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IRCICA Journal publishes articles on all aspects of Islamic civilisation, such as the history of culture, art, science, philosophy, literature, traditional handicrafts and archaeology. *IRCICA Journal* aims to preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of Islamic civilisation, comprising of its written, architectural, cultural and artistic forms.

IRCICA Journal welcomes previously unpublished manuscripts on manifestations of Islamic civilisation in different regions within and outside the Muslim world including the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia. The intellectual outputs are hoped to serve the needs of researchers specializing in the fields of history, cultural studies, sociology, architecture, international relations and anthropology. *IRCICA Journal* considers all manuscripts on the strict condition that they have been submitted only to *IRCICA Journal*, that they have not been published already, nor are they under consideration for publication or in press elsewhere.

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Editorial

IN AN AGE OF EXTREME ATROCITIES and breaches of fundamental human rights and liberties across the globe, one of the most adversely affected social groups is constituted by the Muslims. From Myanmar to Palestine, from East and Southeast Asia to Central and Western Europe Muslims face various forms of violence, bigotry, hatred, stereotyping and discrimination today informed by anti-Muslim extremism. In this context, it is pertinent that IRCICA presents the Special Issue of *IRCICA Journal* on issues of Anti-Muslim Extremism and Islamophobia in Europe to the attention of scholarly community.

It is crystal clear that the development of social and political movements with an anti-Muslim agenda is a truly global phenomenon, but for the sake of focusing on micro-level forces that are operative in demonization and antagonizing processes we limited the focus of this Special Issue with Europe. The articles in this volume are tracing the origins of anti-Muslim sentiments and perceptions, their emergence in certain national contexts and their practice with negative effects for the daily lives of Muslims residing in the Balkans, as well as Central and Western Europe. The articles in the issue were selected from among the papers first presented in an International Symposium organized jointly by the Center for Balkan and Black Sea Studies (BALKAR) of Yıldız Technical University and IRCICA in İstanbul.

As far as the contents and the organizational structure of this special issue are concerned, we are delighted to present six illuminating articles written by distinguished specialists to the attention of scholars and researchers. The first article of the issue entitled “Nothing New: Islamophobia by Default in Postwar Europe” is written by Associate Professor Isa Blumi from Stockholm University, Institute for Turkish Studies. The article underlines the methodological pitfalls of reducing post-Second World War history into practicalities of importing labor from “East” to West Germany and disaggregates the analytical themes that dominate the study of modern Europe’s social, economic and institutional dynamics when

it involves Muslims. Peter Polak-Springer from Qatar University, in his article entitled “‘Willkommenskultur’ in Arab Eyes: Arabic Traditional and Social Media Discourses on Syrian Refugees in Germany”, examines both the voices of Syrians within Germany as well as how the larger Arab media viewed them. Dr Springer also highlights how the refugee crisis has shaped the Arab-Muslim images of Islamophobia in Europe and the West. In the article titled “Questioning Islamophobia in the Context of Greece”, Dr. Ali Hüseyinoğlu from Trakya University takes Greece as a case study of European Islamophobia and analyzes to what extent Islam has been incorporated into the social fabric in Greece. His article dwells both on historical and modern Muslim groups so as to find answers to two primary questions: First, to what extent does the administration in Greece respects the fundamental rights of Muslims residing in Western Thrace and elsewhere? And secondly, what does the concept of Islamophobia mean in the context of Greece? Professor Ali Çaksu from Yıldız Technical University, in his article entitled “Muslimphobia as a Western Tool of Fearmongering”, focuses on the use and abuse of “Muslimphobia” and successfully demonstrates how it turns out to be a tool that allows fearmongering in the current political discourse of contemporary Europe.

Elena Lukinykh from Oldenburg University in Germany, contributed to the volume with an article entitled “Patriotism as the Modern Justification of Islamophobia”. In this illuminating article, she aptly underlines the link between contemporary forms of Islamophobia and patriotism. By way of exploring the case of German nationalist party Pegida’s discourse on social media, Lukinykh examines the common mechanisms of justification used on behalf of patriotism through Islamophobia. Finally, Leyla Yıldırım in her article titled “The Social Impact of Islamophobia on Muslims in the Netherlands” explores concrete problems Muslims face in their daily lives in the Netherlands and questions via which ways the Muslims in the Netherlands are racialized. She also illustrates how the Muslims are falsely presented as a social group who do not belong to Europe because of their beliefs and life styles attitudes which differ from those of ‘Europeans’.

Apart from being a useful tool for extreme-right and populist politics in the West, anti-Muslim extremism triggers concrete problems that Muslims experience in their daily lives. In view of this, anti-Muslim extremism entered into among our major research areas in recent years and we published a report on “Anti-Muslim Extremism in Europe”. The report presented documentary evidence on the rise of extremist political and social movements in Europe with an apparent anti-Muslim agenda. We consider this Special Issue of the *IRCICA Journal* as another spark and opportunity to stimulate further studies on anti-Muslim extremism and Islamophobia across the world and expand their scope with contributions from various social science disciplines. In order to fight against these distressing realities with the support of international public opinion, we need to have the necessary analytical and methodological tools at our disposal. While presenting this Special Issue to the attention of global scholarly and intellectual community, we would like to invite distinguished members of academia from different backgrounds, disciplines and countries to incite new studies and academic debates to contribute to the growing literature on anti-Muslim extremism as an important topic with major social implications.

Halit Eren, Assoc. Prof.
Director General, IRCICA

Introduction to the Special Issue: Islamophobia in Europe

Isa Blumi and Mehmet Hacısalihođlu*

“Have they, then, never journeyed about the earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom, and causing their ears to hear? Yet, verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind— but blind have become the hearts that are in their breasts!”

(Al-Hajj: 46).

WHILE NOT UNIQUE TO OUR CURRENT ERA, the world is in the throes of a dramatic set of changes, be it structural, environmental, or demographic. Among the biggest identifiable group affected by the changes are those who associate their faith to Islam. Indeed, Muslim migrants and refugees are most conspicuous in the world today. As they attempt to temporarily or for the long-term settle outside their traditional homelands, their presence is among the most discussed topics in contemporary Europe. The often emotional, no doubt politically-charged, discussions about how Muslims, their faith in Islam, and seemingly contradictory values can ever find a comfortable medium with their European “hosts,” has dominated Europe’s public sphere for at least twenty years now. In most cases, Islamophobic attitudes shape the nature of these discussions. Under close inspection, much of the public and professional discourse on European values, integration, and

* We would like to thank Dr. Halit Eren, Director General of IRCICA and all those who supported the International Symposium on Islamophobia in Europe, its participants, the referees of the papers presented there, and the editors and referees of the *IRCICA Journal* who helped select the contributions to this special issue.

democracy reflects how Islamophobia impacts not only Europe's public spheres, its institutions, and moral boundaries; but increasingly also how Muslims in the rest of the world, particularly in societies with historic Muslim minority populations, interact.

As if given a green light by the increasingly public debates taking place in Central and Western European countries, new visceral forms of discrimination informed by Islamophobia has impacted Muslim minorities throughout the world. Be it in the Balkans, Russia, China, or Myanmar, the consequences of Europeans' unwillingness to escape the politics of xenophobia will continue to resonate beyond Europe. Perhaps akin to the racism that European colonial powers exported since the 18th century throughout the world, the reanimation of the epistemologies of difference through an overt hostility towards Muslims has its imprint on our world today.

As major contributors to the global economy and its sociocultural consequences, Muslims today face, both in public and in their private lives, challenges to their sense of belonging, security, and dignity. As any visibly faithful person will attest when traveling today, Muslims must answer to stereotypes that assume their guilt for past and future violence presumably afflicting the lives of everyone who is not Muslim. The resulting defensive assurances that they are not criminal and deserve the same benefits of security, dignity, and a voice, has the ugly, paradoxical (but not entirely circumstantial) effect of reinforcing the original innuendo. Moreover, the inferences that Muslims do not belong to Europe, are foreigners, and must bend over backwards to be "tolerated," casts a dark shadow on how they identify both within their immediate community and the larger society in which they live, work, and hope to thrive. For example, the German National Party regularly asks Muslims living in the country to reassure the rest of society that they do not abide to some of the fundamental principles of their faith. The stark juxtaposition of certain values with an almost mythical "German standard" means Muslims are expected to deny their own faith in order to avoid the insinuation that they do not belong. In this era of organized, politically-

mobilized collective xenophobia, a universally recognized threat has made the first quarter of the 21st century perhaps the most difficult period for Muslims since the birth of the faith.

The Center for Balkan and Black Sea Studies (BALKAR) of the Yıldız Technical University, and the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) of the OIC, organized a joint symposium to explore aspects of this global Islamophobia. While its imprint is felt throughout the world, the organizers believed special attention to Islamophobia's particular context in Europe warrant specific attention. While it may be debated just how much one should focus entirely on Europe in this larger, clearly global phenomenon, the process of organizing the symposium proved to justify the organizers' specific European focus. It became devastatingly clear to the organizers as they proceeded to seek collaboration from colleagues just how uncomfortable the politics of collective demonization of Muslims in Europe has made many within the academy. Sadly, in the process of organizing the symposium out of which the contributions to this special issue come, the organizers were confronted with a glaring, and disappointing, hesitance among European-based interlocutors. Most of our European-Christian colleagues, (be they from Germany, Austria or Bulgaria), whose work on Turkey and the Middle East we have long admired, almost universally declined our invitation to participate. Unfortunately, our colleagues, with whom we have worked often in the past on common projects and even became friends, at this critical moment demanding our collective engagement (if not in solidarity, at least in the form of debate) all refused invitations to join the advisory board of the symposium. While the pretexts for not being able to participate differed, this attitude reflects perhaps most clearly what has happened to a free and democratic Europe in the context of yet another era of collective hysteria over the ontological other. Of course, we are sympathetic to the sensibilities that inform our European colleagues' refusal to participate in this exercise early in 2017, but we also need to express our collective concern that Islamophobia is clearly impacting how Europe's scholars engage their Muslim neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

The fact we were left speaking mostly to ourselves is indicative of an as-of-yet unacknowledged, insidious pressure to not challenge the underlying contours of the “debate” inflicting not only larger Europe, but the larger world.

This special issue of the *IRCICA Journal* thus may be read in the context of these realities concerning the symposium, or any similar academic event for that matter. In one way, the importance of our two-day meeting became even more pronounced and immediate with this lack of participation from our European-based colleagues. Perhaps out of this overhanging sense that our scholarly environment had been changed irreparably by Islamophobia, it became apparent that perhaps we needed to first return to the very term itself. As the contributors of this special issue clearly highlight, in our quest to understand what we are clearly still experiencing collectively, and personally every day, we must first identify what is Islamophobia, its origins as a discourse, and finally as a practice in Europe.

What is in a term?

As scholars for the last twenty years have discovered, it is a risky business to define Islamophobia. More dangerous perhaps is challenging how we interpret its manifestations in Europe today. As indicated by the hesitance of most of our European colleagues to join us in Istanbul to debate this phenomenon, at its root the operation of defining Islamophobia (or contest it) surrenders perspective in order for us to read it functionally as a discourse of exclusion. The result is we have rarely, as scholars, public intellectuals, or community leaders, analyzed what are the many specific contexts in which Islamophobia, especially in Europe, surfaces.¹ This is clearly the case when well-intentioned pundits and scholars attempt to engage Islamophobia critically.

In what we should assume is a genuine exercise of supporting

¹ Andrew Shryock (ed.), *Islamophobia, Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, University of Indiana Press, 2010.

the principles of justice and civility, the defender of something like a liberal social order in Europe seems often in an uncomfortable, if not ironic epistemological quandary, when trying to “fight” Islamophobia. Often, when engaging critically Islamophobia, we are unintentionally surrendering to the crude generalizations of otherwise deep, complex nuances behind both the overt racism against Muslims and the faith of those so targeted. Put differently, identifying, and thereby condemning, Islamophobia seems to demand that we concede a single definition of not only the act of “hating”, but also the object of the xenophobic violence— Islam itself. There is, in other words, a danger of not accounting for why specific constituencies in say leftist circles in Germany and France, just as their Zionists or far-right wing activist opponents elsewhere, would refer to the generic Muslim (instead of specific groups of Muslims) in order to either persecute or protect them.

What contributors to this special issue hope to argue is that it is not enough to define the term Islamophobia or acknowledge the relative evil of its use. The distinctions between one kind of discourse of hatred from another, less overt but equally reductive ways to refer to Muslims, deserve individual attention. Indeed, throughout this issue, contributors offer examples of how Islamophobia evolved, in different social, political, and structural contexts. In this respect, be it Ali Çaksu’s study of how “Muslimophobia” became a Western tool that allows for “fearmongering” in contemporary Europe targeting Muslim migrants and refugees to directly impact a reconfiguration of Europe citizens’ cultural fears and ideological responses, or Elena Lukinykh’s link between Islamophobia and a new form of “patriotism”, the circulation of hate speech toward Muslims cannot be contained to just being a problem its victims face. Indeed, by way of exploring specifically the case of the German nationalist party Pegida, Lukinykh reminds us of the function of the us/them binary in shaping modern identities and the politics around them. Several contributions to this special issue reflect on the manner in which established (mainstream) political parties identify an opportunity to exploit a perceived quiet (or more overt) support for Islamophobic policies. The case could be one of

openly embracing the logic of Islamophobia, or opportunistically addressing the dangers such overt displays of collective hatred toward “minorities” can have on larger society.

This is certainly the case that Leyla Yıldırım makes in her study of the Netherlands, which is infused by the politicization of Muslim difference throughout the social media, press, and even how the Dutch government tries to confront these attitudes. While the government officially attempts to confront the potentially violent advocacy for excluding Muslims from Dutch public and state settings, the efforts can have complicated, political consequences. For those watching the attempts, until recently, at least of German Chancellor Angelika Merkel to take a “principled” stand against the growing hostility to the beneficiaries of Islamophobia, Peter Polak-Springer’s important analysis of the Arab media’s embrace of Germany’s political struggles unveils the politics behind them. With the general support of Arab media pundits that demonstrate Germany’s formal “positive” policy toward Muslim refugees, the context in which such seemingly sympathetic, principled policies sits is lost. The obvious need to adopt a nuanced approach to analyzing the seemingly distinctive groups on the issue of Islamophobia —those who fight against it and those who promote it— reminds us these political rivalries have multiple lives. Ali Hüseyinoğlu’s study of Greek political parties, and even the Orthodox Church leadership, does the work of highlighting how the “perpetrators of Islamophobia” define Greek government policies toward Muslims, but also allow for very distinctive practices depending on context. In Greece, there are two distinctive identifiable Muslim constituencies and Greek Islamophobia necessarily reflects these nuances. The government in Athens has historically developed different policies vis-à-vis Muslim-Turkish minority in Greece and “new Muslims,” who recently migrated to the country. Without making these nuances both visible and then, as Isa Blumi’s contribution suggest, inform how one studies Islamophobia (and Islam more generally), the resulting generalization tends to simply reify, and thus rationalize, the violence behind the phenomenon.

Read together, it is hoped the conclusion that the reader of these contributions will invariably reach reaffirms that there is the need to explain Islamophobia in its many different contexts and iterations. More, the reader may appreciate that explaining Islamophobia must be done in ways that do not fit under the analytical umbrella social scientists and political pundits often seek. This is certainly the case when it is applied in the larger European context.

The underlying assumption behind most of the individual contributions to this volume is that the reader is directly affected by the evocation of Islamophobic discourse in Europe. Having likely felt both offended and threatened, we Muslims and non-Muslims alike, seem to recognize that there is utility to being vigilant when studying it and not allow an emotionality to subvert our analysis. With greater attention invested in studying the specifics, especially the historical roots of Islamophobia, counter-measures may be possible. At the same time, however, amid the passions that invariably arise when “pushing back,” it is crucial to remind ourselves when exploring how to address this modern phenomenon the need to avoid lamely demanding “tolerance” of others.

As so well explained by the critical analysis of pluralism in a hypocritical Western context, the American and European “tolerance” on offer to compliant Muslims misses entirely the function of deeply rooted tools of political and social epistemologies of exclusion.² One need only look at who is permanently the focus of objectification and who is not in order to appreciate the importance of Connolly’s (and Talal Asad’s) interventions.³ The mere act of making sweeping references to Muslims as definable threats, in other words, is hardly the depth of the problem for many Muslims in the world today. At issue is not only pitting the “good” Muslims against the “bad” ones, a precarious terrain of

² William Connolly, *Why I am not a Secularist*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

³ Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986.

self-emulation and apologia at play in hyper-apartheid spaces like occupied Palestine or in almost every European city today, but also within so-called Muslim-majority polities as well.⁴ Islamophobia, we must argue, has its underlying, epistemological origins that are evident in the way Muslims themselves self-identify and carelessly engage the larger world. In other words, when we Muslims, in a collective way decry Islamophobia on its terms, we rely on the very Euro-centric terms of Muslims, non-Muslims that empower those who threaten us.⁵

As already hinted, there is a context to the term Islamophobia that warrants special focus. Isa Blumi's contribution asserts that Islamophobia as a term is a product of a French colonial regime that struggled to address the anti-colonialist polemics native peoples mobilized throughout the world. How Islamophobia has mutated from this point of initial tension is evident today most poignantly in the incapability of observers specializing on the so-called Islamic World to analyze events outside the narrow frame set by turn-of-the-century French orientalist.⁶ The narrow parameters we are expected to understand "Muslim agency" is by design (conscious or not) requiring we ignore other frames of interpretation. For example, the recent struggle against predatorial capitalist imperialism pits once temporary allies (at least in Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Syria) against each other, violent rivalries that are based on analytical categories entirely dependent on the same ontologies erected by the use of Islamophobia in its original colonial setting. That is to say, the war on the larger Middle East,

⁴ It is not by mistake that this framing made it in mainstream media circles: Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*, New York: Doubleday, 2005.

⁵ Isa Blumi, "Battles of Nostalgic Proportion: The Transformations of Islam-as-Historical-Force in the Ideological Matrix of a Self-Affirming 'West'." in Agon Hamza (ed.) *Althusser and Theology: Religion, Politics, and Philosophy*, Leiden: Brill, 2016, pp. 182-197.

⁶ See also Joseph Massad, *Islam in Liberalism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 79-121.

and justifications for it, are the result of an ontological order, an analytical prism, that still marshals colonial-era epistemologies to create the impression all conflict among historically peaceful societies is in fact inevitable. Neglecting to consider the origins of this logic, a product of new political economies introduced by the contingencies created by a failed effort to suppress (and perhaps even annex) the resistance against global capitalism, means we miss appreciating who benefits from seeing the world in such terms. Put differently, what remains a battle against imperialism throughout the world is now entirely catalogued by academics and media in terms dependent on an Islamophobic logic.

Sadly, the result has been that among the last actors facing global capitalism in resistance must articulate the struggle entirely in terms of their assumed sectarian association. This is not by mistake and has debilitating effects on the larger scholarly environment. No longer just the duty of spin masters and propagandists, entire academic disciplines (and special issues) dedicate their time to understand the world in terms set by the logic behind Islamophobia. This is especially glaring when considering the role self-identified Muslims play in this reification of a false binary separating Islam from the rest.

Now compelled to affiliate with globalist forces based in Tel Aviv, London, or New York, Muslims are neatly cut into binaries of good and bad, Shi'i or Sunni, civilized and uncivilized. These distinctions are predicated entirely on a formula that affiliates compliance to globalization and its incumbent materialism as the only way for a Muslim to be tolerated in the world. The rewards are glaringly simple. Those deemed "good" Muslims will enjoy, for now, a life free from direct US/NATO bombardment. To keep out of the crosshair, it is expected "good Muslims" comply with a number of demands that invariably challenge the very political orientations many in the world have based on their moral, ethical, and logical principles. For instance, "good" Muslims who are tolerable must assist in suppressing anti-American-Zionist discourse.

They must also reference their experiences of being Muslim

through the prism entirely produced out of ideological constructs of what are deemed Europe's ontological other.⁷

In the process of complying to global power (in exchange for not being directly persecuted) these "good" Muslims are in turn expected to enforce a narrow "tradition" that now neatly fits into institutionalized frames, an orthodoxy that erases all spiritual diversity. This enforcement of an orthodoxy requires a violent suppression of those who object to Western cultural hegemony, in other words the "bad" Muslims. The consequences have been the enforcement of sectarianism in Eurocentric, and Islamophobic, circles. This logical formula necessarily has, and will continue to, impose a frame of experience that collapses studying the contemporary world into these neat binaries. Such is the way Islamophobia defines the new frontiers in domestic and regional politics.

As evident in even the way historians report on the past, the sectarianism that inhabits the shadows created by Islamophobia is now the only way in which, Muslims (pedestrians or academics) will be able ever to both critique and confront Western imperialism and its ontologies. The result is those of us demanding our European neighbor's tolerance run the risk of doing so from the "Good" and "Bad" Muslim calculation. In such a frame, Muslims will always have to be not "bad" by first conforming to the Eurocentric, orientalist, strategically idealized representation of Islam, and then surrender any and all political, moral, or ethical principles that challenges the most vulgar iterations of globalist capitalism.

No Longer Distinct

We seem powerless to avoid reifying the underlying logic of Islamophobia when we demand to be accepted. Largely a theoretical exercise at this point, in this special issue we aim to offer at least some nuanced examples of how scholars can undermine the implications of Islamophobia by questioning the ubiquity of the

⁷ Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.

logic behind it. The net Islamophobic references castes is NOT generic and universal, but selective and based on specific political economic contexts. For this, we as scholars need to always remain guarded with how we analyze the apparent surfacing of such discourses in the past, present and future. If we can appreciate that Islamophobia, like racism, has its epistemological roots in an apparatus that mobilizes rhetoric to strengthen, impose, and circumvent expressions of power that are specific to time and place, we can perhaps abandon seeing its logic everywhere we look. In this respect, the ability to resist what we think is behind Islamophobia necessarily aggregates our needs as well to be recognized on different terms.

The question must then always remain: whose interest does Islamophobia serve? In these terms, undermining the universality of Islamophobia (and its project's nature) helps us identify in whose interest does fighting the origins of Islamophobia/racist discourses lay. Unfortunately, as we see so clearly today, the fact such discourses of differentiation and alienation can shift, casting a dangerous exclusionary shadow on user and target alike, often leads to violence from within Muslim communities. This violence (rhetorical or physical) coming from either side of this false dichotomy of who is acceptable and who is not, forces us to be more circumspect and careful, an example of paranoia once experienced by Europe's Jews prior to World War II.⁸

As we can see with some of the contributions in this special issue, there have been self-assuring efforts at defending "rights" of those Muslim Europeans whose experience increasingly falls under the categories of hatred, stereotyping, harassment, and discrimination. No doubt the case, the question is what is the path they take to address this harassment. As demonstrated in the Netherlands in a piece authored by Leyla Yıldırım, large

⁸ Yulia Egorova and Fiaz Ahmed, "The Impact of Antisemitism and Islamophobia on Jewish-Muslim Relations in the UK: Memory, Experience, Context." In James Renton and Ben Gidley (eds.), *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017, pp. 283-301.

numbers of people who in theory would feel protected by the apparent altruism of Dutch (non-Muslim) activists' eager to stand at the forefront of their defense, feel a discomfort. Many Muslims we have found do not even bother using the mechanisms presumably put in place by larger Dutch society to shield them from Islamophobia. The act of reporting hate crimes reflects a disturbing underlying assumption both activists wanting to "help" Muslims and scholars bring when carelessly adopting frames laid out in terms with a very specific Eurocentric epistemological heritage. To those Muslims expected to act within that frame, an evident discomfort, fear even, persists.

Others like Joseph Massad in his heavily critical (and thus criticized) book *Desiring Arabs* hits the nail on the head with his unease with European claims of tolerance and care.⁹ The critical discomfort Egyptians have with invasive moralizing from "well-intentioned" activists promoting a liberal social order, is apparent more and more among Muslim Europeans too. Also uncomfortable inhabiting the same invasive, narrowing and entirely controlled rhetorical arena in which they have been put, some self-identified Muslim constituencies have emerged in these contexts, be they in France or Belgium, in a way that hardened, not erased, divisions.¹⁰

The lesson learned by these observations is that we need to be weary of "humanitarian" activism that in many ways helps narrow the experience of being Muslims to those set by self-identified outsiders. If we do not remain skeptical and constantly challenging the logic of how Europeans reference Islam, there will remain little that self-identified Muslims can do outside the narrow frames self-identified non-Muslims set for them. The power to act and engage remains well-beyond the reach of Muslim individuals and the communities they wish to make unless a new epistemology is created.

⁹ Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, University of Chicago Press, 2008.

¹⁰ Mayanthi L. Fernando, *The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

While an understated situation, it is one entirely recognizable by individuals who, rather than putting up a fight, choose to shy away from the conventions set out by Islamophobes. The problem is they end up being atomized, isolated from others that may share their cultural, political, and spiritual experience. And that is precisely the point behind our fear about the logical power behind Islamophobia. It will soon be impossible to think and act as Muslims other than in terms set by sanctioned, invariably foreign and intolerant, institutions sanctioned by powerful interests. Here then the struggle is to communicate to those operating on terms set entirely by Islamophobia to make “the Muslim” legible.

An on-going struggle in Anthropology to do just this —make Muslims accessible to a Western audience that does not reify their “difference”— has been mostly pitting Saba Mahmood and Samuli Schielke against each other.¹¹ Part of the problem with both their partisan approaches to make Muslims legible to an audience operating from within a lexicon informing Islamophobes is that they both presume (or methodologically need) a commonality. Their analysis of Islamic tradition and practice, primarily in Egypt, needs, therefore, to actively gloss over the contractions that any ethnographic study reveals because they are compelled to present the Muslim to an audience believed to harbor narrow associations with Islam. In other words, while arguing from distinct methodological starting points and with very different political objectives, Mahmood and Schielke seem to reify the very presence of something which Islamophobia targets. In the end, it is their implicit framing of the Muslim object of study, and Islam as that which shapes what Europeans must hate and protect, that may inhibit our struggle to find restitution. Furthermore, framing a coherent, available Islam and Muslim in this way may also make it impossible to resist the violence of what lays behind Islamophobia in the first place: Euro-American Imperialism.

¹¹ See Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando, “Rediscovering the ‘everyday’ Muslim: Notes on an Anthropological Divide.” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2015, pp. 59–88.

The attempt to program Muslims into a question and thus to fit narrow frames of action (either as objects of attack or protection) that answers this question, extends to theoretical debates among Anthropologists, whose voices are unfortunately not represented in this special issue. Their debates around an ethnography of being Muslim in this period of rapid centralization and institutionalization could offer more sustenance to those of us who profess our faith to Islam in a variety of historically rich ways. In the frame of an historical assessment of those forms of institutionalized bigotry that contributors may have misapplied the term Islamophobia anachronistically, we find ourselves trapped in frames of historical and social scientific trends while ignoring, again, context. We fail at our peril if we cannot remember that Islamophobia is a phenomenon that is tangible; it operates, functions and informs the actions of many individuals and often the associations they create. As practice, Islamophobia even defines the way state authorities, and then the law, performs, a factor rarely studied in the context of so-called Western administrative and legal traditions.

In this respect, Islamophobia is entirely associated with its manifestation, exclusively in its hostile, paranoid phase, in the so-called West. While this special issue seems entirely fixated on Europe in order to geographically situate the term and its practical effect, we recognized the need to pay lip service at least to the fact the manifestations of Islamophobia extend well-beyond the so-called West. Indeed, the violence directed toward Muslims in Myanmar in the last few years, or throughout Central and Western Africa, signals a global phenomenon where power politics can mobilize a logic to secure short-term gains. Again, in this sense, it is instructive to appreciate the pervasiveness of the Western epistemologies of Islam that posit a faith to which more than a billion people adhere as a unit of study. Islam as such appears entirely unique to the modern era (perhaps moving back to early modern Europe), and it is here that we suggest readers exploring this special issue ask what is indeed the phenomenon (or term) we are studying here.

Beyond laying down an historic accounting for its manifestation is of course the consequences of its actual manifestation on societies. Those targeted by Islamophobia certainly must suffer the consequences, as we see historically throughout this special issue. More recently, one need not go further than the stories of burnt down refugee homes, and the pogroms in Burma, Central African Republic, Nigeria in the 1960s, Palestine since the British Mandate, and the Balkans throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, several valuable interventions in this special issue highlight the consequences for Muslims who have made Western Europe their home. Further study into the process of Islamophobia justify violence against Turkish, Albanian, Bosnian, or Arab migrants to Europe since World War II led some of our contributors to discover how targeted peoples cope with their persecution.

Unfortunately, the question of how do we get out of this situation in which Islamophobia, as a discourse that imposes a narrow criterion of engagement with the larger world, remains unanswered. Troubled scholars certainly need a new approach, be it from within the study of Muslim communities or a careful rephrasing of the historical analysis of past and more recent events. There is hope, however. Contributions to the International Symposium out of which this special issue comes suggest a new generation awaits encouragement and the resources to speak in new ways about Islamophobia, and thus Islam. Indeed, we suggest monitoring the work of exceptional intellects who, while still PhD students scattered throughout the world, demonstrate an appreciation for the need to consciously upset the prevailing pressures to conform to reifying epistemologies. Young scholars are increasingly seeking to represent the conflicted, hybrid and consistently shifting parameters of individual Muslim associations with their faith and other Muslims. As noted in their work, this involves studying Muslims in decisively cosmopolitan (both materially and spiritually) settings without imposing a natural binary relationship between host and foreigner.

Writing out of the discursive trap set up by accepting

Islamophobia as something outside its political context is not possible unless such paradigm shifts are at least explored. The contributions to this volume offer some possible other routes to accomplish this. That said, these young scholars too articulate a frustrated recognition that without abandoning the thrust of their specific cases, such a challenge is difficult in the confines of a special issue. Therefore, this special issue must provide but a set of useful tools to help deconstruct (in the spirit of Jacques Derrida and David Campbell) the apparatus that enables Islamophobia to function as a logic and perhaps reality to which Muslims feel entirely vulnerable. Ultimately, the way to fight Islamophobia must be theoretical, and the following contributions provide some of the assets, as case studies, to affect change by appreciating the roots to the ways in which such doctrines become tools with real historic consequences.

“Nothing New: Islamophobia by Default in Postwar Europe”

Isa Blumi*

“And God has brought you forth from your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing—but He has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and minds, so that you might cause to be grateful.” (An-Nahl: 78).

ABSTRACT

Europe’s post-World War II history has long been associated with division along class-based, sectarian, and ethnic lines. The so-called Cold War certainly contributed to the ways in which Europe’s “front line” states like West Germany consistently reanimated internal divisions, both of those constituting legally “natives” and those rendered temporary to service labor demands from industry. Often lost in the analysis of this postwar history are the secondary divisions that persisted, expanded, and even outlived the dynamics of the Cold War and its cultural politics.

This article will suggest that studying migration patterns from the “East” to West Germany over the entire course of the Cold War not only highlights the methodological pitfalls of reducing this period of Europe history to a reflection of superpower machinations or the practicalities of importing labor from the Balkans and Turkey, but also further disaggregates the analytical themes that dominate the study of modern Europe’s social, economic, and institutional dynamics when it involves Muslims. Put differently, identifying certain forms of institutional harassment and/or facilitation as a marker of the relative persistence of “Islamophobia” (or other

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forms of system discrimination on the basis of more specific references to race and/or ethnicity) threatens to dilute certain forms of prejudice that actually extenuates the experience of Muslims beyond the identity politics today uniquely framed in these Islamophobic terms.

Introduction

Fearing those who profess faith to God through their varying “unfamiliar” practices and principles we identify as Islam has become synonymous with the modern social, cultural, and political European landscape. The act of fearing has indeed become a core element to the shaping of identity politics, the primary medium by which relations between an emergent state and its subjects interacted since the 19th century. Increasingly since then, the underlying principles of *laïcité* and the more brutal performative secularism that animated the power struggles of the 19th century constituted Europe. While no longer meant to so neatly distinguish Europe from a strategically claimed Judeo-Christian lineage, the ideology of secularism nevertheless survives to define the boundaries of Europe in respect to Muslims. In this respect, it is impossible to separate Europe’s modern history and its association with secularism, from a pathological fear orientated toward the Muslim other.

This need to fundamentally mistrust the presence—either near or far—of diverse peoples practicing a faith so neatly encapsulated by a pathological fear of difference, one which Nietzsche and Freud observed pushed modern “secular” people toward a self-destructive nihilism, necessarily informs not only those who fear, but those specifically targeted as well. In other words, the rise of Islamophobia since the 19th century reflects a relationship of mutual dependence. The Euro (American) neurosis of fearing Islam (and Muslims) has transformed not only how Europeans understand themselves, but, sadly, Muslims too. As discussed below, the clear associational need for modern identities to germinate within a context of a binary between insider/outsider, us and them, has had terrible consequences on everyone of us.

Worse, the anticipated, and thus understandable, need to protect oneself from the violence of being feared has tattooed yet another layering of doubt, perhaps even self-hatred, to the identity of being Muslim (and those who study the phenomenon).

As argued throughout, there is a need to begin reflecting more on the implications of Islamophobia not only on Europe’s political and economic relations with “outsiders” but also its derivative implications on how Muslims understand who they are in this context. Ever since the mid-19th century, a new kind of hyper-sensitivity to individual and group Muslim relations with Europe has shaped the way Muslims remember their heritages, practice their faiths, and even think about their religious principles. Perhaps uncomfortable to many today, it may be the very “renaissance” of Islam among those Salafist now famous in the West —Abduh, Afghani, Rida—is itself a reflection of this need to engage, communicate, and reassure the West of Muslims’ modernity.

I have suggested elsewhere that the “nahda’s” reinterpretation of how Muslims spiritually live in the late 19th century reflected an apologetic and narrowing understanding of Islam in almost entirely Eurocentric terms. First the centering of Salafist doctrine that Islam is modern (in terms entirely subordinate to European understandings of the term) and then its empowerment that has colonized Islam ever since, all took place in British-occupied Egypt, India, and Arabia.¹ Without this contextualization, all subsequent attempts to address what we today, in this special issue, associate with hostility to Islam misses two very different formulations of just who represents the faith of over a billion people and what is the nature of Europe’s relationship with them. What the reformists and Salafis have done since their ascendancy within British/American controlled polities is to reassure Westerners that it is compliant with a modern, rational global order. What Salafism remains hostile to is a spiritual alternative to finance capitalism, a

¹ Joseph Massad, *Islam in Liberalism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

“traditional” or “folk” Islam that is stuck in a logical vortex informed by the colonial-era epistemologies that birthed Islamophobia. This collaborative effort to differentiate and subordinate Muslims to a frame of engagement with European hegemony necessitates a Muslim wishing for recognition as someone not to be feared, a politics of subordination that reminds some of us of the classic self-hating Jew once tormenting intellectuals prior to World War II.²

As demonstrated so well throughout this special issue, what animates much of European society today likely contributes to our rationale to publish this special issue.³ In literature and the arts, mainstream culture, and in coded references deeply entrenched in the confines of “serious” scholarly production, something defined by Islamophobia as Islam is ubiquitous and terrifying, for Muslims. In the calculus of Islamophobia, Muslims’ faith is impossible to understand in terms incommensurable to a bigoted, colonial-era epistemology of racism. Muslims’ faith in the hands of the Euro-Americans, in other words, can only ever be understood as an object. Be it an object of police surveillance or of study by social scientists, Islam no longer belongs to Muslims. It is a pathology, a sociological phenomenon that ends up catalogued in a universe now understood through, perhaps a humanistic filter, but more likely a neoliberal, market-orientated rationalism. In other words, there is something entirely available to study as a collective Muslim experience by way of European institutions and centers of power. It is one that is feared as a collective, and confronted from within the aggregates social scientists offer to their readers. Indeed, what most Western-orientated scholars now offer is a set of analytical tools that centers Islam in an almost geographic sense. We are now assured that we have a sense where the source of the fear of a practice shared by a billion fellow human beings, Islam, is located.

This locative function of the study of Islam (and Islamophobia)

² Paul Reitter, *On the Origins of Jewish Self-Hatred*, Princeton University Press, 2012.

³ Junaid Rana, “The Story of Islamophobia”, *Souls*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2007: pp. 148-161.

allows for the reinsertion of Europe (and North America) as the epistemic core of truth. As such, fear in Europe has a geographic reference point, from which all those who profess association must originate or serve as alien, foreign, and thus dangerous. Islam and the coagulated Muslim other thereby remain out there, beyond, never within. This means the visceral, violent capacities of those terrified, if politically expedient, know toward where their fear must be directed.⁴ This explicit threat of violence, starting in the late 19th century, has made many a parvenu of the self-identified, fearful Muslim desperate to be left alone.⁵

Fortunately, there is a growing distrust with this positioning of Islam in reference to a centered, core Euro-American consciousness. There is a generation of scholarship now that challenges the “West” and its epistemological tradition, especially in relation to Islam. Scholars in the academy (mostly, ironically enough, in North America and Europe) are upsetting the centrality of Euro-American logic and suggesting there are new ways to return a “Muslim voice” to a frame of consciousness in the modern world heretofore monopolized by Europe. This article shares their concern but will point out some critical misconceptions of what such “push-back” actually instills in partisans when their resistance is understood through the prism of Islamophobia. It is argued throughout that remaining vigilant about how the more general pathologies of the modern and postmodern epistemologies of difference works is required if we want to move into beyond the reactive to advocacy phase when addressing Europe’s phobia with Muslims.

Are we Studying Islam or Fearing not to?

Frequently Islam’s peoples’ position vis-à-vis something else (in our world today, where power is still imbalanced and almost

⁴ Wendy Brown, “Apocalyptic Populism,” *Eurozine*, 30 August 2017.

⁵ A condition theorized by Hannah Arendt in context of interwar Europe. See Suzzane Vromen, “Hannah Arendt’s Jewish Identity: Neither Parvenu Nor Pariah,” *European Journal of Political Thought*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2004, pp. 177-90.

monopolized, this always means Europe/United States) is situated through the mechanics of neo-colonial power. When, for instance, Salafists engage their constituencies today, as in the late nineteenth century or in the 1920s, the reference is how their faith operates on a parallel track of European notions of rationality. In other words, “modern” Muslims have, rather than taking a much more dignified incommensurable plain vis-à-vis European power, they have eagerly sought acknowledgement as equals.

It is increasingly clear, through the work of Joseph Massad, and humbly, my own, that the Western epistemologies that needed to construct Islam both reaffirms a narrow constitution of the liberal self in the Euro-American world, and, unfortunately, also how Muslims position themselves today. Put differently, it is the quest to always maintain a political and economic order that may have attempted to stabilize Western hegemony by projecting its epistemic power into a new discursive arena. This arena, we argue, is what constitutes the parameters of what those likely to be reading this fear are the consequences of Islamophobia. That is to say, by fearing those who fear Islam is to unconsciously reify the West’s new iteration of its foundational ideological concepts that aims to suppress counter-hegemonic narratives such as an Islam buoyed by a sense of autonomy, perhaps even rebellious confidence to resist. While today Muslims and Islamophiles seek to engage the unquestioned assumptions laid out by this discourse on modernity, secularism, and then even what constitutes Islam, we may have forgotten to understand why the polemic of Islamophobia even exists. It was the fear of Islam that mobilizes Muslims to be good, kind, generous, and to struggle against the materialism, selfishness, and blatant racist ideologies nurtured in a world dominated by finance capitalism.

As it is explored below, this Islam to which Islamophobia neatly confines the boundaries of debate to ignore what Muslims understood as their moral compass and what God commanded them, becomes part of a program that renders Islam to an object of defilement and protection. Islam is not only an object that defines the extent to which fear begins and ends, however.

In its current form, as it functions in day-to-day experiences of Muslims and those who “fear” them, Islam for me and most of those contributing to this special issue, seems actually always already not what we need it to be. Out of necessity, Islam and our faith is what makes us not Europeans. This condition requires our activism, our resistance. The way we seek to challenge Islamophobia, unfortunately, may function to reify this formula. For this fact, we are concerned.

Frustrated, the following intervention explores and criticizes, how we are gauging, navigating and studying Islamophobia in ways that may prove there is something in need of unlearning as much as teaching. Reflecting on what it means to be Muslim in a world dominated by media (both from beyond and within the so-called Islamic world) entirely beholden to service Empire, should not program us/them to operate within a neat ontology to which we refuse to subscribe. This ontology of great ideological function, if not carefully deconstructed and then excised, will continue to translate into never traversable difference. As we observe so often in the debates around, for instance, the Anthropology of Islam, and both the blind embrace of the essentialism of Islam found throughout academia and from within those who struggle against it, the binary we learn to hate nevertheless occupies the depictions of what we/they assert Islam is and what it is not. We write here against this often amorphous and complicated, most surely unintended, surrender to what are essentially colonial-era epistemologies to bring a different angle to this special issue’s explicit and implicit project.

We are in a situation where individuals with some analytical capacity and a trusting audience, rather than putting up a fight, shy away from confronting the conventions set out by the discourse defined by Islamophobia. This exercise of avoiding getting to the root of the logic of Islamophobia in order to function in academic circles that increasingly demand conformity ultimately realizes the racist epistemologies they *seem* to challenge as truth. The consequences for those feeling targeted are that they are, in fact, now entirely beholden to the logic of Islamophobia. Attempts by

well-intentioned scholars to make Muslims more accessible to what is assumed a “West” that knows nothing of their tradition and their creed fail to recognize politics of confrontation that makes the modern regime of genocide and political chaos in the “Muslim world” possible.

As we will demonstrate below, the ruling interests need Islamophobia to help maintain an epistemic order to the world; making Islam fit within what it is not allowed to be in principle because of racist ideologies only reinforces the power dynamics at play. The effect is and will continue to be that Muslims are isolated from others who may share their cultural, political, and spiritual experience as objects of colonial-era exploitation. The concern, here, in other words, is by suggesting being Muslim is itself not a human condition, but a Muslim one, we fall into the logical power behind Islamophobia. Below we theorize how we need to understand this with a return to Louis Althusser’s larger critique of our inability to break out of the ideological frames laid out by powered-interests since, in our case at least the late 19th century. To explain why such an approach is necessary, we first must lay out that Islamophobia and the tools mobilized to reify its logic are historically situated in a colonial (French) context.

D’être Islamophobe

Islamophobia is a construct, in the end, very much a product of a modern era as much tied to European colonialism, the ascendancy of finance capitalism, and a regime of occupation entirely unique to the rich history in which Muslims and non-Muslims interacted in the world. As such, its very presence, even in what now seems indistinguishable from a past and future, must be thought of as a particularity of one specific moment and context. Islamophobia, we argue here, is but a constellation of ideas that groups humans in an ideological framework as much reflective of those expected to embrace the logic of fearing the other, as it works to actually make an object of Islam (and Muslims). Thinking of the context from which Islamophobia originates, therefore, seems the primary goal of any introduction to a special issue on the very modern,

contemporary phenomenon clearly animating, in almost equally fearful counter-active visceral, both advocates and opponents, beneficiaries and victims.

We have learned from a most thorough analysis of the phenomenon that this Islamophobia to which we refer throughout may have French origins.⁶ The argument is convincing. As Hajjat and Mohammed demonstrate, the epistemic roots of Islamophobia indeed seem to first emerge with the rise of a new colonial (and anti-colonial) regime germinating within the inner circles of the French colonial administration at the turn-of-the-century. With the struggle between competing factions trying to navigate the decades of resistance to French (and finance capitalist) colonialism in Western Africa, the Sahel and especially Algeria, a new kind of regime seemed necessary to sustain what was otherwise an insupportable quest to prolong European imperialism. Where the tension lay was just which direction to steer the tools of empire as it faced this armed resistance of its tens of millions of Muslim subjects.

France was at the end of its plundering capacities prior to World War I because of resistance. With so much at stake, the prescient analysis of critical revisionist scholarship on French imperialism have identified what constitutes rival regimes within the larger colonial state. What these rivals struggled over was the laying down of an effective policy to address Muslim resistance throughout Africa. One faction proved especially important to the larger story of Islamophobia. Trying to differentiate from within the imperial administration and scholarly communities servicing it, a group of specialists of West African (Senegalese) Islam—Alain Quellien, Paul Marty and Maurice Delfosse—appeared as the fountainheads of an often-contradictory objectification of Muslims that is the heart of our larger analysis of Islamophobia. Their attempts to steer the French colonial state into a new, less hostile and more

⁶ Abdellali Hajjat and Marwan Mohammed, *Islamophobie: Comment les elites françaises fabriquent le "problème musulman"*, Paris: La Decouverte, 2013, p. 72.

accommodating position vis-à-vis Paris' often violently hostile Muslim subjects proved essential to the subsequent rise of a new form of orientalist epistemology. These scholars of Islam's objectives of rendering otherwise ethnically, linguistically, and ideologically disparate groups into one coherent whole, aspired to service the greater needs of empire rather than elevate the weight of French capitalist exploitation of Muslim peoples. Advocating a subtler way of ruling Muslims, in other words, could help France administer its Muslim subjects effectively and efficiently.

These leaders of their disciplines believed the implicit Islamophobia among a certain cadre of administrators constituted a threat to an effective and enduring colonial rule over Muslim populations. They advocated harnessing Islam in ways that parallel the ways in which Islamophobia has become a normative for both bigots and disillusioned opponents of racism today. Reminding ourselves that the neologism "islamophobia" has its likely roots in this contested French colonial administrative apparatus means the campaign to harness the human sciences in the larger liberal capitalist world were crucial to the expansion of North Atlantic imperialism and the cultivation of Islam as a colonial administrative tool.⁷

The advent of sociology, international relations, anthropology, and political science were the necessary investments of global capital as imperialist operations moved from coopting private colonial projects to more sophisticated, comprehensive operations run by nation-states. Indeed, by the middle of the nineteenth

⁷ For how the needs of empire shaped American investment into the social sciences, and their consequences, see among others: Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations*, Cornell University Press, 2015; Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States*, Stanford University Press, 2016; Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, *Anthropology's Politics: Disciplining the Middle East*, Stanford University Press, 2016; Osamah F. Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State*, Harvard University Press, 2016 and Isa Blumi, *Destroying Yemen: What Chaos in Arabia Tells Us about the World*, University of California Press, 2017.

century, rival capitalist enterprises began to fuse, transforming the way competing interests plundered resources availed by the global spread of finance centered in Northwest Europe and then Northeast USA.⁸ New investment in industrialization and the construction of a laboring class able to buy the new mass-produced products they made in the factories that hired them required an even more explicit aggressive colonialism, one that harnessed cultural knowledge to help shape new forms of social control and political economy. This context proves vital to understanding the rise of Islamophobia and its repositioning today.

The French origins of the term and its likely function link all three of the above-mentioned ethnographers who tried to harness their skillset as experts on the manners and ways of Sub-Saharan Muslims to secure important administrative roles in the imperial project they hoped their knowledge served. For Maurice Delafosse (1870-1926) the ultimate acknowledgement of his contribution to subordinating French African Muslims to a serviceable subject was his appointment to the director of Civilian Affairs in the Government of the Dakar-based French West Africa (l’Afrique occidentale française, AOF). For Alain Quellien, a long career researching law and African languages landed him a director role in the Ministry of Colonies. Lastly, Paul Marty, born in Algeria in 1882, served as director of Indigenous Affairs in Rabat between 1912 and 1921.

The story goes that since the beginning of the twentieth century, as Islam and Muslims became increasingly identified as a necessary object of social scientific inquiry for the purposes of better administering the continued exploitation of their still wealthy societies, the pretensions of science dovetailed with the

⁸ For a narrative that includes the Ottoman Empire into this Global Historical process, and in the process suggests the events in the Middle East and Indian Ocean may have contributed to the formation of the Modern world (and thus the need for Islamophobia) see Peter Gran, *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840*, Syracuse University Press, 1998; Isa Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity: Human Agency and the Imperial State*, Routledge: 2011; Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World*, Bloomsbury Press, 2013.

power of knowledge matrix subsequently critiqued by students of Althusser, including Derrida and Foucault. The initial concern was to direct the growing ethnographic body of work on “Islam noir” located in the sub-Saharan regions of the French African empire. Through the publication of these studies by way of the *Revue du monde musulman*, published out of French administered Morocco and used by ethnographers in the administration of French imperialism as much as in the universities, the foundations of a distinctively French orientalist discourse emerged. Crucial to its very operational effectiveness was the implantation of Islam as both a fully captured object of scientific research, and subsequent tool by way of the application of this knowledge.

Crucially, these three originators of the term Islamophobia raised it in the context of fighting against the crude hostility emerging among the administrative ranks that Islam as a Civilization must be overtaken by Western (and Christian) progress. Delafosse as early as 1910 decried the attempts by administrators to foster hostility among the minority non-Muslim populations in Western Africa, leaving a veneer of Islamophobia that “has no place in [French Administered] Western Africa... moreover... France has nothing to fear of Muslims in Western Africa...”⁹

For his part, Quellien embraced more forcefully this campaign to reverse the trends within French colonial administrations, identifying the “prejudice toward Islam” that is ever more expanding in Western Civilization and among Christians, proves counter-productive in that it misplaces history. “For no one among those in the West are Muslims the natural and irreconcilable enemy of Christians and Europe.” In this tone that demanded everyone know their history of Muslim relations to Christians, Quellien commented that this campaign against Islam is “exaggerated, that Muslims were not the born enemy of Europe, but were made such by the local circumstances induced by their armed resistance.”

⁹ Maurice Delafosse, “L’état actuel de l’Islam dans l’Afrique occidentale française,” *Revue du monde musulman*, vol. XI, no. V, 1910, pp. 56-7.

He then offered a detailed catalogue of positive impressions well-known early explorers of Western Africa, especially in the Ivory Coast region, had of Muslim. All well-received by "Muslim tribes" and never threatened on account of religious hostility, to Quellien, Islam constituted a moral code of "incontestable" value and served everywhere in Africa as a force that "lifted the moral and intellectual sensibilities of those who embraced it."¹⁰

What appears to also be a popular colonial administrative track in this period, one that could actually harness Islam to help facilitate the efficient and thus profitable rule over resources, Quellien, like many "Arabists" of the British, Dutch and Italian origins believed that Muslims were amendable to being ruled by European powers. "Islam... does not seem to be... in opposition to the idea of Christian Europe conquering other Muslim polities."¹¹ The idea that individual Muslim polities could be partners in the larger objective of occupying other Muslim polities, essentially using alliances that would in the case of British partnership in Arabia, ultimately nurture an ideological recasting of a centralized umma who would establish authority over heretofore scattered, autonomous Muslims, suggests a way to assure the long-term survival of the French empire. Quellien tried to convince his administrative audience that Muslims could be convinced to live as subordinates as long as they could maintain authority over the exercise of their faith and that their women were duly respected.¹² Here contemporaries with deep cultural and artistic links to North Africa engaged in the larger debate in French society to persuade policy-makers how to administer Muslim majority societies.¹³ In a much-read book of the interwar period, for example, even artists lamented the persistence of an ideological construct that extended,

¹⁰ Allen Quellien, *La Politique musulmane dans l'Afrique occidentale française*, Paris: Émile Larose, 1910, pp. 133-137.

¹¹ Quellien, *La Politique musulmane*, p. 154.

¹² Quellien, *La Politique musulmane*, p. 154.

¹³ Hajjat and Mohammed, *Islamohobie*, pp. 75-77.

they complained, back to the Crusades. The prevailing “ideology of conquest” had persisted to the extent that it permeated, with tyrannical effects, all the Empire at the expense of ideologies that could assure progress and development for Muslims. Casted as heathens beyond reform, the French empire was in danger of initiating an endless war against its own Muslim subjects. If, on the other hand, France, and by extension Europe, maintained a cordial relationship with Islam, an alliance could emerge, a union that would create an “impenetrable barrier” against the spread of communism.¹⁴

Identifying a typology of Islamophobia that continued to uproot France’s ability to harness Muslims against communism, the authors separated an Islamophobia drawing from the “pseudoscientific” elites of the academy and colonial administration and the version emanating from a Christian clerical class.¹⁵ Here they directed their derision at Princeton Professor Samuel W. Zwemer, whose work at the time extended some of the earliest modern versions of misinformation, continued to inform misrepresentations of Islam in some corners. These French advocates further lamented the fact many believed there was no need to even study Islam and thus engage Muslim societies intellectually because of the underlying assumptions of Muslim depravity and primitiveness. This chauvinism created a class of “experts” and advisors who never studied the languages of the Muslim world or Islam, a gap in knowledge that was deemed dangerous and left France vulnerable.¹⁶

In the hands of these sensitive operatives, identifying Islamophobia as a mode of government that encouraged violent resistance was clearly counterproductive to the long-term stability of French ambitions. As advocated by Marty, already heavily

¹⁴ Nacir Ed Din Etienne Dinet and Sliman Ben Ibrahim Baamer, *Le Pelerinage a la maison sacree d’Allah*, Paris: Hachette, 1930, pp. 173-76.

¹⁵ Dinet and Baamer, *Le Pelerinage a la maison sacree d’Allah*, p. 183.

¹⁶ Dinet and Baamer, *Le Pelerinage a la maison sacree d’Allah*, pp. 173-4.

invested in administration in Muslim communities in West Africa, France needed to establish a collaborative enterprise to maintain a respectful appreciation for Muslims as interlocutors, not targets of ignorant hostility. The lack of any sustained “moral considerations” among French colonialists inhabiting Western Africa frustrated men like Marty, who pushed back against this Islamophobia. The resulting “Islamophilie” embraced local cultures and condemned those advocates of open war with indigenous Muslims. Again, men like Delafosse, Quellien, and Marty believed long-term partnerships were conducive to sustaining a French presence in Western and North Africa otherwise threatened by Islamophobic tactics just beginning to move beyond the circles of colonial administration into the general public.¹⁷

The problem that remains one today is the response to a programmatic conflict between “outsiders” and Muslims in the French colonial administration was these “sympathetic” men also mobilized an essentialist Islam, just as did the Islamophobes. The depiction, for different reasons, of Islam and Muslims as objects of fear or patronizing support constituted a dangerous reductionist logic that demanded a subordinated Muslim. Their diverse faith was expected to service a French imperial cause. While the phenomenon of collaboration spans centuries between those objectifying factions within human constituencies, among whom Muslims are included, the 20th century phenomenon of colonialist ontologies of Islam has meant even a Muslim can appropriate this essentialist, Western-orientated construct reduced to Islam. Soon after these French agents of Empire who advocated harnessing Islam to help calm rebellious Africa, the purveyors of reductionist approaches equally objectified Islam. In the hands of British administrators of Egypt and the Arabia file, Islam could serve as a modern ideological apparatus that could take on various governmental (in Foucault’s terms) functions. To administrators

¹⁷ In French Guinea, such prospects promised violence and a less effective regime of wealth extraction. Paul Marty, “L’Islam en Guinée,” *Revue du monde musulman*, vol. XXXVI, 1918-1919, pp. 173-5.

collaborating with North Atlantic capitalist empires throughout the 20th century, Islam necessarily was reducible to a construct found in Social Anthropology text books, neatly defined and fixed historically in this entirely false binary between the West and East. As such, it could indeed be mobilized as a social engineering tool.

As Hajjat and Mohammed so clearly highlight, the recent move to coopt the indigenous counter-narratives increasingly infiltrating the nationalist discourse of North Atlantic neo-colonialism necessarily meant appropriating efforts to counter other forms of institutionalized racism with new narratives of mobilization. The problem was the mobilization reified new constellations of oppositional classes, reducing different measures, and flattening distinctive histories of struggle to racial categories. Muslims since the 19th century thus became categorically read in colonial epistemologies as a race and today the politics of Muslim resistance is entirely differentiated along racial lines. The generic association of Muslims as “Turks,” for instance, led to policies that constituted genocide in the post-Ottoman era. In the effort to right a demographic balance in the Balkans, millions of Muslim were compelled to migrate to a newly established Turkish republic, a state whose own ideological project required that its subjects appropriate an ethno-national affiliation at the expense of much deeper fluid cultural, linguistic, spiritual and socio-economic associations.

By the end of the Cold War, a simplistic recategorization of Muslims in Britain into “British Muslims, Black and Asians” effectively blurred the dynamic lives of migrant Muslims from all corners of the British Empire.¹⁸ The politically serviceable entrepreneurs emerging from this new discursive environment began to assert a uniformly iterated “Muslim consciousness” that resulted in a preeminent association. This affected the lives of hitherto diversely animated constituencies. Crucially, this now seemingly unified self-identified Muslim collective, had

¹⁸ Hajjat and Mohammed, *Islamohobie*, pp. 80-81.

the counter-intuitive dulling of stronger resistance based on more amenable associations in the past. By being collectively, rhetorically subsumed under a more universal “Muslim” category, it narrowed the political spectrum under which such identified people could operate. This undermined the struggle against institutional racism, which paradoxically became diluted into a new kind of identity politics when Muslims became a de facto new racial constituency. By design, we argue, those who without recourse had to slide into this collective Muslim consciousness, robbed them of an ability to speak freely about what actually constitutes being a Muslim.

The politics of self-identification that resulted in new super categories further diluted the ability of working class subjects of imperialism to effectively resist abuse. Increasingly, a racialism that by definition distinguished “blacks” from “Asians” and “Muslims” who in turn created their own exclusivist political spaces, meant everyone’s political orientation could be harnessed by entrepreneurs inhabiting the public sphere and academia. These, what we call agents of difference, started to sell “Islamic tradition” uncritically as the natural response to Islamophobia. Their ahistorical iterations about a caliphate or hermetically sealed umma during the “glory years” of Islam need to remind us of the crude jingoism of the colonial past that encouraged this ethno-nationalist revision of relations between Muslims.

Conveniently, these tropes about what constitutes Islamic heritage became the exclusive expression of this now universal Muslim identity fermenting in Britain, France, Germany, and Holland. In other words, within a generation, what had been a moment in the immediate postcolonial era of new possibilities of alliance-making among the working poor was once again undermined by the self-exclusionary discourses around an essentialist Islam (and race).¹⁹ Muslims, or poor white men who

¹⁹ Nasar Meer, *Citizenship, Identity & the Politics of Multiculturalism. The Rise of Muslim Consciousness*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010.

were trained to fear them, were informed by a racist politics (or even a revival of ethno-nationalism in the Balkans) whose exclusionary form of social representation shaped how Muslims understood Islamophobia, and thus Islam.

In respect to identity politics and Muslim-exclusive narratives that were allowed to germinate in certain institutions throughout Europe, Islam within a neatly disciplined frame of reference, has been reified. The space within which it is only possible to understand Islam—entirely in terminology communicable to Europeans—are now rhetorically policed with considerable flare and nuance in the academy which harbors an orthodoxy that perpetuates, through the training of an otherwise “secular” educated class, a worth colored by the logic of Islamophobia. For these educated Muslims and their sympathizers thinking in Euro-American partisan terms, the incentive is to push back against Islamophobia.²⁰ What is missing is an appreciation for how dangerous are the consequences of allowing western epistemologies about Islam to shape how Muslims subsequently see themselves vis-à-vis those who evoke this ideology of hate.

The struggle that has helped narrow the faith of Muslims into one identifiable “Islam”, as Hajjat and Mohammed note, extends to diasporas today. Seemingly operating on different ideological plains, The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (CBMI), established by something called the Runnymede Trust, consciously aspires to inform anew Muslim sensibilities in a seemingly neutral way.²¹ The stated objectives are for the discourse of “resistance” to Islamophobia to become global. For this to happen, however, CBMI and its partisans need both white elite patronage and the ideological enforcement by some imams to accept the limits of a constituted Islam.²² Today, the space permissible to engage power

²⁰ Runnymede Trust, *Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, London: Runnymede Trust, 1997; Kalim Siddiqui, *The Muslim Manifesto. A Strategy for Survival*, London: The Muslim Institute, 1990.

²¹ Hajjat and Mohammed, *Islamohobie*, pp. 82-83.

²² Hajjat and Mohammed, *Islamohobie*, pp. 85-98.

is entirely controlled within the confines of Euro-American power. Muslims are now expected to prove their embrace of “democracy” and perform in ways that are commensurate to liberal “values” that necessarily reinforce the exploitative mechanisms of global capital today. The most important facilitators of this quest to find common ground are the previously mentioned public intellectuals and well-funded academics. As with the French case discussed above, what scholars trying to bring Muslims to a point of being “represented” in a democratic order fail to appreciate is that their references also surrender to western epistemologies that explicitly subordinate Islam to an object of colonial/post-colonial power. Those seeking “tolerance” within this arena rely entirely on self-segregation or “umbrella” coalitions that reinforce the idea that Muslims are in fact impossibly alien to Europe. In the context of European identity politics and secular nationalism, until their alterity is actually challenged, Muslims will only be able to accept being tolerated or given rights. Worse still, others with a bit more sophistication and political savvy make “the case” for commensurability that effectively argue Islam is more amendable to European modernity—the enlightenment, liberalism, secularism, materialism—than previously appreciated.

What is missing is a concern for what are the ethical implications for expecting Muslims to perform their conformity. Talal Asad (2000) specifically lays out the parameters of understanding the unethical demands put on individuals whose faith as Muslims inherently externalizes their presence in arenas they are expected to live. Their politics of representation that seek a more “inclusive” politics from European interlocutors unfortunately constitutes an orientation that itself entirely limits what being Muslim can mean. More troubling, the politics of representation that empowers certain institutions by stealth, proves to empower selected constituencies expected to speak for Islam as an ontological whole. This has led to the rapid usurpation of once resistance circles among Muslim communities.

The working tools of tolerated “revivalist” Islamist mobilization, in other words, has a way of servicing the very needs of global

power that wants to steer various, long autonomous actors into neatly confined and identifiable constituencies. In the case of “successful” mobilization in Europe and the West, presumably in unison to fight Islamophobia, the very references of success, institutional recognition, participation, is far from securing the kind of autonomy purported. Instead it has incorporated and subdued, into a serviceable epistemology immune from the need to resist. The result is we now have advocates for securing a place for “good” Muslims within the tent of Western Capitalist imperialism, a materialist based machine of exploitation, at the expense of a thousand years of promoting human dignity and justice across geographic and existential boundaries.

The underlying point remains that what we are observing in various formats as genuine attempts to challenge racist ideologies in fact proves that, in an Euro-American setting, to ever think and act as Muslims other than in a manner set by intolerant institutions associated with colonial power requires a radical epistemological break.²³ To communicate, however, to those operating on terms set entirely by the same forces that evoke Islamophobia makes it impossible to render “the Muslim” legible in ways other than reduced ontological others.²⁴ This is clearly the case with the ongoing debates among the most sophisticated anthropologist who seek to give “voice” to otherwise silenced Muslims. The process of allowing Muslims to be heard, however, requires that their narrative is translated to accommodate an otherwise impatient (and demanding) Western audience.

This project to give Western readers access to Muslims, in the hope these insights offer in empathetic ways alternative narratives about who Muslims are (they are, after all, “human beings” too)

²³ Evelyn Alsultany, “Arabs and Muslims in the Media after 9/11: Representational Strategies for a ‘Post-race’ Era,” *American Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1, 2013, pp. 161-169.

²⁴ Moustafa Bayoumi, “The God That Failed: The Neo-Orientalism of Today’s Muslim Commentators”, in *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, Andrew Shryock, Ed., Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2010, pp. 79-93.

often has the unintended consequences of reifying “difference” in the most reductive way. As we will demonstrate below, although the debates around how to avoid such essentializing has taken place in studies of Egyptian society, led by excellent anthropologists like Saba Mahmood and Samuli Schielke, the problems of representation extend beyond the parameters so neatly confined to, perhaps self-defined, “Islamic” spaces.²⁵

As we will see below, the analysis of Islamic tradition and practice, primarily in Egypt, functions to actively gloss over the contractions that any ethnographic, historical, spiritual study reveals. This is the case, out of necessity, because scholars of Islam are compelled to present the Muslim to an audience understood to harbor narrow associations with the tradition. In other words, while arguing from distinct methodological starting points and with very different political objectives, Mahmood and Schielke seem incapable of avoiding the reification of the very presence of something which Islamophobia attacks. It is their implicit framing of the Muslim object of study, and Islam as that which shapes what Europeans must hate and protect that inhibits our struggle to find restitution and resist the violence behind Islamophobia in the first place: Euro-American Imperialism.²⁶

Making Islam Work: A Critique of the Anthropology of Islam Debates

If the very act of identifying, or perhaps reifying, Islam as an object that requires analysis through the prism of studying what some anthropologist do and say, the continued dynamics of power seems peripheral. Indeed, the practitioners of this anthropology of Islam end up debating methods and practices

²⁵ See Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando, “Rediscovering the ‘everyday’ Muslim: Notes on an Anthropological Divide”, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 5 no. 2, 2015, pp. 59–88.

²⁶ Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, Boston: Haymarket Books, 2012 and Stephen Sheehi, *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign against Muslims*, Clarity Press, 2011.

of their own selective positioning to the point that the larger apparatus of power that requires we assume we can objectify Muslims enough to study them for our consumption is of little import. The critique of power, perhaps it is Euro-American still, remains unchallenged. So, the ultimately point made here is that even scholarly, certainly partisan, approaches to make Muslims legible to an audience operating from within a lexicon informing Islamophobes unintentionally reaffirms a commensurability of Islam to Muslims AND non-Muslims that may prove misleading. This is certainly the case when referring to women experiences, as Lila Abu Lughod so correctly criticized.²⁷ It is also the issue at play in a discourse that has secured a special place in the epistemologies of global financial power that continues to exploit the assumption that Islam is indeed definable and thus feared, collectively. Perhaps the most useful example of this coming into play is the debate between Mahmood and Schielke. Their debate over how to best account for the associations Muslims make to shape their sense of faith and how that positions them in a larger world actively, as noted above, in manageable circles of power, has been explored in detail recently by others in the field.

The image presented by Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando of this debate on how best to reconstitute what Islam means for Muslims is one of radical difference. The assumption is Mahmood and Schielke are diametrically opposed to each other's ethnographic method and subsequent analysis. In their article, Fernando and Fadil describe the disciplinary history of this dispute over how to represent the "everyday" in the anthropology of Islam.²⁸ As they rightly point out, the larger context, from within the discipline, is a struggle to challenge the claims by the mainstream, so-called

²⁷ Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 104, no. 3, 2002, pp. 783-90.

²⁸ Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando, "Rediscovering the 'everyday' Muslim: Notes on an Anthropological Divide." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2015, pp. 59-88

“modernists” who simply reduced Muslims’ realities to a frozen dependence on “pre-modern” pathology in which they constituted an “exception” to the larger trends toward secularization (and thus modernization).²⁹ The focus on pious Muslims, in other words, was supposed to be a scholarly, empathetic corrective that worked to upset the lingering assumptions about, as they put it, “modernity and tradition, politics and religion, rational deliberation and religious discipline, autonomy and authority.”³⁰

We learn from the important, insightful summary of this debate that what separates Mahmood and Schielke is how to treat the normative secular-liberal principles on which anthropology itself is based. As both are writing as anthropologists, to a larger professional audience, Mahmood and other scholars in her vein are keen to “radically [provincialize] secular concepts, categories, and attachments.” In the process, Mahmood is effectively claiming she is making “secularism and secularity not just the background condition of their intellectual work but instead an object of observation and analysis.”³¹ This seems on the surface important and exciting. If indeed, Mahmood can render Western secularism that informs almost all analysis of the larger world as unnatural, the ethical and intellectual sensibilities that have long been taken for granted are themselves thus challenged. The problem is the assumption that, even if disparate in practice, Muslims are fundamentally coherent to one another through their relating to the same discursive tradition—texts and practices oriented towards a past, present, and future.³² Though this may account for some Muslims, it excludes others. As Shahab Ahmed notes, one problem with such an approach is its privileging and normalizing of a text-based orthodoxy that overshadows and discounts other

²⁹ Fadil and Fernando, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, p. 60.

³⁰ Fadil and Fernando, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, p. 60.

³¹ Fadil and Fernando, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, p. 62-3.

³² Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015, pp. 115-117.

modes of Muslim subjectivity.³³

In important ways, Mahmood and her prescient criticism of social scientific inquiry that dominates anthropology, especially as a vehicle to reify Islam, has influenced the work of her peers, including Fadil and Fernando. They too are seeking to understand and explore the explicitly hostile European contexts where Muslims are targeted by the Islamophobia we question here. Moreover, they too argue that we need to appreciate the contingency of the secular European ethos we are required to accept. Far from being Europe's essence, the secular-liberal maxims that help give Islamophobia its valiance function to justify (neo-)colonial power over Muslims, especially when anthropologists study "them."³⁴

In this regard, Schielke's seeming blindness to the so-called "popular" practices of Muslims he studies actually justifies the method by surrendering logically to these same secular-liberal principles critiqued by Talal Asad and his many disciples, like Mahmood, Fadil and Fernando. Claiming to be a secular humanist, Schielke refuses to abandon the secular ethos that helps him conceive human beings as being united by a set of common values and conditions, often beyond the shadow of Muslim moral principles.³⁵ What Schielke misses is the historic context in which this universalist claim that secularity (or the desire for blue jeans, a nice car, or a good night out in town) is a common human quality emerges and is sustained. Humanism, we suspect, is indeed a project of a power arrangement that necessitates Islam (or indigenous savagery) as an object and experience. The problem is Islam experienced by Muslims is only definable by accessing universal values informed according to Schielke, outside piety, while Mahmood asserts Islam is something distinctive only available to believers (and thus not

³³ Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016.

³⁴ Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986.

³⁵ Samuli Schielke, *Egypt in the Future Tense: Hope, Frustration, and Ambivalence Before and After 2011*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2015, p. 13.

European non-Muslims). On the surface already, we see a larger assumption that Islam-as-object persists.

While both Mahmood and Schielke seem to look for different ways to position Muslims in the world, it is always via targeted Muslims, who function as representative. Unfortunately, we learn that, at least in respect to Schielke, the decision to study a particular kind of (not entirely pious, but human) Muslim is made on the basis of the object of study sharing something that reinforces the larger theoretical agenda. In their article, Fadil and Fernando fault Schielke for selectively engaging “everyday Muslims” who for their own political reasons demonstrate certain traits deemed quintessentially normal, universal. Schielke, in other words, is charged with seeking those who are challenging recent attempts at imposing religious structures by conservatives, or what he claims, anomalies, in direct response to the very materialist desires Schielke’s “living” Muslims reportedly prefer. Armed with seemingly universal tools like skepticism, Schielke’s Muslim who objects to conservatives is human by way of his (he rarely engages women) resistance to the disciplinary power of Salafists. Just like Europeans are.³⁶

While Schielke retorts in the same issue that this criticism misplaces the power at play, asserting that rather than Euro-centric humanism prevailing in rural Egypt where he conducted his field work, the dominant ideological element against which Egyptian (popular Muslims) are struggling are the radical Salafists. The problem is, however, as noted above in the section we assert an important synergy between takfirism and Euro-American power, Schielke seems to miss the possibility that what constitutes “good” and “bad” Islam operate on the same ideological grid.³⁷

The origins of this spat within anthropology proves informative again if contextualizing the primary advocates and the larger issues of what Islamophobia effectively does to how we understand the

³⁶ Fadil and Fernando, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, pp. 61-74.

³⁷ Samuli Schielke, “Living with Unresolved Differences: A Reply to Fadil and Fernando.” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2015, pp. 89-92.

limits of our resistance to this racist epistemology. The primary issue among anthropologists was a so-called piety turn in which the only way to understand Muslims was to explore the depths of their religious imagination and practice. The approach was rightfully criticized for adopting a method of analysis that privileges religion at the expense of political, economic, and other structures mediating Muslim life. In other words, we (mis) understand religion as a totalizing force in peoples' lives. Far from giving us the tools to predict what Muslims do if we study their practices and beliefs, without the development of a new dynamic object of study —“the everyday Islam”— we may never grasp the multifaceted subjectivities of Muslims. This is at least how Schielke and his faction would present the debate.

In the end, what is the point of all this? Have we fallen into the trap of reifying Islamophobia's underlying colonial-era logic and thus effectively undermined our ability ever to break out of Euro-American hegemony? While Fadil and Fernando acknowledge that “many of the anthropologists of everyday Islam... see themselves as working against the unrelenting de-humanization of Muslims by highlighting similarity rather than radical difference and offering an account of the ordinariness of Muslims the world over” the legitimate question we need to ask is does this really help us out of the colonial-era epistemologies that developed concepts like Islamophobia used today to subordinate Muslim subjects?³⁸ Ironically, Fadil and Fernando rightfully point out it was not only Schielke's faction that was problematic. There are the concerns others have about Mahmood-inspired approaches because their “accounts that underscore Muslim alterity in order to defamiliarize dominant secular-liberal assumptions can sometimes be recuperated as evidence of a clash of civilizations.”³⁹

Mahmood and Schielke seek to account for different political struggles through their ethnography (of secular-liberalism

³⁸ Fadil and Fernando, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, p. 82.

³⁹ Fadil and Fernando, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, p. 74.

vs. radical Salafism) by way of the study of different kinds of Muslims (radical Salafis vs. everyday Muslims) to represent Muslims in terms of difference from Euro-American secularism (Mahmood) to similarities (Shielke). The problem is, because their object of analysis remains confined to that which is defined in Islamophobia, they ultimately arrive at the same point: a politics of communicability. The need to account for how Muslims differ or share others' orientations impose on us tools of analysis that limit our ability to move beyond the logic of Islamophobia. In order for us to effectively upset the power relations that make Islamophobia what it is, we actually need to operate on entirely different planes.

It is here that we try to offer not so much a concrete solution as a concrete set of tools to understand how we are trapped by a logic of Islamophobia that makes it impossible to ever not be what we wish not to be identified as. To do this we take a close look into how the post-Structuralist critique of Marxist informed epistemologies and the function of ideology by Louis Althusser applies to a new guarded engagement with Islamophobia.

First seeking to briefly reiterate a set of points made earlier about the value added to bringing Althusser's investigations into ideology and its relation to how human subjects internalize modern power in the 1960s and 1970s, it is likely that we can extend our critical analysis of Islamophobia beyond being just an observatory exercise to one that begins to offer methods to resist as well. In this respect, throughout this chapter, it has been our intention to initiate ways to characterize media constructions of the past twenty years—a period that saw the rise of a generic "Islamic Terrorist" supplant the more ideologically complicated Arab Nationalist, Palestinian freedom fighter, anti-imperialist guerrilla—in order to undermine the very ontological foundations of such discourse. In evoking some theoretical tools for this larger project in such a way, it is hoped that the following not only highlights the enduring utility of thinking about power in aggregated, contested, vulnerable ways, but also frees the discussion on contemporary affairs from the very mechanisms of ideological obfuscation that have led so many observers to abandon analytical tools once deemed useful

during the still relevant struggle against global capitalism prior to the 1990s. To do this requires us to first reconsider what it is we are referring to when critically engaging Islamophobia. It seems obvious the first step is to carefully reconsider what it is we mean by Islam itself.

Projecting Fear

Often treated as an analytical monolith, the eternal ubiquity of Islam as the West's existential threat has inhabited the analysis of events in the "Muslim world" since the nineteenth century. Serving as the quintessential binary opposite of a dichotomous construct of civilization, Islam is thus best read as the modern state's ideal marker. Like a line in the sand, Islam as a political, ideological, and epistemological project defines the limits of the freedom which propagandists claim Europe and the West secured with the Enlightenment.

As such, the dialectical role of Islam, as the ideal, clear threat to a still indeterminate foundational myth of Western ascendancy, is critical to interpreting the rise of the modern world and, more crucially, its modern subject. The pervasive expression of Islam in popular media and serious scholarship throughout the last century ushers in interesting new possibilities to think about new tools for interpreting the fundamentals of the way power operates in our world. In this sense, we necessarily need to explore in new ways how an East and West binary popular first in the Victorian era has played out in predictable ways over and over again in the media-driven discourse of the long twentieth century.

To Althusser, an ideology that aims to mobilize a generic pool of subjects in this way is always complicated because these targeted individuals have to always translate their conditions of existence through an interpellation of ideology as practice.⁴⁰ This would suggest that something as fundamental and transcendent

⁴⁰ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by B. Brewster, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001, pp. 152–5.

as radical Salafism is in fact a product of the structures and processes sustaining the “superstructure” of any number of social orders that feed this ideological reordering of some Islamic principles. Althusser’s understanding of ideology arms us with a way to grasp how the direct imposition of power —by way of thrusting a ready-made cartoon character— imposes an order of power —by way of an ideological turn— that expects those now adequately terrorized to either embrace the logic of Islamophobia or react to its underlying claims.

What is essential for us is to break out of the self-evidence of references to Islam that limit our ability to analyze where power politics produce Islam-as-Ideology and vice versa. The Islam perpetuated in the media, and often manifested for people facing the masked men purporting to represent it in the physical form, becomes the realization of an ideological construct necessary to extend the power of capital. The Islam of those servicing the hegemonic ambitions of Euro-American capital is as much an order of a humanist consciousness, “the practico-social function,” in which many factors intervene to ensure that the “theoretical” always remains adaptable to contingency.⁴¹ Put differently, the ideological confines of Islam à la takfiri groups reflect social formations that are reinforcing the actual process of conceptualizing Islam in its desired ways. This projection of fear requires the reification of the scope of conditions necessary to sustain the ideological project through corporate media outlets as well as its enforcement by way of hardline groups.

As such, the prevailing ideology of Islamophobia as practiced within an identifiable political space operates as much within the confines of the Middle East as the West. To use Althusser to appreciate this evolution of Islam-as-ideal-other, we may want to consider that the emergence of the eternally threatening Muslim —today neatly codified in form of Da’ish— is “not an aberration or contingent excrescence of history [but may be the manifestation

⁴¹ Althusser, *For Marx*, pp. 219–31.

of] a structure essential to the historical life of society.”⁴² This society is the construct of capitalism in the twentieth century.

Ideology aims for cohesion, and it succeeds when a social subject emerges, a human being (and her affiliates) who can be made to feel threatened and vulnerable to coherent, almost physical, threats like Islam. The people behind the masks/veils/beards, for Althusser, may not be distinguishable individuals with stories of their own (that would lead us to an essentialist problematic of alienation in order to account for their apparent “anti-social behavior,” their “barbarism”) because the ideology we consume as Islam is what actually creates these objects of fear, and the subjects targeted by this fear. The creature that is both feared and terrified is the product of ideology, a modern tool of control that disguises the real contradictions of life while steering the target toward a horizon of action that is at once subordinating them to the whims of capital and selectively alienating them from the real acknowledgement of their plight. In other words, how the ISA (ideological state apparatus) operates is to make for our consumption (and thus our indoctrination into fearing this idealized other) an articulate threat, a dangerous Muslim other, rather than having the target take into account what may contribute to both the conditions of such fear and their actual utility.

Part of this process is the role ideology plays in disguising the existing social contradictions by naturalizing these existing social relations that are clearly meant to reinforce fear of the other. The positions occupied by targeted subjects of these ISAs within an imaginary discourse that presents their relations with others (by default Muslims) as inevitable (thereby excluding the possibility that things might be different) and coherent (thereby excluding or rationalizing the existence of problems within these social relations) leaves most of us watching this powerless.

Such an effective mobilization through ISAs of conditions that obscure cause and effect includes reading the forces at play

⁴² Althusser, *For Marx*, pp. 232–33.

behind this manipulation within what Althusser conceived as a comprehensive realization of “real” material conditions.⁴³ The conditions that drive our world in these polarities reflect expressions of socio-economic structures that must be analyzed, an insistence that helps Althusser abandon Hegelian dialectics which likely contribute to the exploitative power of Islam as the quintessential other to the West.⁴⁴

It may be useful to see the modes of production that produce false dichotomies (in order to terrorize people into submitting to their subjugation by unknown others) as references that cannot be reduced to the expression of one essential principle like an idealized Islam. For us to extricate ourselves from this analytical quagmire in an ethical way requires that we remember that the material specificity and diversity of political economic conditions create power structures and thus society. Modes of production, including religious practice, can on occasion inform the exploitative economic practices that in turn inform the “contradictions” in our contemporary social formations, a relationship that means the social conditions of those terrified by the presence of Islam on their television screens are “inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, [in other words] inseparable from its formal *conditions* of existence.”⁴⁵

In this context, these contradictions that confound the extent to which people in the West are rightfully terrified is actually “overdetermined.” In our case today, this may be read to mean that every contradiction informed by the conditions we experience throughout society, within a corrupted state, or in individuals, is not easily confined to accommodate the favored and most mobilized categories of pundits eager to speak in opposition. In Althusser’s terms, these people afflicted by layers of indoctrination are products of “the historically concrete forms and circumstances

⁴³ Althusser, *For Marx*, pp. 183–7.

⁴⁴ Althusser, *For Marx*, pp. 89–104.

⁴⁵ Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 101.

in which it is exercised.”⁴⁶ Once we recognize this, we can develop a greater resistance to evoking these forces in terms that reify our conditions of terror.

The overdetermination inherent in Islamophobia can thus be observed today as the plethora of contradictions that make up our whole system (punctuated by the seeming polar opposites of “Islam and “Civilization”) and are reflected at the individual level in the form of “terror,” an individual expression of the contradictions of contemporary conditions of production, make such expressions of fearing Islam the crucial tool of indoctrination and mobilization. Again, put in terms of Althusser, the very place of Islamophobia today is overdetermined in that its presence serves as the contradictory expressions of both uneven developments that marginalize those who may not fit into the characterizations necessary for Islamophobia to resonate. These are ways of explaining the world that are conceived from within a dominant ideology that ensures the reproduction of existing relations of production.

As Althusser puts it, “reproduction of labor power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e., a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers [and academics], and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly by the agents of exploitation and repression.”⁴⁷ Crucially, to reproduce the existing relations of exploitation, there must be agents who presumably can help cater to the needs of those targeted for indoctrination while inducing what Althusser calls “interpellation.” Recall that for Althusser, the labelling process that effectively categorizes the subject is the function of all ideology: “every ideology has the function... of ‘constituting’ concrete [individuals as] subjects.”⁴⁸ As

⁴⁶ Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 106.

⁴⁷ Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 132.

⁴⁸ Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, translated by G. M. Goshgarian, New York: Verso, 2014, p. 188.

the identifiable subject for this constitutive exercise is identifiable as a pre-existent, “natural” constituent to “Islam-as-anti-Western,” an ideology that recruits individuals by way of transforming them into subjects by this process called interpellation ultimately guarantees that any counter-narrative is crippled by an incredulous, terrified audience.⁴⁹

Here we can appreciate how ideology may be a realm of consciousness while also being a material practice that exists by way of the perpetual reenactment of social, economic, cultural practices. These rituals thrive within the West versus Islam construct and become forms of practice that are “governed by the rituals in which these practices are inscribed, within the material existence of an ideological apparatus.”⁵⁰ One must be careful, however, not to assume that we can simply apply traditional terminology in International Relations literature, to pinpoint the forces behind this apparatus.

Conclusion

The principal beneficiaries of the hegemonic capitalist turn – discarding the nomenclature of nation-states to resort to identifying the oligarchy around finance-capitalism as transcendent of the analytical blinder – have instrumentalized a narrow, ahistorical, and fully operational ideological Islam in ways that can be usefully understood through Althusser’s work. The partial result of such ideologies of Islam has been the gradual discursive confinement of otherwise impossibly complex human diversity in what we call the “Islamic world.” To see this, however, requires abandoning the reductive use of such terms that are only meaningful from the nineteenth century onwards. This requires remaining suspicious about claims that there exist unified polities loyal to creed, doctrine, or state ideology. In sum, the twentieth-century project, on behalf of Euro-American banking oligarchs

⁴⁹ Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, p. 189–97.

⁵⁰ Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 168.

by way of various state building projects, is to tie Islam and thus Muslims into an epistemology, one that functions to arm state policies to frame Muslims as units denuded of humanity.

The need for an ideal type of ontological other must not go beyond a single image, personified in the bearded man and the hooded woman, both now entrenched universal images of the paradigmatic Muslim, courtesy of both media and academia. As such, the contentious relationships developed within and along the fringes of self-identified Muslim polities need not interrupt the working function of such generic images. This is possible only with an underlying ideological order that shapes how we interpret events and ultimately how we understand the unfolding of events and their impact on our own seemingly disconnected conditions.

In so abandoning the terminology and the esprit behind the very instruments of demonization, a false binary of Islam and not, West and the other can ultimately collapse. One would be remiss to write a history of the world, the Middle East and even much of Europe in terms entirely acceptable today in context of the discourse characterized as Islamophobia. Its main assertion of ontological differences between something identified as Islam and that which is not is both ahistorical and intellectually bankrupt. So too should it be that Islamophobia today is entirely dismissed as a construct of dishonest agents of empire seeking to narrowly define the parameters of how peoples are categorized and thus easily confined. Confining at the analytical and thus administrative level can then venture into absolute control over the conceptual, intellectual, and productive lives peoples from around the world who profess (in very personal ways) a faith to Islam. Where the primary agenda begins to conjoin those necessarily defensive and those exploiting the command of the rules of debate is the definition of Islam. As a terrain of debate in the Anthropology of Islam, the critical debate is seemingly lost before the debate stops in that Islam is reduced to characterizations, and legal doctrines that hardly reflect the “day-to-day” practices of pedestrians and popular masses. The struggle to nuance the recognition that to define Islam by the parameters of what is doctrinally distinctive

about it —many would insist that which is codified in law and principles of behavior, codes perhaps— misguide those otherwise confused by a far less empathetic observer that also asserts doctrine and practice at a formal, institutionalized frame as the only criteria for Islam to function.

It is when orientalist scholarship buoyed the reductive logic of ontological difference between how Muslims purportedly see the world through their creed and non-Muslims, that we see the contours of a logic that enables Islamophobia to become something more than an observation. It becomes a reality, one whose implicit logic substitutes for a real epistemic challenge. Those writing on Islamophobia today who condemn its underlying agenda and perhaps practice, fail to separate the ideology and even the strategic categorical rigidity from possible resistance by simply not acknowledging its logic. In this sense, Muslims and sympathizers who reject Islamophobia actually are succumbing in a Pavlovian exercise where they reinforce the legitimacy of an ideological construct, thus enabling empire to flourish rhetorically and thus in practice, inducing reactions from those offended in ways that reify ontological claims of difference.

As polemic, indeed, many a group —scholars, political leaders, community leaders (religious, political, and/or cultural) and commercial— use references to Islam as an ontological “other” whose non-European practices and principles seem naturally situated, outside, rather than in. In this respect, as unfortunately clear even in this special issue, being Muslim, experiencing Islam, and reflecting on the ways we —Muslims, practicing or not— requires acknowledging at its most fundamental, ontological basis, a logic of fear. In this regard, Islam (and those who profess it, study it, fear it) is (are) uniquely confined to that which is both feared and attacked. This relationship is never possible to avoid, in a world discursively beyond the means of those “outside” to speak other than in terms used by those on the inside. Islam, in other words, seems always to be feared, fearful, and foreign. Worse, we retrofit this epistemology of feared Islam to how the future and past is also understood, experienced, and articulated.

Again, sadly evident even in the counter-narratives we Muslims seek to proffer as a retort.

But there is something always contemporary about Islamophobia. As we explore throughout this special issue, Islamophobia is very much a discourse, a practice in which certain relations of power (and lack of it) are required for it to take the form we seem to experience it today and imagine it to have always existed in the past and future. Therefore, any critical analysis of Islamophobia begins, it seems, with the need to not concede it is eternal, and natural, but a part of a particular moment in a larger historical context.

Questioning Islamophobia in the Context of Greece

Ali Hüseyinoğlu*

ABSTRACT

Since 9/11, there has been a growing academic literature about Islam across the world. Islamophobia is a relatively newer concept that needs further focus and analyses of researchers in various realms of social sciences. In the context of Europe, Islam per se is actually an old phenomenon. Until the early 1920s, the concept of peaceful coexistence and cohabitation of Islam with other religions had actually been promoted and strengthened particularly under the Ottoman administration all over the Balkan Peninsula for centuries. With the newly-drawn map of Europe, minorities and their rights came to the forefront under various mechanisms of the League of Nations. After the end of the Cold War epoch during which positive discrimination measures for minorities had been kept at the minimum level, religious freedoms of Muslims living in non-Muslim countries started to attract more attention of scholars seeking to find out how and to what extent Islam is incorporated within the majority societies.

In this respect, this study takes Greece as a case study and analyzes to what extent Islam has been incorporated in Greece. While doing so, it dwells both on historical and new Muslim groups so as to find answers to two primary questions. To what extent does Greece respect rights of Muslims residing inside and outside of Western Thrace? What does Islamophobia mean in the context of Greece? Doing so, this study argues that since its establishment until this day, Greece has never allowed full enjoyment of Muslims' freedoms across the country. It rather

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aimed to limit their religious liberties, penetrate in their internal affairs via different ways and finally have the ultimate control over fundamental issues of Islam, which actually keeps triggering various interpretations of Islamophobia towards Muslims within the Greek society.

Introduction

Depending on the context, the term Islamophobia means any type of hatred, discrimination, intolerance, fear or bias towards Muslims. Compared to other versions of religious phobias, it is a relatively new concept used in different disciplines of social sciences. From a Eurocentric perspective, even if there used to be changing modes of fear and discomfort towards the historical survival of Islam across the European continent, Islamophobia as a concept entered into the academic and scientific discourse of the Anglo-Saxon world with the end of the Cold War. Etienne Dinet, a French scholar, used it for the first time in 1922.¹ It reappeared in an American periodical almost seventy years later, in 1991, and became popular across Europe with the Report of Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia.² Yet, the terminology started to be used more frequently by scholars and media particularly after 9/11 in the US, a means by which the debate about the place of Islam in the Western world articulated.

Along with states, international organizations also started to devote more attention to rising trends of Islamophobia. This proved especially the case in those Western European countries accommodating Muslims either as historical minority groups, migrants or refugees. Often a source of tension, many of these

¹ Jocelyne Cesari, "Islamophobia in the West: A Comparison Between Europe and the United States" in *Islamophobia, The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, eds. John S. Esposito, Ibrahim Kalin, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p.21.

² "Islamophobia, A Change for Us All", accessed April 4, 2017, <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/17/74.html>.

Muslims now found in larger numbers in Western Europe adopted different strategies to help integrate themselves in the non-Muslim majority. This process of attempted integration is often reported as the source of tensions in post-Cold War Europe.

For instance, in the mid-2000s, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) created the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.³ For the preeminent organization dealing with Europe's internal conflicts, the idea behind this office was to engage with cases of anti-Islamic policies or movements. In this spirit, since 2007 the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has prepared an annual observatory report on Islamophobia that charts cases from across the world.⁴ Other global organizations have joined the struggle against Anti-Muslim behavior. Various organs of the United Nations, along with the Council of Europe and European Union have taken up the cause, but usually confined it to broader terms such as equality and non-discrimination. Unlike the OSCE and OIC, none of these international organizations address Islamophobia exclusively.

In the European context, it is apparent that with the rise of ultra nationalist movements across the continent, ethnic, religious and cultural minority groups started to feel more uncomfortable about their place in society. This was especially the case both for older Muslim communities and those who had recently settled in various parts of Europe. As noted in studies on minorities in Europe, Muslims are particularly affected from an increase in nationalist movement activism. Members of these rapidly growing movements have been regularly documented to express their hostility towards those whose religious affiliation differs from the majority community. Drawing from this larger

³ "Combating Discrimination Against Muslims", accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/countering-discrimination-against-muslims>

⁴ Islamophobia Observatory, accessed April 3, 2017. http://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p_id=182&p_ref=61&lan=en.

trend in Europe, this study deals with Islamophobia in one of the EU-member states, questioning the extent to which Islamophobia exists in Greece.

While being a general problem, it is necessary to show the reader some of the main similarities and differences Muslims have in Greece, especially with respect to the limited rights of religious practice, a factor unique to the country. Later, this chapter focuses on what Islamophobia means in the context of Greece and ends with introducing some of the main actors behind the expression of hostility toward Muslims across the country. This survey of the main Islamophobes in Greece extends to studying their roles in the construction/deconstruction of anti-Muslim sentiments, attitudes and perceptions inside larger Greek society.

While doing so, this research argues that simultaneously there are many similarities and differences between Muslims in Greece. The extent to which they suffer from discrimination primarily depends on the group they belong. Islamophobic actions that different Muslims face in both the Greek public and private spheres is very much linked to such groupings. Furthermore, it is necessary to briefly differentiate the groups actively engaged in hostile acts toward Muslims in Greece. There are many state and non-state actors that both encourage and sometimes even discourage Islamophobic acts when targeting different groups of Muslims (a distinction often made between older and newer communities) found within borders of Greece. It is ultimately concluded after this analysis that the Muslim's limited religious authority and the increase in Islamophobia (which remains in denial in larger Greek society) is likely to widen the gap between the Muslim and non-Muslim population in Greece for the foreseeable future.

Categorizing Muslims in Greece

The existence of Islam in Greece is not a new phenomenon. Muslim presence in the region (including also today's Greece) dates back to the Ottoman administration of the Balkan Peninsula. It was in that Ottoman context that Islam flourished. There are

two reasons behind this particular success: first, Islam was the primary faith of the Ottoman Empire, a composite of religious communities divided according to the *Millet* System (Muslims and non-Muslims) and second, the territories of contemporary Greece were ruled by Ottomans from the late 14th century until the independence of Greece in 1830. Invariably, Islam was one of the two primary religions practiced both in the old and new lands of Greece. In this respect, Greek exposure to Islam and practicing Muslims is not something new as it is the case in many other European countries.

The latest official figures from 2011 suggest that the total population of Greece is 10.816.286.⁵ It is not clear, however, how many Muslims are among this almost 11 million Greeks because official statistical information does not include religious affiliation. It is nevertheless safe to say that the vast majority of Greek citizens (more than 90%) identify themselves with Orthodox Christianity, whether they practice it or not.⁶ The importance of religion is quite robust across different segments of Greek society and this is reflected in the power of the Orthodox Church. From official openings of school years to cultural festivities, from religious oaths taken at the Parliament to the celebration of national holidays, Orthodox Christianity is quite visible across the country. Its hegemony is safeguarded under the Article 3 of the Greek Constitution: “The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ.” In this respect, all other faiths fall under the category of minority religions.

It is estimated that Muslims outnumber all new and old minority religious groups, such as Jews, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Old Calendarists, Mormons, Sikhs, Adventists, Agnostics, Roman Catholics, Protestants and Hare Krishnas.⁷ Based on some latest

⁵ “Απογραφή Πληθυσμού-Κατοικιών 2011 [Residential Census 2011]”, accessed September 12, 2014, <https://goo.gl/y3iHxX>.

⁶ “Greece 2015 International Religious Freedom Report”, accessed February 2, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/256407.pdf>.

⁷ John Anderson, “The Treatment of Religious Minorities in South Eastern Europe:

estimates, the size of Muslim communities residing in Greece (temporarily or permanently) is around 600.000 as of 2016. This constitutes more than 5% of the Greek population. Compared to the overall number of Muslims in Europe, the ratio of those living in Greece seem to be slightly above average levels.⁸

To reflect this relatively large presence in Greece, since the beginning of the 1990s there has emerged a growing literature in Greek about Islam and the quality of life for Muslims in Greece. Tsitselikis's research is one of the most recent and comprehensive examples.⁹ Despite this long history of scholarship on Greek Muslims, there are almost no academic works about Islamophobia in Greece in either Greek or English. The most recent country report prepared by a Greek scholar stands as the only study devoted to Islamophobia in Greece.¹⁰ This stands in stark contrast to the heavy investment in the study of Islamophobia in the Netherlands or Germany. There has been some information published about hate acts directed toward Muslims as reported to different international organizations by local NGOs such as the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association based in Komotini, but the general trend has been to circumvent the issue.

Muslims in Greece can be roughly divided into two main groups with another two subgroups drawn from each. The first are the older Muslims who have been living on their own historical lands

Greece and Bulgaria Compared", *Religion, State and Society*, vol.30, no.1, 2012, p. 11. For a detailed analysis of some of those religious groups and their rights see Richard Clogg, ed., *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society*, London: Hurst & Co, 2002.

⁸ Conrad Hackett, "5 facts about the Muslim population in Europe", accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>.

⁹ Konstantinos Tsitselikis, *Old and New Islam in Greece: From Historical Minorities to Immigrant Newcomers*, Leiden; Boston, Martinus Nijhoff, 2012, p. 19.

¹⁰ Alexandros Sakellariou, "Islamophobia in Greece: National Report 2016" in *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, eds., Enes Bayraklı, Farid Hafez, Istanbul: SETA, 2017, pp. 239-254.

for centuries. The second group we can identify as the ‘Newcomer Muslims’ who make up the vast majority of those who arrived Greece in the last decades during different waves of migration.

From within the Old Muslims two ethnic Turkish groups are identifiable. There are those established Turkish communities still living in Western Thrace and then those living on the two islands of the Dodecanese, i.e. Rhodes and Kos.¹¹ Crucially, there were far larger Muslim populations spread throughout the country prior to the the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange facilitated by the League of Nations after the World War I. As both Turkey and Greece agreed on peaceful swap of Muslims (labeled Turks) and Orthodox Christians (labeled as Greeks), around half a million Muslims left today’s Greece between 1922 and 1930 and resettled throughout Turkey. This massive exchange ultimately accounts for the demographic shifts in populations both in Greece and Turkey ever since.

Western Thrace, a region consisting of 8572 square acres, is host to the only officially-recognized minority group in Greece. Being exempted from the abovementioned population exchange, Turks of Muslim faith live in all three sub regions of the region (Rhodopi, Xanthi and Evros). The majority of Muslims are located within the Rhodopi Prefecture with the capital city of Komotini.

Also known as the Muslim Turkish Minority of Western Thrace, people belonging to this community have been residing inside the abovementioned region for centuries.¹² In fact, the area has been inhabited by a majority Muslim population long before Western Thrace became part of contemporary Greece in the early 1920s.

¹¹ It is useful to point out that a small number of members of this group identify their ethnic or religious identities other than Turkishness or Islam. However, this does not distort the overall picture that the vast majority of Old Muslims identify themselves with ethnic Turkish identity and Islam. Indeed, many of them prefer using triple criteria (ethnicity, religion and citizenship) for self-identification: Turk, Muslim and Greek citizen.

¹² For a detailed analysis about the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange see Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922-1934*, New York; London, Routledge, 2006.

This population is one of the oldest autochthonous minority group in Europe. Almost all members of this group belong to the Sunni Hanefi sect while there is a small number of Alevi-Bektashis living primarily in the highlands of the region close to the Bulgarian border. This community is the only minority group that has an official minority status with the Greek state. As such, their rights are safeguarded under the bilateral and international agreements signed between Greece and Turkey, including the 1923 Peace Treaty of Lausanne (Articles 37 - 45).¹³ Compared to some other minority groups across the country, such as Macedonians, Greece has never questioned the existence of a minority group in its northeastern borderlands with Turkey and Bulgaria. As for their fellow Muslims of Rhodes and Kos, these ethnic Turks became citizens of Greece in 1947 with the inclusion of Dodecanese Islands into Greek national boundaries.¹⁴

For the main purpose of this special issue on Islamophobia in Europe, it is useful to highlight that there are differences and similarities between the two historical Muslim Turkish communities. As noted above, Muslims in Western Thrace have an official status of minority through which their rights (both individual and collective ones) are protected by the international community. Those Muslims inhabiting two islands have no such privileged status and their liberties are safeguarded only through national legislation, as is the case for all citizens of Greece.

Another difference relates to the right of education in the mother tongue. Compared to those Muslims residing in the Rhodes and Kos Islands, Muslims of Western Thrace have always had the right to choose either a bilingual (Turkish and Greek) or monolingual public primary schooling for their own children.¹⁵ In the case of

¹³ Martin Lawrence, *The Treaties of Peace, 1919-1923 (Vol.2)*, New York; Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1924, pp. 970-973.

¹⁴ Deniz Bölükbaşı, *Turkey and Greece, The Aegean Disputes*, London; Cavendish, 2004, p. 919.

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of minority education in Western Thrace see Ali Huseyinoglu, "The Development of Minority Education at the South-easternmost

Rhodes and Kos, the right of primary education in their Turkish mother tongue kept provided after 1947 until the early 1970s when the last school providing bilingual education was closed by the Greek state. Since then, Muslim Turkish children on the islands have been prevented from learning their mother language at public primary schools.

Both cases are widely interpreted as “national” or “nationally-sensitive” issues for Greece. In this respect, Greek governments have historically remained very sensitive to Turkey’s relations with those Muslims living on Greek soil. Heraclides underlines that there are two main consequences for defining this issue as one of “national” importance. First, it risks being exploited by Greek governments for their own purposes. Second, the issue has historically proven to create stress and tension throughout Greek society.¹⁶ Aksu underlines that such issues interpreted within the rubric of “national” security also compels the Greek and Turkish majorities in each country to remain hostile toward granting any concessions to the other side.¹⁷

Both Muslim groups in Greece also share some common relations with the larger Greek society. For instance, it is safe to say both groups enjoy some religious freedoms in their historic areas of residence. That said, the problems surrounding these rights are equally shared. For instance, neither of the two Muslim Turkish communities are allowed to appoint either their own religious leaders or members of their religious charitable foundations. It is the Greek government that appoints members to those seats, assuring that the state has the ultimate control over the primary religious freedoms of both communities. Moreover, the rights and liberties provided to the Old Muslims are interpreted within the principle of *in situ*. In case they leave their lands and start a

corner of the EU: The Case of Muslim Turks in Western Thrace, Greece”, (PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2012), pp. 120-266.

¹⁶ Alexis Heraclides, *Yunanistan ve “Doğu’dan Gelen Tehlike” Türkiye*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p. 71.

¹⁷ Fuat Aksu, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, Ankara, SAEMK, 2001, p. 29.

new life in another part of the country, they then forfeit those liberties. For instance, in case a group of Muslim Turks decide to leave their historical lands and start residing in Thessaloniki, they will have no permission to construct a mosque and cannot start their own cemeteries.

New Muslims in Greece are categorized as either immigrant Muslims or ethnic Greeks who converted to Islam. The former group constitutes the biggest proportion of Muslims in Greece; they largely arrived during or after the Cold War. In fact, Greece had turned into a country of immigration, especially from Albania, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the MENA region since the early 1990s. Despite their large numbers, compared to the two other autochthonous Muslim groups mentioned above, these immigrant Muslims are continuously the most discriminated, alienated and vulnerable group. This ethnically diverse pool of primarily foreign-born Muslims suffers from the lack of even basic religious liberties. The following provides some indications of the extent of their suffering:

First, Athens has long been criticized at the local, national and international levels for being the only European capital without an official mosque. On the one hand, there are more than 300 official places of worship across Western Thrace that functions freely and meet the religious needs of Muslims numbering around 150.000.¹⁸ Similarly, the Islander Muslims have their officially-sanctioned mosques. For those Muslims living in Athens, on the other hand, even though they number at least three times those found in Western Thrace, they have never had an officially sanctioned mosque built in the capital city. In other words, hundreds and thousands of Muslims have no other option than praying collectively at makeshift places of worship, often owned and managed by immigrants. These are often garages or

¹⁸ In the mid-1950s, the number of mosques and masjids functioning across Western Thrace had been given as 259, showing us an increase in the number of places of worship for Western Thracian Muslims. See K. G. Andreadis, *Η Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα της Δυτικής Θράκης* [The Muslim Minority of Western Thrace], Thessaloniki: ΙΜΧΑ, 1956, p. 6.

apartment basements spread across different parts of Athens. In recent years, only a few of these places were legalized and given official permission while the rest, which count around 100, keep functioning illegally.¹⁹

After decades of criticism and immigrant Muslim activism, a bold step was taken by the Greek government in 2016 and a new official house of prayer for Muslims was planned to be opened for 2017. Even though this mosque, planned to at most host 350 people is insufficient for the half million Muslims who live in Athens, its construction retains considerable symbolic meaning, in part because it is meant to accommodate Muslim nationals of the city. As of November 2017, the construction of it hasn't been finished yet.

The second major obstacle for immigrant Muslims is the lack of graveyards. Unlike their coreligionists in Western Thrace, Rhodes and Kos, Muslim immigrants living outside of these two regions have no option to bury according to Islamic traditions since they do not own a functioning cemetery. Those who pass away have only one option for a religious funeral; corpses are transferred to Western Thrace where they get buried based on Islamic rituals. Considering these conditions, most non-native Muslims do not send the dead to their countries of origins. These often incur prohibitive costs for the family and is far more expensive than sending the deceased to Western Thrace for burial. In the last ten years, there were occasionally steps taken by Greek officials and the Greek Church to devote some parts of non-Muslim graveyards to construct an Islamic area. In the end, however, promises and official statements bore no fruit. Henceforth, many immigrant Muslims living in different parts of the country have no right for an Islamic burial.

Compared to immigrant Muslims, Greek converts are the least visible and numerically smallest group of Muslims in Greece. Being ethnic Greeks, this group of Muslims are very fluent in Greek. In addition to their linguistic proficiency, their knowledge

¹⁹ Until 2004, there used to be 25 makeshift places of worships in total all of which belonged to the Arab community of Athens. As of this day, they count around 100. Interview with Anna Stamou (over Skype), May 2, 2017.

of Greek culture and traditions is much better than any other Muslim group in Greece. This helps them escape much of the stigmatization other Muslims experience in Greece.

From the three Muslim groups discussed above, there is almost no literature, either in Greek or English, about Greek converts. The exception is the work of Sakellariou²⁰ and a few articles published in Greek newspapers.²¹ It seems that it is not an “attractive-enough” topic for the Greek media and academia compared to other types of Muslims in Greece, especially immigrants. As a result, they are the least known group living primarily in urban centers of the country. Anna Stamou is one of the few Greek converts who speaks openly about her religious choice and sheds light on the religious concerns of Muslims residing in Athens. It is from her testimonials that it is possible to discuss further Islamophobia in Greece.²² As it will be clarified, the increasing Islamophobic discourse in Greece, as it has been the case in almost all countries of Europe, precipitated the anti-Islamic rhetoric at different levels of public and private spheres. This not only broadens the gap between Muslims and Orthodox Christians, but also contributes to the alienation of both groups of Muslims feel vis-à-vis larger Greek society.

Reflections of *Phobia* against Islam in Greece

Terminologically speaking, phobia is a term originating from the Greek language (φόβος/φοβία). It means fear from somebody or something. Islamophobia has a meaning of fearing from Islam but

²⁰ Alexandros Sakellariou, “From Greek Orthodoxy to Islam: Conversion in Contemporary Greek Society and Public Self-Representation”, *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, vol.1, no.1, 2012, pp. 59-80.

²¹ For instance see Maria Antoniadou, “«Γιατί έγινα μουσουλμάνος», Έλληνες πρώην χριστιανοί ορθόδοξοι εξηγούν γιατί ασπάστηκαν το Ισλάμ [“Why did I choose Islam”, Former Orthodox Christian Greeks tell why they chose Islam]”, *To Vima*, March 13, 2011.

²² For a comprehensive and recent analysis about limits of religious autonomy of Muslims in Greece see Ali Hüseyinoğlu, “Islam and Religious Liberties in Western Thrace, Greece” in *Islam in the Balkans: Unexpired Hope (Vol.4: From Times of Glory to Times of Humility)*, ed., Muhammet Savaş Kafkasyalı, Ankara, T.C. Başbakanlık Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı, 2016, pp. 141-158.

it has many similar connotations depending on the context such as hatred towards Islam or anti-Muslim racism or discrimination. This study deals with Islamophobia in Greece regarding both old and new communities separately because many of the anti-Muslim attitudes are displaced quite differently regarding both types of Muslim groups living in different parts of the country.

Islamophobia and Old Muslims

As mentioned in the beginning, Islam has a long history on the lands of Greece. In the official Greek discourse, Islam is associated with the Ottoman administration of Greece on the one hand, while affiliated with the ethnic Turkish identity on the other. In the past, both terms were used widely and interchangeably so as to refer the Muslim *umma* of the Ottomans as Turks. At this point, it is useful to underline that, mainly because of the negative image of Ottomans and Turks in Greek history textbooks, both associations are quite negative among the majority of Greek people. That is to say, the Ottoman rule in today's Greece is widely perceived as a period of subjugation. Therefore, the Greek War of Independence followed by the establishment of Kingdom of Greece in 1830 is perceived as a new beginning for the Greek nation. Similarly, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey after the War of Independence in 1922 is considered in Greece as the "Asia-Minor Catastrophe" because it formally ended the *Megali İdea*, a term introduced in 1844²³. In other words, the beginning of the Republic of Turkey means the end of Greeks' fantasy of uniting the coastal lands of the Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Seas with that of mainland Greece.

In this respect, this study emphasizes that the abovementioned zero-sum perception has not only been quite central to the bilateral relations of Greece with Turkey since the 19th century, but also it has widely been evident in Greek government policies towards its indigenous Muslim population since 1923. In many ways this policy is informed by the fact these Muslims are associated with

²³ Herkül Millas, *Yunan Ulusunun Doğuşu*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1994, p. 199.

an ethnic Turkish identity.²⁴ In contrast, Greece's New Muslims come from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds, such as Albanian or Arab. As a result, they do not suffer from any anti-Turkish policies. Therefore, this study contends that one of the primary sources of bias towards Islam emanates from Greek history itself; the official discourse stipulates that the Ottomans and Turks are the main "others" of the Greek nation. Thus, unlike some European countries unfamiliar with Muslims until recently, the historical presence of Islam in Greece not only enabled the Greek nation to learn more about Islam and even experience it in their everyday lives, but also triggered bias, fear and even hatred towards a religion and its followers.

Taking the abovementioned interchangeable usage of both terms, i.e. Turks and Muslim, incidents of intolerance, anger, hatred and bias towards the ethnic Turks living in Western Thrace, Rhodes and Kos has gained momentum in recent years with the rise of ultra-nationalism across Europe. The most prominent arena for this anti-Turkish display are the sacred places of these communities, such as mosques, masjids and graveyards. Attackers generally prefer to smash the windows of mosques with stones, write anti-Muslim or anti-Turkish slogans on the outside walls of mosques and plant freshly-cut pigs' heads outside of mosques.

Since the beginning of 2000s, such attacks have increased throughout Western Thrace. For instance, the mosque of the Isalon, a Muslim village was attacked in 2003 and 2011. Its windows were smashed with stones.²⁵ Toxotes, is another location

²⁴ In a book dedicated to the principle of reciprocity enshrined at Article 45 of the 1923 Peace Treaty of Lausanne, the Muslim Turkish minority's position located in between the two antagonistic nationalisms (Greek and Turkish) is explained in detail. Samim Akgönül, ed., *Reciprocity Greek and Turkish minorities: Law, Religion and Politics*, Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008.

²⁵ "Combating intolerance and hate-motivated attacks against the Muslim Turkish Minority of Western Thrace in Greece", Written Contribution by the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association, OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, 23 September – 4 October 2013, Warsaw, Poland, HDIM. NGO0127/13, September 25, 2013, pp. 3-4.

facing frequent Islamophobic attacks. It is a village where only a handful of Muslims live. Its mosque was attacked almost five times between 2004 and 2012. Some attackers smashed its windows while others aimed to set it on fire by throwing oil inside the mosque.²⁶ Each time the mosque of Toxotes is attacked, members of the community repaired the damage. Similar attacks, including the use of Molotov cocktails, took place in the Avato Village of the same prefecture. On 13 December 2010 the attack damaged the windows and the doors of the mosque.²⁷ A year before, it was reported that the entrance of the Sunne Mosque located in central Xanthi had been vandalized with anti-Turkish graffiti.²⁸ The use of pig heads to desecrate Muslim places of worship has taken place on three separate occasions across Greece in recent years. Severed pigs heads were placed in front of the Halil Bey Mosque in Kavala (3 February 2011)²⁹, Avantos Masjid in Alexandroupoli (13 April 2014)³⁰, and the Greek-Arab Educational and Cultural Center in Athens (17 October 2014), also, used as place of worship.³¹

In Rhodes and Kos, there are a number of mosques established under the Ottoman administration of the Dodecanese region. Yet, contrary to the demands of the Islander Turks, only one mosque

²⁶ Ali Hüseyinoğlu, “Balkanlarda Azınlıklar ve Siyasal Katılım Hakkı: Batı Trakya (Yunanistan) Örneği”, *Yeni Türkiye*, vol 21, issue 69, 2015, p. 4785.

²⁷ “The Examples of Hate Crimes in Western Thrace”, Written Contribution by the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association, OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, September 26 – 7 October 2011, Warsaw, Poland, HDIM.NGO/O372/11, October 4, 2011, p. 2.

²⁸ “The US International Religious Freedom Report”, 17 November 2010, Bureau Of Democracy, Human Rights, And Labor, accessed July 5, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148940.htm>.

²⁹ It serves as a museum, not as a house of prayer. “Cami Girişine Domuz Başı Asıldı”, *Millet Gazetesi (İskeçe)*, February 10, 2011.

³⁰ ‘Dedeagaç’ta Mescide Domuz Başı ile Çirkin Saldırı’, *Millet Gazetesi*, April 17, 2014.

³¹ Sotiria Nikolouli, “Pig’s Head, Hate Slogans at Athens Muslim Center”, accessed June 2, 2016. <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/10/17/pigs-head-hate-slogans-at-athens-muslim-center/>. See also *The Examples of Hate Crimes in Western Thrace*, Op. Cit, p. 2.

is open on each island for use; the rest remain closed. From time to time, mosques are also targeted on both islands. For instance, walls of the Lonca and Cezayirli Hasan Pasha Mosque located in Kos were defamed with Islamophobic slogans.³² Beyond the difficulty in using the available mosques, historically the Greek state has converted mosques into places of public access. The Süleyman Pasha Mosque, for one, was closed in 1978 but later restored and started to function as a museum while Şehitlik Mosque is used as a health center and the Mosque of Kattavia Village as a café.³³

From a broader framework, it is crystal clear that a majority of the Ottoman heritage that remains standing in Greece suffer from being abandoned, dilapidated and all structures in need of urgent restoration. In 2011, for instance, a part of the magnificent Recep Pasha Mosque collapsed due to the lack of “effective restoration”.³⁴ The neglect continues however. Even with the call of the Resolution 1867 adopted in 2012 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE-COE), the Greek state refuses to properly respond to the call:

Greece is invited to continue the restoration program of Islamic and Ottoman monuments, which are an integral part of the cultural heritage of the two islands, in co-operation with Muslim associations and with all necessary respect for the integrity of the historic monuments;³⁵

³² Mustafa Kaymakçı, “Ege’nin Unutulan Rodos Ve İstanköy Türkleri”, *Star Gazetesi*, September 27, 2014.

³³ Mustafa Kaymakçı, “Current Problems and Solutions Concerning Turkish Identity in Rhodes and Kos” in *Turkish Identity in Rhodes and Kos*, eds., Mustafa Kaymakçı, Cihan Özgün, İzmir: Rhodes, İzmir, Kos, and the Dodecanese Islands Turks Culture and Solidarity Association, 2014, p. 11.

³⁴ In fact, the mosque had been under restoration since early 1990s. But almost no massive work had been done in the passage of more than half a decade resulting in the partial collapse of the building. “No:309, 23 Aralık 2011, Yunanistan’daki Recep Paşa Camii Hk.”, accessed April 1, 2017, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_309_-23-aralik-2011_-yunanistan_daki-recep-pasa-camii-hk_.tr.mfa.

³⁵ “The Situation of the Greek Citizens of Turkish Descent in Rhodes and Kos”, text adopted by the Standing Committee, Acting on Behalf of the Assembly, 9 March 2012 (Doc. 12526, Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human

Similar incidents that may be labelled a product of Islamophobia (and anti-Turkish policies) also occur in Muslim graveyards. Either tombstones are desecrated or these sites are covered with anti-Muslim and/or anti-Turkish graffiti. For example, many tombstones located inside the Kahveci and Kırmahalle Muslim graveyards of Komotini were attacked in May 2010.³⁶ Similarly, on 16th of February 2012, the Poshbos cemetery located in Komotini was targeted for the third time in three years, resulting in some gravestones entirely smashed. One month later, “Τούρκος Καλός Μόνο Νεκρός (The best Turk is the dead Turk)!” was written on the main exterior walls of the Bektashi *Tekke* located in central Xanthi.³⁷ Finally, in February 2014, some individuals or groups torn the Holy Quran and scattered its pages inside the main Muslim graveyard of Rhodes.³⁸

Because ethnic and religious identification is intertwined in the context of Western Thrace, one often observes anti-Muslim stereotyping through attacks against the ethnic Turkish identity of the Minority members. Some historical associations of the Minority bearing the term ‘Turkish’ in their titles. For instance, some wrote “Έξω οι Τούρκοι (Turks Out)!” on the wall of Xanthi Turkish Union in 2012 while some months later a group of Golden Dawn supporters throw plastic bottles and attacked verbally those Minority members sitting inside the Komotini Turkish Youth Union. Similar examples of hatred regarding Muslims of ethnic Turkish identity happened in Rhodes and Kos, particularly during tensions between Greece and Turkey over the issues of Cyprus and the Aegean Sea.³⁹

Rights, Rapporteur: Mr Gross), accessed February 5, 2015 <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=18075&lang=en>.

³⁶ *The Examples of Hate Crimes in Western Thrace*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2.

³⁷ “Combating Intolerance and Hate-motivated Attacks Against the Muslim Turkish Minority of Western Thrace in Greece”, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3.

³⁸ “Rodos’taki müslüman mezarlığına çirkin saldırı”, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://m.iha.com.tr/haber-rodostaki-musulman-mezarligina-cirkin-saldiri-335063/>.

³⁹ For a variety of personal experiences see Kaymakçı and Özgün, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 102-109.

As we have shown here, it is about both ethnic and religious identities of Old Muslims that are getting targeted frequently through hate-motivated attacks. Such incidents not only create an atmosphere of fear and anxiety for the two historical minority regimes but also it prevents any attempt of the Greek governments seeking their integration with the majority Greek society. In this respect, Islamophobia rather assists ghettoization and isolation of autochthonous Muslims, thus broadening the gap between them and those followers of the majority religion.

Islamophobia and New Muslims

Aspects of Islamophobia targeting New Muslims seem to remain distinct from their Western Thracian and Islander coreligionists. They rather face different forms of anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination. That is to say, no reporting about smashing of windows in mosques located in Athens is possible since there are not any official mosques yet. Similarly, given that there are no functioning Muslim graveyards outside Western Thrace, Rhodes and Kos no one can speak of incidents of smashed tombstones at Muslim cemeteries.⁴⁰ Yet, members of New Muslims, cannot escape from Islamophobic attacks.

These immigrants are generally located in main urban centers. That said, there are also significant numbers who work at seasonal jobs in less populated regions of Greece. Estimates dating back to 2010, show that there are 82 different areas where Muslim immigrants have settled across the country.⁴¹ These numbers have surely increased in recent years thanks to the arrival of new refugees from Turkey, most who crossed illegally the Aegean Sea. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Greece has turned into a significant hub for those seeking to access Europe. As of July 2016,

⁴⁰ To note, there are some Muslim graveyards outside Western Thrace, Rhodes and Kos that date back to the Ottoman times. But, almost all of them remained as abandoned sites and do not function for religious purposes.

⁴¹ Maria Antoniadou, “Ο Χάρτης του Ισλάμ στην Ελλάδα [The Map of Islam in Greece]”, *To Vima*, February 14, 2010.

it was reported that there were more than 56.000 refugees living in Greece.⁴² Unofficial estimates suggest that this number is much higher.

Some of the main reasons for discrimination in Greece among these new Muslims can be attributed to some core disadvantages long responsible for Islamophobia in larger Europe. First, race is likely to be the biggest reason for discrimination in the Greek public sphere. Migrants' dark skin makes it easy to identify for those who target the immigrants in Greece. Second, Muslims are often stigmatized because of their names. Even if some Muslims are born and bred in main urban centers like Athens or Thessaloniki and are quite fluent in reading and/or writing in Greek, they may still face bias because of their non-Greek names. As a result, many immigrants (both Muslim and non-Muslim) prefer to adopt a Greek name. We have personally witnessed some Albanian Muslims who were called 'Ilyaz' in their villages in Albania electing to use the Greek version of it, Ilias, when trying to find work in Greece.

A similar practice of using a second name, though not so popular, is also applicable for some members of the Muslim Turkish minority who reside outside Western Thrace. They would rather use it when trying to have new friends from the Greek majority and to become a part of Greek groupings. Also, it is easy to find similar examples for Islander Turks in the Dodecanese Islands. Such examples are another indication of why names are highly crucial for accommodation of different cultures and religions inside the majority Greek society. Had they felt comfortable enough with their primordial identities, we think that they would not opt for a second name and use it for the sake of preventing any kind of possible stereotyping and stigmatization inside the Greek society.

The third reason for being prone to discriminatory actions is their proficiency in Greek; there are many documented and

⁴² “Στους 56.881 οι καταγεγραμμένοι πρόσφυγες και μετανάστες [The Number of Recorded Immigrants and Refugees is 56.881]”, *H Avgi*, July 13, 2016.

undocumented immigrants living in different parts of Greece with poor fluency in Greek or not at all. One of the main criticisms raised against the language barrier is that they could not speak Greek fluently even if they had been living in Greece for a long period of time. Particularly those immigrants living in ghetto districts do not have many chances to improve their level of Greek language since many Greeks sharing the same space with them prefer not to develop contacts or friendships with immigrants. This type of social exclusion across Greece is another reason why many immigrants develop their ties with their co-ethnics or coreligionists rather than getting harmonized within the majority Greek society.

And the fourth main reason is about belonging to a different religion than the one of the majority. In a country of citizens, the majority of whom belong to Orthodox Christianity, Islam is widely perceived and interpreted as the “historical rival”. Thus, many Greeks keep growing up with stereotypes of Islam and Muslims. Here it is primarily the Greek education system, Greek media organs and the Greek clerics who fuel negative perceptions about Islam and the Muslim world. In this context, the perception that Muslims belong to the “other” religion is one of those reasons that actually obstructs the integration of Muslims into the Greek society and culture.

This study underscores that being an immigrant in Greece does not always imply being a newcomer to the country. There are many Muslim and non-Muslim immigrants who have been residing in Greece for decades. Some of them have already managed to get Greek citizenship through different ways such as marriage, but a number of them still live with citizenship of their origin country or live as stateless.

Before dwelling on Greek Muslim converts, this research argues that everyday life seems to be highly difficult for the vast majority of immigrants in Greece due to their status as newcomers or undocumented people. Yet, for many Muslim members of this group, survival in Greece gets another aspect of difficulty, thus increasing the overall level of their sufferings as immigrants. On

the one hand, they need to escape from any possible xenophobic manners coming from members of the majority Greek society. On the other hand, they may also face different types of Islamophobic attitudes emanating from their religious preferences. Therefore, some Muslim immigrants either pretend to change their religion (especially among Albanian Muslim immigrants) while many others hide their faith to escape religion-based discrimination in Greece.

The other group of New Muslims, Greek converts, do not face many of the abovementioned problems. Interpreting the concept of Greekness through the lense of ethnic belonging but not citizenship, we prefer to refer to this group as Greek Muslims, ethnic Greeks belonging to the faith of Islam.⁴³ It is estimated that they number around 3000 people some of whom reside abroad.⁴⁴ There may be different reasons for their choice of Islam. Yet, as it is noted, a spiritual search and interaction with Muslims stand as the two main factors for their conversions.⁴⁵

Their fluency in Greek and knowledge of Greek cultural practices are among those reasons why Muslim Greeks escape many kinds of religion-based discrimination coming from the majority Orthodox Christian co-ethnics. Yet, this is applicable particularly to those who prefer not to depict their religious preference openly in the public.⁴⁶

Anna Stamou is the most widely-known figure of Greek Muslims in Greece. She is functioning as Responsible Person about Public Relations at the Muslim Association of Greece (MAG), an NGO that

⁴³ It is crucial to keep in mind that some Greek state officials, academics and journalists use this concept while referring to different types of Muslims in Greece.

⁴⁴ Interview with Anna Stamou (over Skype), April 12, 2017.

⁴⁵ Sakellariou, "From Greek Orthodoxy to Islam", p. 73.

⁴⁶ Until recently, there used to be a website called www.greeksrethink.gr where there were many individual stories of conversion of ethnic Greeks from Christianity to Islam in which they shared their experiences with their close relatives before and after conversion. As of 2017, the website is not accessible anymore. However, another website owned and run by Greek converts is quite popular about Islamic issues for the Greek-speaking world where there are ten different individual stories of conversion. Accessed April 13, 2017, <https://islamforgreeks.org>.

is quite active in protecting the rights of New Muslims, particularly those residing in Athens. Never shy from TV programs or interviews to Greek media, she has become the go-to person, a Greek woman wearing *hijab*. However, the image of an ethnic Greek who chose Islam and speaks fluent Greek on television is almost nonexistent. In fact, conversion stories of Greeks to Islam are rarely discussed in Greek media organs. More, there are insufficient academic studies on Muslim Greek converts and their problems related to their choice.

Having interviewed Stamou, some points that she raised seem to be highly relevant while talking about religious liberties of Greek Muslims, ethnic Greeks of Islamic faith. For Stamou, unlike Muslim immigrants, the Greek converts need to explain only to their very close environments and sometimes even persuade them for reasons of choosing Islam. At the beginning, it is very hard for their relatives to understand those reasons of conversion. As she underlines, in most cases people ask basic questions such as “why do you wear *hijab*?”. Greek converts would rather stay away from their close relatives in the beginning period of their conversion. This problem that Stamou raises is not applicable to any other members of New and Old Muslims.

She also underlines class and economic aspects of Islamophobia in Greece. For Stamou, Islamophobic actions target particularly those vulnerable low class immigrant Muslims who cannot easily fight for their own rights due to their low level of Greek language and (undocumented) status inside the Greek society. It is quite difficult for them to cope with such stigmatization so they would rather ignore without making it public. Nevertheless, it is rare for middle and upper class Muslim immigrants, who are small in numbers, to experience Islamophobic or xenophobic acts. In case it happens, she/he knows how to respond and claim justice before the Greek courts.

As for the economic aspect, Stamou aptly emphasizes that Islamophobia grew with the deepening economic crisis in recent years. The rise of Islamophobia corresponds with increasing racism and xenophobia within the Greek society. With a few exceptions, many Greek Muslims prefer to hide their individual

choices of conversion due to the possibility of getting stigmatized in their working environments, likely to result in otherization, discrimination and finally losing their jobs. This pragmatist approach indicates that converting to Islam, taking a Muslim name or wearing *hijab* still contain high risk of losing job or changing profession. Therefore, it stands as a rational choice for many Greek Muslims to hide their religious preference in public and make it visible only inside their families.⁴⁷

Before finishing this section, it is useful to underline one of the most significant aspects of Islamophobia in Greece. Looking closer at hate motivated Islamophobic attacks, it becomes obvious that many of the perpetrator(s) remain unidentified. Based on the OSCE's Hate Crime Reporting Data, the overall numbers of hate crimes recorded officially by the Greek police counts as 245 for the period between 2009 and 2015.⁴⁸ Only 10 out of 68 cases were prosecuted under the Greek law.⁴⁹ Given that the level of punishment remains so low, hate motivated attacks against Muslim and non-Muslims of the society are not likely to diminish in the near future.

Perpetrators of Islamophobia

This study has identified four main perpetrators of Islamophobia in the Greek context:

The first is the Greek state itself. For many years after the end of Cold War, Greece - governed either by rightwing or leftwing political parties such as PASOK, New Democracy and lately SYRIZA and Independent Greeks- applied different policies towards the integration of immigrant groups primarily residing in Athens. Yet, there has never been a consistent policy towards

⁴⁷ Interview with Anna Stamou (over Skype), May 2, 2017.

⁴⁸ It is unavoidable that those numbers increase when the unrecorded attacks provided by various NGOs located in Greece are also included in the list.

⁴⁹ For the table of hate-motivated attacks in Greece see "OSCE-OIDHR, Hate Crime Reporting, Greece", accessed April 19, 2017, <http://hatecrime.osce.org/greece?year=2015>.

their accommodation inside the Greek society. None of the governments have effectively found a solution to the fundamental problems that immigrants face in their everyday lives. Another issue is the fact that the fundamental religious liberties of Old Muslims are still restricted. As of 2017, for instance, no step has been taken by the Greek state to return the rights to Western Thracian and Island Muslims to choose their own religious leadership. Similarly, the problems Muslim Greek converts face have never been dealt effectively by the Greek state.

The second main perpetrator of Islamophobia in Greece is the third-biggest political party, Golden Dawn. Reinforced primarily by increasing trends of racism across Europe and deepening of economic crisis, the party has secured a broad base of supporters from within the Greek society and eventually won seats in the Greek Parliament. By winning seats in the Parliament, their ultra-nationalist, xenophobic and Islamophobic statements and actions started to get heard from the highest level of Greek politics. In 2012, Golden Dawn launched a campaign that aimed to help exclusively those of ethnic Greek origin in need for food, clothes and shelter.⁵⁰ At the same time, it launched several anti-Muslim and racist campaigns against New Muslims of Athens. The most popular of these campaigns targeted the construction of a mosque that has a history going back the 1880s.⁵¹ Even though Golden Dawn's "No Mosque in Athens" campaign resulted in repeating many criticisms coming from Greek citizens, these efforts were ultimately defeated by the determination of the SYRIZA-ANEL Coalition Government coupled with Muslim NGOs' unabated demands for an official mosque.⁵² As of the time of writing, the

⁵⁰ "Κοινωνικό παντοπωλείο μόνο για Έλληνες από τη Χρυσή Αυγή [Social aid from Golden Dawn only for Greeks", accessed April 8, 2017, <http://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/208102/koinoniko-pantopoleio-mono-gia-ellhnes-apo-th-xrysh-aygh/>.

⁵¹ For a detailed research see Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas, "Constructing Difference: The Mosque Debates in Greece", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.35, No. 6, 2009, pp. 957-975.

⁵² Jenny Tsiropoulou, 'Ραμαζάνι στο Σκαρμαγκά [Ramadan in Skaramagka/

latest news from Athens indicate that the mosque is supposed to get opened in 2018. Nevertheless, this study highlights discriminatory and hate-motivated acts against Muslims at the highest level of the Greek political sphere through Golden Dawn. This surely is one of the most significant examples of the level of Islamophobia in Greece.

Being the highest religious authority of the country, the Greek Orthodox Church is also a major perpetrator of Islamophobia in Greece. It is quite influential in different aspects of the religious, social and cultural lives of Greek citizens. Statements coming from this institution and regional bishops have always been influential in affecting perceptions across different segments of the Greek society. From time to time, figures of the Church, those either based in Athens or peripheral areas of the country, prefer to express their own opinions on some matters of Islam in Greece.

The Mosque in Athens is one of the most-frequently discussed topics among clerics. In fact, the Orthodox Church has never rejected the right of Muslims to have an official house of prayer in Athens. However, some Metropolitan Bishops, like that of Seraphim from Piraeus or Athimos from Thessaloniki, openly expressed their opposition to the construction of Islamic places of worship in Greece. “Islam is a destructive faith” quotation is from one of his latest interviews on a Greek TV channel in late January 2017. Indicative of his general anti-Muslim views coupled with his continuous statements against the construction of an official mosque in Athens, it is hard not to associate such discourse with the larger Orthodox Church.⁵³ Similarly, Damaskinos, the local Metropolitan Bishop based in Komotini, had claimed in the 1990s that many religious events organized by Muslims “disturbed

Athens]’, The Press Project, accessed June 1, 2017. <https://www.thepressproject.gr/article/111915/Ramazani>.

⁵³ “Μητροπολίτης Πειραιώς Σεραφείμ: Το Ισλάμ Είναι Μια Καταστροφική Λατρεία – Όχι Τζαμί Στην Αθήνα [Seraphim, the Metropolitan Bishop of Piraeus: Islam is a Xatastrophic Religion- No Mosque in Athens]”, accessed April 10, 2017, goo.gl/zX8Eoh

and even challenged” the local Orthodox Christian population.⁵⁴ Another book printed by the same local church blamed Muslim clerics for distributing Turkish propaganda during religious activities either inside or outside houses of prayer.⁵⁵ Until his death in 2012, a number of controversies had taken place between Damaskinos and many leading figures of the Muslim Turkish minority concerning the religious autonomy in Western Thrace.

The last major perpetrator of Islamophobia is the Greek media. A number of privately owned organs play a significant role in the way Islam in a predominantly non-Muslim society is portrayed. Some of the Greek mass media associate Islam with extremism and religious fundamentalism while some others show how Islam is incorporated within a multicultural Greek society. Both types of media generally tend to question Islam in Greece after some terrorist attacks in different parts of Europe. Islamic headscarf worn by Muslim students at National Parades (25th of March and 28th of October) and *Eid* prayers practiced collectively at stadiums in Athens are some of the common instances where Greek media diverts its attention to debates about the limits of Islam in the Greek public sphere.⁵⁶

Yet, of all other matters regarding Islam, the construction of a mosque in Athens turned out to be the most widely-covered issue by the Greek media which contributes triggering the whole debate about Islam inside the Greek society. In this respect, discussions

⁵⁴ Damaskinos, *Mitropolitiss Maronias kai Komotinis* [Metropolitan Bishop of Maronia and Komotini], *Η πνευματική δυναμική παρέμβασις της τοπικής εκκλησίας εις τα προβλήματα της ακριτικής περιοχής της Ροδόπης* [*Cultural Dynamics of Intervention of the Local Church Regarding Problems of the Border Area of Rhodopi*], Komotini, 1996, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Damaskinos, *Mitropolitiss Maronias kai Komotinis*, [Metropolitan Bishop of Maronia and Komotini], *Η συμβολή της τοπικής εκκλησίας εις την αντιμετώπισιν των εθνικών προβλημάτων της Θράκης* [*The Contribution of the Local Church in dealing with of the national problems of Thrace*], Komotini: Iera Mitropolis Maronias kai Komotinis, 1989, p. 21.

⁵⁶ “Με μαντίλα στην παρέλαση: Μήνυμα συνύπαρξης [With Hijab in Parade: A Message of Living Together]”, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://news247.gr/eidiseis/koinonia/me-mantila-sthn-parelash-mhnyma-synuparkshs.3972726.html>.

presented through Greek media about the religious rights of Muslims in Greece directly affect construction and deconstruction of image about Islam in the minds of Greek citizens at various levels and segments.

Conclusion

This study has shown that there are many similarities and differences among Muslims living in different parts of Greece. Muslims in Western Thrace enjoy more religious liberties than all other Muslims across the country. Being the only officially recognized minority group in Greece, their rights emanate from their minority status which is safeguarded under the Greek and international law. The Island Muslim Turks also have some primary religious rights, though they are kept at a minimum level. Muslim immigrants are the most vulnerable group whose rights and liberties are kept at the minimum level by different policies of the Greek state. Being the smallest group in number, ethnic Greeks who converted to Islam have their own problems in respect to their religious liberties.

Depending on which group they belong to, Muslims in Greece face a variety of Islamophobic policies and practices targeting particularly their religious identities. It is almost impossible for many of them to escape from Islamophobic actions or statements coming from non-Muslim members of the Greek society including some Greek politicians or journalists. Only a small proportion tries to find justice before the Greek law while many others just ignore any kind of stigmatization or discrimination they face based on their Islamic identity. It is apparent that economic crisis in Greece has fueled extreme nationalism, xenophobia and racism among Greeks, thus accelerating the overall pace of Islamophobia towards any kind of Muslim group residing across the country.

Looking from a broader framework, this study has confirmed that phobia is not always directed at something unknown or alien. Historical knowledge, as in the case of Old Muslims in Greece, may actually trigger negative sentiments. At this point, perpetrators of Islamophobia come to the forefront. As emphasized above, there

are many different state and non-state actors portraying Islam in Greece. Islamophobic actions are rarely persecuted and many perpetrators remain unidentified. More importantly, the Greek media refrains from covering issues about discriminations or hatred against Muslims. The result may likely be that the growing trend of Islamophobia in various segments of Greek public and private spheres is likely to continue in the coming years.

From a wider perspective, it seems urgent for the Greek state to take action to fight Islamophobia inside the Greek society. This research contends that the effectiveness of those action depends on the inclusion of Muslims in decision-making processes. Decisions need to be taken and implemented after close cooperation and collaboration with all Muslims. Otherwise, as the history of the poor treatment of minorities in Greece indicate, none of those unilateral actions by non-Muslim members of the Greek majority will adequately address and solve the problems of Muslims in Greece.

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“Willkommenskultur” in Arab Eyes: Arabic Traditional and Social Media Discourses on Syrian Refugees in Germany

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ABSTRACT

Over one million refugees, most from the war-torn parts of the Middle East, have been “welcomed” and given haven in Germany, but not in some of the countries of Eastern Europe. At the same time, Islamophobia has been on the rise, manifested in hateful groups, such as Pegida, as well as the right-wing political party, Alternative for Germany, and various Eastern European governments. This paper will examine perspectives on the refugee situation and the xenophobia and Islamophobia tied to it in the Arab-language media. It will draw from important Middle Eastern news sources such as Al-Jazeera Net-Arabic, regional newspapers such as Asharq Al-Awsat, Al-Sharq, and Al-Ahram, as well as German Arabic-language media sources such as Abwab, Deutsche Welle-Arabisch, and Deutsche Welle Shabab Talk. Much of the Arab media has given Arab refugees in Germany and Eastern Europe —often in comparison with other European countries— extensive coverage since September of 2015. The purpose of this paper is to examine changing opinions since then towards the status and treatment of Syrians in German society, and their contrast with that towards some of the Visegrad Group countries, such as Hungary and Poland. Of key influence is the impact of pivotal events, including terrorism, crimes committed, or allegedly committed, by refugees, the growing strength of right-wing populist parties and groups, Islamophobic popular protests, and attacks against refugees

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and their shelters by locals in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. By drawing on newspapers and T.V. programs that give refugees a chance to express their own opinions and concerns, this paper will examine both the voices of Syrians within Germany as well as how the larger Arab media views them and their situation. Of key importance will be the question of how the refugee crisis has shaped the Arab images of Islamophobia in Europe and the West.

Introduction

IN THE EARLY FALL OF 2015, Arabic-language newspapers and the social media published photographs (“selfies”) of refugees, mostly young Syrian men, posing with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during her visit to a refugee shelter (*Flüchtlingsheim*). One of the popular labels for Merkel that appeared in the social media under these images was that of “Mama Merkel” (and “Mama of the refugees”).¹ This term expressed praise and gratitude towards the German Chancellor and her open-door policy towards the circa one million refugees that have come to Germany since 2015, as well as the “*Willkommenskultur*” —the popular culture of welcoming them— inspired by it. Yet this image of a “welcoming Germany” rarely went unquestioned.

As this article aims to demonstrate, Arabic media venues expressed both praise and criticism, wonder and skepticism with regards to “*Willkommenskultur*.” Over time, official Arabic press venues and Arabic posts on the social media spoke less of the spirit of welcome and more of animosity towards refugees and their countries, often driven by Islamophobia (anti-Islamic/anti-Muslim sentiment or hostility). Influenced by events such as German right-wing violence against them and their shelters, such criticism was also a reaction to the difficult everyday life conditions faced by refugees, which both official and social media venues labelled as a “slow death in Germany.”

¹ «هل تتخلى ميركل نهائياً عن سياسة الأحيضان» *Al-Ahram*, 2 February 2016: <https://goo.gl/c6uRv2>.

Media venues in the Arab world, such as the news network *Al-Jazeera*, and Arabic-language sources inside Germany, such as the refugee newspaper, *Abwab* (Doors), have been interested in and reacting to the fate of Syrians and other Arabs who fled to Germany and larger Europe to escape violence, persecution, and poverty. Drawing on these and other official sources available online, as well as on Arabic-language posts on social media, this article is interested in Arab views on the treatment of refugees in Germany—in particular, issues and events connected to the refugee crisis, challenges to Merkel’s open-door policy, and everyday life of refugees in Germany. Certainly, there are more venues out there, as well as more entries on the social media, than has been consulted here. Without any claims to being a comprehensive study of Arab media, this article offers—to the best of the author’s knowledge—a first attempt to examine Arab public opinion on the refugee crisis in Europe, with a focus on Germany. As such, it aims to open this topic up to scholarly discussion, as well as encourage scholarly consideration of Arabic-language sources and Arab perspectives on Islamophobia and the current refugee crisis in Europe and the west.

Media portraits of refugees tend to be interwoven with politics and often representative of the labels, images, and stereotypes that society attaches to these migrants. More often than not, these tend to be negative, especially when the society views refugees as foreign in terms of ethnicity and culture, and all the more so as “the other”—a competitor, threat, or enemy—on a political basis. Certainly, recent studies of refugees in the media in general, and as well as those focusing on the current Syrian refugee crisis in Western official and social media sources, have stressed the negative labels attached to them.² Labels attached to them in the public discourse,

² See Victoria M. Esses and Stelian Medianu, “Uncertainty, threat, and the role of the media in promoting the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees,” *Journal of Social Issues* vol. 69, no.: 3, 2013, pp. 518-536; Seth M. Holmes and Heide Castaneda, “Representing the ‘European refugee crisis’ in Germany and Beyond: Deservingness and difference, life and death.” *American Ethnologist* vol. 43, no.: 1, 2016; and Jill Walker Rettberg & Radhika Gajjala, “Terrorist or cowards: negative portrayals of male Syrian refugees in social media,” *Feminist Media Studies* vol.

such as that of terrorist, criminal, invader, and deserving versus non-deserving reflect an ongoing conflict in Western societies over the extent to which refugees are seen as a cultural, societal, and economic threat, or in other words as “the other.”

This examination takes a different approach in that it is not so much about how the media “others” current refugees from the Middle East in Europe but rather how it uses them in a discourse that, arguably, portrays European/Western societies as “the other.” The Arab media sources examined here view Syrian, Iraqi, and other Arab refugees—particularly Muslims—as “their own,” but the society they enter, namely Germany and Europe, as “the other.” In this sense, the media, both official and social, usually follows the function that Benedict Anderson ascribed to it—that of constructing an “imagined community.”³ In this case, it is one situated remotely outside of any geographic borders/territory imagined as “our own,” e.g. an Arab country, Arab region, or even larger Islamic world. The host country and society is imagined as the “other” through a discourse that scholars call “occidentalism.” Drawing from the work of various scholars, Ehsan Bakhshandeh characterizes this concept as a product of opposition to Western imperialism and hegemony and its discursive weapon, “Orientalism,” characterized as such by Edward Said.⁴ According to Xiaomei Chen, occidentalism is “a discourse of oppression and a discourse of liberation,”⁵ which depicts Western societies as inherently imperialist, hegemonic, and oppressive. The refugee issue in the eyes of the Arab media sources and Arabic commentaries on the social media examined here often contain such occidentalist undertones. They frequently

16, no.: 1, 2016, pp. 178-81.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1991.

⁴ Ehsan Bakhshandeh cites Wang Ning, Fernando Coronil, Xiaomei Chen, among others, in *Occidentalism in Iran: Representations of the West in the Iranian Media*, I.B. Tauris, 2015, pp. 13-16.

⁵ Quoted by Ehsan Bakhshandeh in *ibid.*, p. 15.

stress how refugees are subject to oppression, conspiracies, and forced assimilation in German society. Certainly not all venues promote these messages in the same way, and some media voices do not at all. Nevertheless, there is a unifying message of refugees finding themselves in the place of “the other.” The latter’s features are selected for the sake of stereotyping as (white) European, German, and Christian, while those which would undermine its image of “otherness” vis-à-vis refugees are ignored. These are essentially Germany’s Muslim population numbering over a million, as well as largely-assimilated communities of over two million Turks, and hundreds of thousands of Arabs present before the arrival of the refugees.⁶

“Willkommenskultur” and its Sceptics

The popular German term “Willkommenskultur” became commonly used in the Arab media, translated as a “culture of welcome” (thaqafat al-tarheeb) as well as—in an article published in the Egyptian main pro-government newspaper *Al-Ahram*—“warm hugs policy” (*al-ahdan al-dafia*).⁷ *Al-Jazeera Net-Arabic* (*AJN-Ar.*) praised Merkel for her resilience to Islamophobia and xenophobia in her own country and for being a “bold leader” of Europe aimed at creating a “moral law” that is post-national.⁸ In addition, photographs and articles recognized the grassroots

⁶ According to the census of 2011 there are 1.5 million declared Muslims. The Turkish population is estimated to be between 2.5 and 4 million in size according to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turks_in_Germany, accessed 25 February 2017. In 1995, there were some 24,000 Arabs living in Berlin alone according to Ralph Ghadban, *Die Libanon-Flüchtlinge in Berlin: Zur Integration ethnischer Minderheiten*, Publisher info. missing, 2008, Documentation Center and Museum of Migration (DOMiD), p. 245. Today, their population in Germany in total is estimated to be between 400,000-500,000 according to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabs_in_Germany#cite_note-2, accessed 25 February 2017.

⁷ «هل تتخلى ميركل نهائياً عن سياسة الأخصان»

⁸ The term “racism” is used to refer to these characteristics. «الأوروبي ضروري لأوروبا» [European is essential for Europe], *Al-Jazeera Arabic/AJN-Ar.*, 8 Feb. 2016: <https://goo.gl/PtmxQd>, accessed 25 February 2017.

character of “Willkommenskultur,” marked by volunteers working in refugee shelters, donors of clothing and other basic necessities, or even graffiti on city walls denoting the spirit of “welcome.”

Arabic press venues were quick to question the seemingly endless altruistic character of “Willkommenskultur.” Foremost, the economic “need” to bring in fresh blood to replace an aging population that is not replenishing itself with offspring was a recurrent theme in newspapers. Likewise, the historical explanation of Germans wanting to create a better image of themselves in light of their eternal association with Nazism and the Holocaust found its echo in Arabic-language press. In the UK-published Saudi newspaper, *Al-Hayat*, Hazem Saghieh pointed to this motive as he wrote that “while the Germans invest a lot to educate their generations so that there is no repetition of the Holocaust ..., the Arabs benefit from this investment emanating from the tragedy of Jews.”⁹

Still, praise for “Willkommenskultur” was at its height at end of 2005. Just before New Year’s Eve, rumor spread widely on Twitter that this year “Germany has prevented fireworks” at celebrations since it did not want to remind the Syrians of bombs and explosions in their country.¹⁰ A more humorous post on Twitter by an author called “Moroccan without Religion” claimed that the German government was giving refugee men vouchers to visit brothels as a way to satisfy them sexually and thus limit acts of harassment among them.¹¹ Indeed, this joke was a reaction to the actual events of New Year’s Eve, which in Cologne in particular, resulted in acts of harassment and sexual assault against women by refugees from North Africa. One of the posts on Twitter shared a caricature of two fish, the bigger one “the Cologne New

⁹ Hazem Saghieh, [We and the Germans] *Al-Hayat*, 12 September 2015: <https://goo.gl/BP3BZ5>, accessed 25 February 2017.

¹⁰ omarahmad@omardwerk1, Twitter Post, 31 December 2015.

¹¹ ألمانيا قامت بتوزيع بطاقات صفراء على اللاجئين كمساعدات لهم في ممارسة الجنس في بيوت الدعارة «بيليكي إيبسييه باليام» [Aya ya Liam, Germany distributed yellow cards to refugees as help for them to have sex in brothels], Flüchtlinge in Deutschland. Facebook, 8 February 2016: <https://goo.gl/Wy5wZF> (accessed 12 May 2017)

Year’s Eve,” eating a smaller one labelled “Willkommenskultur” and blamed the acts on Arabs and Muslims generally.¹² The New Year’s incidents in Cologne sparked the first major conflicts over “Willkommenskultur.” Among the German public, they were used by its opponents to fuel Islamophobia, as well as rouse emphatic opposition to Merkel. In the end, this drove the German government to adopt a policy of limiting accepting refugees from North Africa, and thus clearly privileging Middle Eastern and Central Asian refugees. *Al-Ahram* defended against this sentiment by sarcastically questioning how only the “crazy” acts of “a few... drunk refugees and migrants from North Africa put an end to” “Willkommenskultur.”¹³ Other press venues went on a similar counterattack. In an editorial in the UK-published Saudi newspaper, *Asharq al-Awsat*, Samir Altallah pointed out that the Arab press was quick to “search for the roots of ‘the conspiracy’” behind these attacks. He noted several explanations for what happened, which essentially absolved the perpetrators of responsibility. One was that the perpetrators were actually Germans in Arab clothes conspiring to give refugees, Arabs, and Muslims a bad image in Germany. Another was that really the “bad influence” of “German freedom” led to this kind of debauchery. The blame was also put on the victims themselves: that these German girls were dressed in a promiscuous way, which invited attacks on them. Criticizing these views, Altallah urged Arabs to take more responsibility for their own actions, noting that German opinion and policy towards refugees was at stake.¹⁴

The Brussels terrorist attacks in late March 2016 were another

¹² «وهكذا ابتلع الظلام العربي الإسلامي ثقافة الترحيب الألمانية في ليلة رأس السنة. من الكرنفال الألماني السنوي» [This is how Arab and Islamic darkness swallowed Willkommenskultur during New Year’s Eve. From the German annual carnival.] Jourin Keelo, Twitter Post, 8 February 2016: <https://twitter.com/JourinKeelo/status/696727381088825344> , accessed 25 February 2017.

¹³ «هل تتخلى ميركل نهائياً عن سياسة الأحضان»

¹⁴ [Samir Atallah, The Night of Assault Against Merkel] *Asharq al-Awsat*, 11 January 2016: <https://goo.gl/r3Meu3>, accessed 25 February 2017.

important challenge for the endurance of “Willkommenskultur”. While writers, such as Altallah, called on Arabs to take a “collective responsibility” for the attack before Islamophobia heightens in Europe and Muslim refugees will bear its brunt, others, such as Amri Taheri, instead pointed out that most of the attackers had European citizenships and thus called it an act of “European terrorism.”¹⁵ Taking a similar view, *AJN-Ar.* argued that the ultimate cause of the attacks was not so much the problems of the Middle East as European problems, particularly “weakness of integration politics” towards immigrants. This venue claimed that Arabs in Europe were “alienated”, “marginalized” from the mainstream society, as well as shortchanged by the education systems and as a result, their identity fluctuated between identifying with their new countries and Islam. Terrorism within Europe was then the consequence of these internal conditions, which create “introversion” and ignorance among unassimilated immigrants, making them susceptible to the “spread of radical thought in some mosques.”¹⁶

Some Arabic media sources likewise saw Merkel’s open-door policy as a Western imperialist conspiracy. For example, in a post on social media by Egyptian journalist and editor for *Al-Ahram*, Said el-Lawindi dismisses the sincerity of “Wilkommenskultur” —which he refers to as “Merkel’s tears”— and depicts it as Germany’s pro-Israeli conspiracy to empty Syria of its human strength in order to “facilitate presenting it on a golden plate to Israel.”¹⁷ In similar respects, a comment to an *AJN-Ar.* article on

¹⁵ أمير طاهري، هجمات، [Samir Atallah, The Brussels Massacre] *Asharq al-Awsat*, 14 April 2016: <https://goo.gl/EDWRHU>, accessed 25 February 2017, هجمات، من العدو؟ [Amir Taheri, The Brussels Attacks: Who’s the Enemy?] *Asharq al-Awsat*, 25 March 2016: <https://goo.gl/giHbAB>, accessed 25 February 2017.

¹⁶ هجمات بروكسل .. كيف هي أوضاع المهاجرين؟ [The Brussels Attacks... How is the Migrant’s Situation?] *AJN-Ar.*, 24 March 2016: <https://goo.gl/agtfuz>, accessed 25 February 2017.

¹⁷ Dr. Said El-Lawindi, Facebook Status. «النازية القديمة كانت تدفع تعويضا لليهود بسبب عقدة» [Old Nazism payed an indemnity to the Jews because of a guilt complex over the Holocaust], 12 September 2015: <https://www.facebook.com/said.lawindi/posts/956671031061324>, accessed 25 February 2017.

that Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was able with remarkable success to save her country from the challenges of the greatest financial and economic crisis that afflicted the Old Continent, has put all of her past achievements and political future at stake. For she adopted a uniquely humane stance by embracing hundreds of thousands of refugees—men, women, and children, from all ages, who are worn out from travel and the search for a safe haven.²¹

Nevertheless, by February 2016, some Arab-language official and social media sources were emphasizing that while Merkel has been hailed all over the world, “she will not enjoy this for long.”²² The major reason cited for this pessimism towards the Chancellor and “Willkommenskultur” in general is not European opposition to her efforts to rally EU nations to open their door to refugees, but rather growing opposition to her policies within Germany.²³

The most important challenge in the eyes of Arabic media sources has been the growing strength of radical right-wing groups. Arabic media reports on them date back to 2015. In fact, already in September of that year, an article in *Al-Ahram* pointed to growing division in Germany between radical rightist, Islamophobic, and anti-refugee sentiment on the one hand, and supporters of accepting refugees on the other. Nevertheless, the article claimed that about 60% of the Germans still “welcome” newcomers fleeing war and persecution in the Middle East.²⁴ However, the growing tide of skepticism in Germany became particularly noticeable in Arabic media sources by January 2016. *AJN-Ar.* and other venues reported the rise of Islamophobia and nationalist radicalism.²⁵

²¹ «هل تتخلى ميركل نهائياً عن سياسة الأحمضان»

²² عبد الباري عطوان: اللاجئين السوريون يتعرضون لحملة عنصرية نازية

²³ Ibid., and ميركل متهممة بتقديم اللاجئين على مصالح ألمانيا [Merkel Accused of Aiding Refugees at the Cost of Germany's Interests], *AJN-Ar.*, 5 March 2016: <https://goo.gl/etr59L>, accessed 25 February 2017.

²⁴ «كيف ستغير أزمة اللاجئين ألمانيا» [How the Refugee Crisis will Change Germany!], *Al-Ahram*, 7 Sept. 2015: <http://www.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/431727.aspx>, accessed 25 February 2017.

²⁵ See مخاوف في ألمانيا من موجة معاداة للأجانب في شرق البلد [Fear in Germany Due to Anti-Refugee

Some venues, like the *Beirut Press*, warned of a German return to racist violence during the Nazi era, “which led to the outbreak of World War II and the death of 40 million people.”²⁶ Germany was not singled out, but rather used as an example of wider European/Western Islamophobia.

Allegations of German/European/Western Islamophobia were at times depicted in the popular myth of an Islamic/Middle Eastern and Christian/European “clash of civilizations”.²⁷ One example was an editorial in *Asharq*, which disputed any notion of Islamophobia being a reaction to the rise of political Islam, with a specific mention of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian Revolution. Rather, the author argued that this was a deeply-embedded and timeless aspect of European and Western “mentality” since “the Crusades, a bomb that Pope Urban II set off in 1095.” As a prime example, he pointed to the German anti-Islamic *Pegida* movement, whose very name “Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West (Occident)” promotes this myth. Otherwise, he also pointed out statements made by Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka depicting the influx of refugees as a Muslim Brotherhood-led “invasion” and “conquest” of Europe, in which the Brotherhood was operating to rally refugees in Turkey to cross over to Greece. Likewise, the author cited a press statement by former Czech President Václav Klaus that migrants from other continents “will destroy our culture, civilization, and Western way of life.”²⁸

Sentiment in the Country’s East], *Kuwaiti News*, 22 February 2016: <https://goo.gl/HrxzbJ>, accessed 25 February 2017; عصابات تهاجم المهاجرين بالسويد وألمانيا [Gangs Attack the Migrants in Sweden and Germany] *AJN-Ar.*, 30 January 2016: <https://goo.gl/3va7iQ>, accessed 25 February 2017, and تضاعف الاعتداءات على مراكز اللاجئين بألمانيا [Attacks on Refugee Centers in Germany Multiply], *AJN-Ar.*, 29 January 2016: <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/international/2016/1/28/مراكز-اللاجئين-بألمانيا-تضاعف-الاعتداءات-على>

²⁶ عبد الباري عطوان: اللاجئين السوريون يتعرضون لحملة عنصرية نازية

²⁷ In the scholarly world, this was promoted by Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: the Free Press, 2002.

²⁸ «د. محمد مصطفى علوش: «جديد ظاهرة الإسلاموفوبيا [Dr. Mostafa Alloush, Islamophobia as a New Phenomenon], *Asharq*, 9 Jan. 2016: <http://www.al-sharq.com/news/details/396305>, accessed 25 February 2017.

In Arabic media, the perceived gaining strength of right-wing groups in Germany has been the basis for claims of Merkel's loss of public support for her open-door policy towards refugees.²⁹ *AJN-Ar.* has given wide coverage to the Islamophobic *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), a political party version of the *Pegida* movement, with particular focus on its rising popularity, electoral success, and most serious challenge to Angela Merkel.³⁰ *AJN-Ar.* pointed out that the AfD was the most successful right-wing German party since 1945.³¹ One Facebook post singled it out as a prime example of the resurgence of a nationalist radicalism in Germany comparable to Nazism—indeed this time in Islamophobic rather than anti-Semitic guise.³² Above all, the stress in Arabic media venues has been on its hostility to Muslim refugees. Commonly cited has been the AfD leader Franke Petry's statement condoning the use of live ammunition against refugees entering the country as well as her call for the closing and patrolling of the German-Austrian border as prime examples of the party's anti-refugee politics.³³

An even greater blow to the initially praised German reception of refugees has been right-wing violence and hostility against them. In late February, *AJN-Ar.* reported that in 2015 there were 1,000 incidences of violent attacks on refugee shelters in Germany alone, as part of what it claimed to be a European-wide antagonism

²⁹ ميركل متهمه بتقديم اللاجئين على مصالح ألمانيا

³⁰ See *ibid.*, القلق من اللاجئين يهبط بشعبية ميركل [Anxiety Over Refugees Slumps Merkel's Popularity], 19 October 2015: <https://goo.gl/2dRtYC>, accessed 12 May 2017, and *مسلمو ألمانيا: حزب البديل نازي*, [Germany's Muslims: The Alternative Party is Nazi], 19 April 2016: <https://goo.gl/AfaKUu>, accessed 12 May 2017.

³¹ ميركل متهمه بتقديم اللاجئين على مصالح ألمانيا

³² A. Ghali, "العنصرية النازية ضد اللاجئين", [Nazi racism against refugees], Facebook Post, February 6, 2016: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1686355574922701&id=100006448245736, accessed 25 February 2017.

³³ بيتري سياسة الهانبة تنزع كراهية الإسلام واللاجئين «، [Petry: German Politician Spearheads Hatred of Islam and Refugees], *AJN-Ar. – Al-Jazeera Encyclopedia*, 12 April 2016: <http://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/icons/2016/4/10/> بيتري-سياسية-ألمانية-تنزع-كراهية-الإسلام-واللاجئين, accessed 25 February 2017.

towards refugees.³⁴ A little than a month later, it asked “has *thaqafat al-tarheeb* [Willkommenskultur] evaporated?” in light of what it referred to as violence and vandalism against shelters by members of *Pegida* and other radicals in Saxony, including in Heidenau, Freital, Claußnitz, and Bautzen. The source reported how attackers threw rocks at food servers in one of the shelters of Saxony-Anhalt.³⁵ Already by August 2015, *Deutsche Welle-Arabisch* (DW) broadcasted a report about violent hostility towards refugees from Asia in a shelter in Dresden, which likewise showed images of vandalism, here damage done to a roof of one of the shelters. The report also showed how skinhead gangs terrorized the refugees of this shelter on a daily basis by demonstratively assembling in front of it and making violent gestures at them. Ordinary neighbors, on the other hand, expressed their hostility towards their foreign newcomers in a less provocative and seemingly more innocent manner by making friendly conversation with the shelter’s German volunteer worker. In order not to feed into their stereotypes of being untidy and neglectful of their surroundings, the refugees made sure to work extra hard to trim the grass, remove the weeds, and tidy up in the yard and lawns surrounding the shelter.³⁶

A video recording of a violent incident involving police brutality against refugees in the municipality of Claußnitz in mid-February was widely circulated in the social media. The incident took place when a bus transporting refugees, including men, women, and small children, to their shelter was greeted at its destination by hostile gangs of right-wing radicals shouting slurs

³⁴ «تقرير حقوقي يحذر من ردة أوروبية ازاء اللاجئين» [Rights Report warns of European Resentment towards Refugees] AJN-Ar., 18 February 2016: <https://goo.gl/wtWzHs>, accessed 25 February 2017.

³⁵ «هل تبخرت ثقافة الترحيب باللاجئين بألمانيا؟» [Has the Culture of Welcoming Refugees Evaporated in Germany?] AJN-Ar., 11 April 2016: <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/immigration/2016/4/11/هل-تبخرت-ثقافة-الترحيب-باللاجئين-بألمانيا/>, accessed 25 February 2017. This article is based on sources from Deutsche Welle.

³⁶ «حقائق عن حجم كراهية الأجانب في ألمانيا» [Facts on the Hateful Attack on Foreigners in Germany] Deutsche Welle – Arabisch, August 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZGwGVSlY8o>, accessed 25 February 2017.

at them as well as a perverse version of the 1989 pro-unification slogan, “Wir sind das Volk!” (“We are the people!”). Terrified of the violent mob, the refugees were hesitant to leave the bus after it stopped. This prompted police officers waiting alongside of the radicals outside to step inside the bus to force the passengers to get off. Their loud and terrifying shouts of “Raus, raus!” (“Out, out!”) at the refugees aroused reminders of Nazi SS-men tactics. Even more appalling than these shouts were the brutal actions of the policemen, who grabbed the refugee children by their clothing and forcefully shoved them off the bus and then dragged them like objects into the shelter. The first people to witness the brutality were not audiences who saw the video, but rather the radical right-wingers mobbing the bus. They demonstrated their approval for this show of manly German force against a seemingly effeminate group of frightened Arabs with loud shouts of “hurrah” praising and encouraging the policemen.³⁷

Taking place in relatively close proximity to Heidenau, where Merkel’s selfies with the refugees first symbolized the government’s warm welcome towards them, this incident represented one of the most powerful contrasts to “Willkommenskultur”. On the social media, some reactions tapped into the clash-of-civilizations myth, such as that the incident marked “an act of European civilization dancing on the ruins of the weak” and “the barbarity of the white man.”³⁸ In another post, the same commentator noted that “the police would never treat German children like this.”³⁹ Although this incident certainly added credit to the claim “*thaqafa al-tarheeb* [Willkommenskultur] was a thing of the past,” this is because

³⁷ “Flüchtling wird aus dem Bus gezerzt, Clausnitz [sic!]” [Refugee was dragged out of the bus]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jxNVUR6aPs>, accessed 25 February 2017 and انتقادات لسلوك الشرطة بألمانيا مع اللاجئين, AJN-Ar., 21 February 2016: <https://goo.gl/uYLBHY>

³⁸ Abdo Fayed, «الكراهية ضد اللاجئين» [Hatred Against Refugees] Facebook Post, Accessed February 21, 2016: <https://goo.gl/mdzHfn>, accessed 25 February 2017.

³⁹ Abdo Fayed, Facebook Post, February 19, 2016: <https://goo.gl/pp9gnk>, accessed 25 February 2017.

by mid-2016 Arabic-language media venues “focused mainly on appalling incidences.”⁴⁰ This was also the case regarding the everyday life of refugees in Germany.

Refugees in Everyday Life: Slow Death in Germany

Upon coming to Germany, many refugees had expectations of quick improvement of their quality of life. This did not always materialize, especially in the short term. Media venues recorded refugee discontent and often cited them in their criticism of Arab treatment in Germany. In particular, *Abwab*, the first Arabic-language newspaper published in Germany by and for Syrian and other Arab refugees, which started circulation at the beginning of 2016, took the lead in covering the everyday lives of refugees.

This coverage of the problems refugees face in Germany go back to at least the Spring of 2015. In April, *Al-Raya* published a critical article entitled “Germany is not the Garden of Eden for Syrian refugees.” Told through the experience of Ashraf, a 21-year old Syrian male and former pharmacy student who fled to Germany and ended up housed in a large refugee shelter in Leipzig, the article certainly does not hesitate to give Ashraf the chance to voice his grievances, the seriousness of which it describes with the provocative statement that while in Syria “one dies quickly, whether by bullets ... bombs ... or at the hands of ISIS ..., in Germany nevertheless one dies slowly.” This “slow death” is caused by a number of factors, ranging from the poor state of the shelter’s interior to the eerie feeling of its outside appearance. In fact, the shelter was once housing for Soviet soldiers based in East Germany, and according to Ashraf, “when they [he and other refugees] got to this place they felt they had come to a prison, [especially] when they saw the barbed wire surrounding it.”⁴¹ He also voiced a more widespread complaint among refugees: that

⁴⁰ «هل تبخرت ثقافة الترحيب باللاجئين بألمانيا؟»

⁴¹ «ألمانيا ليست جنة عدن للاجئين السوريين» [Germany is Not the Garden of Eden for Refugees], *Al-Raya*, 15 April 2015: <https://goo.gl/otmtMx>, accessed 25 February 2017.

in their placement in this shelter in the former East Germany, a region peripheral to the Western, more economically vibrant part of the nation, they became isolated from mainstream society. This isolation hinders their efforts to learn German and find work.

In the summer of 2015, *Al-Hayat* emphasized that newcomers felt “shock” when they got to Germany and discovered the refugee reception centers were crowded with asylum applicants waiting to have their papers processed. The newcomers faced a “whirlwind of application paper work that never ends,” made all the worse by the fact that documents were written in, and bureaucrats only spoke, German. The language barrier was certainly not alleviated by the fact that asylum applicants had a hard time getting into German language classes, which tended to be too crowded for efficient learning. In their everyday life, Syrians found it difficult to communicate to medical doctors about ailments, and also hard to find a job. Asylum applicants feared they would not be able to survive on government funds without dramatically sacrificing their lifestyle. Likewise, families granted asylum found it difficult to afford apartments suitable for their size and the lifestyle to which they had been accustomed.⁴²

Similar complaints were voiced in September 2015 by the refugees interviewed by Sky News Arabic, complaining about conditions newcomers faced when applying for asylum in Germany. They likewise objected to the crowded conditions during the application process as well as bureaucratic back-log. The asylum petitioners interviewed also emphasized their sense of disorientation and frustration during a time when they had to sit idly day after day waiting for their number to be called so their petition is reviewed. One man claimed “there’s no system” to the application process. Another, a frustrated young man wearing a leather jacket, said “the same bombs are here [in Germany] and there [in Syria]” and thus echoed the “slow death in Germany”

⁴² لاجئون سوريون وأوهام الحياة الرغيدة في ألمانيا [Syrian Refugees and the Illusion of the Good Life in Germany] *Al-Hayat*, 18 June 2015: <https://goo.gl/oB6fme>, accessed 25 February 2017.

theme promoted by *al-Raya*.⁴³ Deutsche Welle in Arabic featured Iraqi refugees who were so fed up with bureaucratic gridlock, they decided to take their chances by returning to Iraq.⁴⁴

Social media posts also echoed the “slow death in Germany” theme. Quoting the phrase “while in Syria death is quick, in Germany it is slow,” one social media post from February 2016 cited the story of a male refugee who returned to Syria after being fed up with the everyday life conditions he was subject to in Germany. Certainly, the problems he encountered were those commonly found in the reports of other sources on refugee everyday life in Germany. They included being subject to difficult living conditions in the shelters for an extensive and undefined time period until the refugees were able to move to their own housing. In this case, the person expressed feelings of *déclassé* as educated professionals, such as “doctors, engineers, and teachers” were forced to live with “criminals and drug users”. This post likewise reported that in one of the shelters, the newcomers were forced to wear special bracelets that identified them as refugees when they went outside, prompting them out of fear and embarrassment to hide them under their clothing. Idleness and inability to find work certainly exacerbated this feelings of isolation, and alienation from the rest of society, and certainly hindered integration. It was even difficult for refugees to get their university degrees and professional certificates from Syria recognized and honored in Germany. Another source of grief and frustration among refugees were failed attempts to invite their closest relatives still in the home country to join them. In order to receive the right to unite their immediate families, refugees needed, but often were unable, to prove that the lives of their

⁴³ «أحوال اللاجئين السوريين في ألمانيا .. بين الحلم والعقبات» [Conditions of Refugees in Germany.. Between the Dream and Obstacles], Sky News Arabic, September 2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpzOvA_ZfUQ, accessed 25 February 2017.

⁴⁴ مئات اللاجئين العراقيين في ألمانيا يعدون الى العراق [Hundreds of Iraqi Refugees in Germany Return to Iraq], *Deutsche Welle News*, January 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H8WIVocdoU>, accessed 12 May 2017.

relatives still in Syria were threatened to receive permission for them to come to Germany.⁴⁵

In the Spring of 2016, *AJN-Ar.* echoed some of these problems in a report on the conditions at a refugee shelter in the town of Bornheim near Cologne and Bonn based on the personal accounts of some refugees living there. While they expressed satisfaction with regards to the basics of life such as food and security, refugees also expressed discontent with other matters. The shelter was in actuality a sports hall in a school, where refugees lived until their requests for asylum were processed and they received their residency permit. Living conditions were generally crowded as 80 petitioners from Syria, Iraq, and Israel/Palestine lived there, and thus 6 people for every 25 square meters, which were partitioned off for some privacy. One Palestinian woman complained about the nature of the food, which although bearable was nothing like the Arab home cooking they were used to. As had Ashraf according to *Al-Raya*, she likewise compared the shelter to a prison and worried about how they would fast for Ramadan. A teenage girl complained about the small amount of space, claiming that “when I start to play on my phone they tell me to be quiet.”⁴⁶ Another Palestinian, a 26 year-old man named Bashar, complained that the overcrowded conditions, and living at the shelter with his parents and siblings, necessitated that he spend his day sleeping and his nights awake for privacy. His main grievance—like that of Ashraf, and one commonly underscored by other refugees sharing their accounts on the media—was idleness and separateness. He was unable to work until his papers were processed and thus sat in the shelter for most of the time. Citing a German psychology professor, the report emphasized that the disruption of the refugee’s former routine in life resulted in their suffering from

⁴⁵ Ahmad Nabil Amireh, Facebook Post, February 1, 2016: <https://www.facebook.com/ahmad.nabil.amireh/posts/10208157729442302>, accessed 25 February 2017.

⁴⁶ لاجئوا بورنهايم.. الأمل انقلب احباطا [The Refugees of Bornheim... Hope Turned into Frustration], *AJN-Ar.*, 14 April 2016: <https://goo.gl/rfrGFL>, accessed 25 February 2017.

“depression, defeatism, hopelessness, and other negative feelings,” even “madness”.⁴⁷ Refugees also commonly voiced complaints of long waiting periods for papers to be processed and for acquiring seats in language courses, as well as difficult living conditions, among other problems, on *Deutsche Welle’s* Arabic talk show, “Shabab Talk” (Youth Talk).⁴⁸

Female refugees faced their own specific problems, as demonstrated by *Abwab*, which features a special section on women’s concerns. In a report featured on the German television broadcasting company, ZDF, and subsequently subtitled into Arabic and posted on *Abwab’s* website, women refugees complain of lack of privacy in crowded shelters, where they do not have rooms with locks on the door. They face not only harassment by male refugees, but also at the hands of Germans working with the refugees. This is highlighted by Lina, a 19-year old Syrian woman, who spoke of being harassed by a refugee man inside the shelter. The police ignored the matter when she told them, and a German security guard at the shelter used it to harass her himself, telling her “come live with me and I’ll protect you.”⁴⁹

Perhaps a more common challenge faced by women refugees in Germany was encountering the new Western culture while still living in an Arab and Muslim social context. In *Abwab*, Dina Abu al-Hasan demonstrates that pressures on refugee women to conform to Western values that were present even inside the shelters, as German NGOs distributed pamphlets to them that informed them of their new freedoms and rights that Germany guaranteed. This raised fears among Syrian refugees—particularly men—who felt

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See *سياسة دمج اللاجئين في ألمانيا.. ما تأثيرها على أرض الواقع؟* [Politics of Integrating Refugees... What is its Impact on the Ground?], Deutsche Welle – Shabab Talk, 30 May 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhGlqkJLDdk&t=88s> , and *ماذا بعد عام على استقبال اللاجئين؟* [A Year After Acceptance of Refugees], in same program, 30 Aug. 2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS_i_BExfDY&t=778s

⁴⁹ Publications by *Abwab*: <http://www.abwab.eu/in-the-media/>, accessed 25 February 2017.

that this influence will change the women and their dynamics with their families. Parents feared losing control over their daughters, as the latter will be able to make their own decisions on issues such as wearing hijab or going out with non-relative men.

Abwab's articles devoted to the concerns of women refugees demonstrate various other competing pressures they face in Germany. Accepting liberation based on Western values can be a bitter-sweet experience for the Arab Muslim woman, since despite often being subordinate in status to men, she does also have certain advantages as a woman, which can be hard to part with. Al-Hasan alludes to this in emphasizing that the refugee women's "new rights do not come without facing new responsibilities [as well]," which include the "loss of her [previous] right [as an Arab Muslim woman] to save her own salary and demand that the man pay for her."⁵⁰ Another article, by Daher Aita points out the competing and mutually-clashing pressures Arab Muslim women refugees wearing hijab face in their new society. According to Aita, on the one hand, "some male refugees look at her as if she's a whore if she stops wearing her hijab," and on the other, "some Germans" look upon a woman in hijab as "someone carrying with her the spirit of terrorism."⁵¹ Even if viewing the hijab as a symbol of radicalism is an exception rather than the rule among mainstream Germans, Aita's article points out that a woman in hijab certainly faces indirect societal temptation to take it off for the sake of everyday integration.

Encountering a society with different values and freedoms has certainly had its impact on refugee women and caused strains in their relations with family and peers. For example, *Sawt Almania* (Voice of Germany), the DW online Arabic news source directed at Arabs in Germany, pointed out that an increasing number of refugee women have petitioned for divorce in light of their

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ ضاهر عيطة، متحجبات أو دون حجاب، والصراع ضد حجاب الفكر [Daher Aita, Veiled or Without Veil: Conflict Over Veiling the Mind], *Abwab*, 14 Aug. 2016: <https://goo.gl/T5FnZA>, accessed 25 February 2017.

new freedom, and due to their dissatisfaction with or long-term separation from their spouses.⁵² Conflicts and difficulties in the everyday life of refugees —such as difficult and unsafe living conditions, culture shock, as well as conflicting pressures from Muslim/Arab family and German/Western society— led to their disappointment with life in Germany. Indeed, these hardships often translated into feelings of encountering a “slow death” and of being victimized by Islamophobia in German society. Social media comments of “Willkommenskultur has evaporated from Germany and Europe” reflected refugee pessimism about being able to assimilate into German society— a topic that *Abwab* addressed extensively.⁵³

Abwab on Integration

The key grievances over the lack of jobs, isolation, and the language barrier became part of *Abwab*'s critical evaluation of the new integration law the German government issued in the Spring of 2016. In addition to other provisions, one of the main features of the law was to make the granting of permanent residency to asylees contingent on their successful integration into German society. The government defined the main features of this assimilation process as learning the language and becoming familiar with German ways via completing an integration course on values, culture, society, and politics. Those who did not fulfill these requirements were threatened not only with denial of permanent residency but also with having their financial aid cut. In *Abwab*, Syrian-German lawyer, Nahla Othman, criticized this law for imposing demands on refugees but not creating adequate conditions to enable their fulfillment. Echoing a familiar refugee grievance, Othman pointed out that during the asylum petition period, the bureaucracy has

⁵² «قصص مؤلمة .. احترسوا هذا الخطر الذي يدمر أسر وعائلات اللاجئين» [Painful Stories: Beware of this Danger Destructing Refugee Families], *Sout Almania*, 29 May 2016 : <http://germanyinarabic.com/archives/6634>, accessed 25 February 2017.

⁵³ Amireh, Facebook Post, February 14, 2016.

forced some 600,000 refugees to sit idle, even as they want to work as well as “to enter language courses.” Furthermore, she mentioned that those whose petitions were not processed and who did not secure long-term residency were excluded from new programs that the law created, such as the right to a two-year internship. Additionally, there are no places for some 300,000 individuals who want to take the integration course required for all refugees wanting to secure permanent residence. An additional barrier to integration is the law’s demand that refugees stay in the geographic location to which they are assigned, so as to prevent ghettos and parallel migrant societies from forming. As Othman points out, this discriminates against those assigned to shelters in small towns, making it more difficult for them to integrate into German society than those assigned to shelters in large cities.⁵⁴

Complaints about the loss of job status marked another grievance voiced by media sources addressing refugee concerns. Refugees who came to Germany with college degrees and high job qualifications found it hard to get recognition for their education and experience, and acquire adequate jobs. Instead, many were faced with working in low-paying, low-status jobs or not at all. One of the new integration law’s provisions was the creation of 100,000 “Eurojobs” —low-paying jobs that paid as little as one Euro— for refugees, which Othman and other writers for *Abwab* criticized as a waste of refugees’ skills and experience, arguing that any created jobs should be tailored to building on their existing professional skills and experience. Moreover, another reaction against this provision in *Abwab* claimed that German society discriminated against refugees based on its stereotypical image of them as unskilled, backwards, and impoverished, and thus qualified only to work in “Eurojobs” and similar types of menial functions.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ [German Lawyer Nahla Othman], *الحقوقية الألمانية نهلة عثمان: 11 ملاحظة على قانون الاندماج*, *Abwab*, 16 April 2016: <http://www.abwab.eu/-11-عثمان-نهلة-الألمانية-الحقوقية-ألمانيا/>, accessed 25 February 2017.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, [Sorry, You Are an Overqualified Refugee], *Abwab*, 2 July 2016: <https://goo.gl/xgEUNS>, accessed 25 February 2017.

The newspaper’s editor-in-chief Ramy al-Asheq, a Syrian-Palestinian poet and journalist, buttressed this view in his own critique of the new integration law and the government-postulated concept of “integration” in general. Referring to “integration” as “a big lie” al-Asheq criticized the government and NGOs working with refugees in Germany for treating Syrians escaping civil war as “backwards” and “as if they came from the forest.”⁵⁶ He especially attacked brochures published by German NGOs instructing refugees on basic hygiene, such as on how to use a toilet, as reminiscent of a colonial-era European civilizing mission. Al-Asheq compared them to the scenario of brochures published by Syria to teach Westerners how to use water—in addition to toilet paper—to clean themselves in the bathroom. He likewise saw a civilizing-mission agenda in how people working to assimilate refugees, such as the director of West German Radio’s refugee integration program, WRDForyou, Isabel Shayani, depicted it— as Germany’s “noble offer” to Syrians. Attacking this as “arrogant” and depictive of “[German] natives as... advanced in terms of civilization,” Al-Asheq claimed that in actuality integration is imposed on the refugees, and cited the new integration law, which punishes those who do not learn the German language and German ways “as if a segment of the language and an overview of the culture integrates you.”⁵⁷ *Abwab*’s critique of the methods to encourage integration did not mean opposition to it. To Al-Asheq, integration in the eyes of the government and NGOs is a “one-way street,” in which “the other” is expected to give up her/his own culture. In his view, Germans active in the integration process construct a stereotypical portrait of refugees that becomes the official stamp of the newcomer’s identity, ignoring

⁵⁶ Ramy al-Asheq, „Antwort auf Isabel Schayani: Die Integration ist ein Bedürfnis und kein Angebot,” *Abwab*, 1 August 2016: <http://www.abwab.eu/deutsch/antwort-auf-isabel-schayani-die-integration-ist-ein-bedurfnis-und-kein-angebot/>, accessed 25 February 2017.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, and Ramy Al-Asheq, “Diese Integration ist eine große Lüge!” *Abwab*, 11 April 2016: <http://www.abwab.eu/deutsch/diese-integration-ist-eine-groese-luge/>, accessed 25 February 2017.

individual backgrounds, problems, and concerns, as well as the fact that their flight from war is an exception and not a norm that characterizes their lives. With this in mind, Al-Asheq calls on a different and “two-way” concept of integration in which German society also actively engages in integrating with the refugees and “treats each person as an individual, who is different from the other with [her/his] own identity, work, and culture.”⁵⁸ This call for an end to categorizing refugees based on stereotypes certainly recalls the underlying message of the Saudi writer Fahed al-Shaqiran cited above. While Al-Asheq and other writers in *Abwab* challenge German societal stereotypes of refugees as backwards and impoverished, al-Shaqiran disputes their categorization as victims of Islamophobia and fighters for Islam by Arab and Islamic intellectuals. Despite the different agents and discourses the two authors target, both call for refugees to be looked on in their own terms as individuals and not prejudiced by their refugee status and the stereotypes associated with it.⁵⁹

Despite this call for a new approach to integration, *Abwab* is still dedicated to facilitating the assimilation of refugees — especially Arabs and Muslims— into German society. One of the venue’s agendas has been to publish for Arabs in Germany on German society, news, and culture, as well as to report educational and job opportunities. Likewise, the venue strives to be an Arab, Muslim, and refugee voice in the discussion on policies and paths to integration. What remains to see is the extent to which *Abwab* or other Arabic media sources will prove to be an adequate voice for ordinary Arab refugees, and whether they will have an influence on German treatment of the latter.

⁵⁸ Al-Asheq, “Antwort auf Isabel Schayani.”

⁵⁹ فهد الشقيران، «جلبة خطاهم .. اذ شجعت حظ اليمين»

Conclusion

The Arabic-language media's critical perspective into the many sides of the refugee crisis in Germany provides valuable insight into this issue's transnational importance and reception in the Middle East. While on the one hand, views expressed in the media were based on real conditions and challenges that Arab refugees faced, on the other hand they were also based on occidentalist presumptions, and thus served to reinforce them. Despite its sizeable Muslim population and some seventy thousand Arabs living in Berlin alone, a fact hardly mentioned in the venues cited or the social media, Germany tends to be portrayed as “the other” vis-à-vis Arab refugees. Media and social media venues often stressed Islamophobia and prejudice directed at Arabs/Muslims, notions of a mission to civilize the latter according to the precepts of a “superior” German/Western culture, as well as exclusion, marginalization, and alienation of refugees. These fallacies of “Willkommenskultur” were hardly ever compared to how Syrians fleeing war were treated by nations not imagined by these sources as “the other,” such as Turkey and Arab states in the Levant and Gulf. As a result, far from just reacting to existing conditions and events, media sources used them to promote “us” versus “them” narratives as a way to construct and reinforce transnational Arab and Islamic identity. This notwithstanding, these critical media perspectives also shed valuable light on how the refugee situation in Germany was perceived and how it shaped public opinion among refugees and in the Arab world. Certainly not all venues spoke in one voice and some dispelled notions that fed myths of a “clash-of-civilizations,” emphasizing diversity within the refugee community, supporting integration, as well as calling for mutual dialogue between refugees and German society.

Patriotism as the Modern Justification of Islamophobia

Elena Lukinykh*

ABSTRACT

In the age of mass migration and globalization, coexistence of people with different cultural and religious backgrounds is once again one of the main challenges. In the European context, this question has become particularly thorny due to recent refugee influx and the growth of right-wing and populist movements and parties. This article examines the link between contemporary forms of Islamophobia and patriotism in order to see whether the latter can justify the former. Patriotism, a contested virtue itself, can be easily misused due to its generally positive perception. Pegida (Patriotic Europeans against Islamization of the Occident), a right-wing populist movement from Germany, is used as a case study to show some of the common mechanisms of justification, which might be used by different political parties and movements from the right side of the political spectrum. How – if at all – Islamophobia can be justified with reference to patriotism? Where is the patria that must be protected? And who are those, who pose a threat? To answer these questions, Pegida's discourse on social media will be scrutinized with the use of critical discourse analysis.

Introduction

In the age of globalization and mass migration, virtually every society is faced with the challenge of coexistence between peoples of different cultural and religious backgrounds. In the European

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context, this question has gained political ascendance due to the recent refugee crisis. Under the theme of refugees “flooding” Europe, the claims that they pose threats to the ethno-national identity, culture and national security has gained universal appeal. Exploiting this discourse have been populist right-wing parties and movements whose growing popularity across Europe is a testament to the growing tensions caused by a perceived “Muslim” problem.

This article examines the connection between contemporary forms of Islamophobia and patriotism to see whether the latter can be used as a rhetorical tool in order to justify the former. Patriotism, itself a contested virtue, lends itself easily to misuse due to its generally positive connotations. Defining themselves as ‘patriots’, many populist right-wing movements and political parties throughout Europe are claiming the role of defenders of their fatherland against presumably ‘foreign’ Muslims.

In the following article, we will take Pegida¹, a German populist right-wing movement, as a case study for some of the ways through which such groups justify actions, commonly used by political parties and movements from the political right. As a populist movement, Pegida often resorts to using simplistic characterizations of otherwise complex issues concerning Islam and Muslims. Their reduction of the relations between Muslims and non-Muslim Europeans to a very clear and easily deducible set of statements aim to provoke Islamophobic responses from otherwise politically indifferent voters. One of the primary mediums to affect this response is by evoking patriotism. Therefore, this article asks: How can an Islamophobic argument be construed by referring to patriotism? Moreover, how can the notion of patriotism be instrumentalised for anti-Muslim propaganda?

¹ Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West / Occident (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, Pegida). Pegida is a populist right-wing movement from Germany. The movement has held weekly demonstrations against the so-called Islamization of the Occident and generally against the migration policy of the German government. Even though in 2017 the influence of Pegida is not as strong as a couple of years ago, this movement is a good study case, as it actively evokes patriotism not only in its rhetoric, but also in its name.

To answer these questions, the method of critical discourse analysis will be applied to compare and contrast public utterances made by Pegida and on Pegida-related forums. Critical discourse analysis aims to transcend the outward meaning of the text and look at the ideological loading that underlies the use of language which is often unclear to a layman and, therefore, might be manipulated to convey hidden messages.² This article is based largely on the study of comments and posts drawn from social media. The Internet provides fast, cheap, efficient and a rather 'egalitarian' way for interaction. There are several reasons to concentrate on these sources. First, Internet data represent a daily updated archive: unlike conventional, face-to-face interviews, which remain unchangeable, discussions on social media react on current political events and provide a better overview of quickly occurring changes in the public discourse. Secondly, due to social media's accessibility, the resulting wide range of participants allows researchers the chance to obtain a more diverse perspective of the social anchoring of right-wing discursive patterns.

Patriotism in Contemporary Politics

Patriotism has seen an upsurge in the public sphere, both in political speeches and on social media. Crucially, patriotic discourse is found primarily within the political right wing. Notably, the word 'patriotism' itself can be found in the discourses of many leading right-wing parties in Europe. Thus, Marine Le Pen, the leader of the French right-wing party National Front (*Le Front National*), has been recently calling for 'the union of patriots as an urgent need of the country. This union would constitute

² There are several advantages to using critical discourse analysis in this kind of study. First, it allows the researcher to conduct research without relying on preliminary assumptions or a theory. Second, when there are large amounts of data (Facebook comments in this article), it tabulates a final 'average' level of extremism. Therefore, the result is somewhat affected by the comments found in sources that contain examples of extremism or violence, even if they are not part of the mainstream.

the majority, which France needs'. She also said, that she 'would continue to appeal to all the French without exception, whether from the left or right, as long they have France in the heart'.³

Three years earlier, in 2013, Geert Wilders, the leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom, published an article in the *Wall Street Journal*.⁴ In this article, titled 'The Resurgence of European Patriotism', he condemned the EU and advocated for a Europe of national democracies. Patriotism played an important role in his argumentation, as people, according to him, 'are no longer buying the lie that patriotism is dangerous, that it is a vice and not a virtue. They are reasserting their national pride and identity'.⁵

Last year, Wilders announced 'a Patriot Spring of 2016' in one of his articles.⁶ According to him, 'everywhere, patriots are on the march. We are living the Patriot Spring', because finally Europeans have started to realize, that 'fake parliaments sell out the national interests'. For decades, 'Westerners have been told by their elites that multiculturalism was a virtue and patriotism a thing of the past', but this has to change and 'people will stand up for democracy and freedom' during the patriot spring of 2016.⁷

Not only political parties and their leaders use 'patriotism' in their speeches. Many political movements and groupings of different origin and varying degrees of influence can be found in Internet, which use patriotism within their ideology and, sometimes, refer to it explicitly in their name. The most prominent would be Pegida, the study case in this article. In Ireland, there is

³ Sophie Huet, "Marine Le Pen lance un appel «à tous les patriotes»." *Le Figaro*, May 1, 2016, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://goo.gl/Qkn7BV>.

⁴ Geert Wilders, "The Resurgence of European Patriotism." *The Wall Street Journal*. Dow Jones & Company. November 21, 2013, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://goo.gl/pYv7UW>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Geert Wilders, "Exclusive - Geert Wilders: The Patriot Spring." *Breitbart*. Breitbart News Network. January 27, 2016, accessed July 15, 2017, <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/01/26/the-patriot-spring/>.

⁷ *Ibid.*

a group calling itself ‘Irish Patriot Movement’.⁸ The movement resembles Pegida in its core ideas, protesting against immigration. Furthermore, several German groups can be found on Facebook, movements that are using patriotism in their names, most prominently ‘Patriotischer Widerstand Deutschlands’, ‘Ich bin Patriot, aber kein Nazi 2.0’ and ‘Die Patrioten’.⁹ Another big movement, which, however, does not use patriotism in its name, but actively uses it in its rhetoric is Identity Generation (*Génération Identitaire*).¹⁰ All these groups can be described as right-wing groups and demonstrate the ways, in which a concept of patriotism is used nowadays.

⁸ Irish Patriot Movement is active online. They share the rhetoric of Pegida, protesting immigration. For example, they, just like Pegida, call for closing the borders after the Brussels attack March 22, 2016: ‘Muslims at it again in Brussels we need to close our borders now #StopIslam #buildthewalls’ (Irish Patriots, Twitter post, March 22, 2016, 11:22 p.m., <https://twitter.com/IrishNational1/status/712403998289088512>).

⁹ Taking a closer look, one can find more than ten different groups with the word ‘patriot’ in their name on social media. Apart from three mentioned above, there is a great variety of groups: ‘Patrioten Deutschlands’, ‘Der Patriot’, ‘DEUTSCHE, POLEN ALLE EUROPÄER UND PATRIOTEN FÜR EIN GEMEINSAMES EUROPA’ and many more. Often, these groups share the same materials and news and it is likely that these groups have similar supporters.

¹⁰ This ‘Identitarian Movement’ (Generation Identitaire) is a socio-political movement, that took its origin in France in 2002, but then established itself in many European countries (for example, in Austria, Germany and Sweden). It is famous for its anti-immigrant rhetoric and its links with other right-wing parties and movements (Virchow, Fabian, “The “Identitarian Movement”: What Kind of Identity? Is it Really a Movement?” in *Digital Media Strategies of the Far-Right in Europe and the United States*, ed. by Patricia Anne Simpson and Helga Druxes, London: Lexington Books, 2015. In Austria, the movement is often uses the word ‘patriotism’ in its rhetoric. For instance, on the webpage, it is stated, that ‘Patriotism must become a matter of course again in Austria’ (“Unsere Förderung”, Identitäre Bewegung Österreich, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://iboesterreich.at/unsere-forderungen/>). Leaders of the movement in Germany and Austria often give speeches at Pegida demonstrations. One of such examples could be a leader of Austrian branch of the movement, Martin Sellner, who delivered speech at Pegida’s demonstration in Dresden 6 February 2016.

Rise of Islamophobia

Concomitantly, the level of Islamophobia (as most of the refugees coming to Europe are from Muslim-majority countries¹¹) has been growing fast lately.¹² Indeed, several terrorist attacks and bombings (in Paris on November 13th, 2015, in Brussels on March 22nd, 2016, in Nice on July 14th, 2016, in Berlin on December 19th, 2016 and in London on March 22nd, 2017) allegedly were perpetrated by Muslims, seem to have contributed largely to this rise. However, the core idea of many nationalistic and self-proclaimed patriotic movements – anti-Muslim Europe – has been spreading far and wide even before these tragic events and even before Autumn 2014, when the first Pegida demonstration took place. In European context, for example in Germany and Scandinavian countries (mostly Sweden and Norway) the idea can be traced back to late 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, when these countries started to use workforce from Turkey and Southern Europe, as well as Northern Africa. In 1970s these migration flows went down in numbers. However, the idea of ‘non-Muslim Europe’ was invented. Hence, ‘its popular base had become obvious earlier, [as evidenced] in the book sales of Thilo Sarrazin, in the success of the ‘Politically Incorrect’ blog and, not least, in the headlines of best-selling news media’.¹³ All this created fertile ground for anti-Muslim hatred and racism even before the migration from the Middle East and Africa intensified in 2014.

While such scapegoating is nothing new in the European context, with anti-migrant workers discourse prevalent since

¹¹ According to Eurostat, in the fourth quarter of 2015 Syrian, Iraqis and Afghanis were the top 3 citizenships of asylum seekers, lodging around 145 100, 79 300 and 53 600 applications respectively. Out of the 439 100 total asylum applicants (i.e. including repeat applicants), 426 000 (97 %) were first time applicants (“Asylum quarterly report”, Eurostat, accessed July 17, 2017, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_quarterly_report).

¹² Farid Hafez, “Shifting borders: Islamophobia as common ground for building pan-European right-Wing unity,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 48, Issue 5, 2014.

¹³ Dieter Rucht and Simon Teune, “The Pegida Brand: A Right-Wing Populist Success Product”, *Understanding Pegida in Context*, London: Social Europe, 2015, p. 12.

the 1950s, there is something distinctive about this new wave of xenophobia targeting Muslims. According to Hafez, nowadays 'religion and not race becomes the principal criterion for drawing borders between identities'.¹⁴ In other words, a Muslim with German citizenship might be perceived as 'the other' due to his religious affiliation. Again, following Hafez, 'the term 'race' is replaced by the modern-day term 'culture'.¹⁵

The recent influx of immigrants to Europe brought some other features in this process of othering Muslims. As many immigrants come from the Middle East and countries with a Muslim majority, in the public discourse immigrants (who are mostly come as refugees) became often equal to Muslims without further division into different subgroups or without regard to religious minorities in the Middle East. This very alarming tendency for generalization can be seen in further statements made by members of some political parties. In spring 2016, the right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD), has declared at its party conference in Stuttgart that Islam has no role to play in Germany. Among other measures, the AfD leadership voted to 'adopt a controversial new manifesto that calls for a ban on minarets, veils for women and the Muslim call to prayer'.¹⁶

At the same time, the National Front, a right-wing party in France, calls for protectionist economic policies, reduce government benefits for those immigrants that are already in France (including health care) and heavily cut the number of immigrants that are allowed to enter the country.¹⁷ The current leader of the party, Marin Le Pen, has a long history of protesting

¹⁴ Hafez, "Shifting borders: Islamophobia as common ground for building pan-European right-Wing unity," p. 481.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Huggler, Justin, "Far right AfD party says Muslims not welcome in Germany," The Telegraph, May 1, 2016, accessed April 13, 2017, <https://goo.gl/4MdVqY>.

¹⁷ Aisch, Gregor, Adam Pearce, and Bryant Rousseau, "How Far Is Europe Swinging to the Right?", The New York Times, May 22, 2016, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://goo.gl/aEfE5C>.

against the perceived Islamization of France. In 2010, she protested the image of Muslims worshipping in the streets: 'there are no tanks, no soldiers, but it is still an occupation, and it weighs on people'.¹⁸ As runner-up to the race for the French Presidency in 2017 her rhetoric is clearly in the mainstream.¹⁹

Considering the electoral potential of Islamophobia in Europe and that nationalism is not an attractive label to have, patriotism can be used as a safe refuge in the political discourse.²⁰

Patriotism, which is usually defined simply as 'a love of country', is often entirely tapping into peoples' emotions and is therefore hard to tabulate as a political force. The very idea of belonging to one place or country cannot be easily defined so what makes one's ties to the country so strong and so special? Is it the matter of being born in a particular place? Or is the primary factor linked to being raised in a specific community? Can one become a patriot by only sharing distinct political views? Or is the connection cemented through national culture and past? The ways might be different and the attachment can form through not only being loyal to one's country's policies, but also to its culture, language, nature and all the things that surround the person and the community s/he she lives in.

As a phenomenon that is mostly based on immaterial feelings, patriotism is a blurry concept.²¹ Not having a single generally accepted understanding, the term can be easily twisted in favor

¹⁸ "France: Marine Le Pen goes on trial over Muslim remarks", BBC News, October 20, 2015, accessed July 15, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34580169>.

¹⁹ Aisch, Gregor, Adam Pearce, and Bryant Rousseau, "How Far Is Europe Swinging to the Right?"

²⁰ Although there are different conceptions about what distinguishes patriotism from nationalism, the most common is the one from G. Orwell. He argues that nationalism is aggressive, strives to 'secure more power and more prestige' and a nationalist wants power not for himself but 'for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality', whereas patriotism is peaceful and means a devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people' G. Orwell, 1968, p. 372.

²¹ George Kateb, *Patriotism and Other Mistakes*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.

of political forces.²² Indeed, this amorphous characteristic of patriotism has been used in order to achieve certain political goals.²³

Argument of Protection

Patriotism by nature constitutes a relationship between a patriot and a patria, the place on the map or an imagined community that a patriot loves. No matter what kind of model of patriotism is used, one ground idea unites all models of patriotism, as it lays in the very heart of the concept.²⁴ This is the idea of protecting the country, as patriotism – the love of country – is inevitably connected to the idea of protection the object of love. This is exactly the point, where patriotism and Islamophobia, argument of protection and mechanisms of scapegoating coincide. To understand how patriotism according to Pegida justifies Islamophobia, it is important to look on how Pegida supporters see *patria* that they have to protect.

Protection carries a very powerful message. We would argue that the instinct of protection is one of the strongest that a person can have. Starting from being a form of caring for our dear ones, it can be also extrapolated to a bigger abstract entity, becoming a form of caring about one's country. Protection also lies in the very heart of idea of patriotism. To love one's country and to 'die or kill' for it inevitably means to protect it.

The theme of 'protection' has different dimensions in the Pegida

²² For instance, in Russia, pro-Kremlin agents are usually called 'patriots' and they generally share traditionalist-conservative views. Due to that, they are often opposed to liberal forces seen as symbols of Russian liberal defeatism. (Elena Chebankova, "Competing Ideologies of Russias Civil Society", *Europe-Asia Studies* 67 (2) (2015).)

²³ Kateb, *Patriotism and Other Mistakes*.

²⁴ See following authors for further information on different models of patriotism: moderate patriotism (Stephen Nathanson, "In Defense of 'Moderate Patriotism'." *Ethics* 99 (3) (1989): 535–52; cosmopolitan patriotism (Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots." *Critical Inquiry* 23 (3) (1997): 617–39); patriotism of best tradition (Lawrence Blum, "Best traditions patriotism." *School Field* 5 (1) (2007): 61–68); civic patriotism (Cécile Laborde, "From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism." *British Journal of Political Science* 32 (04) (2002): 591–612).

discourse. Depending on the threats that are posed to the patria, protection can be needed against bad politicians, economic crisis and against uncontrolled immigration. The variety of threats depends on the current news and therefore the discourse can vary from time to time. However, Islam as a threat is always present and, thus, the call for protection of the patria. After all, following Pegida supporters, if politicians are not taking care of it, who will defend our country if not us?

Where is Patria?

Islamophobia can reveal itself not only through the statement that Muslims present a threat to Europe. It can also be in the very core of the image of patria for patriots from Pegida. To see that, it might be useful to examine what and where is patria for Pegida supporters.

Talking about Europe, one has first to pin it down on the map.²⁵ Today Europe is mainly understood as a political entity. Different adjectives are used to describe it: prosperous, successful, innovative. However, all of them reflect an assumed level of political or social development. As a center of power and a continent with many ambitious countries, it has a long history of wars. Today, united under the supra-national body of the European Union, Europe is a strong player on the international arena.²⁶ In this context, right-wing movements are usually Eurosceptic: they tend to describe Europe not through a political agenda, but rather as a place with a common history. This was also expected in the case of Pegida. However, according to the results of discourse analysis, posts and comments by Pegida on social media do not include a wide description of where exactly lay Europe's borders. Geography is not the main factor for defining Europe, in other words. Rather,

²⁵ Europe is expected to be the patria for Pegida supporters, as in their name they call themselves 'European Patriots'. However, in the discourse patria often shifts from pan-national to national level (Germany) and back.

²⁶ Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, Lynne Rienner, 2005.

Pegida's discourse on Europe is closely linked to their current political agenda and current political problems. Due to the ongoing wave of migration, and the fact that Pegida is a movement strictly against immigration to Germany, Pegida defines Europe as consisting itself within the borders of the EU. This definition has a political meaning, but also shows which countries are considered as European and which are not.

'Fortress Europe'

Since the political aspect is one of the most important in Pegida's definition of Europe, and, as Pegida demands restrictions on the number of refugees coming to Europe, the concept of 'Fortress Europe' (*Festung Europa*), which does not have inner borders, but has strong control on the external borders, prevail throughout the comments posted on Pegida's social media page:

Since Europe don't have inner borders we all have to protect our external borders at Mediterranean! Otherwise everyone can come to Germoney [Germoney consists of two words: 'Germany' and 'money'. It is being used often in the discourse and refers to the idea that many immigrants come to Germany not for refuge, but for social benefits only]!²⁷

Amazing, very good, I have a good feeling that we will manage to build a fortress around the whole Europe to stop this invasion of the Islam faith.²⁸

Close our borders finally! Enough is enough! And we will never let them be open ever again!²⁹

The land that cannot protect its borders, is ruled by a bunch of

²⁷ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 23, 2017 (7:45 pm), accessed July 27, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

²⁸ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, January 30, 2017 (10:59 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

²⁹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 11, 2017 (07:09 am), accessed July 24, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

unqualified politicians. We have to protect our borders!³⁰

Please donate more! [to the Identitarian Movement] Donate, donate, donate until it will be enough for a submarine. That is for a good purpose.

OUR SECURITY IS BEING DEFENDED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN!³¹

According to these comments, Europe is seen as an entity of states with no internal borders but very protected external ones that are making Europe into a fortress. Inside this fortress, Europe consist of sovereign states and, if Europe cannot protect its external borders, the states should protect their borders accordingly:

The Australians, who can protect their external borders, don't need the borders within the country. As long as Europe is not able to protect its external borders, it should 'exercise' with the smaller borders [within Europe]³².

I wish good luck to all German and European patriots in fighting against the invaders in the coming years in German/ European soil! God with us and no step back³³.

The last comment shows one of the peculiarities of Pegida's discourse on Europe: national and pan-national levels are often mixed and interlinked with each other, and European identity is mentioned in the same sentence as national.

This way of describing Europe might happen if people do not have a stable image of Europe and it might be hard for them to answer the question of '*How do I imagine Europe?*' Being a self-evident certainty, 'Europe' is easier to define by extrapolating national concepts further to pan-European level: '*all German*

³⁰ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 14, 2017 (05:15 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

³¹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 14, 2017 (05:57 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

³² Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, May 13, 2017 (08:12 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

³³ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, April 18, 2017 (06:00 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

and European patriots [...] in German/European soil' (Europe and Germany are basically equal in this comment).

'Fortress Europe' is used not only by Pegida supporters in the comments but also it is one of the most widely used hashtags in the community. Any news, which is related to the demand of closing or strengthening the borders, which is posted in the community, is complemented by the following hashtags: #FortressEurope, #FestungEuropa and #GrenzenDicht (*Borders Impenetrable*).

Christianity

Not only borders (physical or abstract) can define one place and people that live in it. Perhaps, it is necessary to adopt an idea that will unite the population found within the fortress, reducing their differences in order to assure solidarity. At the national level, it can be a national idea or an imaginary community that serves this purpose.³⁴ However, on a pan-national European level, more general ideas are needed to secure unity.³⁵

Common faith, which unites people, while differentiating them from others, is one of the ways for creating a pan-national community. The idea of Europe as a solely Christian entity where there is no place for Islam has been present in the discourse for centuries.³⁶ It can also be adopted nowadays by different movements.

In the discourses of Pegida, however, Europe is rarely described literally as 'Christian'. There are few comments like the following one, which points out discrimination and danger Christians face nowadays:

We have a persecution of Christians in the middle of Germany!³⁷

However, such comments do not represent the major trend in the

³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 2006.

³⁵ Étienne Balibar, *We, the people of Europe?: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.

³⁶ Christopher Allen, *Islamophobia*, Ashgate, 2010, p. 30.

³⁷ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 15, 2017 (09:51 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

discourse. The idea of Europe being 'Christian' implies through Islamophobic ideas, such as a statement that Islam does not belong to Europe.³⁸

Against the Islamization of the Occident

Another way to unify European patriots is to unite them not for, but against something. Thus, a claim that Islam does not belong to Europe might be a good way to induce unification, without implications about European Christianity. In other words, unification is built around rejection of Islam and not around highlighting (or even mentioning) religious affiliation of Europeans.

The Orient has a long history of representation in the Christian West. According to Edward Said, for the first-time Orientalism was mentioned in 1312 in the decision of the Church Council of Vienna.³⁹ Over time, conceptions of the Orient have been changing.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, in the US the 'greater circulation of Orientalist ideas is directly linked to the war on terror and the emergence of the security state'.⁴⁰ This tendency can be also seen in Europe. European Orientalism takes the form of destructive Islamophobia. It 'treats the Orient not as a separate geographical region but as a problem located – owing to Europe's growing Muslim minority population – within the boundaries of Europe (the Occident) itself'.⁴¹

This approach brings 'the Middle East from the Middle East directly to European realities', increasing the opposition between the Orient and the Occident by clashing them with each other in one space. As Fekete shows, a 'growing number of European 'scholars' in social sciences, terrorist studies, anthropology and

³⁸ Another way of doing it is to use specific concepts while describing Europe that have already a certain meaning within, such as 'Occident' for example (usually in the opposition to 'Orient').

³⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon, 1978.

⁴⁰ Liz Fekete, *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*, London: Pluto, 2009, p. 193.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

related fields are daily paraded in the media as impartial experts on Europe's Muslim minorities'.⁴² As Orientalist experts of the 19th century essentialised the people of the East, social sciences nowadays homogenize growing Muslim minorities in Europe, seeing them as a problem, rather as citizens or people.⁴³

Another important detail in the representation of Muslims in Europe is the recent turn to more explicit Islamophobic tones when discussing migrants. Even though the first Muslim migration to Europe took place in the late 1950s and reflected many ups and downs, such as integration debates and the conservative turn in 1970s and the Balkan wars in 1990s, after September 2001 the discourse started to take a more and more radical position.⁴⁴ European states started to revise their ways of handling non-Muslim communities. Fears of 'Islamism', badly articulated by politicians, and "the problems of a Muslim 'underclass' allowed for the diverse problems of communities of different national and ethnic origin to be collapsed into the problem of integrating a homogenized category of migrants characterized solely by their religion (and a supposed common culture)".⁴⁵ That also led to the reshaping of popular racism. On the one hand, 'the institutionalization of anti-Muslim racism within criminal justice systems and citizenship laws made the political Islamophobia of the extreme-right respectable'.⁴⁶

On the other hand, the basic idea about Islam as a religion that does not belong to Europe has been sharpened and became part of the daily agenda of many right-wing politicians. Hungarian prime-minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to the German magazine *Focus* that the influx of immigrants into Europe was

⁴² Ibid., p. 194.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 193.

⁴⁴ According to Fekete, in the post-war period racism 'period adopted the form of a generalized anti-immigrant discourse and, for racist movements, the color, or the 'alienness' of the foreigner was much more important than their faith' (Fekete, *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*, p. 194).

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 194.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

a means to impose Islam on an otherwise purely Christian continent: 'Islam has never been part of Europe, it came to us'.⁴⁷ Orban further stressed that '*spiritually*, Islam was never part of Europe. It's the rulebook of another world'.⁴⁸

Spiritual reasons might not be the most prominent way of claiming that Islam does not belong to Europe. However, the very idea of Europe as a place historically devoid of Islam, became very popular in right-wing parties and movements. Pegida introduced this idea from the very beginning of its foundation – in the name of the movement – Patriotic Europeans *against Islamization* of the Occident. Therefore, a binary opposition between Europeans and Muslims has been created.⁴⁹

Although the first part —the idea of Europe as a Christian entity— is not often discussed in social media or during the demonstrations (first of all, due to the fact that not all Pegida supporters consider themselves Christians), the idea of Islam as something that can not belong to Europe is prevailing both on social media and in the interviews. Comments on social media often take the following trajectory:

Islam catapults us, Europeans, right into the Middle Ages.⁵⁰

And I don't want any Muslim women, who want to make German an Islamic state!⁵¹

⁴⁷ Tom Porter, "Migrant crisis: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban claims Islam 'was never part of Europe'." *International Business Times UK*. October 16, 2015, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/migrant-crisis-hungarian-prime-minister-viktor-orban-claims-islam-was-never-part-europe-1524385>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Pegida is not the first right-wing political force that protests against possible Islamization of Europe. Hence, the neofascist party Golden Dawn (founded in 1980), that came to international attention in 2012 when it entered the Greek Parliament for the first time, winning 18 seats, is planning to 'make numerous protests around the country' against 'Islamization of Greece' (Gregor Aisch, Adam Pearce and Bryant Rousseau, "How Far Is Europe Swinging to the Right?"). See also article in this issue.

⁵⁰ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, April 12, 2017 (11:05 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵¹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 2, 2017 (01:39 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>.

They make Europe Islamic, that's their goal, they want to turn us into slaves. [...] AGAINST THE ISLAMISATION OF EUROPE!⁵²

The whole Islamic crap with headscarves, knives, suicide attacks, child abusers and child molesters, rapes and their bloody book doesn't belong to Europe... basta.⁵³

This makes me sick, this is Islam, the cult of the devil.⁵⁴

And then some ultra idiots say that Islam belongs to Europe. Some pedophiles in the well-known political party will like this idea.⁵⁵

In these comments, there is no mentioning of Christianity. Therefore, the idea of Europe being non-Islamic lies not in the sphere of religion, but rather in the sphere of culture and moral values. The common discourse on Islamization does not imply European Christianity, although being very harsh: *'the cult of the devil', 'Islam catapults [...] right into the Middle Ages', 'headscarves, knives, suicide attacks, child abusers and child molesters, rapes and their bloody book doesn't belong to Europe.* That shows that the amount of people who are concerned about Islamization as a process of religious transformation might be significantly lower as it might seem at the first glance. However, some Pegida supporters are very alarmed about a possible construction of mosques, as, according to them, they are not part of their culture. However, most of the comments do not include culture or other reasons to not have a mosque in the argumentation:

We don't need mosques and we will fight against them.⁵⁶

⁵² Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, April 6, 2017 (01:54 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵³ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, June 8, 2017 (00:08 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵⁴ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 25, 2017 (10:49 pm), accessed July 26, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵⁵ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 26, 2017 (02:03 am), accessed July 26, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵⁶ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 9, 2016 (7:10 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

Mosques and ‘unions’ must be banned! Laicism instead of Islamism!⁵⁷

There are also concerns about a possibility for Islam to become a state religion:

Well, Islam is not simply a one more state religion, it is a competitive state system, which is not compatible with us. It cannot provide us with religious freedom, for example.⁵⁸

These concerns prove that the Pegida supporters do not fear Islam as a religion but as a part of a different culture, which they cannot accept and which they fear will repress them. Culture, as a part of our life, surrounds us, it became vital for us, ‘like unacknowledged water to a fish, or the oxygen we breathe’.⁵⁹ It has a very strong influence over us, even in the way we behave or think.⁶⁰

The fact that Europe might lose its Europeanness and become Muslim with the construction of more mosques, influenced by a different culture, different traditions, is unacceptable to respondents. In reaction, they go to demonstrations organized by patriotic groups.

Proof by Negation

Another set of definitions for Europe can be found in the analysis of the discourse on refugees/migrants. Generally, the portrayal of Europe and Europeans has not changed since Pegida has been

⁵⁷ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 9, 2016 (7:48 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵⁸ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 23, 2016 (05:18 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁵⁹ Vognar, David. “How Important Is Culture in Shaping Our Behavior?” The Huffington Post, August 1, 2012, accessed July 15, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-vognar/culture-influence-politics-life-_b_1724750.html.

⁶⁰ A well-known psychologist and neuroscientist Merlin Donald has argued that language and culture have great influence on human brain and even human brain structure. Whereas competitive stress and social facilitation of learning do not affect brain in many ways, symbols and culture have a direct access into the brain of a human being and impact the development of our brains (Merlin Donald, *A Mind so Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness*, New York: Norton, 2001).

active. Crucially, as movements try to always be in the spotlight and to react to different problems and events that are happening in their home country and abroad, Pegida is not an exception. In this regard, depending on the agenda, its rhetoric might be more Islamophobic, more xenophobic, targeting refugees or referring to possible terrorists among Muslims. Therefore, Pegida has to stay 'flexible' in order to attract as many supporters as possible. The result is we more and more characterize Europe through the way some parties oppose 'the problems', e.g. Muslims, refugees or terrorists, patriots face.

As mentioned above, Pegida emerged as a movement against the perceived Islamization of the Occident, a direct response to the increasing immigration flow to Germany. Therefore, from all the problems facing Germany, Pegida supporters' use of anti-refugee rhetoric (inevitably connected to Islamophobia more generally) is the most important.⁶¹

Usually, right-wing populist movements use five elements to frame immigrants as national/cultural threats: First, for the radical right, immigrants are a threat to ethno-national identity, including its cultural heritage; second, they are perceived as a major cause of criminality and other kinds of social insecurity; third, most often they are seen as a cause of unemployment; fourth, they are abusers of the generosity of the welfare states of Western democracies, which results in fewer state subsidies, etc., for natives; and fifth, they can even pose a threat to national security, as some of them might be terrorists.⁶² All of these five elements can be seen in the argumentation of Pegida.

This way of describing Europe includes a characterization of 'the others'. The designation of migrants as "others" is widely based

⁶¹ The reasons are not only Muslims, refugees or terrorists, that are mentioned above, but also Merkel's politics, economic situation and Greek crisis in Eurozone and Brussels bureaucracy (Catrin Nye, "Pegida: Why Is The Populist Right on the Rise In Germany?" in *Understanding Pegida in Context*, 4–6. London: Social Europe, 2015).

⁶² Jens Rydgren, "The Sociology of the Radical Right," *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (1) (2007).

on various stereotypes and prejudices that borderline neo-racist. Such rhetoric has reportedly led to the ethnicization of politics.⁶³ As Brigitte Beuzamy writes, 'there is a tendency to overgeneralize while reifying cultural elements' (such as forms of social or family structure), which are associated with ethnicity.⁶⁴ Usually, these elements are simply presented as 'the Others', traditionally Arabs or Turks, but recently also defined as Africans or Muslims more generally.⁶⁵ The extent to which specific groups are emphasized depends on which ethnic group is most represented in the country).⁶⁶ Observing the wide usage of these stereotypes leads us to identify an underlying neo-racist current in European political discourse, all of which is grounded on the stress on cultural differences between Europeans and Muslim others.⁶⁷

Ethno-National Identity Under Threat

Seeing Muslims as an ethno-national threat to Europe is probably not the most popular argument among Pegida supporters in Germany. Mainly, this argument is seen as a demonstration of pure racism, something the movement's leaders wish to avoid. However, undercover, this argument appears in Pegida's discourse and might be used as a good indicator of how radical Pegida actually is today. Indeed, it is safe to argue that the more often racist references to Muslims appear during demonstrations

⁶³ A process, when ethnic identities are transformed into legitimate political topics and thus enter political discussions and become part of politics (Brigitte Beuzamy, "Explaining the Rise of the Front National to Electoral Prominence: Multi-Faceted or Contradictory Models?" in *Right-Wing Populism in Europe*. Politics and Discourse, ed. Ruth Wodak, et al., London: Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 177–89.)

⁶⁴ Beuzamy, "Explaining the Rise of the Front National to Electoral Prominence: multi-Faceted or contradictory models?", 185.

⁶⁵ For more information on xenophobia in the German context, see a book of Angelika Magiros, *Kritik der Identität*, Münster, 2004.

⁶⁶ Beuzamy, "Explaining the Rise of the Front National to Electoral Prominence: multi-Faceted or contradictory models?", p. 186.

⁶⁷ Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1) (1999).

and on social media, the more radical the supporters of Pegida have become.

Usually, this argument puts Europe in a binary opposition between those who are not of European origin and self-asserted “Europeans.” The reification of the opposition seems especially prevalent among seemingly normal people, who might be puzzled by the influx of so much diversity and are not ready to see their country change:

I was today in Offenbach for a work trip: totally shocking, Merkel accomplished her goal, Germans are now foreign in their own country, 70% migrants, unbelievable, everyone is black eyed and black haired, BLOND are now on the way to extinction in Germany!⁶⁸

[...] in Ruhr area Germans hardly go out on the streets in the evenings and in Hamburg the same. When you go shopping in the weekend market you think that one is in Istanbul, one cannot understand a single word. [...]⁶⁹

A swimming pool only for women? Ridiculous! So not German! [...] Enough with that. Everyone has the same right to be able to swim!⁷⁰

However, this concern can be upgraded from the level of daily life (*‘when you go shopping in the weekend market’*) to a more general problem affecting the entire nation: *Germans are now foreign in their own country*. That, in its turn, can lead to the desire to keep Germany for Germans:

The borders in Germany must be secured as Fortress Europe. Otherwise Germany won't be German anymore.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, January 9, 2017 (11:07 pm), accessed 15 July 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>.

⁶⁹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, January 12, 2017 (07:18 pm), accessed 15 July 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>.

⁷⁰ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, July 1, 2017 (11:48 pm), accessed 15 July 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>.

⁷¹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, March 19, 2016 (5:34 pm), accessed 10 February 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>.

This call to keep Germany German demonstrates the high level of nationalism among Pegida supporters. However, we can also extrapolate from this call to mean all of Europe (as there is a concept 'Fortress Europe' used in the same line). As such, such rhetoric found in social media communications are good examples of how in contemporary Europe, seemingly old, unstable and fragmented national identities can mix with pan-national, European ones.⁷² On the other hand, this also assumes that other countries must equally strive to remain 'pure' in face of the onslaught of Muslim migrants. All Europeans must work to stay European. What this notion of European means, of course, is quite different depending on one's views.

Sometimes, the nationalistic rhetoric, which is typical also for right-wing populist movements, becomes extreme, when participants begin to refer to the situation in Germany as constituting a genocide of Germans and, at the same time, extrapolating it again to the pan-national level:

The weapons should be given to bio-German warriors. I'm ready to do something for my country. They will not be able to just get rid of me this way.⁷³

The traitor Merkel lets millions of terrorists, African rapists and Islamic killing bands into the country, because she needs terror. Why does our government need terror? [...] Ethnicity inversion [Umvolkung]. Europeans stand on the way. We are too rebellious, too disobedient, too intelligent and too dominant (please compare cultural achievements like Beethoven, Bach etc. or technology of Europeans, e.g. space travel and satellites etc. with the mud huts of the Africans). The elite wishes however a race of slaves, therefore: ethnicity inversion!⁷⁴

⁷² Cillia, Rudolf De, Martin Reisingl, and Ruth Wodak. "The Discursive Construction of National Identities." *Discourse & Society* 10 (2) (1999): 3.

⁷³ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, June 4, 2017 (11:52 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁷⁴ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, October 11, 2016 (07:00 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

Merkel knows that there will be protests soon [...] therefore she lets terror into the country, so she will have a reason, to crush every (!!) protest with a brutal military violence (ask yourself on whos side will the army be – I say CAREFULL... there are lots of Afghans, Arabs and Muslims in our army – they will gladly shoot us, dirty ‘nonbelievers’).⁷⁵

The use of such words as ‘ethnicity inversion, ‘bio-German warriors’, ‘race of slaves’, ‘traitor Merkel’ is typical of racist discourse and proves that Pegida’s program on Europe is closely connected to racism. In such comments, the concerns for the larger nation usually prevails, indicating a level of nationalism otherwise misconstrued in the literature. However, it also might show how Pegida supporters imagine Europe. Clearly, they see it as a community of national states, where all states are different but share a common need to remain ethnically pure by remaining free from Islam and refugees. However, a use of simplified nationalistic motifs (Germany for Germans) and conspiracy theories (the elite wishes a race of slaves), along with such observations as ‘blond now is on the way to extinction’, is typical of extreme right-wing discourses. These comments provide a vivid picture to anyone who reads the conversations registered on social media and may give some legitimacy to future actions against ‘invaders’. Interestingly, these discourses reveal themselves only in the uncensored comments on Facebook, but neither in the official publications done by Pegida leaders nor during demonstrations.

European Culture and Values are Under Threat

Another popular argument that is closely tied with previous ones is the allegation that Muslims threaten European culture and European values. Partly, this argument has already been examined above in the discussion about Islamization. However, the allegation is not only Islam threatens Europe. Refugees that

⁷⁵ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, October 11, 2016 (07:00 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

are coming primarily from Muslim countries are seen as a threat to Europe, its culture, order and tradition. However, Muslims are seen not only as people of Islamic faith but also as uneducated, lazy, and sometimes criminal people who come to Europe for social benefits and do not want to integrate as they are opposed to Europe and European culture. Therefore, the following binary is often evident: Europe=culture/Muslims=barbarism. This binary opposition allows us to talk about the neo-racial feature of this discourse as it is grounded not in the stress of racial (like racism), but cultural differences. Racism is usually based on hierarchical construction of group of people ('Europeans' and 'Muslims', rarely 'Europeans' and 'Arabs') and can be institutionalized as a discriminatory social practice.⁷⁶

The neo-racial discourse can be explicitly seen in the following examples:

Well, in the article it says that there is 10% of Muslims in France so far. That means that the destiny of the country is already clear. The more I read about Islam the happier I become about the Islamophobic politics of my country and even of the Eastern Europe. It's really a shame to import terrorism in the country. And it is really sad that Germany (if it will not change itself) will end up like France/Sweden. Ps. I am from Slovakia (so that you don't think that your country [Germany] pursues the Islamophobic policy)⁷⁷.

Even the crusades were merely a reaction to the decades of attempts by the Arabs to conquer Europe. It is astonishing that these people have been giving us their losses for 1000 years. The price for this is their overwhelming fate to remain culturally in the Middle Ages.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism: European Perspectives".

⁷⁷ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, February 3, 2017 (12:50 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁷⁸ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, October 10, 2016 (9:44 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

Now it is too late for such conclusions. The Arabs cannot be assimilated into the western society.⁷⁹

Rhetorically, what is meant by national (Germany) is often mixed with pan-European. Sometimes Pegida puts all European nations under the umbrella concept of ‘Europeans’, saying:

We Europeans have to stick together. We need to protect our future, we must fight for our destiny to keep it our destiny. For this, keep your courage, your strength and your health day after day. We must not lose our faith in the conservative values such as homeland, family and work. Our creed is Christianity, and this is something we are not accountable to anyone.⁸⁰

This is one of the few examples when Pegida names openly European values as something in need of protection from foreign cultures. European values, according to Pegida, are conservative and presented as associated with a ‘homeland’, ‘family’ and ‘work’ – words that are self-evident to everyone. This way of describing values through the evocation of essential key concepts is very common in the conservative and counter-modernization rhetoric widely used by many central and extreme right political forces.⁸¹ Constructive strategies are used here again (*we Europeans; we need; we must fight; our creed*) to create a community, this time not on national, but on European level.

Social and National Security Threats

Muslims are often seen also as a major cause of social insecurity within Germany and larger “fortress Europe.” Some Muslims might abuse the social benefits offered by the state whereas others might

⁷⁹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, March 22, 2016 (7:06 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁸⁰ A post on PegidaHungary Facebook Page (a letter to German PEGIDA members and all German Patriots), April 12, 2015 (4:09 pm), accessed April 12, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/PegidaHungary/>

⁸¹ Cillia, et al. “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” p. 4.

be involved in criminal activities. Between these two complaints, the latter about criminality is used to indirectly describe the state in Europe more generally. One more threat to Europe now according to Pegida, is terrorism. Although Rydgren distinguishes between social and national security threats,⁸² they are examined together here because today these two arguments (about criminality and terrorism) are closely linked. Indeed, both criminality and terrorism are used to describe Europe in a similar way by creating an opposition Europe/danger (Europe=safe / Muslims=danger).

Generally, Europe is perceived by Pegida as a safe place largely immune from criminality. Originally, the argument that Muslims coming to Europe threatened its security was not among the most popular of Pegida's positions in autumn 2014. At that time, economic concerns prevailed among Europeans. However, after the Charlie Hebdo shooting in early 2015, Pegida started widely to claim that Muslims might be dangerous for European society.⁸³ This argument, in addition to a fear that spread among Europeans proved a good trigger. The first demonstration after the Charlie Hebdo events numbered more than 25,000 people, which was the largest demonstration since the establishment of Pegida.⁸⁴ After ten months, attacks in Paris in November 2015 brought the issue of security back into the spotlight. Generally, every terrorist attack involving Muslims (or even just migrants who might be Muslims⁸⁵)

⁸² Jens Rydgren, "The Sociology of the Radical Right".

⁸³ Simon Shuster, "Charlie Hebdo' Tragedy Creates Momentum for German Right Wing", *Time*, January 8, 2015, accessed July 15, 2017, <http://time.com/3659679/charlie-hebdo-german-right-wing/>.

⁸⁴ Lynch, Dennis, "Dresden's PEGIDA Movement: How Germany's Anti-Muslim Protesters Are Using Charlie Hebdo To Recruit Followers", *International Business Times*, January 14, 2015, accessed July 15, 2017, <http://www.ibtimes.com/dresdens-pegida-movement-how-germanys-anti-muslim-protesters-are-using-charlie-hebdo-1782442>.

⁸⁵ For example, an incident in Berlin metro station, when a woman was pushed down the stairs by a group of young men, who were thought to be Muslims due to their appearance, but turned out to be Bulgarians after being caught. ("Man arrested for kicking woman down Berlin U-Bahn stairs", *The Local*, December 19,

contributed to the increase in the level of fear and thus corresponded to the intensification of this Islamophobic rhetoric. Indeed, it can be seen how criminalization as threat to social security is conjoined with references to terrorism, a threat to national security. Here, it does not matter what type of crime a migrant commits, if the perpetrator is a terrorist, a pickpocket or a drunk man who assaults women the association is the same:

The biggest part of ‘refugees’ is anyways criminals or even terrorists. Therefore, are they not staying in Syria, where they did not succeed and where their bands were hunted and persecuted. They come to Europe to fight further.⁸⁶

Criminals from all over the world – come to Germany! Here you’ll get a social status, because we will care that you’ll not be persecuted for your crimes back in your home country. Germany needs you as a workforce.⁸⁷

You’ll see when the time will come – a big part of the ‘new’ asylum seekers were previously members of Taliban.⁸⁸

Islam means terrorism in the country – so let’s get rid of it!⁸⁹

Islam should be banned in Europe as a terror sect!⁹⁰

2016, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.de/20161219/man-arrested-for-kicking-woman-down-berlin-u-bahn-stairs>).

⁸⁶ Comment on Pegidaevofficial, July 18, 2017 (02:23 pm), accessed July 24, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>.

⁸⁷ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, April 27, 2017 (12:48 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁸⁸ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, April 27, 2017 (12:21 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁸⁹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, February 3, 2017 (03:22 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁹⁰ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, February 3, 2017 (8:35 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

Only Muslims can give up and welcome terrorism.⁹¹

All these Muslims coming here are just criminals!⁹²

This simplified logic that presents all refugees as Muslims and all Muslims in their turn as terrorists is one of the most popular ways of commenting the news on Pegida's social media pages. Some of the comments (for example, '*All these Muslims coming here are just criminals!*') are written with this mentality, like Muslims have an innate defect or behavioral problem. Another way of expressing stereotypes is modified: '*Only Muslims can give up and welcome terrorism*'. It is not clear whether the author supports the statement that all Muslims support terrorists, but this information is already given implicitly to the reader.

Among all the ways to portray Muslims, and, through them, Europe, this might contain the biggest amount of prejudices and therefore might be the most alarming, as these stereotypes and misbeliefs, articulated in discourses, are also rising to a political level and can possibly influence political decisions.⁹³

Being a populist movement and aiming to attract as many people as possible, Pegida uses oversimplified logical schemes in its rhetoric. This opposition between Europe and Muslims, where the former is safe and the latter is dangerous, might lead to very alarming consequences. If Muslims make Europe dangerous and if it is safe without them, then why should Europeans tolerate Muslims? The level of radicalism might vary, but the argumentation line remains very simple.

⁹¹ Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, June 8, 2017 (05:03 am), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁹² Comment on Pegidaevofficial Facebook Page, June 17, 2017 (10:35 pm), accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevofficial/>

⁹³ Cillia, et al., "The Discursive Construction of National Identities".

Conclusion

In this article, we have shown the ways in which patriotism is used to justify the spread of Islamophobia in Europe by Pegida and within right-wing discourse attendant to it. Using the basic argument of protection, which lays on the surface of patriotism and appears to be intuitively clear, Pegida supporters are calling for the exclusion of Muslims and Islam from Europe. The strategy for exclusion is presented on two different levels: first, Islamophobia is already located within the perception of their patria (whether it is Europe or their home country). Second, Muslims are seen as posing a number of important threats to the community. Hence, patriotism and the argument of protecting the patria appear as concurring and logically justify Islamophobia.

Patriotism, owing to its positive connotations, can be easily used by various right-wing movements to justify xenophobic, racist and nationalistic rhetoric, as it makes palatable a message that can be otherwise perceived as problematic. Therefore, critical deconstruction of this rhetoric is crucial to see its motive forces. First, the image of patria remains deliberately blurred. Pegida supporters rather envisage an imagined community of 'European patriots' than post an existence of a clearly defined patria with many specific characteristics. The very way of describing patria is basically through negation and aims to exclude Muslims from patria rather than to describe patria itself.

The strategy to justify Islamophobia as an expression of patriotism seems to be quite dangerous, as it presents a clear-cut schematic picture of the world which can be implemented by any right-wing populist movement for scapegoating any vulnerable group. The logic of justifying the othering of Muslims in Pegida discourse, closely connected to anti-immigrant rhetoric and xenophobia, as well as their calling for the protection of larger Europe can be extrapolated to other movements and political parties. As Pegida, such organizations throughout Europe make ample use of such simplistic arguments for their political goals.

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The Social Impact of Islamophobia on Muslims in the Netherlands

Leyla Yıldırım

ABSTRACT:

Islamophobia manifests itself in each European country in different forms. Similarly, each society has its own way of dealing with this problem. Bias towards Islam is a phenomenon which existed for centuries. After the 1990s it became increasingly pronounced, not only toward Muslims living outside Europe, but also Muslim minorities residing in the West. This article focuses on Islamophobic ideas popular in the Netherlands. Special attention will be given to how it is possible to differentiate between legitimate criticism of Islamic practices of some Muslims and Islamophobia. It also explores the social impact of Islamophobia on Muslims residing in the Netherlands. Furthermore, this article questions in which way the Muslims in the Netherlands are racialized and how they are presented as a group who don't belong to Europe because of their attitudes which differ from those of Europeans. Throughout this article we explore the concrete problems Muslims face in their daily life in the Netherlands due to Islamophobia. To this end, we provide a description of initiatives that aim to address this Islamophobia.

Introduction

The Netherlands' colonial past forced the Dutch to interact with Islam and Muslims in mostly indirect ways. This changed with the arrival of Muslim guest workers in the 1960s. These workers, mostly from North Africa at the time, still remained distant from Dutch citizens. Living in pensions set up by the government,

these Muslims were regarded as strangers from foreign countries who were living temporarily in Holland. In this setting, the Dutch demonstrated little interest in their guest workers' religious backgrounds. Things changed when these workers, in theory just temporarily residing in the Netherlands, by the 1980s became permanent residents and were allowed to bring their families to the country. In this process of reunifying migrant worker families, a once invisible community became visible to the Dutch people. In response, the WRR (Center for Scientific Advice for Government Policy) wrote in a 1979 report that Islam was now considered the Netherlands' second religion. Based on this, the government officially changed the status of these migrant Muslims from guest workers to immigrants who would have the right to stay permanently. Thus, a minority policy became necessary; the resulting policy aimed to integrate migrant Muslims into larger Dutch society. The new policies toward Muslim migrants gave them the fundamental right to live according to their own cultural heritage while also designed to make them full-fledged citizens.¹

In alignment with this change in policy the Dutch government followed many other European countries at the time and embraced multiculturalism. This sociopolitical model emerged as the *Minderheidsnota* (*Minority Bill*) of 1983. The decree promoted the creation of a multiethnic society that had as its goal the harmonious coexistence of an increasingly diverse population. Some have claimed that the main goal behind this policy was achieving the emancipation of disadvantaged minorities by way of securing for them equal opportunities.² Such a policy was not universally welcomed. Many criticized a social-political policy that promoted the integration of Muslim minorities by way of

¹ Jan Rath and Thijl Sunier, 'Angst voor de islam in Nederland?', in *Kritiek. Jaarboek voor socialistische discussie en analyse*, ed. Wim Bot, M. van der Linden and R. Went, Utrecht: Stichting Toestanden, 1993, pp. 53-62.

² Chris Allen, "Islamophobia and the Crises of Europe's Multiculturalism", in *New Multicultural Identities in Europe*, (ed.) E. Toguslu & J. Leman & I. M. Sezgin, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014, p 216.

expanding their role in larger society. As all this criticism also led to a larger discussion over the place of Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands, criticism of multiculturalism and the integration of immigrants turned into attacks on Islam and Muslims.³

In some ways, putting Islamophobia in the Netherlands in this historical context allows us to think of it as a new form of racism. Nearly every definition of Islamophobia considers it as “a specific form of racism against Muslims/Islam”. But the term is disputed among the Dutch political classes and in public debates. Opponents of this terminology claim that it is limited to a critique of Islamic religious and cultural practices. Condemning such criticism could lead to the suppression the freedom of opinion. As such, opponents of greater protections for Muslims do not consider their ‘attacks’ as a form of racism. Their claim stems from the fact that Islam is not a race but a religion.

What those who defend such opponents to these integration policies claim to be immune from accusations of racism ignore is the fact that ‘race’ is not only about biological existence but also embodies a social and/or cultural construction.⁴ Martijn de Koning underscored this when he warned that to define Islamophobia only as an anxiety lends legitimacy to the racialization of Muslims. In such a context, it practically legitimizes the increasing attacks on mosques and refugee camps that have plagued the Netherlands since the 1990s. What Martijn de Koning warns his readers of is the danger of rejecting Islamophobia as racism can lead to the intensification of hate speeches, attacks on Muslim places of worship and encourage supporters to expand the stigmatization

³ Ibrahim Kalin, “Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism”, in *Islamophobia, The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, (ed.) John.L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 4.

⁴ Mariska Jung, “Forgotten Women: The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Women in the Netherlands” 2016, ENAR, Brussels, http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/forgotten_women_report_netherlands_-_final.pdf (accessed 8 november 2016) p. 9. See also Floya Anthias, Nira Yuval-Davis, & Cain, H., *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-racist Struggle*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 10.

of Muslims. In the end, Islamophobia manifests most visible through the physical attacks on Muslims as a result of the speech of those opposing formal government policies seeking to integrate migrants into larger society.⁵

In this article, special attention will be given to the context of how criticizing Islam turned into Islamophobic attacks in the Netherlands. Additionally, the manner in which Muslims are racialized and how this impacts their daily life will be explored by analyzing some research on this topic.

The Context of Criticism against Islam and the Islamophobia in the Netherlands

Criticism towards immigrants with an Islamic background and the way Dutch society responded, both socially and legally, has changed over time. The focus of critics increasingly focused on the religious background of immigrants and became more strident. When in 1990 Janmaat (a Dutch MP at the time) protested against migration with his statement 'Full is Full' Dutch courts convicted him of committing acts of hate speech. He received fines and a conditional prison sentence for incitement to hate and discrimination against foreigners. However, recently Geert Wilders shouted similarly inflammatory statements during one of his party meetings. When asking his followers if they wanted fewer or more Moroccans in the city, the resounding response was "Fewer, fewer!" to which Wilders notoriously assured them that when in power, his party would "arrange that". Crucially, over time it is clear that such hate speech has become normalized. The larger public was not as shocked at Wilders' hate speech as with the case of Janmaat. The fact that Janmaat had actually been persecuted for incitement hate clearly demonstrates that from 1990 till today, most of the expressions about Muslims and Islam have become harsher. More importantly, this tolerance for anti-

⁵ Martijn de Koning, "Islamofobie is geen racisme want....moslims / islam zijn geen ras!", at <https://goo.gl/w9tWc9>, accessed 30-09-2016.

Muslim discourse is observed among all segments of society as well as political bodies.⁶

One partial explanation can be the application of Dutch law. Dutch criminal law only criminalizes the incitement of hatred and overt discrimination of people. People's religions or political orientations are not protected by the law.⁷ For example, a banner covered with anti-Islamic text aiming to insult Muslims was not found punishable under the law by Court of Cassation in 2010.⁸

How these courts react to incitements and discriminations has a close relation to the freedom of opinion which plays a prominent role in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, this becomes an opportunity for far-right parties and Islamophobes to spread their doctrine to large audiences without fear of legal regress. The freedom of speech, which is considered as a progressive concept, has now become a key tool in the legitimization of racism. Geert Wilders is perhaps the most notorious public figure using "free speech" to deflect the legal attempts to halt his openly racist politics. Perhaps ironically, because of the many trials brought against him, he presents himself as defender of the freedom of speech.

Although the term Islamophobia gained popularity only in 1997 with the report of Runnymede Trust,⁹ it had been used before 1997. Its meaning however did not correspond with the contemporary use of the term.¹⁰ In the Netherlands, this term only became a part of the Dutch discrimination jargon in 2008. At the time, numerous organizations actively reported cases of discrimination and noted an increase of discrimination against

⁶ Maurits S. Berger, "The Netherlands", in *The Oxford Handbook of European Islam*, ed. Jocelyne Cesari, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 200.

⁷ Ibid, p. 201.

⁸ Hoge Raad, 10 March 2009, LJN BF0655.

⁹ The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia A Challenge for Us All*, London: Runnymede Trust, 1997.

¹⁰ Chris Allen, *Islamophobia*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010, pp. 5-7; Naved Bakali, *Islamophobia Understanding Anti-Muslim Racism through the Lived Experiences of Muslim Youth*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016, pp. 11-12.

Muslims.¹¹ Some research about integration of different groups reported a less degree of integration of Muslims in society. This resulted, so the reports suggested, in the further stigmatization of ethnic groups with a Muslim background. The media, intellectuals and politicians played a role in this.¹²

Together they create negative stereotypical images of Muslims and Islam, presenting the faith of fellow Dutch citizens as an enemy of Western values. The most interesting point to draw from this process is that these images were not only advocated by members of the politically far-right, but also by liberals and leftists. In general, as Martijn de Koning has shown, after the World War II people were categorized differently. Categories that once catalogued biological differences were replaced by cultural ones. Importantly, it may be important to specify what these differences are between categories. To date, these differences are generalized across all individuals and are seen as logical, natural, and unchangeable.¹³

In the Netherlands, Frits Bolkestein (former leader of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy—VVD) had for the first time in the 90s openly raised the issue of Islam and Muslims. It was just after the fall of Berlin Wall, when furious debates about European identity started to take place. At this time, the idea of 'Islam as the new enemy' became widely propagated. The Secretary-General of NATO, for example, argued in an interview that "Islamic Fundamentalism" was the new enemy after communism and that

¹¹ Maurits S. Berger, "The Netherlands", p. 196.

¹² Some examples of these reports are: 'Monitoring Islamophobia in the Netherlands – an explorative study' is published by SPIOR, the platform for Islamic organizations in the Rijnmond area (Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond), October 2013, <https://goo.gl/GGE861>. Social Cultureel Plan bureau, 'Integratie in zicht? De integratie van migranten in Nederland op acht terreinen nader bekeken', Willem Huijnk & Iris Andriessen, Den Haag, 2016 <https://goo.gl/AEZ6HG>. (accessed on 4-05-2017). Van der Valk, I. 'Monitor Moslimdiscriminatie: derde rapportage', 2017 (accessed 01-05-2017).

¹³ Martijn de Koning, 'Islamofobie is geen racisme want....moslims / islam zijn geen ras!', at <https://goo.gl/kMzfp4>, accessed 30-09-2016.

it is a threat for the western civilization.¹⁴ Bolkestein embraced these associations with violence and Islam and propagated the assumption that Islam was the enemy of Western values and thus civilization. He constantly repeated these associations in speeches¹⁵ that vehemently asserted that liberalism could not survive in an Islamic environment.¹⁶ The primary method to make this point was the “otherness” of Islam that made Muslims incompatible with Dutch society. Islam was, according to him, the reason for the difficulties Muslims were having with integration.

We must notice here that the existence of anti-Islam parties, thinkers and politicians had always been a reality in Netherlands. What changed by the 1990s was these parties, once ignored and never enjoyed any significant popularity, suddenly gained new relevance. At a time when Muslims were not so visible in society, the politics of hate carried no weight. This changed, however, with the increasing visibility of terrorism in the world. In particular, it was the positioning of 9/11 that changed the situation, granting Islamophobic voices new popularity among Dutch people. Another politician and academic, Pim Fortuyn continued Bolkestein’s way, matching the rising public support with greater fanaticism. With Pim Fortuyn, most discussions about the integration of immigrants in Dutch society turned into discussions about their religious background. Islam, the religion which, according to Fortuyn, was a backward one, proved problematic in the Dutch context; what he called the Islamization of the Dutch society had to be stopped. As an example, he introduced a Dutch teacher who was homosexual and could not openly say this in class because he was afraid of the reaction of his Muslim pupils. Fortuyn’s strategic pitting of different “minority” groups in this fashion led to long public debates about Islam in the media. As many such pundits

¹⁴ Maurits S. Berger, *A Brief History of Islam in Europe, Thirteen Centuries of Creed, Conflict and Coexistence*, Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2014, p. 230.

¹⁵ see *Volkskrant* 12 september 1991.

¹⁶ Wasif. A. R. Shadid & Pieter S. van Koningsveld, *De mythe van het islamitische gevaar. Hindernissen bij integratie*, Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 1995, p.45.

using Islamophobia in Europe, Fortuyn utilized a discourse that associated the rising visibility of Muslims with a cultural threat. This discourse implied served as cover, disguising his racist hatred of Muslims with sociological assertions of the incompatibility of Islam and Western culture.¹⁷ The more prominent his campaign became, the more outrage (and support) he generated in the larger Dutch public.

In May 2002 Fortuyn was assassinated during the national election campaign by Volkert van de Graaf. De Graaf was an animal rights activist and presumably attacked Fortuyn for a much broader set of reasons. With his death, however, Islamophobia did not disappear. Indeed, Fortuyn himself has gained even greater popularity after his death and his ideas gaining even a larger audience.¹⁸

The atmosphere Fortuyn created made it easier for anti-Islam advocates and politicians like Geert Wilders to publicly expresses their ideas. After the death of Fortuyn, a general rigidification of opinions about Muslims/Islam occurred. Prior to Fortuyn the focus was merely on Islam and attempts to better integrate Muslims into larger society, or how to help them address social problems. Since, the dynamic of the political discourse has expanded beyond even Dutch men. Islamophobic discourse continued to expand into all segments of Dutch society, to the point when figures such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, from a Somali Muslim background, and member of the Labour Party (PvdA), emerged as the leading voice of the Islamophobic camp. Together with the film producer Theo van Gogh, Ayaan Hirsi Ali in a film entitled *Submission* offered an “insider” critique of Islam that focused on the treatment of women in Islam. The inflammatory film caused such an outrage that it led to the murder of Theo van Gogh in November 2004. Hereafter, Hirsi Ali

¹⁷ Anna-Esther Younes, “Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2015”, in Enes Bayrakli & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul: SETA, 2016, p.186.

¹⁸ <https://goo.gl/cKar53>, accessed 27-09-2016; and <https://goo.gl/Zo1YPq>, accessed 27-09-2016.

went in hiding under police protection, becoming in the process an icon for those advocating Islamophobic positions throughout the world. In this way, the murder of Theo van Gogh could be described as the Netherlands' 9/11. After his death, a series of arson attacks targeted mosques and Islamic schools. And as happened in the United States after 9/11, 2001, violent incidents against Muslims increased in Holland.

The assassination of Theo van Gogh and the focus of the media on violence in the Muslim world in terms of terrorism created a perfect climate for Geert Wilders to propagate his ideas and gain popularity in larger Dutch society. Until 2004, he was a member of the Liberal Party (VVD) but after 2004 he founded his own Party for Freedom (PVV). Politically his platform mostly overlaps with those used by Fortuyn but Wilders goes further by systematically using the anxieties of Dutch citizens.¹⁹ The idea is to use fear to mobilize Dutch society for his own political anti-Islam objectives. According to some surveys, these tactics are producing results: half of native-born Dutch have negative attitudes towards Muslims. These feelings are exploited by Wilders and his PVV. Together with his party members, Wilders politically manipulates these sentiments not only on a discursive level but also increasingly translating them into, thus far, legal extra-parliamentary social actions such as those against mosques.²⁰

What really stands out is that the PVV organizes campaigns against existing and newly planned mosques. Wilders has often

¹⁹ See for more information: Z. Malicherova, "Changes in attitudes of the native Dutch citizens toward Muslims between 1995 and 2005, as a result of immigration and integration policy and perceptions of threat", (MA thesis, University of Twente), http://essay.utwente.nl/62020/1/Master_thesis_Malicherova_%28s0216054%29_MSc_PA_MB.pdf, unpublished thesis (accessed 08-07-2017) Integrating Europe's Muslim Minorities: Public Anxieties, Policy Responses, By Meghan Benton, Anne Nielsen in <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/integrating-europes-muslim-minorities-public-anxieties-policy-responses>, accessed on 08-07-2017.

²⁰ Ineke van der Valk, "Islamophobia in Netherlands: National Report 2015," in: Enes Bayrakli & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul: SETA, 2016, p.392.

been quoted making calls for the banning of headscarves, the Quran and of the Azaan (Muslim call for prayer). His party program of only one page substantively consists of the last issue. Increasingly the PVV is advocating even the open discrimination of Muslims, proposing, for instance, that the government not employ people with an Islamic background.

The Impact of Islamophobia on the Daily Life of Muslims

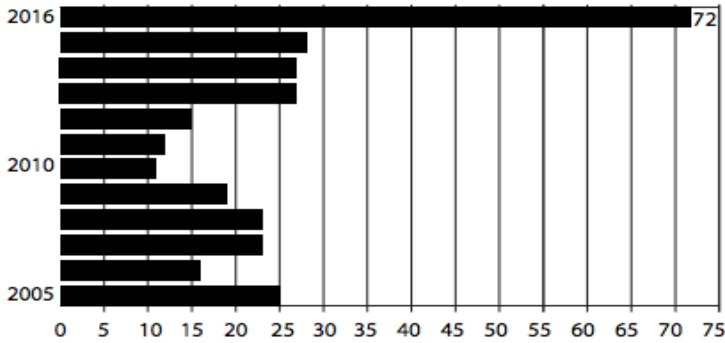
Islamophobic discourse dominating the politics and media has created for the last few decades a climate of stigmatization and discrimination for Muslims living in the Netherlands. They feel and experience it more than ever in their daily life. In the years after 9/11, and especially after the death of Theo van Gogh in 2004, the situation has deteriorated. Muslims have become more and more isolated, negatively being portrayed as enemies of society. The anti-Islamic climate within political debate has thus made the general social climate in The Netherlands more and more Islamophobic.²¹ Mosques, which are the most visible signs of Islam in Holland, have become increasingly the targets of far-right groups and individuals. Below is a chart of attacks on mosques since 2005:

A pivotal moment here was the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004. In the years between 2004 and 2005, one notes that 45 mosques were attacked, 18 of which were arson attacks. Over the last ten years, out of 475 mosques found in the Netherlands, 174 have experienced one or more incidents.²² Among these there was a particularly violent incident in 2014 that stands out. A mosque in the city Enschede was attacked with fireworks while children were present. The perpetrator was found and sentenced to four years for committing a terrorist attack on the mosque. This lawsuit was unique as it was the first time that a mosque attack

²¹ Ineke van der Valk, *Islamophobia in the Netherlands*, Amsterdam: University Press, 2012, p. 92

²² <https://goo.gl/YhAZgr>, accessed on 02-4-2017.

was considered as a terrorist attack. Most previous attacks were treated as individual incidents.



Source: *monitor moslimdiscriminatie*²³

The threats against Muslims are not restricted to mosque attacks. Muslim women who wear headscarves have become targets. Beyond the threat of physical violence and harassment, Muslim women wearing headscarves have greater difficulty finding a job or internships. As a result, women are particularly vulnerable. That does not mean that male Muslims are in anyway better off. Compared to indigenous youths, Muslim graduates generally have less chances of being invited to a job interview. This is also the case when older Muslims apply for a job. In an attempt to highlight the case that being Muslim results in job discrimination, there have been documented cases when Muslims were refused when they applied using their own name, but, when applying for the same job using a Dutch name received an invitation.²⁴ While there already exists laws to combat discrimination in the workplace, activists highlight that it is difficult to verify such

²³ Ineke van der Valk, *Monitor Moslimdiscriminatie: derde rapportage*, (Amsterdam: IMES, Universiteit van Amsterdam 2017), file: derde-monitor-moslimdiscriminatie.pdf, accessed on 01-05-2017.

²⁴ J. Klaver et al., *Etnische minderheden op de arbeidsmarkt*, Amsterdam: Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek, 2005, I. van der Valk, *Islamophobia in the Netherlands*, p. 86

incidents. Enforcing the law, in other words, is problematic and the discrimination continues.²⁵

During their education, Muslims face other forms of discrimination. The most regularly mentioned are the discriminatory comments from teachers and students alike. Adding to trauma is the sense that Muslim students are not treated equally. Despite all this, it must be noted that a new generation of Muslims are doing better than their parents; at least according to statistics the numbers of high-educated Muslims is increasing in the Netherlands.²⁶

This impression is not supported by other studies, however. A report from the College of Human Rights (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, CRM) compared cases of discrimination against Muslims between 2014 and 2016, finding the number has doubled. Crucially, this conclusion is based on the number of registered cases; the number of incidents are probably much higher since people or institutions do not always file a report. The reason for not reporting cases of discrimination might be the presumed negative image one acquires from filing a lawsuit against acquaintances. Another reason might be the lack of information about the institutions which handle these cases. Furthermore, there might be a lack of trust in the judicial system, with victims often thinking that nothing can be done about it. It is often noted that most people feel un-empowered due to the reaction of the police when the victim wants to report the crime. It is reported that the police often discourage the victim and even tries to suggest that he or she is exaggerating the situation.²⁷

The above-mentioned facts demonstrate that the anti-Islam climate induced by politicians and the media has social consequences. It has given rise to stigmatization, discrimination

²⁵ Ineke van der Valk, *Islamophobia in the Netherlands*, p. 86

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 86

²⁷ 'Monitoring Islamophobia in the Netherlands—an explorative study' is published by SPIOR, the platform for Islamic organisations in the Rijnmond area (Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond), October 2013, p. 24. <https://goo.gl/pJH7YL>

and even aggression towards Muslims because of their religion. This makes Muslims in the Netherlands less connected to the society in which they live and makes them feel unwelcome. This is reflected in the last survey made by SCP (Social Cultural Planning Office). According to their report, 40% of the Turks and Moroccans are worried about the social sphere in the Netherlands and do not feel at home. This has increased compared to 2006. Among young people, there is a strong and widely shared sense of exclusion. A consequence is the relative negative views of native Dutch people. Feeling alienated from larger Dutch society, as if “not seen as individuals” and only as a member of a migrant group and as a Muslim, the research casts a dark shadow over efforts to integrate Muslims.²⁸ These findings are really alarming because these young people are better educated and have grown up in the Netherlands. If the exclusion of their parents had any link to their low education and ignorance of Dutch customs, clearly the source of the second generation of migrant Muslim alienation cannot be the same. What had long been anticipated from policies aimed at their integration clearly points to an integration paradox. What mostly happens is that the higher educated Dutch of a migrant background actually experience more exclusion. Just like their parents, this generation of Dutch-born Muslims are excluded in a society they consider their own. Due to their background as second-generation migration, large numbers of Dutch citizens believe that their place in the Dutch society is far from self-evident.²⁹ Among the ethnic groups it is the second generation of Turks who appear the most marginalized in Dutch society. Indeed, the conditions are so bad as of late that up to one-third of second generation Turks actually want to go back to Turkey for the rest of their lives.

²⁸ Social Cultureel Plan bureau, *Integratie in zicht? De integratie van migranten in Nederland op acht terreinen nader bekeken*, Willem Huijnk & Iris Andriessen, Den Haag, 2016. [file:///Users/yildirim/Downloads/Integratie%20in%20zicht%20-%20web%20\(3\).pdf](file:///Users/yildirim/Downloads/Integratie%20in%20zicht%20-%20web%20(3).pdf)

²⁹ <http://www.republiekallochtonie.nl/jongeren-met-migratieachtergrond-voelen-zich-steeds-minder-thuis-in-nederland>, accessed on 4-05-2017.

Anti-Discrimination Offices

Since 2009, Dutch municipalities are obliged by law to provide assistance to fight against discrimination toward any member of their constituency.³⁰ This extends to also offering the facility to report cases of discrimination. Despite good intentions, there is a lack of infrastructure and manpower. Currently, municipalities work with anti-discrimination offices but do so with a limited number of offices responsible for different regions in the country.³¹ The operating model of these offices are as follows: when an organization or an individual experiences (or perceives to have experienced) discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender, religion and so on, they are encouraged report the incident to one of these anti-discrimination offices. The victim files a report at the office that is active in the city where the incident happened. The report could be done via phone, text message, e-mail and even via social media. This is in addition to actually visiting the office. Not only the victim but also third parties, for example a witness or a colleague, can file complaints upon receiving permission from the victim. Complaints can be filed anonymously but if the victim wants to follow-up on the case, he or she needs to mention his/her name. In theory, these offices record every complaint of discrimination no matter whether they are considered legally as a legitimate case of discrimination or not.

Besides these anti-discrimination offices, the police have served as state institutions to issue reports of discrimination. Additionally, non-governmental institutions such as the Muslim umbrella organization SPIOR has registered and then reported cases of discrimination. SPIOR focuses almost entirely on cases of discrimination against Muslims and actively register examples

³⁰ http://www.spior.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MonitoronIslamophobia_finalversionmaart2014.pdf, p. 23

³¹ http://www.spior.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/MonitoronIslamophobia_finalversionmaart2014.pdf, p. 23

of Islamophobia throughout the Netherlands. SPIOR also takes the initiative to work with municipalities and anti-Semitism offices like CIDI to assure such cases are both documented and perpetrators identified.³²

Beyond these mainstream organizations, there are other offices that monitor Islamophobia in addition to more general cases of discrimination because of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender, religion and so on. Clearly Islamophobia has begun to be registered in the larger Dutch governmental and non-governmental infrastructure. Complaints can actually file explicit cases on documents that now offer victims the ability to check off Islamophobia as a type of crime when filling out formal complaints. As a result, much of the Netherlands has become capable of monitoring and registering cases of Islamophobia.

One example of the depth of concern is the attempt to monitor the use by Islamophobes of social media to attack Muslims. Dutch civil society has responded by creating the Registration Bureau for Discrimination on the Internet (Meldpunt Discriminatie Internet, MDI), an organization which specifically registers discrimination on the internet. Upon finding abusive sites, the organization has the mandate to delete discriminatory expressions or, when that does not work, initiate legal steps to shut the site down. It also provides lectures to social organizations and groups in a public campaign to educate Dutch society about Islamophobia. With these initiatives, it could be misconstrued that the Netherlands is on its way to reducing the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Unfortunately, the occasional efforts to point to improvement via statistics provided by the Dutch government are misleading at best.

Most of the offices mentioned above stress that the number of incidents against Muslims are in fact higher than shown in official reports. Since many Muslims do not file reports when experiencing discrimination (as noted earlier, most victims feel

³² Centre for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI). CIDI has been monitoring anti-Semitism in the Netherlands for 30 years and is a very important stakeholder in putting and keeping anti-Semitism on the political agenda.

that such reports result in no positive actions from the authorities) means we actually do not know that actual scope of the problem in present-day Holland. As it is often reported, Muslims feeling the impact of Islamophobia do not trust government agencies or the police.³³ Feeling they are not taken seriously by the police, they largely avoid taking the necessary steps to register their cases with authorities, a problem activists concede makes it more difficult to propose additional policies to combat Islamophobia.

Conclusion

The ideological struggle against Islam in the Netherlands evoked by Frits Bolkestein and refined by Pim Fortuyn is nowadays mobilized and politically organized by Geert Wilders.³⁴ In recent years Islamophobia manifested itself as a deeply entrenched intolerance of immigrants or foreigners, in time developing into structural racism. Integration policies or debates about multiculturalism were often held without actually discussing Muslims' place in Dutch society. The discourse around Islam in the Netherlands always consisted of references to unfounded fear, manifested as rhetorical forms of intolerance, discrimination, and surfaced as systemic racism against Islam and Muslims.

The larger context of this decades-long process is the fact Muslims from Turkey, the Balkans, and North Africa settled in the Netherlands first as guest-workers and within a generation became Dutch citizens. The first generation lived as an invisible

³³ This has been observed in many reports about ethnic profiling see for more information: in the Amnesty International, "Gelijkheid onder druk: de impact van etnisch profileren", 2013; S. Cankaya, "De controle van marsmannetjes en ander schorriemorrie, Het beslissingsproces tijdens proactief politiewerk", Academie Politie Amsterdam-Amstelland, 2012 and also a report which is written on behalf of the police to investigate the distrustfulness of muslims towards the police by registering their cases, see: A. Ens, "Discriminatie melden bij de politie?", Den Haag: Nationale Politie, 2016.

³⁴ For more details see M. de Koning, *Een ideologische strijd met de islam, Fortuyns gedachtegoed als scharnierpunt in de racialisering van moslims*, Uithoorn: Karakter Uitgevers, 2016.

community but focused on building a new life in a new country. They felt no need to participate fully in Dutch society. Their children and grandchildren, however, composing a second generation of Muslims who were also now Dutch citizens, demanded an entirely different relationship with larger Dutch society. They were not just workers, as their parents, but students and professionals with considerable organizational capacities. As they studied in their headscarves, openly debated with their co-workers about misconceptions about their communities, and even started to build mosques, Muslims became more visible in Dutch society. This second generation did not consider itself an invisible community needing to remain in the shadows; they aspired to participate and fully integrate into Dutch society as an equal member, retaining all the while their Muslim identity.³⁵

The response from many in larger Dutch society constitutes the current expressions of Islamophobia covered throughout this special issue. Besides the politicians, the Dutch media played a major role in the rise of Islamophobia in both the Netherlands and larger Europe. Populist media, while operating under no consolidated image of Muslims, nevertheless successfully enlarged the sphere of fear among its readers.³⁶ Politicians like Wilders in the Netherlands played off this medium of exchange and used the populist media to push their own agendas.³⁷ Even when larger society seemingly rejected such Islamophobic trends, and the state attempted to suppress what constituted hate speech, the popularity of such xenophobia grew. The trials against Wilders

³⁵ Ergün Yıldırım, *Simurgun Kanatları; Sosyal Teori ve Din*, Istanbul:Tezkire Yayıncılık, 2016, p. 238.

³⁶ Zafar Iqbal, "Understanding Islamophobia: Conceptualizing and Measuring the Construct," in *European Journal of Social Sciences* – Volume 13, Number 4, 2010, p. 579.

³⁷ Sam Cherribi, "An Obsession Renewed: Islamophobia in the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany," in *Islamophobia, The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, eds. J. L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.49

for example actually turned to his advantage. The more media attention directed to him and his ideas secured among many his place as a persecuted guardian of free speech and European values. Indeed, Wilders presented himself as a hero of a 'silent majority' afraid (intimidated even) to say what he was not afraid to say. Freedom of speech became a potent excuse for Wilders to justify his racist generalizations about Muslims. The intensity of his message and even support expanded after terrorist attacks across Europe, resulting in an even greater campaign by Wilders to link free speech with legitimizing the return of racism to the forefront of European politics.³⁸

What reports show today is that there is a one-sided focus on a discourse that demands government adopt policies that protect the "nation's security" from Islamic radicalization and terrorism. In contrast, there is little attention paid by policy makers to far-right hate speech, and often violence against Muslim or other non-white communities that could also be construed as a form of terrorism. Even in intelligence reports focusing on threats of violence in Dutch society, invariably the presumption is terrorist attacks are committed by people of a Muslim background. Police actions have indeed been increased to monitor and often proactively incarcerate Muslims on the basis of these associations. On the other hand, there has been little to no efforts to address mosque attacks and the clear threat to the security of Muslims. As suggested above, cases of discrimination are, if reported at all, labeled as isolated incidents committed by sick racist individuals. To ultimately address this disparity, new qualitative research is needed in order to study how Islamophobia can be challenged and which initiatives could be taken at the legal, social, and political level.

³⁸ Aurelien Mondon, "Free speech, Islamophobia and the rise of racism in Europe", published in Newsweek on 2/11/2016, <https://goo.gl/1Dzvpf>, accessed 10-11-2016.

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Muslimophobia as a Western Tool of Fearmongering

Ali Çaksu*

ABSTRACT

Fear is part of politics whether it may be in war or peace. States, governments, politicians and oligarchs often employ fearmongering as a tool for their economic and political self-interests. For that purpose, they make use of a wide range of fears of various elements such as ideological, cultural, medical and demographical challenges, risks or threats and create phobias based on them. Modern Islamophobia or Muslimophobia too is a product of such an attitude fed by the global power structure as well as centuries-old racism, Eurocentrism, Orientalism and colonialism. It is used by leading world powers and the elite for domestic and international control, domination and exploitation. It racializes and demonizes, and in the process terrorizes Muslims. Muslimophobia is about politics and not religion and therefore in the domain of politics that Muslimophobia must be fought.

Keywords: Racism, fear, fearmongering, terror, phobia, Muslimophobia, Islamophobia.

Politics is often based on a four-letter F-word: fear. Fear during conditions of war is part of everyday life. War that is usually seen as a continuation of politics by other means spreads naturally fear for one's life. It also incites terror. The same goes for civil wars.

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Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), one of the most important early-modern political philosophers, experienced personally the terror of war and civil war in Britain in the late 16th and 17th centuries. Drawing from this experience, Hobbes places much emphasis on the centrality of fear in human life. Fear thus plays a central role in his political theory. In fact, for him fear is the psychological basis of the modern state which emerges as a result of a social contract made and honored by individuals who give up part of their freedom in return for personal safety and security. Thus it is the fear which basically creates the Leviathan, “that *Mortal God*”, i.e. the state.¹

However, fear (of a civil war or of an enemy) not only creates, but also sustains the political community. At times, this fear easily becomes a tool of domination. Additionally, fear occupies a significant place in human life in more peaceful times. Here, power holders use fear as a simple, yet very effective, means of control and rule. The old principle “*divide et impera*” (divide and rule) encourages the use of fear to divide the target populations, be they nations, ethnicities, members of certain religions or cultures, classes, or genders.

One notices all over the world today collective fear induced by economic uncertainties, a murky political future, the outbreak of unfamiliar diseases, risk of environmental catastrophes, racism, mass shootings, state violence and domestic and international terrorism. Those holding political and economic power spread various types of fear to manipulate their constituencies. The fear into which the ruling elite tap is of unanticipated dangers induced by enemies. Enemies do not necessarily have to be the soldiers of a country or terrorists fighting against one’s army. Another more nebulous enemy lurks within modern societies: the other.

The other is often seen as an enemy or at least a potential one. In the past, Greeks had Barbarians as their others. The Arabs had Ajami, Jews had Gentiles and Christians and Muslims had

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 114.

heathens. Likewise, today atheists, “colored” people, ethnic and religious minorities and women also suffer from discrimination in many parts of the world in this context of fear induced by distrust in the other.

Phobia

Fear is instinctual and is generally good for self-defence. But while our fears are sometimes real, they are sometimes imaginary and fabricated, which brings us to phobia. *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* describes phobia as “an exaggerated usually inexplicable and illogical fear of a particular object, class of objects, or situation.”² A psychologist defines phobia as a “type of anxiety disorder in which certain objects or situations provoke debilitating, unreasonably fearful reactions from the sufferer.”³ What differentiates phobia from fear is the irrational aspect of the former which is often an exaggerated, inexplicable, illogical and unreasonable fear. Phobias are probably learned emotional responses. “It is generally held that phobias occur when fear produced by an original threatening situation is transferred to other similar situations, with the original fear often repressed or forgotten.”⁴ Therefore, there is an obvious need to differentiate the two from each other and address the roots, sources and causes of real fear coming from real dangers, risks and problems.

Some Types of Fear

The political and economic domination are often constructed, developed and sustained through use of collective fear mentioned above. Risks, threats and dangers that the elite uses to inseminate

² “Phobia”, *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com

³ Renée Grinnell, “Phobia”, in John M. Grohol, *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, <https://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/phobia/>

⁴ “Phobia”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/science/phobia>

fear include ideological, medical, economic, demographic and cultural ones:

Ideological fears are varied and the fearmongers often warn the people that communists, anarchists, Islamist or Christian fundamentalists might take over the country and establish their own rule. The Red Scare in the USA is a good example for the ideological “danger” of fearmongering. It refers to the promotion of a widespread fear of a potential rise of communism or radical leftism. The expression “reds under the beds” were used for an insidious communist presence. Likewise, the danger of a communist takeover is used even in international relations during the Cold War, as expressed in the Domino Theory. The theory employed from the 1950s to the 1980s, suggested that if one country falls under the influence of communism, then the surrounding countries would follow in a domino effect. The Domino Theory was exploited by several United States administrations to justify the need for American intervention around the world.⁵

Medical risks too are often used for spreading fear globally. Bird flu (avian influenza) and SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in the first years of the millennium and the swine flu (swine influenza) in mid-2010s were some of the diseases used for that purpose. One might object and ask what is wrong with informing the public about dangerous epidemic diseases. Of course, there is nothing wrong with alerting the population, but it was done in a questionable way. During the outbreak of these diseases some “experts” claimed that millions would die soon all over the world if the precautions were not taken immediately. It turned out not to be the case and in fact more people had been dying of simple influenza every year than of mentioned diseases. Then recently in early 2016 the world was alarmed about the spread of Zika virus in south America, particularly due to the Summer Olympic Games to be hosted in Rio de Janeiro. It was

⁵ “Domino Theory”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/domino-theory>

claimed in the mass media that the virus was the main cause of microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with brain damage and abnormally small heads. However, in November 2016, the World Health Organization declared that the Zika virus was no longer a global emergency. And also many scientists had serious doubts about the alleged impact of the virus on babies.⁶

Here one might ask why fear of medical risks is spread? One common reason is that pharmaceutical lobby makes huge profits out of it by influencing governments, the media and other institutions in favor of its products. And sometimes politicians lead them as in the case of Donald Rumsfeld who in 1997 was named chairman of the board of the biotech firm called Gilead Sciences which had the patent for Tamiflu, a treatment for many kinds of influenza and the preferred drug for bird flu.

“If there was ever an outbreak of the highly contagious virus (or the threat of one), governments would be forced to buy billions of dollars’ worth of the treatment from Gilead Sciences.”⁷

For Klein this is a typical example for “the shock doctrine” and “disaster capitalism”. According to her, “the shock doctrine uses the public’s disorientation following massive collective shocks – wars, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters– to achieve control by imposing economic shock therapy”, while

“disaster capitalism is the rapid-fire corporate reengineering of societies still reeling from shock.”⁸

Fear from refugees and immigrants too are used by fearmongers. Refugees and immigrants are frequently and easily blamed for economic problems and crimes, although they are on

⁶ See for example Michaeleen Doucleff, “Why Didn’t Zika Cause a Surge in Microcephaly in 2016?”, NPR, 30 March 2017, <https://goo.gl/qLG5M5>

⁷ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007, p. 290.

⁸ Naomi Klein, <http://www.naomiklein.org/shock-doctrine>.

many occasions exploited economically and attacked physically. There are a lot of myths about them and one thing they are blamed most is the following: “Refugees are taking our jobs.” In fact, refugees are often doing jobs which others do not want to do due to the low pay, hard work or health hazards. Their mostly positive contribution to the host country’s economy is another fact. For instance, according to Australian government research, rather than taking Australian jobs, refugees are actually creating new ones and they are the country’s most entrepreneurial migrants.⁹

Frequently media produce news stories that actively seek to demonize refugees and immigrants. Recently, there were several claims about Syrian refugees sexually harassing and even raping European women. For instance, on February 6, 2017, Germany’s most-read newspaper *Bild* reported that a mob of dozens of Arab men allegedly sexually assaulted women as they went through the streets. However, the police investigating the crimes stated that the allegations are “without foundation”.¹⁰ Then *Bild* deleted the story from its website and its online editor in chief apologized for the fake story.¹¹

Unfortunately, the truth is just the contrary in most of the cases involving the refugees and immigrants: it is some racist Germans who attack refugees. According to the German Interior Ministry, approximately 10 attacks on immigrants took place in Germany every day in 2016 (with a total of 3,533 attacks on immigrants and asylum hostels in that year) and a total of 560 people were injured, including 43 children. Three-quarters of the attacks targeted immigrants outside of their accommodation, whereas nearly

⁹ Michael Safi, “Refugees are Australia’s most entrepreneurial migrants, says research”, *The Guardian*, 4 September 2015. <https://goo.gl/Xsb3Mf>

¹⁰ Adam Taylor, “German police say major newspaper’s story about a rampaging Arab ‘sex mob’ was wrong”, *The Washington Post*, 14 February 2017. <https://goo.gl/CAMh2K>

¹¹ “Frankfurt: Keine „mobartigen Übergriffe an Silvester”, 14 February 2017, *Bild*, <https://goo.gl/LvijZj>

1,000 attacks were on housing.¹² While that was the harsh reality for refugees, attempts to demonize them continue and have even taken the form of plans for so-called false flag attacks. Recently, members of a Neo-Nazi network in German army, posing as Syrian refugees, planned terror attacks to be blamed on refugees and more specifically the “Islamist militants” among them.¹³

Demographic fears too often reflect the concerns of a native population seeing their country “taken over by foreigners”. In fact, demographic takeover is seen by many as a sort of alien invasion. However, one should note that “foreigners” or “aliens” might be in many cases citizens of that specific country, but they are ethnically not of the “real”, or “original” population. Thus, some talk about a Hispanic or Latino takeover in the USA¹⁴ or an Arab takeover in France.¹⁵ This sort of an alien-like demographic invasion is seen by some as more dangerous than a potential military invasion, for it is peaceful, legal and seemingly irreversible due to low birth rate of the “genuine” citizens.

Cultural fears too often employ or imply a sort of “barbarian invasion” and destruction of the national or local cultures. They are based on a distinction between the national “high culture” and the “low culture” of the immigrants. Thus, according to this racist view, foreigners inside the country as well as new immigrants spread their culture and undermine the national one. They often reject or fail to assimilate and try to preserve their culture at the expense of the national one. However, foreigners are expected to “assimilate” completely rather than to “integrate”. What this means

¹² “Germany hate crime: Nearly 10 attacks a day on migrants in 2016”, BBC, 26 February 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39096833>

¹³ Lizzie Dearden, “Second German soldier arrested over ‘false flag’ plot to assassinate left-wing politicians in terror attack”, *Independent*, 9 May 2017, <https://goo.gl/B9xaN4>

¹⁴ “Whites will no longer be a majority in U.S. by 2043 as Hispanic population surges, Census data reveals”, 12 December 2012, <https://goo.gl/eBXPxk>

¹⁵ Michel Gurfinkiel, “Islam in France: The French Way of Life is in Danger”, *The Middle East Quarterly*, 4, 1997, pp. 19-29.

is that for instance in German context, others must adopt also some German ways of living which include drinking and promiscuity, even though such behavior is against their faith or culture.¹⁶ This integration-assimilation debate was on the agenda after Turkish premier Erdogan's visits to Germany and Austria in mid-2014. For example, in one of his public talks in Vienna, when he urged the Turks living in Austria to respect their adoptive country but reject "assimilation", this led to harsh reactions from some Austrian politicians. In fact, his message was very clear:

"No to assimilation, yes to integration... You will learn to speak fluent German and will carry your relations with the Austrian community to an excellent level but you will not be assimilated."¹⁷

The Swiss ban on minarets is another example of cultural fearmongering. In a referendum in November 2009, a constitutional amendment banning the construction of new minarets were approved by 57.5% of the participating voters. In fact, previously the Swiss government stated that the proposed amendment was inconsistent with basic principles of the constitution. Likewise, the Federal Assembly recommended (by 132 to 51 votes and 11 abstentions) that the Swiss people reject the minaret ban initiative.¹⁸ Various non-governmental organizations and religious organizations, including Catholic bishops and the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, opposed the proposed ban. However, after the referendum, the Swiss government announced that the ban was in effect. One should note that as of the date of the 2009 vote, there were only four minarets in Switzerland, a fact showing the dimensions of Muslimophobia among those who prepared the initiative for the referendum.

¹⁶ Özlem Gezer, "Why I Can Never Be a Proper German", trans. Paul Cohen, *Der Spiegel*, 7 November 2013, <https://goo.gl/X7Qh5N>.

¹⁷ "Erdogan irks Austria with anti-assimilation speech", 19 June 2014. <https://goo.gl/sWCPS3>

¹⁸ "SPK-S: Minarett-Initiative: Untaugliches Instrument gegen Islamistischen Fundamentalismus", <https://goo.gl/01at9R>

“Without doubt, the minaret ban violates both the Swiss constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights in respect to the freedom of religion and belief and also freedom from discrimination.”¹⁹

And with the ban the well-known Swiss “tolerant neutrality” received a heavy blow.

“Barbarian” cultural invasions are not necessarily about their religion, language and manners. Sometimes even certain drinks and food can be objects of phobia. In the past, coffee was one of them in some European countries where it was called a “Muslim drink”, Turkish drink or even Satan’s or Devil’s drink. Coffee often faced a harsh negative reaction by many Europeans who saw it a Muslim tool for invading Christian Europe. For example, entry of the coffee (a “Muslim” drink) and the Qur’an into Britain in the same period in mid-17th century was perceived by some as a risk of Islamization of the country, as clearly expressed in the following lines of a poem:

When Coffee once was vended here,
The Alc’ron [Quran] shortly did appear:
For (our Reformers were such Widgeons,)
New Liquors brought in new Religions.²⁰

Coffeephobia was not the last paranoia seen in Europe with regard to a certain drink or food; one can still today witness similar reactions with, for instance, hostility towards the kebab. Some see a cultural invasion through what they call “kebabization”. Apparently, the threat of “kebabization” goes hand in hand with “Islamization”. For instance, Robert Ménard, the Mayor of Béziers, in France declared an anti-kebab crusade in late 2015 in

¹⁹ Douglas Pratt, “Expressing Fear of Islam: The Swiss Minaret Ban”, *Fear of Muslims? International Perspectives on Islamophobia*, ed. Douglas Pratt and Rachel Woodlock (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 228.

²⁰ “The Character of a Coffee-House.” <https://goo.gl/woqVnC>. The earliest known translation of the Qur’an into the English language was *The Alcoran of Mahomet* in 1649 by Alexander Ross, chaplain to King Charles I (in fact, this, was a translation of the French translation *L’Alcoran de Mahomet* by the Sieur du Ryer, Lord of Malezair).

order to protect “Judeo-Christian” values...²¹ Apparently, kebab is not only against Judeo-Christian values but also Italian romance. Recently, local authorities in Venice banned new kebab shops and other fast-food outlets from opening in order to limit the number of “ethnic food” restaurants in the historic center and “protect its cultural and culinary heritage”.²² Several other Italian towns did similar moves in previous years.

In short, are minarets, coffee, and kebab some tools or signs of Muslim invasion, or ridiculous excuses for racism displayed against the other? These are some of the types of fear which have been used by Muslimophobes and now we will discuss the fearmongers and their motives.

Fearmongers

Chief among the fearmongers are governments. Governments employ fear in order to mobilize the masses in accordance with the interests of the economic and political elite which are often called national interests. One typical example is the George W. Bush Administration’s rhetoric to justify the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Bush used the “war on terror” and threat of “weapons of mass destruction” Saddam Hussein allegedly posed (which later proved to be an outright lie) as pretexts for US invasions. Bush’s use of theological language then is well known: “Good vs. Evil”. Americans represented good in a fight to eradicate evil. They invaded Afghanistan and Iraq to bring “freedom and democracy”, which was the new expression of the *mission civilisatrice*.²³ The US mission to civilize the “barbarians” clearly failed and left behind millions of dead and displaced people.

²¹ Sylvain Chazot, “Robert Ménard lutte contre les kebabs à Béziers parce que la France est un pays de ‘tradition judéo-chrétienne’”, *Europe1*, 30 October 2015, <https://goo.gl/cFVvo4>

²² Angela, Giuffrida, “Venice bans kebab shops to ‘preserve decorum and traditions’ of city”, *The Guardian*, 5 May 2017, <https://goo.gl/rAHFSS>

²³ Mary E. Stuckey and Joshua R. Ritter, “George Bush, ‘Human Rights’, and American Democracy”, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 37, 2007, pp. 646-666.

Beside governments, sometimes individual politicians too resort to fearmongering for their self-interests, especially during election campaigns and economic crises. For instance, Turcophobia is a quite fashionable motive during election campaigns in Europe. One author noted the “rising note of hostility to Turkey or even downright “Turkophobia”” during Brexit campaign.²⁴ While the issue is whether the United Kingdom should leave the EU or not, suddenly Turkey and Turks become a central topic. The ignorance and paranoia about Turks should be so pervasive that two politicians could actually warn that “EU loophole could see 77 million Turks head to Britain”, that is 98% of the entire population of Turkey.²⁵ Former French president Sarkozy too talked often about and used the “danger” of Turkey joining the EU as part of his election campaigns. In fact, one witnesses widespread use of Turcophobia in various EU members states.²⁶

What makes it funny is that Turks evoke a double fear: both their presence and absence strike fear into the heart of many people in the EU. While perhaps most member states are afraid of Turkey’s joining the EU, they are at the same time afraid of Turkey’s moving away from EU and getting closer, for instance, to China or Russia. Whenever Turkey gets close to these two countries, she is blamed for “changing axis”. This phobia shows actually the dimensions of psychopathy in the form of insecure or avoidant attachment style.

Oligarchs and their henchmen, namely intelligence bureaucracies (secret services and intelligence agencies) are the most powerful fearmongers, as they are often exempt from democratic checks

²⁴ David Barchard, “Brexit: Why the Rise of Turkophobia is Bad for Britain”, *Newsweek*, 13 June 2016. <https://goo.gl/GqdMC5>

²⁵ Rebecca Perring, “EU loophole could see 77 MILLION Turks head to Britain, warn Farage and Johnson” *Express*, 18 April 2016. <https://goo.gl/npP4ka> (Note that in the title only the word “million” is fully capitalized, perhaps for making sure that the readers do not miss the danger).

²⁶ “Anyone who says Turkey is European country wants EU’s death – Sarkozy”, RT, 20 March 2016. <https://www.rt.com/news/336385-sarkozy-turkey-eu-death/>

and balances as well as any sort of accountability to anyone or any political body. To give an example, “the Military-Industrial Complex” and Neo-Cons urged the US army to invade Iraq with the pretext that Saddam’s Iraq had mass destruction weapons and caused immense suffering. Iraq could not, however, be proven to have committed these crimes. The complex refers to an informal alliance of the military and the related government departments with defense industries which influences government policy. In the United States some call it military–industrial–congressional complex (MICC), adding the US Congress and showing the political aspect of the group. The relationships among them include an entire network of contracts and flows of resources and money among individuals, corporations and relevant bureaucracy.

Some other lobbies and interest groups spread fear or practice fearmongering by using misinformation, financial manipulations, economic crises and mass media. For instance, the National Rifle Association in the USA which is fiercely against gun-control policies justifies easy access to guns in that country with the fear from criminals and illegal immigrants. They argue that a gun is a key to safety in an unsafe world. Its executive vice president Wayne LaPierre once said that “the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is with a good guy with a gun”.²⁷ It is said that even the Congress is afraid of taking on that association.²⁸

Fearmongering often goes hand in hand with war mongering and as Naomi Klein puts it, war mongering is often carried out for money making:

As proto-disaster capitalists, the architects of the War on Terror are part of a different breed of corporate-politicians from their predecessors, one for whom wars and other disasters are indeed ends in themselves. When Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld conflate what is good for Lockheed,

²⁷ “NRA: ‘Only Way to Stop a Bad Guy With a Gun is With A Good Guy With a Gun’” CBC DC, 21 December 2012. <https://goo.gl/a4pf4T>

²⁸ “Schieffer: NRA the lobby most feared by Congress”, CBC News, 15 December 2012. <https://goo.gl/qEubj6>

Halliburton, Carlyle and Gilead with what is good for the United States and indeed the world, it is a form of projection with uniquely dangerous consequences. That's because what is unquestionably good for the bottom line of these companies is cataclysm—wars, epidemics, natural disasters and resource shortages—which is why all their fortunes have improved dramatically since Bush took office.²⁹

After briefly explaining who are the major fearmongers, now we will discuss another tool used frequently in spreading fear and terror all over the world: Muslimophobia.

Muslimophobia

Islamophobia, Muslimophobia, Anti-Islamism, Anti-Muslimism, and Anti-Muslim extremism are some of the terms employed for referring to a phenomenon known most commonly as Islamophobia. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* defines it as “irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against Islam or people who practice Islam”.³⁰ We prefer calling it Muslimophobia rather than the more common “Islamophobia”, as the latter term has become a sort of trap for Muslims. When an Islamophobic case is detected, then the first question that crosses one's mind is as follows: what is wrong with Islam? That is to say, the term Islamophobia has Islam as its primary object of discussion and if there is a widespread Islamophobia, then there must be something wrong with Islam. However, Islamophobia or Muslimophobia (however we call it) is a small part of or an example for a wider problem, namely Western racism, because current wave of Muslimophobia emerged in recent decades in the West. Therefore, a discussion on Muslimophobia must start with the racism of Muslimophobes rather than the objects of hostility, Islam and Muslims.

We start with an error of reductionism. In fact, Muslimophobia is based on the mistaken notion that a “Muslim world” exists. Aydin

²⁹ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, p. 311.

³⁰ “Islamophobia”, *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com

describes the idea of the Muslim world as an “ahistorical illusion” and argues that it is a misconception to think that the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims constitute a single religio-political entity. According to him, the idea of the Muslim world emerged in the late nineteenth century, when European empires ruled the majority of Muslims, entertained theories of white supremacy and conceived Muslims and the communities they made as the antithesis of Western Christian civilization. Yet Muslims too contributed to the formation of that idea by linking the notion of the Muslim world to the notion of ummah and advocating an idealized pan-Islamic society that rejected claims of Muslims’ racial and civilizational inferiority. Today the idea of the Muslim world is at the center of both Islamophobic and pan-Islamic ideologies and continues to have a hold on the global imagination.³¹ Aydin also explains how Muslim became a racial category, which will be discussed below.

There is no widely accepted definition of Islamophobia. Bleich defines it as “indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims.”³² Stating that there is not a unified and conceptually clear definition of Islamophobia, Allen provides his own alternative:

Islamophobia is an ideology, similar in theory, function and purpose to racism and other similar phenomena, that sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meaning about Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting in similar ways to that which it has historically, although not necessarily as a continuum, subsequently pertaining, influencing and impacting upon social action, interaction, response and so on, shaping and determining understanding, perceptions and attitudes in the social consensus –the shared languages and conceptual

³¹ Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017 and Cemil Aydin, “Globalizing the Intellectual History of the Idea of the ‘Muslim World’”, in *Global Intellectual History*, ed. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

³² Erik Bleich, “What is Islamophobia and How Much is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept”, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55:2011, p. 1594.

maps– that inform and construct thinking about Muslims and Islam as Other.³³

Defining it as an ideology similar to racism, Allen suggests that Islamophobia does not exist because of a lack of understanding about Islam and Muslims. It is about the way Islam and Muslims are thought, spoken and written about; perceived, conceived and referred to; and included into or excluded from civic life in the West. In that sense, it is “most definitely not a ‘phobia’, but instead a name for that which perpetuates and sustains those meanings which are relevant and acknowledged in the shared languages and conceptual maps of today’s setting.”³⁴

We completely agree with the initial part of Allen’s definition, one which considers Muslimophobia as an ideology similar to racism. Some might object to this by saying that Islam or Muslims are not a race, but that a religion and its followers. However, Muslims are often treated like a race by many Muslimophobes, be them on the street, in parliaments or mass media. Here is an example from the USA:

Islam isn’t a racial group. But here in the United States of 2016, Muslims are often treated as if they’re part of a single, fundamental category, endowed with certain essential and inborn characteristics. That construction of Muslim-ness can seem closely related to the construction of racial categories.

Scholars call this process racialization. And while the term is contested, there’s certainly evidence that Muslim-ness in the United States is constructed as a kind of racial category, no matter how incoherent that construction may seem.³⁵

Gotanda sees the racialization of Muslims within an established American tradition of racializing Asian Americans generally. For

³³ Chris Allen, *Islamophobia*, Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010, p. 194.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

³⁵ Michael Schulson, “The Islamophobia Election: How ‘Muslim’ Became a Racial Identity”, 7 November 2016, <http://religiondispatches.org/muslim-racialization/>

him, Muslim as a racial category has acquired meaning beyond religion: “Inscribing the linked racial category and ascribed subordination of permanent foreignness upon the ‘brown’ raced body is the racialization of Muslims into Muslim terrorists”.³⁶

In addition to racialization, there emerged official attempts to create a new racial or ethnic category consisting of mostly Muslims. There was/is even a plan in the USA to specify a different racial or ethnic category for people (most of whom are Muslims) who are originally from the Middle East and North Africa.

“Under current law, people from the Middle East are considered white, the legacy of century-old court rulings in which Syrian Americans argued that they should not be considered Asian – because that designation would deny them citizenship under the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.”³⁷

Yet there is a difficulty to generalize peoples from regions stretching from Morocco to Iran, because they fit into neither Arab (an ethnic category) nor Muslim (a religious category). These varied territories include Muslims, Syrian and Coptic Christians, Israeli Jews, and other religious minorities. The Census Bureau had apparently problems also with some other groups like Turkish, Sudanese and Somali Americans who are not included in that category. While some see this official attempt as a positive step and welcome it as an expression of Middle Eastern identity and an opportunity for increased visibility, many Muslim-Americans are concerned about how the data might be used, given the US President Donald Trump’s attitude towards immigrants and his plans for surveillance of Muslim communities in particular.

In addition to modern racialized aspect of Muslimophobia, it has its historical roots in the West. Muslims were the other of Europe for ages and were called by Europeans, depending on the context and time, heathens, pagans, Saracens, Moros,

³⁶ Neil Gotanda, “The Racialization of Islam in American Law”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 637:2011, p. 184.

³⁷ Gregory Korte, “White House wants to add new racial category for Middle Eastern people”, *USA Today*, 30 September 2016. <https://goo.gl/tn4Q8J>

Arabs, Mahomedans, or Turks. Most of those terms had negative connotations. They originate from a period that violence was the primary means of interaction between Europeans and those peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Recall that the Crusades were waged against the Muslims in order to save the holy lands from them. In addition to this historical background Eurocentrism, Orientalism, Colonialism and Neocolonialism aggravated European attitudes towards Muslims. With many works written by Westerners within a Eurocentric frame, dichotomies like the civilized West versus barbaric Muslims have continued to this day. Some so-called academic theories like “clash of civilizations” and “the end of history” were put forward in order to sustain and justify the Western domination. In line with such theories, Muslims were divided into two groups: “good Muslims” were secular, democratic, liberal, capitalist and progressive, while “bad Muslims” were not so. A sort of “moderate Islam”³⁸, “Protestant Islam” and/or “spiritual Islam” have been prescribed for the Muslims.

One should note that Muslimophobia is more a political tool than a religious prejudice and it has been promoted especially after the fall of the Soviet Union. There was a need for a new “enemy” or an “other” to be used for fearmongering. Currently, Muslims make a suitable enemy (for reasons we will discuss below) and this status might change depending on developments in international politics and economy. Later, for economic or other reasons, Muslims may be deemed useful allies again (like most of them were considered during the Cold War) and another country or culture (for example, China or Chinese) might be demonized, as in the case of Yellow Peril (which targeted peoples of East Asia).

The main platform to spread Muslimophobia is the mass media, which bombards people almost every day with news, comments and images against Islam and Muslims. As often argued in the

³⁸ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Tyler Golsin, “Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of ‘Moderate Islam’ in Western Europe”, *Journal of Church and State*, 49: 2007, pp. 487-515.

scholarship, the mass media has the power to portray an image of Islam worse than cancer.³⁹ For example, a company measured negative sentiment against Muslims by evaluating 2 million *New York Times* headlines from 1990 to 2015. Islam was portrayed negatively in 57 percent of headlines, with cancer and cocaine being evaluated at 34 and 47 percent respectively. Islam was portrayed positively in less than half the headlines as cancer.⁴⁰ Christianity and Judaism, meanwhile, were portrayed negatively in 37 and 34 percent of headlines, 20 or more percent less than Islam.⁴¹ Also these last figures show that *New York Times* portrays negatively not only Islam but also Christianity and Judaism, a fact that supports my view that Muslimophobia is not something directly targeting Islam but a part of a larger racism which sometimes happens to be also against religions in general.

While Muslims constitute only less than 1% of the US population,⁴² one comes across some anti-Islam activists even talking about Islamization of that country like an alien invasion, warning about “creeping sharia” and spreading misinformation and hatred against Muslims all over the world.⁴³ The propaganda using “creeping sharia” includes

“creating paranoid fantasies of Muslim takeovers of the Constitution and the imposition of veils and burqas on American women.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Jehanzeb Dar, “Holy Islamophobia, Batman! Demonization of Muslims and Arabs in Mainstream American Comic Books”, *Counterpoints*, 346: 2010, pp. 99-110.

⁴⁰ Owais Arshad, Varun Setlur and Usaid Siddiqui, “Are Muslims Collectively Responsible? A Sentiment Analysis of the New York Times”, <http://416labs.com/nytandislam>. For the full study, see http://416labs.com/s/nytandislam_study.pdf

⁴¹ Davide Mastracci, “NY Times Portrays Islam More Negatively Than Cancer, Major Study Finds”, *Alternet*, 29 February 2016, <https://goo.gl/pbnJgQ>

⁴² According to CIA World Factbook, only 0.9% of the people in the USA are Muslims. <https://goo.gl/5czQzi>

⁴³ Pamela Geller, *Stop the Islamization of America: A Practical Guide to the Resistance*, Washington D.C.: WND Books, 2011.

⁴⁴ Carl W. Ernst, “Introduction: The Problem of Islamophobia”, *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance*, ed. Carl W. Ernst, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 13.

Attempts to associate or identify Islam with terrorism is the major tool of Muslimophobia. American citizens are made to be in constant fear against potential terror attacks by “Islamist” terrorists. However, the table below shows the reality behind that fearmongering about “homegrown terrorism”. As one will clearly see, according to the statistics for a 10-year average, only 11 Americans are killed by the so-called Islamic jihadists, while armed toddlers killing annually 21 Americans and lawn movers killing 69 people. In brief, every year lightnings, armed toddlers, lawn movers or falling out of bed kill much more people than “Muslim terrorists”. And more interestingly, the real killers of Americans are Americans themselves, because the number of Americans killed annually by being shot by another American is 11,737 (more than a thousand times by Muslim terrorists). While this is the reality, then there must be a special reason for fearmongering about “Islamist terror”.

Kumar examines the historic relationship between Islamophobia and the agenda of empire building. To her, ruling elites have often used the specter of a “Muslim enemy” or a pathological fear of Muslims to justify their imperial projects. Furthermore, the use of Islamophobia in justifying foreign policy entails and facilitates political repression at home. In the USA, for the “green scare” making of the domestic Muslim enemy was needed.⁴⁵ Thus Muslims are made a figure in the empire of fear created by some Western elites who are themselves the main source and cause of fear that Muslims experience today. As teenager Aleena Khan put it in a letter to President Obama,

“Muslims live in fear that they will be attacked. Americans live in fear that Muslims will attack them.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, Chicago and Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2012, Chapter 9.

⁴⁶ Daniel Burke, “The Secret Costs of Islamophobia”, 15 November 2016, CNN, <https://goo.gl/oc5Qmr>

Number of Americans killed annually by:	
Islamic jihadist immigrants ¹ :	2
Far right-wing terrorists ¹ :	5
All Islamic jihadist terrorists (including US citizens) ¹ :	9
Armed toddlers ² :	21
Lightning ³ :	31
Lawnmowers ⁴ :	69
Being hit by a bus ⁴ :	264
Falling out of bed ⁴ :	737
Being shot by another American ⁵ :	11,737

¹10-year average of terrorist attacks "Deadly Attacks Since 9/11," New America, <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/extremists/deadly-attacks.html>

²www.snopes.com/toddlers-killed-americans-terrorists/

³10-year average of deaths by lightning, NOAA, www.nws.noaa.gov/om/hazstats/resources/weather_fatalities.pdf

⁴10-year average, Underlying Cause of Death 2014, CDC, <http://wonder.cdc.gov/>

⁵10-year average 2005-2014, CDC, Injury Prevention & Control: Data & Statistics (WISQARS™) www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal_injury_reports.html

Table 1. Average number of Americans killed annually by some people or events⁴⁷

According to Wright, there was a fear of Muslims in the USA before "Islamophobia" as seen in constitutional debates in the late 18th century. Then Muslims were not alone; Catholics too were targeted. Some saw "Muhammad or the sultan alongside the Pope as the twin beasts of the apocalypse."⁴⁸ Such historical examples let us see the perpetuation of stereotypes as well as their current political usefulness and cultural credibility in the service of Muslimophobia.

Examining the ways in which contemporary discourses draw from and depend upon historical models is important not merely because it shows that cultural tropes and stereotypes about Islam have changed

⁴⁷ *Huffington Post*, <https://goo.gl/hBjBbj>

⁴⁸ Stephanie Wright, "Reproducing Fear: Islamophobia in the United States", *Fear of Muslims? International Perspectives on Islamophobia*, ed. Douglas Pratt and Rachel Woodlock, Switzerland: Springer, 2016, p. 51.

rather little in the United States over time. Rather, and perhaps more interestingly, these historical examples shed light on the dynamics and mechanisms by which certain stereotypes have been perpetuated, and as a result of which they have remained both politically useful and culturally credible.⁴⁹

The Muslimophobic approach to understanding the world not only demonizes Muslims but also often de-islamizes what is seen as positive about Islam and Muslims. For example, Rumi (Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi, 1207-1273) is often said to be the best-selling poet in the USA. In the West, he is usually called an enlightened man, a mystic, a saint and a Sufi, but rarely a Muslim, although he was a scholar of the Qur'an and Islam. Rumi's references in his *Masnawi* to the Qur'an, hadiths and Islamic culture are often omitted and he is, in a way, de-Islamized.⁵⁰

Why have Muslims been targeted in recent decades? One can cite at least a few reasons: First, Muslim countries make an easy target and "a suitable enemy", as Fekete explains.⁵¹ Scientifically, militarily, economically and technologically dependent on Western powers and divided among themselves, Muslims are an easy target for the mass media that promotes the violent relations Muslims are forced to sustain with global powers. Secondly, Muslim lands are also easy targets for the neo-colonialist plundering of their natural resources. It has long proven easy to justify the invasion and occupation of Muslim lands for their natural resources or strategic locations. Often the pretext is the need to deliver "freedom and democracy". Thirdly, there are millions of Muslims living in Europe and North America either as citizens or expatriates. Again, they make easy targets, especially in Europe, for the social and economic problems for which Muslims are often blamed and

⁴⁹ Ibid., p 61.

⁵⁰ Rozina Ali, "The Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi", *The New Yorker*, 5 January 2017, <https://goo.gl/miQ3HS>

⁵¹ Liz Fekete, *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*, London and New York: Pluto Press, 2009.

become victim of racist politicians and Neo-Nazi attacks. In other words, Muslims become easy target for economic problems and failures in various European countries, just like Jews experienced in Europe for centuries. Fourthly, Muslims are feared also for their potential demographic threat due to their high rate of birth in some demographically declining European countries. The propaganda claiming that Muslims will soon take over is often enough to shock common people. Fifthly, some young Muslim individuals in Europe who are marginalized due to lack of proper education, poverty, joblessness, discrimination and racist attitudes they face fall prey to radical groups, terrorist organizations or secret services which use them for their actions and operations. Finally, many marginalized or radicalized groups or individuals who understand or interpret Islamic religious sources in a way favoring violence are involved in terrorism.

There is a serious problem with terms Islamic and Muslim terrorism widely used in the media. There are many violent individuals and groups that call themselves Muslims. However, there have been many terrorists who called and call themselves Christians like the members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland and abortion clinic bombers in the USA (who were officially categorized as terrorists), yet these are not called Christian terrorism. Likewise, there is an ongoing Zionist terror in Palestine committed by settlers as well as the Israeli state, but it is not called a Jewish or Zionist terror. Similarly, ongoing Burmese genocidal terror in Myanmar committed by individuals and the state and openly supported by some Buddhist monks is not referred to as Buddhist terror. The same goes for terrorist acts committed by Hindu nationalists in India.⁵² However, almost only in the case of Islam, we hear of “Islamic” and “Islamist” terror. Moreover, let alone calling it Christian or Western terror, often many terrorist activities are not even called by that name like

⁵² Praful Bidwai, “Confronting the Reality of Hindutva Terrorism”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43: 2008.

the massacre of 77 people committed by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway in 2011 or Neo-Nazi terror in many parts of Europe. This attitude is definitely an example of sheer hypocrisy aiming at manipulating public opinion.

Why has the “war on terror” failed, just like the war on drugs did? Could the USA and NATO not eradicate terrorists who have fully-equipped “armies” in Iraq and Syria and occupy various cities in Syria? The answer is that in spite of the rhetoric⁵³ and the myth⁵⁴ about it, there has never been a real war on terror, as there is no military power on earth (maybe with the possible exceptions of Russia and China) which can openly dare to fight against the US army. As a matter of fact, Donald Trump’s claim on 11 January 2017 that Obama Administration created ISIS is probably correct. What we have been seeing in recent decades, especially after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, is terrorizing of the world in the name of an alleged “war on terror” and a sort of victimization of the perpetrator. Such terror includes torture, deportation, extra-judicial detention and drone killings.⁵⁵ Today terrorists are waging proxy wars in Syria and elsewhere in the service of the strategic interests of wealthy states. Islamic, Islamist or Muslim terror is perhaps best read as a pretext to hide the state-led terror practiced by some countries. This is evident in pictures “leaked” or distributed from Guantanamo⁵⁶ and Abu Ghuraib.⁵⁷

⁵³ Douglas Kellner, “Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying: Presidential Rhetoric in the ‘War on Terror’”, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 37: 2007, pp. 622-645.

⁵⁴ Joanne Esch, “Legitimizing the ‘War on Terror’: Political Myth in Official-Level Rhetoric”, *Political Psychology*, 31: 2010, pp. 357-391.

⁵⁵ See for instance, Kenneth Roth, “The Law of War in the War on Terror: Washington’s Abuse of ‘Enemy Combatants’”, *Foreign Affairs*, 83: 2004, pp. 2-7 and Mark Elliott, “Torture, Deportation and Extra-Judicial Detention: Instruments of the ‘War on Terror’”, *The Cambridge Law Journal*, 68: 2009, pp. 245-248.

⁵⁶ Elspeth van Veen, “Captured by the camera’s eye: Guantánamo and the shifting frame of the Global War on Terror”, *Review of International Studies*, 37: 2011, pp. 1721-1749.

⁵⁷ Mary Ann Tétreault, “The Sexual Politics of Abu Ghraib: Hegemony, Spectacle, and the Global War on Terror”, *NWSA Journal*, 18: 2006, pp. 33-50.

Terror is even commercialized by the United States of America. US private military or “security” companies like Blackwater, Dyncorp and Triple Canopy make money by terrorizing people in target countries and get away with most of their crimes.

We believe that some terrorist organizations such as Taliban, al-Qaida and DAESH (ISIS/ISIL) should be seen and understood also in connection with the “war on terror”. For instance, there is DAESH, a so-called “Islamic” terrorist organization. Yet it has been killing mostly Muslims in Iraq and Syria, having so many terrorist attacks in Muslim countries like Turkey, but never for instance in Israel, which is a traditional target of radical movements in the Muslim world. In fact, we find out that ISIS apologized to the Israeli army for attacking once an Israeli unit based near the Syrian border.⁵⁸ Further evidence that something is amiss is the fact that this terrorist organization somehow “could not be crushed” for several years by the military technology of the only superpower, that is the USA. Similarly, Somalian pirates could not be prevented for some time in the early 21st century from threatening international shipping and trade (if you believe it), but later vanished into thin air.

While there is a widespread fear about Islamist or Muslim violence in the West, white racism is often underestimated. Today in Europe we see racists parading openly on the streets and working in parliaments and governments. In the USA the White House a president who occasionally makes overt racist claims. While this is the situation, some paranoids worry about Turks joining the EU or even invading Vienna, but have no fear about the emergence of another Hitler from within.

⁵⁸ Judah Ari Gross, “Ex-defense minister says IS ‘apologized’ to Israel for November clash”, 24 April 2017, <https://goo.gl/59L48n>

Conclusion

Fearmongering is used today to control peoples not only inside their countries but also globally through means ranging from global terror to global epidemics. It is also used to control, warn, deter, punish, weaken or destroy governments and countries. Therefore, there is a dire need to distinguish fear from phobia and address the issues pertaining to real fears. With respect to fake fears or phobias, one should fight fearmongers without intimidation, otherwise, one will always be a victim and slave to such fears. In that fight, one should beware of pundits and question all fears imposed upon people by governments, “experts” and the mass media.

Fearmongering is a problem not for the target population alone (like Muslims) but also for the whole world. Fearmongers control, design, abuse and rule their own societies too. For instance, in the USA, trillions of dollars are stolen from people’s infrastructure, healthcare, education and channeled into the wars. Robin who examines fear as a political idea mentions the repressive fear of elites in this context:

Perhaps we will see how our fear of terrorism, orchestrated and manipulated by the powerful, is being used to reorganize the structure of power in American society, giving more to those who already have much and taking away from those who have little. Perhaps we will even attend to—and make a political issue of—the inequalities of American life and the repressive fear those inequalities arouse and sustain. For one day, the war on terrorism will come to an end. All wars do. And when it does, we will find ourselves still living in fear: not of terrorism or radical Islam, but of the domestic rulers that fear has left behind.⁵⁹

As Kumar expresses it, “the image of the menacing ‘Muslim threat’ has been mobilized largely by ruling elites to serve a political

⁵⁹ Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 25.

agenda, whether the domination of Europe by the papacy in the eleventh century or US expansionism today.”⁶⁰ With Kumar, we assert that Muslimophobia is about politics and not religion and that it is therefore in the domain of politics that Muslimophobia must be fought. Although modern Muslimophobia is mostly of Western origin, it is common in other parts of the world as well. Therefore, one should also address Muslimophobia, ranging from human right violations to genocidal policies in some non-Western countries like Israel, Burma and China.

We have stated that Muslimophobia is a type of racism from which Muslims suffer. But how are Muslims themselves with respect to racism? Unfortunately, racism is common also among Muslim countries which do not have in recent decades a good record of treating religious, ethnic and cultural minorities in general. In addition to minorities, non-Western expatriates too are often treated badly. We even see that some rich countries in western Asia mistreat many workers coming from other parts of Asia. This situation naturally leads to the following question to be directed to those Muslims: while you treat others in an inhuman way, do you have a right to complain about racism in general and Muslimophobia in particular? As a matter of fact, many Muslims have a serious problem of racism and/or Muslim supremacism and many individuals are not even aware of it. There are some initiatives like MuslimARC (Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative)⁶¹ but they are too few for all the lands Muslims live. In brief, Muslims should first try to eliminate racism among themselves before complaining about being a victim of it in the West or elsewhere.

We discussed Muslimophobia as a sort of racism. The current problem of racism presents a quite pessimistic picture globally. However, despite widespread phobia and racism against certain ethnic, religious or cultural groups there are also a lot of positive

⁶⁰ Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, p. 193.

⁶¹ MuslimARC (Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative), <http://www.muslimarc.org>

developments all over the world. For instance, a recent Muslim-led crowdfunding campaign to help restore a vandalized Jewish cemetery near St. Louis was flooded with donations and reached its goal within just three hours.⁶² Likewise, we observe that while many Canadians formed “rings of peace” or acted as “humans shields” around mosques after some incidents.⁶³ Similarly, Pakistani Muslims formed human chain to protect Christians during mass.⁶⁴ Furthermore, there are various responsible statesmen and politicians such as Alexander Van der Bellen, the president of Austria who suggested that all women should wear headscarves in solidarity with Muslims to fight unrestrained Muslimophobia: “It is every woman’s right to always dress how she wants...”⁶⁵ We consider such individual and popular attitudes and reactions against fearmongering rather essential in the struggle against fearmongers. Intellectual clarity and power as well as grassroots efforts created, supported and led by conscious individuals will probably bring necessary change to fight against all kinds of phobia, including Muslimophobia. Such power and efforts can connect local issues to broader contexts.

⁶² Judy Maltz, “Muslim-led Campaign to Fix Vandalized Jewish Cemetery Triples Goal in Less Than One Day”, *Haaretz*, 25 February 2017, <http://www.haaretz.com/us-news/1.773186>

⁶³ Ashifa Kassam, “Canadians form ‘rings of peace’ around mosques after Quebec shooting”, *The Guardian*, 3 February 2017. <https://goo.gl/QDH5HP>

⁶⁴ Aroosa Shaukat, “Human chain formed to protect Christians during Lahore mass”, *The Express Tribune*, 6 October 2013. <https://goo.gl/z45SNp>

⁶⁵ Lizzie Dearden, “Austrian President calls on all women to wear headscarves in solidarity with Muslims to fight ‘rampant Islamophobia’”, *Independent*, 28 April 2017, <https://goo.gl/eBShRo>

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