About the ISJ

The *Islamophobia Studies Journal* is a bi-annual publication that focuses on the critical analysis of Islamophobia and its multiple manifestations in our contemporary moment.

*ISJ* is an interdisciplinary and multi-lingual academic journal that encourages submissions that theorizes the historical, political, economic, and cultural phenomenon of Islamophobia in relation to the construction, representation, and articulation of “Otherness.” The *ISJ* is an open scholarly exchange, exploring new approaches, methodologies, and contemporary issues.

The *ISJ* encourages submissions that closely interrogate the ideological, discursive, and epistemological frameworks employed in processes of “Otherness” – the complex social, political, economic, gender, sexual, and religious forces that are intimately linked in the historical production of the modern world from the dominance of the colonial/imperial north to the post-colonial south. At the heart of *ISJ* is an intellectual and collaborative project between scholars, researchers, and community agencies to recast the production of knowledge about Islamophobia away from a dehumanizing and subordinating framework to an emancipatory and liberatory one for all peoples in this far-reaching and unfolding domestic and global process.
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Editorial Statement

Islamophobia: An Electoral Wedge Issue!

Clearly, the recent events in Europe, U.S. and the Muslim World have brought renewed attention to Islam and the status of Muslim citizens and immigrants in the West. For some, the idea of Islam and the West are an odd coupling that don’t belong to the same category and are structurally set on a constant course of conflict. Terrorist events in Europe and extreme violence perpetrated by ISIS is paraded as exhibits A-Z to illustrate this incompatibility between Muslims, as adherents and holding an affinity to Islamic faith or a mere expression identity formation, and ‘the West’, as an undifferentiated homogenous category. The voices clamoring to offer unvarnished ‘expert’ views on a supposed clash of civilization are many but for the most part belong to a well-connected body operating within a broader Islamophobic network and a strategy centering on cherry picking contemporary and historical facts to support a predetermined ideological position.

Today, we do have an Islamophobic industry that is committed to the systematic and structured demonization of Islam and Muslims while collapsing a diverse 1.4 billion people into a single undifferentiated threatening class, both at home and abroad. Essentializing Muslims and giving them voice only in relations to terrorism and violence is at the heart of the Islamophobic campaign. Indeed, observing public discourses one gets the impression that the anti-Muslim sentiments have become widespread and the Islamophobia industry has managed to effectively deploy its messaging into the main stream. The intrusion and certainly the active pollution of public consciousness by racism and bigoted anti-Muslim discourses has been in the making and is part of a well-orchestrated campaign led by well-financed fringe groups and individuals.

In 2011, the Center for American Progress published a groundbreaking report, “Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America,” which managed to expose for the first time the funding sources behind the bigotry producing Islamophobic industry, the individuals responsible and the effective strategies that made possible to impact the mainstream. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/report/2011/08/26/10165/fear-inc/ CAP’s report managed to shift the focus and correctly highlighted the infrastructure behind the growing Islamophobia phenomena and provided empirical evidence that until then was only theorized.
The Fear Inc. authors identified seven foundations that provided a total of $42.6 million between 2001 and 2009 to fund organizations and individual spreading anti-Muslim bigotry in the country. What the report clearly documented is that rather than a large grouping and wide spread anti-Muslim popular movement the researchers discovered a small network of organizations, scholars and activists that are well-funded and committed to misinformation, machination and bigoted rhetoric. The 2011 report concluded that “the efforts of a small cadre of funders and misinformation experts were amplified by an echo chamber of the religious right, conservative media, grassroots organizations, and politicians who sought to introduce a fringe perspective on American Muslims into the public discourse.” https://islamophobianetwork.com

On February 11, 2015 CAP released Fear Inc. 2.0, the second installment in the series that builds upon the initial research and providing deeper analysis of the Islamophobia network and the current themes utilized in targeting the American Muslim community. The report examines Islamophobia within the religious right and the ability of groups to increasingly deploy “anti-Islamic rhetoric” and to “push this… discourse into mainstream GOP politics.”

The religious right and the Republican party has an acute Islamophobia problem with grassroots activists increasingly at ease in expressing anti-Muslim statements. Certainly, debates about national security and terrorism are legitimate topics but among religious rights activists and sections of the Republican party Islamophobic discourse has become connected to the broader cultural wars with a distinct messianic and clash of civilization rhetoric.

In chapter two of Fear Inc. 2.0, the report examines the 2014 Values Voter Summit while pointing out that the gathering “heard from many of the architects and amplifiers of the Islamophobia network.” Speakers at the VVS made sure to emphasize that we are at war with Islam with statements cited in the report include:

Former Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN):
“We have jihadists who are subscribing to this radical ideology that dying in the name of Islam gets them to heaven. This is spiritual warfare. And what we need to do is defeat Islamic jihad. Sadly, President Obama has the wrong prescription. He even fails to acknowledge their motivations for bringing about jihad. Yes, Mr. President, it...
is about Islam. ... And I believe if you have an evil of an
order of this magnitude, you take it seriously. ... You declare
war on it, you don’t dance around it. Just like the Islamic
State has declared war on the United States of America.”

Mark Levin, a conservative radio host:
Called outgoing Attorney General Eric Holder a “coward
because he won’t talk about Islam.”

Brigitte Gabriel, an Islamophobic activist:
Spoke of “the cancer of Islamic barbarism” and claimed
that “radical Islamists” constitute 15 percent to 25 percent
of Muslims worldwide, an unsubstantiated figure that the
Islamophobia network frequently uses.

Republican governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, who has
referred to Muslims as “uncorked animals,” urged the United
States to make clear its position in the Israeli-Palestinian
conflict:
“When it comes down to the battle between the
descendants of Ishmael [Muslims] and descendants of Isaac
[Jews] ... we will stand with those who stand for biblical
truth and liberty and that is not something we will ever
apologize for or ever be ashamed. We will stand with the
nation of Israel.”

Gary Bauer—a former GOP presidential candidate and
president of American Values, a religious right advocacy
group—said:
“President Barack Obama has “more [interest] in
defending the reputation of Islam than he does in saving
the lives of Christians.” These outlandish remarks
prompted a standing ovation.11 Bauer also had some advice
for the next Republican presidential nominee saying if that
person has “a heart and a brain,” he will tell President
Obama that “defending Islam” is not “in his job
description.”

What is clear is that the religious right has made Islamophobia
and anti-Muslim bigotry a major rallying point for activists
across the country and deploying it within a broader political
strategy. One key element of this strategy is the national anti-
Sharia campaign lead by David Yerushalmi, “the lawyer
responsible for the movement and who drafted the model...
legislation used by activists across the country” with the
expressed goal “to shape public attitude and is not about legal
substance.” The report cites Yerushalmi’s own framing of the
issue in The New York Times 2011 interview, “If this thing passed
in every state without any friction, it would not have served its
purpose. ... The purpose was heuristic—to get people asking this
question, ‘What is Shariah?”’
What we have in the anti-Sharia legislation and targeting Democratic and civil society leaders is an electoral strategy that seeks to monetize Islamophobia into votes at the ballot box and for sure to influence elections outcome moving forward. Attempts to influence elections with Islamophobic content was front and center in the 2008 elections when the Clarion Fund spent about $17 million to send 28 million copies of the documentary, “Obsession, Radical Islam’s War Against the West,” as an insert in Sunday Newspapers days before the elections to voters in swing states with the idea that Candidate Obama should not be trusted or the constant speculation of him being a closet Muslim. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/erik-rose/pro-mccain-group-dumping_b_125969.html A similar strategy was unleashed in the 2010 midterm elections focusing on the “Ground Zero Mosque”, a term coined by the Islamophobia network and then amplified through the conservative media.

Wedge issues are a very critical pieces in campaign strategist’s tool chest and Islamophobia and targeting American Muslims create the needed framing focusing on national security and threat to the ‘homeland’ which puts liberal Democrats on the defensive while pushing independent voters into supporting rightwing Republican candidates even though it might be against their economic and political interests.

Another critical area exposed by the report centers on leading figures in the Islamophobia network managing to have a disproportional impact on law-enforcement and counter terrorism training. The report documents what have become known to civil rights and community organizations that local, state and national law-enforcement agencies and the FBI training programs were heavily infused with Islamophobic content provided by individuals and groups connected to the Islamophobic network. “Teaching America’s police officers that all Muslims are suspicious and Islam is inherently evil” in the view of the Fear Inc. 2.0 authors “is counterproductive because it drives a wedge between law enforcement and Muslim communities.” The individuals involved have found a niche in the counterterrorism industry to peddle Islamophobia and problematize Muslims as a group under the rubric of protecting the country. Fear Inc. examines few of these trainers and then highlight the work done by investigative journalists and two SF Bay Area civil rights organizations, the American Civil Liberties Union https://www.aclunc.org and Asian Law Caucus, http://www.asianlawcaucus.org that filed a Freedom of Information Act requests in 2010 and managed to expose parts of the Islamophobic network intrusion into the law-
enforcement and counter terrorism trainings.

The Islamophobia network agenda in the U.S. is connected to a broader electoral strategy. “Demographics in the United States are changing rapidly” was an important reason for some on the political right to opt for a divisive strategy as Prof. Saeed A. Khan and Alejandrop J. Beutel illustrated in their recently released report, Manufacturing Bigotry: A State-by-State Legislative Effort to Pushback Against 2050 by Targeting Muslims and Other Minorities, and published by The Institute of Social Policy and Understanding. http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Manufacturing_Bigotry[4].pdf
In ISPU’s report Khan and Beutel point to six issues that are connected to this strategy across the U.S. and are used to mobilize the right wing politically: Voter Identification Regulations; State-level Immigration Laws; Defense of Marriage Act-Sam Sex Marriage Bans; Right-to-work Legislations; Anti-Abortion Bills; Anti-Sharia/Anti-“Foreign Laws” Bills. ISPU’s researchers correctly situate Islamophobia within a broader national political context and “empirically measure the attempted disenfranchisement against… groups” that are the face of a rapidly changing America. Thus, targeting Muslims becomes a signpost for the deep discomfort felt about this change on the one hand and the shifting political landscape. This is clearly visible in the constant delegitimizing of President Obama on his supposed Muslim-ness while the reality is a discomfort for the early arrival of the diverse and indeed different America.

Consequently, the Islamophobic activists and network participants have been able to infect civil society’s consciousness and public discourses with an otherization message that views American Muslims and by extension Muslims around the world as a threat to America and western society in general. Rather than speak of a changing America and the challenges posed by it, the Islamophobic network employ the well-tested and often successful otherization campaign to keep the status quo in place. For example, former Allen West from Florida is indicative of this approach stating, “radical Islamists are busy building a voting bloc to sneak their political agenda into the American system” and Muslims work to “institutionalize policies that favor them” with the goal to “destroy America from within using a civilizational jihad, and that’s exactly what you see happening.”

The same Islamophobic dynamics in the U.S. political landscape is mirrored with differences in a number of European countries whereby essentialist views of Islam and an otherization
campaign focused on Sharia and purported threats posed by Muslim citizens, as non-European groupings. In this context, being a European and Muslim is likewise de-aggregated and expressed as inherently conflicting and oppositional. This framing is used as a rallying cry for extreme right wing parties with the Stop the Islamization of Europe https://sioeeu.wordpress.com and Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30478321 and English Defense League are visible manifestations of the Islamophobic political typography. For sure, the Islamophobic network are collaborating and reinforcing the anti-Muslim narrative across the Atlantic and quote each other extensively as Anders Behring Brivik’s case in Norway illustrates. https://publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/

Terrorism is real and should be dealt with by real experts that are trained in sound methods to counter it. It does no service to the country or provides any security if Islamophobia is used as a method to score narrowly conceived political ‘gains’ by a fringe that maliciously perfected manipulating the society’s real fears of terrorism into supporting racist and bigoted targeting of Muslim Americans. The Islamophobia network must be opposed and countered for it provides neither factual knowledge about Islam and Muslims nor does it enhance security. However, what it does is help a discredited extreme right wing fringe that has no solutions to real and critical problem come back into respectability riding the Islamophobia horse and straight into the ballot box.

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The cover illustration, "It's Just Policy" is a critique on the discrimination Muslims, and anyone who appears to be of Middle-Eastern descent, experience in America. The piece addresses the general surveillance that goes hand-in-hand with Islamophobia, but is more directly inspired by a close friend's constant struggle with TSA, where he is always pulled aside for further inspection as he fits the mental image they seek out. I chose to use a microscope to represent TSA and the overall eyes of America. A microscope can only view a small part of a specimen, but in a very invasive way. By putting the woman and her child under the microscope, it represents the dehumanizing way that Islamophobic cultures inspect and survey Muslims.
Reconstructing the Muslim Self: Muhammad Iqbal, Khudi, and the Modern Self

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ABSTRACT: Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), one of the 20th century’s most influential Muslim thinkers, theorized a radically new understanding of Islamic selfhood. For Iqbal, the self (khudi) was marked by an individuality that made it distinct and inherently equipped to overcome colonial incursions. Iqbal put this down to Ibn ‘Arabi’s (1165-1240) “Neo-Platonist doctrine of sheep” of wahdat-al-wujud. This article examines the ways in which Iqbal’s ideas of the self derive from a specifically modern, Western notion of the self that has its history in Rene Descartes’ cogito ergo sum – a modern selfhood entailing independence and uniqueness, and which became the standard in Europe after the 18th century. It is a self whose worth is measured by what it produces, and by its relationship to the world as a creator. When Iqbal writes that “man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique individual [God],” this paper investigates how Iqbal’s approach to the Muslim self is thought through Western categories – beginning with the self, but extending to the pan-Islamic nation (the ummah), and nationalism – and how such an imagining delimits his very (re)construction of Islam, thereby further imbricating “Islam” within Eurocentric power-knowledge. The article reflects on the importance of examining perhaps the foundational theoretical assumption of the modern Muslim experience – Muslim selfhood – and how such an examination is essential for the process of decolonial thinking to begin.

INTRODUCTION

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was perhaps the greatest of all Islamic modernists, not least because his level of mastery of Western philosophy, in addition to his deep familiarity with the Islamic tradition, was unparalleled by other great Islamic modernists such as Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Jamal al-Din Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905) and Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928). For Iqbal, as was the case for all Muslim reformers, there was a deep sense of disquiet regarding the political and economic ascendancy of the West over the Muslim world, manifested in the colonization of vast swathes of Muslim lands beginning in the 18th century. The question troubling Muslim thinkers was “what had gone wrong?” Muslims, it was believed, had been divinely promised “victory” (whether political, economic, cultural, or technological) over the rest of the world, and history had largely borne this out – until, of course, European powers exceeded the Islamic world and colonialism took root in formerly Muslim-led lands. India was no exception, and it became one of the central colonial projects.
For Western-educated Muslim intellectuals, the Islamic world’s current civilizational inferiority was due to the West’s embracing of reason and the Muslim world’s ostensible discarding of it. Reason, they argued, was the very aspect of Islam that had made it so great in the past. Unlike the mainstream of Muslim reformers, however, Iqbal did not advocate a wholesale (re)adoption of reason. Iqbal proposed a complicated approach to the problem of intellectuality that included both intuition and spiritual awakening, aspects marginalized in Western discourses on modernity. But for Iqbal, the root cause of Muslim “debasement” lay in its approach to the “self.” Iqbal’s thought was dedicated to addressing this as a means for re-empowering the Muslim self.

Iqbal argued that under the influence of Neoplatonism – the system of metaphysical speculation that had been inherited from Plato, through Plotinus, and incorporated early on in the history of Islamic thought’s engagement with ancient Greek thought – Muslims, and in particular the Sufis, conceived of the self as something that had to be overcome and ultimately annihilated. In the active pursuit of such an ideal, these “pantheistic” Sufis, as he called them, who taught the doctrine of wabdat al-wujud (“oneness of being”) exemplified for Ibn ‘Arabi and his school of thought, became more concerned with hairsplitting arguments and less concerned with “action” and “achievement,” which were the basis of past Muslim greatness. The significance of Sufism lay in its “mystical,” supposedly antirational nature, and therefore in its position in the dichotomy between reason and irrationality – where the West was seen as embodying modernity and reason. Eventually, their entire lives became that of “quietism” and “decadence,” and finally, Iqbal argues, this far-reaching influence led to the downfall of the Islamic world vis-à-vis the West. Iqbal was dedicated to counteracting the influence of this type of Sufism. While acknowledging the contribution of Greek thought to the Muslim world, Iqbal ultimately argued for an anti-classicism that was a reflection of the spirit of the Quran. “While Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Quran…. The spirit of the Quran [is] essentially anti-classical.”

As representatives of “old” and the “new” Sufism, Iqbal commended the life-affirming and active Sufism of Rumi (1207-1273) (whom he considered to be his spiritual guide), while warning against the “intoxicated” and “inactive” Sufism of Hafiz (1325/6-1389/90). Regarding the latter, he said “Beware of Hafiz the drinker,/His cup is full of the poison of death.” Iqbal was concerned with reinstating the self which had been “gambled away” by previous generations of Muslims. In The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, which Iqbal considered to be the most significant of all his works, he quotes the Quranic verse, “Verily We proposed to the Heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive the trust, but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man alone undertook to bear it, but hath proven unjust, senseless!” Here Iqbal interprets “the trust” as the trust of personality (self/ego), while historically it was interpreted either as the trust of tawhid or obedience to God. Iqbal makes a fundamental break from the traditional interpretation in an effort to revitalize Muslims towards action. For Iqbal, the discovery and cultivation of the ego marks the pinnacle of religious life. Unlike in “pantheistic” Sufism, which emphasizes the dissolution of the ego, or fana, and only after which the self in the higher sense can be adorned with the Divine attributes (which is also known as baqa, and the final end of the path), for Iqbal the strengthening of the ego with the divine principle is the true end (without recourse to the notion of fana) as it allows man’s fulfillment of his God-given role as His vicegerent on earth. Iqbal thus conceives of man as being independent, creative, in charge of his own destiny, constantly evolving, life-affirming, active, modern, and yet religious.
The Iqbalian man is in relation to God, not as “nothing,” but as His servant (**‘abduhu**). He is constantly moving towards perfection as the Perfect Man. This idea was significantly, though very differently, elaborated upon by al-Jili (1366-1424). Man’s responsibility is as God’s creative agent in the universe, “recreating” it in ever-increasing perfection, and thereby bringing about *freedom* from colonial rule, as has been noted by Javed Majeed. This article is thus an examination of Iqbal’s (re)construction of the Muslim self—with the ultimate end of freedom and the ways in which he borrows from a modern, Western understanding of selfhood, and its implications for his “Islamic project.” “Hallaj and Prophetic Perfection; God, Man and Society,” is an overview of Iqbal’s philosophy and how it relates to the self; while “Contentions” is a critical appraisal of Iqbal’s thought in relation to decolonial thinking.

**HALLAJ AND PROPHETIC PERFECTION; GOD, MAN AND SOCIETY**

The life and thought of Mansur al-Hallaj (858-922) has been the object of much reflection and debate in Islamic history. Many Sufis argued that Hallaj had successfully annihilated his self and that it was the divine principle speaking when he stated, “Ana al-Haqq,” (“I am the Truth.”) Iqbal felt that this was a mistaken interpretation which was the result, initially, of Neoplatonism, and later on of Ibn ‘Arabi’s school of thought. This school emphasized the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*, or the “unity of being.” This pantheistic philosophy entailed that everything is immersed in God. Through this interpretation, God’s pure transcendence was diminished.

In contrast to interpreting Hallaj’s utterance from such a perspective of ‘*itissal*, or union, “[Louis] Massignon…succeeded in showing that in the theology of Hallaj, God’s pure transcendence is maintained.” Iqbal, used this interpretation to support his thesis on the individuality and personality of the self. He wrote,

*The contemporaries of Hallaj, as well as his successors, interpreted [his] words pantheistically, but the Fragments of Hallaj, collected and published by the French Orientalist L. Massignon, leave no doubt that the martyr saint could not have meant to deny the transcendence of God. The true interpretation of his experience, therefore, is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realization and bold affirmation in an undying phrase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality.*

According to Iqbal, this type of spiritual direction was exemplified by the Prophet, who is the exemplar par excellence in Islam: “The Quran says of the Prophet’s vision of the Ultimate Ego [God]: ‘His eye turned not aside, nor did it wander.’ […] [According to this ideal] the moment we fix our gaze on intensity [or God], we begin to see that the finite ego must be distinct, though not isolated, from the Infinite.”

Most importantly for Iqbal, given his philosophy of “action,” which shall be addressed more fully a little later, “the psychological difference between the prophetic and the mystic types of consciousness” is that “the mystic does not wish to return from the repose of ‘unitary experience’; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The prophet’s return [however] is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to controlling the forces of history, and thereby to creating a fresh world of ideals…. The most Perfect Man is the most perfect vicegerent, whose function is as master of the world, of the universe, of all things.
For Iqbal, man’s function is to attain to an ever-increasing individuality and freedom, which can only be achieved through proximity, or “realization” of that proximity, to God:20 “The Ego attains to freedom by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partly free, partly determined, and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual who is most free – God. In one word, life is an endeavor for freedom.”21 This proximity is in a sense a “proximating” of God, which derives from the famous tradition takballaqu bi-akhlak illah, “Create in yourselves the attributes of God,” that is, “man should attain more and more nearness to a unique God. Thus man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique individual.”22 Such an individuality is not the case of the “drop slipping into the sea,” but it is to become a shining pearl in the bosom of the sea, which is superb in its individual luster, but at the same time could not have come into being without the sea. As Iqbal writes in kulliyaat-e iqbal urduu, “If I am an oyster-shell, then in your hand is the brightness/honor of my pearl, if I am a pottery-shard, then make me a royal pearl!”23 Thus the individualities of God and man exist in a dynamic and creative tension in Iqbal’s philosophy, a tension that he does not resolve entirely satisfactorily.24 As part of man’s creating in himself the attributes of God, one of the main qualities that he achieves is that of “creator,” which again he gains through proximity to the Ultimate Reality: “Of all the creations of God [man] alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker.”25 However, in order to overcome the tension between the “creator man” and the “Creator God,” Iqbal says that God consciously limited His omnipotent will: “It [this limitation] is born out of his own creative freedom whereby he has chosen finite egos to be participants in his life, power and freedom.”26

Thus, the universe is not static and complete, but rather is forever evolving. “It is not a block universe, a finished product, immobile and incapable of change. Deep in its inner being lies, perhaps, the dream of a new birth.”27 It is man’s role to direct the universe to ever-increasing perfection, which he does through the pull of love / desire, without which he becomes as though “dead”: “Life is latent in seeking, / Its origin is hidden in desire, / Keep desire alive in thine heart /Lest thy little dust become a tomb. / Negation of desire is death to the living. / Even an absence of heat extinguishes the flame.”28 Through this constant movement, man molds his very destiny: “Do not fetter thyself with the chains of Taqdir [destiny], / for with this canopy of heaven there is a way out. / If thou dost not believe rise and discover that no sooner hast thou released thy feet findest thou a free field.”29 In this way the Iqbalian man is the one who manifests God’s decree. “The Momin (believer) is himself the destiny of God, so that when he changes his own self, his destiny also changes.”30 As Iqbal writes, “Abdudhu [the servant of God] is the fashioner of Destiny…..”31 Iqbal criticizes pantheistic Sufism because of its failure to recognize this creative, active and destiny-fashioning role of man. Regarding this state of mind, Iqbal writes, “We find a strange similarity in Hindu and some of the Muslim thinkers who thought over [the] problem of the self. The point of view adopted by Sankara in the interpretation of the Gita was the same that was followed by Ibn ‘Arabi in the interpretation of the Quran.”32 That is, its state of mind is one of inaction, fatalism, and quietism. The Iqbalian man, on the other hand, is constantly striving and has within him the state of creative “tension” through which he constantly perfects himself: “Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained…. Since personality, or the state of tension, is the most valuable achievement of man, he should see that he does not revert to a state of relaxation.”33

In this conception of “higher” Sufism, as he calls it,34 Iqbal envisions the “human ego [as] rising higher than mere reflection, and mending its transiency by appropriating the eternal.”35 Action is the very basis of life – it is the way of the Prophet and of God Himself.36
Thus, through the untiring action of Iqbalian man, society’s wellbeing is ensured and maintained. “The fate of a people does not depend so much on organization as on the worth of and power of individual men.” Without such an effort, society becomes decadent – which is the current state of Muslims, according to Iqbal.

Through the inner, creative tension of man, an evolutionary picture of his ascent is put forward by Iqbal, which borrows from Bergson’s *élán vital* and Nietzsche’s will to power, whereby the fundamental driving force of humanity (and all of existence, in fact) is the achievement of endless perfection. “In his inmost being man, as conceived by the Quran, is a creative activity, an ascending spirit who, in his outward march, rises from one state of being to another: ‘It needs not that I swear by the sunset redness and by the night and its gatherings and by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward.’” Thus “the joy of the journey is not in the arrival, but in the perpetual tramp…. Ceaseless effort and not repose is what gives zest to life, and so Iqbal prefers humanity in its imperfect state.” Illustrated in Iqbal’s own words, “Man marches always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality which ‘every moment appears in a new glory.’”

Iqbal saw in the constant striving to realize the perfection of the individual epitomized by Hallaj’s *ana al-Haq*, as described earlier, the ideal of the nation itself. Annemarie Schimmel notes, “In a group of quatrains in his posthumous work (Armaghan-i Hijaz), the ideal nation is that which realizes *ana’l-haq* in its striving, i.e. which proves to be creative truth, a living, active reality which witnesses God’s reality by its own national – or supranational – life.” This is an idea that seeks to reconcile the opposition between Iqbal’s perfect man being an individual, and his responsibility to society. Indeed the Iqbalian man is at once separate from society and inextricably bound to it. This conception of man and society is mirrored in Iqbal’s notion of man’s relationship to God, as a simple verse summarizes his entire attitude to the problem: “The men of God do not become God,/but they are never separated from God!” In this way, the Iqbalian man, in his never-ending creativity – which is rooted in man’s inextricable relationship to God – continually recreates himself and his society, thereby, inevitably, shedding the shackles of colonialism.

**CONTENTIONS**

It is important to reflect on why Sufism – and specifically Ibn ‘Arabi’s school of Sufism – is singled-out for critique by Iqbal as the *cause célèbre* for explaining the Muslim world’s “falling behind” the West. To address this, let us begin by considering Iqbal’s education. While he did receive primary education in a Quran school, his subsequent formal education was almost entirely modern and Western. In *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India*, Sanjay Seth examines how modern, Western education – with its very different epistemology and attendant subject formations, as compared to indigenous forms of knowledge in (pre)colonial India – contributed towards (re)shaping Muslim subjectivities. To be sure, Seth shows that there wasn’t a wholesale displacement of indigenous modes of knowing; however, a significant rupture did occur, resulting in a rethinking of indigenous learning. It is within this intellectual milieu, which included such important figures as Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, that Iqbal should be located. In other words, *Indian intellectuals thought through, against, and in relation to modern, Western ideas and categories of politics, philosophy, culture, and religion.*

A fascinating illustration of the way in which Iqbal accepted Western constructions of Islam and Muslims is expressed in a handful of letters. Iqbal writes about his feeling of
being torn between his “constitutional” inclinations towards the traditional Sufism of his forefathers, and what he understood to be the “true” Islam of the Quran and the Prophet of Islam. In the above-mentioned letters (referred to by Javed Majeed in his study of Muhammad Iqbal), Iqbal writes of his natural disposition towards the fana of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Sufism, which he had so resolutely dismissed in his writings. However, Iqbal was “constrained by the needs of the time to define himself against the notion of fana.” While Javed Majeed puts this down to Iqbal’s “willed alienation from the tradition he defines himself against,” it is important to examine Iqbal’s intellectual formation to further the argument that thinking in the modern world is significantly modulated by Western paradigms.

It is noteworthy that Iqbal’s doctoral dissertation, “The Development of Metaphysics in Persia,” in many ways reproduces Orientalist ideas about Sufism as an aberration inserted into the “dry,” “legalistic,” “desert” religion of Islam. He writes in the introduction of his dissertation-turned-book, “The student of Islamic Mysticism who is anxious to see an all-embracing exposition of the principle of Unity, must look [at] the Andalusian Ibn al-‘Arabi, whose profound teaching stands in strange contrast with the dry-as-dust Islam of his countrymen.” In other words, Iqbal accepted Orientalist constructions of Islam and Muslims, thereby positioning himself within a discursive formation as far as his reconstruction of Islamic thought. The argument is therefore, in keeping with Talal Asad’s reflections on the problem with the idea of “agency,” as “the structuration of conditions and possibilities.” That is, the ways in which one is delimited from the start by practical and epistemological conditions necessitate that an Iqbal, a Tagore, or a Gandhi do things a certain way, and the “consciousness with which one does them” is really of another order.

It is in this way that Iqbal’s little-known ambivalence towards his own adopted position vis-à-vis traditional Sufism can be better understood. This also sheds light on Iqbal’s understanding of Sufism, since Sufism was constructed as an accretion to Islam by Orientalists. In this regard, Tomoko Masuzawa writes in The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism:

> Seen through the mystic kernel of Sufism, all the parochial and miserly laws, childish dogmas, and ceremonial encrustations that have constituted orthodox Islam seem to fall away. In effect, through deep contemplation, this kernel would come to seem something other than Islam proper, or Islam in the usual sense.

To be sure, Iqbal was not alone among the modernists in casting aspersions on Sufism for bringing about the decline of Muslim civilization. Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Muhammad ‘Abduh, and Rashid Rida all singled out Sufism for blame. What made Iqbal different from other Islamic modernists was the fact that he did not – at least not at the outset – seek to dismiss Sufism tout court. Rather, his reconstruction of Islamic thought was in significant ways a reconstruction of Sufism, a reimagining and reinvigoration of Sufism, which he called “higher Sufism,” and a reassessment of the role of the self within Sufi metaphysics.

In traditional Sufi cosmology, the self/soul (nafs) is graded according to three levels: the soul that commands to evil (nafs al-‘ammara); the self-reproaching soul (nafs al-kawwama); and the soul at peace (nafs al-mutmainna). The soul, according to this understanding, attains the highest level through striving to do good deeds – in obedience to God – which, by the methods of spiritual realization handed down from master to disciple, ultimately allows one to train the soul so that it becomes in tune with the divine. For Iqbal, this amounted to a denial of the essence of what makes humans human, and also what he argued was the crucial
aspect of the Quranic narrative: that, when God offered the “trust” [amanah] to the heavens and the earth and the mountains they refused; but when He offered the trust to man, he accepted (Quran 33:72). This trust, according to Iqbal, was the trust of “egohood,” whereas, according to traditional Islamic cosmology, the trust was considered the trust of tawhid, and of upholding the precepts of the religion. It would appear to be clear that Iqbal is making a radical break from the historic Islamic tradition. The idea of “egohood” or “selfhood” is instrumentalized for the sake of (re)producing Muslims as active agents of change in the world.

To consider Iqbal and his relation to Rumi, Hafiz and Hallaj, we must recall that Iqbal considered Rumi to be his spiritual-guide, while he described Hafiz as his “cup is full of the poison of death.” He regarded Hallaj as embodying the meaning of egohood. Although it has been suggested that Rumi’s poetry lends itself more readily to being read in terms of Islamic morals, whereas this is much less the case with Hafiz, the question here is regarding the extent to which Iqbal was reading these poets, including Hallaj, through Orientalism. It is pertinent that his appreciation of Hallaj and his (apparent) affirmation of “the individual ego” was through Massignon’s studies on Hallaj. As for Hafiz and his wine, the following from William C. Chittick is significant:

No doubt when Hafiz speaks of wine, he means wine. The question is, “What is wine?” All Sufi thought goes back to a cosmology and metaphysics. In order to understand the nature of wine, we must refer to the philosophical and metaphysical beliefs of the Sufi poets who employ the image. For example, Sufi thought of the school of Ibn al-‘Arabi […] holds that the things of this world are not just things, rather they are created by God, derived from God, and ultimately Self-Manifestations of God, loci of His Theophany, places in which He reveals the “Hidden Treasure,” mirrors in which the Beauty of the Beloved can be contemplated. God, or if one prefers, “Absolute and Nondelimited Being” (wujûd-i mutlaq), is the Origin of all creatures, of all relative and delimited existents. […] If Sufis speak of their beloved, they may not be referring only to God, but they also are not referring to “so-and-so” as such, but only insomuch as she is a reflection of the true Beloved. Wine likewise may be wine, and music, music. But if so, they are only dim reflections of true Wine and true Music.

In other words, “wine” must not be read simply as an intoxicating drink; rather, it is to be seen significantly as symbolizing God Himself. The question being raised here is, in the end, perhaps a simple one: To what extent was Iqbal reading Hafiz literally instead of symbolically?

Iqbal’s critique against “pantheistic” Sufism, derives from his idea that the spirit of Quran is anti-classical. It is therefore worth considering what he means by this. Did he mean that the spirit of the Qur’an is against pantheism? That it is against metaphysical speculation of the kind that was adopted by Muslim philosophers and mystics (the two designations typically being applicable to the same individuals)? That it is “radically monotheistic,” as has been portrayed by Orientalists? Perhaps Iqbal means to suggest all of the above?

A second question that also arises is: To what extent was Iqbal (unconsciously) drawing on a Eurocentric understanding of the relationship between ancient Greek thought and Muslims; an understanding that suggests there was a fundamental opposition (or incompatibility) between “Islam” and Greek philosophy, whereby Muslims preserved and carried down ancient Greek thought as though they were mere vessels, without adding or subtracting anything? That is, Muslim thinkers played no role in interpreting and representing Greek thought within their own intellectual milieu, for that would run counter to
the Eurocentric thesis of European exceptionalism: Greek thought was inherited in its entirety, unaltered, and intact from its ancient origins, by the true heirs of such knowledge — modern Europe.

This thesis is of course to a large extent continued — albeit unconsciously — in the very manner in which “the Western canon” is taught at universities around the world, with very little consideration given to complicating the study of “world history.” Where world history is taught, European history is still seen as separate from the rest of the world. It is also important to consider that Orientalists, in the process of attempting to discover the “original” language(s) of Europe, constructed Greek “polytheism” as a fundamentally creative force in history, whose heir was Western Christianity. The monotheisms of Judaism and Islam were seen as opposed to creativity, with Islam being seen as the least creative of the two (Judaism, at least, was productive of Christianity, or so the logic went).

Iqbal’s inversion of the traditional Sufi understanding of the self and his emphasis on the centrality of the self for human achievement and being are significantly informed by a modern, Western understanding of the self going back to Descartes. This, therefore, departs significantly from a traditional Islamic understanding of the self. Like Descartes, Iqbal posits “being” in man, and not in Being as such, as it is the case in premodern Islamic metaphysics, thereby diminishing the function of God as the source of all being. Iqbal makes the point that the ritual prayer (salat) in Islam symbolizes both negation and affirmation, which of course is also at the root of the Islamic doctrine: La ilaha illa Allah, “No god but God.” However, it may be argued that the negation being first (La ilaha, “No god”), it must mean a denial of the self first and foremost, and only then can there be an affirmation (illa Allah, “but God”), which, according to traditional Sufi metaphysics, is done by God Himself. And so the human self is from the very beginning non-existent.

Also like Descartes, Iqbal’s point of departure is the self, as he writes: “To exist in pure duration is to be a self, and to be a self is to be able to say ‘I am.’ Only that truly exists that can say ‘I am’…. But our ‘I-amness’ is dependent and arises out of the distinction between the self and the not-self.” He goes on to describe the Ultimate Self (God) as existing by Himself without any need of the other selves, while of course these other selves are in need of Him. The “proof” of God that he formulates is reminiscent of Descartes’ “cogito ergo sum” whose radical skepticism allowed him to begin from his own “thinking” self, and then go on to prove God’s existence. In this case, being is posited in one’s self, prior to that of God. In the end the doctrinal formulation — according to Iqbal — would appear to read: “Man says: No god but God.”

As far as Iqbal’s use of the word “pantheistic” with regard to Ibn ‘Arabi’s school of thought, it is significant to remember that this was for a long time the kind of language used by Orientalists. In his path breaking work, Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Subrawardi, Ibn Arabi, Seyyed Hossein Nasr writes:

The basic doctrine of Sufism, especially as interpreted by Muhby al-Din [Ibn ‘Arabi] ...is that of the transcendent unity of Being (wabdat al-wujud) for which he has been accused by many modern scholars as being a pantheist, a panentheist, and an existential monist.... All of these accusations are false...because they mistake the metaphysical doctrines of Ibn ‘Arabi for philosophy and do not take into consideration the fact that the way of gnosis is not separate from grace and sanctity. The pantheistic accusations against the Sufis are doubly false because, first of all, pantheism is a philosophical system, whereas Muhby al-Din and others like him never claimed to follow or create any “system” whatsoever; and, secondly, because pantheism implies a substantial continuity between God and the Universe whereas the Shaikh [Ibn ‘Arabi] would have been the first to claim God’s absolute transcendence over every category, including that of substance.
Also consider the following lines from Ibn ‘Arabi’s magnum opus, *Futuhat al-Makkiyyah*:

*Each individual among the Folk of Allah has a ladder specific to him which no one else climbs. [...]* All this takes place because the servant and the Lord always remain together in the perfection of the existence of each in himself. The servant always remains servant and the Lord Lord throughout this increase and decrease.*64*

The intention behind pointing to these passages is to shed light on the extent to which Iqbal was informed – whether consciously or unconsciously – by Western, Orientalist constructions of Sufism and Islam; and how this subsequently impacted upon Iqbal’s reformulation of the self, or *khudi*.

As mentioned earlier, Javed Majeed writes that Iqbal saw his project as being one of “redefining Islam in response to colonialism,”*65* as a means of achieving the freedom, independence and self-creation that could only be achieved with the removal of colonial powers from Muslim lands. Iqbal had a pan-Islamic vision. But what does it mean to say: “Life is an endeavor for freedom.”*66* What is the freedom that is being sought? It is of course fundamentally a freedom from colonial rule; this is the central concern of Iqbal’s writing. He is not so much concerned with the perfection of the human self as he is with perfecting selves, who, in their constant striving to re-create the world, ultimately free society from the bondage of colonial rule. Iqbal derives this from Nietzsche whose idea of human perfection in the Overman is an endless process of realization, perfection as a never-ending quest.*67* At the same time – and somewhat paradoxically, given that Iqbal was not a systematic thinker, – Iqbal was critical of Nietzsche, just as he was critical of modern, Western thought and its excessive reliance on reason, and its inability to relate phenomena with the noumena.*68* Thus, although Nietzsche becomes a central character in his magnum opus the *Javed Nama*, Iqbal sees in Nietzsche the example of a prophetic vision without the crucial benefit of divine revelation.*69*

The question, for the sake of problematizing an ideal that is taken for granted, is: Is “freedom” (liberty) necessarily a desirable thing? It is of course an Enlightenment ideal – perhaps the central Enlightenment ideal – but why is it a universal given? What does it mean to be free in a premodern society? Sanjay Seth provides some fascinating insights on this as to the differences in the ideal of freedom between ancient Greece and the modern world:

> The term slave is for us moderns a social category, meaning that we understand “slave” to signify a free man en-slaved, rather than, as for the Greeks, understanding it to denote a form of selfhood. Our idea of human selfhood or subjectivity has, in other words, a certain notion of “freedom” already built into it. Words like freedom make us think of Rousseau and Kant and the French and American revolutions, and of “fuller” conceptions of freedom – not just freedom as non-enslavement but as autonomy, as choosing our ends, and the means towards them. These associations are of course apt, and are part of what I have been invoking in insisting that modern knowledge presumes a form of subjectivity – active rather than passive, and so on. But the “first” sense of freedom – first in the sense of being both logically prior and historically earlier – is freedom in the sense of being merged into the background, lost into nature like animals and slaves, nomos rather than physis. The Greeks did not think that all men possessed this freedom, and thus it was not built into their conception of what it means to be a human self.*70*
The point here is not that “enslavement” to colonial powers is desirable; and one is also not referring to the “ethics” of slavery in Islam. Rather, the point is this: the modern, Western notion of freedom – from which it is well nigh impossible to extricate our thought – has the notions of “autonomy, as choosing our ends, and the means towards them” already built into it. And this notion of freedom and the attendant idea(s) of subjectivity – the idea of the Muslim self that Iqbal is (re)constructing – rethinks the traditional Islamic idea of “slave of God” (‘abd Allah), which is the status of all human beings before God, as “the fashioner of Destiny.” What I am also suggesting is that the ideal of self-determination only becomes possible in the presence of the discourse of nationalism, whose parameters are set from without. That is, political thinking in a (post)colonial world is always already delimited from the outside.

To elaborate on this line of thought, in Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse, Partha Chatterjee provides a “critical study of the ideology of nationalism” as a problem of epistemology and political philosophy, arguing how nationalist thought is inseparable from post-Enlightenment, rationalist notions of knowledge. In accepting Orientalism’s category of the Oriental, while granting him a subjectivity that is active and autonomous, rather than passive and non-participating, nationalist thought nevertheless operates “within a framework of knowledge whose representational structure corresponds to the very structure of power [it] seeks to repudiate.” That is, while nationalism succeeds in ostensibly liberating the nation from colonialism, it does so through the knowledge systems of a post-Enlightenment West, which continue to dominate and operate unconsciously. Now, while Iqbal described nationalism as being antithetical to Islam, he also famously expressed the need for Muslims in pre-partition India to have a separate homeland. It is for this reason, due to the epistemological structures within which he was situated, that Iqbal had a contradictory perspective. On one hand, he thought territorial nationalism was contrary to Islam, on the other, he saw Islam as a uniform “culture” which all Muslims had to assimilate in order for them to achieve their long lost political vitality.

That being said, Iqbal did not believe in “freedom at any price.” He quotes the Muslim scholar of Spain, Tartushi, saying, “Forty years of tyranny are better than one hour of anarchy.” Thus, the question which has been suggested in the course of this article is this: Is freedom at the price of delimiting of one’s thought desirable? Perhaps this is the double bind of being Muslim in the modern world. Must a pre-modern notion of the Muslim self be subsumed by a modern, Western notion of selfhood?

**CONCLUSION**

One of the central concerns of this article has been to highlight the extent to which Western categories and ideas are always already, somewhat paradoxically, enmeshed in the thinking of Iqbal. Thus, the project of trying to salvage a pristine Islam (which is the project of today’s Salafis and neo-traditionalists alike) is fraught from the start. For, there is no Islam without specific “contexts” (to make use of Derrida). The context today calls for examining how a figure such as Iqbal sought to re-empower Muslims in an age where Western notions of the self – politically, existentially, epistemologically – always already tend towards Western modes of thinking and being.

As far as decolonizing Islamic thought, there is the intractable problem of power/knowledge, and its delimitation of what can or cannot be said. This is a very rich area
of research, and it must include the Foucauldian insistence on the possibility of speaking to power – that the creative forces of life always, to some degree, allow for this. As such, to make the claim that “there is no Islam, only colonial, Western interpretations of it,” would be as excessive as claiming that “there is a pristine Islam that has no relationship to, with, between, or against everything else.” The truth lies, as always, somewhere in that elusive middle ground.

Islam is a process of negotiation with, between, and against the conditions of possibility as they present themselves in each historic-politico-cultural situation. Iqbal’s negotiations within his own intellectual milieu – despite their limitations – reveal a deep engagement with his conditions, in order to make speaking, thinking, and writing as a Muslim in a post/colonial milieu possible. This is the challenge for all who seek to think decolonially about Islam in the 21st century.

NOTES

3 There is a certain quality to Iqbal’s thought that makes his voice standout over that of other Islamic modernists. This, as has been pointed out to me by Javed Majeed in a personal conversation (March 17, 2014), gives Iqbal a level of “authenticity” that cannot be found with other Islamic modernists. Incidentally, Iqbal Singh Sevea has recently problematized the use of the term “Islamic modernist” with regard to Iqbal, arguing that Iqbal rejected the post-Enlightenment understanding of “natural religion” which is accepted wholesale by Sayyid Ahmed Khan for example. (See Sevea’s The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India [Cambridge, 2012].) The reason why I choose to continue to apply the term “Islamic modernist” to Iqbal – as will become clearer during the course of this article – is due to his (unconscious) use of modern categories, and which significantly inflect his Islamic project.
4 Quran: 48, “The Victory.”
5 Of course, neither Iqbal nor the Islamic modernists in general were the first to criticize wahdat al-wujud. The famous Indian reformer of Sufism, Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi (1564-1624), to whom Iqbal refers favourably (see Reconstruction 152), was a very significant critic of wahdat al-wujud, proposing instead wahdat al-shuhud (“the unity of witness”). What differentiates Islamic modernists from premodern reformers such as Sirhindi is that the former sought to entirely do away with the historic institution, disciplines, practices, metaphysics, and so on, of Sufism.
7 Muhammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought, Javed Majeed (introduction) (Stanford: Standford University Press, 2013), 3-4. Although Iqbal does not explicitly state what he means by “anti-classical,” it may be surmised that he was referring to the presence in Greek thought of a plethora of gods – whereas the Quran presents a “radically monotheistic” worldview. It is also important to note that Iqbal was not a systematic thinker, which accounts for the lack of development of many of his ideas, and even, at times, certain internal inconsistencies.
10 Reconstruction, p.11.
11 See below in Contentions for more details.
12 Again, see below in Contentions for more details.
13 “The climax of religious life…is the discovery of the ego as an individual deeper than his conceptually describable habitual self-hood. It is in contact with the Most Real that the ego discovers its uniqueness, its metaphysical status, and the possibility of improvement in that status,” Reconstruction, 184.
14 The term “man” its generic sense is used for the sake of fluidity, and also since this is the term that Iqbal uses.
17 Reconstruction, 96.
18 Reconstruction, 118.
19 Ibid., 124.
20 “[W]e are blind, and Thou are present. / Either draw aside this veil of mysteries /or seize to Thyself this sightless soul!” Javid Nama, verses: 66-8.
21 Intro: Secrets of the Self, xxi.
22 Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher: 298.
24 This tension in examined in more detail in Contentions.
25 Quoted: Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher, 305.
27 Reconstruction, p.10.
28 Quoted: Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher, 221.
30 Quoted: Ibid., p.151.
33 Intro: Secrets of the Self, xxi.
34 Reconstruction, 132.
35 Ibid., 197.
36 S. E. Ashraf, 43.
37 Reconstruction, 151.
39 Reconstruction, 10.
40 Fazlur Rahman, “Iqbal and Mysticism,” in Iqbal as a Thinker, 208.
41 Reconstruction, 23.
42 Gabriel’s Wing, 350.
43 Quoted: ibid., 376.
44 Premodern knowledge – and therefore premodern subjectivity – entailed a fundamental inseparability of the knower and the known. Modern knowledge entails a fundamental separation between the knower and the known, resulting in the subject/object dichotomy that is central to modern epistemology.
45 Javed Majeeed, Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2009). Majeeed reads Iqbal as “one possible landmark for a cosmopolitan critical idiom, in which Islamism and Western critical theory can be considered, not as oppositional discourse, but together, with overlapping concerns, as critiques of and responses to colonial modernity” (Ibid., xxvi). The approach taken in this paper is to question some of the unexamined ways such an Iqbalian “cosmopolitan critical idiom” is always already imbricated in assumptions of modern Western power/knowledge, thereby significantly hobbling the criticality of such an idiom – and even its cosmopolitanism.
46 Ibid., 29-30, my emphasis.
47 Ibid., my emphasis.
52 “33:72 The Trust is understood as relating to the dictates of faith and belief, as in a famous saying:
“Whosoever has no trust has no belief” (Q, Sy). Many relate the Trust to obedience (IK, T, I, Z), and it is thus understood by most as a reference to the requirements (for ḥaḍ) of religion (IJ, J, Q, T), though others see it as a reference to prayer alone (Q). The Trust can also be understood as pertaining to the manner in which one manages each aspect of one’s being, such as the tongue, the eye, the stomach, one’s private parts, etc. (IJ, Q). Thus some connect it to 8:27: Betray not God and the Messenger, and betray not your trusts knowingly (M). It is also said that the Trust pertains to faith inwardly and performing the requirements of religion outwardly (Aj). Some also allow that the Trust refers to the pact or covenant of tawḥīd and the witness to God’s Lordship taken with all of humanity before they came into this world (Aj) (see 7:172c).” HarperCollins Study Quran, forthcoming.
53 Personal conversation with Javed Majeed, March 17, 2014.
55 “Beware of Hafiz the drinker,/His cup is full of the poison of death.”
56 William C. Chittick, “Jami on Divine Love and the image of wine,”
57 Ibid.
58 See, for example, J. M. Blaut’s Eight Eurocentric Historians (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000). Blaut critiques the work of a diverse group of Eurocentric historians who have significantly shaped our understanding of world history.
60 Reconstruction, 92-3.
61 Ibid., 56.
66 Intro: Secrets of the Self, xxi.
67 See Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Thomas Common (Blacksburg, VA: Thrifty Books, 2009).
68 “God save us from majesty that is without beauty,/God save us from separation without union! /Science without love is a demonic thing, /science together with love is a thing divine.” Javid Nama: verses: 1339-42.
69 Reconstruction, 154.
71 To be sure, there isn’t a single “ethnic,” although slaves in the Muslim world had a very different status in ancient Greece, as well as in the modern Europe. See William Gervase Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
72 This idea of the “fashioner of Destiny” is a significant departure from historic Islamic theological accounts of the relationship between free will and predestination, where the doctrine of Acquisition (kasāb) was favored as the median position between the two extremes. See The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology, Tim Winter (editor) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 8.
73 Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1986).
74 Ibid., 1-30.
75 Ibid., 10-11.
76 Ibid., 36-39.
77 Ibid., 38.


Reading Power: Muslims in the War on Terror Discourse

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Reading Power: 
Muslims in the War on Terror Discourse

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyzes the relationship between Muslims and the west defined at a particular moment in post 9/11 America and the war on terror context through a conversation in the novel *The Submission* (2011) by Amy Waldman. It critiques the construction of knowledge about Muslims and how this knowledge functions as part of a hegemonic discourse of Orientalism. The novel is about a public competition for an architectural design for a memorial marking the site of the World Trade Centre attacks in New York City. Khan is the architect who wins the competition through a blind selection process. But when his identity is revealed, public controversy erupts. Claire, the other protagonist in this encounter, is a white woman with two children, widowed in the 9/11 attacks. She is also a member of the selection committee. While Claire’s assumptions denote western, hegemonic representations that define Muslims in narrow ways, Khan’s responses represent a critique of this Orientalist construction, as well as indicating how it can be reshaped, with all the tension that this process provokes. This fictional encounter offers an opportunity to reflect on decolonial possibilities in the ‘real life’ encounter between Muslims and the west in the war on terror context.

Keywords: Muslim; war on terror; power relations; Orientalism

INTRODUCTION

Although 9/11 is often used to mark a watershed moment in world events, it illustrates political continuities in the relationship between Islam, Muslims and the west. The ‘war on terror’ discourse emerging from the 9/11 attacks ties together terrorism, national security, war and Muslims, reinforcing Orientalist narratives about Muslims as ‘inherently’ violent, threatening and as potential terrorists. This contemporary discourse has both political and epistemological dimensions: the politics of how Muslims are situated in the war on terror in relation to the west is linked to the construction of knowledge about Muslims and the possibilities for how they are and can be known in the west.

This paper elaborates on these two dimensions through the analysis of a fictional encounter in the novel, *The Submission* (2011) by Amy Waldman. The novel is about a public competition for an architectural design for a memorial marking the site of the World Trade Centre attacks in New York City. Khan wins the competition through a blind selection process. But when his identity is revealed, public controversy erupts over his Muslim identity. Claire, the other protagonist in this encounter, is a white, liberal, middle-class woman with two children, widowed in the 9/11 attacks. She is also a member of the
selection committee. Their conversation takes place in a meeting arranged by the head of the selection committee to discuss the public controversy and his winning design for a memorial garden.

Their conversation revolves around two main questions. Who speaks for and about Islam and Muslims in the west? Who constructs the categories used to give meaning to the Muslim subject in the war on terror? The answer involves an analysis of the hegemonic configuration of power and meaning in their encounter. This paper is divided into four sections. In the first section, I introduce the American war on terror discourse. In the second section, I discuss the construction of Orientalism and how it is relevant in the war on terror discourse today as a hegemonic system of power and meaning. In the third section, I analyze the conversation between the two characters and lastly, I discuss how this encounter illustrates the power of Orientalism as a hegemonic discourse and its critique, including issues of Muslim agency, the construction of meaning and the implications for creating a decolonial space for Muslims in the world today.

**THE AMERICAN WAR ON TERROR DISCOURSE**

The “war on terror” was named by the Bush administration in September 2001 to mark the American response to the 9/11 attacks and to identify those “who are with us” and those “who are with the terrorists.” Despite the fluidity of the phrase, the American war on terror took multiple, concrete forms. It included international military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, domestic national security legislation and measures targeting Muslim populations and the revitalization of an Orientalist cultural discourse about Islam versus the west as an explanation for the 9/11 attacks.

Traced through Bush’s speeches, the war on terror discourse situated Americans as “good”, “innocent victims” and the attackers as “evil perpetrators.” Through these categories of good and evil, the story of 9/11 was elevated to the level of a national sacred myth in American public discourse. Using the formulaic “good guys” versus “bad guys” scenario from classic Western movies, Bush presented America and its allies as “noble” heroes and defenders of freedom, liberty and democracy throughout the world. The “we” also discursively included “the civilized world”, “moderates” and “the coalition” in addition to the United States. On the other side was “the enemy,” terrorists who were hateful, evil, murderous and violent. This enemy was presented as a fluid category, including Osama Bin Laden, al-Qaeda, Saddam Hussain, Iran and other ‘rogue’ elements at large.

This dominant American discourse presented terrorism as ahistorical, outside the timeline of history, creating a contradiction; America had a historic role to play in the war on terror, but terrorism itself was not historically derived. Terrorism was also presented as a threat without any political roots. The terrorists did not have any political grievances; they were simply evil and violent. Lastly, terrorism was also juxtaposed against freedom as an ideology, stressing the boundaries between the U.S. and the terrorists as actors from opposite sides of a moral divide in this discourse. Furthermore, these two opposites could only exist in relation to each other. The existence of the “terrorists” allowed the Americans to be constructed as “heroes.” One side could be framed meaningfully only in relation to the other.

While most people did accept this American discourse, the circulation of 9/11 conspiracy theories represented a challenge to it. Through casting doubt on the ‘truth’ of the ‘official’ story of 9/11, they represent a critique of the relationship between discourse, power
and ‘truth.’ They also illustrate a different understanding of power, and particularly the hegemonic position of American power in the world.6

**ORIENTALISM AND THE WAR ON TERROR**

This brings us to consider the concepts of hegemony and power in the war on terror discourse, which is linked to Orientalism as a hegemonic discourse. I draw on a neo-Gramscian conceptualization of hegemony7 as a type of political relation that is contingent. It is temporary, precarious and constructed through the inclusion of some possibilities of meanings and the exclusion of others. This is dependent on there being space for these meanings to shift, as we will see in the encounter in the novel. Hegemony is synonymous with power relations, in that power does not exist outside of hegemony. Hegemony is articulated through a particular set of power relations attached to a system of meaning. “Hegemonic practices are the practices of articulation through which a given order is created and the meaning of social institutions is fixed.”8

Orientalism is a hegemonic discourse “based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident.’”9 This relationship operates through the superiority of the west, its ideas and its ways of being and doing as the reference point. Through Orientalism, the west is been able to exercise its dominant position by structuring how the Orient is “dealt with”: “by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restricting and having authority over the Orient.”10

At a discursive level, this means that western power structures the possibilities for what is thought and said about the Orient,11 to the extent that “the Orient itself becomes a creation of orientalism.”12 Described as “strong orientalism,” this aspect of Said’s argument suggests that the construction of the Orient itself is a reflection of western fantasies of its Other, rather than simply the distortion of the ‘real’ Orient by Western scholars.13

The power of Orientalism as a hegemonic discourse is illustrated in how it “creates” knowledge about Islam and Muslims. This knowledge is identified through “certain distinct and intellectually knowable lines.”14 First, that there is an absolute difference between the Orient and the west. The west is constructed as superior, rational, civilized and modern, while the Orient is constructed negatively as primitive, uncivilized, and violent.15 Second, “the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself.”16 As a result, not only must it always be represented and spoken for by the west, but the west’s knowledge about the Orient is deemed the only legitimate and “objective” knowledge. Last, the Orient is something to be either feared or mastered.17

These themes emerge consistently in the ways that Islam and Muslims continue to be described today. Orientalism has become normalized as an expression of western privilege and a form of coloniality in the contemporary context.18 Critiquing the structures of power-knowledge that underpin this hegemonic discourse involves pointing out its contingency, how it is reinforced and perpetuated through various issues, in this case through the war on terror discourse.

The war on terror discourse reinforces the basic premise of Orientalism, the absolute difference between Islam and the west. Islam and Muslims are associated with an “inherent,” uncivilized propensity for violence, which is connected to the Orient as something to be both feared and controlled for this reason. This fear of the violent potential of the Muslim Other takes its contemporary form through the trope of “dangerous Muslim man” who
evokes fear through terrorism, anchored by the civilized, white, “good”, heroic American on the other side. This American is part of the construction of the western “family of white nations, a civilization, obliged to use force and terror to defend itself against a menacing cultural Other.”

A second way in which the war on terror discourse extends Orientalist constructs is through the idea of an unchanging and uniform Muslim Other who cannot speak for her/himself. This is about two issues: first, the idea that all Muslims everywhere are the same, and second, the agency of Muslims to define themselves. They can only be seen and heard if they are interpreted and mediated by the west through its privilege to both set the terms of the discourse of the war on terror and to define them as particular types of Muslims through it. The subject positions available to Muslims in this hegemonic discourse are linked to the way in which terrorism is defined as an “Islamic” problem because Muslims carried out the 9/11 attacks. Terrorism is explained as a religious problem, rather than as a political issue, by linking it to the religion of the attackers. By association then, all Muslims have this “inherent” tendency to be potential terrorists because they are Muslims. Their actions can be explained solely and exclusively through reference to their religion, which is also perceived as “inherently” violent. Quranic verses are often presented as literal evidence of this Muslim propensity for “Islamic” terrorism.

This is then further linked to the idea that Muslims - all Muslims everywhere – must take moral responsibility for the 9/11 attacks because they are all Muslim. Thus, they are asked to denounce terrorism and to apologize for the actions of others on the basis that their shared religion is responsible for the violence. And they are asked to do this, not just once after the 9/11 attacks, but after every terrorist incident, or attempt, involving Muslims anywhere in the world. The criticism that ‘Muslims are not doing enough to condemn terrorism’ is often circulated in the media after any such event. Through this, Muslims are asked to soothe the fears of the west and to defuse their anxieties by reassuring them that they are “good Muslims” or “moderate Muslims,” not the violent, blowing-up-things kind of “bad Muslims.” However, both “good Muslims” and “bad Muslims” confirm and validate the superior position of the west in relation to the violent and threatening Muslim Other.

Orientalism underpins the war on terror discourse; from the way that terrorism and the 9/11 attacks are framed to the subject positions available to Muslims in this discourse. This hegemonic system of meaning underpins the securitization process through which Muslims are constructed as threats and as “suspect” and “disloyal” citizens in America. It justifies how state power is used to profile and target Muslims as part of national anti-terrorism efforts. One prominent illustration of this is the 2002-2003 NSEERS (National Security Exit-Entry Registration System), approving the registration, detention and deportation, of non-immigrant Muslim men in the US from a pre-determined list of 25 predominantly Muslim countries. This process did not net any terrorist “sleeper cells,” but did disrupt families, communities and neighborhoods, while cementing the public’s negative perception of Muslims as both collectively guilty and threatening. Since then, the power of the American state to single out Muslims in the name of national security has only increased, evidenced through the revelations from Snowden of NSA and FBI spying on prominent Muslim leaders in America.
THE ENCOUNTER

Although fiction, Amy Waldman’s novel The Submission, deals with issues around the construction of national identity, public memory and the limits of public discourse. Coincidentally, this novel came out around the time (2010-2011) that a Muslim community center, Park 51, was facing tremendous protest in Manhattan. Dubbed the “Ground Zero Mosque” by its critics because it was near the site of the 9/11 attacks, it was planned as a conversion of an existing building to provide both prayer space and space for community programs and activities. The public controversy around it employed similar assumptions about Islam, Muslims and terrorism illustrated in the novel.

The main plot of the book revolves around a public competition for an architectural design for a memorial marking the site of the World Trade Centre attacks in New York City. The conversation that is the focus of this paper is between Mohammad Khan, the architect who wins the competition with a design for a memorial garden and Claire Burwell, a white woman who is a member of the selection committee and a 9/11 widow. The purpose of the meeting between them is to discuss the public controversy over Khan’s winning design.

The meeting is narrated from Claire’s perspective, indicative of her superior position in this encounter and her privilege as a white, American woman. In contrast, the reader is not privy to Khan’s thoughts or motivations. We only see his words and actions, and how Claire interprets his words and actions. But even in this apparent hierarchical dynamic, the reader is given room to read between the lines and interpret his words and the implications behind them. On the surface, though it appears that Khan is in a subordinate position, his actions and words demonstrate otherwise.

The meeting opens with Clair feeling uncomfortable. She wonders “whether Paul Rubin had deliberately procured the smallest space possible at his old bank in which to cage her with Mohammad Khan. She and he were seated in uncomfortable proximity, across a narrow metal table, the walls too near their backs.” She feels that the proximity to him is restrictive, perhaps indicative of being imprisoned with someone she doesn’t feel comfortable with, the Muslim Other. This proximity forces engagement with the Other. “They were so close they had no choice but to look directly into each other’s eyes.” The configuration of the physical space undermines her comfort in her usually superior position because they are required to face each other and to look at each other directly, evenly, across the plane of the table.

While Claire feels anxious, Khan projects confidence. “Khan’s comfort with his physical self, long and lean, struck her forcibly in this space…His confidence had been restored, and somehow this unnerved her.” This is a man who is comfortable in his own skin, who does not feel the need to be someone, or something else, and she finds this unsettling, partially because he does not fit her fantasy image of him. “In her dream, his face held warmth, the desire to explain. Here it simply withheld. His affect was dispassionate.” She wants him to engage with her emotionally in order to explain that he is not a threat and to reassure her. Through this willingness to explain and reassure, he will confirm her superior position as the one who requires this response, and further the terms of engagement of the war on terror discourse according to which Americans are the innocent victims and “good Muslims” must reassure them by confirming their moral innocence.

One of the main and recurring themes of this encounter is knowledge and the certainty of knowledge of and about Muslims. This is also linked to the question of meaning.
Ostensibly, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the meaning of the design of his memorial garden. Claire wants to know what the design means and she wants Khan to tell her. She believes he owes her an explanation of what it means because she supported it. “I can’t go on backing the Garden without knowing more,” she says to him. The presumption of privilege on her part is displayed not just in her belief that she has a right to ask, but further, that he is required to tell her. The second assumption of privilege is that there is a meaning, a deeper meaning that can be known with certainty, if only he will tell her. He doesn’t respond directly to her assumptions, but suggests she get on with her questions.

The conversation between them occurs in rounds, like a back and forth exchange, point, counterpoint, question, answer. But these rounds can also be read as a spiral, a conversation that circles around the same themes over and over, but becoming more tense in each round, as it moves towards a denouement. In each round then, as the hegemonic assumptions associated with Claire’s position of privilege become more explicit, Khan’s resistance, which can be read as counter-hegemonic, also becomes more overt.

In the first round, Claire begins by trying to pin down the meaning of the design through where he has traveled. She asks him if he has spent time in any “Islamic countries” and he answers, “only briefly.” She asks him which ones, and he says, “Afghanistan. Dubai, if five hours in the airport counts as spending time.” She asks him what he was doing there. “Representing my firm in the competition to design a new American embassy in Kabul, although I’m not sure what bearing that has on the memorial.” Claire is trying to draw a clear line between him being a Muslim and his spending time overseas in “Islamic countries” in order to determine the meaning of the garden design. Although he answers, he doesn’t give her the answer she wants.

She drops that line of questioning and moves to a second round. Claire asks, “Where did your idea come from for the Garden?” “From my imagination,” he answers. “Of course,” she said after a beat. Of course. But you must have to feed your imagination. Constantly, he said evenly. She couldn’t tell if he was joking.” Again he answers her question, but he is not explaining things to her satisfaction. She continues on. “You said you fed it, your imagination, in the case of your design, with Islamic gardens. That’s what you said at the hearing.” He answers, “I said the gardens we now call Islamic were one influence.” Khan’s answer once again challenges her desire for a concrete, singular answer to the meaning of the design. His answer insists on ambiguity, on the possibility of imagination, creativity, multiple sources of influence, and not just one, reduced down to “Islamic.”

Claire persists in drawing a literal connection, asking him whether he was inspired by gardens in Afghanistan. “I did see a garden there, yes,” he answers. “And what was it for - what’s its purpose? I mean - Afghanistan must be full of martyrs. Clumsy, but she had to know.” Again, she iterates the importance of knowledge and the certainty of her knowledge, which is based on his fitting into her assumptions.

This moment marks a point where the conversation passes from an indirect to a direct engagement with the terms of hegemony. Up till then, Khan resists Claire by not being friendly and reassuring, by not explaining, by not giving her the answers she wants, and disrupting her by giving answers that do not go in the direction she wants to take the conversation. But in response to her questions, he now says, “So that’s why we’re here,” rendering explicit the hierarchy, that he is there in a subordinate position to answer to her questions and assumptions. In the subsequent conversation, his resistance is also much more explicit, as he begins to question the legitimacy of the system of meaning itself and not just her privileged position within it.
Moving into the third round, Claire asks the question more openly. She says, “You’ve never answered that question, about whether it’s a martyr’s paradise or a paradise at all. Since the question was raised by the Times. You’ve never said.” His response challenges the framing of the question, as he continues to refuse to answer. “The question, as I recall, of it being a ‘martyrs’ paradise - he mimed quotes around the phrase - was first raised by Fox,” he answers. She insists that it doesn’t matter who raised it, but its been raised and left hanging. “Where it will hang forever, he said…Why should I be responsible for assuaging fears I didn’t create?”

This round raises the issue of Muslim agency and representation - who speaks for and about Muslims? He mimes quotes around the phrase ‘martyrs’ paradise’ in order to be ironic perhaps, but also to distance himself from it. It is not his phrase, and therefore he doesn’t feel the need to answer to it. It is also a critique of the terms of discourse - who defines the terms used to talk about Muslims. Khan challenges the use of the phrase to ascribe meaning to his design as well as the hegemonic discourse used to construct that category of meaning.

Khan’s answer also speaks directly to the issue of collective moral responsibility placed upon Muslims to assuage the fears of the majority. It refers back to the earlier contrast between his aloof and confident demeanor and Claire’s fantasy image of him as as “good Muslim,” someone who seeks to explain and reassure her. Here, Khan explicitly refuses to take responsibility, and further, to explain or reassure. She insists, “But Paul said you would answer my questions.” “I told him I would answer whatever questions I could,” he responds. Not only does he not answer, he explicitly refuses to engage with the hegemonic order requiring him to be in the subordinate position of answering.

The conversation circles, coming around again in the fourth round to the question of the “real” meaning of the design and Claire’s desire to know what it means. In response, Khan draws two intersecting lines on a piece of paper and asks her to identify them. She describes it as a cross or an X. He draws a square around it and asks her what it is. She gives several possibilities, a window, a checkerboard, a map of Manhattan. “It’s lines on a plane, just like the Garden.” Through this example, he counters her reading of his design as an “Islamic” design. He goes on to give several examples of modernist, abstract architects and artists, none of whom were Muslim, arguing that their identities were not read into their work. In contrast, she insists that his “lines on a plane” should be understood exclusively as “Islamic” because he is a Muslim. Once again, Khan refuses to take responsibility for her assumptions. “I can’t help the associations you bring because I am” [Muslim], he states.

Undeterred, Claire goes on to elaborate exactly what she wants him to do to change the design to fit her meaning. “Take out the canals, so your opponents won’t be able to say it’s the paradise in the Quran. ‘Gardens beneath which rivers flow,’ or whatever that line is…Just some symbolic change, as much to show you are eager to find common ground, that you’re flexible, as for any substantive reason.” He repeats what she has just said. “You want me to take out the canals because it reminds you of a line in the Quran,” he said as if he hadn’t understood.

This exchange demonstrates that her demand to “know” what the design means is actually a demand to change it. First, she has already decided she knows what it means, that “knowledge” is already settled, fixed. It is not open to interpretation or question, least of all from the subject of that knowledge, the Muslim architect who drew it. What she seeks is confirmation from Khan for what she already believes. This belief is her “knowledge,” based on Orientalist construct that has already settled what Muslims are supposed to be like. They
are defined through an unwavering commitment to Islam, in this case exemplified as a literal depiction of Quranic text.

The second aspect in this exchange is her assumption that he should accept the discourse that creates and defines him. She wants him to accept her belief as the meaning of the design and then change his design and himself to fit into it, to demonstrate his “flexibility” and “eagerness” to compromise. Claire is completely oblivious to his reluctance, privileging her perspective and her comfort. “I’m not going to apologize for wanting to be comfortable with the design for my husband’s memorial,” Claire said with exasperation. “Your design becomes more threatening if you won’t change it.” In fact, it is he who becomes threatening if he won’t change his design according to her interpretation, or if he isn’t willing to be “flexible” enough to accept her privileged position.

The conversation moves towards its final rounds, becoming more intense as Claire finally drops the issue of the design and asks him to take moral responsibility for the terrorist attacks because he’s a Muslim.

Followers of your religion have caused enormous pain. Caused me enormous pain. And for all of us, it’s very difficult to sort out what Islam actually means or encourages. What Muslims believe. A lot of Muslims who would never commit terrorism still support it, for political reasons if not religious ones. Or they pretend it wasn’t Muslims at all who did this. So it’s not unreasonable for me to ask where on that continuum you sit. To learn at the hearing that you’re never denounced the attack - I’ll be honest, that was upsetting. Why haven’t you?

Khan says that no one has ever asked him to. She insists, “And if I ask you now?” He doesn’t answer, saying that it is an issue of principle. Claire gets angry. “What is the principle behind refusing to say a terrorist attack was wrong, or that you believe in the theology that spawned it?” He counters, “And what is the principle behind demanding that I say it, when your six-year-old son can you it’s wrong?…Wouldn’t you assume that any non-Muslim who entered this competition thinks that attack was wrong? Why are you treating me differently? Why are you asking more of me?” “Because you’re asking more of us!” she said. “You want us to trust you even though you won’t answer questions about your design - what it means, where it came from.”

Her distrust and suspicion are overt, exposing also her assumptions that have structured the entire conversation: her white, western privilege, her “us” against his “them”, her belief that he is a Muslim who cannot be trusted, who has a hidden agenda, who is threatening, and who is responsible for terrorism. She tries to explain to him, “This isn’t about you - it’s about the religion,” thus exposing her Orientalist understanding of him as a Muslim.

This is the final turn in this spiraling conversation. Khan turns the construct around to put it back on her. “How would you feel if I justified what happened to your husband by saying it wasn’t about him but about his country and its policies- damn shame he got caught up in it, that’s all - but you know, he got what he deserved because he paid taxes to the American government.”

This moral equivalence shocks her, even as it confirms what she already thinks. “It pained her, sickened her…that Khan did see Cal as mere collateral damage in a war American had brought on itself, that he believed Cal, generous, good natured Cal, bore responsibility, guilt, simply because he was American.” Her thoughts illustrate the
essentialized moral categories underlying the war on terror discourse, between “good Americans” and “evil Muslims.” But the denial of her husband’s humanity, his individual personality, and his reduction to an American taxpayer undoes her and ejects her from this spiraling conversation. “She jerked to her feet like a mishandled marionette, grabbed her purse, and in one unbroken gesture reached the door, flung it open, stepped through, and slammed it behind her.”

**MUSLIM AGENCY AND KNOWLEDGE**

This encounter is a confrontation between Orientalism and its critique. It demonstrates the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism and counter-hegemonic responses to it, played out through Claire and Khan. Claire’s assumptions about Khan, her beliefs about the meaning of his design and her unerring confidence that her perspective is the only one, is illustrative of the power of Orientalism as a hegemonic discourse to define what Islam and Muslims are and what they can be. Her subject position comes from within this western privilege. Khan is part of this hegemonic system as well. He recognizes it, but his position is different. He questions its legitimacy and highlights its contingency through his resistance to and questioning of her assumptions and privilege. Taking the idea that every hegemonic order could be constructed otherwise, that meanings and configurations of power can shift, he points out this “otherwise.” He emphasizes Muslim agency as a counter-hegemonic practice.

There is a gap between what the garden design means to Khan, the person who imagined and created it, and to Claire, whose claim to it’s meaning is based on her position of western privilege. This illustrates one of the distinctive premises of Orientalism, the power of the west to determine the meaning of all things Muslim which is based on a denial of Muslim agency. Muslims can be represented and spoken for by the west because they are incapable of speaking for themselves. Thus, no matter what Khan says to her, no matter how much he explains what the garden means in his terms, Claire does not and cannot understand him. His explanation is not “intelligible” to her. Khan’s explanation does not make any “sense” to her because it is neither in her terms, nor on her terms. It is not in her terms, the hegemonic terms of reference that constitute her Orientalist understanding of Muslims, Islam, and terrorism as essentially linked together. Secondly, it is not on her terms because it challenges her privilege within this order, the western privilege to define the war on terror discourse through Orientalism and to speak for his garden design. Thus, it is not just that Khan is unable explain what the garden design means, but rather that it can only mean what she already “knows”, i.e. that all Muslims are terrorists.

The gap between his explaining and her understanding is visible to him, but not to her. Her privilege and the hegemonic configuration of meaning associated with it is invisible to her because it has been normalized as part of her privilege. However, Khan does see it and understand it. His subordinate position does allow him to understand her meaning very well. His challenge is based precisely on the fact that he understands it, but he does not agree with it as legitimate. Therefore, he chooses to subvert her position by putting forward his terms and his meaning as a counter-hegemonic practice and as a critique of Orientalism.

Related to the issue of intelligibility and the meaning of the design is the link between Muslim agency and knowledge. Who has the authority to speak for and about Muslims is closely tied to what constitutes knowledge of and about Muslims since both are integral and intertwined components of Orientalism. The exclusion of Muslim agency and subjectivity, what Muslims know, the meanings they give to themselves as well as to their experiences on
their own terms calls into question the legitimacy of knowledge about Muslims that is presented and spoken for by western privilege. This is not to say that Khan’s knowledge is “better than” Claire’s, to assess competing claims of ‘objectivity’ of knowledge, but to point out that power and knowledge cannot be separated in the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism.

Lastly, the issues raised in this encounter are visible in the perception of Muslims in the US in the war on terror. The Islamophobic controversy over the construction of the Park 51 Muslim community center in NYC was based on the idea that it had a “hidden agenda.” It was suspected as an attempt by Muslims to flaunt their “victory” in the 9/11 attacks, while claiming to build a center that would promote inter-faith dialogue and harmony. Most “suspicious” was the fact that it would also include prayer space, and therefore its supporters were hiding the fact that it was “actually” a mosque. At the base of this controversy was the Orientalist assumption about the fundamental difference of Muslims from the west, that they are a threat and that all Muslims everywhere are threats for this reason. Second, it also demonstrated the denial of Muslim agency. By accusing the supporters of Park 51 of having a “hidden agenda”, critics positioned the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism against their power as Muslims to give meaning to it as a Muslim community center and a prayer space.

The Orientalist assumption of Islam as a threat and therefore an inability to believe otherwise feeds a general attitude towards Muslims as suspects and security threats. The NYPD’s surveillance of Muslim college student associations and Snowden’s revelations about NSA and FBI surveillance of Muslims in the US are both justified through this assumption. Muslims require watching because they are part of a suspect community and allegedly hiding their ‘true colors’ as threats to national security. Through this form of thinking, the belief in their terrorist plots is already present as a form of “knowledge.” It is only a matter of “proving it” by scrutinizing and watching them long enough. The same rationale was present behind the creation of NSEERS as well.

READING POWER

Public and hidden transcripts provide another way to think about the contestation of meaning about Islam and Muslims in the war on terror discourse. They make visible the hegemonic configuration of power and meaning underlying this discourse and the subject positions within it. A public transcript is the record of the open interaction between dominant and subordinate actors, which includes what is said as well as what is not said. It tends to be skewed towards the dominant discourse, through the power of the dominant actor. A hidden transcript is the discourse that is expressed “offstage”, outside this interaction. It “consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.” The boundary between the two is a zone of contestation, constantly negotiated and challenged. It is not absolute.

While Claire represents the public transcript about Muslims and terrorism, Khan, even though the reader does not have access to his “offstage” thoughts about the conversation as it unfolds, demonstrates the hidden transcript of how Muslims understand their own position and experiences in the war on terror discourse. This hidden transcript slowly unfolds, initially through non-verbal gestures, such as his demeanor and his posture. He is calm, cool, without affect. He sits across the table, looking directly at Claire. Khan doesn’t apologize, explain or reassure. Verbally, he uses irony to answer her questions, giving her “straight answers” which do and do not answer her questions.
Irony functions as a way to resist the hegemony of Orientalism, while giving the appearance of conforming to its structures. Said illustrates this very aptly through a transcript of an Israeli radio broadcast at the time of the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in 1982. It is ostensibly an interview with a captured Palestinian “terrorist,” and is meant to demonstrate a “good Israeli/bad Palestinian terrorist” narrative. But the exact way in which the Palestinian answers, repeating the phrases used by the Israeli interviewer, has the effect of dramatic irony. For example,

Israeli broadcaster: “Tell me, Mr. Abu Leil, to which terrorist organization do you belong?”
Israeli broadcaster: “And when did you get involved in the terrorists’ organization?”
Palestinian: “When I first became aware of terrorism.”
Israeli broadcaster: And what was your mission in South Lebanon?
Palestinian: “My mission was terrorism…in other words, we would enter villages and just terrorize. And wherever there were women and children, we would terrorize. Everything and all we did was terrorism.”

After the first apparent ‘mistaken’ use of the term “liberation” in the name of the organization, the Palestinian’s repetitive use of the word “terrorism” highlights the gap between the way it would be understood by Israeli listeners and by what is meant by the Palestinian speaker. While the Israelis would see it as a confirmation of their understanding of the role of the PFLP, the continued use of the words “terrorism” and “terrorize” erodes their meaning. It would be significant to Palestinian listeners as a form of resistance presented as outward compliance. But this dramatic irony would be “intelligible” to them only because they can share in its meaning. They can hear the hidden transcript. It “makes sense” to them in a way that it would not to Israeli listeners.

Khan moves from irony to direct confrontation in this encounter, however. Each round and twist of the spiraling conversation brings the hidden transcript closer to the surface and into the open as the zone of contestation becomes more overt. “The first open statement of a hidden transcript, a declaration that breaches the etiquette of power relations, that breaks the apparently calm surface of silence and consent, carries the force of a symbolic declaration of war.” It names the power relations underlying their encounter. “So that’s why we’re here.” Naming the contingency of this hegemonic order is about making visible that which has been, up till now, invisible, and which remains invisible to Claire till the very end because she cannot look past her own assumptions. After this point in the conversation, Khan takes a stronger position, countering hegemony directly, bringing the hidden transcript into direct, verbal confrontation with the public one.

THE FINAL EXIT

Given this discussion, how do we address the implications of Claire’s abrupt, final exit from the room after Khan poses his last question: “How would you feel if I justified what happened to your husband by saying it wasn’t about him but about his country and its
policies?” Moral parallels made by Muslims can be dangerous because they destabilize the certainty of western privilege. This western privilege is the lynchpin of the hegemonic structure of Orientalism as a discourse. In this sense, we can interpret Claire’s departure as what happens when western privilege is no longer the center, when its authority is not recognized, when its terms and its meaning are no longer accepted: the dynamic is ruptured. The configuration of power must change in order to accommodate this destabilizing event. One could interpret this ending as Khan having the last word, literally and figuratively. He speaks and Claire is speechless. She has no more words. More than that, it is his claim to power that leaves no room for her, literally. She has to exit. It is tempting to read this ending as a void, a sudden vacuum, as something that is missing. But Claire’s exit is not the exiting of power from the discourse. Rather, it is de-centering of Orientalism as a particular hegemonic order, producing the space for a different articulation of power that does not take the west as its reference point.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to demonstrate how power works, how the power of Orientalism as a hegemonic system of meaning works to define Islam and Muslims in the west today. It has tried to illustrate the link between power and the construction of knowledge in the war on terror discourse, which has reinforced and perpetuated Orientalist constructions of Muslims as violent and terrorist threats against the morally “innocent” and “good” west. The conversation between Claire and Khan is a snapshot of Orientalism and its critique, of the western privilege that Claire demonstrates and Khan’s counter-hegemonic response as a Muslim exercising his agency and subjectivity.

Translating this into non-fiction, what does this mean for Muslims today? How do they speak in the decolonial space opened up through Khan’s critique and simultaneously how do they create the space in which to speak? These two processes go hand in hand. This comes back to the idea of agency, of Muslim agency to define themselves as subjects in their own terms. It means creating a space for a different reading of the political, while speaking within it as well. It requires Muslims to name the contingency of the war on terror discourse and to challenge it by pointing out how the processes of securitization are at work to stigmatize and stereotype Muslims as dangerous Others.

NOTES

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37 Waldman, p. 270.
38 Waldman, p. 270.
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47 Scott, pp. 4-5.
Disciplining the ‘Muslim Subject’: The Role of Security Agencies in Establishing Islamic Theology within the State’s Academia

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Disciplining the ‘Muslim Subject’:
The Role of Security Agencies in Establishing Islamic Theology within the State’s Academia

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ABSTRACT: The following article discusses the establishment of centers of Islamic Studies (Islamische Theologie) in Germany. While many authors have discussed different theories which shape the accommodation of Islam in Western European nation states, I suggest that the security dispositif (Foucault) has a strong impact on the way the state and religious communities interact with each other. I argue that against the backdrop of a hegemonic Islamophobic discourse and a securitization of Islam, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz) as the main actor in charge of domestic security issues within the Ministry of Interior, shapes the construction of the German ‘Muslim subject’ to discipline and govern Germany’s Muslims. The Verfassungsschutz becomes a defining power in the attempt to locate Islam in the German religio-political landscape by influencing the politics of several state agencies. This is due to broadening the notion of security which affects the ‘integration policy’ of several state agencies and makes the integration issue a priority in other policy areas. A hegemonic Islamophobic discourse, in which Islam has become a security threat, seems to foster such a policy. I will elaborate the securitization of Islam through the Verfassungsschutz by tracing its role in the institutionalization of Islamic Studies at state universities.

Keywords: Islamic Studies, Germany, Islamophobia, securitization, discipline, subject

INTRODUCTION

The history of church-state relations in Germany has resulted in a formal separation of church and state, while also securing cooperation in fields such as education and social welfare. Churches and religious denominations can be legally recognized as public corporations, which is a privileged status that allows religious classes in public schools and does not allow the state to interfere in the autonomy of these religious public corporations. This status of a legally recognized church or denomination is given at the federal state level (Länder) based on certain criteria. This is a level that no (major) Muslim association has achieved yet. Being legally recognized as a church or a religious denomination would mean enjoying the same rights at the level of law of religion (Religionsrecht). Arguments for non-recognition by the German state are the low membership of these Muslim associations, their short length of existence and the non-existence of widely accepted religious authorities in Islam. The state meanwhile has introduced different options to facilitate the process of accommodation of Islam towards a legal recognition. One example is the German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islamkonferenz, DIK), which was introduced in 2006 by the Ministry of Interior as a forum to discuss the future relationship between Islam and the German state with a wide range of Muslim representatives. At the same time, the DIK has been viewed critically by various Muslim associations, as a space where security agencies are
Amir-Moazami argues that “with its top-down approach to Muslims as mere re-actors, the DIK has so far turned out to be much more a governmental technique which aims at reshaping Muslims according to liberal/secular norms.” This political move by the Interior Ministry can only be understood in a wider German context where there have been many public debates, revealing widespread Islamophobic attitudes. For example, a the debate following a former German president’s statement stating that Islam was a religion of Germany, the headscarf ban for Muslim teachers, and debates on building mosques, to mention just a few.

In this article, I will analyze the process of the establishment of centers of Islamic Studies by the Council of Science and Humanities in Germany (Wissenschaftsrat, WR). Generally speaking, religious policy “allows European governments to gradually take ‘ownership’ of their Muslim populations because it grants them unique influence over organizations and leadership.” They otherwise hardly achieve and aim at creating “the institutional conditions for the emergence of an Italian or German Islam, e.g., rather than just tolerating Islam ‘in’ Italy or Germany.” This means that the state itself is highly interested in governing a religion that has grown to become a minority of about 5% of the socio-religious landscape. My argument is that the security agency is using a security dispositif to influence the state’s politics towards Muslim communities. A dispositif is defined by Foucault as being “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid.” I will focus on the politics of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz, VS) to analyze what kind of ‘Muslim subject’ the VS aims to create by disciplining and governing Germany’s Muslims.

Disciplining here is used in the Foucauldian meaning, describing technologies that create politically obedient subjects with the ultimate aim of power. I do not draw on the notion of ‘subject’ of the late Foucault that deals with the technology of the self as a sort of alternative demeanor to power. My focus will not be on the ‘subject’ that tries to position itself against existing power structures, i.e. Muslim associations, intellectuals and their voices and policies. This does not mean that Muslims have no agency. But following cultural theorist Hall’s reading of Foucault, subjects must submit to the rules and conventions and to the dispositions of power/knowledge. Hence, my focus in this asymmetric hierarchical relation between state agencies and Muslim agencies will be on those in power. I will investigate the knowledge-power-relations produced by those in power, the state agencies and the VS and their technologies of creating a submissive ‘Muslim subject’. I will use official statements of the WR as well as interviews conducted with institutional players involved in the institutionalization of these centers.

**DISCIPLINING THE ‘MUSLIM SUBJECT’**

The theory of securitization in the Copenhagen School regards security not as an objective condition, but rather as dependent on the securitizing actors in power (media, politicians, etc.). It looks at how objects are turned into security threats requiring ‘extraordinary’ measures, similar to the function of Foucault’s security dispositif in the governance of people. In his understanding of knowledge, power and discourse, a security narrative has to be discursively legitimated in the realm of a political argument. As a social construction, a security dispositif accordingly relies on an imagined security threat. A security dispositif is the basis that necessitates the disciplining and hence legitimizes the governing of people. In the course of the war on terror, ‘Islam’ – as an indefinite object, an imagination, and not an ontological reality – has been turned into a security threat. Cesari speaks about the ‘securitization of Islam,’ arguing
that “it involves actors who propose that Islam is an existential threat to European political and secular norms and thereby justifies extraordinary measures against it.” Cesari argues that although these nation states aim at facilitating the socio-economic integration of Muslims, anti-terrorism legislations after 9/11 compromised civil liberties and restricted the public space for Islam. Instead of including Islam in a common social narrative and integrating it into church-state-regulations, the notion of Islam as a security threat was institutionalized by conflating factors such as immigration, ethnicity, socio-economic deprivation, and the war on terror, a distinctive amalgamation in Islamophobic discourses. This is especially true for Germany, where the relationship between Muslim associations and the state has been shaped by a so-called ‘integration’-policy that is dominated by security-issues.

The sociologist Teczan has used Foucault’s reflections on subject and power when discussing the creation of the ‘Muslim subject’ by Islamizing Muslim immigrants and Islamizing debates on migration and integration in the German discourse on Islam. But the ‘Muslim subject’ is not only the reduction of Muslims to their religious identity, ignoring other aspects of social belonging. It goes further, as Cesari puts it, when trying to display Islam as incompatible with an imagined Western lifestyle and as a security threat. In this sense, Schiffauer describes the ‘Muslim subject’ as ‘suspect subjects’. For him, the ultimate goal of the German integration-policy is the prevention of extremism and terrorism that can only be achieved by disciplining Muslim collectives, influencing their attitudes, views and convictions via their regulation.

The ‘war on terror’ together with a debate on the ‘limits of cultural diversity’ and a proclaimed ‘end of multiculturalism’ in different Western European nation states placed tighter regulations on Muslims. The EU Common Positions and Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism which was passed in December 2001 broadened the definition of terrorism so extensively that “any action designed to ‘seriously damage a country or international organisation’ or that ‘unduly compelled’ a government to act in a particular way could fall within the definition.” EU-member states soon incorporated the Framework Decision into domestic law or amended existing laws by extending police powers in various policy fields. Simultaneously, ongoing public debates on the rise of Islamist terror manufactured “consent to increasingly intrusive surveillance and the circumscription of personal freedoms through the evocation of fear”, which resulted in the detention and deportation of people. The surveillance of Muslim communities and mosques in the US by the NYPD is one example of this securitization process.

Therefore, the incorporation of legal Muslim bodies into the political system and/or the law of religion seemed to be potentially helpful for security agencies to combat the threat of extremism and terrorism in the Muslim community, as Laurence suggests. Similarly, Teczan argues in his study on the German state’s DIK that the mosque was used as a space to legitimate state interference into Muslim religious issues to regulate and rule it via the security dispositif. This argument is also supported by Schiffauer, who argues that the DIK did not counter the security-policy of the VS. The dialogue was not a dialogue between equal participants, but an asymmetric ‘Socratic dialogue’ that was clear about the outcome before the DIK had already started. I argue that political incorporation has become a potential tool for the German state and its security agencies to discipline and govern its Muslim subjects. The state’s aim is to create an ‘ideal’ German Muslim; a politically obedient, loyal and submissive. Disciplinary power, in Foucault’s writings, employs techniques of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgments and examination. It is these techniques that the VS uses to create its ‘ideal’ German Muslim.
THE ROLE OF SECURITY AGENCIES

The relation of the VS to Muslim associations is controversial. Schiffauer has documented the basis, evolution, implications and consequences of the way the VS deals with the Muslim community. He shows in his studies that a “new security policy, which is characterized by an expansion of ‘repressive’ measures and their supplementation and extension through ‘preventive’ measures” has been widened. This widening resulted in not only targeting the prevention of crimes but also in creating situations of abstract danger. ‘Preventive measures’ have lead to a new and close cooperation between the VS, immigration authorities and the courts based on the imagined common threat of Islamist terrorism. One of the significant consequences is that concerning Muslims “the usual checks and balances of various state authorities […] are reduced.” Schiffauer notes that this “increases the danger of false decisions, and thus of injustice.” Upon relying on the expertise of the VS, this wide understanding of security affects various fields of politics.

The VS is devoted to the collection and analysis of information on ‘Islamist activities’, which relies on a wide-ranging definition of Islamism. From a legal point of view, the German constitution (Grundgesetz) does not force anyone to convey his/her loyalty to the constitution, says the jurist Poscher. The VS is legally not allowed to publish anything in its yearly reports on Muslim associations that are under suspicion, but against which there is no proof of any anti-constitutional activities, says the jurist Murswiek. But with the creation of the term ‘legalist Islamism’ (see definition below), the VS has created a special category for Muslim associations which profess allegiance to the constitution in public, obey the law and distance themselves from various forms of violence and extremism, but which are nevertheless viewed suspiciously by the VS as using a double-talk strategy to hide their supposed ‘real goals’. This suspicion is brought forward against a number of prominent Muslim associations such as the Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş (IGMG) and the Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland (IGD) by emphasizing their past and/or international relations. By drawing this line, the state produces an ‘acceptable’ Muslim subject vs. the image of the ‘bad Muslim.’ But an in-depth analysis conducted by Schiffauer suggests that these reports are strongly biased. According to the VS, public activities of legalist Islamist associations are portrayed as a strategy to hide their ‘real’ agenda: statements are turned into their opposite, the creation of legal departments are seen as problematic, and youth work is interpreted as creating a ‘parallel society’ (a self-created ‘ghetto’). As Schiffauer has shown, these portrayals by the VS affect the associations. In civil society, many NGOs do not want to cooperate officially, fearing the loss of public funding and negative media coverage. Cooperation with state bureaucracy is also restrictive, as funding for projects is at risk, if they cooperate with Muslim associations under suspicion by the VS. As a result, Muslim associations become excluded from civil society and from dialogue platforms between the state and religious communities. In addition, Schiffauer has shown that individual members of these associations may lose their citizenship or may not even be awarded citizenship, get expelled and lose their permit of residence due to their membership in an association that is suspected of being anti-constitutional. This reveals the impact of security agencies on the politics of other state bureaucracies such as immigration authorities. Another form of policing is surveillance and control after Friday-prayers in different mosques (some belonging and others not belonging to these associations), where people are held for hours by the police. While some Muslims do not feel especially offended, others see themselves as the new ‘Jews’ of Germany.
A fundamental reason for these restrictions lies in the narrow and nativist conception of identity. In public debates, security-issues are intermingled with issues of social cohesion. The notion of ‘integration’ has become a central focus of the state’s politics towards Muslims, as Amir-Moazami suggests. She argues that integration policies increasingly affect the regulation of Muslim religious practice and have become securitized.45

‘Integration’, which is largely used as a euphemism for assimilation in public debates, is threatened at large, according to the VS. The VS defines legalist Islamism as follows in one of its statements:

“Legalist Islamist associations follow a broader strategy of political influence. They present themselves as an interest group of great parts of Muslims living in Germany and strive for creating open spaces for their members to be able to implement a shari’ā-based life. They offer a comprehensive network of education and ministry. […] this characteristic of legalist Islamism that looks at Muslims, who permanently live in Germany, can support the creation of parallel Islamist societies (Parallelgesellschaft) and hence become a medium to a long-term threat. This torpedoes the State’s and societal integration efforts and facilitates processes of radicalization. An education aiming at opposing democratic institutions cannot be justified with the right to ‘cultural difference’.46

This quote reveals the very narrow definition of ‘integration’ and its underlying idea of German identity as a traditional, static and exclusionary concept. Karahan, a member of the IGMG, criticizes the VS not only for ignoring all the positive social efforts he claims his association has performed in the areas of education and ministry, but for transgressing its area of responsibility. He argues that the VS’ responsibility is not to measure efforts of ‘integration’. The creation of “open spaces” for the implementation of “shari’ā-based life” is not elucidated any further,47 which is a characteristic of Islamophobic discourses to use controversial terms for legitimizing an exclusionary argumentation or policy. Hence, this allows many suspicions to generate. Karahan also criticizes the Baden-Wuerttemberg VS48 for seeing an Islamist in “everybody who refers to sources that are regarded as being authentic”49 (meaning the Qur’an as the word of God and the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad). This would effectively include all Muslims in this category. Interpreting from the above definitions, the ideal German Muslim subject is a Muslim who does not formulate his own interests, but rather submits to the dictated interests of the VS whose ultimate goal is to protect the German state. The very politicized term Parallelgesellschaft, which means the creation of a ‘ghetto’, is used to combat empowerment and building up own structures to fit into the wider picture of an assimilated ‘Muslim subject’, who is more law-abiding, and dedicated in his loyalty to the constitution. Hence, these passages show the power the VS ventures to have in defining Islam, integration, the Muslim security threat and consequently how society should (not) be influenced by Muslims: No creation of interest groups, no creation of networks of education and ministry, no cultural difference. This reveals a conflation of Islampolitik with issues of security and social integration, as observed in politics and academia by the anthropologist Sunier.50 In the next section, I will address how this submissive German ‘Muslim subject’ is disciplined in the field of education.
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WISSENSCHAFTSRAT

After many years of debates and claims by Muslims themselves to establish theological education at an academic level, the catalyst for the institutionalization of Islamic Theology in German state universities came from the Wissenschaftsrat (WR, the Council of Science and Humanities). In 2010, a report titled Recommendations on the Advancement of Theologies and Sciences concerned with Religions at German Universities was published, which discussed the future role of Islamic Studies in the German academic landscape. In this report, the WR recommended the expansion of Islamic Studies and put special emphasis on the “establishment of theologically competent advisory boards for Islamic Studies at the universities that offer the respective courses.”

The background to this recommendation is the legal regulation of state-church relations in science and education. In total, the inclusive secularity of the German system produces domestic religions, ‘civil religions’, which aim to realign society with moral and ethics, something which the secular state cannot provide. Generally speaking, the German constitution grants freedom of religion and equal treatment of all religions. This is supposed to make the state neutral towards different religions. On the other hand, the state must respect the “right to self-determination of the religious communities” (art. 140 GG in conjunction with art. 137 para. 3 WRV). In “common affairs”, the state and the respective church or denomination are required to cooperate. One such “common affair” is Christian theological faculties, “which are affairs of the state (e.g. regarding the status of the university chairs in public service law) and, simultaneously, of the church (e.g. ecclesiastical doctrine as subject of teaching at university)”. Therefore, the state and the respective religious community are obliged to cooperate in the foundation of departments of theology and the establishment of denominational courses of studies at public universities. While the state is not allowed to establish a theology department or any denominational-oriented academic program unilaterally, churches and denominations are allowed to have private universities. For an accreditation of theological faculties at state universities, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Church are both not only responsible to construct a syllabus, but also empowered to vote against the nomination of personnel and even to withdraw a nominated person afterwards if the person is acting against the denomination of church. The reward of a first academic degree is even bound to the membership of the person in the respective Church.

Based on these constitutionally guaranteed rights, the WR clearly states, “Muslims have the constitutional right of participation in the appointment of professors.” The WR calls for the establishment of advisory boards that should be in charge of “the establishment, modification and discontinuation of theological study courses, and the appointment of academic staff.” At the same time the WR goes on to state, “advisory boards for Islamic Studies should do justice to the self-conception of Muslims, the diversity of their forms of organization in Germany and the requirements concerning theological competence.” It calls for the participation of the Koordinationsrat der Muslime (KRM), theoretically trained individuals from abroad (as it is assumed there are none in Germany), and prominent Muslims from public life, as there exist a “majority of non-organized Muslims in Germany.” Members of the universities may only exercise a “consultative vote.” One of the underlying problems here is the non-existence of legally recognized ‘Muslim churches’ and the question that is raised again and again as to who really represents the majority of Muslims. Although representation is not a requirement for legal
recognition, this argument has been put forward against legal recognition for many years by German governments.

Although the WR is arguing very much on the basis of the constitutional order and trying to emphasize the principle of parity and the principle of religious autonomy of every religious community (Art. 140 GG), there are some dimensions in the recommendation that must be looked at critically. One aspect is the autonomous power to define the issue. For example, when it is stated that “a church-like structure would be against the self-conception of Islam”, it allows the WR to define who should be on the constitutionally provided advisory boards. I argue that it is a transgression of the discretionary power of the WR. As part of an asymmetric power relation, it reduces Islam to a certain interpretation. Although this issue has been controversial, the reality of Muslim institutions demonstrates the existence of a variety of institutions, i.e. legally recognized denominations, religious departments, or the reframing of waqf into religious departments as is the case in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and other countries.

A second aspect of WR’s involvement is revealed in the passage, where the WR argues that “there are initiatives in Germany aiming to establish private institutions for the training of imams. In principle, the foundation of a private university run by a [Muslim, FH] religious community is constitutionally provided for and can be realized.” But in contrast to Jewish and various Christian Free Church Universities that do exist, “from the academic perspective, this approach carries disadvantages for a discipline at this early stage.” There is an assumed lack of “integration in academic cooperations” with related disciplines within the university” and that Islamic Studies as a young discipline would not be able to “recruit from a pool of home-grown, young academics, because such does not exist.” This again is factually incorrect as Islamic Studies has existed for hundreds of years in the Muslim world. The WR then concludes that

> “the establishment of any private higher education institution for this purpose would have to be accompanied by the establishment of Islamic Studies at a state-run university. Such double provision appears less than practical. Therefore the Council […] recommends advancing the development of Islamic Studies primarily within the state-run university system”.  

This statement supports the idea of establishing Islamic Theology as an academic discipline in the ambit of the state. The German Muslim subject is better disciplined and governed in the context of an existing academic state-system and not independently, and hence more autonomously. But, state universities would also face the same problem of a lack of home-grown academics to recruit from.

The WR also says: “Considering the ethnic heterogeneity of the German Muslims, it would be utterly inconvenient to provide lectures or tutorials in Arabic or Turkish. It would also be obstructive to cooperation with other disciplines represented at the university, in many cases.” Through the issue of language, the state uses another dispositif, a regulatory decision in this case to define the ideal German Muslim subject. While one assumes that Islamic Studies (“Islamische Theologie” in the German document) as an academic discipline should be based on the Arabic language, as is the case with Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in Christian Theology, the WR seems to deal with the language issue from the perspective of social integration policy. Here, the image of the migrant Muslim who does not have a good command of the German language as a justification for integration policy that aims to create successful German Muslims who speak German may play into this policy recommendation. It is also possible that WR would find it
easier to control future departments if they were run in German because they could understand the language of training, teaching and research. This illustrates the will of the WR to determine how the ideal Muslim subject will be produced in these centers of knowledge-production. Based on a conflation of Islampolitik with integration politics, the Muslim subject is clearly meant to be a ‘Germanized’ one.

**THE POLITICS OF THE ADVISORY BOARDS**

While the WR recommended the “establishment of theologically competent advisory boards for Islamic Studies” to ensure the rights of Muslims to choose their own theologians, this happened in only two out of four centers of Islamic Studies. Regulations for organizing an advisory board have been established, yet not all centers have implemented them. This is not simply a matter of different ways of setting up an advisory board. The security dispositif and the chosen role of Muslim ‘theologians’ is important in the constitution of these boards, I intend to concentrate on the role of the VS in the regulation of advisory boards and not on the role of other actors, as this would go beyond the scope of this article. I will discuss the (non-establishment) process of these advisory boards of the four mentioned centers of Islamic Studies at German state universities and elaborate on the impact of the VS on their constitution.

In Münster, an eight-member advisory board was supposed to be established, based on a contract between the university and the KRM signed in December 2011. This contract provided the responsibilities and duties of the board: It had to agree to the establishment or change of courses as well as regulations of study and exams. The board also dealt with the recruitment of personnel and was even entitled to remove someone from his or her position. While the university had to consider only academic aspects, the advisory board was obliged to consider only religious aspects related to the teaching and moral conduct. The board should be composed of eight members – working voluntarily –: four Muslims from associations (nominated by the above mentioned KRM), two Muslims from public life and another two Muslim scholars of Islam (nominated by the university and agreed upon by the KRM) for the coming three years. These guidelines indicate an equal treatment of Muslims alongside regulations between the state and Christian churches as recommended by the WR.

However, while the legal dimensions basically followed the recommendations of the WR, the politics were found to differ. Before the advisory board was fully nominated, one of the four members that should have been nominated by the KRM was refused. This was not done by the university, which is usually entitled to question nominations, but by the then federal Minister of Education, Annette Schavan. The argument was that the nominee, Burhan Kesici, was linked to IGMG and was thus stigmatized as being anti-constitutional by the VS. In a letter by the Ministry of Science, addressed to the rector of the university, it was stated that the Ministry of Interior had objections against Mr. Kesici which, in turn, would affect the project’s funding. Hence, the Ministry of Science felt obliged to prove Mr. Kesici’s loyalty to the constitution. This reveals the central role the security dispositif plays here. This incident reveals the VS’ interference in the state’s Islampolitik.

This politics stems from the so called Extremismusklausel, which was introduced in 2010 and abandoned in 2014. It was an administrative regulation (Verwaltungsvorschrift), which made financial support by the Federal Republic conditional upon a proven commitment to the constitution. Since the IGMG is a member of the umbrella association Islamrat, which is a direct member of the KRM, the nominee was not considered to be committed to the constitution. But
Kesici was a member of another advisory board for Islamic religious education in North Rhine-Westphalia, where no security considerations were taken into account. At the beginning, this decision of the federal ministry was neither communicated to the KRM, nor to other members of the board, according to Güvercin, a journalist who was nominated for the board in the category of “Muslim personalities from public life.” This led to disgruntlement within the board, although the KRM nominated another person that was again rejected. Meanwhile, the head of the Zentrum für Islamische Theologie (ZIT) called for a meeting of the – not fully constituted – board within one week. The agenda of the meeting was revealing: It asked to nominate a chair of the board and to affirm (zustimmen) – not discuss – the nomination of various persons. An application for the accreditation of a course (more than 190 pages) should have been affirmed. As all the members were working on a voluntary basis, many felt used by the head of the ZIT, who represented the university and the ministry. The KRM refused to participate, as one seat of the board was still vacant. Hence, the meeting did not take place. Rather, the courses that should have been affirmed by the advisory board were now offered without any participation of the board. Güvercin became critical and stepped back as a result of a statement by the head of the ZIT that he was against the system of advisory boards for centers of Islamic Studies. The latter argued that Muslim associations would first of all represent their own interests and secondly they were not theologically trained enough to choose theologically qualified personnel. At the same time, the KRM de facto accepted the refusal of its nominee and nominated an alternative person, because it did not want to “block the process of constituting an advisory board”, although it considered the refusal of its nominee as “non-objective.” This again illustrates the subordinate position of the Muslim representatives in relation to the influence of the state.

In contrast to the ZIT at the University of Münster, the universities of Osnabrück and Tübingen did not consult the Ministry of Interior on their proposed candidates for the advisory boards from the beginning. The ZIT at the University of Tübingen has an agreement on an advisory board consisting of seven theologians. Five are local representatives of the largest Muslim associations: three from DITIB, one from Landesverband der islamischen Kulturzentren and one from the Islamische Gemeinschaft der Bosniaken in Deutschland. Another two people in the category of “Muslim personalities in public life” are proposed by the rector. Originally, the advisory board should have included a member of the Islamische Glaubengemeinschaft Baden-Württemberg (IGBW), which also has links to the IGMG. Although they were included in the negotiations from the beginning, according to a member of the teaching staff at the ZIT/University of Tübingen, the university reckoned that with the exclusion of personnel from IGBW, the advisory board would not have to face any resistance from the government. While members of the IGBW and the KRM were included in the first plans for constituting an advisory board, they were excluded after a while. Hence, it appears that the security dispositif was working: the VS’ marking of the IGMG as a security threat lead to the exclusion of members of this group and determined the composition of the advisory board.

At the Departement für Islamische-Religiöse Studien (DIRS) at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, an advisory board has been established consisting of 13 members. The structure was defined in the constitution of the university in 2007 and was not negotiated between the university and the KRM or between any other Muslim institution(s). In § 11a (3), it is stated that only the head of the university is entitled to appoint the members of the advisory board, while Muslim representatives of Bavaria have to be considered “well-balanced” in the selection (FAU 2007). But in fact, only two out of the thirteen members belong to a Muslim association in
A well-versed non-Muslim professor was named as the coordinator of the DIRS. During the opening ceremony, Bavaria’s Minister of Interior stated:

“It is a crucial goal of our integration-policy that our fellow Muslim citizens […] can find a religious homeland, not outside of our society but in the middle of it, as part of it. […] The bachelor’s degree program is best suited in the hands of the FAU with its long tradition of Islamic Studies”.

This statement is revealing in many ways. It again shows the strategic use of Islamic Theology as a means of integration-policy to discipline the ‘Muslim subject’. Moreover it specifies where the Ministry of Interior wants to see Islamic theology develop, namely inside the (Non-Muslim dominated) university, and not in study programs offered by Muslims for Muslims. Here, perceptions of an ideal academic frame for Islamic Studies by the WR and the security agency coincide. The phrase “religious homeland, not outside of our society but in the middle of it” demonstrates the VS’ power to define the parameters. He defines how an appropriate Islamic theology should look, because the University of Erlangen (FAU) has a long history of Islamic Studies, but these Islamic Studies-programs mainly represent a Non-Muslim perspective.

At the fourth center, the Institut für Studien der Kultur und Religion des Islam at the University of Frankfurt, no advisory board was constituted at all. According to one leading Muslim Professor, such an institution would run the risk of restricting research. From a theological perspective, he argued, there was no church in Islam and hence, such a control would risk the loss of “logic and semantics of Islamic religion.”

The only center where advisory board members positions were challenged is the IIT in Osnabrück, where eight out of nine members of the advisory board are chosen by members of Muslim civic associations and only one is proposed by the university. The head of the IIT advocates a link between Muslim associations and Islamic Theology at universities, because for him, religious authority must be accepted by religious Muslims. In the end, they will serve in the mosques or as teachers in religious classes in public schools. Therefore, Islamic Theology as an academic discipline should be entitled to normativity and not looking at religion from a cold and distant perspective, says the head of IIT.

Summing up the development of advisory boards, it can be said that the interference of the VS counteracts the recommendations of the WR and transforms the advisory boards into disciplinary institutions, in the sense of disciplining and governing the Muslim subject.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the politics of the WR, Ministries of Education and the VS regarding the newly established centers of Islamic Studies at state universities, clearly reveals the interest of these agencies in disciplining the Muslim subject. This is demonstrated in several ways. First, the WR tries to direct the development of Islamic theology in a particular way instead of ensuring it has freedom and independence in research and teaching, turning centers of Islamic Studies into disciplining institutions. Yet, the WR still justifies this on the basis of equal treatment for all religious groups. Second, the VS disciplines the Muslim subject through involvement in the composition of advisory boards, using a security dispositif. By determining the ‘acceptability’ of Muslim representatives, the VS clearly shapes the development of Islamic Theology in the academy. The VS aims to discipline the Muslim subject by defining the main elements of an ideal German Muslim subject. The formation of this desired ‘Muslim subject’ is through the primary
use of German language in academia. This ideal Muslim subject’s views coincide with those of the state, fitting into its construction of national identity, while ignoring objections coming from the subaltern Muslim. The Muslim subject is disciplined by framing it in a primarily German-speaking environment of state academy, desiring no space for self-determination, but obedience to the state. Third, the politics of other state agencies such as the Ministry of Education is framed by the policy of the VS, relying on a categorization of “good” and “bad” Muslims. Fourthly, the incorporation of Islamic Theology into the state’s academic institutions allows state surveillance over these activities.

It is possible to conclude that the institutionalization of Islamic Theology in German academia is a step towards the accommodation of Islam in Germany. But as demonstrated by the non-recognition of Islamic associations as legally recognized denominations, this process is unfolding with strong state interference, especially by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Hence, the equal treatment of all legally recognized churches and denominations, which is assured by the federal constitution and which is supported by the WR to some extent, is not being implemented. The role of Muslim faculty members of centers of Islamic Studies who are supporting this policy has not been discussed in this article and needs further attention in a separate paper.

1 Joel Fetzer & Christopher Soper, Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 105-8. Only in June 2013, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, which is regarded as a heterodox Muslim sect by a number of Sunni scholars, was recognized in Hessen. The rest of the Muslim associations, being majority Sunni and mainly from Turkey, have not been legally recognized yet.

2 Niels Valdemar Vinding, Muslim Positions in the Religion-Organisational Fields of Denmark, Germany and England, Publications from the Faculty of Theology no. 42, Submitted on 1 march 2013 for the degree of PhD, pp. 189-203.

3 Kai Hafez, Freiheit, Gleichheit und Intoleranz. Der Islam in der liberalen Gesellschaft Deutschlands und Europas, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013, pp.41-44.


9 It is not my aim here to discuss the debate on Islamic studies and Islamic theology and what constitutes them as academic and confessional disciplines, especially in a time when Islam is very politicized. For further reading see: Abbas Poya & Maurus Reinkowski (eds.), Das Unbehagen in der Islamwissenschaft: ein klassisches Fach im Schwungradicht der Politik und der Medien, Reihe global local Islam, Bielefeld: transcript, 2008.


12 Michel Foucault, Überwachen und Strafen, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1992, 166.


16 Cesari does not solely rely on such a constructivist notion of security, but rather goes on to argue that the ‘securitization of Islam’ leads to a de facto transformation of conservative Muslims into fundamentalists and thus meets the dialectic aspect of discoursive theory.
Ibid. pp.95


Ibid. pp.95-7


22 Levent Teezan, Das muslimische Subjekt. Verfahren im Dialog der Deutschen Islamkonferenz, Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2012. With 9/11, the ‘Muslim subject’ became a potential threat as an outcome of a security discourse, using terms such as the ‘sleeper’ to refer to a diffuse ever-present threat that had to be stemmed. Islamophobic crimes resulting in the loss of people’s lives, such as those in the Netherlands with a Muslim teacher of Moroccan origin or in Germany with a pregnant doctor, were not covered in media and did not lead to far reaching consequences in the way that the murder of Theo van Gogh did.


26 Ibid., p.6.

27 Ibid., p.7.


31 Werner Schiffauer, 2008b.


34 Werner Schiffauer, 2008a, p.55.

35 Ibid., p.56.

36 Ibid., p.56


41 Werner Schifferauer, 2008b.

42 Kerem Öktem, 2013, pp.45-53.


46 BVF 2008, pp.8-9. All citations of the VS are the author’s.


51 Michael Kiefer, *Islamische Theologie, islamischer Religionsunterricht – Kritische Anmerkungen zur Funktion und Praxis*, in: Heiner Barz & Matthias Jung (eds.), *Geburt der Islam zu Deutschland? Fakten und Analysen zu einem Meinungsstreit. Vortragsreihe der I lk-Abendakademie, Band 2*, Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf University Press (213-227), 2013, p.214. The WR is one of the most important policy advisory bodies in the field of sciences in Germany. Its 32 members are appointed by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany based on a proposal by leading academic institutions of the Republic of Germany. Its main objective is to advise the Federal Government and the governments of the German Länder (Federal States). For this reason, it regularly publishes recommendations and prepares reports relevant to scientific institutions, especially universities. See “Function”:

http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/en/about/function.html (accessed 23 October 2013) and “Organisation and procedure”:


53 ibid. p.8. All citations of the WR's paper are originally in English.


55 While Christian Theology is provided at Christian theological Faculties, Islamic Studies is only offered in Philosophy departments due to the non-existence of Islamic theological Faculties, which is seen as inappropriate by some critics. See: Michael Kiefer 2013, p.215.


58 Ibid., p.72.


60 Ibid. p.71

61 Ibid. p.75

62 Ibid. p.76

63 The KRM is an umbrella organization of the four largest Muslim civic associations and umbrella organizations, the Islamrat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, the Zentralrat der Muslime, the Verband Islamischer Kulturzentren (VIKZ) and the DITIB (Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion). It was founded in 2006, shortly before the DIK was established, due to the German state’s longing for a Muslim counterpart. The KRM represents the four largest Muslim associations working on a grassroots-level via educational institutions and mosques.

64 Ibid., p.76-77. After five years, these institutions should be evaluated.


68 Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p. 72

69 Ibid. p.73

70 In late 2013, the *Europäische Institut für Humanwissenschaften*, a private institute, was founded, but not accredited by the state authorities.

71 Ibid. 72-73

72 In fact, looking at the personnel granted professorships at the different centers of Islamic Studies reveals that a majority possess Ph.D. degrees in non-theological disciplines and that the theological knowledge is – if at all – pursued by a degree from a course in distance learning. I.e. Prof. Mouhanad Khorchide (University of Münster) obtained his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Vienna and studied in Lebanon Islamic Studies via Distance
Learning. Prof. Harry Harun Behr (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg) is a teacher by training with no Ph.D. in Islamic Studies/Theology.

73 Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p. 80
75 Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p.8
78 Letter from Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia at the rector of the university of Münster, 2012/10/26, Aktenzeichen 225-1.08.03.03/101, entitled “Bestellungen der Mitglieder des konfessorischen Beirates am Zentrum für Islamische Theologie der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster”.
81 Letter from Mouhanad Khorchide at Eren Güvercin, 18 March 2013 entitled “Konstituierende Sitzung des konfessorischen Beirates für Islamische Theologie der Westfälischen Wilhelms - Universität Münster”.
84 Letter of Erol Pürlü, speaker of the KRM entitled “Antwort auf Ihr Schreiben vom 12.11.2012 im Bezug auf die Bestellung der Mitglieder des konfessionellen Beirats für Islamische Theologie der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität”.
87 Letter of Jürgen Rottenecker, principal oft he university, entitled „Einladung zu einem weiteren Gespräch an der Universität Tübingen“, November 2 2010, GZ I-7713.47.
89 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
The Islamophobic-Neoliberal-Educational Complex

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The Islamophobic-Neoliberal-Educational Complex

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‘The struggle for the future of the Arab and Muslim worlds that is being fought now will be won or lost not on the battlefield, but in the classroom’ (Paul Salem 2009).

INTRODUCTION

In Civilization, right-wing imperial establishment historian Niall Ferguson (2012) unravels the hidden talisman of the rise and triumph of the West. In what is unreflective an apologia for Western hegemony of the last 500 years, Ferguson eagerly assembles the six ‘killer applications’ that catapulted Western civilization to global dominance. These ‘killer Apps’, according to the historian of ‘Lagado’, were the brainchildren of capitalist modernity: competition, science, private property, medicine, consumerism and the work ethic. The other literal ‘killer Apps’—war, plunder, disease, colonialism — are of course too inconsequential to merit due consideration. ‘There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism’, writes Walter Benjamin in the shadow of WWII. That truism extends in time and space far beyond Benjamin’s preoccupation with barbarism perpetrated in Europe in the twentieth century. Indeed, the history of ‘civilization’ and brutality are so intertwined that ‘war, savagery and the savagery of war are virtually impossible to disentangle from the march of civilization’ (Bowden 2011, 125). The political implications of this point are eloquently captured by the legendary Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish in his farewell poem to Edward Said: ‘So let us advance—for progress could be a bridge leading back to barbarism’. Recent history in the Middle East resonates quite frighteningly with these insights, starkly so in the Frankensteinian post-September 11 world.

Perched atop the civilizational evolutionary scale and unencumbered by the above-mentioned moral trivialities, Ferguson delivers his final blow on ‘history’ and exhorts the rest’ to embrace the virtues of the ‘last civilization’. ‘The Western package’ he eggs on, ‘still seems to offer human societies the best available set of economic, social and political institutions—the ones that are most likely to unleash the individual human creativity capable of solving the problems the twenty-first century faces’ (2012, 324). The parochial western-centrism and outright cultural/civilizational racism/Darwinism underlying such admonitions can be dismissed as hubristic and morally questionable. But such logic, not unlike its predecessors of the previous half millennium, is not without moment in the current scramble for world domination and does indeed square in with established doctrine both in respectable academic circles and centers of power. This neo-white-man’s burden acquires a particular ideological urgency in America’s global, neoliberal ‘war on terror’. It gives
credence to unleashing wars at will and transmogrifying the world into a boundless, constantly shifting battlefield. It equally lends justification for waging ideological and cultural warfare to spread the ‘habits of liberty’ and progress in the Muslim world. In this battle for Muslim hearts and minds, education becomes the ideological nexus where Islamophobia and neoliberalism interlock in upholding and consolidating American imperialism. Echoing the view in Washington, Paul Salem (2009), Director of the Carnegie Middle East Center, writes with apparent enthusiasm that ‘the struggle for the future of the Arab and Muslim worlds that is being fought now will be won or lost not on the battlefield, but in the classroom.’ The ‘Killer Apps’ are indeed ‘weapons of mass instruction’.

Amidst the deafening clamor for defeating ‘Islamic terrorism’, one distinctly boisterous demand has been to overhaul educational systems in the Muslim world. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, whose membership included leading figures in the current administration such as Obama, Kerry and Hagel, laments that the Muslim world is plagued with an ‘educational deficit’ which ‘has contributed to the rise of extremist ideologies that have provided fertile ground for terrorist recruitment’ (2005, 1). One major focus of this educational enterprise is to purge curricula of ‘bigotry’, ‘intolerance’ and material liable to nurture ‘terrorist’ inclinations. Another emphasis is on the inculcation of civic values likely to have a liberal civilizing effect on Muslims. Part of this program is also the proliferation of proposals exhorting Muslim countries to subordinate educational systems to purely market exigencies and global economic interest. This is vehicled through a new discourse centered around employability, skills and the knowledge economy. The National Endowment for Democracy, for instance, stresses the need for ‘fundamental institutional reforms that will … foster entrepreneurship, and promote changes in the educational system to raise labor productivity and provide young people with the skills needed to compete in a global economy’ (2012, 8). These acts of educational, cultural and economic violence betray an unattractive mix of Islamophobia and neoliberalism with significant implications for the cultural and political future of Muslims. Through the examination of Western projects of educational reform, this paper will thus attempt to disentangle the connections between Islamophobia as both a racialized and a neo-orientalist discourse and neoliberalism as an economic and ideological orthodoxy in the service of Western designs for domination over the Middle East.

**ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE NEW RACIALIZED GLOBAL HIERARCHY**

Islamophobia is not merely emblematic of a psychopathology of fear of the category of Muslim and Islam. Neither is it only reflective of a social psychology encompassing ‘indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions’ (Bleich 2012, 182), visceral, uninformed ignorance of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims. This parochial rendering of Islamophobia as a phenomenological reality that exists primarily in the minds of Islamophobes obscures its embeddedness in political and cultural structures. It removes from view the fundamental fact that Islamophobia, as a discourse and an experiential reality, is systemic and ingrained in the deep structure of contemporary Western ideological culture.

Islamophobia does not, however, exist in a form of structural stasis, merely providing the conditions of possibility for the maintenance of a particular cultural, political and legal structure. Islamophobia does, more crucially, interlock with broader designs of domination and global control. It constitutes an ‘ideological formation’ sustaining both America’s politics of control internally and its political and economic interests abroad (Sheehi 2011, 31-32).
In the post-Cold War era, Islamophobia emerged as a new totalizing ideological framework for the reconfiguration of American/western power and new geopolitical priorities in the Muslim world. Its significance has taken on remarkable dimensions as it has become the foundation of a new racialized, globalized hierarchy in the age of terror. It is a functionally useful logic that legitimizes neo-colonial expansion and violence as part of the post-cold war neo-white-man’s burden. Islamophobia is the Last Man’s ideological resurrection of the ‘end of history’.

Naked power and war-mongering are conventionally cloaked in the garb of noble intent and lofty ideals. But they are also executed in the psychotic shadow of the deployment of fear and demonization of constructed or imagined others, the hordes at ‘our’ door. The past few centuries are replete with an assortment of myriad variations on that same theme. Beginning with the Crusades, through the Inquisition, the annihilation of the ‘New World’, global colonial subjugation, ‘postcolonial’ neocolonialism, the Cold War and more recently the ‘war of terror’, these projects, essential constituents of what Ramon Grosfoguel (2012) calls the ‘Westernized/Christianized modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world system’, are carefully administered with the indispensable aid of the self-serving liberatory rhetoric of Christianity, civilization, development, modernization, liberal capitalist democracy and, now, neoliberal utopia. Thus, ‘the fundamentally racist and culturally chauvinistic dimensions of the new world system ushered in by the United States during the postwar period’ (Churchill 2011, 26) perpetuates an enduring formidable combination of racialized hierarchies and civilizing ideologies.

In the post-cold war era, as argued, these global designs coalesced around the imperial project of capitalist democracy. In the age of terror, neoliberalism has occupied center stage in the neo-imperial discourses and projects targeting the Muslim world. The Islamophobic/neoliberal program is multifaceted and encapsulates a huge array of social, cultural, political and economic schemes. One significant field of operation in this global Islamophobic/neoliberal crusade is education, forming what I call the ‘Islamophobic-Neoliberal-Educational Complex’.

**ISLAMOPHOBIC-NEOLIBERAL-EDUCATIONAL COMPLEX**

The Islamophobic-Neoliberal-Educational Complex epitomizes the ideological site in which American neo-imperial designs in the Muslim world are enacted. It rests on the Islamophobic instrumentalization of education and reform to institute a wide-ranging cultural and conceptual reconfiguration of the Muslim world for global hegemony. This Complex operates at the intersection of American educational imperialism, Islamophobic securitization and neoliberalization. One of the very early instances of this project was the White Revolution devised by the Kennedy administration for the Shah of Iran to counteract the threat of a ‘red’ revolution in the country. The ‘Revolution’ was meant to strengthen secularism, garner support for the Pahlavi regime and also importantly weaken the clerical class. This benevolent educational ‘aid’ was conditioned on economic ‘modernization’ and the privatization of national assets (Dorn and Ghodsee 2012, 387-388). These schemes of liberal-capitalist-oriented education were integral to the global scheme of the production of liberal-capitalist Last Man in the third world. This cultural reconversion has transmuted into the more gigantic project of producing the ‘Neoliberal Man’, to which we shall now turn.

The Islamophobic-Neoliberal-Educational Complex is hinged on two broad packages of neoliberalization as antidotes to the ‘Muslim Threat’: neoliberalization from above and neoliberalization from below. The nexus of the ‘war on terror’ and neoliberalization from
above is epitomized in Bush I’s National Security Strategy. One fundamental fulcrum of the war on terror is to ‘ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade’ (White House 2002). A necessary prelude to such free market ignition is a global conflagration of violence, as Afghanistan and Iraq amply show in addition to the numerous ‘invisible’ small wars around the globe (Scahill 2013). Embracing free trade and free markets holds magnificent things in store for humanity, so we are promised. They generate prosperity and growth, a necessary endeavor for imprinting the ‘habits of liberty’ (White House 2002, 17). Shrouding imperial ambitions in the thick veil of high-sounding moral ideals is not an entirely novel colonial ploy.

In tandem with global neoliberal restructuring, neoliberalization from below forms the centerpiece of the ideological war for hearts and minds (and pockets) to de-radicalize young Muslims. Neoliberalization in this context takes on a vast social and cultural dimension. It is not simply an economic dogma concerned with the reshuffling of economic structures. It is a full-blown social program predicated on a set of ‘values’ and predispositions congruent with the broader neoliberal project. The discourses and policy packages imposing ‘free trade’, privatization, deregulation, the slashing of public spending, free market legal infrastructures at the top dovetail with the ‘grassroots’ social programs foisting a slew of values smacking of a neoliberal ideology. These mainly concern individual choice, individual responsibility, initiative, entrepreneurship, skills and freedom.

**ISLAMOPHOBIA AS COMMODIFICATION**

Education then becomes the site where these laboratory experiments in neoliberal engineering are carried out. The aim of education in the neoliberal age is to improve the skills of the ‘labor force and the population as a whole’ and enhance the propagation of ideas that boost ‘productivity and opportunity’ (National Endowment for Democracy 2012, 17). In the same vein, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), launched in the same spirit as the NSS, subsumes among its goals ‘the development of skills that lead to job and opportunity’ and ‘promote entrepreneurship’ (US Department of State 2008, 2). This should not be taken lightly as ‘economic populism’, so admonishes the National Endowment for Democracy. This necessitates ‘fundamental institutional reforms that will … foster entrepreneurship, and promote changes in the educational system to raise labor productivity and provide young people with the skills needed to compete in a global economy’. The strategic significance of these neoliberal professions is not limited to the economic transformation they are meant to effect. Their centrality lies precisely in the capacity to instigate a wider and long-term ideological revolution against ‘Islamic terrorism’. In this regard, neoliberal ‘Education is the best hope of turning young people away from violence and extremism’ (Center for Strategic and International Studies 2007, 37). Neoliberal education thus functions as a bulwark against the ‘Islamic threat’, domesticating the minds of young Muslims and inoculating their propensity for extremism. Neoliberalism meets education meets Islamophobia.

**ISLAMOPHOBIA AS DISNEYIFICATION**

Educational systems in the Muslim world are generally portrayed as hotbeds for extremism and terrorism. One report denounces Pakistani education as a hub for breeding bigoted fundamentalists and terrorists. It concludes that the Pakistani curriculum comprises ‘outdated and incoherent pedagogical practices that hinder the development of interest and insight’, which ‘makes it impossible to develop critical and analytical skills’ (Nayyar and Salim
The authors make it clear that Pakistani education should emphasize usable skills rather than knowledge. The ‘subtle subversion’, the authors propose, combines ‘peace education’ with a ‘neoliberal manifesto’ for Pakistani education: ‘to teach children to love and trust humanity’ (128) sits comfortably along with ‘to be able to transform available raw materials into useful goods and services’, ‘to be able to adopt a vocation or a professional one desires to espouse’, and ‘to offer marketable human resources acquired through education’ (131-132). Neoliberal education holds humanizing potentialities in store for these youths, as does Disney.

A potent mix of neoliberal and Islamophobic thinking then undergirds the civilizing calculus of the educational ‘subtle subversion’. The panacea for inoculating the fundamentalist inclinations of Muslims is educational Disneyification. The subtle neoliberal reconversion to prod Muslim children away from fundamentalist habits and to entice them to imbibe the magic of consumerist, neoliberal wonderland can be effectively implemented through *Sesame Street*, finely tailored to local taste. The ‘initiative’ builds on the alleged success of a similar program designed for Egyptian school children choreographed by USAID, interestingly, with corporate sponsorship from Americana Foods and Unilever (US$AID 2004). *Alam Simsim* is an ambitious cultural re-engineering project aimed at marketing ‘civic’ values and ‘improving’ the nutrition and hygiene habits of Egyptian children, a blueprint for promoting Western lifestyles and consumerism, as expected by the program’s corporate sponsors. According to Corporate Watch, Unilever is at the forefront of the neoliberal global apartheid agenda. It expends huge amounts of money and effort to promote consumerism in the South targeting the poor and children to alter their eating habits and adopt western lifestyles. The company’s health campaigns are hypocritical and are largely driven by pure self-interest and corporate bottom-line: profitability. This is Islamophobic Disneyification as commercialism.

In Pakistan, the financing of *Sesame Street* is ensured by USAID to offer ‘fun’ education for Pakistani Children in order to stall ‘descent into religious conservatism and economic stagnation’ (Shah, 2011). ‘Fun’ education ‘will have the capacity to encourage tolerance, which is so key to what we’re trying to do here’, boasts Larry Dolan, Director of the USAID education office in Pakistan. The overarching approach adopted is centered around ‘greater secularization of Pakistan’s various educational institutions’, with a view to ‘de-Islamize’ the educational system, which is official US goal, according to a RAND insider (Fair, 2006, 94, 98). In this respect, Republican Senator Bill Nelson acknowledges with great self-adulation: ‘it is one of the greatest benefits to the free world to elevate the educational awareness and attainment of people in that part of the world’ (2006). Baudrillard (1983) once caustically observed that Disney represents the only authentic reality in America. At least, in our case, Disney does seem to offer one essential element of the authentic reality of the Islamophobic-educational-neoliberal dystopia in the simulacrum of the American imperial theatre.

**ISLAMOPHOBIA AS LIBERAL CIVILIZATION**

Similar trepidations are raised regarding the ubiquity of illiberal fanaticism in Muslim education. Purging curricula of intolerance and bigotry has therefore been a trope much bandied about in proposals for educational reform in the Muslim world. Writing in the *Washington Post*, Stuart Levey (2010), Treasury Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, urges that ‘we must focus on educational reform in key locations to ensure that intolerance has no place in curricula and textbooks. There is still much to be done in this
area, but unless the next generation of children is taught to reject violent extremism, we will forever be faced with the challenge of disrupting the next group of terrorist facilitators and supporters.’ This is part of an educational preemptive strategy aiming to inject fine doses of liberal civilization in the minds of young Muslims to quarantine their proclivity for narrow-mindedness and prejudice.

The Saudi textbook promotion of anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism is a prime target of Islamophobic liberal civilization. What emerges is a bleak record of intolerance and bigotry deserving of scorn and condemnation. Accordingly, one report by the Hudson Institute alarmingly concludes that ‘Rank anti-Semitism saturates the curriculum. Repeatedly, Jews are demonized, dehumanized, and targeted for violence. The existence of an Israeli state is de-legitimized and the texts are aimed at mentally preparing the students for eventual war, not peace’ (The Hudson Institute 2011, 10). In the same vein, a policy document by the Council on Foreign Relations, hastily hatched out a little less than two months after 9/11 by a group of former high-ranking officials including Kissinger and Holbrooke, academics and corporate Moguls of the likes of George Soros, bluntly acknowledges that ‘changing the "hearts and minds" of the people of the region is going to be a monumental task that will require tremendous effort from the U.S’. But that should not deter ‘us’ from ‘our’ noble mission to ‘take education out of the hands of the fundamentalists and help extirpate the anti-American and anti-Semitic bile that plagues their educational systems’ (2001). These magnanimous gestures find resonance in intellectual circles as well.

Fareed Zakaria lambasts educational systems in the Middle East for fomenting anti-Americanism: ‘Saudi funded madrasas have churned out tens of thousands of half-educated, fanatical Muslims who view the modern world and non-Muslims with great suspicion. America in this world-view is almost always uniquely evil’ (2004, p. 14). The reasons why ‘they hate us’ should become obvious. Following on the footsteps of his intellectual mentor Bernard Lewis, Zakaria opines that these enraged creatures ‘come out of a culture that reinforces their hostility, distrust and hatred of the West--and of America in particular’ (2007). This visceral hatred has spread deadly fundamentalist contagion elsewhere in the Muslim world, which calls for immediate action.

Neoliberal education reform becomes imperative in order to confront the obscurantist forces of Islamic intolerance. Isobel Coleman (2006), of the Council on Foreign Relations, ruefully asserts that the curriculum monitored by Islamists and education across the region have ‘resulted in an inordinate emphasis on rote memorization of religious texts… turning out paper-pushing bureaucrats’, which does not meet the ‘needs of private industry’. The overemphasis on fundamentalist-churning education systems based on rote learning and ‘insufficient development of marketable, practical skills’ among young people shows the ‘dire mismatch between the skill sets companies are seeking and what most regional high schools and colleges are producing’. She proscribes the remedy: ‘All governments must make educational reform one of their top priorities and work closely with the private sector to develop programs and curricula that will better meet companies’ needs’ and ‘produce graduates with more marketable skill sets’. All these schemes demonstrate the centrality of educational neoliberalization (from below) in the attempt to combat intolerance and bigotry, thus attesting to the tight connections between neoliberalism, educational reform and Islamophobia.
**ISLAMOPHOBIA AS A FLOATING SIGNIFIER**

The Islamophobic ideological subtext of these neoliberal educational recipes resides in the intimation that such hatred is incorrigibly engrained in the Muslim psyche, a product of a primeval penchant for prejudice, illiberalism and moral backwardness. The dogged refusal to treat these phenomena in their ‘worldliness’ and the corresponding persistence to cast them in the mold of a culturalist deficit discourse are informed by calcified Islamophobia. Treating these sentiments as floating phenomenological entities thus brackets off any attempt to study them in their relevant context and ultimately annuls any careful consideration of causality. There is no awareness to attribute negative perceptions or prejudice to the long-standing American military, political and economic dominance or relentless American cultural imperialism or US collusion in supporting repressive regimes and shielding them from local pressures for reform (Khalidi 2005, 178).

There is no apparent urgency, for example, to entertain the possibility that these ‘primitive’ sentiments may be the result of US and Israel’s policies in the region, or of hubristic and contemptuous condescension with which Muslims and their aspirations are treated (see the interesting case studies collected in Lacorne and Judt 2005). The long-standing grievances over the occupation of Palestine and collective punishment of Palestinians seem irrelevant. Gaußse (2005), for one, attributes part of Saudi popular anti-Americanism to US unconditional support for Israel, Israeli terror and continued occupation. Writing before the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, Edward Said argues that it is the US and Israel’s belligerent policies in the region and their utter contempt for the aspirations and needs of local peoples that have ‘created an understandable sense of Arab-Islamic grievance against powers … who proclaim that they are liberal democracies but act against lesser peoples according to quite contrary norms of self-interest and cruelty’ (1997, xxii). Needless to say that forms of hostility and prejudice should not be condoned under any circumstance, but elementary understanding of the context that enables them is imperative if we are to build a decent future. It takes scrupulous Islamophobic rigor not to observe the evident elements of causality in this respect.

Islamophobic reality-principle flouting also flies in the face of geopolitical actualities. The opprobrium against anti-Semitism in Saudi textbooks ignores the very special bond that is gradually bringing Saudi Arabia and Israel together. The Nation, for example, comments that ‘it’s utterly accurate to say that Israel and Saudi Arabia are happily traveling together along the same path… and have worked as a sort of “tag team” in regional affairs, agreeing to disagree (mostly) on the Palestinian issue but collaborating on many other subjects’ (Dreyfus 2013). One object of this close collaboration is the potential sabotaging of Iran’s nuclear program, with the Saudis reportedly possibly bankrolling the Mossad’s systematic assassination campaign against Iranian nuclear scientists (Lando, 2012). Haaretz can thus gleefully exalts in the fact that ‘For Saudi Arabia, Israel is turning from foe to friend’ (Orin 2012), and a very dependable one at that.

These instances of ideological myopia are instructive and reveal the reality of Islamophobia as a hermeneutic category. The prejudiced Islamophobic hermeneutics should not be construed on depoliticized, individualized grounds or on the basis of moral deficiencies. What the consistent pattern of Islamophobic conceptual myopia reveals is a systemic, racist epistemic economy.
Selective attention is a normal human processing mechanism. It helps us navigate the deluge of stimuli that compete for our attention and impose some order on a chaotic reality. And it crucially provides us with a sense of existential control and security. All this is obvious and natural. But what is not so readily recognized is the fact that the focus of attention is anything but natural and that what we choose to zero in on is colored by our socially constructed mental and ideological predispositions. In many instances, perception is determined *apriori*, a result of wired-in ideological fossilization. Islamophobic selective attention is no exception. The regular fixation on the political, cultural et al. maladies of Islam and Muslims is not therefore the result of a normal process of perceiving a given, ‘objective’ reality of Islam and the Muslim world. Moralizing critiques of it as an illustration of hypocrisy are patently off the mark. The problem is not some moral failing to see reality for what it is. The fixation has roots in a collective Islamophobic structure that has solidified into a narrow ideological filter. It is institutionalized racism.

The selective outrage directed against intolerance and the violent anti-American and anti-Semitic content of Saudi textbooks is a telling example of this. The vehement condemnation does not extend to Israeli textbooks where the incitement to and legitimation of violence against Palestinians is widespread nor is there any apparent effort to produce a balanced, comparative and critical account of these phenomena in a broader frame of analysis and understanding. Gor (2003) documents the active militarization of education in Israel which is designed to prepare children to ‘accept war as a natural factor of life’. More specifically, in a careful study of Israeli history textbooks, Israeli scholar Peled-Elhanan concludes that ‘Israeli mainstream school books implicitly legitimate the killing of Palestinians as an effective tool to preserve a secure Jewish state with a Jewish majority, and … that this legitimation prepares Israeli youth to be good soldiers and to carry on the practices of occupation in the Palestinian Occupied Territories’ (2010, 377). In the US, Michael Apple (2006) has documented the right wing takeover of US education central to which is a curriculum shot through with bigotry and intolerance; not to mention the systemic racist sanitization of American history and the invisibilization of the historical plight of Native Americans, Afro-Americans and Hispanics. The erasure of these last instances (and the parallel incessant zooming in on Saudi textbooks) is not a question of oversight, ignorance or hypocrisy. It is ingrained in mainstream intellectual and political culture. In his analysis of journalistic and intellectual commentary on Islam in the US, Said concludes that ‘covering Islam is a one-sided activity that obscures what *we* do, and highlights instead what Muslims and Arabs by their very flawed nature *are*’ (1997, xxii, original emphasis). This is deep-seated institutionalized epistemic racism.

But Saudis are not alone in their predisposition to the incurable malady of anti-Americanism. Tony Judt argues that the enduring legacy of the Cold War and US military entanglements are ‘the source of an unprecedented level of popular anti-Americanism’ worldwide (2008, p. 380). According to the latest Gallup annual global survey (2013), the United States is considered to be the greatest threat to peace in the world, surpassing other contenders by a significant margin. This corroborates previous findings from the Pew Research Global Attitudes Survey which indicate that anti-Americanism is ‘a global phenomenon’, covering also Asia and Western Europe. To be sure, widespread hatred of America does exist among pupils. Consider this sample:
'America is an extreme country, a new country, where the reality is often cruel and hard for more than half the population. It is the most powerful country [in the world], but it is also the most dangerous.

America wants to look like God because they [the US government] want to decide who must die or not.

George Bush wants to control the world. He is not a good president... There is very much racism because the society is controlled by the WASPs... It’s not a democratic country.

I just hate the politics in the United States. The United States is great, without the Americans...

I hate their president because he abuses his power, and makes war everywhere.

I hate America, because it makes war in Iraq for its oil'.

The venomous ‘rage’ expressed in these testimonies does not emanate from those ‘half-educated, fanatical Muslims coming out of a culture that reinforces their hostility, distrust and hatred of the West—and of America in particular’. The anti-American venom is spewed by no other than French seniors in a highly regarded French Lycée (Lacorne and Judt 2005, p. 3). This sample represents only a small portion of a larger phenomenon: the prevalence of anti-Americanism in French textbooks and curriculum (Cahen 2008). But Islamophobic doctrinal rigor requires that these are exempted from denunciation, and therefore no equivalent civilizing educational proposals are envisaged.

There are graver omissions in this process of Islamophobic selective attention. The coverage does not encompass America’s own record of sponsoring terroristic education and fomenting intolerance and violence. America’s crafting of international terrorism during the Cold War (Cooley 1999; Gerges 2011) comprised a substantial educational component: the militarization of curricula and education in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which has had deleterious effects on the entire society. It has irreversibly shattered the fabric of Afghani and Pakistani society and condemned a whole generation to a future of violence, death, displacement and misery. The ‘war curriculum’ developed to teach Afghani children basic ‘literacy’ and ‘numeracy’ ‘skills’ is suffused with activities, images and text that drill a psychology of violence and militarization. It stands in monumental contrast to the current promotion of the ideals of respect for life and the love and trust of humanity reviewed above. This is a sample numerical ‘reasoning’ activity:

A group of Mujahiddin attacked 28 Russian tanks of which they burned 15 tanks. How many Russian tanks did escape?

There is more to kindle the mathematical reasoning fire in the impressionable minds, perhaps as a preliminary step to the spread of freedom and democratic attitudes:
'The speed of a Kalashnikov bullet is 800 meters per second. If a Russian is at a distance of 3,200 meters from a mujahid, and that mujahid aims at the Russian's head, calculate how many seconds it will take for the bullet to strike the Russian in the forehead' (Davis 2002, 92-93).

The textbooks were underwritten by the University of Nebraska under a grant from USAID (Ibid). The rest should become painfully clear and does not warrant any elaborate comment. Islamophobic blinders are thick indeed.

**ISLAMOPHOBIA AS EDUCIDE**

To Iraqis, 2003 was indeed an *annis horribilis*. It was the year civilizational apocalypse fatefuly descended on this much injured country. From the war crimes in Fallujah to targeted assassinations, from the thuggery of mercenaries to the torture and rape chambers of Abu Ghraib, Iraqis saw their lives, histories, dignity and indeed their humanity lurch from disaster to disaster as a new chapter of colonial history was beginning to unfold. But soon, Iraqis would be subjected to assault on a grand scale when their country became the object of an experiment in social, economic, political, cultural and— as we shall see presently— educational annihilation.

This experiment was accurately dubbed by Paul Wolfowitz as an instance of ‘state-ending’ (Baker, Ismael and Ismael 2011, p. 3), a confession of the *intent* of the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. Wolfowitz’s prescription for state destruction in Iraq is all-encompassing; it ‘entailed more than regime change and more than political and economic restructuring’, as some astute analysts have argued (i.e. Klein 2007). ‘It also required cultural cleansing, [...] the degrading of a unifying culture and the depletion of an intelligentsia tied to the old order’ (Baker, Ismael and Ismael 2010, 6). The damage that has been inflicted on almost every facet of Iraqi existence is tantamount to ‘the death of history’ (Fisk 2007) or, more forthrightly, ‘the rape of Mesopotamia’ (Rothfield 2009). In an epithet, journalist Nir Rosen mourns the disappearing of Iraq: ‘there is only ignominy left for the Americans, and slaughter for the Iraqis’. ‘Iraq has been killed and will never rise again’ (2007, 409), he concludes. The experiment is one of civilicide, *tout court*.

In the minds of Iraqis these scenes of civilicide perpetrated by Western occupiers conjure up images of the Mongol invasion when Genghis Khan’s grandson torched the city of Baghdad and wreaked havoc on its libraries in the 13th century, which, for many astute students of Muslim history, constituted the beginning of the decline of Islamic civilization, to be later expedited with the fall of Granada. The horror of what beset the city has been kept alive in the popular legend that during that Mongol invasion that ‘the Tigris River ran red with blood, then black from the ink of books’ (Knuth 2003, 197). Parallel to culturicide, memoricide and historicide is educide, with its implications for epistemicide and linguisucide.

Total destruction created a vast opportunity for redrawing the Iraqi educational terrain. This was an essential ingredient of the dreadful recipe that Bremer concocted for the neoliberalization of Iraq. Eduicide, epistemicide and linguistic neoinperialism cannot be adequately comprehended without taking stock of the neoliberal assault on the country as Paul Bremer’s obsessive scheme to ‘teach influential Iraqis the basics of a free market economy’ (2006, 63) neatly squares in with his design to draw up the legal infrastructure for
the neoliberalization of the country and revamp the educational system (through proposed privatization/corporatization). Bremer was an ardent champion of corporatizing Iraqi education and opening up educational ‘reconstruction’ for profiteering by US companies and organizations as part of his global neoliberal bonanza. Education thus became the locus of a neoliberal economic revolution and the Islamophobic remaking of Iraqi education and minds.

The destruction of Iraq created an educational **terra nullius** primed for neoliberalization, Americanization, epistemicide and linguicide undergirded by Islamophobia. This is patently illustrated in the stints of two Coalition Provisional Authority education advisors, Erdmann (a fresh Harvard graduate) and the more flamboyant John Agresto (later to become the chancellor and provost of the American University of Iraq in Suleimania). The Erdmann and Agresto schemes were devised with the express purpose of politically/epistemically domesticating and Americanizing Iraqi higher education. John Agresto who ‘arrived in Iraq with two suitcases, a feather pillow, and a profusion of optimism [and unbridled hubris]…, envisioned the job in grander terms’. His brief was not merely ‘to oversee but to overhaul the country’s university system’. For him, culturicide was a blessing in disguise. ‘He regarded the postwar looting […] as a benefit. It provided “the opportunity for a clean start”’ (Chandrasekaran 2006, 184). And it really did.

The clean start heralded the organizational dismantling of universities. Erdmann’s first accomplishment was the dismissal of all university presidents as a prelude to effective change. His blueprint consisted of establishing a corporatized university system, de-Baathification, employing universities as sites for US cultural propaganda (public diplomacy) and the ‘normalization’ of the Iraqi academic and scientific community (Watenpaugh, Méténierm, Hanssen, and Fattah 2003, 27). John Agresto’s scheme had grander ideological ambitions. Its pivot was a civilizing higher educational policy hinged on the imposition of an Americanized liberal arts model and university structure (Chandrasekaran 2006, 184) and the intellectual improvement of Iraqis (Agresto’s interview in Iannone 2006, 37-38). Educational vassalage was also high on his agenda: ‘it’s not so much partnering as adoption that Iraqi universities need’ (ibid). The blueprint is no less than the dismantling and the complete neoliberal and epistemic colonization of Iraqi education.

These projects appear to be redolent with Islamophobic eduicide and epistemicide. Their open secrets are combatting anti-Americanism and ‘terrorism’ and establishing firm control on the knowledge economy in Iraq, especially in disciplines with implications for ‘security’, all bearing the traces of Islamophobic anxieties. As Watenpaugh et al. argue, Islamophobic considerations such as ‘counter-terrorism and non-proliferation [thus] drive American [educational] efforts’ (2003, 26). The physical liquification of the intellectual class in Iraq was one of the most horrifying episodes of epistemicide. The systematic assassination and terror campaign targeting academics and scientists were meant to obliterate an intellectual and academic culture and establish a new one on its ruins. The claim that the purpose of the academic purge was ‘deBaathification’ ‘was a war slogan used by the US and its allies in a bid to destroy’ and ‘render null and void’ what Iraq stood for, including its educational culture (Adriaensens 2010, 136-137). ‘Wiping the slate clean’ which involves the decimation of the Iraqi intelligentsia has far-reaching political consequences. It ‘ensures that the country remains dependent on US and other foreign expertise, providing a powerful means of political leverage’, including the establishment of American-style universities charged with producing a new class of loyal administrators and professionals (Fuller and Adriaensens 2010, 184), as pointed out above. The forced exodus and displacement of Iraqi academics and professionals produced damage that is nearly absolute, which further
exacerbates the state of educational tutelage. The dismemberment of the Iraqi intellectual and professional body ‘will have permanent consequences as the spiral of dependence reinforces itself with the passage of time, exponentially deepeningIraq’s inability for autonomy and self-rule’ (Jamail 2010, 209-210). These factors combine to produce a severely impoverished and subordinated educational and intellectual culture. In short, this borders on epistemicide.

Manifestations of Eduicide also comprise the severing of Iraqi academia from its local context and its subordination to foreign control and oversight by design. The goal is to ‘reinforce and perpetuate the subordinate condition of Iraqi higher education. Further, the US is placing itself, with planned USAID higher education subcontracts to American universities, in a position to dominate Iraqi educational structures for the foreseeable future’ (Watenpaugh, et al. 2003, 27). This therefore condemns Iraqi institutions to a state of permanent academic dependency on American/British universities. The recruitment of Iraqi students and academics for pursuing higher education and ‘professional development’ or for research projects in America/Britain handsomely services the lucrative priorities of universities in those countries and the teaching, testing and publishing industries in an era of harsh neoliberal educational regimes ‘at home’. These schemes can also be a subtle conduit for brain drain, the free movement of ideas from the South to the North. This is ‘aid’ with a brown face. ‘Soft power’ considerations also oblige: creating a class of western-educated Iraqis acutely attuned to Western interests, which will facilitate strategic geopolitical domination of the region. One of the major areas in which long-term domination has been achieved is the establishment of the Americanized/Anglicized University.

The Americanized/Anglicized university as a potential conduit for epistemicide is manifested in the imposition of the Westernized canon and in the linguistic (geo)politics of knowledge production and consumption. The imposition of the Anglicized/Americanized canon also entails the institution of Westernized epistemic traditions. This leads to the naturalization of Western knowledge and canon as a universal norm and the relational devaluation and ultimate demise of local forms of knowledge. These processes have a long-standing history. Epistemicide has been a perennial defining feature of the Westernized University. And the whole edifice of modern Western knowledge and canon is founded on the combined physical and symbolic obliteration of the other. Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) forcefully argues that the structures of western knowledge are predicated on the four genocides/epistemicides perpetrated in the long 16th century against Moriscos and Marranos in al-Andalus, indigenous peoples and slaves in the Americas and Indo-European women in Europe. Epistemicide is constitutive of genocide. The educational *terra nullius* which allowed for the ‘clean start’ to plant Americanized structures of knowledge in Iraq represents potential continuities with that long-standing historical pattern. Constitutive of the intersection of epistemicide and genocide is also linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) and linguicide (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). The dominance of western epistemologies and the relational pauperization and obliteration of other traditions of knowledge had respective implications for western and non-western languages. The linguistic politics of the Americanized/Anglicized University in Iraq exhibits the same entanglement of epistemicide, linguistic imperialism and linguicide.

The institution of English as a language of instruction and publication leads to the ghettoization of Arabic and to the isolation of learning and knowledge production and academies from their societies (Hanafi 2011). The increasing commodification of knowledge vehicled through the English language undercuts the organic function of education systems to actively contribute to the public good of local communities and generate knowledge
geared towards solving local problems rather than be subordinated to irrelevant (and sometimes detrimental) global academic/(geo)political agendas. Scholars are subtly coerced by the morbid language economy of scientific production: publish globally and perish locally or publish locally and perish globally (Hanafi 2011); the balance seems to tilt towards the former, with self-evident consequences for globalized knowledge feudalism and epistemic alienation.

There are other bleak portrayals of the nefarious effects of English on Arabic and local Muslim identity and culture (Al-Issa and Dahan 2011), also likely to effect various degrees epistemicide in the long run. English is aggressively altering communication patterns, cultural schemas and perceptions of identity in the Arab world. The effective domain displacement/amputation of Arabic coupled with relentless westernization and consumerism raises grave concerns about the future sustainability of Arabic language and cultural identity in the region. English and ELT thus become agents in the dissemination of American communicative patterns along with American consumerist ‘values’. Beyond this, the relentless promotion of English is intended to have a deeper civilizing impact on the mental habits of Muslims. It is meant to neutralize them against religious fanaticism and intolerance produced by Arabic-medium and Islamic education, a view widely held in Islamophobic circles (i.e. Pipes 2007). In this respect, Susan Glasser (2003) praises Qatar for its educational revolution: putting English over Islam in its school curriculum. This, along with establishing English-medium universities, is a ‘salutary’ extension of US influence in the region (ibid), which acts as a remedy against the rise of anti-Americanism and intolerance in Qatar and potentially in the entire region. Linguistic and educational violence are tantamount to epistemicide.

In Iraq, experiments in Educide also interlock with a potential Islamophobic civilizing mission. Educational colonialism is not limited to just fashioning Iraqi institutions of higher learning on the image of American universities. It equally includes a profound civilizing element likely to elevate Iraqis to the status of the human, for, in the words of the sublime John Agresto, ‘[t]here is no political liberation without the liberation of the mind’ (2006, 48). This is hinged on a cultural ‘flattening’ that will rescue Iraqis from such ravages of Islam as passivity, intellectual backwardness, gullibility and fatalism. The Islamophobic/Orientalist subtext of such statements is unmistakable. Commenting on Iraqi’s fatalistic culture with bland sarcasm, Agresto fantasizes that ‘[i]f we could get Allah to tell the Iraqis to submit to a new way of life, all would yet be well’ (ibid, 43). His cultural reconversion scheme would ‘help with the opening, or re-opening, of the Iraqi mind’. He claims that ‘the dominance of Islam obstructs liberal arts. Unlike Christianity, he explained, Islam has no recent tradition of analysis or intellectual debate…. Liberal arts incorporate a method of inquiry—discussion, questions, reasoned argument. In Iraq, that is missing’ (cited in Show 2013) (37-38). For Agresto’s Liberal Arts formula to take root, Islam has to give way.

The contract offered to Creative Associates International equally smacks of combination of neoliberal educational speak and Islamophobic, orientalist thinking. The contract states that the purpose of education reconstruction is to focus ‘on quality and access.” To provide that “quality,” the contract says, schools will incorporate “democratic practices in the classroom” and develop students’ learning and critical-thinking skills’ (Zehr 2004). Robert Gordon, Director of Operations at CAI, crows over their pedagogical rehabilitation mission in Iraq: ‘We want them to get away from rote learning. We want students to be able to ask questions’ (Spinner 2003). This rhymes splendidly with Agresto’s Islamophobic ruminations previously cited.
A central focus of the Islamophobic/epistemic assault on Iraqi education was curriculum. The revision of the curriculum and textbook development rested on the ideological reengineering of Iraqi education: the Islamophobic and epistemic sanitization of the curriculum disguised as ‘de-Baathification’. The soaring rhetoric extolling the noble intentions of the occupiers is evident in the parameters designed to revamp Iraqi education (see UNESCO 2004, 21). In practice, however, the lofty ideals translated into a number of actions aimed at purging the curriculum of highly politicized content (see examples in UNESCO 2004, p. 22). The purge was also meant to domesticate and hollow out the curriculum of any subversive content likely to foment resistance to US and Israeli policies (ibid, 58). UNESCO reports that ‘all processes of revision were based on the elimination of everything in the texts that had a link to political material[…]or statements which promoted fighting, for example, against the USA or against Israel’ (ibid, 26). In addition to the political cleansing of the curriculum, ideological reconversion required that the curriculum be secularized. One of the parameters decreed that the textbooks ‘be free from any religious references in order to comply with the American constitution’. This was a ploy to cleanse the curriculum of religious references likely to fuel resistance. The ‘secularization’ of textbook material ‘served as basis for progressive communication between donors and UNESCO principles of universal values’ (ibid, 23), as clearly dictated by the major architect of the project, USAID. It follows then that Islamophobia acts as the ideological repository for the rationalization of secularizing efforts and political sanitization in the process of curricular epistemic decontamination.

After Bush declared ‘mission accomplished’, Tony Blair (2004), in his address to the Coalition Forces in Iraq, prophesied that “in years to come, people here in this country (Iraq), and I believe around the world, will look back on what you have done and give thanks and recognize that they owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude”. Iraqis should be grateful for the six ‘killer apps’: civilicide, culturicide, historicide, educide, epistemicide and linguicide, not to mention the horrific descent into the cauldron of sectarian violence the occupation has bequeathed them. It is one of the ironies of history that occupiers may surrender to the temptations of therapeutic amnesia. Victims rarely afford that luxury.

CONCLUSION

In the era of the empire of terror, to neoliberalize is to racialize. Neoliberalization and Islamophobia are two interlocking projects in America’s quest for hegemony in the Muslim world. This is pivotal to the sustenance of the neo-white-man’s burden to produce ‘Neoliberal Man’. This totalizing experiment finds clear expression in the mutually reinforcing dynamics of Islamophobia and neoliberalism as they play out in American projects of educational reform in Muslim countries. Educational interventions such as Disneyification, liberal civilization, commodification, educide, culturicide, epistemicide and linguicide are given substance in the configuration linking full spectrum neoliberalization and Islamophobia. The consequences are dire for Muslim peoples. The relentless Islamophobic-neoliberal-educational flattening and homogenization jeopardize their cultural uniqueness and security and act in concert as an impediment to pursuing emancipatory courses of cultural and civilizational autonomy. Muslim education is in need of decolonization. A de-Centred, decolonial, liberatory, locally accountable, historically grounded, culturally relevant and epistemically responsive educational/civilizational project is not only desirable, but an existential necessity.
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“Ex-Muslims,” Bible Prophecy, and Islamophobia: Rhetoric and Reality in the Narratives of Walid Shoebat, Kamal Saleem, Ergun and Emir Caner

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Abstract: The connection between Christian dispensationalism ("rapture" theology) and anti-Muslim sentiments is an understudied topic often missing from the scholarship on Islamophobia. This paper is an attempt to fill this gap by focusing on the problematic narratives of four prominent "ex-Muslim" converts to Christianity: Walid Shoebat, Kamal Saleem, Ergun and Emir Caner. I argue that these men have used their Middle Eastern heritages to coax the public into believing that they are former terrorists in order to sell books, demonize Islam, and promote their particular interpretation of Christianity.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years several Christians of Middle Eastern descent have entered the public discourse on Islam claiming to be “ex-Muslim extremists” who are now on a mission to warn America about the “evils” of Islam. The tales promoted by these men create a dualistic and totalizing worldview in which Islam is presented solely in negative terms in polar opposition to the positive values attributed to Christianity and Judaism. Moreover, the rhetoric they use is strikingly similar to that of professional Islamophobes and each of the men discussed here have a particularly close relationship to Christian dispensationalism. This paper will examine the Islamophobic propaganda espoused by these “ex-Muslim radicals” through their own writings and appearances in the media while also using the example of early modern British narratives of Barbary captivity for comparative analysis. As the stories of these men have undergone further scrutiny, many of their claims have been found to be outright falsehoods or at least highly problematic. It is this author’s contention that these men have utilized their Middle Eastern ethnicities to their advantage economically as well as to the advantage of dispensationalism through their othering of Muslims. According to Herman and Chomsky, “former radicals who have come to “see the light” represent a “class of experts whose prominence is largely a function of serviceability to power.” Their stories serve a powerful rhetorical function in the service of Islamophobia.

Before moving on, it is necessary to make some clarifications regarding terminology. It has become commonplace in the American political discourse, especially in the media, to use “evangelical” as a blanket term for all conservative Christians. This is, however, an inaccurate use of the term. Evangelicalism is a broad movement within Protestant Christianity that is often characterized by a “born-again” experience in which a person

comes to “truly” know Jesus as their savior. Evangelicals typically place a strong emphasis on evangelizing and stress the authority of the Bible over human intermediaries. While evangelicals are highly active in American politics and many, if not most, are politically conservative, a significant proportion of evangelicals fall to the opposite side of the political spectrum. The term “fundamentalist” is also not precise enough here since there are Christians that could be classified as fundamentalist, but not dispensationalist. Therefore, dispensationalism, which will be briefly described below, is the most accurate term for describing the specific theological leanings of the “ex-Muslims” that will be focused upon here.

Dispensationalism is a form of futurist premillennialist eschatology based on two modern theological innovations that were introduced by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) in the early nineteenth century – the concept of a secret “rapture” of the “true” believers (meaning “born-again” evangelicals only) and the idea that God has two separate and distinct plans for the Church and for the Jews. This theological system divides history into major eras of biblical history, called dispensations. The creation of Israel in 1948 and the retaking of Jerusalem and the West Bank by the Israeli army during the Six-Day War of 1967, events dispensationalists claim are fulfillments of biblical prophecy, along with the popularity of Hal Lindsey’s The Late Great Planet Earth (1970) and the Left Behind novels of Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins have been instrumental in catapulting dispensationalism to mainstream prominence among evangelical Christians in America. Dispensationalists read contemporary geo-political events into the prophetic writings of the Bible, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. Some of the most popular preachers in America, including John Hagee, Rod Parsley, and Mark Driscoll, are followers of this eschatological framework. Dispensationalists are extremely active in American politics, especially in promoting pro-Israel causes, but most importantly, dispensationalists are highly effective promoters of Islamophobia. In fact, their efforts have been so effective that American attitudes towards Islam are actually worse today than in the year following the September 11 attacks.

Dispensationalists have been able to alter the discourse on Islam through their calculated use of the mass media. According to Edward Said, “a corps of experts on the Islamic world has risen to prominence, and during a crisis they are brought out to pontificate

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4 Some well-known dispensationalist politicians include former Alaska governor Sarah Palin, former U.S. presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, Senator James Inhofe (OK), and former House Minority Whip Tom Delay.

on formulaic ideas about Islam on news programs or talk shows” where they spread “previously discredited, Orientalist ideas.”

Shoebat, Saleem, and the Caner brothers have used their “Muslim-sounding” names and alleged biographies to become those experts claiming an “insider” status aimed at bolstering their credibility. The othering of Islam promoted by these men then becomes “objective” in the view of those consumers who read their books or hear them speak in public. This effectively masks the othering discourse present in their rhetoric allowing Islamophobia to go unrecognized and become an “unconscious ideology.”

The work of Stuart Hall is helpful to shed some light upon the inner workings of othering discourses. Hall defines naturalization as “a representational strategy designed to fix difference, and thus secure it “forever” or “to secure discursive or ideological closure.”

The Islamophobic discourse seeks to naturalize its definitions and interpretations of Islamic concepts, thereby fixing the way Americans view Muslims. In this way, an Islamic concept like shari’a becomes fixed as a rigid system of laws requiring stoning and the subjugation of women in the minds of Westerners making it impossible for it to be seen as the relatively flexible legal and ethical code of conduct practiced by many Muslims around the world.

Related to naturalization is the concept of stereotyping which “symbolically fixes boundaries, and excludes everything that does not belong” thereby setting up strong dualisms (normal/abnormal, us/them, etc.) and, according to Hall, “tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power.” Those promoting anti-Islam propaganda typically deploy the term “Judeo-Christian” as a means of establishing a boundary cutting off Islam from the other two Abrahamic faiths. “Judeo-Christian” then becomes synonymous with Western civilization which, in turn, becomes synonymous with the positive values of freedom, peace, and civilization, while “Islamic” becomes synonymous with the negative values of tyranny, barbaric, violent, and so on. It is through these principles that othering discourses operate.

In the section that follows, the definition of Islamophobia to be used in this paper will be delineated.

**DEFINING ISLAMOPHOBIA**

In the most literal sense, Islamophobia could be defined simply as the irrational fear of Muslims, yet the term has come to signify an entire discourse of othering for which scholars have differed on how to define it as well as debated its usefulness as an academic concept. The most useful definitions provided by scholars are those that treat Islamophobia as an othering discourse similar to racism and anti-Semitism. While the term “Islamophobia” was used prior to 9/11 by scholars, the term did not enter the mainstream American discourse until after those attacks and with the body of anti-Islam literature and media propaganda that followed. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali states that while “Islamophobia did not start

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9 *Shari’a* as described by Islamophobes does exist in some regions, especially those under the control of extremist groups like the Taliban and al-Shabaab. The problem is the way in which anti-Islam commentators define *shari’a* in the same strict and narrow manner as these extremist groups. In reality, *shari’a* is a discourse in itself. It is a broad and flexible system of ethics and law practiced in different ways and methods throughout the umma (worldwide Muslim community).

10 Hall, *Representation*, 258.
in the wake of 9/11...the phenomena has substantially increased [since then]” and has “evolved to become an explicit, almost anti-Semitic style criticism of Islam and Muslims without in fact being acknowledged as such.” Chris Allen criticizes the term for its inclusion of “phobia” which, according to him, transforms the phenomenon into a sort of “disease” or “illness” and thus masks the deliberateness of those who produce and transmit anti-Islam ideology. Allen ultimately settles on a definition of Islamophobia as an ideology which functions similar to racism by formulating a negative image of Islam and Muslims. Marcel Maussen argues that the term is problematic because it “confounds various forms of discourses and acts of violence suggesting that they all emanate from an identical ideological core.” On this point, I tend to agree with Maussen. Some promote anti-Islam ideology from a secular perspective while others anti-Muslim activists come from a specifically Christian perspective. However, many of those in the United States who adopt Islamophobic ideology get their information from dispensationalist sources disguised as “experts” or “insiders.”

Erik Bleich’s article “Defining and Researching Islamophobia” summarizes the various definitions put forth by scholars for the phenomenon while also critiquing the problems inherent with the term such as its ambiguity or its highly-contested and polarizing nature. He also critiques how scholars deploy the term in such a manner as to render identifying instances of Islamophobia difficult. In the end, Bleich offers a definition of Islamophobia as “indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims,” and like Allen, sees Islamophobia as a discourse which functions similar to racism.

Following Allen and Bleich, I define Islamophobia as an othering discourse which functions similarly to racism by creating an “us/them” dualism that defines “them” in negative terms in opposition to what “we” or “us” are (“they” are barbaric, “we” are civilized). The term Islamophobia will be used here to refer specifically to the discourse promoted by anti-Islam activists, scholars, politicians, political pundits, as well as television and talk radio hosts who knowingly and willingly advance negative stereotypes and broad sweeping generalizations about Islam and Muslims, even if they themselves believe their rhetoric to be unbiased. Ordinary Americans or Christians who consume and subsequently retransmit Islamophobic rhetoric should not be referred to as Islamophobes since they may not be fully aware of the political and religious motivations of those who create and promote such rhetoric, thus taking Islamophobic analyses as objective. I reserve the term “Islamophobe” for those who dedicate their lives to spreading anti-Islam propaganda due to their own ideological biases against Islam and Muslims. Anxiety about terrorism or fear of Muslims due to constant exposure to news stories about violent Muslim extremists or militant attacks is not, in itself, Islamophobia. Likewise, as Mohamed Nimer accurately

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12 Chris Allen, Islamophobia (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 135.
13 Allen, Islamophobia, 190.
16 Acknowledging the problems inherent in the terms “religion” and “religious” as outlined by scholars such as J.Z. Smith, Timothy Fitzgerald, and Russell McCutcheon, I nevertheless deploy these terms due to their pervasiveness in the discourse on both Islam and Christianity.
points out, critically examining the beliefs and practices of certain Muslims, especially those that promote fundamentalism and the denial of rights to women, religious minorities, and others, is not Islamophobia either, just as critically examining dispensationalism is not anti-Christian nor should refuting certain aspects of U.S. history be considered anti-American. The next section will discuss early modern British narratives of Barbary captivity in the context of othering and Protestant rhetoric. This example will help to illuminate the othering and dispensationalist propaganda found in the narratives of the “ex-Muslims” examined in the final section.

**EARLY MODERN BRITISH NARRATIVES OF BARBARY CAPTIVITY**

In order to illustrate the rhetorical function served by the stories of the men examined in this paper more clearly, it is necessary to refer back to the early modern period for an example which offers some strong parallels, that of Barbary captivity narratives written by British subjects. These narratives purport to describe the events surrounding the capture of Englishmen by pirates from Muslim lands and claim to provide insider information about Islamic culture. There were some authentic tales of Barbary captivity and many accounts did, indeed, contain some factual information about Muslim culture. Despite this, many also were filled with anti-Muslim bias and overt falsehoods.

During the early modern period, the British began to interact with Muslims and learn about Islamic culture on a relatively widespread basis. According to Maxime Rodinson, during this period many Europeans began to develop a more objective view of Islam and Muslims due to increased interactions in the diplomatic and economic spheres as well as a dramatic increase in travel to Muslim lands. This period in Europe also witnessed the establishment of Arabic chairs at universities while printing presses translated many Arabic works into European languages. This was no doubt troubling to the Protestant establishment in England, which helps to explain the popularity of Barbary captivity narratives in church circles. Many captivity narratives were written at this time as the increase in trade between England and North Africa also brought about a dramatic increase in piracy and the capture of English subjects for ransom or to be sold in slave markets. Estimates for the number of British captives taken by Barbary pirates vary, but evidence suggests thousands. Because of the poor economic conditions back home, according to Nabil Matar, many captives converted to Islam and integrated into Muslim society where opportunities were plentiful. Daniel Vitkus notes that adult conversions to Islam were rarely forced upon the captives, so claims to that effect often found in the captivity narratives are most likely

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false and should be considered sensationalism. Many captives were even given a degree of freedom to move about cities and start businesses under certain circumstances.\(^{23}\)

Church leaders in England played a crucial role in getting captives released and returned to England through fundraising campaigns which, according to Linda Colley, were instrumental in shaping public opinions about Muslims since audiences were exposed to sermons and speeches about encountering the other.\(^{24}\) Captivity narratives were most likely read at these events to draw sympathy for British prisoners held in “strange” lands by “strange” people. “Faced with the worrying reality that Islam strongly appealed to many Christians, English readers turned for comfort to a series of captivity narratives that testified against the allure of Islam and promised that the Protestant deity would deliver English slaves from bondage, if only they kept the faith,” says Vitkus.\(^{25}\)

There is strong evidence that the rhetoric of the Barbary captivity narratives worked. Matar argues that during this period Englishmen created a dominant negative image of Muslims primarily within the contexts of popular literature and Christian theology since government and commercial documents do not show the same level of anti-Muslim bigotry and stereotyping.\(^{26}\) Captivity narratives helped to create an image of the Barbary republics as a “hell on earth” according to G.A. Starr.\(^{27}\) Joe Snader states that the captivity narratives played a major role in Protestant propaganda from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.\(^{28}\) Historian Norman Daniel says that polemics were written primarily to uphold faith and were meant to scare those at a distance from Muslim lands, but also protect those Christians who found themselves in their domain from becoming infected by the culture.\(^{29}\) The captivity narratives of this period should be understood as an effort to dramatically alter the discourse about Islam and prevent Englishmen from being lured into their realm.

These narratives routinely portray non-Protestant groups, for example, Jews, Moors, Negroes, Turks, and Catholics, as the exotic and dangerous “other” in opposition to the “virtuous, pious, and freedom-loving” Protestant Englishmen. Many of these narratives contain strong anti-Muslim and anti-Turk sentiments. Sodomy is a frequent charge hurled against the Muslim people encountered by the British captives. These narratives represent an othering discourse in which the Protestant Englishmen are “us” and everyone else, especially Muslims, is “them.” It should be noted the writers or editors of these narratives are not necessarily the men mentioned in the titles. Some of these tales were revised for specific audiences, particularly church crowds.

Here are but a few examples from these narratives. In John Rawlins’ *The Famous and Wonderful Recovery of a Ship of Bristol, Called the Exchange, from the Turkish Pirates of Algiers* (1622), whenever the author describes the Turks doing something positive, they are described as “Christian-like.”\(^{30}\) But more often than not, they are described as cruel and barbaric. The


\(^{25}\) Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 111.


writer also says that the reader should not be surprised by the “inhumanity” of the Turks and Moors since they “hate all Christians and Christianity.”

William Okeley’s *Ebenezer; or, A Small Monument of Great Mercy, Appearing in the Miraculous Deliverance of William Okeley* (1675) contains a great deal of biblical references and portrays Muhammad as a cobbler who simply threw together different elements from various religions to create his own faith. When the author attributes positive traits to Muslims, he does so in a way that reverses the positive back to negative. For instance, in describing mosques the text says that “their temples are also very magnificent and much too good for their religion, whose practice and conversation speaks them to say, there is no God.” Here the author deliberately distorts the *shahada*, or affirmation of faith, said by Muslims. The author conveniently leaves out the rest of the phrase which in full says “there is no God but God and Muhammad is his messenger.” In describing the method of picking slaves for purchase from the market, he refers to his captors as “rational creatures,” an odd mix of terminology that combines a positive trait with a word suggesting them to be animals.

In Joseph Pitts’ *A True and Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mohammetans, with an Account of the Author’s Being Taken Captive* (1704), the author charges Muslims with sodomy claiming that they are not pleased with the “natural” use of women. The author also describes the Moors as lazy, belligerent, uncivilized, and dirty. Pitts writes that he converted to Islam and performed the *hajj*, giving him access to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. His conversion to Islam gives him credibility as an insider. Near the end of his account he attributes his conversion to the devil working inside him and says that it was God’s providence that brought him back into the Christian fold.

The account titled *The Adventures of (Mr. T.S.) An English Merchant, Taken Prisoner by the Turks of Algiers* (1670), “offers a narrative pattern remarkably suited to the nationalist fantasies of its historical moment,” according to Gerald MacLean. In this narrative, the charge of sodomy is once again leveled against the Moors. The protagonist reflects on his past freedom that was robbed from him by the Muslims of North Africa and continually presents them as a sexually promiscuous people, even going so far as to claim that he became a sex slave of one of the king’s wives, a claim that must be considered sensational.

There are, indeed, numerous examples from which to choose; however, this brief sampling will suffice for the purpose of this paper. The majority of captivity narratives from this period contain clear religious rhetoric designed to elevate Protestant Christianity and warn readers about the “evils” of Islam and the “barbaric” nature of Muslims. Othering is a central element to these texts. The religious rhetoric and sensationalization is readily apparent because so many other travel accounts from this period take a vastly different tone. The captivity narratives served as powerful tools for religious leaders seeking to undermine the appeal of Islam found in other literature and for those Britons seeking better

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opportunities abroad. It will be apparent in the next section, after examining the stories of Saleem, Shoebat, and the Caner brothers, that the same rhetorical strategies are used. They create a strong anti-Muslim othering discourse while also using their Middle Eastern backgrounds to gain credibility as insiders similarly to the way the writers of captivity narratives used the trope of captivity to legitimize their “insider” status.

“EX-MUSLIMS” SOUND THE ALARM

In the years since 9/11, Walid Shoebat, Kamal Saleem, Ergun and Emir Caner have risen to prominence among politically far-right Christians with lofty stories about their upbringing in “radical Islam.” The stories and rhetorical techniques deployed by them are all strikingly similar. Each of them has been promoted by dispensationalists with Shoebat openly advocating beliefs linking Islam to the Antichrist and other end-times prophecies. This section will explore the rhetoric espoused by these four men. A look at some of their writings will demonstrate both their connection with dispensationalism and the othering inherent in their narratives.

Ergun and Emir Caner have never lived in a Muslim-majority country, despite telling public audiences that they were raised in Turkey and indoctrinated in “radical Islam” – a story they told church audiences until 2010. There are, however, serious problems with this narrative. In *Unveiling Islam*, a book the brothers coauthored, they write that Ergun was born in Sweden while Emir was born in Ohio after the family moved to America. The profile for Emir Caner found on the website for Truett-McConnell College, where he has served as president since 2008, says that Emir was born in 1970. One YouTube video documents the various dates that Ergun has given for his arrival in America despite evidence that he emigrated here at a very young age.

After 9/11, the brothers realized they could make a lucrative career by altering their own biography and claiming they were raised in a fundamentalist environment. They have published several books about Islam and have given speeches at universities, churches, and in front of law enforcement and military personnel. Nathan Lean writes about several of these speeches in his book *The Islamophobia Industry*. According to Lean, Ergun Caner’s speeches were filled with tales of how he and his brother were raised to hate all Jews, Christians, and the West. His speaking engagements also harshly rebuked the idea that “Allah” and “Jehovah” is the same God. Lean notes that their book *Unveiling Islam* sold nearly 200,000 copies due to its popularity among evangelical Christians. The notoriety of the brothers helped propel Ergun to the position of dean at the Liberty University Baptist

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42 See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy2bb8Dq28> (accessed March 29, 2014).


44 Lean, *The Islamophobia Industry*, 89.

45 Lean, *The Islamophobia Industry*, 84-86.
Theological Seminary in 2005, a job he held until 2010 when his fraudulent story was exposed.

Much of the credit for exposing Ergun’s bogus persona belongs to another evangelical leader critical of Islam, James White, director of Alpha and Omega Ministries. White worked with a native speaker of Arabic to examine the speeches of Ergun and found that many of the so-called Arabic phrases he uttered during his talks were simply gibberish. This revelation along with other discrepancies in his biography led to his firing from Liberty University in 2010. The websites of these brothers no longer host tales of former Muslim radicalism or of being raised in Turkey, only mentioning that they converted to Christianity as teenagers and were called to the ministry shortly thereafter.

The othering of Islam promoted by the Caner brothers is readily apparent in the titles of their books – Out of the Crescent Shadows: Leading Muslim Women into the Light of Christ and Voices behind the Veil: The World of Islam through the Eyes of Women. In the first title, the word “shadow” representative of darkness is associated with Islam and “light” with Christianity implying the “good/evil” dualism presented in their works. The second title seems to utilize the veil as a symbol of the supposed “imprisonment” or “oppression” of women in Islamic society.

Their most popular book, Unveiling Islam: An Insider’s Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs, like their speeches, presents a strong othering discourse of Islam and Muslims. In describing their Christian mother’s marriage to a Muslim father, they state that it was “doomed from the beginning, a clash of cultures” implying that Christian and Muslim culture are completely and utterly incompatible with one another. At several points in the book, the authors make statements aimed at convincing the reader that their view is “objective” including “to think of Muslims as a homogenous group is erroneous and fails to do justice to the diversity of beliefs embraced within the religion” and “to equate all of Islam with religious persecution…would be an incredible overstatement.”

Despite these accurate and balanced statements, their book still deploys sensationalized titles and subtitles such as “Muhammad: The Militant Messenger” (Chapter Two), “The First Revelation: Divine or Demonic?” and “The Story of Islam: A Trail of Blood” (Chapter Three). The third chapter, designed to be a broad survey of Islamic history, conveniently turns a violent period in the history of Christianity into an Islamic concept stating that “the Crusades arose because Christians adopted the Islamic doctrine of jihad.” In the conclusion to this chapter, they make several problematic claims and overly broad generalizations with regards to the concept of jihad and the role of war in expanding Islam, topics which have been given ample attention by many excellent scholars.

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46 Although White is critical of Islam and speaks as a Christian apologist, he does so in a seemingly more honest manner and refrains from engaging in the harsh polemics of those such as Caner, whom he believes does a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ with his dishonesty.


48 See Wan and Boorstein, Washington Post.

49 Ergun and Emir Caner, Unveiling Islam: An Insider’s Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002), 17.

50 Caner and Caner, Unveiling Islam, 171 and 176.

51 Caner and Caner, Unveiling Islam, 72.

The Caner brothers make no mention of biblical prophecy anywhere in this book or in their public speeches, yet their dispensationalist leanings can be gleaned from a short passage where they lambast Christians who critique their “adamant stand with Israel” and their belief that the Jews represent “God’s chosen Priest Nation” by calling them “replacement theologians.” Dispensationalists use the term “replacement theology” pejoratively to attack the view that has been the traditional mainstream Christian teaching throughout church history— that the promise God made to Abraham and the Jewish people was fulfilled by Jesus. They reject those Christians that do not give the Jews and the state of Israel a central role to play in the end times. The term “replacement theology” is only used by dispensationalist Christians.

Kamal Saleem is another self-proclaimed “ex-terrorist” turned evangelist. Saleem’s alleged biography is so outrageous that a columnist for the Kansas City Star dubbed him the “Forrest Gump of the Middle East.” His personal website provides the following outline of his life:

Born in 1957 into a large Sunni Muslim Lebanese family… Kamal Saleem was breastfed Islamic radicalism by his mother, and taught to hate Jews and Christians by his father. His cousin was the Grand Mufti of Beirut. Recruited by the Muslim Brotherhood for jihadi militancy as a small child, he completed his first bloody terror mission into Israel for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) at the age of 7. Kamal ran important terror operations as a young man in the service of Yasser Arafat, under the coaching Abu Yussif and Abu Zayed (PLO/Fatah). He has worked for, and dined with, Muammar Kaddeafi (Libya). He has “carried the ball” for Baath Party leaders and military attaches of Saddam Hussein and Hafez al Assad (dictator of Syria), for Saudi Arabian sheiks and princes, and for Abdul Rahman (Muslim Brotherhood). Kamal Saleem fought with the Afghan Mujahadeen for victory against the Soviets…before he and his patrons turned their attention to the destruction of the West – and Western freedoms – through Islamicization. Above all, Kamal thirsted for jihadic death to America.

The first thing noticeable about Saleem’s biography is how it reads like a cheesy 1980s era action film. Indeed, much of his tale is deeply problematic. He claims to have carried out his first terror mission for the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) at age seven. Since Saleem was born in 1957, this would have been sometime in 1964 or 1965, yet the PLO was only founded in 1964. Furthermore, terrorism did not become a strategy utilized by militant groups for Palestinian liberation until well after the 1967 Six-Day War in which Israel took control of the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem. Another strange aspect of his story is the vast array of organizations and causes he claims to have worked for—including former Libyan dictator Qaddafi, the Ba’ath Parties in Iraq and Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood, the PLO, and the mujahedeen in Afghanistan—which are all very different groups with divergent goals, groups that are often hostile to each other. One of the most humorously claims made by Saleem was that he is a descendant of the “grand wazir of Islam.” This was until it was pointed out that no such thing existed and that it was equivalent to

55 See the website of Kamal Saleem at <http://www.kamalsaleem.com/>.
calling someone the “governor of Christianity.” It would seem that men like Saleem could come up with more plausible stories, but instead, they make life easy for those looking to debunk their claims.

Saleem has appeared on numerous evangelistic shows promoting dispensationalist teachings and biblical prophecy. On one of these shows called Jewish Voice, a Messianic Jewish program, Saleem proclaimed that Allah, the God of Islam, was mentioned in Isaiah 14:13-14 when God was speaking to Satan. In other words, Satan and Allah are one and the same. This statement was made in order to suggest that Muslims worship a complete different deity than Judaism and Christianity. According to Saleem and other dispensationalists, the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (an oft-repeated phrase used to contrast the “Judeo-Christian” God from “Allah”) is the God of love and forgiveness while Allah is one of hate and anger – again demonstrating the othering present in the Islamophobia espoused by dispensationalists like Saleem. In this video, Saleem claims that he was recruited into the Muslim Brotherhood when he was five years old, yet in his own book, The Blood of Lambs, he writes that he was recruited at age seven. To make matters worse, on the back cover of the book it says that Saleem “went on his first mission, smuggling weapons into Israel as a child soldier for Yasser Arafat.” The main problem with these claims is that the Egyptian-based Muslim Brotherhood, a group based in fundamentalist Islam, and the Palestinian-based PLO, a secular nationalist organization, are opposed to each other meaning he could not have possibly worked for both at the same time or been involved in a collaborative effort between the two.

In The Blood of Lambs, Saleem interlaces his own alleged biography with the story of his speaking tour with two other “ex-Muslim extremists” – Walid Shoebat and Zakariah Anani. As is common with some strains of fundamentalist Christianity in America, Saleem critiques American pluralism and the First Amendment early in his book stating that he “came to realize that the strength of the American people is also its weakness. An open society with constitutionally protected freedom of speech and religion, which prides itself on its embrace of foreign cultures, was the perfect place to teach a message of hatred in broad daylight.” He further states that he helped recruit people to radical Islam by finding jobs for poor men and then turning “them over to the imams at small “apartment mosques” to be radicalized.” Saleem then turns to a common metaphor used in the Islamophobic discourse

57 Messianic Judaism is a subset of dispensationalist Christianity that merges those beliefs with some elements of Judaism and holds that salvation is achieved by accepting Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus) as one’s savior. The movement emerged only in the past half century and their efforts to be recognized as a form of Judaism have been rejected by the Supreme Court of Israel.
60 I am unable to locate any written work by Zakariah Anani, but he has toured with Shoebat and Saleem telling a similar story of leaving militant Islam to become Christian and his story has also been scrutinized by reporters who have uncovered problems with his alleged biography as well. See <http://www.canada.com/windsorstar/news/story.html?id=4a479502-4490-408e-bdb5-f2638619a62c&k=1> (accessed April 27, 2014).
on Islam writing that “the human body does not know when a cancer is growing within.”

He repeats his attack on American “tolerance” later in the book writing:

No matter how many terrorist acts are carried out by young Middle Eastern men, it is a cultural taboo for an American to sit in an airport and wonder whether the young Middle Eastern men they see are terrorists. This is why radical Islamists love America: she has replaced her generosity toward all cultures and religions with an unquestioning embrace of “multiculturalism.”

Of course, most Americans would consider America’s “generosity toward all cultures and religions” as the definition of “multiculturalism,” yet Saleem means something very different here. In the minds of dispensationalists, as well as some other groups of fundamentalist Christians, terms like “pluralism” and “multiculturalism” have become ideological concepts synonymous with left-wing politics and secular humanism.

In discussing his childhood, Saleem states that his mother taught him that “even the most sinful man is able to redeem himself with one drop of an infidel’s blood” and that “the more infidels we killed, the better our chances to move quickly from punishment to paradise.” Saleem wants his reader to believe that the basis for salvation in Islam is killing non-Muslims, a strange idea for which he provides no Islamic sources as evidence. Saleem also claims that in order to be a “true” Muslim, one must work towards the establishment of a global caliphate, practice _taqqiya_, and work to implement _shari’a_ in every country.

Here Saleem attributes the goals of fundamentalist Muslims to all Muslims and follows the common Islamophobic tactic of claiming that these goals represent the “true and authentic” teachings of Islam and that any Muslim that does not adhere to these tenets are simply “liberal” or not “real” Muslims.

It was later uncovered that Saleem’s real name is Khodor Shami and that he worked for Pat Robertson-owned CBN for sixteen years and has been working for James Dobson’s Focus on the Family since 2003. This would mean that he began working for CBN sometime around 1987, a fact conveniently missing from the section of his book titled “America 1985-1991.” While it is certainly not clear when Shami immigrated to the United States, when he converted to Christianity if he really was ever Muslim, or if he was simply raised Christian, the blatant falsehoods and Islamophobic rhetoric he deploys is readily apparent.

Walid Shoebat is by far the most extreme and controversial of the lot. Moreover, he is also the most well-known of those examined here. The rhetoric found in his books is nothing short of the far-right vitriol synonymous with the likes of Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage, or Pat Robertson. In his writings, he vehemently attacks secularism,

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63 Saleem, _The Blood of Lambs_, 11, 22.
64 The concept of _taqqiya_ is only found in Shi’ism and not in Sunni Islam. The concept was developed early in Islamic history by Shi’i theologians to protect followers from persecution at the hands of Sunni authorities by concealing their Shi’i identity. This concept has been distorted to serve the purposes of professional Islamophobes who argue that any “moderate” or “liberal” Muslim is practicing _taqqiya_ to hide their “true” intentions of promoting radical Islam – or in other words, their lying is sanctioned by Islamic teachings. The word _taqqiya_ or the concept it describes cannot be found in any Sunni legal sources.
65 Saleem, _The Blood of Lambs_, 82.
environmentalism, “political correctness,” along with every other pet peeve of far right-wing politics. According to Shoebat’s website, his story goes as follows. He was a Muslim extremist for many years, he spent three years in an Israeli prison during the 1970s for his activities, and while in jail he was recruited to bomb a bank in Bethlehem, a plot he claims to have acted upon after his release. Shoebat’s American mother and his Palestinian father sent him to live in the United States in 1978 where he continued his Muslim extremism until converting to Christianity in 1994. According to a Jerusalem Post article, he claimed that he had a change of heart after seeing children near the bank he was recruited to attack, so he threw the bomb onto the roof instead. However, there are many problems with this narrative. No records can be found of any bombing at the bank Shoebat claims to have been the target. According to an investigative report conducted for CNN’s Anderson Cooper 360, the Israeli government has no prison record under the name Walid Shoebat at all. In addition, several of Shoebat’s relatives have been located and all of them state that Shoebat’s education was moderate, that religion was not a major part of his upbringing, and that there was no bank bombing at all. Shoebat’s story has changed several times. When confronted about the lack of evidence about the bank bombing by the Jerusalem Post in 2008, he claimed it was not newsworthy at the time, but in 2004 Shoebat told the Telegraph “I was terribly relieved when I heard on the news later that evening that no one had been hurt or killed by my bomb.” The biography on his website is now very vague on details, probably to avoid giving too much information which could be used to prove his story false. That same CNN report details the healthy sum that Shoebat makes for giving speeches and writing books. According to tax records, Shoebat made over five hundred thousand dollars in 2009. He was also paid five thousand for an appearance sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security. Shoebat has much to gain from selling his “story.”

In his book Why I Left Jihad, Shoebat states that “the enemy’s primary goal isn’t the land. That’s secondary. The enemy wants all Jews dead and Israel eliminated from the face of the earth.” Shoebat also repeats the cancer metaphor writing “some estimate that Islamism is only 15% of the Muslim world, but a cancer starts small.” Throughout the book, he repeats the claim that as a Muslim he hated Jews and wanted them all dead while drawing sharp contrasts between Jewish and Muslim culture. He makes the highly problematic claim that “most assessments reveal that honor killings constitute a large percentage of murders in Muslim nations” yet provides no sources for this claim before writing that “never will you see a Jewish community performing such a barbaric act.” He writes that Palestine is a “fiction of the Islamists” and that “we never wanted a Palestinian state” since the “real issue” is “the destruction of the Jews.” This rhetoric is designed to peel Christians away from attempting to solve the century old Palestinian-Israeli conflict by diverting the issue from land, the main source of conflict, to religion, in an attempt to make the conflict seem unresolvable. By claiming that the real intention of Muslims is to “destroy all Jews,” Shoebat and other dispensationalists can “other” Muslims while at the same time obstructing peace efforts.

67 See the webpage of Walid Shoebat at <shoebat.com>.
69 See Omar Sacirbey, “Skeptics challenge life stories offered by high-profile Muslim converts to Christianity.”
71 Walid Shoebat, Why I Left Jihad (Top Executive Media, 2005), 23. This work is self-published by Shoebat.
73 Shoebat, Why I Left Jihad, 27.
something that cannot happen in their eyes. There must be war and destruction in the Middle East leading up to the Battle of Armageddon or else dispensationalism interpretations of biblical prophecy fall apart and will require a redo.

Shoebat further attempts to discredit liberal-progressive and mainstream Muslims stating “there are Muslims who reject many of the classical sources and truly focus on the peaceful verses of the Qur'an, seeking to re-interpret the verses because they truly do not want to engage in violence. These “liberal” Muslims seem to “re-write” Islam rather than correctly interpret it. They are peaceful despite Islam, not because of it.”

Here again, like so many other dispensationalists opining about Islam, Shoebat attempts to define Islam in favor of Muslim fundamentalists and extremists. A common tactic of Islamophobes is to appeal to the doctrine of abrogation, or naskh, which fundamentalist Muslim interpreters use to argue that the Medinan verses cancel out the earlier Meccan verses, thereby allowing the so-called “verse of the sword” (9:5) to abrogate any and all verses calling for peace and pluralism. This concept is, however, deeply controversial and disputed. There are no established or agreed upon criteria for deciding which verses are abrogating (naskh) and which are abrogated (mansukh).

The latter section of his book is dedicated to biblical prophecy and here he makes many of the same claims with regards to Islam’s role in the end times as Joel Richardson, a dispensationalist writer who claims that the Antichrist will be Muslim and has written that “Islam is anti-Christ to its very core.”

The two men even co-authored another work titled God’s War on Terror: Islam, Prophecy and the Bible, which is much more than a book on prophecy, it is nothing short of a diatribe against “tree-huggers,” “leftists,” “secularists,” and of course, Islam and Muslims, combined with extreme pro-Israel propaganda. Much of the information found in God’s War on Terror is repeated from Why I Left Jihad and both books are poorly written and highly disorganized, but since they were both self-published by Shoebat, there were no publishing or editorial standards to be met.

Shoebat is very active in dispensationalist circles and has spoken at prophecy conferences. He has also been interviewed on CNN and Fox News, and he has spoken in front of active-duty military personnel and law enforcement agencies. He has attained a sort of “rock star” status in far-right political circles. He is cited as a source in the books of many dispensationalists including John Hagee and Joel Rosenberg.

CONCLUSION

My suspicion is that these men were never Muslim at all, that they were either raised Christian or in a secular environment and converted to Christianity later in life. Following 9/11, these men found an opportunity to make money and to convert others to their form of dispensationalist Christianity through exotic tales of terror and mayhem. Much like the Barbary captivity narratives of the early modern period, these “ex-Muslim radicals” and their stories serve a powerful rhetorical function which aids both Islamophobia and dispensationalism. In both examples, those telling the stories establish their credibility by

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74 Shoebat, Why I Left Jihad, 36.
claiming “insider” status. Once their credibility is established they proceed to create an othering discourse that demonizes Islam and Muslims. In both cases, one finds a touch of factual information sprinkled into a smorgasbord of harsh anti-Islam propaganda.

The “ex-Muslims” discussed here have acquired a huge following in conservative Christian circles and especially among dispensationalists. They have written books, produced documentaries, appeared on TV news, and have given speeches in front of critical audiences including law enforcement, military, and other government personnel. What ties these men together is biblical prophecy and pro-Israel groups. The ideas they present and the theology they teach may not necessarily represent the mainstream of American Christianity, however, these men have a much wider influence. Several of their books have sold several hundreds of thousands of copies thanks in part to their utilization of the mass media. Even non-Christians may read one of their books attempting to learn about Islam and Muslims and subsequently retransmit this rhetoric to others.

It is worth noting that besides these problematic “ex-Muslims,” there are other former Muslims who have converted to Christianity, another religion, or no religion at all. Some of these people have also written books and have legitimate stories. There are also most certainly more problematic narratives which have not been examined here. The goal here was to point out those whose rhetoric has been most useful to dispensationalists for the propagation of Islamophobia. Those “ex-Muslims” analyzed here all have clear links to dispensationalist thought. Those attempting to fight anti-Muslim bigotry must learn about these men and their worldview in order to refute the propaganda they disseminate.

As Edward Said points out, “what is said about the Muslim mind, or character, or religion, or culture as a whole cannot now be said in mainstream discussions about Africans, Jews, other Orientals, or Asians.” The current anti-Islam discourse may be the last form of bigotry still widely accepted in American society. Muslims and Arabs continue to be portrayed in the media and in films as villains. While Jews and Muslims are found in similar numbers in America, bigotry against the former is no longer widely accepted in the way that it is against the latter. Dispensationalism has played a major role in this. Probably the biggest positive contribution dispensationalism has made in American society is promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding between Christians and Jews. Even many non-dispensationalist Christians support the idea of blessing the Jewish people based on Gen. 12:3. Yet the notion of “Judeo-Christian” civilization has also served as a wall blocking off the other major Abrahamic faith – Islam. To a large extent, dispensationalist thought has succeeded in promoting a Judeo-Christian/Islamic “clash of civilizations” mentality in the West. As has been routinely stated, roughly half of humanity is either an adherent of Islam or Christianity making it imperative that all talk of an “Islam versus the West” clash of civilizations be put to rest. Both religions are here to stay and continue to grow exponentially. As Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently put it, “we still have a choice today, nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation.”

One of the rhetorical strategies deployed time and time again by dispensationalists to attack Islam is the argument that Muslims and Christians worship different gods – the God “they” (Muslims) worship hates while the God “we” worship loves. Miroslav Volf points out

77 Said, Covering Islam, xii.
the end game of this strategy by stating that “since both Christians and Muslims are monotheists, if they worship different gods, they will rightly accuse each other of worshipping a false god, which is the worst of sins in both of these traditions. The love that Muslims and Christians have for the God they worship will pull them apart rather than bring them together.”\(^8\) That is precisely what some seek to do, pull the two faiths apart by separating or othering Muslims and the God “they” worship. Such actions not only pull Muslims and Christians apart, they pull humanity apart.

REFERENCES


\(^8\) Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response* (New York: Harper One, 2011), 35. The term “Allah” is formed simply by combining the definite particle al meaning “the” to the term ilah meaning “god” to produce the definitive Allah meaning “The God.” This is similar to the indefinite “god” versus the definite “God” used in English. Arabic speaking Christians have used the term “Allah” for centuries.


The Politics of Arab and Muslim American Identity in a Time of Crisis: The 1986 House of Representatives Hearing on Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans

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“I think I can say that Arab individuals or those supporting of Arab points of view have come within the zone of danger – targeting by a group as yet to be fully identified and brought to justice.”
– William H. Webster, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, commenting on the murder of Alex Odeh and the rise of anti-Arab violence (December 11, 1985)81

“There is no such thing as a neutral subject. We are all inevitably someone’s adversary.”
– Michel Foucault, Society Must Be Defended (2003)

INTRODUCTION

On July 16, 1986, a hearing on “Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans” was convened by the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the Committee of the Judiciary of the U.S. House of Representatives. This historic event was one of seven important hearings held in the five-year legislative history of the Hate Crime Statistics Act.82

82 Signed into law by President George Bush, Sr. on April 23, 1990, the Hate Crime Statistics Act (PL 101-275) is fundamentally a law designed to count the number of hate crimes committed annually. The HCSA defines “predicate crimes,” or crimes where the question of bias can be applied to race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Disability was added in 1994 when the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act was passed, and gender and gender identity was added under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act that was passed in 2009. Additional categories of Sikhs, et al were added in 2012 after the Oak Creek massacre in Wisconsin. Evidence of bias can be applied, but are not limited, to murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, arson, and destruction, damage, or vandalism of property. The findings are to be published in an annual report in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program of the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the direction of the Attorney General in the Department of Justice. The Act also provides for the development and dissemination of educational materials for law enforcement agencies.
While it generally reaffirmed the need for data collection on the incidence of hate violence nationally, it was significant in another way: the hearing was the first time that the issue of anti-Arab violence was acknowledged at the federal level. Just seven months earlier, on December 10, 1985, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director William Webster suggested that the nation’s Arab and Muslim American community was living in a “zone of danger,” alluding to the murders of activist Alex Odeh in Southern California and Ismael Faruqi, an Islamic scholar, and his wife in Philadelphia. Various representatives of the Arab and Muslim American community testified at the hearing about the impact of this violence. An analysis of their testimonies offers important insights into the politics of hate violence during a period of racist hysteria and religious bigotry.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act in April 2015 is an occasion to not only pause and assess the impact of this law, but also to understand the political context and the legislative machinations that led to the passage and signing of the nation’s first federal hate crime legislation. The “Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans” hearing as well as six other committee hearings were essential for determining how hate crimes would be defined, what its sources were, and what solutions would be proposed. My primary focus in this article is to examine the ways in which the hearing represents Arab and Muslim American subjectivity as simultaneously victim, American, citizen, and political subject. I show how each version reveals various stakes of, interests in, and contradictions about being Arab and Muslim American while also demonstrating the ways in which each testimony was committed to supporting the Hate Crime Statistics Act.

Four significant themes can be discerned in the hearing. First, two recent historical events were repeatedly invoked throughout the hearing. The murder of Alex Odeh on October 11, 1985 hung heavily over the hearing. Odeh was Regional Director of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee and a respected community leader in Southern California. Family members and fellow community leaders widely believed that his murder was the clearest example of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discourses escalating into violence, as his death was widely thought to be the result of years of intensifying racist sentiments against Arab and Muslim American communities. Furthermore, Odeh’s death revealed the inability and unwillingness of current legal and political institutions to intervene and protect individuals and communities from hate violence. The other historical event that was frequently referenced during the hearing was the 1978-1980 Federal Bureau of Investigation anti-corruption operation, “ABSCAM,” which still lingered in the memory of the Arab and Muslim American community. In the ABSCAM operation, so named for a fictitious Arab corporation, “Abdul Enterprises Ltd.,” undercover agents posed as “Arab sheikhs” to lure politicians and public officials into bribery scandals. Once the details of the operation were made public, the FBI was embroiled in a wave of controversy over its questionable investigative procedures and surveillance tactics. In the wake of this scandal, Executive Assistant Director of the FBI Oliver B. Revell’s testimony about becoming more “sensitive” to the needs of the Arab and Muslim American community was received with much skepticism.

Second, some witnesses linked U.S. foreign policy to the rise of domestic anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discourses. Mervyn Dymally, former Lieutenant Governor of California enforcement agencies to use in training officers to recognize and record hate crimes, and to foster better working relationships with various communities in order to improve crime control responses.

83 Shenon, “F.B.I Chief Warns Arabs of Danger.”
(1975-1979), made the connection between the power of inflammatory rhetoric by political leaders, in conjunction with hostile U.S. foreign policy in the Arab nations, and the fomenting of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments in American society. The discourse of political leadership can have social and political effects that can exacerbate and intensify racial and religious tensions. As these hearings made clear, U.S. foreign policies, especially those mobilizing military assets in Arab nations, could antagonize race relations in the U.S. under the banner of patriotism and contribute to bias-motivated attacks against Arab and Muslim Americans. Dymally’s testimony underscored this powerful link, and specifically criticized President Ronald Reagan.

Third, the testimonies articulated a discourse of Arab and Muslim American subjectivity as predominantly assimilative. Committee members and witnesses tended to agree that what threatened the road to democratization and Americanization was organized racism and religious bigotry. However, this perspective represented an uncritical view of state power as a functional, and distinctly race- and religion-neutral, instrument.

Fourth, political enfranchisement and civic participation were avowed goals for the community, and hate violence came to be known as an obstacle. If hate violence has the effect of undermining and obstructing the full participation of a community in a free and democratic society, then strengthening political and electoral participation was paramount. However, political mobilization, representation, and civic participation should be essential goals in and of themselves for any community, not simply a response to the threat of violence. Analyzing the hearing on “Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans” in terms of the four themes above – the weight of recent historical events, the relationship between U.S. foreign policy and domestic anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discourses, Arab and Muslim American subjectivity as assimilative, and hate violence as an obstruction to political enfranchisement – will highlight how the causes and effects of hate violence in the U.S. came to be understood and defined for the purposes of federal legislation and in relation to the status of the Arab and Muslim American community in the U.S. in the 1980s.

THE POLITICS OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Before examining the testimonies given during the hearing, a brief overview of the function of committee hearings in general will clarify the purpose of the “Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab Americans” hearing within the legislative history of the Hate Crime Statistics Act. At a basic level, committee hearings are a way to gather information for committee members about a particular piece of legislation. Ideally, committee hearings are like educational forums where lawmakers listen to a select list of experts, such as lobbyists, citizens, business leaders, and academics, including even the occasional high profile entertainer. For example, political humorist and satirist Stephen Colbert testified in 2010 in a House Judiciary Committee subcommittee on the state of immigrant and migrant workers, and in 2002, Michael J. Fox and Muhammad Ali appeared before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services to argue for additional monies for research into Parkinson’s disease.84 Each individual called before the committee gives a short presentation about the topic at hand. Committee members can gather information, ask questions, make comments, and analyze findings, all of which presumably enables them to act as informed lawmakers.

84 For an extended list of celebrities and their testimonies, see ProQuest Congressional Hearings Digital Collection Famous (Celebrity) Witnesses: http://proquest.libguides.com/quick_start_hearings/famouscelebs.
The hearing on “Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans” was a strategic legislative opportunity to move the Hate Crime Statistics Act forward. It served as a chance for the committee to further their understanding of hate violence, and it was an opportunity for Arab and Muslim American representatives to articulate their support for the HCSA, along with their ideas about what hate violence was, and what the federal government ought to do about it, all of which would be entered into the public record.

One of the important functions of a committee hearing is that it assists committee members in deciding whether new laws, or changes to current ones, are needed to address immediate problems. This hearing provided additional evidence for the advancement of hate crimes legislation on the federal and individual state levels. It laid the foundations for penalty enhancements, expanded coverage for future group protections, especially for religious identity, and augmented the powers of the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the direction of the Attorney General in the Department of Justice. Witnesses called to testify articulated what it meant to be Arab and Muslim American – their experiences, fears, and desires – in ways that deeply resonated with the possibilities of achieving the American Dream, but they also expressed anxieties over the obstacles that stood in the way.

“The Subcommittee will come to order.”

Witnesses summoned to the hearing were mostly, though not entirely, a “who’s who” of prominent Arab and Muslim Americans. Testifying at the hearing were Nick Joe Rahall, Representative from the State of West Virginia; Oliver B. Revell, Executive Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Mary Rose Oakar, Representative from the State of Ohio; James Abourezk, Chairman of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee; David J. Sadd, Executive Director of the National Association of Arab-Americans; David M. Gordis, Executive Vice President of the American Jewish Committee; Hyman Bookbinder, Washington Representative, also of the American Jewish Committee; Mervyn M. Dymally, Representative from the State of California; Norma Odeh from Santa Ana, CA; Mohammad Mehdi, President of the American Arab Relations Committee; Abdeen Jabara, from Detroit, MI; James Zogby, Executive Director of the Arab-American Institute; Bonnie Rimawi, former Regional Director of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee; Michael Smith, Seafarers Legal Services; Robert Crane, Islamic Society of North America; Sayed Gomah, Islamic Society of Houston, TX; and Rema Simon of Boston, MA.

The Chair of the Committee, Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-Michigan), opened the hearing by decrying what he called a “national tragedy” of violence against Arab Americans. Conyers cited FBI Director Webster’s remarks that Arab Americans are in a “zone of danger” and that “Jewish extremist groups” have resorted to political assassinations to silence critics of the state of Israel. Conyers proclaimed that “ethnically motivated violence against Arab-Americans … must be perceived as a threat to all in our society.” Anyone or any group who sought to deny “fundamental democratic freedoms” on the basis of an identity should “pay a very high cost.” He continued, “This can only be accomplished

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86 Ibid., 2.
87 Ibid.
with vigorous and swift investigation and prosecution by both Federal and local authorities.\textsuperscript{88} Conyers also noted for the record that federal investigations into the attacks, especially of the murder of Alex Odeh, had not produced “a single indictment."\textsuperscript{89} He reaffirmed the commitment of the federal government to the idea that the perpetrators cannot go unpunished, and that such violence cannot be tolerated. He ended solemnly, “In the memory of Alex Odeh and all that this country stands for, we must insist upon it.”\textsuperscript{90}

**TESTIMONY OF NORMA ODEH**

The centerpiece of the hearing was without a doubt the testimony of Norma Odeh, the wife of Alex Odeh, who was murdered on the morning of October 11, 1985 as a tripwire caused the door to the office of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee to explode when he opened it. Alex Odeh was the regional director of the ADC's southern California office.\textsuperscript{91} Close friends and community members strongly believed that the office bombing that resulted in Odeh’s death was in retaliation for Odeh’s words following the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship on October 7, 1985 during which Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish American, was taken hostage and cruelly murdered. In a television interview, Odeh condemned the terrorist acts, but defended the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat, as a “man of peace.”\textsuperscript{92} Odeh was referring to Arafat's role in securing the release of the hostages aboard the *Achille Lauro*, but family members believed his words were taken out of context.\textsuperscript{93} Media hysteria in the coverage of the *Achille Lauro* atrocity fueled anti-Arab sentiments in the U.S. that led to numerous death threats to Arab American organizations, leaders, supporters, and families across the nation.\textsuperscript{94} Norma Odeh testified that her husband received numerous death threats prior to his murder. Yet he remained dedicated and steadfast in his work. The danger did not sway “his convictions or diminish the energy with which he dedicated himself.”\textsuperscript{95} The tragedy of her family’s loss was intensified as the public discourse surrounding Alex Odeh’s death was met with a deafening silence on the part of the U.S. political leadership: “How is it that an American citizen, brutally murdered by terrorists on our own soil, has not received full recognition and support from our Government, as did the victims of international terrorism during the *Achille Lauro* incident? … While our Government apprehends terrorists half way around the world, it seems helpless in the face of domestic terrorism directed against Arab-Americans.”\textsuperscript{96} Other witnesses also testified that numerous high ranking and high profile politicians failed to acknowledge the murder of Alex Odeh by terrorists even though the murder of Leon Klinghoffer was widely condemned. This was an obvious double standard regarding whose

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{94} House, *Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 1–2.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 106–107.
lives and which communities were valued. The official silence surrounding Odeh’s death spoke volumes, even if unintended, about the federal government’s disposition.

Norma Odeh continued to describe Alex’s life and legacy, as one who worked for the community’s constitutional rights, fought against racial discrimination, and valued the importance of “bringing people of all races and religions together to work side by side for the common good.” Her hope was for Alex Odeh to not “die in vain.” This hearing represented an opportunity to articulate the immediate need to investigate and resolve, the circumstances of Odeh’s death, and to find justice for the Odeh family.

**TO BE IN A “ZONE OF DANGER”**

Representative Nick Joe Rahall (D-West Virginia) testified about the “wave of anti-Arab hysteria” driven by anti-Arab stereotypes in the media. He came to office in 1976, and represented West Virginia’s Third Congressional District. Rahall was one of the few Arab American Representatives serving in Congress, and one of five Lebanese American Representatives with senior status. Rahall’s testimony pointed to how political leaders in Congress had created an environment ripe for “terrorist attacks on Americans of Arab heritage right here on American soil.” In particular, he criticized President Reagan’s “Ramboism,” a reference to the popular movie character Rambo played by Sylvester Stallone and popularly known for his mindless warlike brutality. Rahall also argued that rattling American sabers in Arab nations had the effect of creating an environment that sanctioned harassment, discrimination, and violence against Arab Americans. Fueling this “wave of anti-Arab hysteria” were news reports that continued to equate “Arabs” with “terrorists.” According to Rahall’s testimony, media stereotyping and inflammatory political rhetoric were a deadly combination that enabled anyone in society to exact revenge and mete out punishment. As Rahall continued to note in his testimony, Arab and Muslim Americans have become the “black sheep of the world” and “degraded to the role of subhuman[s],” causing the bonds of compassion and empathy to suffer as well. He argued that this dehumanization was how the murder of Alex Odeh became possible, with Odeh as “a victim of terrorism on American soil.”

Scholar Edward Said has warned of discursive constructions that reduce the complexity of the Arab and Muslim world to a “limited series of crude, essentialized caricatures” whose persistence would “make that world vulnerable” to violence. Rahall’s testimony depicted the death of Odeh as the terrible price the community pays when negative representations of Arabs and Muslims reached the point where the prospect of violence was not only possible, but also permissible and rationalized. Rahall ended his testimony imploring the committee for leadership in a time of crisis: “It is high time that this anti-Arab, anti-Arab-American hysteria, which has engulfed this country, be calmed. It

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97 Ibid., 107.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., 2.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., 2–3.
102 Ibid., 3.
103 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
tears at the moral fabric upon which this great Nation of ours is woven.” He continued to assert the unwavering rights of Americans to be protected from such violence as well as to be able to live freely as a people, and referenced the moral compass that guides the political leadership to fight hate violence: “The right for Arab-Americans [to live freely as a people] is being threatened, and this represents a serious crisis. This right must never be threatened for any ethnic group. Let all of us here today pledge to work together under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, and wipe out the ugly stain of prejudice and violence from the face of the Earth.”

Rahall’s closing point accentuated one of the more common themes in the testimonies given about racial identity in a time of racist hysteria. Raising the issue of anti-Arab violence at the federal level was a significant political act, one that not only acknowledged the issue, but also afforded leaders of the Arab and Muslim American community a number of opportunities to recommend policy initiatives, advance the discourse about race and religious identity, and express other relevant concerns. Rahall’s testimony was also a sign of things to come later in the hearing. While he rightly asserted that anti-Arab hysteria needed to “be calmed,” he failed to understand how U.S. foreign policy and military actions abroad contributed to the groundswell of racist violence at home. While the media was an influential institution that could be considered culpable for fomenting such violence, it was the caustic rhetoric of political leadership and the deafening silence from his colleagues in the federal government that sanctioned the violence. This failure of political leadership, particularly by President Ronald Reagan, created the conditions for violence in the first place.

Mervyn Dymally, former Lieutenant Governor of California (1975-1979), saw the connection between political rhetoric and racist violence quite clearly, and he offered the strongest critique of the federal response to violence against Arab and Muslim American communities, including holding U.S. politicians at the highest levels accountable for the ways in which their words and actions contributed to an environment of anti-Arab stereotyping, prejudice, and violence. Dymally was elected as a Democrat from California to the 97th Congress (1981-1993). A leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, Dymally became involved with the Arab and Muslim American community when an Arab American staff member was singled out on the conservative Christian Broadcast Network and labeled as a “terrorist” without the network interviewing the staff member or Dymally himself. The national broadcast occurred around the time of the murder of Alex Odeh. What distressed Dymally was that while other staffers had worked on the Alex Odeh case – Samoan, Jewish, African American, Latino – only the Arab American was singled out for harassment and personal attacks. This incident led him to believe that not enough was being done to protect the nation’s Arab and Muslim communities.

Dymally condemned the current administration as “the most Arab-bashing administration of any in the history of America.” He continued, “To be Arab is to be Moslem and to be Moslem is to be Arab, and to be either is to be a terrorist. That’s the line of reasoning. And they have set up a climate in the United States which makes all of these things … possible.” He provided a summary of a list of abuses, rapes, murders, assaults,
vandalisms, and threats to Arab and Muslim individuals and families in their homes, schools, businesses, and mosques, from San Francisco, CA to Alexandria, VA. The complete list was submitted to the committee for the record. The work of his office and staff led him to conclusively assert that a wave of “terrorism against Arab-Americans” was present, and an exasperated Dymally stated, “I do not know as of this moment if anyone – at least I know that no one has been caught, no one been indicted, no one has been sentenced.”

Additionally, he emphasized that there had been no cases where an Arab or Muslim American had been “caught, or prosecuted, or tried for any terrorism act against any American…. not a single case” in at least ten years.

In his full testimony submitted to the Committee, Dymally illustrated the impact of the limited response of the FBI: “the likelihood of Arab Americans reporting these incidents to the FBI is slim because of their feeling that the FBI is not concerned for their well being. Moreover, the community feels that reporting these incidents to the FBI would only result in agents prying into their own lives rather than protecting them.” But perhaps the most damning element in Dymally’s submitted testimony was his critique of President Ronald Reagan’s anti-terrorism policy, which had significant effects at home, fueling anti-Arab hysteria. While he summarized the texts in his public statements, his written statement included contributions from members of the Reagan administration to an anthology entitled, *Terrorism: How The West Can Win* (1987), edited by Benjamin Netanyahu, then Israel’s ambassador to the United States. Contributors included then Secretary of State George Shultz, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jean J. Kirkpatrick, National Security Council consultant Michael Ledeen, former Undersecretary for Political Affairs Eugene Rostow, former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III, and former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director William Webster. According to Dymally’s testimony, the anthology included views that “ascribe terrorism to Islam.” While Dymally was careful to acknowledge that members of the administration associated with the anthology did not explicitly refer to Islam as terrorism, he suggested that they implicitly sanctioned such a view and gave credence with their names to a project that rationalized U.S. foreign policy by perpetuating this link. Among the contributors whose views explicitly equated Islam with terrorism was former ambassador Netanyahu who wrote: “The root cause of terrorism lies not in grievances but in a disposition toward unbridled violence. This can be traced to a world view which asserts that certain ideological and religious goals justify, indeed demand, the shedding of all moral inhibitions. In this context, the observation that the root cause of terrorism is terrorists is more than a tautology.”

According to Dymally, of all the figures who played a role in fueling the “zone of danger,” and to whom could be attributed an environment of anti-Arab hysteria in the United States, the most significant was President Ronald Reagan. After the release of the TWA hostages on July 1, 1985, Reagan quipped to television technicians before a speech,
“Boy, after seeing *Rambo* last night, I know what to do the next time this happens.”\(^{118}\) While the remark was not broadcast live, it was picked up by the microphone and rebroadcast on the television and the radio. After the U.S. bombardment of Libya, Reagan described Moammar Qaddafi as “this mad dog of the Middle East [who] has a goal of a world revolution, Moslem fundamentalist revolution which is targeted on many of his own Arab compatriots.”\(^{119}\) The bombing was in response to an incident that occurred six months after the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, on April 5, 1986, when a bomb killed three and wounded two hundred thirty at a nightclub in West Berlin. Seventy-nine U.S. servicemen were among the injured. Reagan held Libya responsible for the attacks, and over the objections of the international community, the U.S. retaliated with military strikes on April 15, killing forty people. In the U.S., Arab and Muslim American community members braced for the worst as individuals and families were harassed and received threats, and their homes, businesses, and houses of worship were vandalized with the words, “Go back to Libya.”\(^{120}\) Inflammatory statements by the President, Dymmally contended, uncritically and irresponsibly cast Islam as an underlying force in terrorism with global as well as domestic implications. These disparaging references, especially as spoken by the “leader of the free world,” had specific domestic effects upon the country’s perception of Islam, and the perception of Arab and Muslim Americans.

At these testimonies suggested, state power and hate violence determine each other vis-à-vis U.S. foreign policy in the Arab nations and the rise of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim violence and bigotry in the U.S. As the United States rattles its sabers abroad and routinely, and with impunity, threatens its own form of terror in the Arab nations, violence and bigotry against Arab and Muslim Americans in the U.S. increases dramatically. In this period of the 1980s, at a time of considerable anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hysteria, the idea of hate violence against Arabs and Muslims was not just a matter of counting incidents and occurrences, but also of contextualizing the weight of the competing interests responsible for why a “zone of danger” existed in the first place. Central to this “zone of danger” was how this particular violence was more than acts of prejudice and violent bigotry, but was also a discursive and systematic effect that represented Islam and the Arab world as threats to the United States.

“**CONCERNED AND SENSITIVE**: THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Perhaps the most informative yet frustrating testimony in this hearing came from Oliver B. Revell, Executive Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He assured the Committee and the Arab and Muslim American community that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was “definitely aware of and greatly concerned about the attacks perpetrated.”\(^{121}\) He added that the investigation of Alex Odeh’s murder was elevated along with a number of other bombings to the “highest national priority,” and that the exchange of “pertinent intelligence information” with other field offices in the country was leading to

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\(^{120}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., 9.
the “development of a national strategy” with “teams of investigators” engaged in anti-terrorist operations, and that they had and were pursuing suspects.\footnote{122 Ibd.}

Revell expressed the hope that members of the subcommittee and the Arab American community would continue to be patient and remain supportive of their continuing efforts. He reiterated the FBI’s “deep sensitivity” to the Odeh family’s loss, the community’s tragedy, and the circumstances in which the murder occurred. He endeavored to resolve these investigations in an “expeditious manner.”\footnote{123 Ibd.} Revell also clarified FBI Director William H. Webster’s statement on December 10, 1985 regarding the “campaign of terror” against Arab and Muslim Americans: “I think we must be careful what we say, but I think I can say that Arab individuals, or those supportive of Arab points of view, have come into the zone of danger or targeting by the group as yet to be fully identified and brought to justice” (emphasis mine).\footnote{124 Ibd., 9–10.} Revell made similar statements to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in February earlier that year in referencing “certain extremist elements” that opposed Arab and Muslim American interests and their constitutional rights to express statements as well as peaceably assemble.\footnote{125 Ibd., 10.} Although FBI Director Webster initially identified those “extremist elements” as members of the Jewish Defense League and the Jewish Defense Organization, Revell later qualified these statements suggesting that the assertion was based on “intelligence available” at the time, but that they were still in the preliminary stages of the investigation.

Revell’s testimony revealed the perspectives of the agency, especially in a time of racist and religious violence. Chairman of the Committee Conyers reiterated FBI Director William Webster’s “zone of danger” comment and asked if the agency had taken any “special steps” to ensure the safety of Arab and Muslim Americans.\footnote{126 Ibd., 12.} Revell responded that the FBI did not have “the authority nor the capability to protect,” but only the possibility of “interventive action” and the “ability to intervene in ongoing conspiracies.”\footnote{127 Ibd.} The FBI, said Revell, did not provide “protective security.”\footnote{128 Ibd.} Revell further elaborated that the FBI had increased their level of investigation after the murder of Alex Odeh, and since then there had been no further incident – or at least none that he was aware of. The agency’s position on this matter was “the ultimate prevention will be the successful identification and prosecution of those responsible. The best way to prevent terrorism is to put the terrorists in prison, and this [is] our responsibility.”\footnote{129 Ibd.} As a matter of procedure, Revell stated that when they received information or intelligence about anyone at risk, they would contact those individuals as well as local law enforcement in the area who could then take appropriate protective measures.\footnote{130 Ibd.}

Revell’s testimony was met with disbelief by some of the key Committee members and witnesses at the hearing. While Revell appeared committed to solving the murder of Alex Odeh and acknowledged the wave of anti-Arab hysteria that may have produced an atmosphere ripe for such violence to occur, he framed the agency’s resolve in narrowly defined terms: by law, jurisdiction, and resources. Revell further testified that the violence that had been perpetrated may not have been entirely committed by white supremacists or
Jewish extremists. They could have been random acts of violence or crimes of opportunity such as robbery. Revell also pointed to the legal limitations of the agency, arguing that not all violations are federally related, and therefore would not require the resources of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. State and local infractions would be the proper domain of local law enforcement which he presumed would be perfectly capable of handling these cases. Finally, Revell maintained the agency’s “sensitivity” to the concerns of the Arab and Muslim American community, and their commitment to the diligent pursuit of any investigation in which there is a “legal justification to do so.”

In fact, the question of legal justification was precisely why this hearing had been called, and more broadly, why federal hate crimes legislation was being considered in the first place. The purpose of the hearing was to consider what hate violence was, why local and state law enforcement were unable or unwilling to respond to such violence, how best to combat it, whether new laws should be enacted to address it, and whether or not the FBI should be the primary agency to respond to it. Revell’s testimony may have been unsatisfactory for the Arab and Muslim American community, but he made an important argument for the expansion of the agency’s power by revealing the its narrowly defined purview and thus highlighting the need for “legal justification.”

Revell’s testimony also raised broader questions among the committee members about enforcing federal civil rights statutes and investigating hate crimes in general. Although hearing after hearing declared the necessity of expanded federal power in combatting hate violence, including this hearing on anti-Arab violence, it was unclear whether an agency like the FBI ought to be granted broader institutional authority and expanded surveillance and police powers given its abusive history with communities of color, labor unions, and civil rights leaders.

*ARAB SHEIKHS, FANCY SUITS, AND STACKS OF $100 BILLS*

Arab and Muslim Americans had reason to question Revell’s commitment to “sensitivity.” Representative George W. Crockett (D-Michigan) charged that the agency’s investigative actions had “racial implications.” Revell took exception to the remark, pointing to the agency’s long and successful history in investigating and arresting individuals connected to organized racism. In the past two years, he argued, the agency had over thirty successful prosecutions against the Aryan Nation, for example. He reassured members of the Committee and the community that the agency was using the “same dedication and the same application” of their skills to any investigation.

However, the FBI’s historical role in communities of color was unsettling, in particular as it related to practices of surveillance, questionable searches and seizures, and known practices of coercion and extreme violence against civil rights leaders, communities of color, the progressive left, and organizations such as labor unions and the Black Panther Party, to name a few. Despite Revell’s claim of the FBI being “sensitive” to the needs of Arab and Muslim Americans, their perceptions of and lived experiences with the agency told a different story, one that involved extralegal abuse, selective violence, biased investigation, and questions about the FBI’s role in communities of color.

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131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid., 13.
and agents operating at their own discretion. These concerns were underscored in the wake of the ABSCAM scandal, a two-year sting operation conducted by the Federal Bureau Investigation from 1978 to 1980 to investigate public corruption.\textsuperscript{136} Under the direction of the Department of Justice, the operation videotaped numerous federal, state, and other public officials in New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia accepting bribes from a fictitious “Arab” company called “Abdul Enterprises Ltd.” in exchange for political favors, contracts for multi-million dollar casino businesses, and permanent residency in the United States. Operation “ABSCAM” operated with little guidance, let alone oversight concerning their activities. Although the operation netted numerous corruption charges, the FBI was heavily criticized for various unethical procedures in undercover activities, for the nature of its entrapment operation, and for undercover agents’ involvement in illegal activities. The American-Arab Relations Committee condemned in particular the use of undercover FBI agents posing as fictional “Arab sheikhs” who served to reinforce prevailing popular stereotypes.\textsuperscript{137} Flashing “stacks of $100 bills” presumably from oil wealth, and wearing “fancy suits and improvised headdresses,” the operation played up the racial stereotypes of affluent “sheikhs” to net its victims, including some who were financially distressed.\textsuperscript{138} This operation was still fresh in the minds of the Committee members and the witnesses testifying that day.

Among the Committee member and witnesses who viewed Revell’s testimony with disappointment, skepticism, and frustration was Representative Mary Oakar (D-Ohio), who connected memories of the ABSCAM scandal to the lack of progress in the Alex Odeh investigation by expressing her hope that the FBI would pursue those who had caused Alex Odeh’s death with the same zeal that “they stereotyped Arab-Americans.”\textsuperscript{139} Oakar then took a moment to praise her fellow colleagues on their swift condemnation of the ABSCAM operation, noting the diversity of the individuals on record: “I was very, very pleased, Mr. Chairman, that black American Members of Congress, and Jewish-American Members of Congress, and Anglo-American Members of Congress, Japanese-American Members of Congress, Polish-American Members of Congress, as well as others joined with me and sent a letter to the FBI indicating how reprehensible they felt it was to stereotype any group, let alone Arabs.”\textsuperscript{140} In her testimony, Oakar emphasized this point further to ensure that the actions of the FBI would be consistent with their intentions.\textsuperscript{141}

\textbf{ON BEING ARAB AMERICAN}


\textsuperscript{137} This operation was recently popularized in a fictionalized account in the hit movie, \textit{American Hustle} (2013), which opens with the text, “Some of this actually happened.”


\textsuperscript{139} House, \textit{Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary}, 19.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
In addition to addressing the political context of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. and some of the words and actions responsible for these discourses, the hearing also presented community leaders with an occasion to define Arab American identity and communities. No other figure with as much stature and conviction as Representative Mary Oakar (D-Ohio) would speak about the issues, concerns, and challenges that the Arab American community faced at the time. However, she ended up defining the identity of the Arab American community rather narrowly. Her testimony circumscribed anti-Arab and anti-Muslim violence as a domestic issue and an American discourse rather than as a phenomenon intimately tied to U.S. foreign policies abroad. Her testimony also provided a strategic fit with the legislative agenda in that it prominently featured prejudice as the ideological rationale for understanding what hate violence was for the Committee members, thereby laying the grounds for the turn away from critiques of organized racism in favor of punishment for individual acts of prejudice.

Mary Rose Oakar was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 5, 1940, to parents of Lebanese and Syrian ancestry. She served sixteen years in the House of Representatives representing the state of Ohio from 1977-1993. She was dedicated to improving the economic security and welfare of women, and advancing the case for women’s rights, but on certain issues she often came into conflict with the Democratic majority, such as in her pro-life stance. As one of the few Arab Americans serving in Congress during the 1980s, she criticized President Ronald Reagan’s foreign policy stance towards Israel. Despite her sometimes controversial positions, she was able to become an influential figure in the Democratic Party.142

Oakar began her testimony by praising the work of her colleagues on the Judiciary Committee and the Subcommittee, whose work in civil and human rights protected not only Americans but everyone “throughout the world.”143 The most persuasive part of Oakar’s testimony was her ability to connect the Arab American experience of prejudice and stereotypes with other racial and ethnic groups, including Japanese Americans, Jewish Americans, and Eastern European Americans.144 It was a strategic gesture that linked the root causes of destructive behaviors to prejudice as the animating set of beliefs that had the potential to lead to violence. She appealed to the shared experiences of different groups as a basis for seeing racism and ethnic hostility as a universal experience.

However, this perspective glossed over the different institutional histories of each group and ignored the different ways governmental policies like slavery, genocide, race-based exclusion, and colonization have impacted African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino Americans differently. Furthermore, prejudice was appealing as a causal factor as it tended to reduce the complexity of bias-motivated violence to individual acts of ignorance, while failing to acknowledge the significance of social and economic factors such as poverty, inequality, demographic changes, and unemployment. While no one factor could be identified as the cause of hate violence, several factors could contribute to an environment that could lead to incidences of hate. In defining bias as an individual behavior.

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143 Ibid., 19.
144 Ibid., 20.
and criminality as a question of culpability, hate violence became less about historical subjects and unequal power relations and more about individual conduct, prejudice, and the influence of stereotypes. Oakar’s testimony, along with that of many others like her in these committee hearings, was critical in shifting the emphasis away from addressing the problem of hate violence as one of organized racism and violent bigotry. Instead of targeting the activities of the Ku Klux Klan or the Aryan Youth Movement, the focus shifted to random acts of prejudice and bigoted individuals. As a result, policy discussions centered upon the need for criminal penalties and enhanced punishments, and increased federal interventions in response to individual conduct became the predominant policy option. Even though ample evidence suggested that educational programs and social policies aimed at building, supporting, and strengthening community bonds could be powerful initiatives to dismantle hate, only sentencing enhancements were adopted by the federal government as the primary tool to “combat” hate violence.

In her testimony, Oakar connected racial stereotypes in the media and racial prejudice as salient factors in the rise of anti-Arab violence. She cited the “Rambo-like Arab terrorist who just shoots up everybody,” in major movies as well as caricatures in children’s cartoons such as “Abdul O” and “Abdul the Butcher” in Popeye and Woody Woodpecker that reinforced negative representations of Arabs in the United States and around the world. Oakar noted that she initially dismissed these as jokes, but after the death of Alex Odeh, she worried about the cumulative effects of these images on people, especially upon those who were willing to engage in bias-motivated attacks. Describing the effects of these media stereotypes as the most “blatant bigotry,” she articulated this relationship of prejudice to violence as a continuing problem of peace. Oakar’s testimony gave voice to a deep aspirational idea of what America represents, as a country where full participation, free expression and free association, are values and freedoms that ought to be exercised without consideration of one’s rank, status, religious affiliation, national origins, or race. Yet, Oakar lamented, the unfortunate reality persisted that prejudice, from its manifestations in popular media to its physically violent expressions, continually marginalized and disempowered communities of color including Arab and Muslim communities in the United States.

Oakar’s testimony made strategic political and legislative sense for the argument for passing not only the Hate Crime Statistics Act, but also future hate crime legislation. She articulated the political logic of the perniciousness of prejudice left unchecked, the danger of negative media stereotypes, and the need for better law enforcement, in particular the necessary role of the federal government as an instrument for liberty, freedom, democracy, and equality. She expressed the need for lawmakers to address egregious errors in society. Her testimony set up a critical framework for the discussion of how hate violence endangered the nascent political and civic voices of Arab and Muslim Americans, as the next testimonies will suggest.

**THE ROAD TO POLITICAL ENFRANCHISEMENT**

Like Oakar, former Representative James Abourezk, now Chairman of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, also testified to the insidious effects of prejudice,
though he emphasized its consequences in terms of the political participation of Arab American communities. Speaking directly about the death of Alex Odeh, Abourezk avowed that the current political leadership could contribute to an atmosphere of hostility or even facilitate violence through their silence if they allowed “demagoguery against Arabs” to continue unchallenged.\textsuperscript{147} Political leadership, he argued, especially at the highest level, can send the wrong message to the people. While Abourezk expressed his thanks for the FBI’s work on the investigation, and their “sensitivity” in addressing the concerns of the Arab and Muslim community, he also admonished the agency for its continued harassment of Arabs and Muslims. Explicit in Abourezk’s testimony is the fact that such harassment had the overall effect of chilling the political participation of Arab and Muslim Americans. Abourezk contended that the political enfranchisement of Arab and Muslim Americans rested on the fundamental right to the free exercise of participation and association. On occasion, the exercise of such rights might involve a critique of U.S. foreign policy in the Arab nations, and sometimes those critiques could call into question foreign aid to the state of Israel and its continued occupation of Palestine.\textsuperscript{148} These activities fall within the protection of free speech, he argued, and they do not warrant the scrutiny of the FBI or any surveillance by any agency of the federal government.

Echoing the importance of political enfranchisement and the danger that hate violence presented as an obstacle to it was Mohammad Medhi, President of the American Arab Relations Committee, and Abdeen Jabara, a community leader from Detroit, MI. Medhi expressed his concerns about how violence against Arab Americans had the effect of limiting their participation in American political discourse. He brought up the murder of Professor Ismael Faruqi, an Islamic scholar and a Palestinian Arab who was murdered along with his wife in Philadelphia. Although local authorities were assisted by the FBI, they failed to produce leads or suspects in their investigation. Medhi worried that continued attacks, repeated harassment, and the failure of law enforcement agencies to intervene and prevent these attacks could produce a sense of alienation within the Arab and Muslim American community and a retrenchment from social, political, and economic life that would be detrimental to everyone.

Jabara’s testimony was more explicit about the aims of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim violence, which was to “chill the exercise of the constitutional rights of Arab-Americans.”\textsuperscript{149} Jabara believed that the community was a “nascent voice,” that Arab and Muslim Americans were beginning to organize “to play a role in this society,” and to stand “shoulder to shoulder” for “jobs, peace, and justice, in the corridors of power.”\textsuperscript{150} This rising tide of violence, he believed, was not the result of “random” or “thoughtless” attacks, but rather was aimed at circumventing the political and civic participation of Arab and Muslim Americans as a whole, that is, the violence that was aimed directly at their Constitutional rights.\textsuperscript{151}

Finally, James Zogby, Executive Director of the Arab-American Institute, contextualized the Arab and Muslim American experience as another chapter in America’s political story, a “new ethnic and political constituency” over 2.5 million strong and

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 34.  
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 35.  
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 110.  
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
growing. According to Zogby, the path to political enfranchisement was a success story that was unfolding. However, the “vilification,” “defamation,” and “outright violence against leaders and institutions” had been serious threats to this path for the past fifteen years and had cost the lives, property, and ability of many to exercise their constitutional rights. Reiterating previous critiques of the FBI for failing to produce “a single indictment” and, in some cases for being the very perpetrators of these attacks, he added to criticisms of their overzealous focus on Arab and Muslim Americans, energies he felt would be better spent investigating the perpetrators of anti-Arab violence.

Zogby emphasized that this violence took place in a broader context of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hostilities that contributed to the undermining of the ability of Arab and Muslim Americans to exercise their civil liberties and ensure the protection of their civil rights. If this domestic terrorism continued unabated, Zogby feared that the community would face political exclusion, blacklisting, and more fundamentally, the inability to define their identity on their own terms. Zogby’s testimony advocated for more than self-determination; he also called for “self-definition,” “legitimacy,” and the collective expression of “political and cultural rights.”

CONCLUSION

The findings of the Committee hearing contributed significantly to the legislative agenda that assisted in passing the Hate Crime Statistics Act four years later in April 1990. Committee members, aided by their newfound knowledge about the Arab and Muslim American experience, revealed gaps in the FBI’s investigations in hate violence. New political alliances and coalitions were made as African American senior leadership and their Arab and Muslim American counterparts helped fashion new understandings about working with the FBI given its problematic histories with communities of color. However, the House committee hearing on anti-Arab violence was also one of several important hearings that slowly shifted the discourse of hate crime legislation from addressing the dangers and legacies of organized racism and violent bigotry to one of personal conduct expressed as prejudice, the political discourse that best suited the neo-conservative policies of the Reagan-Bush administration. In defining Arab and Muslim American identity within the mainstream narrative of ethnic assimilation, as best exemplified by Oakar’s testimony, hate violence was relegated to a social aberration rather than seen as constitutive of unequal power relations in American society. Even though the powerful testimonies from Dymally and Rahall made the link between anti-Muslim and anti-Arab violence within the U.S. to U.S. foreign policy abroad explicitly clear, the resulting passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act and subsequent hate crime legislation did not necessarily lead to laws and policies that addressed the dangers of organized racism or institutional factors that could reproduce an environment of hate. Instead, what subsequent federal and state legislators have essentially passed in the ensuing decades was enhanced carcerality as the core feature of hate crime legislation.

152 Ibid., 111.
153 Ibid., 111–112.
154 Ibid., 112.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid., 114.
While the testimonies from Abourezk, Jabara, and Zogby framed the dangers of hate violence as an obstacle to political enfranchisement, they did so in a manner that failed to acknowledge the racial and economic inequality in Arab and Muslim American communities, and the institutional and structural conditions that enabled and sustained an environment of hate. This is not to say that political representation, electoral voting, “get out the vote” campaigns, and other formal means of political representation are not important means of empowering a community. But the road to political empowerment does not necessarily mean an end to hate violence. Such empowerment might actually intensify hate.

Finally, even though testimonies criticized the FBI’s operations, the end result of this committee and other hearings laid the groundwork for expanding the agency’s domain and surveillance powers for future hate crime legislation in the 1990s, and more importantly, for “anti-terrorism” legislation after 9/11, by highlighting the inability and/or unwillingness of local and state law enforcement to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. Many testimonies in this hearing demonstrated the need for expanded federal powers and new laws to address organized racism and religious violence. In some specific testimonies, witnesses cited the Federal Bureau of Investigation as the agency most perfectly suited to handle these kinds of situations, given the proper resources, training, and of course, legal authority. No one could have known in 1986 how their words and actions would help shape the role of the FBI in the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001, which blurred definitions of domestic terrorism, hate violence, and international terrorism. “Domestic terrorism” which would have meant organized white supremacy in the 1980s, shifted to risk and threat assessments of Arab and Muslim Americans in a post-9/11 moment. Enhanced by provisions in the USA Patriot Act and the dismantling of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the FBI, which was positioned to be the primary law enforcement unit through which hate violence could be challenged, became the very tool through which the Arab and Muslim American community would be investigated, scrutinized, and surveilled. No one testifying at the hearing or sitting as a committee member in 1986 could have known what was to come, specifically the degree to which the agency’s powers would increase, and the resulting damage that would then be done to the Arab and Muslim American community or to the delicate fabric of civil rights and civil liberties in the United States. The Hate Crime Statistics Act has become an invaluable tool that, in addition to counting the number of hate crimes committed annually, has been an important resource to law enforcement agencies to improve the recognition of and response to hate violence. It has also become an outstanding source for researchers and policy analysts interested in discovering new trends in hate violence. Yet the implications that occurred during the “Ethnically Motivated Violence Against Arab-Americans” hearing go beyond their effect upon the passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act to larger questions of racial and religious identity in the U.S. context, the relationship between foreign policy and domestic discourse, and the role of the federal government in the policing of hate.

**EPILOGUE**

Almost thirty years later, Alex Odeh’s murder remains unsolved case and is still a stark example of justice denied for the Arab and Muslim American community. Police arrested Joseph L. Young, 41, and charged him with the murder of Professor Ismael Faruqi and his wife, Lois Lamya al-Faruqi, who were killed in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, on May 27, 1987. Anmar al-Zein, their pregnant daughter, suffered critical injuries, but she and her baby
survived. On July 11, 1987, a jury found Young guilty of committing two counts of first-degree murder, and he was sentenced to death.
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A Chronicle of A Disappearance:¹ Mapping the Figure of the Muslim in Berlin’s Verfassungsschutz Reports (2002-2009)

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IMMIGRATION AND SECURITY

„Wenn wir in der Nachbarschaft irgendetwas wahrnehmen, dass da plötzlich drei etwas seltsam aussehende Menschen eingezogen sind, [...] und die nur Arabisch oder eine Fremdsprache sprechen, die wir nicht verstehen, dann sollte man glaube ich schon mal gucken, dass man die Behörden unterrichtet, was da los ist“.

- Ehrhart Körting, Berlin’s Senator of the Interior and head of VSB Berlin, 17th November 2010

In times of ‘global terrorism’, protecting democracy, freedom, and the rule of law has become once more of paramount interest to policy makers, legal scholars and human rights discourses. Ours is an age of post-colonial securitization processes and a post-Cold War world order (Mamdani, 2004; Schifauer 2006c), with Europe as a key player attempting another “shot at world leadership” (El-Tayeb, 2008: 654). ‘Global terrorism’, religious extremism, hostile intolerance, gender discrimination, homophobia, and anti-Semitism have emerged as the salient discursive markers portraying a transnational racialization of “Islam” and its attendant bodies. The figure of the Muslim is currently in high demand in the racial economy of global domination and security politics.

Situated from the vantage point of Berlin, “the capital of the most powerful of the states that dominate the construction of Europe” (Balibar, 2003: 2), this essay scrutinizes the

157 English Translation: “If we perceive something in the neighborhood, that suddenly three somehow weird looking people moved in, [...]who only speak Arabic or another foreign language that we do not understand, one should then be alert and let the government authorities know what happens there.” See: Wachsame Anspannung in Berlin - ohne Hysterie, http://www.morgenpost.de/berlin-aktuell/article1454943_/Wachsame-Anspannung-in-Berlin-ohne-Hysterie.html, 11/18/2010, Morgenpost Online, retrieved from the WWW on 11/20/2010. Following this statement, Ehrhart Körting apologized two days later for his statement and assured that it was not meant to call for people to denounce Muslims or Arabic-speakers. Instead, he was concerned for the general security and, thus, rather asking people to watch out for suspicious luggage or mails. Furthermore, he stressed that this also holds true for the Muslims in Berlin who should inform federal security services immediately “in case they overhear a suspicious conversation in a mosque” (my own highlighting). See: Körting bedauert diskriminierende Terror-Äußerungen, WELT ONLINE, www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article11050786/Koerting-bedauert-diskriminierende-Terror-Aeusserungen.html, 11/19/2010. On the same day Körting apologized, one of the most famous mosques in Berlin, the ehitlik-Mosque in Berlin-Neukölln (Berlin Türk ehitlik Camii) suffered from an arson attack – the fourth one within half a year.
strengthening of security policies around the figure of the Muslim from 2001 onwards (Schiffauer, 2006, 2007, 2009), portraying him as the enemy of Western civilization *par excellence* (Shooman & Spielhaus, 2010).

This overall process has typically been coined ‘Islamophobia’ in English—(see i.e. Poynting and Mason, 2007; Klug, 2012; Saiyyid and Vakil, 2011) or German-speaking literature (see i.e. Bundschuh and Jagusch, 2007; Bunzl and Hafez, 2009). However, this article follows Attia (2007: 5-28) and her student Shooman (2012 & 2011), both of whom have paved the way for a discussion of *anti-Muslim racism* especially with regard to its German context in order to highlight globally consistent processes of racialization inherent in this dynamic between securitization and stigmatization (Barskanmaz, 2009; Partridge, 2012; see also Lentin, 2013).

It is safe to attest that the manufactured narratives moving from “foreigner” (*Ausländer*) to “Muslim” in Germany (Spielhaus, 2006) or the “hybrid” and “nomad” in Europe (Silverstein, 2005) have also converged around the figurative idea of a phantasmatic Muslim, inherently different, hostile and inassimilable to German (and thus European) society. Societal commitments to security and diversity, animal rights, gender equality, and tolerance of sexual diversity (Haritaworn and Petzen 2011; Puar 2007) have been artfully mobilized as signifiers of European progress and unification, under the umbrella of democracy and a secular, modern identity. On the other hand, “Muslim degradation is deeply discounted against the universalizing currency of implementing security, resisting terrorism, restricting immigration” (Goldberg 2009: 168). Especially feared is an unwanted immigrant population, imagined by policy makers and European voters to unduly increase monetary investments of Germany’s social welfare state in “bad diversity” (Lentin, 2011).

Although 9/11 was an important event in Western perceptions of the Muslim Other and their discourses of fear and war, it is many times forgotten that at the same time a new citizenship law was underway in Germany as well, first approved in 1999 and coming into effect in January 2000. Especially since Germany stepped back into unified legal sovereignty (1991), it has been under scrutiny by its fellow European countries for its archaic and ideology-driven citizenship law (Howard, 2008), which dates back to the Wilhelminian empire and its colonial “one-drop” blood rule that governed sexuality, marriage and racial categories in German colonial Africa—as well as under Nazi rule later on.158 With the passing of the sixteen-year reign (1982-1998) of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) to a reign by the Social Democratic Party (SPD), steps were taken to push for a new law during the end of the 1990s. The new citizenship law changed the old Wilhelminian *jus sanguinis* (principle of blood) to a *jus soli* (principle of residency). Official statistics claim that from the end of WWII to 1960, Germany had less than 700,000 foreigner residents, which by 2008 increased to 7.3 million non-German citizens, 9% of its population (Howard, 2008: 44). The

158 Originally, each independent German state had its own *jus domicili* (principle of residence). This however conflicted with homogenizing trends to build a German state, and thus, *jus sanguinis* (principle of blood), was adopted. First by Bavaria in 1818, then distributed through the Prussian citizenship law of 1842, and finally consolidated as German law with the emergence of the German Reich in 1871 and concretized by the German Nationality Law of 1913 (Howard, 2008). El-Tayeb (2001) writes that Germany’s romanticism movement supported the investment into the myth of a “German Spirit” (“deutscher Geist”) finalized at the turn of the 20th century, essential in notions of “jus sanguis”, as a result of century long people’s movements across and in Europe, according to El-Tayeb. The investment into the fantasy of a German original myth thus supported the development of a pure national character in a country geographically positioned as a transitory and migratory central European location. With jus sanguis the management of populations enabled the demarcation of who has the “right blood” (134) and thus “true belonging” and who (legally) doesn’t. (see El-Tayeb, 2001: 133-139)
new law that came into effect in 2000 reduced the residency requirements from 15 to 8 years with a valid residence permit, gainful employment, no criminal convictions, and the will to give up the former citizenship. Applicants also had to take German language tests.\textsuperscript{159} Furthermore, an ethical “loyalty oath” was added, requiring the support of “a free and democratic order of the Constitution” (53, see also Schiffauer, 2006a: 125). Noteworthy for the discussion that follows, the “protection of the Constitution” rationale is deployed to protect this free and democratic order as well as peace and security within German borders. If listed in its reports, individuals can expect to have their request for citizenship rejected, or can even face deportation. In the case of organizations or groups, it might become impossible to rent spaces and thus use public space – as they may also be subjected to recurrent ‘stop-and-frisk’ searches such as after prayer in front of mosques (see Schiffauer, 2006b: 363).

Overall, the new citizenship changes have brought no considerable change in immigration statistics as of now. Those who for generations have lived and worked in Germany without citizenship, have not contributed to a higher rate of “immigration”. Anthropologist Schiffauer argues in an interview that since 2001, the effect of anti-Muslim racism and White German fear of Muslims has been rather harsh on German Turks, Arabs, and others stigmatized as “Muslim”. Out of fear, Schiffauer states, people hold on to their old citizenships and opt to not give up their previously held passports (Berliner Zeitung, 2007; see for more detail Schiffauer, 2006a: 124).

Furthermore, the figure of the Muslim reappears in times of acute post-German unification crisis, where Whiteness and national belonging seemingly command the conjuring of a Muslim “monster” (Puar, Rai, 2002) that enables a coming together of racist (trans-) nationalist tendencies and sentiments whose “frame of reference is law.” (118)\textsuperscript{160}

Local developments of around fifty years of labor migration to West Germany primarily from Turkey, but also from Jordan and Morocco, along with the discussion around the new citizenship law of 1999/2000 contradict the rather prevalent idea of September 11\textsuperscript{th} as some kind of “paradigm shift”. Actually, the depiction of the Muslim Other had already been changing in a worrisome manner with a symbolic dichotomy that enabled an upgraded “occidentalist cartography of the Self” and a “degradation of the Other.” (Paulus, 2007)

In line with conventional post-colonial literature, Eickhof (2010) names it the alteration from a depiction of the Orient to the depiction of Islam (80). More recently, the picture has moved from a depiction of the Other as foreigner in the 1980s and 90s to the depiction of an inherent masculine, violent, homophobic and sexist Islamist as the true threat. Thus, it seems reasonable to say that 9/11 has further contributed to (Klug, 2012), rather than triggered, a national and transnational justification to intensify the racial stigmatization of what came religiously and somatically to be known and recognized as ‘Muslim’.

\textsuperscript{159} This also holds true for spouses who follow their partners to Germany. Note: there are exceptions for US citizen spouses, Australians, Japanese based on their visa rights for Germany. For more on this see Aufenthaltsgesetz: § 30 Abs. 1 Satz 3 Nr 4 AufenthG.

\textsuperscript{160} Puar and Rai demonstrate the sexualized and racialized Othering methods of what we today came to understand as Muslim terror. They use Foucault’s notion of abnormals, monsters and the sexualized that he posits in the appearance of the juridico-biological domain. For him, Puar and Rai, the ‘inhuman’, or else the ‘impossible’, need to be corrected and controlled in order to achieve social security. See their interpretation of Foucault on p. 119. Their term ‘docile patriot’ is leaned toward Foucault’s notion of the ‘docile body’. 
THE GERMAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES AND THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Following scholarship which has studied the development of anti-Muslim racism, this research engages critically with a reading of Berlin’s yearly reports for the ‘Protection of the Constitution,’ or Verfassungsschutzbericht Berlin (VSB Bln) from 2002 until 2009. Overall, the task of those annual VSB reports is to gather and analyze data and subsequently inform the Senate, the House of Representatives, other government authorities, and ultimately the German public about so-called “threats to the free democratic basic order.” (VSB Bln 2009: 236; see also §§ 1,5 and § 6 VSG Bln).

Unlike many other European polities, the VSB publishes its intelligence to inform the German public and police of possible threats to society, democracy and the state before any formal legal prosecution of the accused is confirmed and tried by legal institutions. In other words, the VSB does not, as other foreign intelligence services do, gather information secretly for years until criminal guilt is “ensured”, or before putting the accused group or person on trial. The VSB instead gathers material – in a dubious manner, as will be shown in this paper – and publishes it for public viewing, thus socially stigmatizing the named groups or individuals, at times even for decades. Within the politico-legal grey zone of suspicion and public shaming, the VSB then socially contributes to managing an ethnically diverse population in Germany. Hence, the VSB takes part in formulating difference and

161 Due to the length of the name in both languages, I will refer to it with its official German abbreviation VSB Bln. When writing VSB Bln 2007, the year simply indicates the year of publication.

162 In addition, each federal state also produces its own VSB reports (see: German Basic Law/ Deutsches Grundgesetz, § 74 (1) 1). Berlin’s reports were chosen due to the city’s centrality in national politics where discourses materialized into actions, but also because it has a vibrant migrant and People of Color community. However, there is not much difference between the individual country reports (Länderreports). For a broader overview over the VS as an institution, see Werner Schiffauer as indicated in the bibliography (German).

163 This is not meant to suggest that there is a “good” and “bad” intelligence service. It is rather meant to compare and thus ease comprehension for non-Germans not familiar with the German context.

164 The VS institution has been interdicted by law to generate its own information based on surveillance or other executive rights. This ‘administrative predicament’ comes to the fore in the moment that the same institution claims to generate valid knowledge, which are most of the time mere estimations. However, courts as well as the police seem to take the VS assessments at face value. (see Schiffauer, 2006: 117).

165 Such as the famous example of Millî Görü, in Germany. For more see an ethnography of the organization and the impact of the Verfassungsschutz on the organization by Schiffauer, Werner (2010), “Nach dem Islamismus - Eine Ethnografie der Islamischen Gemeinschaft Millî Görüs”.

deviance of ethnic minorities, amongst others, transporting and distributing the immateriality of racial belief systems into the materiality of security policies:

The Protection of the Constitution has next to the task of surveillance also the responsibility to elucidate extremism to the public. This means that it is important, within this preventive function, not only to take part in political and societal discourses about all forms of political extremism, but also to take part in actively shaping them. (Claudia Schmid, Head of VSB)\textsuperscript{166}

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the VSB had a severe “legitimacy crisis” (Schiffauer, 2006a: 117) leading even to a minimized manpower, which, however, changed after 9/11. Put differently, “Islamism”, or the figure of the Muslim, helped the institution of the VSB to survive and even rejuvenate itself.

This article maps the way the figure of the Muslim—alternately referred to as Islamism, terrorism and ‘foreigner’s extremism’—is defined and conceptualized in those VSB reports. As outlined above, it is widely held that political happenings and social debates around the issues of Islam, terrorism, and the Muslim Other are of vital importance to place the VSB in the context of a ‘German social fabric’. What can be seen is that the figure of the Muslim becomes more and more dehistoricized and dehumanized over time, with the Oriental Other disappearing as an ethnic category into the category of “Islamism”.

The figure of the Muslim Other also allowed for a breach of German constitutional law in that anti-terror data sets were created that now allow the (at times secret) exchange of data between intelligence services and the police in order to provide a better management of the fight against terrorism. Interestingly, no other “terrorist” threat (such as the RAF) has ever managed to have such legal impact in German law and its application. However, although such securitization measures might have started with the Muslim terrorist phantasm, they don’t stop there. Another interesting move, maybe specific to a German and Israeli context even, is the figure of the Palestinian terrorist. Portrayed as historically and politically decontextualized, s/he serves a hierarchical order for him/her to fill the role of an ‘archetypical Arab anti-Semite’ evidenced in his/her anti-Zionism. In short, the universalization of the figure of the terrorist Muslim is enabled through the phantasmatic investment into the Palestinian terrorist.

*MAPPPING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SECURITY IN GERMANY*

The threat of Islamic terrorism has managed to bring together German political, legislative, judicial and executive forces to rally behind a common cause called ‘national security.’ In Europe and Germany, the idea of an almighty Islamic hub capable of striking everywhere has generated much fear. After all, Hamburg was the city which housed seven of the 9/11 planners and attackers. The minister of the Interior in Bavaria hence commented

on the recommendations published by the German Protection of the Constitution (2002),
one year after the attacks in the US, in a newspaper article, stating: “Germany can very
quickly change its role from becoming the space for rest, to the space of attack.”
(Berliner Kurier, 09.2002)

The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon also had
an impact on German policies and “certainly fueled the expansion of criminal law and an
erosion of basic rights in the field of procedural law.” (Safferling and Ide, 2010: 1293).
Hence, already in December 2001, a draft law was proposed by the Federal Parliament called
the ‘Law for the Combat against Terrorism’ (German: Terrorismusbekämpfungsgesetz).
It went into effect in January 2002 for a provisional five-year period, and was then extended for five
more years in January 2007 after an officially-proclaimed “revision”. Interestingly, this law
was extended yet again for another five more years in 2011, although inherent in its
installation was its dissolution after this first period. It seems that each extension, justified by
the laws’ time limit of five years, became the actual law. Political farce, sometimes called
‘propaganda’, is at work here, hiding in plain sight under the banner of “democratic politics”.

Furthermore, political alliances and data-bases have been created to combat the threat
to freedom and justice. Since 2004, under the umbrella of the ‘Federal Office for the
Protection of the Constitution’ (BfV), federal security agencies started to regularly exchange
data about Islamic terrorism and measures of how to collectively frame actions against it.
(VSB Bln 2004: 275). At the end of 2006, a law was enacted that ensured an information
exchange based on common data sets between the police and intelligence services.
Part of that development was also the introduction of an Anti-Terror Data-Set or ATD (German:
Anti-Terror-Datei) in March 2007, that provides a free data exchange on potential terrorist
threats between police offices and the intelligence services in Germany. The latter includes
the Federal Office for the Protection of the Government, the Military Counter-Intelligence
Service (MAD) and the Federal Intelligence Service. According to Will, this law has

Befürchtung des bayerischen Innenministers Beckstein (CSU): "Deutschland kann jederzeit vom Ruhe- zum
Ausführungsraum werden."

168 Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung zum Deutschen Bundestag mit Begründung,
Terrorism has become a worldwide threat. The extent of violence, the perpetrators’ logistical networks and
their longterm, crossborder strategy demands the further enhancement of legal instruments.“ Further
documents: „Gegenäußerung der Bundesregierung zur Stellungnahme des Bundesrates“, http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/14/077/1407754.pdf, 12/07/2001; and: Gesetz zur Bekämpfung des
internationalen Terrorismus (Terrorismusbekämpfungsgesetz), referring to 9/11 and EU Legistlation,

170 Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Änderung des Bundesverfassungsschutz-
ionFile

171 “Law for the establishment of collective data sets of Police Offices and Intelligence Services of the Federal
of the law can be accessed online under: “Gesetz zur Errichtung gemeinsamer Dateien von Polizeibehörden
und Nachrichtendiensten des Bundes und der Länder (Gemeinsame-Dateien-Gesetz - ATDG(EinF))”,
172 German: Verfassungsschutz, Militärischer Abschirmdienst und Bundesnachrichtendienst.
durably changed Germany’s “architecture of security” (Will, 2006; see also Will, 2012). The actual separation between intelligence services and the police springing from the lessons of Nazi-Germany persecution has been breached for the first time in post-unification German history. According to Will’s article (2012), information of around 17,000 people (as of 2012) is saved in this database. There the police is saving its information openly; however the intelligence services save their information in this shared database covertly, meaning, eventually it is the intelligence services who decide when and what information is passed on to the police. Between 2007 and 2011 around 300,000 requests to ATD were registered, with a hit-rate of 1.5 million. But whereas it is unsure whether any terrorist or attack could be found or prevented, it is certain that the majority of requests were posed by the police. That in turn shows the police’s interest in unsafe intelligence service information, which then informs police conduct, according to Will (2012). A logical consequence could thus also be a move toward what might be called “secret trials”, where prosecution (including the police/executive) and the judicial authorities are sharing the same information and the actual attorney defending his or her client, might not have access to the same secret files or information gathered by intelligence services (or, as recently happened with the racist NSU murders in Germany, where files vanished and informants died).

On December 14th, 2004, another concerted effort of different state authorities called the “GTAZ – Collective Counter-Terrorism Center” (Gemeinsames Terrorismusabwehrzentrum) came into being in Berlin-Treptow. GTAZ was founded with the sole purpose of fighting Islamic terrorism. Its tasks are, among others, to connect national security efforts with the international community. With the foundation of GTAZ, the coming together of various police and intelligence services was finalized. Ironically, after the NSU murders in Germany, the new Federal Minister of the Interior and of the VS in Berlin, Hans-Peter Friedrich, stood up for the establishment of a new “Collective Center for the Fight against Right-Wing Extremism” (GAR) in 2011. The latter would fight against right-wing extremism (in light of the NSU murders), a move, which appears sarcastic at best given that intelligence services would need to also fight against themselves. Until today, the involvement of the VS of Thuringia as well as the police in the support (logistical and financial) of the Neo-Nazi group that publicly executed nine men of Turkish descent and one man of Greek descent is more or less known, although it is still debated in all its detail in a court (see for a better overview the dossier in English, German and Turkish by the Coordination Council of Muslims, CRM, 2012).

Respectively, the GTAZ today operates to coordinate experts from the Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) with terrorism experts of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), Federal Intelligence Service (BND), General Federal Public Prosecutor (GBA), Military Counter Intelligence Service, Federal Police, Customs Criminal Investigation Office (ZKA) and representatives of

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175 The General Federal Public Prosecutor (Generalbundesanwaltschaft) is the authority when it comes to cases of national security. See also §§ 142a, 120 of the Organization of the Courts Acts (Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz).
all State Offices of Criminal Investigation (LKA) amongst each other and with other European or international partner services such as the ‘Alliance Base’\textsuperscript{176} or EUROPOL\textsuperscript{177}.

Again, the sheer abundance of data sets, new alliances and working groups established after September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001, indicate quite clearly the growth of an internationally working security state under the symbolic mandate of the defense of democratic ideals, norms and security.

Furthermore, another major legal paradigm shift took place in August 2009, with the Federal Court of Justice judging the financing of terrorism as a criminal act, which had until then been non-existent, according to Safferling and Ide (2010). This in turn meant to expand definitions of fraud (§ 263 StGB) and membership in a criminal organization (§§§ 129, 129 a, 129 b StGB\textsuperscript{178}) within the German Criminal Code in order to render it a criminal offense. With this development even a ‘third person’ could now be held criminally liable, even if s/he was only indirectly involved, for the mere reason of ‘indirectly supporting’ terrorists. The authors conclude that “criminal law should not be used as a social response to any potentially dangerous behaviour.” (p. 1305) Problems arose when defining national terrorism, membership in a terrorist group (loosely defined as ‘three people’ minimum), and deciding the admissibility of evidence gained through (at that time) illegal surveillance. Accordingly, the process and results tightened and strengthened a more “preventive criminal law and a more repressive criminal procedure” which blurred the “previously strict differentiation between preventive police measures on the one hand and repressive prosecutorial means on the other.” Safferling and Ide thus further comment

Criminal law is often denaturalized into symbolic legislation, attempting to prove political strengths and power to the general public. Even the use of legislative language has changed, as it became tighter and started utilizing a war-like vocabulary. (Ide and Safferling, 2010: 1293)

However, both authors seem to have overlooked the fact that the first legal change that resembles the changes of German Basic Law (2009) had already been undertaken in 2002 with regard to the charity association “Al-Aqsa e.V.” The Palestinian association had been collecting and donating money to impoverished Palestinian families in Gaza and the

\begin{itemize}
\item Dana Priest, Help From France Key In Covert Operations Paris’s ‘Alliance Base’ Targets Terrorists, Washington Post Online, \url{http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/02/AR2005070201361.html}, 07/13/2005: “Alliance Base, headed by a French general assigned to France’s equivalent of the CIA -- the General Directorate for External Security (DGSE) -- was described by six U.S. and foreign intelligence specialists with involvement in its activities. The base is unique in the world because it is multinational and actually plans operations instead of sharing information among countries, they said. It has case officers from Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Australia and the United States.” France’s President Sarkozy positively mentioned the Base after a successful arrest in June 2003: “This arrest took place thanks to the perfect collaboration between the services of the great democracies.” Retrieved from the WWW on 11/28/2010.
\item http://www.europol.europa.eu/: “Europol is the European Law Enforcement Agency which aims at improving the effectiveness and co-operation of the competent authorities in the Member States in preventing and combating terrorism, unlawful drug trafficking and other serious forms of organized crime.” Accessed on 12/07/2010 – homepage accessible in 24 EU languages. Europol issues yearly reports on the “EU Terrorism situation and Trend Report”.
\item §129 StGB captures the „formation of a criminal union“ (German: Bildung krimineller Vereinigungen); § 129 a StGB the „formation of a terrorist union“ (German: Bildung terroristischer Vereinigungen); § 129 b StGB the „formation of a terrorist union abroad“ (German: Kriminelle und terroristische Vereinigungen im Ausland).
\end{itemize}
West Bank. In this case, the argument of the Supreme Court applied the ‘new’ codes for the right to associate (Neue Verbotsgründe des Vereinsrechts), which deemed it now possible that the Al-Aqsa association, by merely supporting the families in Gaza with charity money, would be held to have also supported the “willingness of third persons [meaning Hamas] to apply violence as political, religious or other means.” Furthermore, the judge decided that with the support of the martyr’s families they relieved “the potential attackers from their responsibility to financially support their family members.” Therefore, according to the VSB Bln in 2002, Al-Aqsa e.V. was deemed to have “supported the readiness to suicide attacks and also violated the idea of the ‘understanding between peoples’ (Völkerverständigung)” (VSB Bln 2002: 74). Al-Aqsa e.V. repeatedly claimed to have no connection to Hamas whatsoever – to no avail. The ruling was finalized in 2004, claiming that no support of terrorism in other countries will be tolerated in Germany. In the final trial session the ‘understanding between peoples’ was mobilized as the principal rationale for the decision.

What emerges from 2002 to 2009 is a different conception of the ‘third person’ (i.e., ‘third bodies’) in law – the assumed ally, the loosely aligned, or the distant and silent supporter: a mystical Other of which we cannot make sense—yet (Fitzpatrick, 1992). In the VSB Bln of 2004, Erhart Körting, former Senator of the Interior and head of VSB, lamented with regard to alleged Muslim terrorists in Hamburg and Berlin, that to be on the side of the accused “in case of doubt is the price we pay [sic] for a constitutional state.”

In a time of burgeoning terrorism expertise, Afghanistan specialists, al-Qaida homegrown terrorism, and homeland security doctrines, it has become practically impossible to oversee the sheer abundance of terrorism material that has been issued by German state authorities as well as by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and think tanks. This limited account of existing anti-terrorist networks and offices given above is thus but a small mapping of developments in Germany over around nine years. Institutions such

179 Vereinsgesetz Verbot, Verbot von Vereinen (§§ 3–9): § 3 (1).
180 Hamas’s military wing is listed as terrorist organization with the EU since June 17, 2002. And since 2005 the entire organization is listed as ‘terrorist entity’ with the EU. In April 2013, Hamas has asked the EU for taking the organization of the Terrorism-list.
181 For original reference see also: German Basic Law/ Deutsches Grundgesetz, § 9 (2).
183 German: „Die in Deutschland geführten Prozesse gegen mutmaßliche Terroristen in Hamburg und in Berlin offenbaren aber ein grundsätzliches Problem. Selbst wenn die böse Absicht wahrcheinlich ist, wo Schuld nicht zweifelsfrei zu belegen ist, gilt der rechtstaatliche Grundsatz „im Zweifel für den Angeklagten“. Das ist der Preis des Rechtsstaats, auf dessen Grundsätze wir vertrauen.“ (VSB BLN 2004: 5)
184 Thanks to Christopher Sweetapple for proposing that term.
as the ones mentioned continue to exist individually, yet through their mutual cooperation new policy regimes and new coordinates of security have been established and intensified. With such policy regimes in place the ‘institutionalization of security’ thus generates its own ideas, norms, institutional processes, with allocated manpower and money. It is then also reasonable to assume that the tracking of information and decision processes (not only in retrospect) can pose problems. When security becomes a ‘regime’ in itself, the way information about Islamism is reproduced becomes of vital importance. Accordingly, MP G. Klemm, member of the Left party (Die LINKE), remarked in a meeting of the committee for the protection of the constitution in Berlin (2002) that this year’s report is not simply “ruminating the three different extremism areas,” but instead is trying to incur current political developments into its analysis. Thus, he states similar to Claudia Schmidt the head of the VSB that the VSB Bln finally “moves into the direction of becoming a tool for political policy consulting.” Eventually, it is Erhart Körting’s understanding that “International Terrorism cannot solely be fought with legal paragraphs” which seems to represent and carve out the state’s present and future modes and codes of conduct (VSB Bln 2007: III.)

Accordingly, national, international administrative powers and information networks can be seen to work together and define markers of security for the national level. In Germany, the executive carrying out such policies would entail the government, police, local and national prosecution, fiscal authorities as well as administrative offices on all levels in a federal state. Islamic Terrorism seems to have enabled supra-national collaboration in a sense of Foucault’s governmentality that does not dissolve national sovereignty – and spurred the intensification of the coordinates of security that no other “terrorist threat” ever managed to bring about. Thus, governmentality and sovereignty are ‘living’ side by side, within and beyond any nationality (see also Butler, 2004).

ANALYZING THE VSB BLN 2002-2009

Each report commences with a preface from formerly mentioned Ehrhart Körting, Berlin’s Senator of the Interior and head of VSB Berlin. In his usually 1.5 to 2.5 page introduction, he summarizes what has been paramount for the VSB the past year. Following the introduction, one continues to the table of contents (with the 2002 issue being an exception). There the VSB Bln is mainly sub-divided in three categories of eminent threats:

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186 Debated in this session was also the emerging problem of Islamic terrorism. And with that in mind also the financing of terrorist organizations, with Hamas being the example. However, the final discussion on funding for the declared “terrorist organization” Hamas is not accessible for the public.

187 Inhaltsprotokoll – Ausschuss für Verfassungsschutz. Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, 15. Wahlperiode, 06.06.2002. Abg. Klemm PDS: “Der Bericht käue nicht die drei Extremismusbereiche wieder, sondern versuche, auf aktuelle politische Entwicklungen einzugehen, und nähere sich damit dem Ziel, ein Instrument der Politikberatung zu sein.” Concessions about shortcomings in that regard were made regarding the fact that in 2001 the agency producing the VSB Bln was being renovated.

188 See also Butler’s (2004) account on „anachronic sovereignty“ with the cohabitation of Foucault’s governmentality developed in his take on biopolitics. See her essay on „Indefinite Detention“, pp. 50-100.
right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism and foreigner’s extremism (Ausländerextremismus). Analyses are then handled in four main chapters that are again subdivided in different sub-chapters.

**CHANGES IN CATEGORIZATION FROM 2002-2009**

It is especially noteworthy that the table of contents underwent considerable change during those years. From 2004 onwards, the chapter on ‘Statistics’ vanishes and its numbers about the various populations are integrated in the body of the main text. Furthermore, in 2002, an editorial is included which explains the subdivision (or any changes) to the reader but from 2003 onward it disappears. In this 2002 editorial it is mentioned that for the left- and right-wing extremism new sub-types of analyses were introduced: ‘action-oriented extremism’, ‘extremist parties’ and ‘Intellectual and strategy-oriented extremism’.

This subdivision should live up to the heterogeneous structures of right-wing and left-wing extremism in each yearly report. A similar outlook on the heterogeneity of foreign national extremism is not mentioned. It raises the question: Is heterogeneity uniquely absent among so-called foreigners? Moreover, from 2003 onward this heterogeneous analysis is mirrored in the table of contents; however, *only* for right-wing extremism until 2004 (namely, ‘action-oriented right-wing extremism’, ‘parliament-oriented right-wing extremism’, ‘discourse-oriented right-wing extremism’). In 2004, it is the left-wing extremists who are subdivided into ‘action-oriented’ and ‘parliament-oriented’ extremists. Until then, foreign nationals had been categorized into ‘Arabs’, ‘Iranians’, ‘Kurds’, and ‘Turks’ – amongst those ethnic main categories, other boxes for analyses of specific extremisms were as well oriented toward right- and left-wing extremism, and Islamic terrorism. This however changes in the table of contents in 2005 to 2007: foreigner extremism (Ausländer Extremismus) is from now on primarily sub-categorized in ‘violence-oriented Islamists’, ‘various Islamists’ or ‘Islamists with unclear orientation toward violence’, ‘non-violent Islamists’, and eventually, ‘left-wing (violent) extremists’. The ‘right-wing’ seems to have been a) subsumed by various nouns with ‘Islam’ as a root or b) just does not exist anymore.

Furthermore, in 2008 the word ‘Islamic terrorists’ is added as header for sub-chapters, referencing now ‘transnational terror networks’ (al-Qaida) as well as ‘regional violent Islamists’ (main reference abroad are Hamas and Hizb’allah). One more new sub-chapter – next to ‘various Islamists’ – is the ‘juridical Islamists’: those who adhere to the pledge of non-violence and the democratic order, but who nonetheless offer an ostensible “radicalization process” to their peers. The latter ostensible undermining of democracy via nominal democratic behavior is, according to the VSB, the predicament with ‘juridical Islamists’ (see also Schiffauer, 2006b, 363). Though the ‘Arab’ has now vanished as an explicit category, the ethnic categories for ‘Kurds’, ‘Turks’ and ‘Iranians’ return in 2008 with a totally new sub-chapter called ‘extremist and security threats of foreigner’s organizations

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189 The four chapters are: I ‘Actual Developments in the Field of Observation’, II ‘Statistic’, III ‘Background information’, IV ‘Protection of the Constitution Berlin’, IV ‘Annex’. Under I each extremism is described and explained, following a sub-chapter on ‘counterespionage’ and the ‘protection of classified information and sabotage’.


191 German: Extremistische Parteien: Ausnutzung demokratischer Spielregeln zur Abschaffung der Demokratien. English: Abuse of democratic rules in order to dispose of democracy. Ibid.

(without Islamism)” put at the very end of all categorical analysis. Amongst them the ethnic category ‘Arab’ seems to have a) dissolved into the various forms of ‘Islamisms’, and thus, b) does not exist anymore as an ethnic but rather as a religious category in the chapter on Islamism. In the same category, ‘Iranians’ do not feature anymore in 2009. Notable as well, is that the Kurdish PKK and other organizations are now listed amongst the ‘extremist and security threats’, whereas the Turkish Millî Görüş is now also subsumed under the various Islamist headings. As discussed before, it seems that “Islamism”, or rather religion, has become the dominant, yet not the only, marker of visible ‘evil’ and ‘threat’.

FROM FOREIGNER TO ISLAMIST AS INTERNAL ‘OTHER’

The ‘foreigner’ (Ausländer) is not an unknown word in German vernacular or legal language. In legal discourse, it refers to somebody born outside or inside of German territory, to parents without German citizenship, who - within the frame of various demarcated reasons - is in the possession of: a) a temporary residence permit, b) the right of unlimited residence, c) a stay permit, d) a residence title for exceptional purposes, exceptional leave to remain (refugees), e) or somebody who is illegally remaining on German administrative soil. In vernacular language, the word can denote any person of non-white color, with a foreign accent, with different ways of dressing, or recently also a Muslim (even a convert) woman of any color with a headscarf. The VSB Bln however uses the word somewhere in between legal and vernacular language – and no definition is provided, thus normalizing a language that might as well be understood by people as discriminatory. In fact, even after several readings, it is not at all understandable to whom the term foreigner is supposed to refer. It simply remains unclear whether the VSB talks about non-Germans in the legal sense, or whether it talks about the ‘Others’ in the vernacular sense exemplified above. In fact, it becomes clear that “Ausländer” might simply denote belonging to non-ethnic white German background, for it is highly unlikely that all of the people in those organizations really aren’t German citizens. The people the VSB Bln denotes as foreigners include Muslim youth of the second and third generation, converts (VSB Bln 2009: IV), and religious scholars from abroad coming to teach Islamism in Berlin’s mosques or cultural centers. In short, the VSB defines ‘foreigner’ on account of religion, even though the people affected might very likely be holders of a German citizenship.

The only moment when the foreigner is related back to the majority population is when his/her extremism is explained (see for more detail the subsequent chapter) as foreigner’s organizations collaborating against the ‘peaceful coexistence of peoples’ (GG § 21; 1; VSB...
Bln 2005: 199). With this, it is not a societal problem of the German state, but rather the state appears as the reluctant host of a “clash of peoples and civilizations” on its soil. A superficial dichotomy of Germans and non-Germans over legality, time, space and, thus, generations, is maintained with reference to different types of ‘peoples’ (German: Völker). This becomes especially clear in one of the few “overviews” over foreigner’s extremism given in 2003:

It remains the same that extremist groups in Berlin are only supported by a small minority of foreigners living here. Around 5,820 people can be counted as part of such foreigner's organizations; this equates to 1.3 percent of Berlin’s foreigner’s population (2003: 440,404 people). Berlin thus lies above the national average with 0.8 percent. (VSB Bln 2003: 106)

The footnote given to the number of extremist persons in Berlin says that “the numbers given herein as well as in the subsequent pages are estimated [sic]” (VSB Bln 2003: 106). With the latter introduction of Islamism, Islamist terror, etc. it becomes even less identifiable. Instead, the marker of non-German difference, formerly known as foreigner in vernacular language, now simply changes into a religious marker. Or, put differently, before it was another ethnicity that flagged non-Germanness; now it is Islam as religion (its extremist version) that marks non-Germanness (with ethnicity for non-Arabs still narrated, yet subordinated as a secondary marker).

From 2005 on, a vague idea of an apparently ‘original ethnic and religious’ Muslim youth who are at-risk for falling prey to Islamists becomes a primary matter. Hence, “it should be our concern to integrate Muslim boys and girls into our hierarchy of values (German: Werteordnung)” in order for them not to become the Islamists’ new constituency (VSB Bln 2005: 3-4). Ideological and ethical confusion, the sense of not belonging (2004) and thus extremism are all treated as personal problems—it is tempting to read this narration of the VSB Bln as a pathologizing strategy of second or third generation non-white migrants. What we can witness with this still rather superficial summary of the VSB Bln is an evolution of one religion (Islam) into a security threat. With it comes as well the mystification of danger. Although racialization clearly takes shape along ethnic demarcations – the Arab vanishes completely, whereas Kurds, Turks

Above the “house rules” of the Arab mosque which is also an Islamic cultural and social center in Tübingen (IKB Tübingen), holds a warning notice (see above, bullet point no. 1) right next to the prayer room (see to the right), that only people who “respect the free democratic basic order of the German Republic” are allowed to enter, pray and mingle.
and Iranians are hyphenated Islamists— the VSB Bln paradoxically writes that there is no specific body, gender, ethnicity, or class that is classified or monitored\(^{195}\).

At the same time, the threat of the constitutional state’s erosion gets more ample attention. Usually, the forewords introduce the Islamist threat either within the frame of an erosion of rights or with the inability to monitor various aspects of the threat such as terrorist sleeper cells (VSB Bln 2005), the German Islamist terrorists in terror camps abroad (VSB Bln 2008), Sharia as a specific danger to and negation of the German constitution (VSB Bln 2003/2004), the suppression of woman/gender inequality (VSB Bln 2004), and the so-called “parallel societies” so famous in German discussions on “integration” (German: Parallelgesellschaften, VSB Bln 2004).

Körting, who headed the VSB Bln during that time, also wrote several times that no specific people should be stigmatized, but instead, that dialogue is important: “By far more important is the dialogue with the Muslims in our country; [and] their inclusion in the fight against terrorism.”\(^{196}\) In the moment of “dialogue” the dialectics of Othering take shape, negating the former statement that there is no ethnic Other that shall be addressed. The paradox of double-bind politics in race is that whatever one attempts to do or say on the receiving end as “the Other”, one’s “rights” are always at the whim of authority. Either you are here to confess as the specific ‘Muslim Other’, or else as the ‘negated Other’-cum-‘universal security threat’ (which is in fact the ‘Muslim Other’ in a different terminology). A symbolic strategic essentialism around any of the two dichotomous positions becomes thus a tragedy in the beginning, but an internalized farce in its post-colonial repetition.

Just recently, in January 2014, Sawsan Chebli, a Palestinian German from a refugee family, was appointed assistant speaker of the Foreign Ministry (AA). Before that, she was the consultant and speaker for inter-cultural issues (meaning “Muslim”) and dialogue for Körting, the former head of the VSB Bln who created her position in the wake of

\(^{195}\) VSB Bln 2007, p. III. (“... denn es gibt innerhalb der islamistischen Szene kein klares Gefährder Profil. Radikalisierung ist an keinen festen Ort und an keine Nationalität gebunden.” – English: “…because there is no clear-cut perpetrator profile within the Islamist scene. Radicalization is not tied to a specific place or nationality.”)

\(^{196}\) Erhart Körting, VSB Bln 2009, p. III.
September 11th. She will be – along with the above-mentioned changes in surveillance strategies – a ‘revolution’ for German foreign politics. Accordingly, the news that hit the ground on January 24th titled her as the “First Muslim in the [German] Foreign Ministry” (see BZ, n-tv, t-online.de, neuesdeutschland.com, irna.ir).

Four years before that, two telephone hotlines against terrorism were created, with two government institutions competing for it (the VS in 2010 and the BAMF in 2012); however, receiving both little to no resonance, for no terrorist has called to hand himself/herself over in advance.

As a “service provider for democracy”, the Verfassungsschutz Deutschland (VS Germany) has initiated this telephone hotline, called HATIF in Arabic as well as a homepage. Both are (also) online and working since July 2010. Turkish and Arabic are easily available at that hotline, in case somebody is in ‘Terrorist distress’.

DISAPPEARING ARABS AND HYPHENATED ISLAMISTS

All VSB reports between 2002 and 2009 seem to have defined ‘extremism’, but not why some groups and people could potentially belong to the ‘foreign national’, ‘right-wing extremism’, or even ‘left-wing extremism’, whereas others don’t feature. Extremism is here vaguely defined as in what it is not (negative definition), not in what it actually is (positive definition): “Political endeavors which agree to reject the democratic constitutional statehood and its fundamental values and rules.”(VSN Bln 2006: 162).

Summarizing the categorization, the years 2007 and 2008 have marked a definitional boundary for the 2008 report when the old “foreigner’s extremism” is replaced with 'Ideology

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197 David Ruhm titled „Palestinian woman named German Foreign Ministry Deputy spokes person“. In this article, the emphasis was on Palestinian, not Muslim. The article also mentions that „Chebli broke a long tradition in Germany’s Foreign Ministry, which for decades has only recruited professional diplomats with years of experience to its posts.” 01/25/2014, i24 news, online, i24news.tv/en/.

198 See for further reading The Jerusalem Post, Germany debuts ‘suicide bomber hotline’. Online retrievable at http://www.jpost.com/International/Germany-debuts-suicide-bomber-hotline

199 The definition of extremism is not a legal one. Meaning, it cannot be found in any legal text or even the basic constitution. Today’s meaning goes back to the scholars Eckhard Jesse and Uwe Backes (Jahrbuch Extremismus & Demokratie; since 1989). Their definition has been heavily criticized by amongst others Richard Stöss (1989) who claimed that it equalizes right-wing and left-wing extremism, whilst negating their historical roots.

200 This definition remained the same in all reports. To be found are this and other definitions under the first sub-chapter under ‘Background Information’ under ‘Ideologies’ in each report.
of Islamism' (IOI)\(^{201}\). In this new category where the “foreigner” literally became an “Islamist”, Arab organizations or people vanish into “Islamism” completely whereas Kurds, Iranians and Turks become hyphenated Islamists. Overall this is a process of an intensifying anti-Muslim racism that at least in security documents of the VSB takes the figure of the Arab to have become some “authentic” representation of Islam and thus, Islamism. The introduction of the Anti-Terror Data Set in 2007 might have had an additional impact in the shaping of such administrative decisions. Also the legal extension of the ‘Law for the Combat against Terrorism’ for five more years was implemented at this time.

In 2009, the European electorate voted overwhelmingly for neoconservative-liberal politics (Žižek, 2009: 34) after the economic crisis hit. Additionally, several European state officials from various political affiliations have thereafter declared that ‘multiculturalism’\(^ {202}\) was officially dead (Fekete, 2011). Racism reached a new level during this time, justified by notions of ‘cultural incompatibility’, supported by so-called ‘biological facts’, or reproduced in new racialized academic knowledge about ‘immigrant generations’. As a result, non-ethnic and non-white people living in Germany were put into academic categories of ‘the Nomad’, ‘the Laborer’, the ‘Uprooted’, ‘the Hybrid’, or ‘the Transmigrant’ (Silverstein, 2005) – or else, from the ‘Foreigner’ to the ‘Muslim’ in Germany (Spielhaus, 2006) as also shown in this essay.

**DEFINING EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM**

In 2008, the definition of ‘foreigner’ nationalist extremism’ vanishes completely into a category reserved for nationalist groups of non-white ethnic German background. According to the VSN 2002-2007, the definition for the latter was that a

nationalist foreigner's organization is hallmarked by and based on an ethnic, cultural and political-territorial difference resulting in the claim for superiority of the own nation, as well as, in negating the rights of other ethnicities.

This, however, could also be simply attested by definition of any nationalism, for “nationalism repudiates civility and the differences that it tolerates by attempting to eliminate

\(^{201}\) From 2002-2007, the subdivision of ‘Ideologies’ was 1) Definition of Extremism, 2) Ideology of Right-Wing Extremism (RWE), 3) Ideology of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), 4) Ideologies of Foreigner Extremists (FNE). The latter category vanishes from 2008 onward and instead, the category ‘Ideology of Islamism’ (IOI) is stepping into its place and ‘moves up’ to position 2) in the hierarchy of importance. The short overview of definitions of each phenomena of extremism/Islamism devotes a couple of pages to each phenomenon: In 2002, there are around 3 ¾ pages devoted to FNE (around 1 page for RWE, 2 pages to LWE); in 2003 and 2004 there are around 4 pages devoted to FNE (and around RWE with 1 page, and LWE with more than 2 pages); in 2005 and 2006, FNE is devoted more than 4 pages now (RWE features with 1 ¾ pages, LWE with around 3 pages); in 2007, the margin for FNE hits 4,5 pages (RWE is still with 1 ¼ pages, LWE is with 3 pages); 2008, as the year where FNE makes room for IOI with again 3 ¼ pages (RWE around 1 page, LWE has 3 pages); finally, in 2009, IOI is given 4 pages (RWE has 1 ¾ pages, LWE has around 2 pages).

\(^{202}\) The Guardian, “Angela Merkel: German multiculturalism has ‘utterly failed’”, 17 October 2010: “One recent poll showed one-third of Germans believed the country was "overrun by foreigners". It also found 55% of Germans believed that Arabs are "unpleasant people", compared with the 44% who held the opinion seven years ago. In her speech, Merkel said the education of unemployed Germans should take priority over recruiting workers from abroad, while noting that Germany could not get by without skilled foreign workers.” Last accessed 29th April 2011.

all differing views and interests for the sake of one vision of what the nation has been and should be.” (Crosby, 2005: 17). It remains thus questionable why nationalist tendencies are to be seen as more dangerous when coming from the ‘Other’ and why it disappeared as a category after all. White-ethnic German right-wing extremism (i.e. various German Neo-Nazi Movements), on the other hand, is defined as “overemphasizing ethnic belonging” only, which entails on the one hand their own ‘nation’ and ‘race’, as well as, that of the Other. The eliminationist logic and (historical) function race serves in conjunction with nation and a working military force are not mentioned. Anthropologist Nitzan Shoshan (2014) who researched Neo-Nazis in Berlin writes about this neoliberal logic (151) of managing a deviant right-wing population stigmatized as pathologically – and thus individual – delinquents with anti-social habits, rather than them being outcomes of many forms of racist (white) bodies in Germany. Moreover, for Shoshan it is also the reproduction of the Right-Wing Neo-Nazi figure in German society, along with all excesses and anxieties connected to it, which serves another purpose:

Such excesses […] betray not so much the follies of governance, but, more significantly, its inscription within cultural and historical aporias – such as the political memory of National Socialism in Germany – that belie biopolitical rationalities. The multiple procedures of governance that come to bear […] on Neo-Nazi bodies] labour to reveal the location of the right extremist Thing; to signify it the better to control it. But the sense of frustration that this relentless quest seems to generate suggests that the political delinquent maintains a certain externality to the legal and penal order of the Federal Republic, that something in it defies its signification and localization. (Shoshan, 2014: 152)

Furthermore, whereas various kinds of nationalist foreigner’s parties/movements are seen in the same manner, the nationalism-stigma amongst white Germans seems to be viewed as ‘overemphasizing’, an ‘over-reaction’ so to say. But an over-reaction to what? An analysis of white German youths gone right-wing is depicted in the VSB as ‘ideological

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204 Shoshan (2014: 158) describes a moment during his ethnographic research, where this societal attitude is mirrored in the attitude of the social worker trying to “re-integrate” a former Neo-Nazi back into society: “Gino [the young Neo-Nazi], for his part, explained he was ‘just having fun’ with his [Neo-Nazi] friends without thinking too much about it, which, he hurried to add, is what you do when you are young. But Tomasky [the social worker] judged this account as inadequate. Gino mentioned that, as a child, he had experienced domestic violence from several of his mother’s boyfriends. ‘I externalized the violence I had internalized at home’, he said. Still unsatisfied, Tomasky argued that most victims of domestic violence never became neo-Nazis. This went on for some time, until Gino appeared to remain entirely drained of ideas. Tomasky came to his aid, inquiring whether his right extremist sympathies could have emerged from frustration and despair, from the outlook of a life without prospects, form a sense that he was not in control of his future. Gino nodded indistinctly, neither confirming nor refuting – nor for that matter even indicating he had quite grasped – Tomasky’s hypothesis.”
insecure" people who are thus led astray by German Neo-Nazi nationalist groups. But it is not part of a norm within the German social fabric that gave rise to its extremes.

Putting it into a broader context, Butterwegge (2010) sets out to criticize the government’s decision to treat right-wing extremism as a phenomenon of the margins, whilst equalizing it with left-wing extremism in the same turn. With this in mind, it remains to be seen whether Hans Püschel, for instance, until recently a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), will appear in any VSB. Püschel went to a convention of the right-wing NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) – which he later joined – and decided in the beginning of November 2010 that there was “almost no sentence dropped [during the NPD convention], that he could not subscribe to himself.”

Puschel's party member, Thilo Sarrazin, also made famous racist statements, which were cumulated in a book called “Germany is doing away with itself” (2010) – the book sold more than 1.2 million copies. Sarrazin also became particularly famous for making discriminatory comments about the unemployed. Additionally, his comments about the positive contribution of Jews for Germany being based on their genes, or comments about Turks’ and Arabs’ lower intelligence based on their genes, caused turmoil in public German and European discourse. His verbal pyrotechnics also helped to coin the term “Kopftuchmädchen” (“Veiled-Gals”), referring amongst many things also to their ‘sole’ re-/productive role as Germany’s female Muslim population. Neither of the two political subjects was mentioned by the VSB.

That racism is observable amongst the right-wing might seem reasonable. What is troubling, however, is how closely today’s racism from the ‘established center’ of society and politics (see Püschel and Sarrazin) resonates with that of right-wing extremists. In this vein, the Internet homepage Politically Incorrect’s support of, for instance, Sarrazin’s arguments is a further indicator of a rising Anti-Muslim Racism – however, this time we are not talking about a SPD constituency, but clear-cut right-wing ideologists. ‘Politically Incorrect’ sides with American

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206 The NPD was founded in 1964 and its branch in Berlin in 1966. The NPD is seen to be xenophobic, racist and anti-semitic. Their racist leanings are reflected on their homepage from 01/11/2010, which is quoted saying: “It is obvious that violent tendencies, educational deficits and social parasitism of many Moslems is the direct consequence of their cultural-religious conditioning.” VSB Bln 2009, p. 179.

207 Frankfurter Rundschau, SPD-Bürgermeister tritt für die NPD an. 12/21/2010. See: http://www.fr-online.de/politik/spd-buergermeister-tritt-fuer-die-npd-an//1472596/5034048//index.html. Retrieved from the WWW on 12/31/2010. After having been ‘rebuked’ by his own party colleagues, he dropped out of the SPD and joined the NPD. He also claimed that the true threat to Germany’s Constitutional State does not come from the NPD, but from the mainstream parties in the ‘center’.

208 Thilo Sarrazin, Deutschland schafft sich ab – Wir wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Berlin, 2010. The numer of 1,2 million copies appeared in an article: Christoph Scheuermann, Negerprinzessin, Der Spiegel, No. 51, 12/20/2010, p. 71. In the second edition of the book, remarks about the biological inferiority of Turks and Arabs were taken out.

209 Politically Incorrect Homepage: http://www.pi-news.net/
and Israeli policies in the fight against Muslim terror: It propagates a world-view where the PI-constituency can imagine a ‘community of victimhood’ (Shooman, 2008: 72) while repeatedly in a sarcastic acrobatic split identifying themselves with Jews or Israel which is under ‘attack’. It is also worrisome that the homepage of ‘Political Incorrect’ had around 20 000 hits per day (Shooman, 2008: 69), as of 2008. In 2011, the number of hits increased to 45 - 75 000 per day. Today, in 2014, it is still between 70 and 80 000, with a maximum of more than 118,000 per day. In today’s political reality, this fantasized ‘Judeo-Christian-victimhood’ by a White German right-wing internet portal extends its features of rising Anti-Muslim racism also to the outside of Europe. The VSB Bavaria has been the only VSB in Germany (amongst 16 country VSBs) which included the local PI branch in Munich in its observations, since 2012. In their 2013 publication, they then however group it separately from “right-wing extremists” and instead invent a new category called “For the Protection of the Constitution relevant hostility to Islam” (2013: 139-140) while working together with the right-wing extremist political party “The Republicans” (REP). It is thus indeed questionable, why, after all these alliances are made transparent, Political Incorrect is not listed along with other right-wing extremists.

In December 2010, the right-wing mainstream and their political leaders from Germany, Belgium, Sweden and Austria went for visits with right-wing Jewish-Israeli representatives and settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, announcing their support against Muslim terrorism and barbarism. Strache, the famous leader of the right-wing Austrian party FPÖ, declared to the settlers in Haaretz, “Our hearts are with you” (2010). Furthermore, the VSB Bln writes “Anti-Semitism is very often narrated as and framed in a critique against

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210 www.pi-news.net (according to their own statistics on their homepage). Last checked on March, 2014.

211 German: “Verfassungsschutzrelevante Islamfeindlichkeit” (pp. 136 -141). Alternatively, the first group that in the index is “Islamism” (pp. 26-62), then “Foreigner’s Extremism” (pp. 64-74), then “Right-Wing Extremism” (76-133). Then eventually follows “Left-Wing Extremism” (pp. 142-174), followed by “Scientology Organization” (pp. 178-186) and finally “Counter-intelligence, Protection of the Economy, Center for Cyber-Allicance” (pp. 188-198) and “Organized Crime” (pp. 200-208).

212 Migazin, online “Sinneswandel Bayerischer Verfassungsschutz beobachtet Politically Incorrect” (eb), 15.04.2013: www.migazin.de/2013/04/15/politically-incorrect-pi-verfassungsschutz-bayern-islamfeindlichkeit/

213 Lorenz Jäger, Reise nach Jerusalem, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung online, 12/13/2010: http://www.faz.net/s/RubCF3AE404BC64960822FA5429A182360/Doc~EB870215AD7EF4EB6AE5349 C2E54D032A~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html, Also see: Adar Primor, The unholy alliance between Israel’s Right and Europe’s anti-Semites, Haaretz online, 12/12/2010: http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/the-unholy-alliance-between-israel-s-right-and-europe-s-anti-semites-1.330132 (both articles retrieved from the WWW on 01/01/2010). The unholy alliance was composed of Heinz Christian Strache (FPÖ, Austria), Filipp Dewinter (Vlaams Belang, Belgium), René Stadtkewitz (former CDU, now co-founder in 2010 in Berlin of the new racist party „Die Freiheit – Bürgerrechtspartei für mehr Freiheit und Demokratie“, Germany), and Kent Ekeroth (Schwedens Democrats and member of the Committee on European Union Affairs, Sweden).
Zionism.” (VSB Bln 2009, 170). One of the striking characterizations of labeling somebody with a foreign background extreme or Islamist seems to be the person’s stance toward Israel. In fact, anti-semitism is often used as a means to judge integration possibilities and willingness in the immigrant population. (Wolter, Yilmaz-Gunay, 2013; Ozyurek, 2012).

ISLAMIST TERRORISM, ISRAEL AND ‘US’

In this section, I want to focus on the depiction of the political Palestinian organization Hamas. Hamas (along with Hizb’allah) is from 2008 onward subsumed in the reports as ‘regional violent Islamists’ (Middle East) with branches in Germany, and it is used to narrate the logic of an anti-Semitism among the “Muslim population” in Germany in the archive of the VSB Bln.

I do not intend to totally dismiss any violent demeanor of this party that emerged under occupation and violence. Instead, I claim that the VSB Bln, by describing their solely ‘religious’ or later on ‘Islamist ideology’, actually does not talk about Hamas or its contextual historical entirety, simply because it does not serve its purpose. Last but not least, whether it is accepted normatively in Germany or not, Hamas emerged primarily resisting Israeli occupation and authority. Again, this does not mean that Hamas has to be or even can be fully explained from the 80s onwards in just a few pages. However, leaving out context and history with such a crisis-stricken topic serves to essentialize groups of people one talks about as static, without history and in this case as anti-democratic, anti-Western, and anti-Semitic.

The VSB Bln, for example, talks about the terror attacks of Hamas without any mention of Israeli actions. Additionally, the marking of ‘the most important’ features is debatable. In almost all reports Hamas is, roughly speaking, narrated in the following sequence: it starts with its origins from the Muslim Brotherhood (no mentioning of the first Intifada, Israeli support of Hamas in the beginning, or the Israeli military occupation), then the historical picture moves on to Hamas’ refusal of the peace accords, because they saw it as a mere ‘sell out of Palestinian interests’ (also no mentioning of Israel’s prime minister

\[\text{\footnotesize 214 VSB Bln 2009, p. 170, on the newly called ‘legal Islamists’ Millî Görû}.\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 215 This is written within quotation marks in all reports. Looking at the facts, the Oslo Accord were basically the legal signing of giving full administrative, logistical and judicial control over Palestinian soil to the Israeli state. Today, it is debatable whether that is not the reality today, even without the success of the Oslo Accords: Taking into account that Israel ever since legally and militarily controls air, see, water, borders, export, import, and territories B and C with its populations. In case of a ‘security threat’ Israel is also legally allowed to intrude everywhere and take out the ‘threat’ itself, as was the case in the conquest of the Palestinian Parliament after}\]
Rabin’s murder by a right-wing Israeli settler), whilst portraying Fatah as the Palestinian party which is not only ‘laical’ (secular)\(^\text{216}\) in their view, but also the supporter of peace with Israel. The Islamist and racial Palestinian Other thus exists without any relationality, solely in his own ostensible deviant behavior, and thus, in the case of Hamas, is worth of exclusion and social and political precarity (Butler, 2004) due to its ‘unreasonable’ violence.

Furthermore, in 1994 suicide-attacks started (no mentioning of 20 praying Palestinians killed in a mosque in Hebron by the settler Baruch Goldstein that started the spiral of violence), and after Hamas’ ‘surprising’ (for whom?) electoral win, ‘Islamism’ it is said replaced ‘Nationalism’. Then a paragraph is devoted to the martyr attacks including the sentence “The erection of the border fence complicated […] terrorist advances, \(\text{which}\) Hamas justifies until today as the ‘right to self-defense’.”\(^\text{217}\)

It then moves on to claim that the ‘fence’ stopped the attacks. It usually closes with a reference to Hamas back in Berlin, referencing either the Al-Aqsa association and the previously-discussed trial, or else Berlin’s ‘Islamic Cultural and Educational Center’ as a hub for Hamas members. The entire depiction in such a short overview easily suits an ‘overall picture’ that is given in mainstream German media and discourse, as well. However, the use of the term ‘border fence’ is still more than interesting, since it clearly betrays the VSB’s political vision and stance. Such a word would definitely not be used from a Palestinian perspective on the ground – not only because the depiction of an eight-meter high concrete wall as a ‘fence’ is – to say the least – offensive. The terminology also only works when having impaired vision after one has awoken from colonial hangover. Furthermore, also in an Israeli jargon this word is new. In mainstream Israeli vernacular and political language the word ‘Separation Fence’\(^\text{218}\) is used – wall is usually avoided in mainstream Israeli discourse. The german VSB’s use of the word ‘fence’ indicates a certain ideology and side that is taken namely Israel’s interpretation – after all, the term “wall” might also elicit stronger reactions.

Furthermore, Hamas’ (and Hizb’allah’s) rejection of the ‘right of Israel to exist’ is mentioned in every report as well (also, Anti-Zionist critique with regard to other organizations) and serves as the clearest indicator for their radicalism. That the attack on the claim of Israel to exist is connected to an anti-colonial narrative of most Palestinians (and those allying with them) is not taken into account. Instead, for German administration and policies ‘Israel’s Right to Exist’ is perceived as an indisputable fact that ought not to be

\(^\text{216}\) Fatah as the ‘laical’ party has been maintained throughout all reports as well. Where this definition actually comes from, is not indicated, nor the VSB Bln definition of ‘laical’, here, meaning, as I assume, ‘secular’. Taking into account that the VSB Bln works closely with scholars of the Middle East and Islam (2002, p. 1), it is even more interesting that such experts have missed the fact that a pure ‘laical’ party or state does barely exist anywhere in the Middle East (Israel included). The importance of religious law given in personal status law prevails in all countries (Israel included), except in Tunisia and Marocco (since 2005), and since 2013 for Libya.


\(^\text{218}\) the Separation Fence - מר ההפקרות (Gader Ha-Hafrada, Hebrew)
discussed. The fear of an ostensible anti-Semitism then becomes manifest policy and a means to judge integration possibilities in 2006: a new citizenship test in the German province of Hessen demanded applicants to “Explain the notion of the unconditional right of Israel to exist” with one possible proper answer being: “It means that people living in the state of Israel can live without fear, terror or violence in their internationally acknowledged borders.”

Today, with the new transnational Islamist threat going around in Europe and the world, the Israeli-Palestinian struggle is more often than not depicted as a ‘religious war’ (Judaism vs. Islam) of two ‘opposing cultures’ (the modern West vs. the pre-modern East). That Palestinians have no real right to oppose Israeli occupation (again, the word ‘occupation’ wasn’t mentioned in the reports at all) is mirrored in the fact that the right to self-defense is in all reports put under quotation marks. The figure of the Palestinian also enables the stereotyping of the “bad Muslim” transnationally: from the Middle East conflict to Berlin. It gives rise to a transnational production of a violent Islamic ideologist who fights Western notions of freedom, democracy and nationhood in the name of Allah. Finally, the failure to mention the role played by Israel in each crisis shows that its entity and agency have become part-and-parcel of the ‘majority consensus’ in Germany – at least from the perspective of German authorities and policies.

The production of the violent Islamic ideologist serves in that instance the construction of an Islamist threat that is deeply anchored in a European and White racist anxiety of the Other. We have seen that a certain German and European discourse moving from the right-wing margins to the center have been using the same ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ polarities when it comes to an Islamic threat. An imagined endangered Western ethical constitutionalism, repressed head-scarved women, the internal ‘sleeper’ directed by outside forces, and ‘our’ menaced liberty. Furthermore, I claim that the features of that anxiety, also vividly depicted in the VSB Bln are fueled by the ideas of a threat that a) transcends borders and peoples, b) is not controllable anymore, c) aims at destroying a fantasized ‘Western body and ethics’ and is more and more connected to ‘religion’.

Furthermore, what happens with the focus on the aggressor, as a psychological deviant from the dominant group, is that it disavows the dominating structure that made the ‘deviant behavior’ possible in the first place. In the case of the VSB Bln reports it is clear that any type of Israeli aggression is not mentioned even once. Even the word ‘Occupation’ does not feature. Instead, the Occupied West Bank and Gaza are referred to as ‘Territories of the Palestinian Authority’ or ‘Hamas’ respectively. Historical structural power differences are silenced. It is only through the negation of such historical power structures that the naming or marking of ‘Islamism’, ‘terror’ and ‘terrorizing’ becomes possible.

Eventually, the ‘white gaze’ comes back to itself by reversing processes of ‘victimization’. Interestingly, similar processes are at work amongst the radical Right-Wing and their imagined ‘Judeo-Christian Victimhood’ along with the more mainstream ‘Western Victimhood’ at work in the VSB Bln. After having successfully explained Hamas’ extremism and terror vis-à-vis Israel, the reports finish with an account of alleged Hamas centers in

219 The original questions are accessible on an official homepage: http://www.deutsch-werden.de/100-fragen-hessen. Possible answers for passing a test are summarized online here, for candidates who want to practice in order to succeed (accessed last on 23rd April 2014): http://de.wikibooks.org/wiki/Lehrbuech_Einb%C3%Bcrgerungstest_Hessen/_100_Fragen_und_100_hoffentlich_ausreichende_Antworten
Germany. The outside front has moved onto German soil; ‘Islamists’ are now also amongst ‘us’, threatening the state’s borders, legitimacy and values.

CONCLUSION

This article has analyzed the construction of the ‘figure of the Muslim’ within the VSB Bln in the context of a rising anti-Muslim racism in German society and transnationally. It has been shown that the discursive practices of ‘marking’ the Other from ‘ethnic Arab’ to ‘religious Islamist’ was clearly visible within the yearly reports from 2002-2009. Moreover, the VSB has picked up, furthered, and contributed to the same discourse that has been characterizing public and political debates in Germany and beyond over the same period of time. The ‘threat’ to Western values is usually narrated with reference to law and to democracy, to women and to homosexuals, and, since 2000, also with reference to an ostensibly anti-Semitism by the figurative Muslim.

Originally, this research started out to ‘read’ the figure of the Palestinian, only to find that the ‘Arab’ generally disappeared into ‘Islamism’. What is also striking is the equalizing narration of right- and left-wing ‘extremism’, as well as the continuous downplay of right-wing movements both in emphasis and in the number of pages devoted to their activities -- both of the latter aspects however are given due attention in German left-wing activism and critical scholarship. Additionally, it was the tightening and rejuvenation of national and international intelligence services and policies, which were not only democratically put in place, but also are repeatedly prolonged democratically. In this post-colonial era of tightening securitization processes and the attempt at reformulating borders to the outside and inside, racialization seems to be an easy, if not even primary, principle in providing narratives for policies enabling such re-ordering of society. Yet, it doesn’t stop at race. Although this essay focused on race and racialization, it also became clear that policies and laws were breached with the narrative of “race”, but then eventually extended to other potential threats to society (here, left-wing and right-wing ‘extremism’ are the two prominent examples).

Menaced German borders and legal groundings are imagined as being under attack by an ‘external Islamist front’ (the Arab Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran, i.e.) that has dissolved into the white paranoid fantasy of an “Islamist” omnipresence. Furthermore, the ‘Islamization’ of the Arab has a dimension of de-humanizing the other, which seems to be put into practice in combat against ‘Islamic Terror’ by the ‘Coalition of the Willing’ today in several places including Guantanamo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and last but not least, Palestine. The murder of Marwa el-Sherbini in a German court whilst giving testimony during trial, reminds us of these dehumanizing trends. The woman had sued her racist attacker only to be stabbed dead by him in front of the judge. After the murderer220 testified his justifications for calling her a ‘terrorist’ and ‘Islamist bitch’ on the streets for wearing a hijab, he killed the pregnant woman and also stabbed, though not lethally, her husband. The court recorded that “he differentiates humans based on their race.” According to these documents he also said: “‘Since September 11th, such monsters have no right to live in Germany’.” (Attia and Shooman, 2010: 28)

220 It is nevertheless important to mention when talking about the racialization of migrants, transnational security processes and the transnationalization of Whiteness, that the perpetrator also had a (white) migration background from Russia.
German whiteness in the VSB Bln reports is characterized by projecting its own racial schizophrenia onto the Figure of the Muslim whilst phantasmatically taking up the victim position via the Figure of the Jew. At the end of that sarcastic acrobatic loop stands a racial double-bind: Either you are here to confess as the specific Muslim Other, or else you are deemed a universal security threat. A symbolic strategic essentialism around any of the two dichotomous positions becomes a tragedy for those trying to combat such negative stereotyping in the beginning, but ends up as a farce due to its (post-colonial) repetition.

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1 The title is an homage to Elias Suleiman’s film „A Chronicle of A Disappearance“, 1996.
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The Socio-political Context of Islamophobic Prejudices

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INTRODUCTION

When discussing minorities in the social sciences, we want to signify that a given population lacks decisive influence on the power structures in place – whether political (parliamentary majority, repressive forces), symbolic (medias), or economic (capital, jobs reserved to the native-born) – that they lack the influence required to end the ostracism of which they are the victim. The term ‘minority’ in sociology has no demographic meaning, i.e., of not being numerous in a society. The white minority in South Africa illustrates this point. Although small in number, it possessed between 1948 and 1994 the political, economic and symbolic powers.

In the past decade, some mentalities in Western societies have represented Muslims as populations whose behavior and customs are abnormal, deplorable, archaic, irrational, and even vicious. The representations of entire populations as cultural “aberrations” that develop bizarre, immoral, archaic, barbaric lifestyles, is common in modern Western history. Discourses on the superiority of the White civilization over other civilizations – of Anglo-Saxon over Southern European cultures, or again, of the national culture of the native-born, the so-called “old-stock” (as in the French expression “québécois de souche”) over the cultures of immigrants – have had deadly repercussions on countless Native Americans and Africans, many thousands of Chinese and Indians, and more recently, during the Second World War, on millions of Jews and thousands of Gypsies and homosexuals. Such racist ideologies have remained powerful and unchecked up until the 20th century, given the near-impossibility for its victims to organize collectively and to contest the ostracism or overt repression which they endured, and given the absence of public debates on these matters. Besides, the notion of “public opinion” is recent in history, and appears with the diffusion of written media in the 19th century. The rare defenders of minorities at that time were English abolitionists who mobilized both in the name of human equality and of the protestant ideology of Christian charity. They were also the defenders of national minorities in Central Europe in the name of democracy and cultural specificity.

MINORITIES’ RIGHTS AFTER 1945

There is a debate on the definition of the Haitian Revolution as the first contestation of European supremacy, given the demands of equal rights regardless of race which have been put forward, along with the prise of power by non-whites.
The status of non-right of cultural minorities changed at the end of the Second World War as a result of two events:

The reaffirmation of the liberal ideology after 1945. The legal protection of cultural, ethnic or national minorities had been a subject of international negotiations between the years 1918 and 1922, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and of Austria-Hungary, two empires that contained numerous ostracised minorities. The question was settled through treaties – ordering, for instance, the displacement of populations to ensure their protection. Such was the case with the displacement of more than two hundred thousand Pontic Greeks (North of Turkey) to Greece. But the abuses of the Nazi regime and of Italian, Spanish, French and other instances of fascism have been genuinely traumatic for the ideologues of political liberalism: how could a liberal democracy founded on the equality of individual rights, the respect of fundamental liberties, and the belief in the progress of humanity bring about such authoritarian (fascism) and deadly (holocaust and assassination of minorities by the Nazi regime) phenomena? What is more, the Cold War, i.e. the ideological and geo-political conflict that began in the 1950s between the two Post-War powers, demanded a reaffirmation of the basic principles of political liberalism.

The supporters of political liberalism established the rights of national, ethnic and racial minorities, just as they established the rights of political exiles by means of the Geneva Convention in 1951. International dispositions that oppose discrimination against minorities were adopted: the Charter of the United Nations of 1945 (art. 1 and 55); the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (art. 2); the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 2), the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Often, these documents, along with others, also created cultural rights for the members of minorities.

Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concluded in 1966 but approved by the UN in 1991, is considered the most effective. It grants the right both to preserve one’s cultural life and to use one’s language: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.” This article

222 Victims of genocide by the Nazis: 6 million Jews, 200,000 or more Gypsies, thousands of political opponents and homosexuals.

223 Non-discriminatory clauses are also presented in other documents: the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of the ILO, No. 111 (art. 1, 1958); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (art. 1, 1965); the UNESCO Convention (art. 1, against discrimination in teaching, 1960); the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (art. 1, 2, 3, 1978); the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (art. 2, 1981); the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the American Convention on Human Rights (Organisation of American States); the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Organisation of African Unity).

applies even if the State has not officially recognized the presence of such minorities on its territory. As for the States that have ratified the Covenant, they may introduce specific measures to end the inequalities of which minorities are the victim.

The resistance of minorities: The second evolution which changed the status of cultural minorities after 1945 is the rise in the demands of minorities that refused to be dominated on the basis of a so-called cultural difference. From the 1950s and 1960s, these demands are forcefully affirmed in North America, and from the 1980s in Europe (March of the Beurs, 1983).

By the end of the 1950s, Black Americans, bolstered by their participation in the war, organized and took up the demands for equal civil and economic rights that had been initiated with regard to their access to lodging in the 1940s. The struggle was violent, notably in the Southern States, and the governments of Kennedy and Johnson had resort to the army to ensure the respect of the Black’s civil and voting rights. In addition, they introduce legislations which would change their condition: desegregation of schools, obligation for a State to inform federal instances of any modification of an electoral county’s territory, and social mobility through programs of affirmative action (positive discrimination). The same struggles spread to Canada during the 1960s with Native American, Quebecer and Ukrainian contestations. These struggles, as the public interventions that dealt with them, have rendered impossible the negative use of terms such as ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ in North American State politics.

The issues of minorities’ struggles and the state’s solutions

Of the three issues at stake, the most explicit is economic. It should be noted that the economic dynamics of the time are not unrelated to the recognition of the rights of minorities. The North-American continent is mutating industrially and expanding economically. It necessitates an expansion of the interior market and of labor force, both qualified and unqualified. Part of this new labor force will be national, while another part will have to come from the so-called Third World, given that by the 1960s Europe no longer constitutes a significant source of immigration. All quotas by race or region of the world will be eliminated from immigration policies in the United States in 1965, and in Canada in 1967.

In Europe, the dynamics are similar but different: Post-War reconstruction requires an abundant non-qualified labor force that will largely come from old colonies. The civil and social rights of immigrants will be recognized during the 1970s, but no European country will implement policies that fight discrimination and defend equal rights for cultural minorities as in the case of North America, given that their interior cultural minorities do not constitute an economic issue or asset, unlike the ‘Black’ feminine labor force in the United States, or again, the Franco-Canadian labor force in Canada.

The second issue is of a socio-political order. The contestations of minorities aim for the reduction, on the part of the State, of the power granted to the cultural majorities that oppress them. The struggle thus concerns access to the State and its intervention on their behalf.

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225 Set in motion in part by the Socialist Party for its own interests, not supported by the Communist Party – that great defender of universalism in the abstract – this mobilization of immigrants and of their descendants, largely of Maghreb origin, had little impact and future. It was comprised of a militant current which demanded the simple social recognition of immigrants, and others which were more radical in their demand for equality.
The term ‘cultural majority’ designates views – some would say values – which are shared by a sufficiently large proportion of individuals in a society\textsuperscript{226} so that their behaviour can impact those who cultivate other values. Such views may be expressed through a passion for sports, such as football (soccer), modes of consumption, religious beliefs, and also through an aversion for certain peoples, accompanied by negative and discriminatory types of behaviour.

The modes by which the State intervenes to counter discrimination against cultural minorities have taken three forms since their invention during the 1970s. Canada remains the State which has developed, on this matter, the most advanced policy compared to the countries of Continental Europe. In 1971, Canada designed a Multiculturalism Program which was to become, in successive steps, a multiculturalist policy, i.e. a policy addressed to all Canadians, promoting the cultural plurality of the civil society and endeavouring to end all form of cultural discrimination (based on race, ethnicity, religion, language, physical appearance, sexual orientation). This policy has three principal finalities and modes of intervention:

a. Education of the cultural majorities so as to reduce their non-reflexivity and their discrimination of cultural minorities. Here, the task of the State and its agencies is to delegitimize any current of opinion which would advance, for instance, that the political life, the redistribution of, and access to, employment in the public sector, social recognition, or modes of behavior in the civil society, must serve the values and interests of the ‘nation’s native-born’ (as in the case of debates on Muslim attire, Christmas decorations, holidays, access to citizenship, unemployment indemnities, distinction between national cultural and particular religious heritage, etc.) This education takes the form of a discourse on the part of political authorities which promotes cultural plurality and of interventions and pressures on the medias, large businesses and artistic communities; it also takes the form of training programs for employees in the public sector, and above all of those who are in contact with its clientele: teachers, medical personnel, judges, police officers.

b. Anti-discriminatory and legal measures so as to punish the infringement of equal rights in access to lodging, employment, and education, as well as all racist, ethnicist, misogynistic, homophobic or heinous public discourse towards a member or members of cultural minorities.

c. Measures aimed at opening channels of social mobility to members of minorities that are victim of discrimination (affirmative action/positive discrimination in favor of visible minorities, of women) and at facilitating cultural adaptation, access to the job market, to public programs (financial aid to the community sector), access to rights (legal education, particularly of women).

A third issue, which is intellectual and lesser known, is ideological. It has been central to the evolution of the social sciences and humanities over the past thirty years. During the 1980s and 1990s, demands for equality on the part of American Blacks and of North-American feminist movements have generated a large-scale debate in political philosophy on

\textsuperscript{226} 30\% could be a sufficient proportion for impressing an orientation to ways of acting within a civil society. All depends on the political power and/or influence on the media of the concerned cultural majority.
the status of cultural difference in a modern democracy, and on the effectiveness of the formal right to equality. Radical critiques of the tenets of classical Anglo-Saxon liberalism\textsuperscript{227} have been formulated and have undermined the legitimacy of positions – such as the official French stance – which reject programs of affirmative action (positive discrimination) on the basis of race or ethnicity. However, if this academic debate seemed to have come to a close by the early 2000s, it has regained momentum with the rise of racist and xenophobic movements – such as the \textit{Tea Party} in the United States, the Parti Québécois and its Charter of Quebec Values in Canada, as well as Extreme Right parties with growing influence all over Europe.

Another aspect of this ideological issue is intellectual and concerns the history of ideas. The socio-cultural transformation which was induced by the protests of minorities has given rise to so-called Post-Colonial Studies which seek to reconstruct and understand the identities, mobilizations and itineraries of individuals and other dominated social categories, of subordinates (Gayatri C. Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Edward W. Said) who do not conform to the norm (most often white, Christian, masculine, heterosexual, with little mobility) of dominant cultural majorities.

\textbf{THE REACTION OF THE MAJORITIES: RESISTANCES TO CULTURAL PLURALISM AND LOSS OF SOCIAL STATUS}

The demands of minorities challenge the benefits which certain social categories draw from discrimination. These are for instance employers who resort massively to the work force of minority groups (immigrants, Chicanos, Blacks with little qualifications). These are also salaried employees in sectors where jobs are highly-protected through unions and historically held by the nation-born (public sector, non-university teaching positions, the so-called ‘regalian’ professions in France: funeral parlors, tobacco shops, etc.). Moreover, State measures aimed at reducing discrimination, such as programs of \textit{affirmative action}, generate socio-occupational mobility in educated segments of immigrant, racial, feminine minorities.

Just as important for the political struggle, the demands of minorities challenge, if not diminish, the political and symbolic rights/privileges of cultural ‘majorities’. They jeopardize the collective identifications, modes of thinking and lifestyles of the cultural majorities against which they struggle. Blacks condemn racism (of the racist white majority), women struggle against the supremacy of men, both professionally and politically (misogynist majority), Native Americans against the dispossession through violence of their territory (so-called civilized majority versus so-called archaic cultures), Muslims against secularism and the depreciation of religion and belief in the name of progress (atheist majority, which is yet to be demonstrated), homosexuals against sexual roles.

This socio-cultural change takes place just as the social categories which are most targeted by protesting minorities, i.e. the middle classes they seek to integrate and which are still predominantly white, undergo socio-economic and cultural devaluation that has been

\textsuperscript{227}The terms \textit{Liberal} and \textit{Liberalism} as employed here in no way refer to a theory of the minimal role of the State in the economic and social spheres, nor do they convey the notion of economic neo-liberalism. They are used in their theoretical and historical sense, which is in fact more Anglo-Saxon than Franco-French. Historically, this sense has existed in France, although the philosophy of Classical Liberalism has been almost entirely supplanted by the Republican doctrine (Jaume, 1997) or transformed by it, so that it lost its original meaning.
accelerating since the 1980s.\footnote{228} These middle classes are partly the victims of the effects of economic globalization, which erodes the rights and social statuses that had been established in the Welfare National States. They experience or apprehend the increased mobility of the work force, the delocalization of productions, the change in the structure of occupations, a decline in social mobility for themselves and their descendants, a decrease in buying power, unemployment, and physical insecurity. The threat of loss, or loss of economic status, and of identity referents combine together for social categories that are not main actors of globalization and that often reproduce lifestyles and modes of thinking from the 1960s and 1970s.

On a social scale, the issue of minority struggles becomes an ideological and political struggle between the advocates and actors of cosmopolitanism and globalization, and the advocates and actors of the protection of borders and of the Nation and the post-war Welfare State.

Some authors also insist on linking the rise in xenophobia, religious intolerance and racism with the growing risks, perceived or experienced by individuals, as well as with the State’s discourses on insecurity (urban criminality, terrorism) and threats (natural and technological disasters, epidemics) (Beck, 1999a,b; 1992a,b). Such discourses would induce a culture of fear\footnote{229} and establish a link between danger and externality, danger and difference, danger and otherness (stranger, migrant, anyone different from oneself) (Perry & Poynting, 2006; Morgan & Poynting, 2012).

Starting in the 1980s, and more forcefully since the 2000s, social categories that consider themselves dispossessed due to the protests of minorities and the protection which the State grants them will resist and join anti-State, anti-elitist and xenophobic populist movements, in an attempt to bring about a shift in public policies towards what they regard as their own interests,\footnote{230} i.e., preserving their rights and identity.

**OTHER TARGETS: WHY MUSLIMS?**

\footnote{228} To give a simple yet striking example of the rise in social inequalities, according to a report by Caritas from October 2013, 6% of the population of Spain lived on 307 Euros per month in 2012, which is twice as much as in 2008. The number of millionaires had increased by 12% in 2011. *The Guardian Weekly*, October 18th, p. 13. **Wealth Gap in Spain is EU’s Biggest.**

\footnote{229} Of which a new slogan describes the current facets in the United States: *God, Gays and Guns.*

\footnote{230} The open discourse of the Republican Party since the 1970s has been to reduce the size of the State and of social entitlements. Two factors intervene. Its electoral base wants to maintain its economic and cultural status; the financial sector estimates that the return on capital has decreased too much since the 1970s and that the cost of the State has become too high. This electoral base has demanded and obtained the opening of borders for the exportation of capital in countries where the salaries and production costs are lower, as well as the abolition of the separation between the investment activities and commerce of banks (Clinton, 1998). It has also created false financial products, encouraging poorer social categories to get into debt and creating bubbles and financial crises. Nonetheless, a new phenomenon in the past four to five years has been the harshness by which a fraction of the Republican Party, such as the Tea Party, has applied this program and reaffirmed its identity referents (family, Christianity, contempt for the poor, morality, exclusion of all kinds of deviants including homosexuals). It is noteworthy that the more this current destroys the State, the more the pro-Democrat coalition of the poor, the middle-class struggling with backward social mobility, wealthy liberal elites, Blacks, Chicanos, immigrants, non-whites and cultural deviants, is reinforced. The history of the Parti Québécois’ cultural shift is similar. From a defender of the interests of the middle class and of ascending francophone elites that muzzled the nativist, racist and xenophobic fringe of the party, it now has for its main base the voices of cultural Catholics alarmed by their loss of status and power in society.
Racism, white supremacism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and the mistreatment of undocumented immigrants are various forms of this reaction. In Europe, illegal immigrants coming from the South border were the ones particularly discriminated against by xenophobic and racist movements during the 1990s. Currently, the Roms are targeted. In the United States, Blacks and Chicanos remain minorities which are discriminated against by middle classes and White elites that are forcefully opposed to two reforms of federal programs, the first of which is already accomplished, and the second, currently under debate.

ObamaCare (Affordable Care Act) is a State program which obligates every resident to hold health insurance and subsidizes those persons who do not have the financial means to afford such insurance. It concerns approximately 45 million Americans, many of whom are disadvantaged Blacks and Chicanos, but also rural Whites and/or impoverished elderly people. The other case, under debate for the past ten years, is the Immigration Law reform and the regularization of nearly 12 million illegals, mainly Chicanos, who provide cheap labor. The two programs grant new rights to minorities: health protection and right of abode.

Another significant offensive is that of the Supreme Court against the rights of racial minorities, such as the possibility since 2012 – following the abolition of a right acquired during the 1960s – of modifying the borders of an electoral county in the Southern States without having to notify a court of justice. We are also waiting to see if the Supreme Court will accept to hear cases that challenge the law voted by Congress which defines marriage as a union between persons of different sexes (Defence of Marriage Act, 1996). Finally, two recent laws concerning the school curriculum illustrate in other ways the current form of rejection of minorities and foreigners. The first, voted in 2010 in Arizona, prohibits references to the history of ethnic minorities, and the second, voted in April 2012 in Texas, prohibits references to ‘ethnic groups’, race and gender.

It is in this historical context of attempts at containing the loss of rights by social categories declassed by economic globalization and cultural change that animosity towards Muslims surges. Islamophobia is only one of the modes of ethnocentrism in those social categories which, observing the decline of their influence, consider themselves the victims of undergoing changes, or of intellectual and political elites.

Muslims are one of their preferred targets for a number of reasons:

a. Their demographic importance within European populations of foreign origin, where xenophobia is on the rise since the 1990s.
b. Their low capacity for organization and community mobilization, given their recent installation in Western societies, the absence of centralized, hierarchical religious organization, the multiple ethnic, linguistic, religious, national and political rifts that divide them, just as they divide the Muslim world.

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231 We should remember that 80% of Gypsies in Germany, or more than 200,000 persons, were exterminated in Nazi camps, and 100% of those established in Croatia. France detained Gypsies but did not hand them over to the Nazis. Germany refused to recognize the genocide of Gypsies until 1979 (Delpha, 2013, 11).

232 In Texas, where the rejection of Obamacare is the strongest in the United States, 10% of Whites do not hold insurance, as opposed to 40% of Blacks and Chicanos. Corine Lesnes, 2013. “Texans à votre santé!” Le Monde, October 21rst.
c. The fear of political Islamism, which becomes visible in the West with the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

d. The end of the repressive control of internal tensions in regions and countries that depended on the URSS until its fall in 1989, very often Muslim countries (Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan) where Islamist contestation, whether terrorist or not, had been on the rise since the 1970.

e. Finally, Western interest for the energy resources of the Middle East. This issue is evolving, given the United States’ capacity for self-sufficiency expected for 2020, so that the Middle Eastern oil market is coveted only as a supply source of European and Asian economies, primarily China.

**ISLAM AND THE QUESTIONING OF MODERN BELIEFS**

Evidence indicates that Islamophobia is fostered by a cultural change which is more fundamental than the struggle of minorities for their access to equal rights and the recognition of their difference. The significant presence, at least visible, of Islam on Western soil, and especially the demands of many of its adherents with regard to their freedom of religion, challenges Western secular paradigms. Islam is thus merely the symbolic vector of the questioning of the profound convictions of large segments of Western societies, whether Right Wing or Left Wing.

Beyond the right of (post-colonial) minorities, to demand the social recognition of their cultural specificity, the point of contention is the questioning of the status of religion and, through it, of rationality in contemporary societies. Strong currents of opinion have presumed that belief and religious practices no longer had any political or cultural impact in societies said to be modern, advanced and developed. Demands on the part of non-Christian (Sikh, Jewish, and especially Muslim) or Christian (Evangelical, fundamentalist Catholic) religious minorities for the respect of their values and practices openly question popular paradigms of the past two centuries.

1. *The paradigm of rationality.* The first paradigm is one that regards religion as an intellectual archaism that cannot subsist in a ‘modern’ society led by rationality and its most obvious manifestation; namely, social, scientific and technological progress.

The notion that religiosity is an archaic cultural trait is perfectly embodied in some segments of Muslim populations which profess a fundamentalist – literal as they put it – interpretation of sacred texts, whether in terms of its modes of social sanctions (physical mutilation), its scrupulous forms of piety, the inferior status of women, as well as the refusal of scientific discoveries and of intercultural contacts.

Nevertheless, to assimilate such Muslim obscurantism to ‘Islam’ is itself another form of obscurantism, since it is a fact that the majority of Muslims are not fundamentalists, as numerous studies conducted by the PEW Centre in the Muslim world as in North America have shown. In Canada, it is the least pious immigrants, unlike Asian immigrants in the 1990s, who display the strongest affiliation and religious practice (Indians, Chinese, Koreans). Such Islamophobic obscurantism also ignores that it is no longer possible to

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[233] 50% of immigrants in the 1990s affirm that they regularly frequent a place of cult, compared to 20% of immigrants of European origin, 40% of Arab immigrants, regardless of the period of arrival, and 31% of
define modernity as a sure path to the emancipation and affirmation of rationality (Gray, 2012; Sen, 2003). The debate on the flaws of this thesis began at the end of the 19th century and was continued after the First World War, and then after the Holocaust. Let us also bear in mind the contradictions of modernity, which brought about Human Rights along with policies for indigenous peoples, the Democratic contract along with colonialism, of citizen and non-citizen (women, the colonized, the salaried poor).

Rationality is not the exercise of an intellectual logic which aims to define and affirm opinions, choices and interests. It is in no way the fundamental trait of the human psyche and of the social sphere and is not always sufficient for conflict resolution among humans, nor to define a so-called common good. Rationality is the apprenticeship and exercise of detachment from such convictions and of doubt, which in turn leave room for both difference and disagreement.

2. The paradigm of the secularization. This paradigm, which derives from the former, puts forward the necessity and ineluctability of the secularization of the civil society. It is an atheistic fundamentalism, founded on an evolutionist model of societies – the idea of a progressive and inevitable secularization of civil societies by means of human rationality, scientific progress and instruction. This scheme is directly put into question by the permanence of religious beliefs, and this challenge weakens the authority and legitimacy of intellectual elites, as well as of currents of opinion professing a scientist philosophy adverse to any position which is not established by controlled observation or by clear causality, thus condemning religious belief as nothing but refusal of science, intellectual alienation, social constraint and moral archaism.

3. The paradigm of the necessary opposition between the State and religion. According to this paradigm, religious thinking should be ignored, if not combated, by the modern State, given its so-called archaic nature. This position, which is professed by strong currents of opinion in the West, notably in historically Catholic societies, ignores the extremely diverse forms of the constitutional regimes that regulate the relations between the State and religion, in the West and elsewhere. The strict separation between Church and State, as in the case of France, is an uncommon form (United States, France, Mexico). The most widespread forms are: (a) the cooperation between the State and one or more religious institutions (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands); and (b) the granting of privileges, whether significant or limited, to one religion (Spain, Italy, Canada). The issue as regards these forms is then the extent of the public funding of religious instruction and of religious personnel.

4. The paradigm of the threat on popular sovereignty by the judiciary (since it protects cultural minorities). Religious minorities are protected by constitutional clauses applied by the judiciary. Some advance that such protection of cultural or religious minorities undermines popular sovereignty, i.e., to the supremacy of the people and of elected assemblies against

native-born Canadian adults. Those of Middle Eastern and Western Asian origin, mostly Muslims, do not display a high degree of religiosity: 33% versus 65% for those of South Asian origin and 56% of South-Eastern origin (Clark & Schellenberg, 2006).

Gray critiques any notion of ‘meliorism’, i.e. the belief that the material and moral condition of humanity improves over time in an irregular yet inevitable manner. Sen is critical of the school of rational choice which reduces rationality to the realization of an immediate objective, without taking into account the beliefs, moral ends and convictions of individuals.
the judges. According to this anti-democratic vision, elected national assemblies should possess the power to define the norms of social life. As we have seen above, this idea, present in European debates on the Muslim attire, has been curbed in the Post War era so as to prevent the ostracism of cultural minorities.

5. The paradigm of the inherent oppression of women in Islam and in religions in general (for instance, that women are barred from priesthood in Catholicism). In the case of Islam, the wearing of the veil is perceived as manifesting sexist domination and, if freely chosen, women’s alienation due to archaic and pietistic customs. However, three points should be noted concerning this paradigm:

1. It ignores surveys conducted in Muslim countries which reveal a desire for democracy and the inclusion of women in the public spheres, with one notable difference: puritanism with respect to sexuality (Helly, 2010).
2. It conflates Islam and patriarchy, and omits the critiques of modernity on the part of Muslim feminists (Helly, 2010).
3. It ignores that in a democracy the State cannot prohibit a form of private behavior to an individual unless it infringes upon the rights, dignity and/or physical and psychological well-being of others. In a Post-War modern democracy, freedoms of opinion, conviction, cultural choice, can no longer be impeded or annulled in the name of the will and values of the cultural majorities. Democracy can only, by definition, be constituted of conflicts, compromises and constant negotiations, given the innumerable differences in worldviews, moral values, practices and modes of behavior and thought.

The sometimes violent reaffirmation of secular paradigms in the West and the disparagement and rejection of the rights of non-Christian minorities are based on the idea of a return of religion in the past twenty years. It is a misleading idea. Secularization is not declining in Western countries, and religious belief has not made thousands of new adepts (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). We are simply witnessing the constitution of new sects and of new syncretic religious currents, as well as a transfer from secular adhesion to historical Christian churches to minority, charismatic, evangelical, Christian churches. In this sense, the change that has taken place since the 1980s is neither a return of religion nor a decline of secularization but the emergence of new forms of belief and religious groups. The mutation also marks a change in the coalition strategies of minority Protestant churches in the United States since the 1980s and in the adoption by the Papacy of new strategies of influence to sustain its conservative contestation of the political and cultural mutation of the 1960s and 1970s (change in morals and values).

The religious actors, notably institutional, American, European, Latin-American and African, have been very active in the past twenty years on the political stage; they have participated in mainstream moral and political debates on euthanasia, homosexuality, cloning, abortion, American wars, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Darfur genocide, and adopted diverse positions, but which are founded on Christian morality.

This strategy can motivate a political effort on the part of liberal and militant agnostics, but could by no means justify absolutism or anticlerical fundamentalism, a return to intolerance and the annulment of the right to equality of non-Christian minorities. Nor could it legitimize the defense of the political supremacy of cultural majorities and the ostracism of religion.
Although the social and legal status of non-Christian minorities has become one of the most visible subjects of confrontation in this three-way fight, the main issue lies elsewhere, and most often concerns the control of the State. In the United States the Christian Right is Islamophobic, and the NGO CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) publishes nearly every morning an intolerant or racist declaration by a member of the Christian Right. Its objectives are the rejection of the most disadvantaged groups (Blacks, Chicanos, rural Whites), the primacy of the Supreme Court on Congress and the challenge of the separation of Church and State, two pillars of the American political system and two basic convictions of Liberalism. In Quebec, a number of Catholics want to exclude non-Christian minorities in the name of their national cultural heritage; they struggle against both liberals and atheist fundamentalists, among which are many feminist groups, who want to exclude religion in the name of so-called Quebecer values. We are faced with profound rifts where three currents of opinion and interest, by no means cohesive, clash – liberals (believers or not), traditionalist Christians and fundamentalist atheists – and the point of contention is the current restructuring of the political personnel of Quebec and its economical repositioning in a Canada which is enriched by its own mining, oil and gas resources.

These struggles should not have for collateral damage the violation of the freedom of religion and the uncompromising condemnation of religion’s influence on political life. Progressive and egalitarian stances have often been adopted by religious institutions, notably Protestant (recognition of homosexuality, defense and asylum of refugees, fight against inequalities). Religious belief is considered a conviction, an opinion, and as such must remain free of expression.

CONCLUSION

Hostility towards religious institutions and against any public role of religion arises in segments of populations which are often privileged by the political and ideological powers in place and which constitute powerful pressure groups (teachers’ and public sector employees’ unions, partisans and intelligentsia, feminist groups). These pressure groups understand by the religious neutrality of the State the anti-religious stance of public institutions. They advocate radical anticlericalism, even State atheism, while other pressure groups advocate the supremacy of Christian religions and the strict observance of their moral, ethical and family precepts. Muslims have become the main target of the animosity of both groups, and this double animosity is stronger in historically Catholic societies or regions and where Catholicism has historically had a strong influence. In such places, most often, the superimposition of Church and State has been historically detrimental to the development of democracy and individual freedom, and has resulted in conflicts, sometimes violent, between partisans and adversaries of the Church, as well as between fundamentalist and progressive Catholics. There, liberal currents are historically less established, while antireligious currents are powerful. Such is the case in France, Spain, Quebec, Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands.

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The Islamophobia Industry, Hate, and Its Impact on Muslim Immigrants and OIC State Development

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Abstract: This paper first looks at the Islamophobia industry and some of its most well know figures. It then looks at relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Europe and the United States. I discuss the historical and cultural precedents surrounding Islamic immigration. I show that there are differences in patterns of assimilation between Muslims in the US and Europe. The Islamophobia industry and its impact on geopolitical developments in the Muslim world is also explored. It is concluded that xenophobia in the west ultimately only stifles the democratic processes in the Muslim world.

INTRODUCTION

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is currently the world’s second largest international organization, second only to the United Nations. There are currently 57 countries that are full members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The first members joined in 1969. The most recent member of the OIC is Cote d’Ivorie, who joined in 2002. According to the charter of the OIC, member states are, “to be guided by the noble Islamic values of unity and fraternity, and affirming the essentiality of promoting and consolidating the unity and solidarity among the Member States in securing their common interests at the international arena […]” (Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference 2008, 2). Despite the majority of Muslim’s living in OIC member states, more and more Muslim’s each day are choosing to live outside them. Economic, health, and security concerns have led to an increase in Muslim migration to EU (European Union) and OECD (Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation) countries.

As Islam continues to ‘go global,’ understanding how Islam is situated within the larger global discourse must be discussed in any project that seeks to understand Islam as a globally interconnected religious, political, and social phenomenon in the 21st century. I will begin this article by looking at the complicated, often sensationalized picture of Islam painted by the western media. Understanding the role the western media plays in portraying Muslims is essential in understanding how the general public understand and view Islamic immigration and assimilation. It is important to be aware of the deeper agenda’s that many of these ‘professional agitators’ actually have.

1 According to a 2006 SESRIC report, 1/5 of the world’s population resides in OIC countries, far outnumbering the population of OECD, African Union, and EU-15 countries.
(http://www.sesric.org/files/article/366.pdf)
I will then look at trends in Muslim immigration in the United States and Europe. It should be clear that the experience of Muslims in the US is far different than in Europe. This chapter also seeks to explore philosophical issues related to Muslims living in Non-Muslim lands. Is it permissible to live in a non Muslim land? I will also look at the role of Muslims in non-Muslim countries. Are they supposed to assimilate? If so, what does that actually mean? The conclusion of this chapter will explore how the western media and other obvious provocations of Islamic sensibilities by atheists, Christians, Jews, Hindus, etc. ultimately hinder assimilation in non Muslim lands and political modernization in Muslim lands.

**THE WESTERN MEDIA—PAINTING A CONFUSING PICTURE**

One of the underlying themes of this article is that in today’s global community, actions on one side of the world often have immediate impacts on policies, attitudes, and decisions made by political actors on the other side. With this being the case, the western media and its portrayal of Muslims in the west and abroad plays a major role in ultimately influencing internal politics and political developments in Muslim countries. In the 21st century, Muslims choosing to immigrate to non-OIC states have faced increasing scrutiny from many different sources. Perhaps the most scrutiny against Muslims has been levied by the mainstream traditional western media outlets. Muslims living in non-Muslim countries has become more of an issue than ever in recent years.

In a 2012 article that appeared in the *American Sociological Review*, Christopher Bail runs multiple regressions on over 1,000 press releases and over 50,000 newspaper articles and television transcripts from 2001 to 2008. His regressions analyze how civil society organizations have facilitated in cultural change regarding attitudes towards Muslim’s during this time period. Bail concludes based on his analysis that, “[…] anti-Muslim organizations captivated the mass media via displays of fear and anger after the September 11th attacks, even though the vast majority of civil society organizations deployed pro-Muslim messages” (Bail 2012, 856). Bail’s analysis concluded that ‘fringe organizations,’ while much smaller in number than more balanced mainstream networks have been able to, ‘forge social networks that consolidate their capacity to create cultural change’ (Bail 2012, 856).

Bail’s findings correspond with another 2012 publication that came out in book format that argues that recently, right wing pundits, nationalist authors, and politicians have been arguing that Muslim’s are slowly taking over and are destroying western societies from within, and that they do not properly assimilate.27 In Nathan Lean’s, *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims* (2012), Lean argues that an entire cottage industry of Islamophobic writers and scholars has emerged since 2001. According to Lean, “The Islamophobia industry is a growing enterprise, one that is knowledgeable about the devastating effects of fear on society and willing to produce and exploit it” (Lean 2012, 183). Often the language used by these writers makes a half-hearted effort to ‘clarify’ that they are talking about fundamentalism and not all Muslims. Careful reading of these Islamophobic writers makes it clear that they really are criticizing Islam as a whole, including moderate Muslims.
If Bail’s labor intensive empirical findings that were published in one of the very top ranked peer-reviewed social science journals\(^2\), and Lean’s critically acclaimed book are correct, then it is absolutely essential to understand the tactics a few of the most well known fringe commentators. It is also important to understand how these extremist messages are transmitted from the fringes into the auspices of the more established media outlets most frequented by mainstream American’s.

**THE USUAL SUSPECTS…**

Perhaps the most recognized media-driven ‘expert’ today on Islamic extremism is Robert Spencer. Spencer argues unequivocally in regard to the general nature of Islam, “Rather, I have contended that Islam is unique amongst world religions in having developed a doctrine, theology, and legal system mandating warfare against and the subjugation of unbelievers” (Spencer 2008, 5). Spencer adamantly believes that Islam is out to take over the United States, impose Shari’a law, and oppress Jews and Christians who do not conform to Islamic law. Spencer regularly can be seen on various cable news networks’ promoting his books and agenda.

Despite his books being available at most mainstream bookstores in the west, few serious scholars recognize the veracity of Spencer’s scare tactics and ‘selective use’ of quotes, often made by relatively minor figures in the Islamic discourse. In the words of British religious scholar, Karen Armstrong, “Spencer never cites the Koran’s condemnation of all warfare as an 'awesome evil', its prohibition of aggression or its insistence that only self-defense justifies armed conflict [...]” (Armstrong 2007). She concludes that Spencer is trying to play up to a specific audience that feels their way of life is threatened, and that Spencer has little or no regard for factual validity. The most concerning issue in regard to Spencer is the amount of coverage he receives on popular television. Unlike academic audiences, many casual evening cable news viewers are not familiar with Spencer’s long record of racism and hate. He is often provided a captive audience that hears his responses to softball questions from sympathetic newscasters.

Pamela Geller is perhaps an even less reputable source than Spencer. Geller, a Hofstra University dropout, is the author of a right wing blog titled, *Atlas Shrugged*, (a reference to objectivist writer Ayn Rand’s popular 1957 book, *Atlas Shrugged*) that has gained cult popularity status amongst right wing extremists and hardcore Zionist extremists alike. Not surprisingly, Geller herself is unconvinced of President Barack Obama’s citizenship and believes Obama is out to destroy ‘traditional’ American values. (Geller 2008) Geller and Spencer together have started their own groups called, ‘The Freedom Defense Initiative’ and ‘Stop Islamization of America.’ These two groups are so extreme that they have been labeled as hate-groups by, not only the left-leaning Southern Poverty Law Center, but also the generally staunchly pro-Israel Anti-Defamation League. (Siemaszko 2011 and ADL Press Release 2011) Geller has publically referred to controversial Islamophobic Dutch MP, Geert Wilders, as her hero. According to a 3/25/2011 ADL Press release on extremism, “In her [Geller’s] blog postings and other writings, Geller regularly voices support for Wilders, whom she has described as "the Bravest Man in Europe" and "our proxy in the trial of Western Civilization, protagonist vs Islam, antagonist" (ADL Press Release 2011). Those on

\(^2\) According to a 2008 listing of the top 20 Thomson Scientific-indexed journals in the social sciences from 1997-2007, the *American Sociological Review* was ranked 9th overall during this period; however its citations per paper published was ranked number 1 at 20.7 citations per paper. The *American Journal of Sociology* had the 2nd highest citation per paper number of 18.81. (http://in-cites.com/journals/top-soc.html)
the mainstream political left and right recognize the dangers of such rhetoric. Geller has even gone as far as to label the ‘Ground Zero Mosque Project’, ‘the Obama Mosque.’

While Spencer has at least made an effort to differentiate between ‘radical’ Muslim practitioners and ‘moderate’ Muslim practitioners, Geller has not. Geller has even gone as far as rejecting long time rightwing critic of Islam, Daniel Pipes for being too moderate. According to a 2010 article that appeared in the _New York Times_, “she [Geller] ultimately rejected because he believes in the existence of a moderate Islam” (Barnard and Fuerer 2010). The former cold warrior Pipes was at one time the quintessence of cultural chauvinism and extremism himself during the 1980’s. While Pipes’ own philosophy is quite objectionable, he at least holds a doctorate and was a part of the intellectual brain-trust of the neoconservatives in the Reagan administration during the 1980’s. It is frightening that individuals like Geller and Spencer, both lacking PhD’s or state department experience, can be taken seriously as worthwhile commentators on such a controversial and important topic.

Spencer and Geller are part of a new generation of Islamophobic extremist commentators; a non-academic, anti-intellectual group that openly outright rejects almost all forms of Islam with the backing of powerful and wealthy donors from the furthest reaches of the right. According to Bail, “Financial and social resources not only increase organizations’ visibility but also demonstrate their legitimacy before the media” (Bail 2012, 860). Bail cites a 2010 _American Sociological Review_ article by Andrews and Caren that originally makes this point. According to Andrews and Caren’s own quantitative research on resource mobilization and media access, “More resourceful organizations are better able to establish and maintain relationships with the news media and may also be better able to signal the legitimacy of the organization and its claims” (Andrews and Caren 2010, 857). Spencer, Geller, and others of their disposition have made their impact primarily through aggressive internet websites and blog sites that attract powerful donors. Such financial and social organization gives these individuals credibility amongst the more mainstream media sources. In a nutshell, according to Bail, Andrews, and Caren, the logic of the mainstream media outlets goes something like; if all these wealthy business elites are willing to pump funds into these websites and grassroots publicity campaigns, then the message of these sites and campaigns must have some validity and importance.

The question that begs to be asked then is; ‘Why do these powerful donors spend so much money and effort in promoting non-reputable fringe figures who spread fear and hate?’ What is the real agenda of these people? It is absurd to think that individuals or organizations with so much money, especially often individuals or groups who aren’t even American citizens, would spend large sums of their money due to some ‘self-righteous indignation’ over the 9/11 attacks.

The answer to the ‘why’ question lies not with some altruistic concern for the well being of the United States; rather it lies in garnering political support and public sentiment in favor Israel. According to Lean, these powerful donors often have uncompromising positions on Israel and its ‘divinely ordained’ expansion into the West Bank and East Jerusalem. “Hard-line supporters of Israel’s quest to extend its reach into Palestinian territories are often major backers of pseudo-intellectual pugilism that the Islamophobia deploys” (Lean 2012, 11). Connecting the nebulous threat of global Islamic _Jihad_ and militancy to the concrete reality of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation is at the forefront of these powerful financial backers of the Islamophobia industry. For these people, painting Islam as ‘a general threat’ gives justification for Israel’s continued building of illegal settlements in the West Bank and theft of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem.
These actions are done ‘in the name of self-defense,’ with the ultimate goal being the rebuilding of the 3rd temple on the site of the temple mount, currently where Al-Aqsa Mosque sits.

Beginning in September 2012, new controversial publicity campaigns were launched by Geller and Spencer’s, American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI) promoting the defense of Israel against ‘barbarous jihad.’ Below is a picture of one of the AFDI advertisements that was on the walls of the New York City subway.  

![AFDI Subway Advertisement](http://tarpon.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/subway-ad.jpg?w=450)

The initial round of subway advertisements brazenly proselytize to those waiting for their train that, ‘In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man.’ Underneath that statement in bold blue letters it said, “Support Israel” and in bold red letters “Defeat Jihad.” These advertisements have not only made their way into the dank caverns of the NYC subway system frequented by millions of New Yorkers and tourists on a daily basis, but also to commuters unsuspectingly waiting in other highly visible sites such as public buses and trains in Washington D.C and Chicago. Once again the logic of the AFDI is simple; the average American who sees such aggressive advertising on such public entities (entities themselves largely funded by taxpayer money), is bound to identify these well financed campaigns as legitimate and therefore worthy of support. Every time the news media covers a Palestinian activist, often dark skinned and ‘radical’ looking, defacing one of these advertisements, it further serves the interests of the far right to convince the American public that Israel is ‘just like you’ and the Palestinians are, to borrow from Edward Said’s vernacular, ‘the other’ (Said 1979) who seek to undermine freedom of speech and other American values.

**THE ‘NOT SO USUAL’ SUSPECTS…**

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While one would expect such behavior by professional fear-mongering publicity hounds like Spencer and Geller, it is important to point out that the fear mongering in the media is not limited to the usual suspects. There have also been more recognizable figures to the mainstream that have also made some extreme comments like United States television personalities Juan Williams and Bill Maher. Williams and Maher have both made comments based on their own irrational fears rather than any real evidence based on facts.

Former NPR and current Fox News contributor Juan Williams was quoted in 2010 making egregiously xenophobic comments on a popular Fox News channel nightly program. In an interview on the Fox News Channel’s, *The O'Reilly Factor*, Williams said,

"I mean, look, Bill, I'm not a bigot. You know the kind of books I've written about the civil rights movement in this country. But when I get on a plane, I got to tell you, if I see people who are in Muslim garb and I think, you know, they are identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims, I get worried. I get nervous" (MacAskill 2010, 1).

These comments raised the ire of many American’s, and ultimately resulted in the firing of Williams. However, despite the outrage of those at NPR and other left leaning and ‘moderate’ Americans, Williams was supported by numerous popular right-wing personalities, including former presidential candidate, Mike Huckabee, and 2008 GOP vice-presidential candidate, Sarah Palin. Fox eventually offered Williams a 3 year, 2 million dollar contract to be a contributor on its channel. (MacAskill 2010 and Lean 2012) While these politicians have defended Williams in the name of ‘free speech’ is seems unlikely they would have done the same had Williams made anti-Semitic or anti-American comments.

Nathan Lean argues that Williams’ comments, “[…] fit in nicely into the narrative [Bill O’Reilly] was spinning: Muslims are people to be feared, especially Muslims in airplanes” (Lean 2012, 68). The actual offensiveness or factual validity of Williams’ sentiment was of no concern to the producers of neither O’Reilly’s television program nor the executives at Fox News. Much to the delight of these producers and executives, Williams’ comments effectively served in placating the overall demographic that typically follows Fox News; a demographic that consider themselves on the forefront of the ‘culture wars.’ Islam, along with gay-marriage, women's rights, and illegal immigration are all in a seemingly unending battle to be declared the biggest scourge to ‘America as we know it.’

Popular self-proclaimed libertarian-turned-Democrat comedian, Bill Maher, has also has made some incredibly insensitive comments of late. According to an article that appeared on the online magazine Mediaite.com in 2010, on a comment made by television host Bill Maher on his television show, Mediaite.com states,

“Maher made a Juan Williams-esque confession on his program when he apprehensively noted that Mohammed has just become the most popular baby name in Britain. ‘Am I a racist to feel alarmed by that?’ Maher asked his panel. ‘Because I am. And it’s not because of the race, it’s because of the religion. I don’t have to apologize, do I, for not wanting the Western world to be taken over by Islam in 300 years?’ (Rahman 2010)

Maher’s ignorant statements reached a very large audience. His popular television show is regularly viewed by millions of people. Maher’s unfounded, off-the-cuff political analysis of patterns of Islamic migration only served to further fan the flames of intolerance.
While such comments on Islam may be ‘par for the course’ for Fox News, Maher’s comments reached an audience that may not have the same deeply entrenched prejudices. In this regard, Maher’s comments may be even more potentially hazardous to Muslims and relations between Muslims’ and Non-Muslim societies.

During the recent Israeli war in Gaza, Maher made remarks not only insensitive towards Palestinians, but also women. In one of his Twitter tweets, “Dealing w/ Hamas is like dealing w/ a crazy woman who’s trying to kill u - u can only hold her wrists so long before you have to slap her,” his message wrote (Swarts 2014).” His comment drew widespread condemnation not only for its poor analysis of the current situation in Gaza, but also for its misogynistic undertones. According to Amanda Marcotte, “So much sexism packed into one tweet! As others have already pointed out, Maher is making light of the serious problem of domestic violence. But he’s also trading on the tired stereotype of women as irrational children who need to be brought in line by more stable men (Marcotte 2014).”

**MUSLIMS LIVING ABROAD-- THE SCHOLARS POSITION ON LIVING IN NON MUSLIM LANDS**

With the situation regarding the role of the media now explored, the next question remains, ‘What is the role of Muslims themselves living in the US and other Western European nations?’ Are Muslims even supposed to live in these places according to the scholars? Despite an insidious undercurrent of exclusion promoted by the western media about Muslims coming to the west, Muslim’s have by and large been open to the idea of immigrating to new lands. Many important Islamic scholars have spoken and written on the subject of Muslim’s living in Non-Muslim societies. One of the earliest scholars to discuss the issue of Muslim interaction with Non-Muslims and non-Muslim societies was Al-Hajj Salim Suwari. Suwari lived in West Africa during the 15th century in what would now be considered Mali. According to Suwari, Muslim’s living in Dar-al-Kufr, or lands of the disbelievers, were obliged to live peacefully. Suwari argued that it was Allah’s (s.w.t) plan to have certain individuals remain unaware and ignorant of Islam longer than others, therefore Muslims were not to proselytize. Instead they were to set a good example for the local people that would get them interested in Islam and possibly one day convert. (Levtzion and Pouwels 2000 and Robinson 2004) Resulting from the Muslim’s living peacefully with the non believers, they created successful networks of trade and prosperity. According to Robinson, “The Suwarian tradition was a realistic rationale for Muslims living in the woodland and forest regions of West Africa over the past five or six centuries” (Robinson 2004, 58.) Noted African historian Ivor Wilks argues that Suwari’s teachings on toleration were popularized by followers in Senegal and Niger in later centuries. (Wilks 1995) Only recently have fundamentalists made efforts to break the peace forged by Muslims for centuries in this region.

The contemporary consensus is that Muslim’s have a dual responsibility. They must seek to maintain a halal lifestyle and be good citizens of the country they are living in, abiding by all local laws and regulations, provided they are not being actively persecuted against. According to the late Sheik Uthaymeen, perhaps the most influential scholar in Saudi Arabia and the Sunni Muslim world in recent years, in an interview telecast from Saudi Arabia to the city of Birmingham in the United Kingdom he said,

“[...] Likewise I invite you to have respect for those people who have the right that they should be respected, those between whom there is an agreement (of protection)
for you. For the land in which you are living is such that there is an agreement between you and them. If this were not the case they would have killed you or expelled you. So preserve this agreement, and do not prove treacherous to it, since treachery is a sign of the hypocrites, and it is not from the way of the Believers. And know that it is authentically reported from the Prophet that he said,

“Whoever kills one who is under and agreement of protection will not smell the fragrance of Paradise.”

Do not be fooled by those sayings of the foolish people, those who say "Those people are Non-Muslims, so their wealth is lawful for us (to misappropriate or take by way of murder and killing).” For by Allaah - this is a lie. A lie about Allaah's Religion, and a lie about Islamic societies.

So we may not say that it is lawful to be treacherous towards people whom we have an agreement with.” (http://muslimways.com/islam-against-terrorism/how-muslims-should-behave-in-non-muslim-societies-by-shaykh-uthaimeen.html)

Uthaymeen in this discussion directly references the Prophet (s.a.w) who made it clear that Muslims who were living under the protection of a foreign state we obliged to live peacefully amongst them. Not only is it impermissible to engage in acts of violence, it is also impermissible to act deceitfully and make efforts to defraud those non Muslims living in that nation. His commentary is aimed directly at those fundamentalists who knowingly make up lies in order to persuade violent jihad in non-Muslim nations.

Even more recently another major figure in the world of Islamic scholarship addressed a crowd in the United Kingdom on the same issue. According to an article in, The Sisat Daily, about the lecture given by the renowned Imam Abdel Rahman Al-Sudais, the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca,

“Al-Sudais urged Muslim leaders to engage and reach out positively with Britain’s official bodies, local councils and government offices. He questioned why Muslims avoid the political scenario of the country.’

‘We do not have any hidden agenda. So why we are Muslims not proactively involved in politics of this country?’ he said.” (The Sisat Daily 8/10/09)

Al-Sudais not only calls on Muslim’s to reach out to political leadership, but to actively take part in the political practice. His call to political action is at odds with the perception of many nativists who argue Islam is inherently against engaging democratic political processes. Al-Sudais in a Friday khutbah (خطبة) given during Ramadan reiterated the importance of toleration, saying, "Islam is a religion of moderation. Extremism has no place in Islam” (Nawal 2005.) Al-Sudais also argues that violence done by Muslim’s in places like Israel and the United States generally only results in exponential killings of Muslims in other parts of the world for each non-Muslim killed in a car bomb or suicide attack.

There have been commentaries that argue that Muslims living in lands hostile to Islam face certain dangers. According to Abu Dawud, one of the six major Sunni compilers of hadith, “He who imitates a people will be from among them (on the Day of Judgement)”
Muslims must not give up their obligatory practices, but this does not mean it is not possible to live in a ‘non Muslim’ land. This point needs to be further dissected. According to Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, “It is obligatory to leave a place where forbidden practices are rife since it is mandatory for Muslims to demand observance of the Law” (Ibn al-Arabi, Vol. 1/484-485.) The hadith argues that Muslim’s are obliged to leave lands openly hostile and do not allow for them to observe Islamic laws. Not all non Muslim countries are openly hostile to Muslim’s. The United States (at least at this point) allows for Muslims to practice their faith free from intervention and oppression. Despite recent political decisions, Europe also seems to be in the same category. As Islam has ‘gone global,’ especially in this day of general universal condemnation of overt discrimination based on religion, race, or gender, one would be hard pressed to make a logical argument that they are actively oppressed in the country they live in. With this being said it is generally looked down upon to leave a Muslim country for a non Muslim country if the primary intention is based in greed or seeking the pleasures of western life at the expense of Islamic values. As in most things in life, having the right reasons behind an action is of primary importance. Only an individual Muslim and Allah can know if his or her intentions are pure.

**MUSLIM IMMIGRATION TO EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES—TWO DIFFERENT STORIES**

Many in the mainstream media insinuate that Islam in the US is a relatively new phenomenon, and that it also poses a new threat. Empirically this is not true. While certain events in the world have put more of a spotlight recently on Muslims living in the west, the reality is that they have been here for a long time. Muslims have been coming to and from the United States since the very inception of the United States of America. They also helped establish its independence. “Researchers were able to find at least six additional Muslim names that fought in the Revolutionary War from 1774 – 1783. These included Yousuf Ben Ali aka Joseph (Benenhab) Benhaley who fought with General Sumter in South Carolina, Bempett Muhamed who was a corporal, Francis Saba, a sergeant and Joseph Saba were with the Continental Troops from 1775 to 1783” (Mahmood, 2.) There have been numerous waves of immigration throughout history by Muslims to America. Like other immigrant groups, many Muslims left their home countries in search of employment and opportunities they lacked in their country of origin.

The first major wave of immigration to the United States occurred during the 1840’s by Ottoman Turks and Yemenites. (Koszegi, et al. 1992) Muslims from all over the world began immigrating in small numbers at the turn of the 20th century to the United States. (Ahmed 1991) Ahmed argues that many of the original Muslim immigrants did not seek permanent residence in the US. “Their intention was to make as much money as possible quickly, and return to their homeland” (Ahmed 1993, 11.) Nonetheless, many began to settle down in specific Islamic enclaves like Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Michigan City, Indiana, and Dearborn, Michigan. Muslim’s also settled both coasts, establishing communities in Sacramento, CA and Brooklyn, NY. (Ahmed, 1993.) During the early half of the 20th century Muslims from all over the Muslim world began to make their home in the United States and Canada.

Muslim’s have been immigrating to Europe as well for some time. Following WWII many Muslim’s came to Europe from North Africa as a part of guest worker programs and ended up staying. “Mass migration to Western Europe began in the late 1950’s, reached its peak around 1970, and never ceased, despite more restrictive legislation introduced after
1973 and regularly tightened since then” (Roy 2004, 100.) Muslims in Europe have been absorbed in European nations much differently than in the United States. One such difference is in the ‘mixing bowl’ style arrangement of European societies as opposed to the more ‘melting pot’ societal arrangement that is seen in the United States. According to Robert Leiken, “So unlike American Muslims, who are geographically diffuse, ethnically fragmented, and generally well off, Europe's Muslims gather in bleak enclaves with their compatriots: Algerians in France, Moroccans in Spain, Turks in Germany, and Pakistanis in the United Kingdom” (Leiken 2005, 122.) Resulting from this ‘powder keg’ type arrangement has been enormous suspicion on the part of many Europeans, and feelings of hopelessness and second-class citizen status for many Muslims. In regard to the orientalization of non-Christian groups in Europe, anthropologist Matti Bunzl states, “from the vantage point of Christianity, both Judaism and Islam are a certain kind of Other” (Bunzl 2005, 501.) This otherness has been present in perspectives held by Christian European’s on Jew’s since the 19th century, but it has really only recently emerged in the case of Muslims. Will Kymlicka argues that one of the driving intellectual arguments against immigration in welfare states, including European welfare states, is a misguided belief that increased immigration ultimately means diminished welfare state benefits. “While this issue has not raised the same level of public anxiety as issues of security and terrorism, it has become influential in academic debates and is beginning to shape debates among policymakers as well” (Kymlicka 2006, 282.) As these debates amongst intellectual and policy makers continue, they ultimately filter down to the mass publics. These debates are likely to grow stronger in the near future, especially amongst more moderate Europeans who don’t oppose immigration purely on simply on racial or ethnocentric grounds.

There are two main arguments Kymlicka looks at that are commonly invoked by those living in welfare states who oppose the promotion of multiculturalism. One hypothesis is what he calls the ‘heterogeneity/redistribution trade-off’ hypothesis. This hypothesis argues that, “ethnic diversity as such makes it more difficult to sustain expansive social programs and to achieve substantial redistribution toward the poor through taxes and transfers” (Kymlicka 2006, 283). The logic of this argument is that so many resources are being directed towards immigrants that the poor native population are having their benefits stripped away, thus making existing poverty worse. The second argument he considers is what he calls the ‘recognition/redistribution trade-off’ hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, the basic premises are that multiculturalism policies emphasize diversity, and this emphasis undermines a common national identity. Ultimately, strong feelings of solidarity are needed for an effective and ‘robust’ welfare state; therefore multiculturalism is an albatross to any welfare state. (Kymlicka 2006) By no means are these two hypotheses mutually exclusive. It is quite obvious to see how these two hypotheses can overlap. Kymlicka argues that neither of these hypotheses has yet been proven true, nor should they expect to become true anytime soon.

According to Kymlicka, “Acknowledging the legitimate presence of immigrants and enabling them to participate in society without having to hide or relinquish their ethnic identity seems to pose no general threat to the welfare state” (Kymlicka 2006, 297). He states that the evidence shows no correlation between welfare state retrenchment and large foreign-born immigrant populations. “There was simply no evidence that countries with large foreign-born populations had more trouble sustaining and developing their social programs over these three decades than countries with small immigrant communities” (Kymlicka 2006, 291.) While one may speculate that there may be some time lag in seeing the effects of immigration on welfare policies, Kymlicka points to research that has shown
that other democratic nations with even longer patterns of immigration also have not seen significant reductions in their welfare states based on immigration patterns as the primary independent variable. One such example is the United States. (Crepaz 2006) Kymlicka goes on to argue that multiculturalism policies actually help break stereotypes held by Europeans towards Muslim immigrants, and ultimately mitigate immigrant hostility towards their former colonizing state. Hostility amongst immigrants towards the former colonial powers has their own negative social impacts. This is especially true amongst marginalized Muslim immigrants in Europe.

Robert Leiken contests that native European hostility towards North African and South Asian immigrants has resulted in a more ‘militant’ form of Islam that is practiced by those Muslims living in European countries as opposed to Muslims living in North America. “In Europe, host countries that never learned to integrate newcomers collide with immigrants exceptionally retentive of their ways, producing a variant of what the French scholar Olivier Roy calls "globalized Islam": militant Islamic resentment at Western dominance, anti-imperialism exalted by revivalism” (Leiken 2005, 122.) Roy’s argument is that ‘native’ Europeans are angry because they feel that their identity is being attacked from multiple sources. The EU and the Euro were the first major institutions in the 1990’s that challenged traditional nationalist state norms. The growth of Islam has added to fears of some Europeans who feel that their individual national identities are disappearing. Finally, the stagnant European economies of the past decade has also has facilitated in anti-immigrant attitudes. As a result of all of these factors, there has been a rise in xenophobic and far right wing parties.

In the United States immigration has always generally been welcomed. It is considered a part of the American identity rather than a threat to it. On the other hand, in Europe, immigration has been viewed with suspicion and much greater hostility, even during times of economic growth and global stability. (Roy 2004) Leiken argues that there has been a growth of second and third generation extremists throughout Europe, however he points to less than a handful of ‘major attacks’ over the last 20 or 30 years that he claims are examples of this growing extremism.

Leiken’s ‘growing threat’ position is overstated. The European militancy he discusses is obviously not the same militancy demonstrated by groups like Al Qaeda or the Pakistani Taliban. It is not a militancy whose sole purpose is to cause mass destruction of property and lives based on a radical interpretation of the meaning of jihad. Instead, it is more a ‘militancy of attitude’ resulting from years of exclusion and local hostility. Muslims throughout Europe have had difficulties engaging with the local political discourse of the European nations they inhabit. They have also been at the bottom of the economic ladder. “[…] despite their increasing presence throughout the region [Europe], Muslims have had a difficult time collectively organizing to assert (or defend) their interests in the political arena” (Warner and Wenner 2006, 457.) It is a feeling of being orientalized and excluded by the new country resulting in a rejection of local customs altogether and an ‘inward retreat’ into the native culture. While sporadic acts of terror and violence occasionally hit European cities, generally the attacks are orchestrated by the absolutely most militant and alienated individuals and often terror minded operatives from outside Europe.

**MUSLIM’S IN AMERICAN SOCIETY TODAY—A COMPLICATED STORY**
According to Carol Stone, there were an estimated 1.2 to 3 million Muslim’s living in the United States at the time (1991) of her chapter’s publication in The Muslim’s of America. (Stone 1991) Muslim immigration has continued to increase, even after 9/11. Estimates of the Muslim population in the United States are between 0.6 and 2.3% of the overall population. (American Religious Identification Survey 2008 and Baghby, et. al, 2010) There are more Muslims living in the United States now than at any other previous time in American history.

Sulayman Nyang on the role of identity says, “One of the most crucial elements in the history and development of a social group is the maintenance of its identity” (Nyang 1991, 237.) While religious freedom and toleration has been a staple of enlightenment thought dating back to John Locke, there has been a clear effort to limit Islamic expressions throughout the west. The Islamic identity faces regular challenges in Europe and the west. In 2011, a female employee of Abercrombie and Fitch in the United States was fired because she would not abandon wearing hijab, even though when she was hired, she was wearing hijab. The woman even agreed to wear store colors. (Glynn 6/28/11) Such a violation of one’s religious freedom would never have occurred if the employee wore a yarmulke or a cross. If it did, it would certainly raise a public outcry.

Sadly, examples similar to this have become more common in the west. Even non Muslim American’s recognize that Muslims on average face more discrimination than other religious groups in the US. In 2009, a Pew Research Poll found that nearly six-in-ten American adults see Muslims as being subject to discrimination. This is higher than rates of discrimination people on average feel that other minority religious groups such as Mormons, Atheists, or Jews face. (Pew Research Report 2009.) Places like France have made efforts to pass laws banning certain styles of dress claiming that it goes against ‘French liberal values.’ On April 11th 2011, the French parliament passed a law banning women from wearing a Burqa, making it an offense that can result in a fine. According to French president Nicolas Sarkozy, “It’s a sign of enslavement,” he said. "It will not be welcome in the French Republic." (Newcomb 4/10/11) Such concerted efforts to ban Islamic styles of dress and symbols will only further alienate already marginalized Muslims. Even though most Muslim women in France do not wear Burqa (Killian 2003), there is a clear message is sent to Muslims everywhere when certain styles of dress are condemned. Such legislation will not encourage assimilation and will most likely only increase extremist zeal. Despite the recent wave of efforts aimed at passing symbolic anti-Shari’a legislation in a few strongly ‘red’ states, it is very unlikely that any serious movement to ban certain styles of Islamic dress will ever gain popularity in the US.

While most American’s recognize the second class status of Muslims in the US, many non-Muslim American’s still feel that the global Muslim community has not been active enough in denouncing the September 11th attacks. The reality is that less than 3 weeks after the attacks, two of the most prominent scholars in the Muslim world made a clear statement to the world condemning the terror.

“Moreover, on September 27th, 2001, Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi (chairman of the Sunna and Sira Council, Qatar), and Shiek Taha Jabir al-Alwani (chairman of the North American Fiqh Council) issues a join fatwa, signed by American Muslim leaders and internationally prominent Islamic scholars. The fatwa condemned Bin Laden’s actions of 9/11 and sanctioned Muslim participation in the United States military response in Afghanistan” (Esposito 2010, 32.)
Other similar statements have been made as well by other authorities within the Muslim world. Despite western sentiment, it is not the responsibility of every Muslim to personally take responsibility for, or feel guilty for what happened on 9/11. Following the Holocaust, people recognized that it was not something based in the German ethos, rather most sensible people recognized that it was lead by a ruthless dictator who represented a fanatical faction within Germany. Those active members of the Nazi party were responsible for the holocaust, not simply anyone who happened to be of German descent, just like those members of al-Qaeda were responsible for 9/11, not anyone simply who happened to be Muslim. By constantly ‘denouncing terror’ it makes it appear that one is somehow involved in the act itself. When Bernie Madoff bilked investors out of $50 billion dollars, nobody called on the Jewish people to apologize for his actions and when abortion clinic bombers kill doctors who perform abortions, nobody in congress calls for a large scale investigation of what is going on in evangelical Christian churches.

There is a clear double standard that Muslim’s face. Nonetheless, Muslims living in the US have also made great strides in improving their lives. Muslims in the US enjoy many of the same benefits that the general population in the west enjoys. According to the chart below, based on 2008 statistics, it is clear that Muslims in the US have a standard of living very similar to non Muslims.

### Annual Income (in US $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>General Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $95,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regards to formal education between Muslims and the general public in the west, the story is similar. The same government report shows that Muslims are on par with the general population in terms of educational achievement. As a matter of fact, a higher percentage of Muslims pursue graduate study than the general public. This is not surprising since many Muslims, immigrants and native born, pursue studies in technology and medical fields.

### Level of Educational Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>General Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate study</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4 This information on Annual income was gathered from page 48 of The United States Department of State/Bureau of International Information Programs 2008 publication, Being Muslim in America.

5 This information on Educational achievement was gathered from page 48 of The United States Department of State/Bureau of International Information Programs 2008 publication, Being Muslim in America.
As mentioned earlier in this section, Muslims come from all over the world to go to the top American universities and live the American dream just like every other American citizen. There are numerous success stories of Muslims coming from poverty and raising themselves to success. Unlike Muslim’s who immigrate to Europe and seek blue collar jobs, Muslim’s in the west tend to be more educated and integrated.

As one would imagine those Muslim’s living comfortable and successful lives are far less likely to commit acts of violence. Despite this, despite living in relative comfort and enjoying prosperity, Muslim’s still face challenges. “As North American Muslims attempt to integrate their own beliefs with secular ideologies of North America, they may, at times, move away from the main goal to transmit their beliefs to their children” (Barazangi 1991, 164.) The main goal referred to by Barazangi is *tawhid* (توحید), or realizing the oneness of Allah. Muslim’s in the west are not under the direct supervision of central Imam’s. This can leave Muslim’s often confused or caught in between worlds. Barazangi is arguing that the pressures of assimilation and fitting in do sometimes take a Muslim’s mind away from the ultimate purpose of Islam, but nonetheless, through patience, practice, and community this can be ameliorated. Being free from the central authority of a particular Imam can also have its benefits. Such a situation allows for Muslims to freely choose and embrace their own path in life without undue pressure from an external source. It allows for a pluralism of ideas to emerge, thus strengthening the discourse overall.

**HATE AND FEAR = RADICALIZATION AND FUNDAMENTALISM**

The slipshod explanations of Islamic culture offered by western media outlets have put Muslims worldwide on the defensive. As Oliver Roy argues, such hostility has resulted in a ‘quasi-fundamentalist’ backlash in many places. This does not mean that the majority of disenfranchised western and/or European Muslim’s are looking to find explosives and detonate them in the first building or bridge they can find. Rather, it means an atmosphere of uncertainty and distrust is created that ultimately pushes Muslims into the margins. This marginalization severely mitigates the opportunity for integration and assimilation. In the words of Will Kymlicka, “Liberal multiculturalism rests on the assumption that policies of recognizing and accommodating ethnic diversity can expand human freedom, strengthen human rights, diminish ethnic and racial hierarchies, and deepen democracy” (Kymlicka 18, 2007). The *accommodating* quality of western democracy is perhaps its most important value. Societies are by nature fluid entities, meaning the entire definition of what is constitutive of ‘a society’ is something always in flux. While there can be pervasive generally accepted norms and values, by no means are these norms and values unmoving, thus harkens back to Plato’s famous epithet, nothing ever ‘is,’ rather everything is coming ‘to be.’

Hostility towards Muslims results in a natural ‘retreat’ into a more conservative and less open form of Islam. History shows this to be true. Janet Afary in the conclusion of, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (2005), reminds us that during the late 1970’s and 80’s, ‘*The Reaganites and the Iranian Islamists fed on each other. At an international level, each claimed to defend a sacred way of life against hostile enemies*’
(Afary 2005, 164). Each used propaganda and distortions to misrepresent their enemy which ultimately resulted in quasi-fundamentalist backlash, especially within the governing bodies themselves. Ultimately for Afary, the propagation of ‘traditional values’ as defense against the enemy most adversely impacted women and those concerned with sexual rights in Iran.

Events like Qur’an burnings, blatantly offensive videos made of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), and other verbal or written public assaults on the faith result in moderate and progressive Muslim’s being put back on the defensive. This results in the continued to be fear and skepticism of western values and institutions by many Muslim’s. Perhaps, even more dangerous in this ‘process of marginalization’ is the effect it has in galvanizing reactionary and fundamentalist forces in Muslim nations, especially in those who just recently freed themselves from the yoke of dictatorship. It should not be surprising that some of the most vocal and violent condemnations of the ‘Innocence of Muslims’ video were in Egypt and Libya. Both of these states are in their infancy and have yet to fully understand what ‘the Arab Spring’ means in terms of institutional structure. One should expect that egregious provocations against the most sacred figure in Islam by anti-Muslim Israelis and Christians living in the United States, using the United States as their forum for ‘self-expression,’ would spark immediate outrage amongst a population still leery of the United States, its relationship with Israel, and its true intentions for the rest of the Muslim world.

Egypt’s recently elected and then disposed, President Mohammed Morsi in his first address to the United Nations in regards to provocations against Islam,

We must join hands in confronting these regressive ideas that hinder cooperation among us. We must act together in the face of extremism, discrimination, and incitement to hatred on the basis of religion or race. The General Assembly, as well as the Security Council, has the principal responsibility in addressing this phenomenon that is starting to have implications that clearly affect international peace and security.

The obscenities recently released as part of an organized campaign against Islamic sanctities is unacceptable and requires a firm stand. We have a responsibility in this international gathering to study how we can protect the world from instability and hatred. Egypt respects freedom of expression (Morsi 2012, 14).

Morsi made it clear that Islamaphobia does have implications on ‘international security and peace’ meaning that such examples of discrimination ultimately impact the way policies are crafted within OIC member states. Quelling the flames of Islamaphobia abroad is essential in bringing stability to OIC nations, especially those in the midst of major political transitions. Increased discrimination against Muslims in the US ultimately leads only to policies and attitudes more restrictive of Christian and Jewish minority communities in the OIC member states.

LOOKING TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

This article has aimed to show a few things. First, it showed how the mainstream media has painted a confusing picture of Islam in the west. While there are many prominent Islamaphobic sources that get regular media attention, there are also a growing number of those concerned with discrimination against Muslims. This article showed that Muslims
have been an integral part of the American experience since the very beginning. Muslims fought alongside colonial forces against the British and helped establish an independent United States of America. Though not as many in number as other immigrant groups in the US, Muslims have been coming here for hundreds of years. They have created their own ethnic enclaves that are no more threatening to the American way of life than an Irish neighborhood in Chicago, a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn, or a Hispanic neighborhood in somewhere in Arizona or California.

Muslims in terms of education and income are on par with the rest of the American population. Resulting from economic and educational opportunities is an immigrant population that by in large loves their country. If anything, understanding this reality should make it all the more clear that violence stems from oppression and poverty and not simply from any particular religious perspective. Having a voice in social and political affairs is a critical concern for Muslims who often feel they are left out of the political process, even in the US. According to Christian convert to Islam, Imam Suhaib Webb, “The most important thing American Muslims must do in the next 5 to 10 years is to ensure their message is relevant and reverberates within their Western reality” (The Muslim West Facts Project 2009, 133). Most scholars also are of the opinion that living in non Muslim lands is acceptable and that those choosing to do so should follow all local and national laws.

Relations between Muslims and non Muslims is a two way street. Both sides must respect each other’s way of life and co-exist as peaceful neighbors. While things may be tense currently, there is no reason to believe that in the future Muslims in the United States and abroad cannot live without fear or evoking fear amongst the general population the reside in. Samuel Huntington’s prediction of an inevitable battle between the west and Islam is hardly a foregone conclusion. (Huntington 1993) If anything, it seems to be wrong. For example, despite current apprehensions towards Muslims in the United States, Keith Ellison was recently elected as the nation’s first Muslim member of the US House of Representatives for Minnesota’s fifth district. Many other Muslim’s hold local political offices as well. Articulate and clear thinking Muslims who hold positions of power will help break down the wall of fear and mistrust that seems to permeate many parts of the western world. Contrary to what extremist groups may claim, it is quite possible to live in America, enjoy certain activities that non Muslim American’s do, and also avoid behaviors or activities that are clearly against the basic fundamentals of the faith. It is up to the individual to avoid things like sexual promiscuity, pork, alcohol, and other forms of excess. Regardless of the social pressures that may exist, ultimately it comes down to the individual Muslim’s own judgment.

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