFCM. Ghul himself signed more than 130 conversion certificates in 2012 and says that he is sure many new Muslims do not bother to list themselves as Muslims once they convert to Islam. As a result there is no way to determine the real number of converts in France or any other state in Europe.\textsuperscript{61}

Some of these numbers are, however, available, like the fact that approximately 5200 British citizens converted to Islam in 2010 alone, and that, over the last fifteen years, about 100,000 conversions to Islam have been registered in Britain, as well as the fact that typical convert is a 27-year-old white female.\textsuperscript{62} It seems that one of the reasons for Islam’s increasing popularity among non-Muslims in Europe has been the conversions of several celebrities. For instance, after the conversion of the French rapper Diam in 2010, there was a higher demand for Islam lessons in Paris-based mosques, according to various sources.\textsuperscript{63}

The reasons for conversions are, however, composed of many factors, among them the search for spirituality, religious identity and purpose in life. All of these, together with the atheistic lifestyle and upbringing experienced by many of the last generations due to

\textsuperscript{60} Samir Amghar, Samir, “Ideological and theological foundations of Muslim radicalism in France,” in EthnoReligious Conflict in Europe: Typologies of Radicalization in Europe’s Muslim Communities, Michael Emerson (ed.) (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2009), pp. 27-51.
the decline of Christianity in Europe, form the perfect circumstances for da’wa movements to present their ideologies and bring purpose-seeking non-Muslims closer to Islam. As an act of spreading Islam in Europe in the 20th century Da’wa was relatively new yet, along with the ongoing Salafi radicalization, the numbers of previously non-Muslim converts began to increase. New converts not only believe in Islam as a righteous way of life but they also form da’wa organizations in order to spread Islam in Europe. This shift from non-Muslim individuals first being themselves subjected to da’wa to being da’wa practitioners is changing the perspective on da’wa in Europe and, combined with Europe-oriented da’wa methods, is changing it into a home-grown European da’wa first and foremost conducted by and for Europeans.

Summary and Conclusions
The main purpose of this paper has been to present two of the main Islamic currents in the da’wa scene in France and Britain and to analyse the methods they use in order to maximize the effect of their da’wa. Two of the leading da’wa actors – the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafiyya – were presented in the geographical framework of two different European countries with the Muslim Brotherhood being more effective in France and the Salafiyya gaining more supporters in Britain.

Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organizations tend to participate in the state’s infrastructures but establish their own institutions in order to educate Muslims to stay inside communities within the state and participate in political and social aspects of the state. Salafiyya-inspired organizations, on the other hand, do not allow any synthesis between the Islamic way of life and the state. No political representation is allowed since democracy is not considered to be a part of Islam or “the Islamic way of life”. The only possible way for Salafis to interact with non-Muslims can only be through propagating Islam, predominantly the Salafi version.

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It seems that da’wa, as it is conceived in non-Muslim territories, is different from da’wa in Muslim lands, mostly because it addresses not only Muslims but non-Muslims as well. This not only gives da’wa in Europe the meaning of invitation or preaching, as is the case everywhere in the Muslim world, but also the meaning of mission.

Muslims in Europe are being courted by a wide range of Islamic movements and ideologists from the most moderate community leaders to the most radical Salafi-Jihadist. All of them offer their view of Islam and call upon others to join them in order to be the best Muslims they can be. Despite the geographical distance from the Middle East, the political, cultural and demographic changes taking place in the old homelands immediately resonate in the Muslim communities of Europe. The Arab Spring, the war in Syria and the emergence of the radical Islamic State in Iraq and Syria have influenced the Muslim communities in Europe and this has been reflected in the rise of radicalization in these communities.

France and Britain, the two case studies of this article, are both viable platforms for various Muslim currents. The Muslim Brotherhood is stronger in France than in Britain, while Salafi da’wa is stronger in the latter. Despite the differences in

In the structures of Muslim organizations in these countries, the common denominator is the influence da’wa movements keep gaining both in France and in Britain, as they are being transformed from being common da’wa movements into da’wa movements that convey messages addressed specifically to European citizens and which are conveyed specifically by European Muslim citizens.

**About the author**

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