Islamophobia

- Features of Islamophobia and Strategies against it

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Abstract

Due to increased immigration and Muslim presence in multicultural societies, concepts like Islamophobia become rooted and are used to explain acts by non-Muslims against Muslim Diasporas. Islamophobia comes alive from a spectrum of expressions where traditional West-Christian views and the Occident versus the Orient come to surface. This relationship establishes inclusion and exclusion, and, inflicting hegemony where majority’s norms against minorities are prominent features. Hence power structures are created and shape Muslims opportunities for religious freedom. Thereby, this research illustrates a deeper comprehension about Islamophobia – its contents, difficulties and effects – alongside, analysing those strategies and efforts that can be used in order to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia. The research departure from theoretical aspects of Islamophobia, and thereafter, leads to in-depth interviews with imams and a theoretical research. The focus of empirical findings and the analysis lies in issues of discrimination, legal framework, efforts for integration and strategies against Islamophobia. The research evidently reveals that Islamophobia is an intrusive element of today’s multicultural societies and ethnic relations. It must therefore be recognised as an important difficulty that has to be addressed, both on national and international levels. Thus, the rise of ethnic and religious collisions and/or the clash of civilisations would rather exist as a neglected memory, than a modern reality.

Key Words

Islamophobia/bic, Islam, Muslim, discrimination and/or hostility against Muslims, Media Representation, Religion, Integration, Ethnic Relations.
### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>ICERD</td>
<td>International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination</td>
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<td>EUMAP</td>
<td>EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program</td>
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<td>EUMC</td>
<td>European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia</td>
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<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Own Translation</td>
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<td>OSI</td>
<td>Open Society Institute</td>
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1. Introduction

In today’s multicultural societies some Muslims are harassed, molested, murdered and abused due to increased immigration and their religious and ethnic belonging. For instance, in Sweden during 2007, there were about 200 filed police reports with Islamophobic motives. Islamophobia is a complex phenomenon that involves many different features and expressions. These features and expressions must be understood from a perspective where the West stands in contrast to the East (the Occident versus the Orient). Stereotypifications, myths and images of the other are apparent constructions of this relationship. The impacts of inclusion and exclusion can therefore be recognised as it is influenced from those norms shaped by the majority’s standards. From these aspects, Islamophobia becomes noticed within the politics as well as within parenting. Muslims are in these conducts seen as a homogeneous group that share the same religious interpretation. Even though, this assertion neglects the dynamic ingredients that live within every ethnic and religious belonging. Still the racialisation process can come alive and shape a benchmark in which Muslims prospects for integration is measured. Islamophobia has also a legacy from the past, in which, power structures produce challenges and difficulties today. Muslim presence versus non-Muslim presence is therefore a vital part of these power structures. This reflects in media as stereotypes and satirical cartoons of Muslims evidently are believed to be actual truths about Muslims and Islam whereas social rejection and discrimination, alongside the increase of criminality, indicate this position. Thus existing laws become insufficient, because present legal framework does not deal with Islamophobia directly. Therefore, strategies against Islamophobia must be undertaken as the need for more cooperation and amplified integration must be considered. In addition, since Islamophobia is not a well-researched issue at IMER the urge for more documentation and attention must be addressed. As Islamophobia can be perceived to be an effect of increased immigration aligned with an ethnic relation that discriminate Muslims. In combination with the fact that the concept of Islamophobia must be extended and involve both the discrimination against Muslims religious belonging as well as their ethnic belonging. Perhaps, before efforts and strategies can fully support Muslims. Yet the battle against Islamophobia must never impede.

1 Further information, see Appendix.
2 Malmö University, Department of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER).
1.1 Aim, Purpose and Research Questions

This research aims towards a deeper understanding about Islamophobia, both theoretically and empirically. Theoretical aspects of Islamophobia are outlined in order to comprehend what Islamophobia consist of and how it operate in a societal context, alongside an aim to describe those effects that ultimately are caused by Islamophobia. An empirical investigation was accomplished by the methods of in-depth interviewing, to demonstrate Muslim voices regarding Islamophobia, together with, theoretical suggestions about strategies to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia. The purpose of the research is to both find a deeper comprehension about Islamophobia – its content, difficulties and effects – aligned with emphasising those strategies and efforts that can be used against Islamophobia. From these views, following research questions ought to be answered

- A deeper comprehension about Islamophobia; how does it operate and what are the effects?
- How is Islamophobia experienced by two imams?
- Which strategies and efforts can be used to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia?

1.2 Delimitations

This research are delimitated to concern only with main features of Islamophobia, hence the theoretical foundation may leave out some features that also can operate within Islamophobia. Since only two in-depth interviews were accomplished, this delimitation may not give a broad perspective of Muslim voices, yet, secondary data gave the investigation added verification.

1.3 Disposition

Initially, (1) Introduction, Aim, Purpose, Research Questions and Delimitations are outlined. Then, Method (2), consisting of chapters on, The Qualitative Method, The Theoretical Research and The In-Depth Interviews; where secondary and primary data is described. Moreover, Theoretical Aspects of Islamophobia (3) in which, for instance, Features of Islamophobia, Inclusion versus Exclusion; the Orientalist View, A Stereotyped Static Islam and the Effects of Islamophobia is revealed. Thereafter, the Empirical Findings (4) which contents describe: The Human Rights and the Swedish Legislation, Voices of Imams and Strategies to Prevent and Eliminate Islamophobia. In the Analysis (5), chapters like The Need to Address Islamophobia and Efforts against Islamophobia comes to surface. Lastly, own reflections and opinions are positioned in the Conclusion (6).
2. Method

2.1 The Qualitative Method

A qualitative investigation offers a diverse methodology that cannot be gained in the same way when using the methods offered by its sibling, the quantitative approach. Besides the possibility to carry out in-depth interviews and observations, qualitative approaches propose several distinguishing features. The author, Lawrence W. Neuman, highlights some of these qualitative characteristics, such as “focus on interactive processes, authenticity is the key, researcher is involved, situationally constrained, few cases”.

Also, a qualitative approach is primarily distinctive in its stance since it rarely interfere with variables and numbers, rather, investigate the social world and the human behaviour in a spectrum of different methods, whereas, Neuman suggests that qualitative data are empirical. They involve documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures, and tone), observing specific behaviors, studying written documents, or examining visual images...Instead of converting ideas or aspects of social world into general variables to form hypotheses, qualitative researchers borrow ideas from the people they study or develop from new ideas as they examine a specific case in its context or particular natural setting.

Therefore, a qualitative approach seemed suitable and thus practical in this research as two in-depth interviews was conducted, together with a theoretical research.

2.2 The Theoretical Research and the In-Depth Interviews

By using the method of in-depth interviewing, the researcher can find material which is more closely related to an intimate setting than, for instance, a group interview can offer. Hence, in-depth interviews (the primary data) with the two imams were accomplished and then combined with a theoretical research, in which secondary data is prominent.

2.2.1 The Secondary Data

Secondary data or existing statistics indicates that the researcher uses a collection of information that have been gathered by other researchers and then used again, still, with an

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3 Neuman (1999) p. 16
5 Neuman (1999) p. 145
innovative perspective. By using secondary data or a collection of information, the researcher may save a lot of time and effort by not gathering this oneself, on the other hand, it is important to be aware of bias within the data collection. Therefore, the data’s reliability and validity must be considered when using it within one’s own research. With this in mind, a theoretical research has been carried out, where, Swedish laws such as the Swedish Penal Code and Human Rights such as ICERD have been emphasised. Moreover, relevant reports and theoretical approaches from, for instance, the European Commission & EUMC and The Runnymede Trust have been collected. The theoretical research is used in order to highlight those strategies and efforts that could be used against Islamophobia.

2.2.2 The Primary Data

The process of the interviews started with a search to find appropriate informants to the research. This was relatively hard since several of the Islamic organisations were not accessible due to the fact that many of the official telephone numbers was enclosed without any reference. Anyway, one contact was established by telephone with an imam (Idriz Karaman at the Bosnian Mosque in Malmö, prime imam over Muslim-Bosnian in Sweden and vice chairman for the Swedish Muslim Association). With methods of snowball sampling the interview with the imam (Alen Delic, imam at the Bosnian mosque in Malmö) was possible to carry out. It is important to consider when using snowball sampling, that it can consist of some bias. On the other hand, by using this method the researcher might come in contact with informants that perhaps not would be possible without the help from a person that already functioning within the network. According to the author Pranee Liamputtong, this method is very useful when searching for informants that try to be anonymous and hidden due to some sort of vulnerability. Further, by taking advantage of a semi-structured approach where an Interview Guide shaped and used. The semi-structured approach is preferable alongside the Interview Guide because the interview is achieved with reference to the Interview Guide and

6 Neuman (1999) p. 35
7 Neuman (1999) p. 305
8 See Abbreviations.
9 Interesting phenomenon since it might underline an urge of withdraw from Islamic organisations from being exposed by the Media or the public domain, perhaps due to impacts of Islamophobia.
10 Neuman (1999) p. 199
11 Liamputtong (2007) p. 48
12 Interview Guide, see Appendix.
to spontaneous discussions as well.\textsuperscript{13} It is also vital to grasp ethical considerations before, during and after the interviews: as some questions might be experienced as a direct offense to the informant. Neuman highlights this and state that integrity and a personal moral code is vital to address when researching\textsuperscript{14} hence the treatment of one’s informants is of high interest. This is evident when conducting research that involves, for instance, people that want to be anonymous, and therefore, cannot be mentioned by their name in one’s research and Liamputtong states that

\begin{quote}
Conducting research on vulnerable people raises numerous ethical issues and these require careful consideration … Sensitive researchers must carefully manage the emotions of the participants and ensure that by participating in their studies, the vulnerable research participants are not left with painful experiences.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Ethical considerations must be addressed, no matter if the informants in the research are working within a public setting or individuals that are trying to hid. Further, the two imams in this research were emailed the interview guide in advance, so they had the possibility to be prepared with some answers before the interview. The interviews with the imams took place at the Bosnian mosque in Malmö. Before and during the interviews, a warm reception was experienced. The first interview was carried out with the imam, Alen Delic, and the second with Idriz Karaman. Both were very easy to talk with, thus, gave experienced insights and knowledge that could not have been given elsewhere: due to their inside perspectives. Though, as a researcher it is always important to be, for instance, rather neutral against one’s informant. Additionally, the author Rob Millar states that

\begin{quote}
During the main body of the interview it is important for the interviewer to encourage the interviewee to maintain a high level of participation. As such, skills of listening and reinforcing are very important...The verbal and nonverbal reactions of the interviewer to the interviewee responses must therefore always be neutral and non-judgmental.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

These thoughts were considered during the interview, and therefore, the interview was experienced to be serious, friendly and impartial. The interviews took about one hour each and were accomplished with both recording and taking notes. The question about anonymity was raised after the interview and both the informants did not care if they were anonymous or

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} Neuman (1999) p. 90
\textsuperscript{15} Liamputtong (2007) p. 32
\textsuperscript{16} Millar (1992) p. 11
\end{flushright}
not. The drafts from the interviews were sent to both imams for a review. This was carried out with an awareness to erase any misunderstandings. As, for instance, the transcription from Swedish to English surely increases some inaccuracies. In addition, two interviews were accomplished which might not be considered representative or valid, and therefore, attention to this ought to be known by the researcher when analysing the results. However, the secondary data functioned complementing and therefore strengthened the research reliability. The results gained by the in-depth interviews with the imams were very rewarding; thus gave a realistic depth to this research that cannot be found within the secondary data.

3. Theoretical Aspects of Islamophobia

The thought in this section is to find a deeper understanding about what Islamophobia consist of and how Islamophobia operate in a societal context and answer the research question; A deeper comprehension about Islamophobia; how does it operate and what are the effects? Following chapters, such as ‘Representations of Muslims within the Media’ underlines several of those main expressions that function within Islamophobia. This is carried out next to a description of those effects that ultimately is caused by Islamophobia and its followers.

3.1 Features of Islamophobia

The concept of Islamophobia is a rather new concept in the public debate and thus useful since it labels several different features and traits into one. Still, the concept also has its critics, whilst some debaters and/or researchers believe, for instance, that the concept is only used in a way where it protects Muslims against criticism.\(^{17}\) Fred Halliday (specialised in politics of the Middle-East) states that the term is misleading and ought to correspond better with anti-Muslim than anti-Islamic since this complexity rather is about the people than the religion itself.\(^{18}\) Nonetheless, The Runnymede Trust\(^{19}\) suggests that the concept is not ideal but yet preferable, since it associates with similar concepts such as xenophobia and racism. They consider that the concept was first believed to be created and used in the late 1980s and

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17 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 31
18 Halliday (2002) p. 224
19 The Runnymede Trust, a commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia in Britain, is working with different aspects of multiculturalism; such as ethnicity, religion etc.
that it refers to a hatred or dislike against the Muslim or Islamic dogma. On the other hand, Anne Sofie Roald (PhD Islamology) and Pernilla Ouis (PhD in Human Ecology) grasp that the concept was not used until in the late 1990s, although, with a historical heritage yet without its label. The label, Islamophobia, was not officially accepted as ‘a general intolerance’: consisting of terms as anti-semitism and xenophobia, until 2001 by Stockholm International Forum on Combating Intolerance. Jonas Otterbeck (PhD in History of Religions) and Pieter Bevelander (Associate professor at MIM and senior lecturer at IMER) also draw parallels with notions such as anti-semitism, racism and xenophobia. They state that Islamophobic traits surely have their own history, while, to some extent connected to expressions similar to the concepts closest relatives, for instance, anti-semitism and orientalism. This stands in relation to how European nation-states and colonialism caused a Eurocentric belief that the other are always distinguished as lower creatures, in contrast to those who belong to us. Additionally, Matti Bunzl (specialised in Anthropology and History) draws parallels with anti-semitism aligned with Jews when stating that both Jews and Muslims “have a common enemy in a right-wing Christian fundamentalism”. Thus highlighting the impact of how a Christian belief might be used as the norm for how a religion should be portrayed and performed. Further, The Runnymede Trust explains that

The term Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs.

In addition, Roald, Ouis and also Bunzl, understand the concept as a tense relationship between non-Muslims and Muslims and this relationship has been even more strengthened since the 9/11 attack against World Trade Center. They indicate that Islamophobia refers to

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20 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 1
21 Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 28
22 Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 33
23 MIM: Malmö Institute of Migration, Diversity and Welfare.
24 IMER: Faculty of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Malmö University.
26 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 36
27 Bunzl (2007) p. 10
28 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 4
The term refers partly to a fear or a phobia against the religion ‘Islam’ and of its supporters, Muslims, and also on a campaign against Islam and Muslims that originate from this fear...Expressions of Islamophobia are built upon the majority’s vision about the minority.\(^{30}\)

Thus, Ouis and Roald perceive that the hegemony of the majority to some extent creates the other: where the norm of what is accepted and not accepted (and which models of explanation one is using) establishes the foundation in which we try to understand (or not understand) the other.\(^{31}\) Consequently, this cause prejudices and discrimination against those who do not belong to us since they do not apply to the majority’s norm. The power relations between Muslims and non-Muslims therefore become very apparent. Whereas, Ouis and Roald highlights that it is vital to attend to the difference between prejudices and those concrete and negative experiences that have been carried out by Muslims.\(^{32}\) Göran Larsson (PhD in religious science) emphasise that Islamophobia can be built upon preconceived meanings about Muslims that are rooted in stereotypification and negative attitudes about Muslims.\(^{33}\) Islamophobia poses a strong indication of how race, ethnicity and religion are challenged by dominant discourses in which, for instance, racial representations from the Media are utilised to express this position. Ouis and Roald suggest, alongside the importance of power relations, that Islamophobia consist of a certain amount of myths

...we consider that the problem with Islamophobia and Westophobia is that it usually not originates from one’s experience, rather on a creation of myths about the other. In this process we have observed that global political conflicts and how these actually are presented in media, is of greater significance than what oneself have been experienced in the meeting with the other.\(^{34}\)

Beside creation of myths and ‘the mediated experience’, Ouis and Roald outline main motives or features in order to explain what causes Islamophobia, such as, economical, political and racial motives. The scapegoat theory comes to surface and explains, according to Roald, to some extent how “groups of people need to physically or mentally oppress contrasting groups or individuals in order to build up group sentiment and adhesion”.\(^{35}\) By scapegoating the

\(^{31}\) Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 27
\(^{32}\) Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 27
\(^{33}\) Larsson (2006) p. 10
\(^{34}\) Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 28
\(^{35}\) Roald (2004) p. 54
other, in these contexts the Muslims, the non-Muslims produce motives to demonstrate their own greatness. This consequently causes, for instance, religious motives where Islamic ideas ultimately threaten traditional values from the West.³⁶ Moreover, economical motives, means Ouis and Roald, tend to be emphasised when there is a lot of unemployment and when social fees increase. Political motives can be demonstrated as ‘Muslim monolithic visions’ are thought to threatening the West, even if the reality shows another side of it.³⁷ Racial motives can be pragmatic when Islamophobes intend to gradually decrease a specific social group as lower creatures, of course, depending on which: society, ethnicity and/or place, time it is.³⁸ Bunzl highlight this when stating that

...Islamophobes are not particular worried whether Muslims can be good Germans, Italians, or Danes. Rather, they question whether Muslims can be good Europeans. Islamophobia, in other words, functions less in the interest of national purification than as a means of fortifying Europe.³⁹

In this context it is clear that, according to Bunzl that the importance of fortifying Europe comes to surface. Debates such as whether Turkey is suitable as a member of the European Union is prominent whereas major leaders embrace a resist against a possible entry due to their Islamophobia.⁴⁰ Hence, Islamophobia becomes a political matter and Bunzl explains that

All over Europe, immigration, the status of Islam, and the possibility of Turkey’s EU membership are central topics of political debate. More often than not, the terms are dictated by the far Right. And the eventual outcome, on Turkey’s accession, for example, is far from certain. Islamophobia, in this sense, is a genuine political issue, part of wide-open debate on the future of the Muslim presence in Europe.⁴¹

The increase of Muslim presence (and Muslim diasporas trying to make space)⁴² ultimately cause Muslims to become holy warriors, according to Bunzl, is a never ending clash of civilizations.⁴³ As has been demonstrated, Islamophobia consist of many features in a

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³⁶ Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 35
⁴⁰ Bunzl (2007) p. 31-32
⁴¹ Bunzl (2007) p. 44
⁴² For more interesting knowledge about ‘Muslim presence’ read, for instance, Making Muslim Space – in north America and Europe edited by Barbara Daly Metcalf.
⁴³ Bunzl (2007) p. 46
combination with a collection of different thoughts and views, whereas, the importance of power relations and majorities norms become very important. Thus the concept is neither easy nor obvious to comprehend. Instead, Islamophobia has a multitude of vital factors with a range of expressions; hence only some of these are demonstrated in following chapters.

3.2 Islamophobic Expressions
This chapter offers a deeper comprehension about how Islamophobia can operate and be evident in a broad sense, by certain expressions.

3.2.1 Inclusion versus Exclusion; the Orientalist View
As mentioned, Islamophobia is evident when Muslims are perceived as something that does not belong to (the superior) us rather something that has connotations as the other. The notion of US versus THEM is therefore integrated in a way where Muslims and/or Islamic affiliations are excluded from the dominant discourse, thus, to some extent based upon the Orientalist View. The author and professor Edward W. Said explains this relationship

The general basis of Orientalist thought is an imaginative and yet drastically polarized geography dividing the world into two unequal parts, the larger, “different” one called the Orient, the other, also known as “our” world, called the Occident or the West…There are, of course, many religious, psychological, and political reasons for this, but all of these reasons derive from a sense that so far as the West is concerned, Islam represents not only a formidable competitor but also a latecoming challenge to Christianity.44

A power relation of us the Occident (or the West) versus them the Orient becomes apparent. Islamophobia is perceived to be a fairly ‘new’ concept, though, have its underlying historical aspects. Said explains that ever since the Middle Ages and some part of the Renaissance in Europe, “Islam was believe to be demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity”.45 This enlightens how the Orient has stand in a negative contrast to the Christian-West trough many century’s to this day. While, Otterbeck and Bevelander stress that

The fantasy about the Orient functioned as a free zone where the Western everyday life…was out of order…Today is Islam often a symbol of fanaticism, terrorism and the patriarchal, in the 1940s more of a exotic framing - a kind of side-scene that signalled something different and remote.46 (OT)

44 Said (1997) p. 4-5
Thus, visions of the different and exotic triggered connotations that have been altered today and therefore give life to Islamophobia, still, surely depend on which time and place that is considered. The author and journalist, Trevor Mostyn questions the same transition: “has the romantic orientalist of yesterday become the Islamophobe of today...”.\textsuperscript{47} Otterbeck and Bevelander gives an example of this transition when stating that texts from older times gives evidence of how the elite (or dominant discourse) write about (and comprehend) Islam and Muslims.\textsuperscript{48} Another symbolic example of how the elite’s power might influence Muslims can ultimately be seen within France. In 2004 the French government did ban noticeably religious affiliations, such as, headscarves and skullcaps. The author, Joan W. Scott, highlights how this ban have a colonial legacy together with raisons d’État that ultimately exclude those people that do not correlate with the accepted norm; even if the norm might itself have its own abnormalities. Scott declares that

Banning the headscarf or the veil is a symbolic gesture; for some European nations it is a way of taking a stand against Islam, declaring entire Muslim populations to be a threat to national integrity and harmony.\textsuperscript{49}

Hence, Islamophobia is not only filled with connotations from the past, it is also filled with a thought that we cannot include the other based on difference, rather sameness. Exclusion, instead of inclusion, is therefore more favourable. A successful multicultural society is then challenged and in danger when not considering the Muslims as an integrated element of the society. The Runnymede Trust stress vital aspects concerning this and means that “‘WE’ are civilised, reasonable, generous, efficient, sophisticated, enlightened, non-sexist. ‘They’ are primitive, violent, irrational, scheming, disorganised, oppressive”.\textsuperscript{50} Logically, the islamaphobic we rather perceive the Muslims and their affiliations excluded than included from the society, hence, long-term unemployment, some societal policies on asylum and immigration, legislations and so forth are obvious parts of social exclusion. Segregation and forced assimilation is also distinctive features. Mental and physical suffering and, geographical exclusion is also prominent: as Muslims try to establish their own space in public settings. Aje Carlbom (PhD in Socialanthropology Research) stress an important aspect of this

\textsuperscript{47} Mostyn (2002) p. 138
\textsuperscript{48} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 19
\textsuperscript{49} Scott (2007) p. 3
\textsuperscript{50} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 6
Muslims need to establish mosques are understood as self-evident, as “natural”; while native needs to understand who the Muslim actors are, or arguments against the establishment of mosques, are dismissed; instead, natives are classified as Islamophobic when they raise questions about the establishment of mosques.

A statement that enlightens the complex duality of Islamophobia; consisting of both features of how natives actually are Islamophobes, but also, how natives might be criticised as Islamophobes as soon as they discuss those issues connected to Islam or Muslims. However, inclusion and exclusion (based upon the Orientalist View or a colonial heritage) is therefore a very prominent feature within Islamophobia. Relationships of power can be seen when Muslims try to create their own space in a non-Muslim world, for instance, when building mosques. Nevertheless, challenged by a range of Islamophobic motives; some mentioned in forthcoming chapters.

3.2.2 Religious and Cultural Claims

It is frequently alleged that Muslims use their religion for strategic, political and military advantage rather than as a religious faith and as a way of life shaped by a comprehensive legal tradition…Muslims are assumed to have an instrumental or manipulative view of their religion rather than to be sincere in their beliefs, for their faith is “indistinguishable from a weapon”.51

The Runnymede Trust emphasise how Islam is seen as a violent religion in similar way as Ouis and Roald. They state that this might be based upon a perspective where religious interpretations by some terrorists consequently are seen as a generalisation for the whole Muslim community and Islam.52 This eventually leads to perceiving every single (Muslim) act as a generalisation for everyone else too.53 Whereas, Muslims are rather seen as one (religious or cultural) identity than a multitude of identities. Otterbeck and Bevelander use similar connotations when stating that

To see Muslims as a homogeneous group contributes to hide individual Muslims other group belongings such as nationality, ethnicity, class, and gender and also theirs individual life plan. It is important to see that this is an aspect of Islamophobia.54 (OT)

51 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 8
52 Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 36
53 Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 36
54 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 11
In addition, Roald implies that ‘cultural Islamophobia’ can also be used against Muslims, since it underlines how our culture is much more accepted and superior than your culture. Again, features of inclusion and exclusion become apparent: where religious groups that either belong to the majority or the minority may find themselves in a societal relationship of power structures. Otterbeck and Bevelander enlighten that religious belonging is therefore a vital element when trying to understanding how social associations are shaped.\textsuperscript{55} Furthermore, Larsson emphasise a vital fact when stating that

> From a religious scientific perspective, it is especially important to accentuate that religions do not have any own force or inherent ability to take action. The religion do not say to people what they should do, rather it is first when people interpret and turn over one’s “readings” into practical actions that something happens. In other words, it is not the religion itself that take actions rather the people that interpret the religions.\textsuperscript{56} (OT)

The importance of religious interpretations is highly vital to reconnect with when addressing higher awareness to why some Islamic fundamentalists or Muslim terrorists actively cause disasters. Hence, religion is rather a claim or interpretation than an own being itself. The same claim goes for, as an example, crimes of honour: which consist of rather traditional conformity and religious interpretations than anything else. Unfortunately, these interpretations are very wrongly represented as actual Muslim and Islamic truths in the media.

### 3.2.3 Representations of Muslims and Islam within the Media

Images of Islam and Muslims and different shapes of Islamophobia vary from country to country, depending on the countries socio-political and economical situation and which Muslim group that is the dominated in the country.\textsuperscript{57} (OT)

Ouis’s and Roald’s statement highlight a vital element in the comprehension of media representations, namely that Islamophobia is not a fixed or stable subject rather changeable and therefore not rooted into a specific country or population. The media’s representations of Muslims therefore depend on which context it is, and also, it might consist of a variety of prejudices and different forms of discrimination. Allegorically, media’s representation of Muslims could be repeatedly reproduced as primitive and over-sexed creatures. In due course this might create influential features of Islamophobia. Whereas, according to Otterbeck and

\textsuperscript{55} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 16
\textsuperscript{56} Larsson (2006) p. 20
\textsuperscript{57} Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 39
Bevelander, the criticism against Islam sometime can be legitimised, even though it might be defined as an actual violation such as, *hate speech*. The Runnymede Trust highlights that imageries in *cartoons* is a distinctive trait of how media uses Muslim representations and declares a dual side of how the right of *freedom of speech and expression* is a vital element of a democracy, but at the same time, used to create prejudices or discrimination. The vital role of journalists: who have a great responsibility to not print discriminating images must therefore be recognised. Furthermore, *gender perspectives* are also apparent in media’s representations of Muslims whereas the Runnymede Trust propose that

Ouis and Roald statements become useful in these context as they state that *the other* constantly could be viewed as a negative object (in a hegemonic relationship) in contrast to one self’s rightfulness. This might cause a view where the oppression of women is an image that only belongs to an Islamic dogma, in contrary to non-Muslims that rather fight for women’s rights. Hence, Roald implies that the image of *the victimised woman* might be an expression of Islamophobic trait. Scott also underlines these matters when emphasising a French context where sexual liberation may stand in a correlation with integration. The French government is seen as the liberator and ought to rescue those Muslim females that are oppressed by their own ‘people’. From these circumstances, the French governmental ban to wear conspicuously religious signs and affiliations is just a signal that positions this urge. This declares an Islamophobic feature that sees the veil as a national enemy rather than an obvious (human) right. Further, Scott means that “Sexuality was the measure of difference, of the distance Muslims had to traverse if they were to become fully French”. Therefore, not only are stereotypifications of Muslims in general used as a reproduced truth of them, but also, a

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58 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 35
59 See cartoons in The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 21-23
60 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 25
61 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 28
62 Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 31
64 Scott (2007) p. 165-166
65 Scott (2007) p. 166
measurement on how and what a Muslim has to accomplish to be part of a given society. Otterbeck and Bevelander express similar connotations regarding gender stereotypification.

Within the pop culture, stereotypes about Muslims are gender specific. Men are active in a negative way, engaged in violence and oppression against women, deceit and self glorification, whilst women are submissive and perceived as a collective without any own ability for liberation.  

Media establishes a great deal of how and in what manner Islamophobia is reproduced and used. From a Swedish context, Ouis and Roald states that features of Islamophobia are mainly expressed from the media, such as trough newspapers, television, literature and so forth. Whereas, they also grasp that Swedish reporters are aware of their important position and role when giving information, in contrary to Norway and Denmark. In addition, the perspective from Aje Carlbom offers a similar view when stating that “It is possible to criticize anything as long as the criticism stays within the confines of what is regarded as politically approved” in a multicultural society such as Sweden. However, Roald imply that

As with other countries’ media, Swedish television channels and newspapers tend to concentrate on problematic rather than positive cases. Thus ‘ethnic crimes’ are reported on a large scale, whereas well-integrated and successful immigrants rarely receive attention. Moreover, if there is reportage or news coverage of positive events connected to the immigrant community, there is rarely any public response.

Ouis and Roald also underline how the media’s representations of Muslims can be reflected in some literature, for instance, Betty Mahmoody’s book *Not Without my Daughter* (1988). This book enlightens how a geographical transition from an American society to the Iranian country transforms Mahmoody’s Iranian husband into an oppressive man. Thus, gives the reader an inside perspective, yet, at the same time might strengthen Islamophobic motives. Furthermore, Otterbeck and Bevelander also give useful examples

On homepages it is claimed that Muslims refuse to submit to Sweden. They are rebellions and even if they sometimes can appear to be integrated, this is only a façade. Actually, they want to dominate Sweden and force Swedes to submission before Islam. The only cure is to eliminate the Muslims and Islam.

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68 Carlbom (2003) p. 21
69 Roald (2004) p. 70
70 For further discussion see, for instance, Mostyn (2002) p. 138
71 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 39
From these views, it becomes suitable to exemplify political parties such as the Swedish Scania Party or the French National Front and how political parties use typical stereotypes in order to both receive more members but also emphasise their political agenda; even though it consists of Islamophobia. On the other hand, media is also used in order to spread political messages containing of methods to prevent Islamophobia. Therefore, media’s representations of Muslims establish a duality of ‘the mediated experience’ due to its variety of perspectives. The British sociologist, Anthony Giddens, claims is instructive in this sense as he claims that ‘the mediated experience’ influence its viewers to settings that have never been experienced before.72 This leaves a multitude of choices, images, representations and expressions to choose from. Additionally, Giddens draws attention to ‘the dialectic of the local and global’ where “events at one pole of a distanciated relation often produce divergent or even contrary occurrences at another”.73 No matter how many miles it is between different populations, Islamophobic images and (untruthful) representations can be expressed anyway, due to the possibilities that globalisation offers. Again, the impact of newspapers such as the satire images of the prophet Muhammed in the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten (2005) comes to surface where ‘the west against the east’ and right for the freedom to speech is challenged. Mostyn, enlightens this challenge

The western media revels in revealing such chilling inconsistencies but it also severely distorts the image of the purer aspects of the Islamic world…The murder of a pregnant Muslim girl by her family in London provokes western revulsion of the Islamic world’s apparent barbaric ‘otherness’ but does not such obsession with family honour still exist in southern Italy and Greece?74

Mostyn’s statement not only draws parallels with how western media choose a certain perspective in which Islamophobia are represented, but also, sheds some light over how characteristics thought to only belong to the other also can be evident within the west. The report from EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP) & the Open Society Institute (OSI) highlight another importance aspect

The importance of media as a source of information is likely to increase if cities become increasingly segregated and ethnically divided…During the last decade the interface between Muslims and non-Muslims has been shrinking because of segregation within the housing and labour markets…75

72 Giddens (1991) p. 84
73 Giddens (1991) p. 22
The representations of Muslims and Islam within media are evidently very varied and based upon many different factors; for instance, the usage of stereotypes as a tool for increased popularity within the politics. Following chapter enlightens added expressions that could be decisive for this utilisation of untruthful representations of Muslims and Islam.

3.2.4 A Stereotyped Static Islam

At the present, “Islam”, and “the West” have taken on a powerful new urgency everywhere. And we must note immediately that it is always the West, and not Christianity, that seems to pitted against Islam. Why? Because the assumption is that whereas “the West” is greater than and has surpassed the stage of Christianity, its principal religion, the world of Islam – its varied societies, histories, and languages notwithstanding – is still mired in religion, primitivity, and backwardness… the world of Islam… is no more than “Islam”, reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics despite the appearance of contradictions and experiences of variety that seem on the surface to be as plentiful as those of the West.  

Said’s statement highlights that Islamophobic expressions are also demonstrated in a conduct whereas Islam is perceived as a fixed and static entity rather than a diverse and dynamic dogma. Therefore, it is possible that simulated generalisations about every Muslim become apparent and take shape as typical stereotypifications and untruthful representations. For instance, a Muslim individual holds the burden for his or hers mistakes alongside the Muslim community, thus the individual misdeed becomes a collective Muslim misdeed. Even though there are many differences between Muslims from: the Middle East, Bosnia or Somalia. Islamaphobia are also apparent when not recognising that Islam consist of a diversity of interpretations of religious scripts (as the Qur´an) and gender perspectives, where, this could stand in relation with Muslims origin. Hence, ethnic and/or religious tradition is diversely understood and internalised. Nonetheless, an islamaphobic idea is that all Muslims mistreat and oppress their females, in contrast to non-Muslims. This demonstrates a gender perspective in which false representations flourish and are seen as typical characteristics of the primitive Muslim that do not coop with a modern world. Influences from a patriarchal structure are therefore only referred to a Muslim discourse, even though it does not correspond with the reality. Otterbeck and Bevelander mention this context of unreal representation when stating that

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76 Said (1997) p. 11
77 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 5
78 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 6
The image of Muslims as theological programmed robots comes alive when, for instance, it is claimed that all Muslims pray five times each day. This is rather something that Muslims should do, not what every Muslim actually are doing.\(^{80}\) (OT)

The diversity of Islam is challenged by a thought in which, for example, Islamophobic prejudices are situated. This correlates with views where Islam and Muslims are perceived as enemies, rather than allies.

3.2.5 The Islamic Enemy

Fear of Islam is not new. The tendency to judge the actions of Muslims in isolation, to generalize from the actions of the few to the many, to disregard similar excesses committed in the name of other religions and ideologies (including freedom and democracy) is also not new...Islam is a triple threat: political, civilization, and demographic. The confrontation is often portrayed as a clash of civilizations.\(^{81}\)

The author and professor, John L. Esposito’s claim above, emphasises the portrait of Islam and the west as a *clash of civilisations* thus stressing another expression of Islamophobia. In addition to another vision in which Muslims are stereotyped as violent creatures that only carry out barbaric theorist attacks.\(^{82}\) This ultimately causes Muslims to be seen as enemies rather than allies. The Islamic Human Rights Commission additionally emphasise that migrant groups in general “have been intimidated into silence or passivity by ‘anti-terror’ measures”\(^{83}\) and suggests that “Islamophobia” too narrowly identifies the problem - which is not simply fear of a religion, but also the demonisation and persecution of any person or group labelled as a “terror suspect”\(^{84}\). Furthermore, Ouis and Roald indicate that terrorist attacks might be interpreted in cultural terms and therefore create an understanding in which some wars are thought to be about ‘the Islam against the west’.\(^{85}\) Sometimes a war strengthened by headlines such as ‘Jihad in America’ and ‘I Believe in Islamaphobia’.\(^{86}\) Runnymede Trust and Larsson propose another view i.e. that the West needed a new enemy

\(^{80}\) Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 34
\(^{81}\) Esposito (1999) p. 218, 219
\(^{82}\) The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 7
\(^{83}\) http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=2557
\(^{84}\) http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=2557
\(^{85}\) Ouis & Roald (2003) p. 33
\(^{86}\) Esposito (1999) p. 214
after the Soviet Union; hence Islam and Muslims were suitable for this task. Further, Esposito states that among the arguments proffered by those who fear the promotion of a democratic process in the Muslim world is that it risks the “hijacking of democracy” by Islamic activists and furthers Islamic inroads into centers of power, threatening Western interests and fostering anti-Westernism and increased instability.

The Islamic enemy could therefore be understood by some Islamophobes as a democratic capturer, that poisoning democracy with its barbaric conducts, instead of embracing it. This, unfortunately lead to effects such as discrimination against Muslims and social rejection.

3.3 The Effects of Islamophobia

Discrimination and prejudices are some of the effects of Islamophobia; consisting of characteristics such as that Muslims voices are not being heard, instead silenced. For instance, Otterbeck’s and Bevelander’s study demonstrate that youngsters can evidently be excluded from certain social settings and receive anonymous messages through their computer or telephone due to a religious exposure. Other results that have been given by the study are that Muslim youngsters are more exposed to violations than Christian youngsters. Even though this study only demonstrates results carried out from a Swedish context it reveals some data that is useful when exemplify some effects of Islamophobia. Following chapters demonstrate how Islamophobia can effectively oppress Muslims.

3.3.1 Discrimination, Violence and Social Rejection

The effects of Islamophobia can be several and it impinges on micro, meso and macro levels of the society. Consequently, these effects inflict economical as well as social difficulties against people and nations. Foremost, The Runnymede Trust accentuate a systemic disadvantage where this could stand in relation to everyday attacks on Muslims as they can be spat on, mental and physically harassed, molested, abused and so forth based on a Islamophobic motives.

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88 Esposito (1999) p. 241
89 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 51
90 Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 52
91 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 38
Muslims are precluded from taking part in everyday social interaction which for most other people is largely or entirely unproblematic. Even more obviously, there can be tensions between workplace routines and expectations on the one hand and religious requirements on the other.\footnote{The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 31}

The Runnymede Trust also emphasise how Islamophobia affects youngsters in violent forms, for example, as social disorders. This is evident when trends such as gang-formation take shape: consisting of criminality and territorial traits.\footnote{The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 18} Furthermore, Larsson underlines how social rejection might lead to a growing drug addiction and criminality among Muslims, which in the end could cause riots such as the one in France 2005.\footnote{Larsson (2006) p. 29} Due to unemployment and tenement segregation (like wise to the situation in Rosengård, Malmö/Sweden) does social rejection become a decisive element within the society, both on macro, meso and micro levels. The effects of social rejection impact both countries economical finances and the individual itself when social fees are compensated instead of taxes are paid and depression is experienced, instead of enjoying life. Alongside the importance of social rejection another vital Islamophobic effect can be evident. The lawyer, Paul Lappalainen, clarifies how structural discrimination are operating when stating that

\begin{quote}
Structural discrimination...means that the principle of every humans equal worth is not uphold, and therefore is this a serious democratic problem for the whole society and not only for those groups that are affected. Structural discrimination is therefore to a large extent about laws, regulations and principles that already exist are not followed.\footnote{SOU 2005:56, p. 75} (OT)
\end{quote}

A typical example of structural discrimination can be seen within media as it “produce what is going to be obvious truths about minorities” according to Lappalainen.\footnote{SOU 2005:56, p. 133} This can also be evident within the labour market: as Muslims do not have the possibility to practice their rituals. Furthermore, as global terrorism expands and inflicts disasters, this causes a greater focus onto Muslims in general. Larsson explains this claim

\begin{quote}
Muslims that lived in Europe was influenced and affected by the terrorism in New York...by increased suspicion and discrimination...In spite the fact that most Muslims do not sympathises with terrorism they have to relate to the Medias image of Islam as a violence and fanatic religion.\footnote{Larsson (2006) p. 27} (OT)
\end{quote}
Thus, discrimination and violence against Muslims are not only related to a systemic disadvantage but also to violence built upon global events that eventually affect the local Muslim community by, for instance, usage of Islamophobic threats. Another effect of Islamophobia is seen within the war against the terror when: Muslims are held in hostage at Guantanamo Bay and not considered to have the right for a fair trial, even though they might be innocent. This leads to a greater amount of responsibility onto Muslim representations, political and governmental leader’s in general: in order to give their support for these kinds of victims and also try to decrease Islamophobia. This stands thereafter in relation to the importance of good parenting and schools preventative measurements. Larsson underlines this by stating that schools are very vital since they provide a venue for both students and parents, which consists of both Muslims and non-Muslims.\textsuperscript{98} Lastly, Otterbeck’s and Bevelander’s statement become suitable in these views as they declare that

\begin{quote}
Islamophobia is something that affects Muslims, but Islamophobia is not only the Muslims responsibility. In similar way as racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia and anti-semitism do Islamophobia inflict behaviours, opinions and attitudes in the society that rhyme bad with ideals about democracy and multiculturalism.\textsuperscript{99} (OT)
\end{quote}

3.3.2 Moral Prevention or Legal Prohibition?

Evidently, since the concept of Islamophobia is very diverse and complex, the question whether Muslims has been violated by Islamophobes regarding a legal or moral dimension comes to surface. Otterbeck and Bevelander declare that this debate is not an easy task, rather consisting of challenges such as

\begin{quote}
Some Islamophobia connects with legislations that concerns with discrimination or laws about hate speech, while other [Islamophobia] can be perceived as morally blameworthy (from certain positions, ex. a humanistic and anti-racial) or originated from ignorance. In this context it is important to highlight what is and what is not protected by law, meaning, both which forms of expression that are protected and which ones that one is protected from.\textsuperscript{100} (OT)
\end{quote}

From these views, it is vital, according to Otterbeck and Bevelander, to have the opportunity to address and establish a social acceptance that it is tolerable to debate criticism about Islam and Muslims, yet, only with fairness and not violations.\textsuperscript{101} On the other hand, this emphasises

\textsuperscript{98} Larsson (2006) p. 35
\textsuperscript{99} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 57
\textsuperscript{100} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 11
\textsuperscript{101} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 11
one of the legal dilemmas within the discourse of Islamophobia, namely, the concern about
who decides what is a violation and what is not; thus, which parameters are useable in this
discussion? Hence, Otterbeck and Bevelander draw parallels with how, for example, the
impact of newspapers (such as, the satire images of the prophet Muhammed in the Danish
newspaper, Jyllands-Posten) indicates this dilemma. They suggest that legislators ought to
revise existing legislation.\textsuperscript{102} Lastly, the recurring theme of Islamophobia has evidently been
that Muslims are constantly stereotyped into untruthful images which then are used against
them. This is carried out in a way where Islamophobia cause Muslims to social rejection and
being discriminated by non-Muslims. Accordingly, approaching chapters focus on strategies
against Islamophobia combined with insights from two Muslim voices.

4. The Empirical Findings

With above theoretical aspects of Islamophobia in mind, forthcoming chapter the Empirical
Findings, demonstrates which human rights and Swedish legislations that could be applied
when dealing with Islamophobia.\textsuperscript{103} Together with the imam’s voices and strategies to prevent
and eliminate Islamophobia: which could be useful when tackling Islamophobia. The strove is
to answer these research questions; how is Islamophobia experienced by two imams? And
which strategies and efforts can be used to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia?

4.1 The Human Rights and the Swedish Legislation

Discrimination, social rejection and violence are already mentioned results of Islamophobia.
However, since some people indirectly ignore the human rights as well as fully embrace the
Swedish legislations when carrying out Islamophobic acts, a legal framework must be
addressed and acknowledged. Therefore, in order to grasp what people with Islamophobic
motives are in fact violating in a legal sense and also to understand which rights that protects
Muslims, conventions like the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of
Racial Discrimination (ICERD) must be emphasised. First, religious freedom is declared in
the human rights such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights convention, article 18

\begin{quote}
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change
his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to
manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{102} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 33, 34

\textsuperscript{103} The Swedish legislation is only used to exemplify a national perspective.
This article is also mentioned in, for instance, the European Convention on Human Rights, article 9. Similar associations are highlighted within the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), article 14, whereas every human being below 18 years are considered a child

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Furthermore, ICERD declare that no one should be violated because of his or hers religious belief and are therefore protected by this convention. It is also stated that everyone has the right to embrace any religion of choice. This is situated especially in article 5

In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights: (b) The right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution; (d) Other civil rights, in particular: (vii) The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; (vi) The right to equal participation in cultural activities.

This demonstrates that there are several human rights that must be considered: even if only a few of them are highlighted. Further, the Swedish legislation accentuates the same importance. The Swedish ‘Regeringsformen’ (chapter 2, paragraph 1:6) declares fundamental rights such as the right for religious freedom. Moreover, the Swedish Penal Code (1962:700) (chapter 16, paragraph 8) proclaim that

A person who, in a disseminated statement or communication, threatens or expresses contempt for a national, ethnic or other such group of persons with allusion to race, colour, national or ethnic origin or religious belief shall, be sentenced for agitation against a national or ethnic group to imprisonment for at most two years or, if the crime is petty, to a fine. (Law 1988:835). If the crime is gross it will be sentenced in minimum of six months up to four years. At the judgment whether the crime is gross it should be considered if the agitation have contained, in particular, threatening or violating content and been spread to a large amount of people in a way where it has been devoted to alert significant attention (law 2002:800) (OT)

104 http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c4/15/36/d74ceabc.pdf
Thus, agitation against any religious group\textsuperscript{105} is forbidden by law. Typical ‘unfair insults’ and specified insults against any person with reference to his or hers religious belief is also prohibited by the *Swedish Penal Code* (chapter 5, paragraph 3 and 5)

3 § A person who vilifies another by an insulting epithet or accusation or by other infamous conduct towards him, shall be sentenced, if the act is not punishable under Section 1 or 2, for *insulting behavior* to a fine. If the crime is gross, a fine or imprisonment for at most six months shall be imposed.

5 § Crimes mentioned in Sections 1-3 may not be prosecuted by other than the injured party. If, however, the injured party notifies the crime for prosecution, and if for special reasons prosecution is considered necessary in the public interest, a prosecutor may prosecute for: (3) insulting behaviour towards a person with allusion to his or her race, colour, national or ethnic origin or religious belief (Law 1998:393).\textsuperscript{106}

It is also important to grasp (religious) prohibits and rights within the labour market. The law on *Measures to Counteract Discrimination in Working Life because of Ethnic Background, Religion or other Religious Faith Act* (1999:130) emphasise this relationship

Direct discrimination
8 § An employer may not disfavour a job applicant or an employee by treating her or him less favourably than the employer treats, has treated or would have treated someone else in a comparable situation, if the disfavour is connected to ethnic background, religion or other religious faith. (SFS 2003:308)

Indirect discrimination
9 § An employer may not disfavour a job applicant or an employee by applying a provision, a criterion or a method of procedure that appears to be neutral but which in practice disfavours persons with a particular ethnic background, religion or other religious faith. However, this does not apply if the provision, criterion or method of procedure can be justified by a reasonable goal and the means are appropriate and necessary in order to achieve the goal. (SFS 2003:308).\textsuperscript{107}

This chapter has demonstrated some of the most vital legal instruments that can be applied (foremost, from a Swedish perspective) when violence and discrimination against Islam or Muslims are carried out. In the same sense as those rights that protect one’s religious freedom are emphasised. Still, whilst no law deals with Islamophobia directly, this might cause challenges and problems within the society, hence, below chapters verifies some of these complex difficulties.

\textsuperscript{105} In Swedish, ‘Hets mot folkgrupp’.
\textsuperscript{106} http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c4/15/36/d74ceabc.pdf
\textsuperscript{107} http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/01/99/57/e3e92b44.pdf
4.2 Voices of Imams

Beside earlier theoretical perspectives on some of the effects and difficulties that are associated with Islamophobia, the complementing statements from the imams, Alen Delic and Idriz Karaman, became very enlightening. Thus their voices give experienced explanations and descriptions of Islamophobia that could not be found in any theoretical foundation.

4.2.1 How to Perceive Islamophobia

When it comes to good and evil, there are no Muslim that says that it is ok to kill, be unfaithful or drink alcohol. It is like we have received a false image, unfortunately.

Delic proposes that Islamophobes should see that there are differences between some groups and some people that practice Islam and state that Islam is not an extreme religion as many seems to connote. For instance, the imam means that he cannot force his wife to wear a headscarf or pray; she independently chooses this. With a thought from the human rights perspective, he states that everybody have their own freedom to choose their religion and thus how to practice it. Further, Delic indicates that he might not come in direct contact with Islamophobia that much; but mentions a scenario when he visits schools and in contact with children. In these circumstances he claims that he sometimes feels as the children take a little bit of distance from him: until he says something funny or interesting. He means that it takes a little longer time until they really listen to him, perhaps, in contrast to a Swedish priest. Yet, he is unsure if this can be perceived as Islamophobia or not.

Furthermore, Karaman perceive Islamophobia as a fear against Muslims and Islam, yet, also states that there are differences between those acts against Islam itself (ex. against one special script from the Quran) and the Muslim population. He also stresses that to be critical against Islam does not necessarily connote that one is Islamophobic. However, within the municipalities, the state or authorities Karaman does not perceive any Islamophobia. Nonetheless, he sometimes wished that people had a more understanding about his religion.

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108 Every statement is translated from Swedish to English.
109 Alen Delic 081125
110 Alen Delic 081125
111 Idriz Karaman 081125
4.2.2 Experience of Islamophobia

Delic states that he does not have any direct experience of Islamophobia, however, mentions that he knew a woman who applied for a work that she did not get, because she wore a veil. Generally in Sweden, he claims that Islamophobia is not so evident and outspoken; it lays more beneath the surface and might be apparent on the television and within the media sometimes. The imam reveals that

In comparison with other countries, Sweden is fairly discrete. One can of course observe it on the political side of right wing parties such as the Swedish Democrats. They say that – Muslims take over Sweden, they take over Malmö! But one gets used to it. Though, it was wrong with those pictures from Jyllandsposten and those people who burned the embassy. One should keep quiet, because if you create attention it only gets worse. Still, one should never give up since it is always a struggle. It has always been a struggle to say the truth. The truth that Muslims is not like that, we are good, not evil...[i]slm stand for peace, how can anyone be afraid of peace?

The other imam, Karaman, also states that he does not recognise that Islamophobia is so obvious in Sweden: though, he occasionally reads something from the media that could relate to Islamophobia. Furthermore, Delic describes that female genital mutilation and terrorists bombing are not a part of Islam, but other features are evident such as segregation within the labour market and housing. He also states that Islamophobia is perhaps a fairly too new concept and compare this with when waiting on a doctor at the emergency ward. That is, the time one has to wait depends on what is prioritised and the same phenomena maybe goes for creating preventative methods against Islamophobia. Yet, according to Delic, there is support to be received as the authorities and the police are in fact accomplishing a great deal. They also have a great responsibility to decrease Islamophobia which depends on which law or group that is especially prioritised. Although, one does not know exactly what is prioritised. Furthermore, Karaman mentions events when he has been affected by Islamophobia, such as, one time when he found a pig and a broken window in his former working place at the Islamic Center in Malmö

There was a female and a male police at the mosque when they came to take the pig. And one of my members became furious...because one of the police took the pig and said - so cute, so fine pig! - to the pig. That made one of my members very angry and caused him to say – you see, they are all the same, they hate us! Then, I said to him, you don’t really understand. (For us that do not eat meat from a pig, this is the worst, there are

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112 Alen Delic 081125
113 Alen Delic 081125
114 Alen Delic 081125
Muslims that drink alcohol, but do not eat meat from a pig. To eat a pig is the worst thing a Muslim can do). I also said to the member that, to the police officer, this little pig is exactly like a lamb for us. This does not mean that they hate us or something like that. You have to understand that there are a lot of things that you do not like, but other do like; this is something you have to accept.\footnote{Idriz Karaman 081125}

A statement that underscores that in a bad situation there are those who can distinguish features of Islamophobia and those who cannot, and/or do not understand the differences. The same reflection goes through another event at the Islamic Center. Some teenagers had broken a window at the mosque. Karaman claims that this surely did hurt him mentally to some extent; at the same time, he acknowledges that this was perhaps only more of a dangerous game for the teenagers, rather than Islamophobia. This enlightens the problematical aspect of Islamophobia i.e. acts motivated by Islamophobia are not always so easy to distinguish out. Although, he mentioned some letters that had been sent to the Bosnian mosque. These letters consisted of an (obvious) dislike against Muslims (such as, questioning why Muslims only subsist on the Swedish welfare and so forth, even though, Islam actually declare that everyone should work).\footnote{Idriz Karaman 081125} The difference between a dangerous and reckless game and Islamophobia are therefore sometimes hard to see. This sheds some light over how much responsibility the authorities and those who press charges actually have upon their shoulders. Consequently, the burden might occasionally be hard to carry: since misunderstanding obviously can occur. Karaman also implies that Muslim presence can cause some difficulties as building loans and licenses and so forth could stand in the way of having a mosque or premises for Muslims. Though, his organisation never seems to have any major problems with this, but he brings up the fact that some organisations have a difficult time to understand why some matters are happening as they do. He mentions, for instance, the occasion in Malmö this year (2008) when the Islamic Cultural Association\footnote{In Swedish, ‘Islamiska Kulturföreningen’.} had to abandon their mosque because their lease had gone out, hence demonstrations occurred as a resistance to this.\footnote{For more information about this occasion, see http://sydsvenskan.se/malmo/article393905.ece} Fortcoming chapters highlight additional difficulties, such as media’s representations of Islam and Muslims.

\textbf{4.2.3 Media Representation and Islamophobia}

Delic points out that the media plays a very important role because a lot of the information derives from abroad and influence local settings. As an example of this is that the attacks on
the 11:th September 2001 in USA became a very popular topic. Delic also claims that this ultimately caused higher attention on ‘bad news’ about Muslims and therefore states that it is vital to use the right person to represent Islam in television and not just anyone. Even though media’s attention is drawn to some popular books or articles that exemplify Islamophobia, Karaman assert that we should not engage ourselves in these matters. Instead we all ought to be engaged in the society as students or employees. However, Karaman also declares that knowledge leads to more acknowledgment and acceptance and everyone should be aware of the influences from media. This section has demonstrated some of the problematical aspects and difficulties within Islamophobia. For instance, the media’s unfair influences and how people perceive and identify Islamophobia are two vital elements of this assertion. This leads to the vitality to embrace strategies that prevent and strive to eliminate Islamophobia.

4.3 Strategies to Prevent and Eliminate Islamophobia

There exist many different challenges and difficulties within Islamophobia; which is a complex phenomenon that ultimately needs be addressed and dealt with. Therefore, below chapters enlighten this urge both from primary and secondary data.

4.3.1 The Imams Visions

The imams gave many insightful strategies to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia. Initially, Delic stated that there ought to be better images concerning the Muslims and Islam within the media: because as soon as something negative is carried out by a Muslim it is demonstrated within the media.\textsuperscript{119} As a solution for this he states that

\begin{quote}
All Muslim immigrants that come to Sweden should act as ambassadors for Islam; one should reflect a positive image of Islam. Meaning, one should represent a good image of Islam…we do not try to reform, rather, give knowledge to our members, much is depending on ignorance when people do mistakes, they have prejudices…although there are good qualities among Muslims.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

Delic means that one should see the positive sides of Islam instead of trying to emphasise the negative attributes. In addition, the imams at the Bosnian mosque try to affect positive attributes to their members: trough praying, different lectures about, for instance, environmental aspects. They also teach different Islamic morals and could act as (religious) guides and/or coaches if necessary. Moreover, within the society Delic grasps that the police

\textsuperscript{119} Alen Delic 081125
\textsuperscript{120} Alen Delic 081125
are handling Islamophobia in a proper manner: if one has been violated or been affected by Islamophobia. Still, the authorities ought to do more about it, according to Delic. Such as implement new laws that treat Islamophobia more precisely i.e. that there should be added boundaries what one can do and what one cannot do. Delic also clarifies that ignorance and prejudices create problems thus highlights that this do not always correlates to only non-Muslims, but in relation to the Muslims themselves as well:

We try to the right thing all the time...spread the message that Islam is not in a certain way as some might think...but just because one is Muslim does this not signify that this person speaks correct about Islam, then, it is perhaps better to be silent if one does not know exactly how to respond. Hence, it is important that competent people represent Islam.

In addition to the strategy above, Delic states that teachers and hospitals play vital roles in order to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia. He underlines, for instance, the situation when a woman must take off her headscarf in front of a male doctor, even if this stands against Islam. This asserts a vital strategy, namely, that all Muslim women must have the right and opportunity to have only female doctors when this is wished for. All this must be in a perspective where everyone cooperates with each other thus everyone have their part to embrace. Delic also claims that many things have happened in the last fifteen years and refers to increased Muslim immigration and presence. However, underline that Islam can give a lot too, for instance a good morality. As an example, he indicates that Islam cannot be related to Crimes of Honour and other religious misinterpretations hence we must view Islam and Muslims as something good. In a conduct where we rather embrace the positive things about Islam, in order to fully prevent and eliminate Islamophobia.

Karaman draws attention to a strategy where the Muslims majority ought to openly demonstrate what Islam consists of and what the religion stands for. For instance, by keeping mosques open for the public eyes and ears without any ticket fees as an obstacle. He also points out that the Bosnian mosque (and the surrounding organisation) is on a good way to take membership-fee trough taxes, thus make it more official, instead of having the members paying it privately. This correlates with the Swedish system whereas Swedes can pay

121 Alen Delic 081125
122 Alen Delic 081125
123 Alen Delic 081125
124 Idriz Karaman 081125
church fees through their tax. Furthermore, he perceives that Islamophobia is built upon 95 per cent of prejudices and the rest might be the fact that Muslims actually practice Islam. Therefore, it is vital that the media give, for instance, him as a representative for Muslim Bosnians an opportunity to review his statements before it is publicised. Thus one strategy could be that the statements carried out by Muslims must be portrayed correctly in the media by letting them read it before it is published.\textsuperscript{125} Further, according to Karaman

There are a lot of debates concerning discrimination against immigrants, Muslims and women that wear a veil. Although, almost every one of our members is working and they have integrated into the society and therefore are very appreciated in their employments.\textsuperscript{126}

Nonetheless, Karaman also underlines that there are difficulties between the religion itself and the opportunities for a work thus claims that all Muslims and non-Muslims ought to cooperate with each other. Otherwise segregation and exclusion become apparent features. Whereas, keeping mosques open for the public without any ticket fees is one solution for this, as well as, a strategy to prevent or eliminate Islamophobia. Thereby, an open forum for non-Muslims and Muslims is also created. Karaman additionally suggests another vital strategy

If Islamophobic actions occur, for instance, such as the pictures in the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten...there must be boundaries. But the important thing is \textit{how} we react because if we react in a wrong way we actually do something against ourselves instead. Muslims did more against themselves with their reactions than the pictures did.\textsuperscript{127}

He claims that the best thing would be if we all accept each other and do not laugh at other people’s expenses, and as a substitute, replace this with positive things instead.\textsuperscript{128} A part from the imam’s visions, following chapter reveal theoretical suggestions regarding strategies against Islamophobia.

\subsection*{4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions}

Initially, statistics demonstrates that only in Europe there are about 12 to 18 million Muslims\textsuperscript{129} and approximately 350 000 Muslims in Sweden and this figure has increased

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125} Idriz Karaman 081125
\item \textsuperscript{126} Idriz Karaman 081125
\item \textsuperscript{127} Idriz Karaman 081125
\item \textsuperscript{128} Idriz Karaman 081125
\item \textsuperscript{129} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 61
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Thus Muslim population’s increases and therefore becomes a part of a multicultural context in many societies. Unfortunately, Islamophobia and its effects turn out to be obvious and destructive characteristics of this statement. Several different theoretical strategies to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia must therefore be revealed. A report carried out by the European Commission and European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)\textsuperscript{131} demonstrates several different suggestions how to eliminate and prevent Islamophobia. Where, the important role of education and media\textsuperscript{132} comes to surface

... education, the role of institutions, participation and dialogue, legal framework and political leadership. All of these instruments must be mobilised if we are to effectively prevent and reduce discrimination against Muslims in Europe...we need to find a way to acknowledge and appreciate difference without turning it into something immutable, foreign and threatening. We must establish a common ground to assert both difference and equality by showing solidarity with all people that face exclusion and discrimination.\textsuperscript{133}

Furthermore, the author John Wrench highlights how diversity management can be one strategy that aims towards ethnic minorities and tries to include minorities even more into the labour market. He suggests that this strategy offers a view where it

...recognising cultural differences between groups of employees and making practical allowances for such differences in organisational policies... If part of the problem in the past has been direct or indirect organisational practices of exclusion, then diversity management represents an inclusionary alternative.\textsuperscript{134}

Besides that diversity management gives excluded minorities a better chance within the labour market, other strategies related to the labour market can be illustrated as well. The report from the European Commission and EUMC involved participants claims such as “that labour statics show that there is a need to modify European labour market policies in order to allow Muslims to integrate more into the labour European market and take part in the economic life of the European Union”\textsuperscript{135} The Runnymede Trust additionally indicates that it is vital to address ‘guidelines on good employment practice’ that correlate with those

\textsuperscript{130} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 15. (Statistics from the year of 2000).
\textsuperscript{131} A report of three round table meetings initiated by commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou.
\textsuperscript{132} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 53
\textsuperscript{133} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 56, 64
\textsuperscript{134} Wrench (2002) p. 4, 7
\textsuperscript{135} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 66
problems and difficulties that are experienced by Muslim employees.\textsuperscript{136} However, the report from the European Commission and EUMC underlines another vital actor in these aspects, namely the European Union and its possibilities

\begin{quote}
There was a broad agreement that the European level was becoming increasingly important in fostering cross-community dialogue, as this was relevant to the basic rights to the fellow Europeans. According to one speaker, the EU should “open up spaces” where Muslims and non-Muslims can communicate and interact.\textsuperscript{137}
\end{quote}

This statement consequently emphasises previous claims from the theoretical framework that was concerned with whether Turkey’s entry into EU is possible or not.\textsuperscript{138} As face to face dialogues between, for instance, Christians and Muslims must be recognised and accomplished. Further, the report from the European Commission and EUMC enlightens that the EU must “increase the legal protection against religious discrimination” as well as “promote religious equality across the EU”.\textsuperscript{139}

Concerning education, the report (the European Commission and EUMC) also illustrated that enhanced knowledge about one’s own religious beliefs as well other religions creates higher awareness, combined with, that “textbooks should not reinforce or perpetuate [Islamic] myths”.\textsuperscript{140} Accordingly, stereotypes and negative images of Islam and Muslims must be tackled at all levels in schools, presumably, with a more pluralistic approach; also, an effort to increase exchange programs can work preventative.\textsuperscript{141} The report also indicated that higher awareness about Islamophobia is achieved: as increased collecting and monitoring facts about Islamophobia, aligned with, discussing new research and the impacts of Islamophobia is carried out.\textsuperscript{142} For instance, Otterbeck’s and Bevelander’s research\textsuperscript{143} on Swedish student’s attitudes towards Muslims and Muslim student’s religious exposure might be useful as a source when dealing with higher awareness about Islamophobia. Further strategies might be that Islamophobia should be more dealt with and highlighted within the curriculum as a

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\textsuperscript{136} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p 62
\textsuperscript{138} See ending parts in the chapter, 3.1 Features of Islamophobia.
\textsuperscript{139} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 111
\textsuperscript{140} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 55
\textsuperscript{143} See the References.
\end{flushleft}
subject\textsuperscript{144}, combined with amplified quantitative empirical data.\textsuperscript{145} Otterbeck and Bevelander suggest that it would be preferable if more statistics could be collected about those crimes that are carried out with Islamophobic motives. In order to grasp which measures one should apply when preventing and/or eliminate crimes related to Islamophobia.\textsuperscript{146} In addition, the Runnymede Trust declares that it is vital that Muslims educate themselves about Islamophobia as well on how Islam can be implemented to the immigrated country.\textsuperscript{147} The Runnymede Trust suggests further strategies, such as

The state system of education will include a number of Muslim schools, and all mainstream state schools will provide effectively for the pastoral, religious and cultural needs of their Muslim pupils. The academic attainment of Muslim pupils will be on a par with that of other pupils...Develop written guidelines on meeting the pastoral, religious and cultural needs of Muslim pupils.\textsuperscript{148}

Furthermore, concerning societal aspects, the report’s participants (the European Commission and EUMC) claim that an intercultural dialogue must be held openly without any wrongful critics, next to, recognising the achievements by local grassroots organisations.\textsuperscript{149} For instance, financial efforts must be carried out concerning those organisations that promote integration.\textsuperscript{150} A discriminatory language by political parties, politicians and/or political leaders should not be accepted or legal. Rather, strategies to enlighten Muslims right for equal treatment and so forth must be enforced.\textsuperscript{151} Muslims endorsement in the politics as candidates, ministers and so forth are also crucial matters that must be addressed.\textsuperscript{152} Integration is therefore essential whereas, for instance, “there is a need to take measure to avoid exclusion of younger second generation Muslims, who are born and grew up in European countries...”.\textsuperscript{153} Also, allow Muslim women to wear their veil as a gesture of their religious faith and freedom. Then it is favourable if Muslim women are recognised (if that is their wish) behind religious and cultural needs when, for instance, working in the health sector. For that

\textsuperscript{144} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 82
\textsuperscript{145} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 58
\textsuperscript{146} Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) p. 57
\textsuperscript{147} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 19
\textsuperscript{148} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 61, 63
\textsuperscript{149} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 55
\textsuperscript{150} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 79
\textsuperscript{151} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 55, 65
\textsuperscript{152} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 32-33
\textsuperscript{153} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 66, 82
reason it is vastly required to develop guidelines that are connected with those needs.\textsuperscript{154} Furthermore, in order to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia, The Runnymede Trust recommends that

\ldots Make discrimination on religious grounds unlawful\ldots Ensure that proposed new legislation on racial violence makes reference to religion\ldots when sentencing offenders for crimes of violence or harassment, treat evidence of religious hatred as an aggravating factor, as already with racial violence.\textsuperscript{155}

It is very important to acknowledge that besides political and social factors, the laws and regulations must also be considered, integrated and developed. As well as the vitality to concentrate on social exclusion and that this could decrease if, according to The Runnymede Trust “\ldots programmes aimed at reducing poverty and inequality involve Muslims, as appropriate, at the early planning stages”.\textsuperscript{156} Further, attention must be drawn to the police force as they too have a great deal of the responsibility to eliminate and prevent Islamophobia. For instance, in situations when the police observe a crime scene they must consider if the crime can be related to religious characteristics, such as, pay attention to if the crime happened at a mosque or the abuse was motivated against religious beliefs etcetera.\textsuperscript{157}

Lastly, measurements concerning more positive images of Muslims and Islam must be increased within the media. Higher involvement by Muslims and specialists in Islam are favoured, aligned with, the possibility that Muslims voices are being heard and not silenced.\textsuperscript{158} One participant (from the report of the European Commission and EUMC) addresses this view and claims that “\ldots Muslim representatives should be more visible in the media and the selection of them more responsible and nuanced”.\textsuperscript{159} However, Muslims participation is vital, in order to offer their view and highlight that they too is engaged\textsuperscript{160} such as being reporters, editors or columnists.\textsuperscript{161} Of course, alongside a labour market that actually accepts them. Apparently, strategies to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia must be carried

\textsuperscript{154} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 62
\textsuperscript{155} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 63
\textsuperscript{156} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 63
\textsuperscript{157} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 64
\textsuperscript{158} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 67
\textsuperscript{159} Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 78
\textsuperscript{160} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 21
\textsuperscript{161} The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 32
out from both the Muslims themselves as well as from non-Muslims. The path to religious freedom must be equally met by non-believers and also as the believers; otherwise religious freedom cannot be achieved. Before turning to the Analysis, a final affecting remark of one participant’s (from the report of the European Commission and EUMC) ends this section, with saying

If we do not deal with these issues in Europe, we may again see the rise of prejudice on racial and religious grounds which could lead to a repetition of what happened in the last century, in Germany during the Second World War and in Bosnia in the 1990s.162

5. Analysis

As previous chapters have indicated, Islamophobia is a complex and nuanced concept that not only signals difficulties how to understand it, but also, consist of tendencies that cause a variety of impacts on the society. Foremost, exclusion, social rejection and discrimination are obvious effects of Islamophobia. Alongside, an urge to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia with specific strategies. Thereby, below chapters of this analysis strive to give an in-depth view of which testimonies previous findings has verified and demonstrated.

5.1 A Theoretical Analysis

The section, Theoretical Aspects of Islamophobia, has evidently shown that Islamophobia is not an ideal concept, since it depends on which connotations and underlying meanings are facilitated. Still, the concept stresses the importance to address these kinds of matters. The Runnymede Trust (as well as others) understands Islamophobia to be a “unfounded hostility towards Islam...[and a]...unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals...”163 Thus, a two sided dilemma are exposed, in which, there seems to be hostility towards both Islam, as well as, towards Muslims. (For instance, one of the imams mentioned this dilemma.164) This indicates how complex the concept can be understood. However, previous theoretical findings have demonstrated that Islamophobia can be based upon many different features and expressions. It has been verified that not only does Islamophobia consist of a Eurocentric

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162 Report, European Commission & EUMC (2003) p. 113
163 The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 4
164 See chapter, 4.2.1 How to perceive Islamophobia.
belief: where the other are seen as a lower creature, but also a Christian-Western belief. These views inflict a prophecy in which the Christian-Western belief is the right one and by these means a static norm is internalised. As observed, this phenomenon is symbolic in France: where laws forbid Muslims to express their religious freedom, even though this ought to be a human right. These sorts of laws find their righteousness from, beside ‘the Christian-Western norm’, for instance from a colonial legacy where Muslims are perceived as primitive and un-modern creatures that ultimately oppress their females to wear headscarf. The French government therefore signals strong and obvious tendencies to be Islamophobes when not seeing religious freedom as a basic (human) right. Hence a thought that we cannot include the other based on difference rather sameness comes alive, unfortunately, next to the idea that assimilation is more favoured than integration.

The notion of us versus them is a prominent feature within Islamophobia and myths and preconceived meanings about Muslims and Islam are used to create this notion and also enhance it. Whereas us stands in contrast to them (or the other) which eventually create relations of power between us, the majority and them, the minority. As a consequence, this cause discrimination and prejudices between the two poles and negative stereotypifications could come alive. Islamophobia is by these conducts an incorporated and rooted characteristic of many multicultural societies as many ‘natives’ see Muslims as a religious group that hardly can belong to us. Due to their geographically, socially, culturally and religious distance to what is meant and valued by the existing norm. In these circumstances ‘the orientalist view’ verifies this relationship in terms where us, the Occident stands in contrast to them, the Orient; which in itself have underlying historical aspects that can be evident even in today’s modern world. For instance, Matti Bunzl comprehends this relationship as a never ending clash of civilisations and Muslims develop into a sort of holy warriors.165 Yet, it is vital to claim that these sorts of assumptions can be risky as it can motivate a view where Muslims and Islam becomes, repeatedly reproduced as, the typical barbaric enemy of a modern war. Consequently a war fought between the Christian-Western belief and the Islamic fundamentalism, whereas, Muslims are rather seen as an enemy (that do not appreciate democratic values instead poisoning it) than allies. As a result, the image of an Islamic terrorist is repeatedly used in the media, even though Muslims terrorists may use self-made interpretations of religion. Religion is in such aspects perceived as having a mind of its own.

165 See chapter, 3.1 Features of Islamophobia.
Islamophobia can also be demonstrated and verified as Muslims are seen as a one unity or as a one identity. This justifies a belief in which every Muslim misdeed must be portrayed from a collective vision. For instance, every Muslim woman does not live within the borders of a patriarchal world. Thus, religion and its followers must be diversely and nuanced understood and interpreted i.e. with no presumed fixed or stable reference to a given country. Islamophobia can also be observed in the politics as political party’s uses hostile images of Muslims and Islam, in order to gain more votes’ etcetera. In general, the absence of Muslims voices in the politics reflects this view. The effects of Islamophobia can therefore impose discrimination, social rejection and violence and inflict questions whether if the right of freedom of speech and expression must be delimitated. Otherwise, is the solution rather to implement another more obvious version of this right whereas increased venues for non-Muslims and Muslims can debate more openly? Or perhaps, is a combination of it required. Anyway, media plays a huge part in these circumstances as Islamophobic cartoons, images and pictures obviously creates more negativity than positivity. The consequences of ‘the mediated experience’ must therefore be addressed and highlighted since Muslims could for instance be harassed because of it.

A final comment would be that Muslims right for presence and their efforts to make space for their diaspora is vital to grasp and recognise in multicultural societies today, one cannot ignore it. The right path to recognise this is not by perceive Islam and Muslims as a dogma consisting of, for instance, only female oppression and we are much better than them and therefore have to fight for their ‘presumed victims’. Instead, we have to lock within those strategies that sees change and difference as something wished for and favoured, not forced upon. Hence, the effects of Islamophobia are vital to grasp since Muslims are silenced and abused in many different aspects. Abuse, suffering, gang formations, riots and social disorder are just some aspects which might associate with Islamophobia. The question whether current legislation is enough must therefore be asked.

5.2 Is Current Legislation Enough?

As demonstrated, there are human rights such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights convention, article 18, which stress that everyone has the right to freedom of religion. Foremost, the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) enlightens that all states have their responsibility to endure and
protect its citizens right to religious freedom. Whilst from a Swedish perspective, this can be combined with laws such as the Swedish Penal Code (16:8) where it is stated that agitation against any religious group\textsuperscript{166} is forbidden by law. Further, insults directed towards one’s religious belief are also forbidden according to Measures to Counteract Discrimination in Working Life because of Ethnic Background, Religion or other Religious Faith Act. This law emphasise that employees should not be discriminated within the labour market and the employer cannot disfavour a job applicant due to one’s religiosity. With this legal framework in mind, is current legislation really enough? Since both the theoretical results as well as the empirical findings evidently have shown, the answer to this question is no. Due to the distinctiveness of Islamophobia, there ought to be laws, conventions and legislations that deal with this phenomenon more directly. Since, obviously, Islamophobia and its effects are prominent characteristics in today’s multicultural societies. The interviewed imams spoke of this condition too\textsuperscript{167}, which underlines the importance to actually create and propose a new law that reinforces Muslims in a multicultural society. As an example, a new ban that deals with on the one hand discrimination of Muslims and on the other hand enhance the punishments for those who commit crimes related to it. The urge to eliminate and prevent Islamophobia cannot just be positioned in a societal context; it must also be endured within a legal framework. Prohibits of today’s society are useful, still not enough obviously.

5.3 The Need to Address Islamophobia

There is ultimately a need to address Islamophobia; both on a social level and also within a legal discourse and this need have descriptively been told by two imams alongside a theoretical foundation. The imams have demonstrated that ‘bad news’ and negative images are in fact causing more disfavour than what everyday life might do. The media can therefore become a dual force in which negative images are flourishing and being rooted, yet at the same time a constitution that can cause the opposite. This relationship is depending on which news that is more favoured in that given time and/or place that one is referring to.

In Sweden it has been demonstrated through both the imam’s voices and a theoretical framework that Islamophobia is not so obvious and a prominent feature in everyday life, rather, lies beneath the surface and are characterised in Swedish media. Yet, mental and

\textsuperscript{166} In Swedish, ‘Hets mot folkgrupp’.

\textsuperscript{167} See chapter, 4.3.1 The Imams Visions.
physical damage cannot be excluded.\textsuperscript{168} For instance, one of the imams stated that it is always a struggle to tell the truth about Islam and also mentioned the segregation within Swedish labour market and housing. The imam also spoke of the importance of what is prioritised by the police and other authorities and that this eventually decides if, how and when Islamaphobia can be prevented and eliminated.\textsuperscript{169} Both the imams did not identify that Islamophobia is so apparent in Sweden, in contrast to other countries. Yet underline that Islamophobia could have crucial effects on both Muslims and the society in general. For instance, they both mention the incident with the Danish newspaper and media’s role whereas Muslims ought not to react against these kinds of things, instead work as good ambassadors or good employees.\textsuperscript{170}

One of the imams mentioned that there are differences between those acts against Islam itself and those acts that are against the Muslims.\textsuperscript{171} Hitherto, this research mainly underlined the phobia against the religious practice rather than ‘the ethnic phobia’; although, the need to address Islamophobia must maybe start with a separation between what we mean with the concept Islamophobia. In order to address more specifically the acts that is carried out. Higher attention must therefore be drawn to if Islamophobic acts are anticipated against one’s ethnic or religious belonging. Ergo a separation must maybe be realised, before Islamophobia can be solved. In this manner, an extension of Islamophobia such as, \textit{Muslimophobia} might be plausible as it depicts a phobia against one’s ethnic belonging. This phobia might reveal a fear or hostility against Muslim culture, countries, lifestyles, traits etcetera. This extension of Islamophobia, \textit{Muslimophobia}, can perhaps make it easier to erase some misunderstandings thus easier being decreased and grasped which methods that ought to be used more specifically. After all, within \textit{the racialisation process} it can be evident that the religion Islam and its various ethnic followers are categorised as one group and/or one identity. It also portrays a discourse in which all groups become homogenous and static hence neglect perspectives that sees ethnicity and culture as dynamic elements. Strategies and efforts against \textit{Muslimophobia} can therefore reduce influences and stereotypes caused by, for instance, \textit{the essentialist view}. This also emphasises the need to divide what the struggle is against more

\textsuperscript{168} For instance, see Appendix - \textit{A minor illustration of cases that relate to Islamophobia}.

\textsuperscript{169} See chapter, 4.2.2 Experience of Islamophobia.

\textsuperscript{170} See chapter, 4.3.1 The Imams Visions.

\textsuperscript{171} See chapter, 4.2.1 How to perceive Islamophobia.
detailed. Then it might be easier to solve those effects caused by Islamophobia and implement new laws that react against it more effectively. After all, Karaman revealed experiences where some situations had been hard to interpret as Islamophobia or a dangerous and reckless game by some teenagers; as misunderstandings can easily cause more damage than good. However, clearly it has been verified that there is a need to address Islamophobia both within the media, the labour market, housing, medical care, schools and so forth. Most importantly, as the imams also declared, it is maybe time to embrace and highlight the positive attributes of Islam and the Muslim population instead of always doing the opposite.

5.4 Efforts against Islamophobia
This chapter accentuates the strategies and/or efforts that can be used in order to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia from a background of previous findings. Foremost, three efforts have been distinguished as the most suitable and effective one’s when dealing with Islamophobia.

5.4.1 Higher Attention to Legal Framework and Documentation
As declared in prior chapters, laws, regulations, guidelines, conventions and so forth are vital to highlight when trying to eliminate or prevent Islamophobia. As legal framework decide boundaries and delimitations, as well as protections and rights (together with moral preventions) it is crucial to have the right type of law or human right that address Islamophobia more directly. The theoretical findings in this research have suggested that EU ought to ‘modify European labour market policies’ and ‘increase the legal protection against religious discrimination’. Further, ‘guidelines on good employment practice’ should be implemented together with a vision that the Muslim experience and needs colour its content. Another attempt could be to ‘make discrimination on religious grounds unlawful’; thus punishable by law since the crime had reference to Islamophobia. Therefore, efforts ought to be achieved where a new or nuanced legal framework is accomplished in a combination with higher awareness of these sorts of crimes within the police force and towards other officials practicing the law, such as lawyers, judges and so forth.

172 For instance, chapter: 5.2 Are Current Legislation Enough?
173 See chapter 4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions.
174 See chapter 4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions.
Previous empirical findings have also demonstrated and verified that there needs to be more collecting, monitoring and new research about Islamophobia as well as more quantitative empirical data.\textsuperscript{175} Therefore an increased focus and attention to this subject is needed. Together with more specific documentation of the effects and impacts of Islamophobia in order to find suitable methods that are required to use against Islamophobia. These methods can then be applied within a legal framework next to societal integration programmes or projects. The documentation should be consisting of both Muslim voices and non-Muslim voices aligned so a spectrum of perspectives can be implanted.

5.4.2 Enhanced Positive Images of the Muslims and Islam

This research has repeatedly stressed how essential the media can be when portraying Islam and Muslims. The media therefore influences how Islam and/or Muslims are stereotyped, perceived, observed, and not at least treated by non-Muslims. For instance, beside the theoretical outline, both the interviewed imams stated that there ought to be enhanced positive images about their religion and Muslims in general and that there should be more attention to the positive things about Islam and Muslims instead of negative.\textsuperscript{176} This cannot not only stand in relation to the media, but also, correlating to all other levels of the society whereas positive images are flourishing within the classrooms as well as within a politician’s statement. As demonstrated, the imams verified that there need to be a higher approval to see Muslims and their religion as something good, instead of barbaric and undemocratic. As a result another effort, consisting of an increased support by the non-Muslims, is that Islamic presence (whereas: the need to build mosques must be accomplished if this is wished for) must be approved. Naturally, next to relevant laws and regulations. The same type of approval must be recognised and applied if Muslim women want to wear a headscarf as a gesture of their religious belief, and not rejected.

It is also vital to address that skilled representative, as imams or specialists in Islam, are favoured as representatives when Islam or the Muslim community ought to be discussed in the media etcetera. (Worth to mention, Muslim voices in general are not to be discriminated of course, but, when matters concerning vital governmental decisions and so forth are to be planned for: skilled representatives are obviously more favoured). One of the imams also

\textsuperscript{175} In more detail, see chapter 4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions.

\textsuperscript{176} See chapter, 4.2.3 Media representation and Islamophobia.
underlined this assertion when stating that more competent people ought to represent Islam and therefore highlighting that there seems to be an absence of this type of participation.\textsuperscript{177} This research has also verified that \textit{education} is a very important and influential aspect within Islamophobia, whereas, the schools have much of the responsibility to portray texts book and literature of Islam and Muslims without reinforcing Islamic myths or false connotations.\textsuperscript{178} Additionally, Islamophobia can be used as a class subject within schools in order to create more awareness about its content. By facilitating these efforts, perhaps some of the negative and stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims can be erased. More Muslim schools and more devotion to which cultural and religious needs that are required by Muslim students might also work as an effort against Islamophobia. In general, education about Islamophobia should be facilitated at micro, meso and macro levels of the society and established both within a public as well as within a private sphere. After all, education leads to more understanding and knowledge of the presumed \textit{other} and could therefore work as a tool for increased integration.

\textbf{5.4.3 Cooperation within the Society}

The urge to make Muslims more socially integrated and thus more official in a public sphere, is crucial when finding methods to prevent or eliminate Islamophobia. Efforts must therefore be acknowledged, such as, that Muslims ought to be more involved in the politics in order to \textit{decrease social exclusion}. The imam’s proposal that the membership fee could be paid trough taxes, in a similar way as Swedish Christian church fee can be paid, could be used as one effort in order to decrease social exclusion. The theoretical findings have evidently also demonstrated that there must be an attempt to avoid exclusion of younger second generation Muslims and that the usage of discriminatory language by politicians and alike, should not be accepted nor legitimised.\textsuperscript{179} Furthermore, social exclusion can be reduced if involving Muslims in projects early stages, when, for instance, projects that have goals to reduce inequalities.\textsuperscript{180} To facilitate a decrease of social exclusion, the urge must be two dimensional and consisting of both the Muslims engagement as well as the non-Muslims. Another effort can be to \textit{promote integration}. The imam, Idriz Karaman, suggested that we all need to spend more time with each other thus ‘to keep mosques open for the public without any ticket

\textsuperscript{177} In more detail, see chapter 4.3.1 The Imams Visions.

\textsuperscript{178} See chapter, 4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions.

\textsuperscript{179} In more detail, see chapter 4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions.

\textsuperscript{180} See chapter, 4.3.2 Theoretical Suggestions.
fees might work as a good promotion for increased integration. Hence an open forum, for everyone willing to participate, must be available and openly accommodated; where the freedom of speech and expression must be democratically balanced against agitation against any religious group. To promote integration is very important to address: because an increased amount of immigration and the impacts of Islamophobia may decide whether a successful multicultural society can be accomplished or not. In addition, diversity management in the labour market, EUs guidelines and projects by for instance grassroots organisations has very important roles to play when promoting integration. Alongside the need to recognise, for instance, Muslims women’s religious needs when visiting doctors. Hospitals, schools, the labour market, the political sphere, they all have vital duty’s to attend to when working with promoting integration.

The imams stated that everyone have their part to embrace in the society and referred to how we all must cooperate with each other in order to eliminate Islamophobia. Cooperation between non-Muslims and Muslims is therefore very essential in order to create a higher awareness about each other and reduce segregation. Beside, collaboration between different societal institutions, such as hospitals, schools and so forth since religious freedom and belonging do not come easily for everyone in a multicultural context. The importance that, for instance, journalists and Muslims cooperates with each other is therefore vital: as the message that is produced must reflect the truth, rather than a false and stereotyped image. The statement that ‘everyone should act as ambassadors for Islam’ highlights that it is not only the non-Muslims that have to implement efforts against Islamophobia. On the contrary, the Muslim community too have a responsibility to participate against Islamophobia, as good ambassadors or be engaged in the labour market as good employees. The participation in the politics and media are also vital. However, the imams mentioned that it is also important to not react in certain matters. In a way, this is also participation although passively carried out, nonetheless, perhaps one of the most elementary tasks.

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181 In more detail, see chapter 4.3.1 The Imams Visions.
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6. Conclusion

The main issue in this research has ultimately been to investigate how Islamophobia operates and enlighten its effects combined with strategies against Islamophobia from a societal context. Evidentially, Islamophobia is a complex notion that consists of many different expressions and features: depending on how one understands it. As already stated, there might be an urge to separate those acts that are against ones religious or ethnic belonging since it then might be easier to distinguish how strategies and efforts can be carried out more suitably. The empirical findings demonstrated this dilemma as one of the imams declared that misunderstandings easily become apparent when the notion of Islamophobia is after all a multifaceted concept. As stated before, an extension of the concept might be required, whereas for instance, *Islamophobia* means a phobia against the religion, Islam i.e. hostility towards the Quran, religious scripts or prophet’s etcetera. In contrast to, the notion *Muslimophobia*, which consist of a phobia against one’s ethnic belonging i.e. fear against Muslim culture, countries, lifestyles, traits and so forth. As it emphasise the racialisation process and the need to divide ethnicity from religion. By this extension it might be easier to solve and reduce the violence, harassment and murder associated with Muslims and/or their religion. The author, Gerd Baumann’s statement (that connects to ethnicity): “Because you differ in looks, you must differ in mind”\(^{186}\) becomes suitable here. As it underline that Muslims are repeatedly seen as *the other* because they ‘look and act differently’ from a Western-Christian view, therefore, they must also be different.

As explained earlier, the original thought was to emphasise several Muslim voices regarding Islamophobia, yet, due to inaccessible informants and a limited set of time, this unfortunately was not achieved. However, future research could lead to focuses in which *the racialisation of Muslims and Muslimophobia* interestingly becomes the enquiry of the research. Wherein Muslim voices are being heard: based upon their distinctive experiences and insights. This might then be aligned with, that the urge for more documentation and awareness regarding Islamophobia within faculties, such as IMER\(^{187}\), are considered and developed. After all, Islamophobia is an effect of increased immigration associated with an ethnic relation that

\(^{186}\) Baumann (1999) p. 62

\(^{187}\) Malmö University, Department of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER).
consequently discriminate Muslims. Hence, this research has demonstrated how Muslims are portrayed as the other in nuanced approach. Whereas representations of Muslims and Islam in media influence, for instance, how stereotypes come alive and are used against Muslims and/or Islam. Islamophobia, then, operates in a varied spectrum as inclusion versus exclusion and power relations between the majorities’ norm and the minorities’ efforts to integrate to these norms, is very distinctive elements. Consequently, effecting Muslims and Islam in conducts where discrimination, prejudices, social rejection and violence become noticeable. Yet, the in-depth interviews with the imams demonstrated that they do not perceive that these effects are so recognisable for them, still, evident in the media. From this view it is very vital to address, that taking a passive standing point, might lead to more religious liberation than the opposite: when dealing with prejudices in media etcetera.

This leads to the importance to embrace those strategies and efforts that can be used, in order to prevent and eliminate Islamophobic (or ‘Muslimophobic’) effects. Hence, these effects can be an expression of how the integration in a given country does in reality not working successfully. Yet, there is legislation that forbids for instance, agitation against any religious group, although, far too broad and diffuse it seems. Thus we all have a responsibility to give our support to eliminate and avert Islamophobia: from good parenting to the politicians to the Muslims themselves. This responsibility does not only apply to a Muslim, this responsibility has to be applied to non-Muslims as well. Politicians, grassroots and non-governmental organisations, police, editors, teachers, parents are just a few of those who have essential and vital roles to undertake in this context. We all stand in a circle of dependability to each other, no matter where one originates from or which belief one find peace and comfort within.

Finally, the purpose was to find a deeper comprehension about Islamophobia and those strategies and efforts that can be used in order to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia, which have been accomplished. This accomplishment I will take with me in future tasks; as the fear of ethnic or religious exclusion might become even more enhanced. Aligned with a hope that successful (both national and international) integration must be applied and strived for; with an enhanced focus on the positive attributes of Muslims and Islam. Yet, critical voices must also be openly received. Lastly, maybe an attempt for us all, we should more often choose those ‘battles’ that can effectively produce some sort of effort against Islamophobia, rather than give it more fuel.
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**The interviews**

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Idriz Karaman 081125
Appendix

Interview Guide

1. In what way do you work with Islamophobia?
2. How do you define Islamophobia?
3. Have you at any circumstance been exposed by Islamophobia privately or in your profession? If yes, in what manner?
4. In what way do you perceive that Islamophobia is a part of today’s society?
5. Which societal characteristics can be evident concerning Islamophobia?
6. In what way do you consider media correlating with Islamophobia?
7. Do you perceive that there are certain societal actors that converse Islamophobic messages? If yes, in what way?
8. Which guidelines or actions do you or your organisation act upon in order to prevent and/or eliminate Islamophobia?
9. Do you think that there are enough strategies (or similar support) within the society today?
10. Which strategies (or supportive actions) do you consider to be the most suitable to apply in order to prevent and/or eliminate Islamophobia?
11. How do you think one should apply this in a practical sense? Which are the most important tools to have and use?
12. Any final reflections that concerns with Islamophobia?

A minor illustration of cases that relate to Islamophobia

- **Gross Assault** (2005): Muslim men beaten badly in the street. A 21 and 22 year old man, with connections to the Nazi organisation Sweden Resistance Movement, were sentenced to one and half years imprisonment.

- **Vandalism** (2004): The windows of a Stockholm mosque were smashed. The incident was reported to the police.

- **Vandalism and incitement to hatred** (2005): Stickers with anti-Muslim messages were put on the outside of a mosque. Some of the stickers were produced by the National Socialist Front. Stickers bore the messages “Keep Sweden Swedish” and “mosques in Sweden – no thanks”. The incident was reported to the police.

- **Vandalism** (2005): The windows of the Söderhamns Islamic Culture society’s meeting place were broken.\(^{188}\)

Additionally, The Runnymede Trust offers a list of names consisting of people that have been murdered, presumably, caused by racist or religious motives.\(^ {189}\) In Sweden (2007), there were about 200 charges with Islamophobic motives; consisting of crimes such as, damages, unlawful threats and agitation against religious group.\(^ {190}\)


\(^{189}\) Further information, see The Runnymede Trust (1997) p. 41