Instances of Islamophobia

Demonizing the Muslim "Other"

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AND HOSSEIN ROUZBEH

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini
and Hossein Rouzbeh

Islamophobia as a Global Concern beyond Muslim Communities

Islam has the divine message of ultimately meaningful human life with beauty and justice for the world. According to the Holy Quran, the prophet of Islam has been sent "*only as benevolence to the creatures of the world*" (21: 107) and all believers are called to *enter peace*: "*O' believers, enter the peace, all of you*" (2: 208). Muslims are advised by the Quran to practice patience and kindness: "*Those who council each other to patience and council each other to kindness; those are the companions of the right.*" (90: 17–18) The Holy Quran even asks Muslims to be careful about their words when facing non-believers and not to confront them with unpleasant words let alone cruel deeds: "*Do not revile those who pray apart from Allah.*" (6: 108)

In encountering non-believers, in inviting them to worship Allah, and in preaching the faith, the teaching of the Quran for Muslims is: "*Call them to the path of your Lord with wisdom and words of good advice, and reason with them in the best way possible.*" (16: 125) When coming to people who are believers of other faiths, instead of shouting the differences, Muslims are to raise the agreements, similarities, and commonalities conducive to a climate of peaceful coexistence: "*Tell them, O' people of the Book, let us come to an agreement on that which is common between us.*" (3: 64) Despite the worldwide projected killer-image of Islam, according to the direct teaching of the Quran, in the Islamic worldview killing a single innocent person is a horror as huge as killing the entire human being: "*Whosoever kills a human being, except for murder or for spreading corruption in the land, it shall be like killing all humanity; and whosoever saves a life, saves the entire human race.*" (5: 32)

However, Islamic beliefs, along with enflaming hope for human communities, shape a threat to forces that aim to subdue the human sphere and to oppress people. In living with people of other faiths, the teaching of the Holy Quran for Muslims is to face them in a *fair way* but the clear exception is about *oppressors*, regardless of their faith: "*Do not argue with the people of the Book unless in a fair way, apart from those who oppress*" (29: 46). Along with the call for entrance of all believers into peace, it is stated that "*there is no hostility*" but to avoid a passive pacifist peace, a sharp exception is specified; "*except against those who oppress*" (2: 193). Not only *permission is granted* to the *oppressed* to fight oppressors (22: 39) but Muslims are forbidden from approaching them in a friendly manner:

> *Allah does not forbid you from being kind and acting justly towards those who did not fight over faith with you, nor expelled you from your homes. Allah indeed loves those who are just. He only forbids you from making friends with those who fought over faith with you and banished you from your homes, and aided in your exile. Whoever makes friends with them is a transgressor.* (60: 8–9)

Who is afraid of *this* Islam? As the religion of peace, Islam is *also* the religion *of justice*; and justice is what those on the camp of oppression fear, be it oppression to a person or a tribe, or be it oppression at the global scale. Therefore, the hegemony of the global regimes of dominance does seem justified to be vitally afraid of Islam whose obvious teaching is not only to allow for standing against oppressors but to set it as a duty: "*What has come upon you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and for the oppressed men, women, and children*" (4: 75). Therefore, the unitary cause of *peace-justice* equally strongly calls for peace *and* justice. In calling for *fair argument*, the exception is *those who oppress* (29: 46), and in inviting to fighting for justice, *aggression* is forbidden: "*Fight those, in the way of Allah who fight you, but do not be aggressive; Allah does not like aggressors.*" (2: 190); "*If they incline to peace, make peace with them*" (8: 61).

Probably this very fundamental approach of Islam is the reason why those who take pains to highlight the threat of *extremist Islam*, rarely bother to deal with what *Islam* is (with no prefix or suffix) (e.g., Act for America, 2015; Lwis, 2004; Sookhdeo and Gorka, 2012). This very trick provides the room for equating Islam with the *extremist Islam* and shapes the basis of *Islamophobia* which is realized in numerous ways almost all over the world with “on-going rhetoric about Islamic ‘terrorism,’ ‘radicalism’ and ‘extremism,’ both locally and globally” (Wijsen, 2013, p. 76). The rather widely-discussed Islamophobic trends reflect their widespread occurrence as almost a fact of life, especially in the West (Bevelander and Otterbeck, 2012; Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2007; Kabir, 2008; Kumar, 2010; Morey and Yaqin, 2011; Morgan and Poynting, 2012; Pedziwiatr, 2010; Powell, 2011; Puniyani, 2010; Sheehi, 2011; Tyrer, 2013; Valenta, 2010; van Liere, 2014).

On the other hand, true Islamic belief also has to face the cutting blade of *radical* Islam. The all-out confrontation of the essentially hegemonic and dominance-seeking Western powers is but one major global force against Islam. A view of Islam as the religion of peace as well as resistance against oppression and tyranny, that is a religion of *peace-justice* rather than mere pacifism, also has to face a second challenge operating under an Islamic disguise. The so-called radical Islamic groups, forces, and fighters are notoriously too widely reported on and discussed to require any introduction or further description here. Media almost all over the world are replete with the loud and unpleasant messages of these groups which tend to be received as a most visible and viable face of Islam. Therefore, rather than further introducing them, we raise three sets of questions and concerns in this regard.

First, as the apparently best-known face of Islam to non-Muslims worldwide, what is the position of these violent fractions regarding the call for peace in Islam? What does the world know about the positions of notorious gangs like Al-Qaeda and ISIL with regard to specifically peace and tolerance-related verses of the Quran quoted above? Moreover, as the verses of *fighting*, which are frequently quoted by these groups, seem to be directed at non-believers, why is it that they focus their actions mostly in the Islamic

world itself and against Muslims? Even if their reading of the Quran is a meaningful one, why is it that ISIL, for example, is not targeting any non-believer and does not throw even a single stone to Israel? This might be the evidence that the entire *radical Islam* phenomenon is not merely a version of Islam but probably a fabrication for certain political purposes.

Second, regardless of the justifications for the neglect of the inherent peace-seeking in Islam, one may ask how the so-called radical Islamic fighters managed to raise themselves up to the level of *the* face of Islam in the world. The world which is boasting the increasing access to information, centrally including the West with the much acknowledged *free* media, should be able to provide an explanation for how gangsters fighting under the title of Islam have been generally accepted as the true representatives of Islam. Taking the measure of sheer statistics and numbers as a point of reference (as seems to be a viable measure in "*demo*" cracy), the number of Muslims in the world is well beyond a billion, while fighters in the configuration of groups like Al-Qaeda, ISIL, Boko Haram, and the like are measured in hundreds or thousands (Blair, 2012; Cassidy, 2006; Partlow, 2009). Taking into consideration their scholarly and theoretical supporters, financial providers, and like-minded communities may raise the figure to tens of thousands, and even adding the purported (imaginary or factual) grassroots sympathizers (Pew, 2011), the peak of the number will not reach 10 percent of the Muslim population in the world.

With a concern for democracy (that Western politicians, media, and citizens claim to find particularly important) or with a simple perception of this (dis)proportion, based on elementary calculus, one may feel the urge to address a simple question: Has there ever been the slightest attempt at confirming that a considerable proportion of the Muslim population anywhere in the world *votes for* these groups as representatives of any denomination of Islam? What community of Muslims in any corner of the world has lived with Al-Qaeda and ISIL's killer- conception of Islam during the past fourteen centuries or part of that period? What is the nature of the type of Islam that people have lived with, for example, in the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, where some of

the most flourishing societies existed for centuries and some of the most vibrant human communities continue to live today. Simply ask a meaningful proportion of Muslim *people* in these communities and, they will say that hanging children, burning adults, and relentlessly beheading human beings has nothing to do with Islam.

Third, an irrational killer-image of Islam seems to be the favorite one for Western politics and media. We would not enter the arguments on the very creation of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and ISIL in Syria by Western intelligence agencies. We would not also enter the discussion on the argument that the US plans like the ones for a *new Middle East* (Washington Post, 2006), for *new Crusades* (Qureshi and Sells, 2003), and for fulfilling the *commitment to Israel's security* (Garamone, 2013) would be left futile without the existence of these groups. However, it is an open secret that these groups act to deny peaceful Islam and to fuel the confrontation of the West against a conception of Islam that merges peace and justice, that is, the lived Islam of *peoples.* This, interestingly, brings these *Islamic gangs* into an atmosphere of surprisingly harmonious co-functioning with Western global hegemonic powers represented by the US. These two crushing forces, apparently coming from opposing origins, ironically function in harmony to demonize anything associated with Islam.

This co-functioning can hardly be seen as a mere coincidence. The global regimes of dominance may actively fabricate and fuel such terror mechanisms as a tool of reinforcing their dominance under an Islamic-looking disguise, as they may do under other covers like the pro-Western militia groups in South America and recently the opposition groups in Ukraine. Therefore, the two blades of neoliberal *hegemony* and *irrationalism* under the disguise of radical Islam come together against genuine Islamic thought around the world. This once-covert marriage unprecedentedly surfaces as Islamophobia. Considering the triple issues discussed above, it would not be out of place to suggest that the entire Islamophobia enterprise, or "Islamophobia Industry" as Lean (2012) eloquently calls it, is probably based on a broad plot by Western security agencies. Even the most vulnerable portions of the Western lay communities who may rather easily fall prey to the Islamophobic

tides, would find this suggestion worth contemplating, before labeling it as just another *conspiracy theory*.

In a detailed discussion of "The roots of the Islamophobia network in America" (Ali, et al., 2011), the authors investigate the processes and sources of funding for the Islamophobia trends, the central role of "misinformation experts," the influence of the religious right, and the anti-Islam propaganda of right-wing media. However, they see the contribution of *politicians* as a crucial element in Islamophobia, and this along with the positions of other high ranking politicians (Garamone, 2013; Qureshi and Sells, 2003; *Washington Post*, 2006) may be well taken as the contribution of politics and the US political system:

> Messages can spread far and wide because of the small but effective groups of funders and think tanks, right-wing grassroots and religious groups, and their right-wing media enablers on cable TV, radio, and the Internet.
> But the ability of this tightly knit network to drench the public with misinformation is greatly enhanced by elected officials at the state and national level—politicians who push these myths as "facts" and then craft political fundraising campaigns and get-out-the-vote strategies based on debunked information about Muslims and Islam. (Ali, et al., 2011, p. 109)

One may put these authors' examples of *politicians who push* Islamophobic *myths as facts* next to many examples of government-supported Islamophobia (including the ones presented in some of the chapter of this volume) and next to the argument for the very creation of Al-Qaeda-like gangs by Western secret services. The picture that such a combination may provide is a simple pair of scissors: As the lower blade, the Western hegemonic powers, represented by the US government, created fabrications like Al-Qaeda and ISIL and cultivated a brutal so-called extremist Islamic attitude for purposes like facing the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s or crushing Syria and grappling with its anti-Zionist allies like Iran and Hizbollah; as the upper blade, the same godfathers of terror enflamed the Islamophobic blaze and

extremely publicized it through *their own* media to forge and naturalize a conception of *extremist* Islam as *Islam*. The final stage is just a simple co-working of the two blades; fight anything related to *Islam* (which is all *extremist*) including its inherent cause of seeking *justice* and resisting *oppression*. The world would be easier to tame in the absence of such a cause.

A final argument in this regard is that if Islam can be equated in the public eye with something which is clearly non-Islam and then exploited as a terrorizing instrument, then, any other belief structure potentially threating to the dominance of the global hegemony can fall prey to such evil intentions; be it Indian American community-life, Soviet-type communism, Chinese socialism, Nazism, or Fascism (regardless of the drastic differences among them and regardless of the inherent disasters in some of them); or be it nationalism in its diversity of realizations by different people in different countries, from Sukarno in Indonesia to Nehru in India, and from Mosaddegh in Iran to Mugabe in Zimbabwe and to several US-challenging leaders in South America. Therefore, Islamophobia processes may be viewed as an illustration of aspects of a broad global *othering* plot that can potentially target any country "to prevent the rise of any society that might serve as a successful example of an alternative to the capitalist model" (Blum, 2013, p. 214).

With this view of Islamophobia as a global concern beyond Muslim communities, the fairly growing literature and increasing problematization of Islamophobia (Insted, 2013) may appear to be thin. Its diverse faces and facets in different contexts around the world need to be extensively explored; and awareness, sensitivity, and questions need to be raised on the part of Muslim communities, Western populations, and non-Western non-Muslim people. Books on aspects of Islamophobia have been proliferating in the past decade (Allen, 2010; Bulkin and Nevel, 2014; Ernst, 2013; Esposito and Kalin, 2011; Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2007; Helbling, 2012; Kumar, 2012; Morgan and Poynting, 2012; Sayyid and Vakil, 2010; Sheehi, 2011). However, it may well be argued that so are instances of this phenomenon. Therefore, the diverse aspects of the issue; the very complicated sociopolitical nature of the concerns in this regard; and the diversity of the geographical settings where the issue is

relevant, cause many problems and discussions that remain far from exhausted even in the case of multiple treatments of similar topics and contexts. Therefore, this volume, despite similarities in some topics and titles, is intended to add new dimensions and depth to existing books.

After this introductory chapter, in chapter 2, Steven Fink highlights some religious justifications for forging Islamophobic attitudes and examines positions of American Christian Zionist leaders in connecting Islam with violence. In the context of a narrative of fear, according to which Israel and the US face the imminent threat of destruction, Fink discusses how this discourse of fear may shape Christian Zionist laypeople's views of Muslim Palestinians, demonstrating that it promotes opposing their land claims and disregarding their human dignity. The chapter also argues that because of its basis in fear, the Christian Zionist narrative also promotes the justification of violence against Palestinians as Muslims.

Shifting to an equally important sociopolitical context and to the arena of political discourse, Brian Klug in chapter 3 reads between the lines of a speech by the British prime minister and discusses how he projected a distracted image of Islamic perspectives under an apparent defense of Islam. Klug raises a key question in this regard: Is the speech implicitly Islamophobic? To address the question, the chapter examines aspects of the word and the concept of Islamophobia and on this basis the author argues for the existence of an underlying *othering* stance in the prime minister's speech vis-à-vis Muslims. A focus on the rhetoric of a politician also shapes the substance of chapter 4 in which Farid Hafez explores the illustration of Islamophobia in the discourse of an Austrian politician. Through critical discourse analysis, the chapter examines an interview with this right-wing party leader and highlights major Islamophobic discourse strategies used to verbally exclude Muslims and demand Islamophobic politics.

In chapter 5, James Carr brings together the state-politics position and the perspective of the general public with regard to attitudes of suspicion toward Muslims in the context of Ireland and in light of the experience of people who used to be targets of such

attitudes themselves. Based on empirical research data, Carr discusses and illustrates how the Irish State profiles Muslims as a suspect community. He also argues that practices of *suspecting* are not restricted to the State and Muslims are subjected to the suspicious gaze of the Irish public as well.

Halim Rane and Nora Amath, in chapter 6, focus on the specific problem of asylum seekers in Australia and how Islamophobic trends find their way into the debates over this issue. They examine the policies of the Australian government about asylum seekers as specifically reflected in various Australian media. The chapter discusses the representation of Islam and Muslims in the Australian media and the extent of Islamophobia in Australian society. A major argument by Rane and Amath in this chapter is that Islamophobic notions shape a major factor in the coverage of the asylum seeker concern and that the media tend to reproduce the government's views in this regard.

Turning to the issue of Muslim women in Western communities as a target of Islamophobic attitudes, chapter 7 by Laura Navarro focuses on the role of mass media in the social reproduction of Islamophobia and sexism. The chapter analyzes dominant representations of Muslim women in Spanish mass media, showing how these images reinforce Islamophobic stereotypes about these women in general and migrant Muslim women specially. Navarro also looks at the French *anti-veil law* and discusses how the racist aspects of the law were ignored by the majority of mass media and politicians in the debate over this issue. Overall, the author attempts to analyze the symbolic mechanisms legitimizing certain Islamophobic thoughts and practices from a gender perspective.

Chapter 8 generally argues that countering Islamophobic perceptions and practices requires more creativity than simply talking about it. In this chapter, Stéphane Lathion presents an overview of two distinct periods of the discussion of Muslim realities in the past three decades before turning to the specific consideration of the word *jihad* to illustrate the challenges of the application of religious vocabulary. He proposes steps toward reducing tensions and creating awareness on the part of concerned actors including various groups of politicians, journalists, social workers, public

administrators, teachers, and Muslim community workers and religious leaders.

Finally, Nazeem Goolam in chapter 9 sets out from the argument that Islam is a way of life founded on peace and that jihad must not be equated with terrorism and attempts to clarify the Islamic concepts of non-violence and tolerance. The chapter then examines two instances of Islamophobic practices. Referring to the scarf ban in France, Goolam seeks to unravel some Western fears of the Muslim dress code and the practice of double standards in this regard. He also focuses on why Britain fears Islamic extremism in its schools and discusses aspects of the association of British values with *being un-Islamic*.

The chapters, authored by scholars who specifically work on aspects of Islamophobia around the world, examine various instances of Islamophobia and explore different discursive contexts including those of media coverage and manipulation; political debates and discourses; and general attitudes and attitude-building in the public sphere. The geographical settings of the contributors and the locus of their explorations cover different countries including Australia, Austria, France, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the US. While “Muslims have increasingly been targets of prejudice, stereotypes, and other forms of hostility in the United States and Europe” (Croucher, 2013, p. 46) and Islamophobia is viewed as a *security* concern (Edwards, 2015), it is hoped that this book serves the purpose of further expansion of the discussions and extension of the distribution of writings on the issue, and highlights some hitherto less discussed concerns.

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Chapter 2
Fear under Construction

Steven Fink

Islamophobia within American Christian Zionism[1]

"Violent Islam is true Islam." This statement (Shoebat, 2010, p. 137) encapsulates a view of Islam which is commonly presented by leaders of American Christian Zionism, a subsection of American evangelical Christianity which emphasizes unwavering support for the nation of Israel. Reflecting the Orientalist tendency of constructing degrading monolithic caricatures of Islam and Muslims, these leaders construct essentialist depictions which play a powerful role in shaping Christian Zionist laypeople's conceptions of Muslims in general and Palestinian Muslims in particular. It is difficult to gauge the place of this subsection within the landscape of American evangelical Christianity, and to determine the actual number of Christian Zionists in the United States. Shortly before his death in 2007, Christian Zionist pastor Jerry Falwell claimed that this figure exceeded 100 million, but Mezvinsky (2010) states that the number in 2009 was probably in the range of 50–60 million. Although Falwell's amount was most likely exaggerated, Mezvinsky's estimate demonstrates a significant Christian Zionist presence in the United States, and therefore, a large number of Americans who are regularly exposed to anti-Islamic discourse which can strongly affect their views about Palestinians.

A major emphasis in Christian Zionist teaching is eschatological, focusing on future events. Despite variations in the specific details of what exactly will transpire, a fundamental Christian Zionist belief is that Jesus will take his true believers into heaven during the rapture and will subsequently return to earth, but only after Israel, especially Jerusalem, is completely under Jewish control and contains a majority Jewish population. Palestinians are the adversary, since their presence and influence in the region must be greatly diminished, if not obliterated, for the desired eschatological events to occur. Presenting this apocalyptic view, Christian Zionist leaders

provide their congregations and readers with a sense of personal purpose, as their choice to support Israel takes on cosmic importance, advancing these eschatological events. Moreover, negative portrayals of Palestinians function importantly within Christian Zionist eschatology in order to uphold foundational tenets regarding the justice of God. Constructing Palestinians as irremediably prone to violence and other forms of evil, Christian Zionist leaders suggest there would be no reason to question the belief that God will destroy them in the end times. Although according to this view God will annihilate a multitude of Palestinians, God is held blameless in Christian Zionist eyes.

Instead of examining the eschatological element of American Christian Zionism, however, in this chapter I will concentrate on a major facet of this movement which emphasizes the present rather than the future. I will explore Christian Zionist leaders' use of the biblical verse Genesis 12:3, "I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse" (NIV). For these leaders, God's words to Abraham are God's words to twenty-first century Americans, who will experience dire consequences if they curse rather than bless the nation of Israel. I will examine the use of this verse within what I call the American Christian Zionist *Genesis 12:3 narrative*, drawing particular attention to its Islamophobic discourse. This narrative is grounded in fear, raising the specter of an imminent catastrophe if American Christians do not respond to the warning of Genesis 12:3 and pledge unconditional support for Israel against the threat of purportedly fundamentally evil violent Islam. Especially because of its basis in fear, this narrative can exert a powerful influence upon the way in which Christian Zionist laypeople view Palestinians, leading these Christian Zionists to oppose their land claims, to fail to recognize their human dignity, and to justify violence against them.

Pastor of 19,000-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, John Hagee is one of American Christian Zionism's chief Genesis 12:3 narrators. Hagee started "A Night to Honor Israel" in 1981, responding to what he viewed as unjust world condemnation of Israel after its bombing of a nuclear reactor in Iraq. According to his *In Defense of Israel*, at his first "A Night to Honor Israel" Hagee

(2007) declared, “Israel, you are not alone; Christians support you, and America supports you. We love you, and we shall stand by you,” and since 1981 this event “has given encouragement, inspiration, and comfort to people who often felt alone. A Night to Honor Israel has also raised millions of dollars to support charities and resettlement of world Jewry in Israel” (pp. vii–viii). Indeed this financial support has been abundant, with John Hagee Ministries donating $8 million to Israel in 2007 alone for immigration and other assistance. Hagee’s Global Evangelism Television has broadcast programs worldwide on 150 stations, and his books amass a large number of readers, such as his *Jerusalem Countdown* (2006), which has sold over 800,000 copies. Hagee has also shaped American foreign policy decisions, especially through Christians United for Israel (CUFI), which he began in 2006. In CUFI’s first lobbying effort, in July 2006, over 3400 Christian Zionists from all 50 states came to Washington, DC. and participated in 280 meetings with congressional representatives, and on the day of the CUFI banquet the House of Representatives passed a strongly pro-Israel resolution by a vote of 410 to 8 (Spector, 2008).

In addition to Hagee, ideas of three other prominent Christian Zionist leaders will be highlighted in this chapter. Michael Evans is the founder of the Jerusalem Prayer Team, whose members have included well-known pastors, as well as major political figures and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Evans’s books proudly display his recipience of the Ambassador Award from the Israeli government and his advisory positions to many prime ministers of Israel and mayors of Jerusalem. Though not as connected politically or prolific of an author as Hagee or Evans, pastor Chuck Missler has nonetheless also shaped the worldview of numerous Christian Zionists through his daily Christian radio program 66/44 and his Internet ministry Koinonia House, which claims to bring “the world into focus through the lens of Bible prophecy” (www.khouse.org). Finally, Walid Shoebat has achieved popularity through his books and even more so through appearances on conservative media outlets such as the Fox News Channel. Although the *Jerusalem Post* and other sources have challenged the veracity of his claim, Shoebat describes himself as a former Palestinian Muslim terrorist, thereby

purportedly giving him a former insider's view to substantiate virulently anti-Islamic remarks, such as Shoebat's (2010) assertion in *God's War on Terror* that "it is with absolute sobriety that I declare that this book will establish the fact that Islam is the religion of the Antichrist" (p. 25).

These American Christian Zionist leaders connect Islam categorically with violence. Hagee (2007) announces that "Islam not only *condones* violence; it *commands* it. A tree is known by its fruit, and the fruit produced by Islam is fourteen hundred years of violence and bloodshed around the world" (p. 68). These leaders are also especially apprehensive about the presence of an alternate message concerning Islam as a religion of *peace*. Shoebat (2010) writes: "Imagine how I feel as a former Muslim to hear some ignorant Western commentator tell me that Islam means 'peace' . . ." (p. 26). Additionally, Christian Zionist leaders challenge the notion that Islamic terrorism is an aberration in relation to mainstream Islam. Hagee (2006) declares that "Islamic terrorists are not *fanatics*—but *devout followers of Muhammad* who are following his example and doing what their Islamic Bible teaches them to do" (p. 33). Mirroring this belief, Shoebat (2010) maintains that Islamic terrorists "are indeed behaving in an Islamic way. They are behaving like Mohammed and his successors. While it is often said that the terrorists have hijacked Islam, in reality the so-called moderate Muslims are trying to change the true teachings of Islam." (p. 137).

According to the leaders of Christian Zionism, Muslims are wholeheartedly committed to Israel's obliteration. Claiming that Muhammad dreamed of Islamic world domination, Hagee (2006) warns, "The first step in fulfilling Muhammad's dream is the destruction of Israel" (p. 42). Missler (2006) magnifies this threat by declaring that one of Islam's "primary goals" is to

> wipe Israel and the Jews off the map. . . . This legacy of hate that focuses on the Jews—and includes the Christians—has always been the obsession of Islam, and this clearly identifies it as *satanic*. Islam's agenda is the same as that of the Pharaoh who slaughtered the babies in the book of Exodus; Haman's attempts in the days of Esther; Hitler's pursuit of the 'final

> solution'; and it will continue with the final world leader pursuit at Armageddon. (p. 148)

An argument which these leaders commonly express is that Muslims are consumed by a longing for Israel's annihilation because the veracity of the Quran would be undermined if Israel is not destroyed. Hagee (2006) writes, "Islam believes the prophet Muhammad taught absolute truth—that it is God's (Allah's) will for them to rule the earth. Therefore, if Islam does not defeat Israel, Muhammad and the Quran were wrong—and that's absolutely unthinkable. Therefore, they must defeat Israel. . . . If Israel survives, then Islamic theology is not true" (p. 35). Shoebat (2010) offers this argument as well, concluding that "Allah is not God" for Muslims if Israel continues to exist (p. 38). According to Christian Zionist leaders, the stakes could not be higher for Muslims to seek the destruction of Israel, since the foundations of their religion would irreparably crumble if this destruction does not transpire.

THE GENESIS 12:3 NARRATIVE

Importantly, these leaders maintain that the stakes are just as high for Americans, because their nation too may be destroyed if they do not support Israel against Palestinians. Based on their exposition of Genesis 12:3, these leaders exhort congregations and readers to support Israel and therefore receive God's blessings instead of God's curses. According to Hagee (2006), the "word could not be plainer: if you want the blessing of God upon your life, you must *bless* Israel, not *curse* it with hatred, persecution, and murder" (pp. 63–64). Quoting Genesis 12:3, Hagee refers to numerous biblical stories, to demonstrate an irrefutable pattern of God's blessings upon those who have assisted the people of Israel and God's curses upon those who have harmed them in some manner. Christian Zionist leaders contend that this pattern is just as certain during any time period as it was during biblical times. Shoebat (2010) writes: "What was promised to Abraham, 'I will curse those who curse you and bless those who bless you' still stands. It has no expiration date" (p. 52). It is noteworthy that Shoebat reverses the order of the words

in Genesis 12:3, placing the idea of cursing before blessing, since like his other fellow leaders he warns of curses more frequently than speaking of God's blessings. Shoebat (2010) tells his readers that God's commitment to curse those who harm the people of Israel is "a proven law with much historical evidence that no logical man can deny. Nothing could be more self-fulfilling" (p. 52), and he exemplifies this claim by citing historical examples including the death of Hitler. Significantly, Christian Zionist leaders proclaim that America is currently receiving such curses from God. Evans (2005) makes the startling statement that there is "absolutely no question that God's hedge of protection was lifted from America. September 11 was a curse on our beloved nation, but worse is the fact that most Americans don't understand why it happened. I believe it will happen again, and again and again, and much worse, if Americans do not wake up to the truth" (p. 14). Thus the Genesis 12:3 Narrative proposes the following message: As demonstrated categorically by biblical examples and by recent history, America must support Israel lest an event even more devastating than September 11 will occur.

Intrinsic to this message is also the idea that whether or not Americans support Israel is a choice characterized by urgency. These divine attributes are asserted not to preclude God from giving humans the responsibility to make choices which could have tremendous historical consequences. Noting biblical precedents such as God's desire to allow Abraham to intercede for inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah before these cities' destruction, Evans (2005) writes, "the Scriptures themselves indicate that we can choose to be on the blessing or cursing side of prophecy" (p. 29). Not all Americans, however, are capable of making this choice according to Christian Zionist leaders. In the context of quoting Genesis 12:3, Evans (2005) declares that "God-fearing Americans must stand up now before it is too late" (p. 212), since they alone are equipped to make the requisite choice for the sake of America as a whole.

Considering the urgency of this choice, the Genesis 12:3 Narrative especially emphasizes kairotic time, in which the present is accentuated as a moment in history when American Christians must make an existential decision bearing incalculable significance. Evans (2005) declares: "There has never been a more urgent time for

Americans to act with moral clarity than today . . .” (pp. 20–21). Hagee (2006) also displays this kairotic dimension of time, uttering: “America is at the crossroads! Will we believe and obey the Word of God concerning Israel, or will we continue to equivocate and sympathize with Israel’s enemies?” (p. 193). Constructing Islam, the religion of most Palestinians, as essentially evil and violent, Christian Zionist leaders seek to make this choice extremely obvious, as if there were no need whatsoever to even question the position that the United States should support Israel rather than its malignant Palestinian *enemies*.

THREE PRODUCTS OF THE GENESIS 12:3 NARRATIVE

Denial of Palestinian Land Possession

Christian Zionist leaders aim to provide no doubt that American Christians must choose to support Israel. Recognizing the vagueness of this directive, however, the question must be raised regarding what exactly this support might entail. Victoria Clark (2007) addresses this question, quoting Genesis 12:3 and then stating that “blessing” Israel has involved many Christian Zionists “in opposing any peace process, in supporting the continued building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, in funding those internationally outlawed settlements and in backing an extreme right-wing Israeli plan to ‘transfer’ the Palestinians to neighboring Arab states” (p. 12). Most prominently, Christian Zionist leaders have demanded that the United States must not urge Israel to give up any land or sign peace treaties with Palestinian authorities. According to these leaders, God promised the land of Israel to the Jewish people not only for biblical times but forever. Hagee (2007) asserts that “God gave the Jewish people the land of Israel by divine covenant. (See Genesis 15:17–21; 17:7–8.) That covenant is a blood covenant; it is eternal and unbreakable” (p. 53). He references numerous biblical passages to maintain that the creation of the nation of Israel in 1948 was a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. In addition to claiming that Israel has a divine mandate for the land it currently possesses, Palestinians are

asserted to have no right to any land, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip,, because the land was given to Isaac rather than Ishmael, the “father of Arabs” who “was excluded from the title deed to the land in Genesis 17:19–21” (Hagee, 2006, p. 196). It is also maintained that there is historical support for this position:

> The land of Israel has never belonged to Palestinians. Never! It was labeled Palaestina by the Roman emperor Hadrian in A.D. 130, but there has never been a land called Palestine. There is no Palestinian language. Before 1948, the people now called Palestinians lived in Egypt. They lived in Syria. They lived in Iraq. They moved into the land of Israel when they were displaced by the war of 1948, which the Arab nations started, but Israel is not occupying territory these people now call home. Referring to Israel as ‘occupied territory’ is propaganda. (Hagee, 2007, pp. 58–59)

Missler (2006) challenges Palestinian possession of land with a similar argument, declaring that “there has never been a country of Palestine ruled by Palestinians” (p. 130). For these leaders, Israel has no reason to relinquish any land and must not do so since this would violate the will of God. They proclaim that the United States will experience dire consequences if it plays a role in Israeli loss of land. Hagee (2007) declares that any nation “that forces Israel to ‘divide the land’ will come under the swift and certain judgment of God” (pp. 53–54). In order to prevent this scenario, Hagee (2007) implores his readers to place pressure on members of American government, saying: “Every Christian in America has a biblical mandate to stand in absolute solidarity with Israel and demand that our leaders in Washington stop recommending Israel’s withdrawal as the solution to every conflict that arises in the Middle East” (pp. 53–54). There are further warnings against American involvement in land deals linked to peace treaties with Palestinians, because followers of Islam allegedly can never be trusted to uphold their terms of a treaty. Shoebat (2010) contends: “To the Muslim mind, treaties are not binding agreements, but rather opportunities to grow stronger while buying time or to appear peaceful while preparing for

war“ (p. 120). Missler (2006) turns to the beginning of Islamic history to illustrate this allegation, claiming that Muhammad used to violate his peace treaties and that those violations are celebrated today. Because of this purported Islamic attitude toward treaties, Shoebat (2010) admonishes his readers not to adopt misguided optimism about Palestinian involvement in peace agreements, announcing: “This is 1938 all over again” (p. 456). Raising the fearful specter of Hitler and his scorning of attempts to effect peace, Shoebat suggests that tragedy of Holocaust-like proportions will result if Americans trust Palestinians to faithfully uphold any treaty with Israel.

Consistent with their application of Genesis 12:3, Christian Zionist leaders emphasize that such a tragedy may affect not only Israel but the United States as well if America pressures Israel to give up land or enter into treaty agreements with Palestinian authorities. Hagee (2006) declares: “America is very vulnerable to terrorist attacks in the future, whose consequences could be much more severe than the three thousand lives lost on 9/11. This is not a time to provoke God and defy Him to pour out His judgment on our nation for being a principal force in the division of the land of Israel” (p. 194). Reflecting its enormous importance for Christian Zionists, Jerusalem appears especially prominently in these warnings, as Christian Zionism condemns any plan to divide the city. Evans (2005) proclaims that the “nations that divided Jerusalem will be cursed beyond their ability to comprehend. If that happens, no amount of prayer or repentance will reverse the curse on that nation” (p. 167). Evans then focuses specifically on the United States, warning: “If America divides Jerusalem, there will be no forgiveness. America will tragically end up on the ash heap of history” (2005, p. 167). Conjuring images of September 11, Christian Zionist congregations and readers are encouraged to imagine the occurrence of something much more cataclysmic if they do not actively oppose the division of Israel, especially Jerusalem.

Dehumanization of Palestinians

Occasionally Christian Zionist leaders explicitly refer to Palestinians in order to claim they are not an actual people group.

Hagee (2007) makes this position extremely clear, stating that “the Palestinians have *never* existed as an autonomous society” (p. 176). For Missler, Palestinian identity is not simply called into question; it is expressly denied and transferred to Jewish inhabitants of Israel. Missler (2006) writes that the “Jewish people are the real Palestinians. They have a documented three-thousand-year history in that land” (p. 130). Such statements which explicitly deny Palestinians’ existence as a people group can powerfully affect Christian Zionist laypeople’s conception of Palestinians. What is not as readily apparent, however, is that this conception may also be dramatically shaped by the implicit treatment of Palestinians inherent within the Genesis 12:3 Narrative. For the most part, throughout this narrative Palestinians are an unnamed people, subsumed under the reified label *Islam*. In addition to obfuscating the fact that not all Palestinians are Muslims, this tendency to discuss *Islam* rather than *Palestinians* may effectively make Palestinians invisible in the Genesis 12:3 Narrative. While the humanity of Americans and Jewish inhabitants of Israel takes center stage in the Genesis 12:3 Narrative, since their existence hangs perilously in the balance due to potential imminent destruction, the humanity of Palestinians is not brought to light.

Melani McAlister draws attention to an analogous phenomenon in the *Left Behind* series, a set of novels and movies which achieved tremendous popularity among Christian Zionists during the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Noting that no Palestinian Arab plays a role in the series even though much of its action takes place in or near Jerusalem, McAlister (2003) concludes that Palestinians “are simply outside the representational possibilities of the *Left Behind* world. Dick Armey’s suggestion that the Palestinians should be removed from the West Bank and Gaza, and Pat Robertson’s insistence that Israel should never compromise one bit of land, are enacted within the novels as wish fulfillment: there is no Palestinian problem on the evangelical map” (pp. 791–792). Concentrating on Islam rather than Palestinians befits post-September 11 America, since Christian Zionism build upon widespread associations between Islam and violence to augment the sense of impending threat they desire to create. As a result, not only

does Islam become more sinister in the minds of Christian Zionists, but the existence of Palestinians continues to remain in the background, if acknowledged at all.

Furthermore, for those Christian Zionist laypeople who encounter the Genesis 12:3 Narrative and nonetheless recognize Palestinians' existence, the Narrative promotes an additional dehumanizing effect, namely an inability to recognize the human dignity of Palestinians. Due to the thoroughly unfavorable depiction of Islam by the Genesis 12:3 Narrative, Palestinian Muslims are implicitly cast as essentially violent and evil, lacking human dignity. Moreover, they are implicitly presented as absolute foils to Jewish inhabitants of Israel. As illustrated by Hagee (2006), Christian Zionist leaders regularly proclaim that "the religious beliefs of Islam and Israel remain in total opposition to each other" (p. 42). Lauding the virtue of Jewish inhabitants of Israel while simultaneously denigrating Palestinians, Shoebat (2010) declares: "Jews love peace. In fact, when I speak at Jewish events I always quote Golda Meir: 'We will have peace when the Arabs love their children more than they hate us'" (p. 100). Hagee (2007) also extols Jewish inhabitants of Israel in distinction to their Muslim neighbors, insisting that the Israeli system of government, crafted by Jews, stands alone as a regional exemplar. According to Hagee, Israel "is the only true democracy in the Middle East. It is an island in a sea of radical Muslims screaming for the death of every *infidel* (non-Muslim)" (p. 174).

Employing this Manichean mind-set, the Genesis 12:3 Narrative dehumanizes Palestinian Muslims. As Strozier and Boyd (2010) argue, this type of dualistic thought causes one to "see others in very partial terms—as part-objects," so that one loses "the ability to imagine the inner world and humanity of others" (p. 14), especially of those characterized on the nefarious side of this dualism. Reflecting upon Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism, Douglas Little (1993) asserts that such bifurcated understanding concerning Israel and Palestinians promotes the mind-set that Palestinians "represent 'terrorism' and little beyond it" (pp. 260–261). Such a perspective inhibits imagining the inner world of Palestinians and their human dignity, and illustrates them uniformly as terrorists and adherents of a malevolent religion. While it should not be perceived that all Christian

Zionists will inexorably adopt such a mind-set due to the Genesis 12:3 Narrative, its possibility to become actualized must be acknowledged. As I will discuss in the following section, such acknowledgment is especially important because whereas Christian Zionists are exhorted to devote their energy, prayers, and resources to rescuing the Jews of Israel as well as themselves from imminent destruction, lack of regard for Palestinians' human dignity may manifest itself in Christian Zionists desiring Palestinians' destruction.

Justification of Violence against Palestinians

When one group fails to recognize the humanity of another, a desire for and justification of violence against this other group may naturally ensue. Such violence may appear well justified by perpetrators and their allies since the victims are viewed as wicked beings that deserve these actions. Such approval of violence against Palestinians can be linked to the Genesis 12:3 Narrative, as demonstrated by the staunch advocacy of Israeli military action against Palestinians which is expressed by all four Christian Zionist leaders discussed in this article. Hagee (2007) proclaims: "It's time, as friends, for us to say, 'Israel, we stand with you—and enough is enough! You have the right to attack your terrorist enemies just as America has the right to attack ours!'" (p. 82). Evans (2005) insists that "America will have to allow Israel to fight their war against terrorism that has never been fought" (p. 9), and Missler (2006) declares that "Israel has the God-given right to defend itself against terrorism" (p. 135). Additionally, Shoebat (2010) entreats readers to support what he identifies as a divinely ordained Israeli "war on terror" against Palestinians (p. 52). Even though these leaders may not endorse direct American military action against Palestinians, similar to Evans's call in his 2003 *Beyond Iraq* for American so-called preemptive strikes against Iraq, they nonetheless clearly desire for violent actions to be carried out against Palestinians by Israeli forces.

Importantly, two tendencies of Christian Zionist leaders may lead laypeople to uncritically accept these leaders' ideas, thereby increasing the likelihood for laypeople to justify and desire acts of

violence against Palestinians. First, these leaders commonly present an ethos of unique personal authority, which seeks to negate any doubt regarding the veracity of their claims. Remarkably similar to comments made by Evans, Hagee (2006) boasts: “I have been going to Israel regularly since 1978 and over the years have developed a network of highly qualified and strategically placed confidential sources that have a very clear and certain focus on critical geopolitical developments in Israel and the Middle East” (p. 13). Shoebat is especially noteworthy in this regard, as he regularly emphasizes his status as *a former Palestinian terrorist* to generate a sense of definitive personal authority. In *God’s War on Terror*, Shoebat (2010) states: “I will provide you with a fresh understanding of Biblical prophecy from an Eastern perspective and insight into the Bible as viewed by an ex-Muslim terrorist. . . . He chose Paul, a terrorist against Christians, and He transformed him into one of the greatest Christian ambassadors that has ever lived. Like Paul, I persecuted God’s people, and like Christ, I was born in the same village as the King of Kings” (p. 23). Placing himself in such mythic proportions, Shoebat aims to create an aura of authority similar to what his readers would attribute to the Bible.

Second, uncritical acceptance of Christian Zionist leaders’ ideas may result from their tendency to impute divine mandate upon their narrative, as if obedience to God requires acceptance of whatever they say. In order to accentuate this sense of divine mandate, these leaders occasionally contend that the events which they describe are not a matter of politics, which is ultimately a human affair, but rather of divine providence. Evans (2005) proclaims: “The Scriptures call on us to speak out. The battle being fought over Jerusalem is not politics—it’s prophecy. It’s not a foreign policy battle, but a heavenly battle!” (p. 145). Along these lines, Evans recounts his role in a 1981 meeting with American president Ronald Reagan’s staff and American generals and admirals regarding the sale of military planes to Saudi Arabia, a proposal which Evans identified as contrary to God’s will. In response to being asked, “What does God know about foreign policy?” Evans (2005) exclaimed, “He is foreign policy!” (p. 15). This type of assertion seeks to quash disagreement and doubt,

suggesting there is no need to even consider alternative viewpoints since God has already settled the matter.

While these two tendencies may play a significant role in stimulating a desire by Christian Zionist laypeople for violence against Palestinians, the sense of fear created by the Genesis 12:3 Narrative plays an even greater role. With its threat of cataclysmic American destruction, the Narrative promotes a desire to prevent this destruction through acts of violence. Such eagerness for violence in response to a sense of threat is characteristic of a contemporary American attitude toward fear, highlighted by Peter Stearns (2006). He (2006) states that contemporary Americans "respond to fear as a highly individual emotional affront . . . which someone, somehow should both punish and assuage" (p. 114). With the Genesis 12:3 Narrative identifying Islam and its Palestinian followers as an ominous threat to Israel and therefore to America, Christian Zionists may respond to this perceived threat with a longing to punish it. In addition to this contemporary American attitude toward fear, a feature of the Genesis 12:3 Narrative itself connects this narrative with a desire for violent actions against Palestinians. By emphasizing the presence of imminent danger to Israel and the United States, nations are depicted by Christian Zionism as *rare, precious,* or *unique*, the Genesis 12:3 Narrative can easily spur Christian Zionist laypeople to approve of *extraordinary measures* of violence against Palestinians, since they are held responsible for this threat to the irreparable. Thus, the advocacy of military action against Palestinians becomes no longer merely the desire of a few leaders but a shared conviction held by a substantial number of Christian Zionists.

CONCLUSION

In the mind-set undergirding the Genesis 12:3 Narrative, answers are already settled in a dichotomized good vs. evil worldview that shuns any acknowledgment of ambiguity in Israeli-Palestinian relations. In Jason Bivins's (2008) words, this type of worldview is endemic to a "religion of fear," which "asks us to see not only political life but human existence as fixed and settled; it contends that a

single, irrevocable choice (us or them, in or out, identity or self-adrift) can serve as a surrogate for the messy indeterminacy of public life. . . . The religion of fear has slowly constructed a frame through which public life is seen in terms of conflict rather than cooperation and dialogue" (pp. 233–234).

While *conflict* may arguably be an appropriate label to characterize contemporary Israeli-Palestinian relations, the fear-based mind-set infusing the Genesis 12:3 Narrative effectively obstructs Christian Zionists from even considering this relationship as an opportunity for cooperation and dialogue, rather than an insoluble conflict. Furthermore, within this mind-set, cooperation and dialogue with Muslim Palestinians are viewed as preposterous since they are antithetical to the binary thought in which this mentality finds security. Islamophobia feeds on such binary thinking, providing a sense of security in an oversimplified world, one that has no space for the messy work of dialogue and features blanket condemnation of Muslims instead. As illustrated by the ramifications of the Christian Zionist Genesis 12:3 Narrative, the price of Islamophobic constructions of this world is steep, with the dehumanization of Muslims and justification of violence against them looming as a tragic result.

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Chapter 3
Implicit Islamophobia?

Brian Klug

Behind the "Muscular Liberalism"
of the British Prime Minister[1]

In February 2011, David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party, gave a speech at the 47th Munich Security Conference in which he spoke about terrorism, specifically the kind that he attributed to *Islamist extremism*. In the course of his speech he defended Islam against critics "on the hard right" whose arguments, he said, "fuel Islamophobia" (Cameron, 2011). (The text of this speech is the source for all quotes from and references to *the speech* in this essay.) On the face of it, Cameron is on the side of the angels. But when we read between the lines, does this impression hold up?

Reading between the lines involves an analysis covering the overall structure of the speech, the logic of Cameron's argument, and the rhetoric he employs. This is the project I pursue in the first part, the longest part of the chapter, laying the foundation for the remainder of the discussion. I confine my attention to the first half of the speech, as this is where Cameron sets out his stall. The analysis reveals a gap between the message that the speech conveys on the surface and the message it conveys at depth. This leads to the question: Is the speech implicitly Islamophobic? This question calls for an examination of the concept of Islamophobia, to which I turn in the second part, where I put forward an account of what *Islamophobia* means, emphasizing the distinction between word and concept. In the light of this account I return, in the third part of the chapter, to the question of how to take the speech as a whole. What is the verdict? Does it give with one hand what it takes away with the other? Is it a *rejection* of Islamophobia or is it an *expression* of it—or what?

This question takes on added significance in view of the raft of domestic measures that Cameron proposes in the second half of his

speech to “defeat” the “threat” posed by “Islamist extremism.” The proposals he sets out here, especially his advocacy of “a much more active muscular liberalism,” formed a basis for ongoing initiatives taken by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government, including the letter sent to mosques in the UK in January 2015 by the Communities Secretary Eric Pickles and the consultation on actively promoting *fundamental British values* in schools launched in summer 2014 by the Department for Education. In the immediate aftermath of the May 2015 General Election, Cameron effectively reasserted *muscular liberalism* in a speech to the National Security Council, saying: “For too long, we have been a passively tolerant society” (Stone, 2015). Consequently, the argument (and verdict) of this essay has implications for assessing the Islamophobic tendency (or otherwise) of all these government initiatives. In this chapter I stop short of applying the argument this way.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES: ANALYSIS

The Munich Security Conference is an annual event at which heads of states, military and security experts, diplomats, and senior politicians from over seventy countries gather to discuss international policy on security. Ban Ki-moon (UN Secretary General), Hillary Clinton (US Secretary of State), Baroness Ashton (EU Foreign Minister), and Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany) were among the participants at the 47th conference, which met in February 2011 in Munich. Thus, this was a high-profile occasion in which Cameron, speaking as the head of the UK government, addressed the upper echelons of other countries directly, while indirectly aiming his remarks at his own electorate back home. The speech merits close attention for this reason. I shall not, however, try to give a comprehensive analysis. My aim is to identify those features of the speech that are crucial for addressing the question this chapter raises and for reaching a verdict (in the final part). I shall trace the steps by which the speech develops, dwelling especially on the *hinges* on which it turns.

Let us begin with Cameron's opening and closing words. He introduces his speech by saying: "Today I want to focus my remarks on terrorism." He concludes this way: "At stake are not just lives, it is our way of life," adding: "That is why this is a challenge we cannot avoid; it is one we must rise to and overcome." Several questions immediately spring to mind. When he refers to *terrorism*, what does he have in mind? Whose *way of life* does he mean when he says *our*? What does this way of life consist in? Who is the *we* that cannot avoid the challenge? How should we *rise* to it and what would it mean to *overcome* it? These are among the questions to keep in mind as we take the measure of his speech, though answers to all of them might not be forthcoming.

After a brief preamble in which he refers vaguely to "the new and various threats" that Britain faces, Cameron homes in on his target: "the biggest threat that we face comes from terrorist attacks, some of which are, sadly, carried out by our own citizens." Note where the second clause of the sentence places the emphasis; it introduces from the outset the theme of the threat from within. It will emerge later in the speech that his attack on multiculturalism, with the Muslim population in the UK at its epicenter, is predicated on this threat, which he will link specifically to terrorism carried out in the name of Islam. But first, as if to throw us off the scent of the argument, he interpolates this remark: "It is important to stress that terrorism is not linked exclusively to any one religion or ethnic group." He gives three examples: dissident Irish republicans in the UK, anarchists in Greece and Italy, and the Red Army Faction in Germany. He does not, however, explain *why* he thinks it is "important to stress" this point, nor does he appear to stress it himself; for, having mentioned the point, he promptly drops it, never to return to it, despite (as we shall see) evidence provided by official statistics on terrorism. It appears that the point is important not *per se* but purely as a rhetorical device; it is important for his purposes as an orator. Making the point (and saying it should be stressed), Cameron is making a pre-emptive move against critics who might otherwise accuse him of picking on "one religion or ethnic group." It gives the impression that he is *not* doing what in fact he *is* doing (or is about to do) in the rest of the speech: overstressing one category

of terrorist acts and ignoring others. This, as it turns out, is characteristic of his oratorical style; throwing dust into the eyes of his audience.

Having covered his rear, he advances his troops and moves into the main territory of the speech. “Nevertheless,” he says, “we should acknowledge that this threat comes in Europe overwhelmingly from young men who follow a completely perverse, warped interpretation of Islam, and who are prepared to blow themselves up and kill their fellow citizens.” This is a complex claim and it is the premise of the rest of his argument. I shall therefore dwell on it at some length.

First, is it true that in Europe the threat of terrorism comes “overwhelmingly” from people who follow an interpretation of Islam? If it were true, you might expect it to be reflected in the statistics compiled by Europol, the EU law enforcement agency, which, since 2007, has published an annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT). However, neither a single annual report nor the full set of reports tends to support Cameron’s claim. From 2008 on, each annual report contains a chart of *failed, foiled, or completed* (or *successfully executed*) attacks. The total amount varies considerably from one year to the next, but the number attributed to *Islamist* groups is consistently small. In 2010, which would have been the most recent figures on which Cameron could draw, there were three out of 249 (TE-SAT, 2011, p. 36). The executive summary of the 2010 report observes that while “Islamist terrorism is perceived as the biggest threat to most Member States,” in fact “only one Islamist terrorist attack . . . took place in the EU in 2009.” It goes on to say: “Separatist terrorism continues to be the type of terrorism which affects the EU most in terms of the number of attacks carried out” (TE-SAT, 2010, pp. 6–7). The last three annual reports (TE-SAT, 2012, 2013, 2014) continue to show the same pattern: the *separatist* category dominates the chart of *failed, foiled, or completed* attacks. In short, going by these statistics from Europol, it appears that the threat of terrorism in Europe comes “overwhelmingly” from separatist groups and not, as Cameron claims, from people who follow a certain interpretation of Islam.

Nothing I am saying is intended to minimize the gravity of attacks (or the threat of attacks) on civilian targets by people who

invoke Islam. The issue here, however, is not the gravity of attacks considered in and of themselves. The issue is the relative scale of attacks from different sources. It should be said that social statistics are liable to be a messy business and the statistics I have cited are not definitive. However, on the one hand, Cameron provides no quantitative evidence in support of his claim. On the other hand, the figures I have cited appear to contradict him. What are we to make of this?

The question is reinforced by the way Cameron describes the "young men" who carry out terrorist acts in the name of Islam. He says they are "prepared to kill their fellow citizens." This is true. But it is also true of the three other examples he gives of terrorism: dissident Irish republicans in the UK, anarchists in Greece and Italy, and the Red Army Faction in Germany. They are no less willing to *kill their fellow citizens.* Yet he uses this description only for terrorist acts carried out in the name of Islam. This will have struck a chord with his audience, not least the British electorate listening in; for in the background is 7/7, the suicide attacks on the London public transport system on 7 July 2005. At the time, the bombers, three of whom were from Leeds and one (though born in Jamaica) from Aylesbury, were widely described in the UK media as *homegrown*. I remember the sense of outrage in the general British public, as if the four men were not only murderers but aliens in citizens' clothing, turning on their British hosts. So, when Cameron says that the young Muslim men he singles out are willing to "kill their fellow citizens," his statement is not false, but it is loaded.

Cameron also describes these "young men" this way: they "follow a completely perverse, warped interpretation of Islam." This raises the question of his *voice*, the point or angle from which he is speaking. The question is not *Is he right or is he wrong?* but *Who is he to say this?* In what voice does he speak when he describes their Islam as "perverse" and "warped"? Who is he to judge? Taking the podium in Munich, he speaks as the British prime minister. But is this a ministerial judgment? Hardly. Then what kind of judgment is it exactly? The point is not that what he says is wrong; the point is that he is the wrong person to be saying it. He assumes it is within his prerogative to distinguish the true Islam from the "perverse," the

straight from the “warped.” But this is an *internal* matter for Muslims, a question that belongs to Muslims *as* Muslims. Who is *Cameron* to draw these lines? He does not speak as a Muslim nor does he cite Islamic authorities. He speaks on his own authority. His voice is the voice of his office—as if being the British prime minister puts him in a position to speak for Islam.

And he continues as he begins. Speaking in the same voice, he goes on to make what appears, at first sight, to be a defense of Islam against those who blame it for the actions of the “young men” in question, but which turns out to be a ruling about the very nature —and therefore the limits—of Islam. He insists that the “root of the problem” lies in “the existence of an ideology, Islamist extremism.” Islam is something else altogether: it is “a religion observed peacefully and devoutly by over a billion people.” “It is vital,” he says, “that we make this distinction between religion on the one hand, and political ideology on the other.” Asserting a larger scheme of things into which he slots Islam, placing it under the heading *religion* rather than *political ideology*, he is, in effect, putting Islam in its place—which is not necessarily the place in which Islam puts itself but the place that he prepares for it. If he is right, then Islam cannot—on *a priori* grounds—be “the root of the problem.” The argument goes like this: The root cause is a political ideology; Islam is a religion; a religion is not a political ideology; therefore Islam is not the root cause. Thus, he constructs his *defense* of Islam by building a wall around it that maroons it in a space called religion, a space *he* determines, cut off from the arena of politics. “In my understanding,” writes Sayyid (2003, p. 17), “an Islamist is someone who places her or his Muslim identity at the centre of her or his political practice.” But there is no room for such a person or such a politics in the world according to Cameron. Islam is a religion; it *cannot* be the basis for a politics.

If Cameron’s scheme of things excludes Islam, by its very nature, from the political arena, the political ideology that he calls *Islamist* suffers the same fate for a different reason. He uses the word *Islamist* six times in the speech. On four occasions it occurs in the phrase *Islamist extremism*, while the other two instances have the same meaning. In his lexicon, the phrase Islamist extremism is a

tautology (like a round circle or a wet drink). It does not mean an extreme form of Islamism; it means Islamism, full stop. He does recognize what he calls a “spectrum” of Islamist views, not all of which are violent; but all of them are extreme. He says:

> At the furthest end are those who back terrorism to promote their ultimate goal: an entire Islamist realm, governed by an interpretation of Sharia. Move along the spectrum, and you find people who may reject violence, but who accept various parts of the extremist worldview, including real hostility towards western democracy and liberal values.

Note the surreptitious appropriation of democracy here, as if *Western* and *democracy* go together as inevitably as *Islamist* and *extremism*. It is impossible not to hear an echo of Samuel Huntington and an old Orientalist tradition of the contrast between the West and Islam. Yet Cameron, brandishing the “distinction between Islam and Islamist extremism,” disassociates himself from this view. He opposes “those on the hard right” who, ignoring this distinction, “say that Islam and the West are irreconcilable—that there is a clash of civilizations.” Again, this *seems* like a defense of Islam against its enemies. However, his way of reconciling Islam and the West is (as we have seen) to make the former fit for purpose. Defending Islam, denying that it is the “root of the problem,” he is disciplining it, keeping it within bounds, barring it from the political arena, confining it to peaceful and devout observance, rendering it *safe*—so that it does not pose a threat to us. (To whom? I shall come to this question.)

What does pose a threat to us (according to Cameron) is Islam unbound; Islam that does not stay within the religious bounds that he sets for it and Islam that crosses the red line and enters the political arena; for then it morphs into an “extremist ideology,” which, though not *necessarily* violent, is animated by “real hostility towards western democracy and liberal values.” Moreover, when it *does* turn violent, it becomes utterly irrational. As he says toward the end of his speech: “This terrorism is completely indiscriminate and has been thrust upon us.” Cameron does concede that material conditions, such as

Western foreign policy (“not least in Palestine”) along with “the poverty that many Muslims live in,” play a part in this hostility. But he concedes only to deceive. Calling these factors “contributory,” he says: “Even if we sorted out all of the problems that I have mentioned, there would still be this terrorism.” So, the key point here is not the concession that he makes with one hand but its withdrawal, which he makes with the other.

Upon whom? *Us* is never precisely specified in Cameron’s speech, but there is an Us that emerges when he turns to the question of why “so many young Muslims are drawn” to the ideology of Islamist extremism. He is thinking in particular of Europe and he focuses on the British case. In other words, the question he addresses is this: What are the causes of the *threat from within* posed by certain “young Muslims”? It is in this context that he launches his attack on “the doctrine of state multiculturalism.” He opens by saying that “we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity.” The word *collective* seems to imply an Us that is fully inclusive, but this inclusive Us vanishes at once like smoke and gives way to a sharp binary between Us and Them. The problem, as he sees it, is that “we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream.” He continues: “We’ve even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.” *Whose* values? Who is the We that has tolerated the Them that form these “segregated communities”? And who are the Them? The answer is contained in what he goes on to say by way of elucidating his point, and it is surprisingly—even shockingly—stark:

> So, when a white person holds objectionable views, racist views for instance, we rightly condemn them. But when equally unacceptable views or practices come from someone who isn’t white, we’ve been too cautious frankly—frankly, even fearful—to stand up to them.

He gives the example of “forced marriage” and comments: “All this leaves some young Muslims feeling rootless.” So, on the one hand, there is “a white person” who represents We and, on the other

hand, “someone who isn’t white” who (it appears) is Muslim. This, ultimately is the Us-Them binary that lies under the surface—or between the lines—of the speech. What should we make of it? How, in the light of this binary, should we view Cameron’s defense of Islam as a religion? Is the speech implicitly Islamophobic or not—or what?

THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

In considering this question it is vital that we judge according to the concept and not the word. One way to bring out the importance of this distinction is to compare the concepts of Islamophobia and antisemitism. Both words are internally complex: Antisemitism is the product of placing the prefix *anti* before the substantive *Semitism* (Levy, 2005). The word could also be looked at as a combination of two affixes, *anti* and *ism*, plus the stem, *Semite*; it comes to the same thing. *Islamophobia* combines *Islam* with *phobia*. Islam names a religion, while Semitism (at the time that antisemitism was coined) signified “a body of uniformly negative traits supposedly clinging to Jews” (Levy, 2005). *Phobia* means fear, *anti* indicates opposition. Put the parts together and what do you get? What you seem to get, in the one case, is opposition to a particular group (or the traits ascribed to them), and, in the other case, fear and trembling in the face of a certain religion. These are not similar. They could hardly be more different. Yet the two words function in a similar way; the *concepts* are analogous even though the *words* are not.

Let us take stock of this distinction and look more closely at the analogy between these two concepts. The view that I am criticizing is the view that the meaning of a word—the concept for which it stands—is given by its semantic origins. Sayyid (2010) refers to this view as *etymological fundamentalism*. You could also call it a form of literalism. Or, (to use an analogy), imagine asking someone what a pen is and they answer: A pen is a thin object, normally made of metal or plastic, usually about six inches long. Just as the etymological fundamentalist reduces a word to the parts that make it up, so this answer reduces the pen to its material properties; consequently, it fails to explain what a pen *is*. So, what is a pen? It is a writing implement of a certain kind. To understand the concept, it is

necessary to look beyond the list of the pen's physical properties and to grasp the use to which it is put. Similarly, to understand the concepts of antisemitism and Islamophobia we must look and see how the words are used—how they function. Wittgenstein (1968, p. 20) remarks, "For a *large* class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language." Islamophobia and antisemitism both fall into this class.

Some scholars prefer the term *anti-Muslim racism* to Islamophobia; others have argued for *anti-Muslimism* or *Muslimophobia* (Halliday, 1996 , 1999). Wittgenstein's statement in another context seems apt to this debate: "Say what you choose, so long as it does not prevent you from seeing the facts" (Wittgenstein, 1968, p. 37). The word Islamophobia, as Kofi Annan lamented in December 2004, has come into use in order to name a reality: "But when the world is compelled to coin a new term to take account of increasingly widespread bigotry, that is a sad and troubling development. Such is the case with Islamophobia" (Annan, 2004). This brand of bigotry is the same by any other name, so choose another name if you will; but once a word is out of the box and into the language it takes on a life of its own. The word Islamophobia has caught on. No one can be compelled to use it but it is too late for a committee of academics to veto it. Like it or not, we are stuck with it. Rather than pursue a fruitless debate over the felicitousness or otherwise of the word, better to pay attention to the concept, for the concept has arrived (Klug, 2012).

When I say that the two words Islamophobia and antisemitism *function* in a similar way—that the concepts are analogous even though the words are not—what I have in mind is this: Both words name a species of *othering*. In the one case, the othering is directed at Muslims, in the other case at Jews, but in both cases the underlying logic is the same: casting the Muslims or Jews as other (or Them) in relation to the insider (or Us). Thus, in his study of websites where Jews and Muslims are the targets of malicious so-called jokes, Simon Weaver concludes that "the underlying logic of racism is the same" in both cases (Weaver, 2014, p. 99). It would be interesting to pursue the analogy further, but for the purposes of this

essay the point I want to emphasize is this: A concept cannot be judged by the word that names it (Klug, 2014). The concept of Islamophobia refers to the othering of Muslims as Muslims and not to the *fear* of *a religion* called Islam.

Before plugging this account of the concept of Islamophobia into the analysis of Cameron's Munich speech, there are two other points that need to be made about the concept. The first is a general point about any species of othering. Othering can take at least two forms. Weaver, taking his cue from the work of Michel Wieviorka, argues that there is a "dual logic" in racism: "racism can exclude the 'Other' from society, or equally it can include the 'Other' and put him/her to work" (Weaver, 2014, p. 101). I find this helpful, except that I would say that the second form of racism—the form that *includes* or incorporates the other—does not necessarily involve putting the other to work. It can take many forms, all of which have in common the underlying idea that the other is either *alien* or *inferior* on account of his or her identity as, say, Muslim or Jew or Black or Arab or whatever.

The second point is this: Apart from the *general* logic that is shared by all species of othering (briefly described above), each species has its *specific* logic, based on the content of the stereotype that attaches to the identity being othered. So, in the case of Islamophobia, at the heart of the concept is the figure of the "Muslim," where this figure is described by a set of traits that, *in the eyes of the racist*, constitute the being or essence of a Muslim. Islamophobia is the process of turning (real flesh-and-blood) Muslims into (fantasy cloak-and-dagger) "Muslims." The scare quotes around "Muslim" indicate that this is essentially a figment or construction. I say *essentially* because it can happen that there are individuals who are Muslim and resemble this figure, but this does not make the figure any more real; it merely muddies the waters by imparting an empirical sheen to the stereotype. The stereotype is a frozen image projected onto the screen of a living person; the fact that the image might on occasion fit the reality does not affect its status as image.

Consider, for example, the Woolwich attack, in which an off-duty British army soldier, was attacked and killed by two men. The *Daily*

Telegraph reported that the men, described as “Islamist terrorists,” “attempted to behead the soldier, hacking at him ‘like a piece of meat.’” One of them, “holding a knife and a meat cleaver and with his hands dripping with blood” spoke into a witness’s video phone, swearing “by almighty Allah” and declaring: “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” As they carried out the attack, “one of the men shouted *Allahu akbar*, or God is Great, according to the BBC, while another witness said they appeared to pray next to the body as if the soldier were a ‘sacrifice’” (Rayner and Swinford, 2013). These descriptions could almost have been lifted from a manual of negative stereotypes of Islam. Almost every major trope is there: backwardness, callousness, bloodiness, an ethic of revenge, mindless worship of a merciless God, and so on. Thus, the perpetrators were not only Muslim, they were also “Muslim”: they acted out the script written into the Islamophobic figure of the “Muslim” before the eyes of witnesses. The witnesses did not imagine what they saw. The attack really occurred. Nonetheless, the *figure* is not real; it is no less fantastic—in the sense of being an image projected onto Muslims collectively—for having been incarnated on the streets of Woolwich.

The account of the concept of Islamophobia that I have given in this part of the essay is far from complete. My aim has not been to explore the concept fully but only to clarify it sufficiently for the purpose of giving a verdict on Cameron’s Munich speech. Is the speech implicitly Islamophobic or not—or what? That was the question posed by the analysis in the first part of the chapter. I turn now to the answer.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES: VERDICT

I shall keep the answer short, recalling some (but not all) of the *evidence* unearthed in the first part of the chapter. If we were to judge by the word rather than the concept, the verdict on Cameron’s speech would be a resounding *not guilty*. For, taking the meaning of a word to be the sum of its parts, Islamophobia means the fear of the religion of Islam. Not only is it the case that Cameron does not evince any fear of Islam, but, on the contrary, he affirms it precisely

as a religion, defending it against the accusation that Islam is to blame for acts of terror carried out in its name and extolling it as "a religion observed peacefully and devoutly by over a billion people." But if we judge by the concept rather than the word, then the question becomes more complex. Islamophobia, to summarize, is a species of othering directed at Muslims in which the preconceived figure of the "Muslim" is projected onto Muslims collectively. Within a given text, this othering can take the form either of altogether excluding Muslims from society or including them as alien or inferior. The question now becomes: To what extent, if at all, are Muslims, in this way, cast as other in the text of Cameron's speech?

I shall begin with the point that emerged at the end of the analysis in the first part of the chapter, where we saw that beneath the surface (or between the lines) of the speech, there lurks an Us-Them binary and that this binary maps onto the discursive difference between being "White" and being "Muslim." To this extent, Muslims are certainly cast as other in this text. But is this othering Islamophobic? Does it project onto Muslims (a version of) the Islamophobic figure of the "Muslim." If it does, then this figure is embedded in the figure of the postcolonial subject, the citizen of Britain who came to *our shores* (or whose recent ancestors came) from one of the former colonies in Southern Asia. The language of race that Cameron uses is also the language of empire, in which *white* and *non-white* signify the difference in status between ruler and ruled. This, I suggest, explains Cameron's *voice*; the point or angle from which he speaks about Islam.

Speaking as the British prime minister, he takes it upon himself to give a ruling on the very nature of Islam, separating the "perverse" and "warped" variety from the straight and true. He draws a line around Islam, placing it in the box called *religion* and posting a Keep Out sign on the door to the political arena. He puts it in its place, the place *he* assigns to it. He does this with total insouciance, as if to the manner born; as, in a manner of speaking, he is, for he is the British prime minister. As such, he assumes or inherits a prerogative that his predecessors had before the "segregated communities" that flout "our values" (as well as the "young men" who "overwhelmingly" pose "the biggest threat that we face") had migrated from the colonies to

the metropole. Disciplining Islam, barring it from the political arena, confining Muslims to peaceful and devout observance of their *religion*, Cameron is doing the equivalent of keeping the natives—the non-whites—in their place; all of which could certainly be called racist. But, in and of itself, it is not necessarily Islamophobic—not unless there is reason to think there is a specific discourse about Muslims *as* "Muslim" (or Islam *as* "Islam") that also lies between the lines and that this discourse projects the figure of the "Muslim" onto Muslims.

And there is. The Islamophobic bent of this speech emerges in another binary that runs through the whole of the text: the split between Good Muslim and Bad Muslim, to borrow the expressions made famous by Mahmood Mamdani (2004). For Cameron, there are, on the one hand, the Good Muslims, the billion-plus people who observe their religion "peacefully and devoutly," and then there are the Bad Muslims, the ones who break out of the box that he labels *religion* and assert their Islam *politically*. As soon as they do this, they flip from Good to Bad. They acquire typical traits of the Islamophobic figure of the "Muslim." They become fanatical, extremist, violent, and irrational; hostile "towards western democracy and liberal values." They become treacherous, prepared to "kill their fellow citizens." They become, in short, a threat from within, threatening not just *our* lives but "our way of life." They might be a small minority, but the Bad Muslim and the Good Muslim are not so much antithetical to each other as twins; they are opposites not in the sense in which hot and cold or light and dark are opposites, but more like heads and tails. They are two sides of one coin and it is the coin that is Islamophobic.

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1. The first part of this chapter draws on my article “Fawlty logic: The cracks in Cameron’s 2011 Munich speech,” in *ReOrient*: *The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies*, *1*(1) (June 2015). In the second part I reproduce and adapt part of the argument I made in “The limits of analogy: Comparing Islamophobia and antisemitism,” which appeared in *Patterns of Prejudice*, *48*(5), 442–459 (December 2014).

Chapter 4
Islamophobic Populism in Austria

Farid Hafez

Discourse Strategies of a Far Right Politician[1]

In the paradigm of Islamophobia where there is the *evil Islam* on one side and the *good West* on the other side, the West is seen as the palladium of democracy, human rights and civilization, etc., whereas Islam has exclusively negative connotations and stands for "dogmatism, fanaticism, the oppression of women, hostility, etc." (Sutcliffe, 2005, p. 72). These prejudices and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims are enforced and instrumentalized by populistic actors. In this sense, Islamophobia is useful for the populism in its content as well as a tactic and form of communication. It can play a role in the production of vertical anti-elitist and horizontal xenophobic affects. In the context of Austria, this may be firstly realized in creating in- and out-groups; the group of Austrian Non-Muslims and the Muslim group; a horizontal xenophobic affect. This happens when a monolithic nation, the *Volk* is construed and confronted with Islam. Here, Islam plays the role of antagonization. Islam, like Judaism around the turn of the twentieth century, has the function of being *the Other* in distinction to the homogenous Austria(ns). Islam functions as a symbol of a different culture, religion, and ethnicity, and Islamophobia is used as an *exclusionary ideology*, as Bunzl (2008) says. It is furthermore imaginable that Islamophobia plays a role in creating anti-elitist vertical affects; for instance, when the EU establishment is accused of enforcing the Islamization of Europe as it negotiates EU membership with Turkey. The terms Islam and Muslim in relation to the notion of Islamophobia are to be understood as imaginations and constructions, not as a religion or as social subjects.

The traditional right-wing populist Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) is an advocate of the *Austro-nationalist discourse* that creates

a collective identity by drawing borders and mobilizing people (Bauböck, 2002). It can make use of Islamophobia by going back to old myths and traditions and revitalizing them in the new contexts of migration (Gingrich, 2005). There are many incidents in Austrian history that shaped the *Austrian identity* of today, where Islamophobia can be used for instrumentalizing these incidents including the *Turks before Vienna* and the battle at the Amselfeld. Islamophobia as a historical Christian-European project (in a Europe of free nations, as the FPÖ calls it) is here used as a *content* (Meyer, 2005). The construed antagonism between Islam and the West/Christianity (as I will show below) is sustained by creating scenarios of threat, where *the Other* is guilty. Islamophobic conspiracy theories, traced back to old bogeymen, are used (Hellmuth, 2002). These Islamophobic conspiracy theories resign the general so-called *discourse on foreign infiltration* (see Gärtner, 2002). While in the past, foreigners in general were the bogeyman; now it is the Muslim. On the basis of this brief discussion, I use the term *Islamophobic populism*, which is on a monolithic, non-differentiated, and homogenous conception of Islam, and is used for construing boundaries and antagonistic confrontation. Islam is seen as inferior, but also as hostile, aggressive, and threatening.

A FAR RIGHT POLITICIAN

An Exponent of Right-Wing Populism

Jörg Haider is one of the most well-known Austrian politicians of the Second Republic. Especially in the 1990s, Haider was counted as one of the leading exponents of European right-wing extremism and right-wing populism (Sickinger, 2008). After his assumption of the leadership of FPÖ, he took his marginalized party through populist vote maximization from a five-percent party in 1986 to a ruling party in 2000, when the FPÖ gained 26.9 percent of all votes during the national elections in 1999. In the words of the Austrian political scientist Anton Pelinka (2002), the FPÖ started as a party from ex-Nazis for ex-Nazis. Haider many times drew on this German National tradition, which continuously formed the very small core

voting bloc of the FPÖ (Sickinger, 2008), although insiders and FPÖ-partners viewed Haider not as an ideologue, but rather as a populist, trying to tell the people what they want to hear. Nevertheless, his view of Austria as a nation was congruent with a German Austrian, excluding immigrant newcomers as well as discriminating in favor of autochthonous folks.

Populism is the homogenization of the *Volk* and the claim to represent them and their real interests against the so-called establishment, the political elite, while right-wing populism adds to this kind of anti-elitist vertical effect a xenophobic horizontal effect in being also against foreigners (Pelinka, 2002). And this is what Haider was doing during his political career. For Pelinka, Haider was trivializing Nazism and the nature of the Third Reich, for instance when describing Nazi death camps as punishment camps to mention but one example of Haider's many sayings during his last twenty years (UIBK, 2000). Haider verbally attacked foreigners (the famous anti-foreigner referendum in 1993).

An Old Man with a New Party?

Haider joined the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) in April 2005 and became its new leader. The old FPÖ under its new leader was identified in public as being the party of the old ideological right-wing core members. This also led the BZÖ at the beginning of its public activities to appear as a party with a new approach, with no link to nationalism and to the old tradition of National Socialism. Attempts were made to project a liberal image of the party but very soon, the opposite was shown. During the 2006 election campaign for the national parliament, the BZÖ leader at that time called for the evacuation of 300,000 foreigners. Old stereotypes were used again. At the beginning of its existence, many political scientists rumored about the survival chances of this new party (Pelinka, 2005). The national elections in 2006 clearly showed that the FPÖ won 11 percent of the votes and the BZÖ barely could enter the parliament with 4.1 percent because of its regional significance in Carinthia where it was ruling with its governor Jörg Haider himself (Sickinger, 2008).

The split with the BZÖ was one reason why the FPÖ started a virulent campaign that concentrated very much on Islamophobic populism. The prime electoral target for both was gaining the trust of those blue-collar voters who had supported the FPÖ in the 1990s. Hence, Haider's BZÖ also started a rhetorically-aggressive campaign style (Luther, 2008). As with the FPÖ, the BZÖ argues in its program that multicultural society has failed. Europe is understood as a Europe of the homelands and the BZÖ argues against the centralism and bureaucracy of Brussels. A significant difference to the party program of the FPÖ is that Christianity is not mentioned (Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer, 1997). As is common for right-wing populist parties throughout Europe, the BZÖ argued that it was no party but rather a movement, something that was apparent with the FPÖ, which called itself a citizen's movement (Rösslhumer, 1999).

The thematic concentration on Islamophobia by the FPÖ can be seen through looking at its various slogans on regional, national, and supranational elections: Vienna shall not become Istanbul (European elections 2004); church-bell instead of Muezzin (Local elections, 2005); Home not Islam (National elections, 2006); no home for Radical-Islam (Local elections, 2008), etc. (Hafez, 2010). While the FPÖ under Jörg Haider also included some Muslims, and even at the beginning of the BZÖ some Muslim members tried to get the votes of this particular group, this development stopped shortly after the split. The BZÖ started a race for who could claim to be the most Islamophobic. It should be mentioned here that Haider was always a person who switched from one identity to another, identities that were very often even contradicting each other (Ottomeyer, 2009).

Turning Islamophobic

FPÖ, which has been mobilizing against mosques and minarets for a long time (Hafez, 2007), made a resolution in the Austrian national parliament that was not discussed any further as the FPÖ was nothing more than a party in opposition. But Jörg Haider made use of this as governor of Carinthia. On 26 August 2007, he declared that Carinthia would be the very first state in Austria and in Europe

with a law banning mosques and minarets, because “we do not want a Clash of Civilizations and radical-Islamic tendencies like in Cologne, Vienna or Telfs.” Haider was able not only to speak but to act, even if he was dependent on another party. His party had 15 seats in the regional parliament. The Social Democrats held 14 seats, the Conservatives four seats, the Greens two and the FPÖ one. The law was enacted 18 December 2008. Six months earlier, on 20 June 2008, the same was done by the Conservatives and the FPÖ in the state of Vorarlberg (while the debate on a possible ban was started in Vorarlberg half a year after Jörg Haider’s announcement in Carinthia).

Nearly one month after his announcement, on 27 September 2007, Haider gave an interview on several issues centering on Islam, Muslims, and the Middle East, that demonstrates what he had in mind when he wanted to ban mosques with minarets as the first governor in Europe. This interview forms the core material of this article’s analysis. While this initiative represented a new method in the means of Haider’s right-wing populist arsenal, we should not forget that anti-Muslim attacks were always part of Haider’s views. He had already stated that “the social order of Islam is in opposite to our Western values” and argued that human rights and democracy are strange to the belief of Islam as much as the belief in equality of men and women (Haider, 1993, p. 93, cited in Betz, 2002, p. 256). When Haider argued for support of his anti-foreigner-referendum in 1992, he said: “Why have our ancestors fought against the Turks, when we let them in today?” (Gingrich, 1999, p. 32).

THE INTERVIEW: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Ethnopluralistic Argumentation: Differentialist Racism

> **Interviewer**: Mr. Haider, you are known in the Arabic world. You have shaken the hands of Saddam Hussein. Gaddafi’s son is your friend. You oppose the EU-membership of Turkey. In an interview with Al-Jazeera you demanded respect towards

Muslims and now you want to ban minarets and headscarf. How does that fit together?
Haider: It is about respect and the distinction between different cultural areas. We must respect the Arab world and the Muslims [must respect] our Western world.

In this opening question and answer of the interview, what can be observed is the differentialist racism, which is called ethnopluralism in its more liberal terms by the New Right. This racism argues that every cultural group should live on its own in peace. The mixture of ethnicities is nothing more than the mixture of races, but cannot be argued in such words because of the pressure of political correctness. *Cultural* is the new word for race, which covers the old racism with new terms (Priester, 2003). For some, it is the "new cultural racism" (Krzyzanowski and Wodak, 2009, p. 3). Haider speaks about Muslims and Islam, but only outside of Austria. This respect for the Arab and Islamic civilization is restricted to the past as well as to the global world but plays no role for domestic policies, as can be seen with the FPÖ's 2008 position paper on "We and Islam" (Hafez, 2009) and as we will see from the coming quotations made by Haider during this interview.

Imposing Symbols of Power

Controversies on the building of mosques and minarets are one of the main topics relating to Islam in the public space in Europe (Dolezal, et al., 2008; Häusler, 2008; Königseder, 2008). Actors are mainly right-wing political parties' (Häusler, 2008) and citizens' initiatives that are often used by right-wing political parties (Kübel, 2009). Very often, these controversies are transformed to conflicts through actors from outside and are hence not solved through consensus (Halm, 2008). The manipulation of this issue can be observed throughout Europe. Right-wing parties mainly use it for their identity politics (Bauer, 2007). Campaigns against Islam and Muslims are regarded as a formula for success and a tool for transnational learning (Häusler, 2008) and it seems that Haider, who was by no means the first to mobilize against mosques and

minarets, wanted to be the first in banning them legally. The interview goes on:

> **Interviewer**: You yourself were saying that 99 percent of all Muslims are peaceful and virtuous people. They live amongst us and want to build a place for their prayer with a visible minaret. Why do you have a problem with that?
> **Haider**: Because those who want to build minarets are not virtuous Muslims, but radical Islamists in the background. They want to impose their symbols of power in our landscape. The current Turkish Prime Minister has said: “The mosques are our barracks, the minarets our bayonets, the domes our helms and the believers our soldiers.”

Austria is a country with a Muslim population of about 4–5 percent. In Carinthia, Muslims only make up 2 percent of its population. In Austria, only two mosques with minarets exist. The vast majority of Muslim prayer rooms are buildings without minarets or basements. Nearly half of the Muslim population has a Turkish immigrant background. We can say that the ban on mosques and minarets is firstly not a result of a real experience in general and secondly not about antagonism toward the real Muslim, though such a ban in the end results in discrimination of the Muslim community. These facts and figures on mosques in Carinthia explain why Haider used this strategy of citation.

By citing this excerpt from a poem that the Turkish prime minister quoted, it is implied that Muslims in Austria of Turkish origin sought to claim power. Besides, it has been overlooked that these sentences were taken from a famous poem. Secondly, these verses were quoted on 6 December 1997, a time when its reciter was not part of the then not-existing ruling party but rather of a party that was banned for being Islamist and whose successor is currently a small party in opposition. This strategy of discourse representation makes sense because of the Turkish context of many Muslims in Austria. The minaret as a political symbol of power, as Haider calls it, excludes Muslims from their right to cultural-religious buildings in the public space. With this simplified interpretation of minarets and the

dichotomous interpretation as a political symbol of power, bogeymen are construed.

It is interesting that in this interview Haider draws a picture in which mosques and minarets are not supported by the majority of Muslims but only by radical Islamists working in the background. This implies that a small minority of radical Islamists would be able to lead a majority of peaceful Muslims. According to this argument, Haider tries not to walk right into the trap of generalization. For Haider, minarets are symbols of power that are imposed in the landscape. The minaret as a traditional cultural symbol of many mosques is described with political and not religious attributes. The term power has a largely negative connotation in everyday language. The minaret is hence aggressive, as aggressive as those radical Islamists who supposedly stand behind it. With the description of imposed in the landscape, the discourse strategy of intensification is used for confirming the negative connotation of power. By imposing something in the landscape, the beauty and integrity of the landscape is negatively impacted. Hence, the minaret is the opposite of beauty and integrity. This quote can be seen in the context of Haider's long fight against every expression of arts, which is contradictory to his understanding of Austrian tradition and was for a very long time the art of the left. However, while the cultural struggle of Haider in the era of the FPÖ was directed primarily against Leftists, Muslims became the primary goal in the late 2000s.

Populist Strategies

> **Haider**: [. . .] The people [meaning the Muslims] should assimilate. Whoever wants to act out his hate has no place in here.
> **Interviewer**: Building a mosque is no sign of hate.
> **Haider**: We have a preacher here in Klagenfurt [capital of Carinthia], who stirs up children so as to walk down by the church and say: "We hate this church."

This call for assimilation is very similar to that of the anti-Semitic calls of a century ago. Discursive parallels between anti-Semitism

and Islamophobia can be observed when it comes to the control of religious books, preachers, religious education, call for assimilation, and kosher/halal slaughter (Schiffer and Wagner, 2009). The call for assimilation, a complete acceptance of another culture and tradition, and a removal of one's own culture and tradition, is a claim in opposite to religious freedom. Haider does not answer the argument of the interviewer, that the minaret is no sign of hate, but rather quotes everyday life events, a strategy that he very often used. This recourse to everyday experiences, so-called common sense, is a distinguishing characteristic of right-wing populism (Geden, 2006). By adopting this approach, Haider tries to avoid a fact-based debate.

Topos of Reciprocity

One of the very famous topoi used when delegitimizing the religious right to building public praying rooms is the topos of reciprocity, an argument that can be found since the 1990s in discourses on Islam in Europe (Halm, 2008). The interviewer continues:

> **Interviewer**: Do you see minarets as a threat to peace?
> **Haider**: Absolutely. And as long as it is not possible in Muslim countries to build churches, we do not have to tolerate mosques here.

Haider speaks about the antagonistic relation of minarets as symbols of Islam. They would absolutely be a threat to peace. As long as it is not possible in Muslim countries to build churches, nobody has to tolerate mosques here. The term *tolerate* clearly shows the contempt of Haider towards these symbols. But let us come to Haider's basic argument. Firstly, it should be said, that the term Muslim countries is a very vague one. There are many countries with a majority population of Muslims. These countries have different constitutions, forms of government, and different cultures and hence possess very different approaches to religious minorities, be it in the past or nowadays. Which country should be taken as a standard? Downtown Cairo, for example, where churches

rank as high as mosques, or rather Saudi Arabia where churches are restricted to Non-Muslims areas. But to ignore these differences is the nature of Islamophobic populism, which homogenizes, generalizes, and bases itself only on half-truths.

Haider argues for the need to judge Muslims according to the way in which Christians are judged in Muslim countries. This argument is based on the assumption that Muslims are foreigners and not in the first instance Austrian citizens. By that, Haider ignores that half of the Muslim population has Austrian citizenship and that the rest is living and working in Austria because of having a new home in the country. Another significant aspect here is that Haider takes the possibility of non-democratic states as the norm, according to which he wants to treat Muslims. The normative standard is not the declaration of human rights, the constitutional rights of the Republic of Austria, or the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, all of which declare the freedom of practicing one's own religion, be it in privacy or in public.

Strangers Destroying Our Progress

> **Interviewer**: You very often refer to the age of enlightenment. But the enlightenment has brought to us religious neutrality of the state. Now we should quit the separation of state and church and ban mosques, but build churches? Wouldn't the West then become unreliable?
> **Haider**: The age of enlightenment has not given us religious freedom, in order that the freedom will be lived by those, who will remove it.
> **Interviewer**: With such a ban you push Muslims to basement-mosques. They will experience the West as a hypocritical institution through that.
> **Jörg Haider**: Praying rooms will be allowed as before. Our point is that we do not want strange sacred buildings in Carinthia.

The accusation of Haider is fundamental. According to him, religious freedom is a product of the age of enlightenment, which has to be protected. But this religious freedom is in danger from

Islamists. This general suspicion that Haider is diffusing is directed against all Muslim proponents of a mosque with a minaret. With a distinction between legitimate prayer rooms, on the one hand, and mosques with minarets, on the other, Haider feeds those conspirators who think that Muslims are aggressive and will try to ban churches in Austria as soon as they have the power to do that. This strategy of seduction should legitimate the exclusion of all Muslims from their right of freedom of religion (Wodak, 1989).

The Democratic Leader Feels and Acts

As the interview continues, a usual element of populist ideology that can be observed here, is the belief in a leader of the *Volk* on the top of a state, who continuously implements the wants of this construed *Volk* based on a regular exchange with it (Schaller, 2001).

> **Interviewer**: You try to provoke people by your ban of minarets.
> **Haider**: Not any more. The people come to me and call for such a ban. I say we have to discuss that: how far Islam can assimilate? In Cologne leftist writers like Ralph Giordano go against mosques. The people are furious and I feel that. A democratic politician has to take the massive protest of the population into consideration.

Haider here argues for the ban of minarets with the claim of representing the people. On one side, he would feel what is in the people's mind and on the flipside a democratic politician has to consider what the *Volk* wants. By citing leftist writers, Haider tries to position his call for a ban of minarets not as a right-wing extremist position but rather as a position of all of the *Volk*, be it leftists or rightists. Haider argues afterwards: Why is a leftist intellectual like Ralph Giordano allowed to criticize the building of mosques but I am not? That Ralph Giordano has turned very much into an Islamophobic arguer, as many studies argue (Brumlik, 2009), is overlooked.

Defending our Way of Life

Haider was always an advocate of the Austro-nationalist discourse. He creates a collective identity of what is us and real Austrian by drawing borders and mobilizing people (Bauböck, 2002):

> **Interviewer**: Nobody is protesting massively. The present and the future of our cities are influenced by Muslims. Mosques are a part of it.
> **Haider**: That's why we have to be brave in this contention [. . .] Islam will become a problem for Europe. I don't want, that Hamburg, Cologne, and Vienna become Islamic cities. That's why people have to assimilate. They have to respect our way of life, the way we attire and the way we treat each other.

Haider here refers on a presumed antagonism between Islam, on one side, and Europe with its cities, on the other. To prevent Vienna and Cologne from becoming *Islamic*, whatever this may mean, Muslims have to assimilate. While demanding respect on the Muslim side for the Western way of life, he means more than that: assimilation, not even integration, a term that is used much more for showing some acceptance toward *other* ways of life beside the asserted *mainstream* in the public Austrian discourses. The Austrians are being as much homogenized in Haider's discourse as are Muslims. For the latter, this construction is to be respected.

The Oppressed Muslim Woman and the Headscarf

One of the most frequent issues connected to the debate on Islam in the public space is the question of Muslim women and the headscarf. Is it a religious symbol, or a political one, and what does it stand for? For oppression or progress? For some feminists, it is the "flag of Islamism" (Königseder, 2008). By speaking about forced marriages and the headscarf, however, people ignore problems confronting the vast majority and try to marginalize issues relating to minorities. When speaking about forced marriages, for instance, the fact that one out of three women experience domestic violence is ignored. This strategy of "shared bad reservoirs" (Ottomeyer, 2009,

p. 59) is of basic importance for shaping a collective identity. How Jörg Haider used these stereotypes of Muslim women is shown in the next extract:

> **Interviewer**: You said, Islam would opposite Western values. Your friend Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi could not be amused about those words.
> **Haider**: The equality of men and women is not accepted by Islam [. . .].

The image of the Muslim woman in the media as well as in popular awareness is a topic that has been thoroughly analyzed (Pinn and Wehner, 1995). It is important, however, to mention here that there is no one homogenous Islam, but rather there are many interpretations of Islam (Amirpur and Ammann, 2006), and this Islam is practiced in different ways (Geertz, 1991; Gellner, 1985) and can have a socially more or less significant importance. That is as much the case for gender issues and Islam as it is for other topics.

In this regard, one of the most hotly-discussed issues is the headscarf, which has turned out to be *the* visual symbol of Islamization. But this presentation of veiled Muslim women as oppressed objects is one that is argued on the basis of immature Muslim women who are not able to articulate or stand up for their rights (Königseder, 2008). The concentration on the headscarf-issue can be seen here:

> **Interviewer**: You are calling for a complete ban of the headscarf in the public space?
> **Haider**: Yes, of course.
> **Interviewer**: Also for the Anatolian mother and those girls, who wear the scarf out of their own will ?
> **Haider**: This may be rigorous on an individual level, if one is used to such a scarf. But I want to condemn the headscarf. Women shall not have to wear it anymore.
> **Interviewer**: Nobody is for an enforcement to wear it. But you want to ban it totally. The young Haider would have called that terror for virtue.

Haider: I say down with the scarf! Otherwise we will open all doors for the *shari'ah*.
Interviewer: We have come to the level of a cracker-barrel-debate.
Haider: But that's what it is all about. The women are happy, when they don't have to wear this stupid scarf. They love to have a nice hairstyle. They like to make themselves up and go to the theatre.
Interviewer: You are the Atatürk of Carinthia, who forces the Muslims into their Western clothes.
Haider: Atatürk was not the worst.
Interviewer: The laws say that I can wear in this country whatever I want. The dress code has been abolished. You wear a pink chemise, I am wearing a cravat and my colleague is wearing long hair. Why should a Muslim woman not wear a headscarf?
Haider: It's about the religious symbol of a fundamentalist belief that interferes in the daily life of people. One has to stop that.
Interviewer: If the Turkish president Abdullah Gül comes to Austria with his wife, who wears a headscarf, for a state visit, would she have to take it off?
Haider: If she comes as a guest, I await her to behave like a guest and take her headscarf off. If I travel to a Muslim country with my wife, then she wears a veil that covers her face. We have always acted like that, because it is a sign of respect.

Haider thus calls not only for a ban of mosques with minarets but for a ban of the Muslim headscarf too. Of course such a ban should be enforced, be it on the Anatolian mother, who wears it out of tradition, or the young woman, who wears it out of a religious conviction. Haider makes himself a mufti in declaring what is Islam and what is an extremist reading of Islam. For him, the headscarf is not only a symbol of belief but of a fundamentalist belief. Becoming the judge and jury, the superior definer of Islam and fundamentalism, Haider, a trained lawyer, ignores an important rule of the Austrian constitution: It is up to every church and religious community itself to define its religion. When he wants to *condemn the headscarf*, Haider

ignores the rules of the Austrian political system that gives religion a place in the public sphere (Potz, 2002).

Haider as a populist leader knows what the Volk feels and thinks and from his perspective, no restriction is enforced on Muslim women wearing a headscarf, because he knows, that *the women are happy, when they don't have to wear this stupid scarf*. This recourse to the Volk is one of the main characteristics of populism (Geden, 2006). It is interesting that Haider positions himself as a liberator by restricting other people. He also identifies the headscarf with the *shari'ah*, a term used frequently in public debates on Islam and which has acquired a purely negative connotation in everyday language. The equalization of the term *shari'ah* with suppression and restriction projects the message that the headscarf restricts the freedom of others.

Representing the Volk and the Persecuted Muslims

In the center of the populist movement stands the construed *Volk*, led by a leader. This *Volk* is construed as homogenous, while the leader is in permanent touch with the masses, and knows what they want (Schaller, 2001). Besides, a main characteristic of populism is *simplification and dichotomization*; the world is separated into good and evil (Lang, 2005).

Interviewer: Most people are doing this anyway.
Haider: Yes, most people have fun with living a free life in the West and leaving their medieval societies behind.
Interviewer: You say that 99.9 percent of the Muslims live peacefully and virtuous in Austria. Then why do you make a social problem out of 0.1 percent?
Haider: The radical-political Islam is the problem.
Interviewer: You say ban on minarets and what the people understand is Islam. You know that and that's why you do it that way.
Haider: Many of those, who have come to Europe, fled from this Islam. They don't want to be caught up by their past. Especially

women don’t want to have anything to do with this tyranny. Whoever comes to Europe has to assimilate.

All Muslim countries are homogenized as *medieval societies.* With this strategy of perspectivation (Wodak, 1989), Haider seeks to present himself as the liberator of oppressed Muslim women. He becomes the speaking tube for these women, who fled from oppression. It is, to some extent contradictory that Haider declares the majority of all Muslims not to be radical and fleeing from their backward societies, while at the same time forcing them to assimilate. A problematic word-play by Haider is the connection that he makes between the words *radical-political* and Islam. Composita like these have the effect of transferring the meaning of one term to the other, and vice versa. The vagueness of the meaning covers the real relationship between both terms and keeps the reader in a state of not really knowing if the problem is with Islam or with a political and radical interpretation of it (Schiffer, 2007). Using this composita fulfils the function of playing with meaning and thus misleading the reader.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing this interview with Jörg Haider in the newspaper *Der Falter* clearly demonstrates how much Jörg Haider made use of Islamophobia in his populist game. Racist elements can be observed in his ethnopluralistic argumentation (respect) as much as in his use of conspiracy theories (symbols of power, Islamization). These political convictions are connected to calls for restrictions: the banning of mosques and minarets and the ban of headscarves in the public space. But while the ban of mosques and minarets was really put in practice, although most jurists regard it as being against the constitution, the call for a ban of the headscarf in the public space did not have any legal consequence.

The Carinthian law was changed with the votes of the BZÖ and the Conservatives (Hafez and Potz, 2009), which underlines that Islamophobic populism is not restricted to the traditional right wing parties but is used by political parties with different colors. And the

call for restrictions goes further. In an “8-Point-programme against Islamist terror,” the general secretary of the BZÖ has called for the establishment of a new institution within the Ministry of the Interior to watch all Muslim associations, institutions, praying rooms 7/24. In the end, the example of Jörg Haider highlights for us that populists in power not only use Islamophobia in rhetoric but also implement Islamophobic laws.

NOTE

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Chapter 5
From Suspect to Suspecting

James Carr

Muslim Communities in Ireland and the Irish Gaze

The co-location of the terms Muslim and terrorist is a key trope in the current racializing discourses of *Muslimness*. Muslim men and women are both perceived to be a threat not only to *our* presumed homogenous *Western* values, but also to our security. Informed by political acts and actors as well as media discourses, Muslim people have become a “suspect community” (Hickman, et al., 2011; Hillyard, 1993) both in the eyes of the State and the gaze of the general public; resonating with the experiences of Irish communities in the United Kingdom during the “troubles” (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009). “Discourses of suspicion” follow “a logic of association” wherein it is the behavior and identity associated with distinct groups in society that becomes associated with the risk of terrorism as opposed to any evidentiary base (Hickman, et al., 2011, p. 11). The effect of contemporary international securitization policies and related media discourses is to contribute to this co-locating of words such as Muslim/Islam with terrorism in the public imaginary (Hickman, et al., 2011; Nickels, et al., 2012). By focusing on Muslim communities as the domain of *extremism* and a *threat from within*, state policies that aim to counter terrorism become harmful and set Muslims apart as a suspect group in the eyes of wider society, a fifth column against whom hostility becomes socially acceptable (Fekete, 2009; Hickman, et al., 2011; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009).

Despite the Irish experience of being *suspect*, Ireland as a State, although not as overtly as others, is not exempt from engaging in practices of securitization. The Migrants’ Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) noted in 2011 how Muslim women felt that they were being subjected to religious profiling by members of An Garda Síochána (Irish police). The argument presented here will develop and provide deeper insight into the manner in which the Irish State religiously profiles Muslim communities, including Irish Muslims racialized as

outside of Irishness by being visibly Muslim (Carr and Haynes, 2013). Based on an original mixed methods study with a diverse sample of over 340 Muslim men and women (including Irish converts and/or those of a migrant background), this chapter will demonstrate the manner in which Muslim communities in Ireland are today deemed a suspect community. Furthermore, it is argued here that practices of suspectification are not restricted to the State. Instead, informed by national and international discourses, Muslims are also subjected to the suspicious gaze of the Irish public where Muslimness is not the norm. In sum, the Irish have moved from being a *suspect* to a *suspecting* community.

SYNONYMIES OF SUSPICION

As a one-time Irish immigrant, I remember living in the UK in mid-to-late 1990s, a time when I was told that being Irish in Britain was far better than in previous decades. I had and still have many friends and family there. My overwhelming experience was one of being welcomed as part of British society. There were times, though, when my being Irish, that is, being *different*, albeit not visibly, came to the surface in a racialized way. This, for example, mostly manifested as crude *banter* about my perceived innate low Irish IQ. At times, however, my Irishness was also associated with far less affable proclivities toward terrorism. On more than one occasion I was accused of being a member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). On one occasion after racing to get back to work down a street that was being sealed off due to a bomb scare, the work colleagues of mine reminded me that as I was Irish I *shouldn't really be running* when there was a bomb scare. Their implication being that I would be treated with suspicion. I was very aware that a central aspect of my racialized Irishness held me up as a suspect, if not in the eyes of the British State, in the eyes of at least some in society even if it felt common. As an Irish person I was a member of a suspect community (Hillyard, 1993).

Writing of the recent historic experience, Hillyard (1994) argues how the Irish in Britain from the mid-1970s were subject to the "extra-ordinary criminal justice system" as opposed to the "ordinary

criminal justice system." While the latter was used for Ordinary Decent Criminals, the former was "draconian" and directed toward "those suspected of Irish 'terrorism'" (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009, p. 647). This draconian policing of Irish communities in the UK was underpinned by the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) 1974, legislation that was passed just a week after the Birmingham Pub bombings in November of that year; legislation that was to have a particular impact on the Irish in Britain (Nickels, et al., 2012; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009). Under this Act, Irish people were subject to "wrongful convictions and almost daily 'miscarriages of justice' through detentions and arrests" (Hillyard, 1994, p. 41). At a broader level, Pantazis and Pemberton (2009) argue, the PTA 1974 and the powers it provided the police allowed for the creation of the Irish as a *suspect* community. An argument summed up by Hillyard (1994) and worth quoting at length:

> From all the evidence, it is clear that the powers under the PTA have been used to mount a massive surveillance operation, much of it in secret, of the resident Irish community in Britain and Irish people travelling between Britain and Ireland. A mass of low-level intelligence information has been collected, through the use of examination and arrest powers. The legislation has "criminalised" the Irish in Britain and the Irish community as a whole has become a "suspect community." (p. 52)

While the Irish *may* be the "'old' suspect community" (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009, p. 646), their experiences of being suspect are being relived among members of Muslim communities in the West today (Nickels, et al., 2012). In the UK context, the counter-terrorism legislation passed to address the *Irish threat*, has gone on to form the basis of legislative measures implemented in the past decade and a half to prevent terrorist activity in the UK (Hickman, et al., 2012). Both communities, in addition to broader experiences of social exclusion, have been the subject of "negative stereotyping, intelligence profiling, stop and search, wrongful arrest, anti-Irish and anti-Muslim sentiment" (Nickels, et al., 2012, p. 136). In the more contemporary UK context, Muslim communities have been subjected

to surveillance, demonstrated for example in Project Champion wherein over one-hundred and fifty cameras were erected in a predominantly Muslim area of the Midlands; schools, mosques (including through infiltration), universities, and even nurseries have also been implicated in the surveillance of Muslim communities; police stop and search has become routine along with and especially in the case of detention at airports/ports, resembling the Irish experience of traveling to/from the UK (Awan, 2012; Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011; Hickman, et al., 2012; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; Topping, et al., 2015).

Contemporary international political discourses of “new terrorism” and practices of securitization present Muslim communities as *the* threat de jour (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009, p. 650). Within these discourses clear de-contextualized references are made to religious identity and practices serving to associate the faith of Islam inextricably with an inherent innate wont for terrorism. We are told how, inspired by Islamic teachings, Muslims are particularly *vulnerable* to being radicalized, to becoming violent Islamists willing to engage in jihad against the *West* (Carr and Haynes, 2013).Unlike Irish communities whose *suspectness* derived from factors such as ethnicity and national identity, for Muslim communities, *homogenized* religion and religious identity takes center stage in their being presented as *suspect*, eliding ethno-national and sectarian differences among others (Hickman, et al., 2012; Nickels, et al., 2012). In addition to being constructed as a terrorist *risk*, differing somewhat from the Irish experience, Muslim communities are also caricatured as a cultural problem and incompatible with a reductive, selective view of *British values* (Vakil, 2014).

LABELING A MONOLITH

Muslim communities are subjected to processes of racialization that present Muslimness as innately atavistic, *naturally* toward terrorism and misogyny (Carr and Haynes, 2013). Of course it is inaccurate to perceive of Muslim communities through this reductive racialized lens that presents these groups as a monolithic homogenous bloc (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009). In a similar manner Irishness

under the PTA 1974 was also treated as monolithic, with Nationalist or Unionist, Catholic or Protestant equally perceived as *suspect* (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009). Both communities have been subjected to reductive labeling processes that present them all as a risky Other. During The Troubles, the Irish were labelled as “Irish terrorists”; in the more contemporary context, Muslims are “labelled as Islamic terrorists” (Hickman, et al., 2012, p. 90).

I do not deny that there may be a threat from terrorist activity. However, today, despite the multifarious groups that may engage in terrorism (Europol, 2014), Muslim communities have become *the* suspect community both in the eyes of the State popular media discourse and the gaze of the general public. Thus “‘suspicion’ should be understood as a diffuse social phenomenon,” one that is premised on the interaction between the “state and social and political discourses,” as opposed to being restricted to state actors only (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2011, p. 3). As noted above discourses of *suspicion* operate under the logic of *association* wherein one is suspect not on the basis of evidence but because of their membership of a community constructed as risky. Pantazis and Pemberton (2009) define a “suspect community” as:

> a sub-group of the population that is singled out for state attention as being “problematic.” Specifically in terms of policing, individuals may be targeted, not necessarily as a result of suspected wrong doing, but simply because of their presumed membership to that sub-group. Race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, language, accent, dress, political ideology or any combination of these factors may serve to delineate the sub-group. (p. 649)

Caught in the crosshairs of international counter-terrorism policies as a threat from within and without, Muslim communities come to be seen as a legitimate target for hostility; providing what Perry (2001, p. 179) refers to as “permission to hate.” The ensuing hostility may manifest as passing comments in public; accusations of links to terrorism; harassment, abuse, and physical assault; and repeated invocations to denounce terrorism on behalf of all Muslims

in the aftermath of terrorist activities (Hickman, et al., 2012). In the sections that follow I will evidence practices of *suspectification* at the hands of the Irish State and also in the eyes of the Irish public. Before doing so I will first provide a note on methodology.

THE SUSPECTIFICATION OF MUSLIMS IN IRELAND: THE STATE AND THE PUBLIC

Methodology

The chapter is based on original research that focused primarily on the lived experiences of anti-Muslim racism in the Irish context. No other study in the Irish context has engaged with this phenomenon to such an extent and the findings that emerged provide unique insights into anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Fieldwork commenced early in 2011 and started with a systematic process engaging with Muslim communities in order to build trust and secure access for research. Contacts within Muslim communities in multiple locations across fourteen towns and cities in Ireland agreed to take part and support the study. These key stakeholders were located in a variety of settings with contacts developed in mosques and cultural centers, university societies, and Muslim Women's groups among others. Muslim participants unaffiliated to any specifically religiously oriented group were also recruited through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of ethnic communities, and snowballing sampling methods. Given the aforementioned diversity among Muslim communities in Ireland, efforts were made to access as broad a constituency of participants as possible; acknowledging diversity in terms of Islamic tradition, religiosity, gender, age, nationality, and ethnicity.

The initial quantitative phase of this mixed methods study involved the participation of 323 Muslim men and women from fourteen locations across Ireland (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011). This was followed by a second, qualitative phase which involved seven in-depth interviews and three focus group discussions with Muslim participants all of whom were purposively sampled to be inclusive of both males and females and a diverse range of ethnic

and national backgrounds including Irish male and female reverts to Islam (Hennink, et al., 2010). The questions asked in this qualitative phase focused on acquiring deeper, richer insights into how anti-Muslim racism manifested for participants in Ireland and the emergent data were subjected to a thematic analysis. These themes, among others, revealed the manner in which Muslimness is deemed suspect in Ireland. In terms of national origins, in the quantitative phase of the study fifty-one different countries of birth were represented encompassing European, African, South Asian, American, and Middle Eastern countries. Participants in the qualitative phase hailed from various backgrounds including Ireland, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iraq, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Sudan.

The Suspicious Irish State

As I have already noted, research undertaken in the British context presents clear evidence of the manner in which, in the eye of the British State, Irish communities were a suspect community. Irishness and the suspicion became synonymous, stereotypically associated with terrorist activity, profiling practices by the apparatuses of the British State and anti-Irish animus (Hillyard, 1993). The history of Irish suspectness is today evacuated from policing practices ostensibly tasked with countering potential terrorist activity in contemporary Ireland. Informed by international racialized securitised tropes of Muslim as threatening Other, Muslimness is perceived as synonymous with terrorism and *our values*. The below findings provide additional and broader insight into state practices of profiling Muslim communities in Ireland. The issue of religious identifiability plays a central role in one being identified as a Muslim, read terrorist, suspect (Fenwick and Choudhury, 2011; Hickman, et al., 2012). In the findings presented here, it is the religious identity of the participants that has been at the heart of their being identified as suspect.

Ehan and Aatif are both Muslim men that live in different parts of Ireland (all names used in this chapter are pseudonyms). While Ehan hails from the Indian Sub-continent, Aatif is a white Irish revert

to Islam. Ethnically from different backgrounds, Ehan and Aatif are both identifiably Muslim. Interviews with Ehan and Aatif revealed the manner in which Muslimness is deemed suspicious in the eyes of the Irish State, uncritically resonating with international securitization practices. Aatif recalls how he was singled out for State attention demonstrating the logic of association central to the concept of suspect community and associated policing practices.

> *I remember the first day I came [back to Ireland] in 2003. . . . Within three weeks there was a Garda car unmarked . . . outside the [prayer house] for weeks watching us. We knew this and I accepted it, at times maybe it was a bit annoying. . . . From my memory now this is back in 2003/4; after 2004 they stopped [surveillance]. Obviously they were satisfied we weren't harbouring any terrorists, I don't know! I mean what else can I think?! . . . They must have checked me out. They must have tried to find out a lot about me. . . . I'm sure they just were satisfied that this person is not a danger to society. . . . He is not a Muslim terrorist.*

Aatif suggested the connection between his Muslim identity and being perceived as a potential terrorist without being prompted. He was more than aware that his identity sets him apart in the eyes of the Irish State as a *threatening* Other. This resonates with Choudhury and Fenwick's (2011) research in the UK context which revealed an awareness among Muslim participants of their *suspectness*. Aatif's awareness of being suspect was to be corroborated in a subsequent interaction with members of the Irish Police. While attending an Islamic event in Dublin, a meeting was arranged by one of Aatif's colleagues with a member of the police *multicultural* office. Aatif recalls:

> *I remember when I went in [to the Gardaí]. . . . When I first sat down at the table and started introducing myself, the response was "don't worry Aatif we know everything about you." I said everything? He said "everything, all your movements." So I went ok, ok.*

For Aatif, this was the State putting him on alert that they were surveying his activity. It is worth noting that when asked, Aatif stated that he did not have a criminal record, the assumption must be, then, that he was targeted because of his religious identity. In addition to the incredibly problematic practices of the profiling of communities, it is worrying to note the role of the *multicultural* office as referred to by Aatif. The use of policing resources that are ostensibly tasked in building community relations can have negative repercussions by generating distrust among those very communities with whom relationships are supposed to be built (Awan, 2012).

As with Aatif, Ehan is also aware that he occupies a suspect body. After participating in an anti-war demonstration, he recalls how he and his companions were singled out because of their Muslimness as they were:

> *reversing to come out of the car park and head back . . . with the rest of the crowd and then Gards came. Two Gards in plain clothes and then two others in uniforms were standing like in the near distance. . . . They came to us and I could see most of our colleagues . . . going; it was just our car left in the car park. . . . I was sitting in the back, so two guys [Gardaí] came . . . inside the car. . . . They're [asking]: What's your name? Do you have an ID on you? You know whose car is this? Where did you get it? Where do you live? When did you come to Ireland? What do you think of Saudi Arabia? What do you think of Hezbollah? . . . We asked them why did you single us out, and he said we just have to do our job.*

This is not Ehan's only experience of being subjected to *special* attention. On another occasion, Ehan along with a traveling companion were approached by two police officers in an Irish airport. Returning from a visit to the restroom, Ehan was taken aside by a plain clothes officer who said:

> *Can I have your passport please?. . . He showed me his badge. . . . He took my passport and then I realized that my friend was also taken aside; his passport taken. . . . He [police officer] was*

nice about it; He was just [asking]: . . . where are you going? How long are you going? Where do you work? . . . They brought the passport back in about ten minutes but we . . . had to stand . . . out there in front of the public between these two big guys.

It is important to underscore the central role of Muslim identity in the aforementioned experiences. For Ehan, being subjected to religious profiling at the hands of the State "*gives people or the public, ammunition to say 'oh look you know our police officers are doing some . . . or that [he] could be a threat that's why they're stopping him. . . .' It makes you look very awkward*." This contribution by Ehan is telling in a number of ways; the latter part, in terms of how being securitized can make one feel chimes with the feelings of stress, humiliation, and embarrassment recalled by Hillyard (1993, 1994) in relation to the experiences of Irish communities. The earlier part of Ehan's contribution alerts us to the effect of securitization practices such as these on the public perception of Muslim communities, serving to reify the perception of Muslimness as a *suspect* identity.

An awareness of living a suspect identity can lead one to manage their identity, including through "lying low" (Hickman, et al., 2012, p. 101). Aatif refers to lying low as a form of coping strategy employed by Muslim communities to avoid being singled out for extra security checks. According to Aatif "*many of my colleagues when they go to airports they just hide their identity, they try to go as Westernised as they can*." Engaging in strategies to *look less Muslim* is understandable given experiences of Muslim communities internationally. Whether in the form of Schedule Seven stops in the UK or similar acts in other national contexts, being identified as Muslim frequently results in increased security scrutiny when traveling (Engage, 2012; Poynting and Perry, 2007). Ireland is no different as reflected in a discussion with a group of young Muslim women of varying ethno-national backgrounds. When answering a question on their airport security experiences they all answered, almost in unison, "*random checks*." Another Muslim woman who wears the hijab referred to the manner in which Muslim people are "*much more scrutinised by airport staff than most other people*";

another describes how she has "*to step aside for a full body check-up even though the alarm was not beeping when we pass through*." As with the experience in the UK, this increased scrutiny in the Irish context is not restricted to airports.

Asif is a South Asian Muslim man and is married to an Irish revert to Islam, Zaheen. Upon returning to Ireland from a trip to the UK, Asif and Zaheen were subjected to the suspecting gaze of the Irish State. What is notable here is the additional incredulity that the Irish border official seemingly demonstrates toward Zaheen's, white Irish and now Muslim, identity. Asif explains their experience arriving at Dun Laoghaire port in their Irish car:

> *Everybody was going through. . . . When they see . . . my car . . . he [Garda] just took us and he was looking in my passport, and then she [Zaheen] was wearing hijab that time and she had her passport without hijab, and it was very young . . . her picture . . . and he was looking at her and her passport for so long . . . [and started asking questions] Where are you from? What's your name? . . . Where did you go? For how long?*

The Suspicious Irish Gaze

Although deriving from a range of different ethnicities and national identities, these men and women are united by their Muslimness. As in the case of Irish communities in the past, securitization strategies such as *stop and search* and the profiling of suspect groups, "whether inadvertently or not . . . have the potential to stigmatise . . . entire populations" of which one is part (Awan, 2012, p. 1166). In such circumstances, Muslimness and/or Islam come to be associated with "imminent dangerousness" in the public common-sense (Poynting and Mason, 2006, p. 384). Thus policies and practices that are ostensibly designed to counter terrorism become harmful to Muslim communities who are racialized as a suspect community. Fekete (2009) argues that today "the media has combined with the current political and security agenda to create a culture of suspicion against Muslims" (pp. 44–47). This is not lost on Muslim men and women in Ireland in this era of globalized media

consumption (Carr, 2015). Zaheen, a participant in this study, was clear of the role of media actors and how they portray Muslim communities as though they are homogenously "*all from the same flock . . . [but] we're not . . . all Irish people weren't supporting terrorism [during the 'Troubles']*."

Of course, Irish media actors are immune to engaging in anti-Muslim discourses. In 2013, the Irish national television broadcaster aired a program on Muslim communities in Ireland that purported to reveal the *reality* of those risky Muslim communities in Ireland (Raidio Teilifís Éireann, 2015). This is not new. In a report published almost a decade ago, the now defunct National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) stated that there was an "increase in alarmist, selective" media reportage in stories relating to Muslim communities in Ireland. Alarmist headlines in the NCCRI report included: Fascist fundamentalism is rife among young Irish Muslims" and "The green jihadis." While these headlines were front and center in their relevant publications; counter-discourses were less obvious, "buried away to the letter page" (National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, 2007, pp. 4–5). In more recent times, just after the death of Osama bin Laden, the headline of the *Irish Sun* printed front page headlines of "Al-Qaeda's Irish terror cell"; "Evil in our midst" and "Jihad fanatics hiding out amongst us." The alarmist tenor of the headlines on the front page was continued within the paper itself with claims of "Terror in our midst" coupled with the watchful eyes of Osama bin Laden cast across a map of the island of Ireland (McElgunn, 2011). Media reporting such as these demonstrates that while the process of *suspectification* may originate within the State it percolates out into other spheres such as the media and, as the following sections demonstrate, into broader society.

The broader study from which this paper derives demonstrates that just over one-in-three Muslim men and women in Ireland experience anti-Muslim hostility in the form of verbal abuse, threatening behavior, and assaults. Similarly, a third of Muslim men and women participating in this study reported experiencing discrimination in accessing goods and services. In terms of hostility, verbal abuse was the predominant form reported. The abuse

directed toward participants frequently evidenced the manner in which Muslimness has become suspect in the Irish common-sense. Participants reported how they have been called *Bin Laden*, *suicide bombers*, and *Taliban*, and *Muslims terrorists*. One survey participant recalled his experience of being told that Islam makes Muslims *think to kill and be terrorists*.

Analyses of reported rates of hostility and discrimination demonstrated that, when controlled for sex, Muslim women experienced hostile and discriminatory acts at a rate of twice that of Muslim men. Again, it is important to underscore the centrality of Muslim identifiability in the experiences of participants. Over 80 percent of participants that experienced anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination stated that their religious dress was a factor in their experience. Consideration of differences between the sexes reveals that far more Muslim women, at a rate of almost two to one, stated that they were identifiably Muslim compared to Muslim men. Muslim identifiability and the association of Muslim with suspectness are to the fore in the experiences of anti-Muslim racism as reported by participants.

In terms of context, public transport was reported as particularly problematic for participants with the suspectification of Muslimness arguably amplified in this sphere after the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid, London, and Scotland, and, the heightened counter-terrorism measures deployed in ports and airports, inter alia. Just less than one-in-three participants stated that they had experienced discrimination while accessing/using public transport; these experiences derived from interactions with staff and also fellow patrons. One Irish Muslim female survey participant recalled how *a man kept telling the bus driver there was a suicide bomber on the bus*. Another Muslim woman, this time of Arabic descent, told of how she was verbally abused while waiting for the tram by an older man who *shouted “she has a bomb in her bag” . . . because I was wearing burqa*. In one of the more extreme cases of assault reported by participants, Mona recalled how while traveling on a city bus service she and a friend were set upon by a gang of teenage girls. This assault commenced with questions of the young Muslim women’s alleged relationship to Osama bin Laden; eventually

resulting with Mona's companion being knocked to the ground and severely assaulted to the point of requiring medical attention.

Participants, both in interviews and in survey comments, made repeated references to the manner in which their Muslim identities are associated with terrorism in a suspicious Irish gaze. This has not always been the case and clearly in the eyes of at least one participant, the so-called "war on terror" has played a key role in these experiences: "*I came in 1985. There was no or less issues, but since 9/11, people treat us as we all are terrorist."* (Male South-Asian Irish participant).

It is interesting to note that, regardless of skin color, ethnic, and national origin being identified as Muslim, part of a *suspect community*, results in the accusations of being a terrorist. The following quotes demonstrate the manner in which being Muslim, regardless of *race* or ethno-national background, is associated with risk in the suspicious Irish gaze. It is also worth noting, as demonstrated in part below and throughout the research findings, that this *gaze* is not the property of, for example, a particular age or class cohort; instead, participants noted how they were subjected to verbal abuse by males and females of varying ages and social backgrounds:

- *What have you got under your dress? . . . Is it a bomb?* (Female Irish revert to Islam)
- *[D]o you have bomb in your car? And all this you know you're bin Laden and all this.* (Male South-Asian Muslim)
- *I have been called terrorist.* (Niqab-wearing female European Muslim)
- *I was at a petrol station. Police came along, and there was two guys next to me, one asked the other: Why are gardai here? The other one said they are here for him and pointed at the beard and the dress. They laughed and talked more. I didn't get all what they said.* (Male North-African Muslim)
- *Young males on one occasion made comments about what we are doing here? Suicide bombers! Elderly women made comment about we are the ones bringing disease. College students called me Osama.* (Male South-Asian British Muslim)

- *I have been called Osama Bin Laden. This happens often when I meet group of youth, even they are my neighbors. Last time it was before 3 weeks. I have been called 'TERRORIST.' My kids where insulted on the street, just because of hijab.* (Male European Muslim)

CONCLUSION

This chapter tried to demonstrate the synonymies of suspicion shared by Irish and Muslim communities. The experiences of Muslim communities in the UK and farther afield as suspect Other, bear a striking resemblance with the treatment of Irish communities during The Troubles in Britain. However, despite the shared histories of suspicion, the experiences of Irish communities as *suspect* are lost to the apparatuses of the Irish State and among, at least some, in Irish society. Drawing on fieldwork undertaken with Muslim communities in Ireland, the findings shared above demonstrate the lived experiences of being a member of a *suspect community* in Ireland. Outside the mosque, on the roadside, at ports and airports, Muslim communities in Ireland are subjected to State securitization policies that single out those who are identifiably Muslim for extra *special* attention. While these securitization practices may be less overt in Ireland than in other states, the effect for Muslim individuals and communities is one of obvious frustration, as well as decreased confidence and distrust in the State.

The impact on Muslim communities in being cast as suspect is more than simply reduced faith and trust in the State. Together, the effect of national (and international in an era of globalized twenty-four hour media content) securitization practices and discourses is to collocate Muslimness with terrorism, premised on the logic of association wherein Muslim identity is read as code for *terror risk*. Racialized as threatening Other, markers of Muslimness come to signify membership of *the* suspect community de jour in the popular common sense. With Muslimness stigmatized as the threatening Other, those prospective police of the Irish nation are called to action, provided as they are by State practices with the "ideological and moral licence" to engage in "racist anti-Muslim hate crime"

(Poynting and Mason, 2006, p. 367). Despite hailing from different *racial* and ethno-national backgrounds, the evidence presented here demonstrates how a diverse range of men and women in Ireland are singled out on the basis of their shared Muslim identity. Participants made repeated references to the manner in which they have been taunted with racist epithets that are replete with comments associated with their suspect identity.

I have argued elsewhere (Carr, 2011) that the Irish State, by recognizing anti-Muslim racism as a specific manifestation of hate crime, could go at least some way toward challenging this phenomenon. It can also be argued that instead of engaging in a scattershot approach to counter-terrorism premised on nothing more than someone *looked Muslim*, the Irish State could engage in evidence based security practices. I am not denying that there are those who engage in terrorist activity who may be from a Muslim background. What I am arguing here though is that, just as not all Irish people were engaged in terrorist activities during The Troubles not all Muslim people support violence nor hold any truck with those who engage in terrorism *in the name of Islam* to further their own particular political ends. A meaningful acknowledgment of this, combined with sensitive policing, could encourage rather than discourage trust between Muslim communities and the State while removing the moral license currently afforded to those who engage in anti-Muslim racism. In the Irish context, official and popular recognition of the shared experience of being *suspect* of both Irish and Muslim communities could also go some way toward challenging the racialized narrative of Muslims as the innately threatening Other in Ireland while concomitantly providing a platform for meaningful discussion abroad in relation to the securitization of Muslim communities.

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Chapter 6

Islamophobia and Australia's Asylum Seeker Debate

Halim Rane and Nora Amath

Amidst the commentary and scholarly discourse about Islamophobia in the Western world, Australia is often overlooked and understudied. However, the issue of Islamophobia in the Australian context is no less significant than the situation in North America and Europe. Officially, the Muslim population of Australia is slightly under 500,000. Unofficially, this number is estimated to be much higher, as statement of religion is not a compulsory question on the Australian census form and, for reasons largely related to Islamophobia many Muslims are reluctant to state their religion. Muslims officially comprise just over 2 percent of the Australian population and their numbers are expected to increase by 80 percent over the next two decades (Pew Research Center, 2011). Moreover, Australia's geographic location positions it as the largest Western country in a region with the world's largest Muslim populations. Sixty percent of the world's Muslim population resides in the Asia-Pacific region. The state of Islamophobia in Australia is likely to impact on relations with neighboring Muslim nations, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, and will become increasingly relevant as Australia seeks to become more engaged with South Asia and the Middle East.

Since the turn of the century, a major debate in Australian politics, media, and public discourse has been the thousands of boat arrivals of people from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and other developing nations. As most of the boats carrying these asylum seekers have arrived on Australian shores from Indonesia, tensions have risen between Australia and the world's most populous Muslim nation. This chapter examines the state of Islamophobia in Australia, specifically in reference to the Australian government's policies on asylum seekers as well as how political discourse on this issue has been covered in the media and how it has influenced the Australian public. We discuss the representation of Islam and Muslims in the Australian media and the extent of Islamophobia in Australian

society. A central argument of the chapter is that Islamophobia is a major factor in Australia's asylum seeker debate. Since the turn of the century, successive Australian governments have exploited pejorative views of asylum seekers and anti-Muslim sentiments among the Australian public. The media have tended to unquestioningly repeat the government's views in this regard and failed to adequately challenge its politics. In turn, negativity toward Muslims and asylum seekers among Australians has been sustained.

REPRESENTATIONS OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN AUSTRALIAN MEDIA

Relative to its total population of just fewer than 23 million, Australia is a media-rich nation. Pay television, five free-to-air national commercial and public television networks, 20 radio networks and over 600 radio stations, two national newspapers, 10 state and territory dailies, over 30 regional newspapers, and almost 500 suburban newspapers shape the overall Australian media landscape. Social media have also continued to expand in Australia, currently involving over 11 million active Facebook users and over two million active Twitter users nationally. Of the two public television networks, the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABC) features a high proportion of Australian news and current affairs as well as imported programs, mainly from the UK. The other network, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), specifically promotes the government's multicultural policy. A high proportion of SBS's content is international, including films, new and current affairs programs from across the world. Commercial television networks also broadcast a high proportion of international content, mostly from the United States. The regulatory body Media, Entertainment, and Arts Alliance (MEAA) provides a journalists' code of ethics which establishes standards by which journalists are expected to adhere. Among these ethical standards is that journalists should "not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family

relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability" (MEAA, 2013).

For around 80 percent of the Australian population, the mass media is a primary source of information about Islam and its adherents (Rane, 2010). In spite of a pluralistic media environment, regulatory bodies and codes of practice, Islam and Muslims have tended to be portrayed pejoratively in general, particularly since 9/11. There is also a general consensus that mass media and, increasingly, social media play an instrumental role in stimulating and intensifying Islamophobia (Rane, et al., 2014). Negative media coverage of Islam and Muslims was certainly present prior to 9/11, however. Since the Gulf War of 1991 and even as far back as the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Islam and Muslims have attracted considerable negative media attention. The Western media, including the Australian ones, present a "limited and limiting conceptual framework surrounding Islam in public discourse . . . within which the perceived 'negative,' 'threatening' features of Muslim belief and behaviour are constantly promoted and reinforced" (Morey and Yaqin, 2011, p. 20). The dominant stereotypes of Muslims include "the bearded Muslim fanatic, the oppressed, veiled woman, [and] the duplicitous terrorist who lives among 'us' . . ." (Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2007, p. 2). Such stereotypes have been reinforced since 9/11.

In keeping with news values that tend to favor stories with controversy, violence, crime, and the unusual, Muslims tend to make the news. Stories that feature Islam or Muslims tend to be within the context of crises and conflicts, including terrorism or otherwise focused on aspects of Muslims' culture that appear *strange* to Western audiences. In general, Muslims are portrayed as different and often as the enemy or at least the *other* (Rane, et al., 2014). This could perhaps be explained as part of orientalism's legacy by which Western identity is forged in opposition to a constructed other. Another part of the explanation is that the mass media are businesses that operate according to commercial interests that prioritize attracting audiences. Peter Manning, for instance, finds that Arabs and Muslims overseas are portrayed as violent, "without reason, humanity or compassion"; Sydney Arab men are portrayed

as “sexual predators”; and Middle Eastern asylum seekers are presented as “tricky, ungrateful and undeserving” (Manning, 2006, p. 37).

While most analyses of the representation of Islam and Muslims in the mass media tend to focus on factual or news media, predominantly newspapers and television news, fictional media are equally important as they are widely consumed by Australian audiences, through both television and cinema. Jack Shaheen’s (2003) study, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, demonstrates that Hollywood films portraying Arabs and Muslims frequently allude to or are based upon actual events or issues, giving fictional films a factual or authoritative character. In his analysis of more than 900 films portraying Arabs and Muslims, Shaheen contends that the films repeatedly dehumanized Arabs and Muslims, portraying them as heartless, brutal, uncivilized, and religious fanatics who are violent and terrorists. He argues that, because of their repetitious nature, such portrayals have a negative impact on public discourse and policy. Films that offered audiences a humane and humanized understanding of Islam and Muslims were very few (Shaheen, 2003).

In his study of orientalism in the Australian press, Isakhan (2010) demonstrates that orientalist and Islamophobic representations of Muslims in the Australian press long pre-date the events of 9/11 and contends that they were inherited from Europe as modern manifestation of an ancient history of East-West rivalry. Also in the Australian context, Aly (2007) argues that the dominant representation of Muslims within the media frame of terrorism marginalizes Australia’s Muslim population and positions them as an unwanted Other. According to Aly, the discourse on terrorism and Islam in the Australian media has subsumed a range of discourses prompted by national and international events, with the underlying message being that Islam is at odds with the principles of liberal democracy. The media’s preoccupation with the extremes in the Muslim world precludes an awareness of mainstream Muslim life and lends legitimacy to extremist Muslims as the representatives of Islam. Compounding the problem is an almost complete absence of the majority Muslim voice and the beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of

the mainstream Islam. Those who rely on the mass media for their understanding of Islam and Muslims are unlikely to gain a view of the complete picture or even the main picture. Hard-line and extreme Muslim voices are overrepresented and tend to be presented as representative of the Muslim masses.

The statements and actions of a minority of Muslims are often deemed newsworthy and dominate the media representation of Muslims' popular understanding of Islam (Rane, 2010). A recent example of this was the so-called *Sydney riots*. On 1 July 2012, Nakoula Besseley Nakoula (also known as Sam Bacile) uploaded a 14-minute trailer for his film *The Real Life of Muhammad*, which became known as *Innocence of Muslims*. The trailer is a crude representation of Islam, Muslims, and Arabs in general. The film repeats familiar stereotypes and clichés depicting Muhammad as untrustworthy, unfair and violent, and Muslims as criminals who abuse women and are intolerant of other religions. Australia was one of the many countries in which large protests occurred. After police dispersed a crowd of about 100 Muslims who were protesting in front of the US consulate, the number of protesters swelled to about 300 as they demonstrated through the streets of Sydney. The protests resulted in damage to civilian and public property, including police vehicles. Six police and 19 protesters were injured and nine people were arrested. Although the number of protesters was small, the media portrayal of the incident suggested that a mass uprising of Australia's Muslims was occurring as "Muslims stormed the city" (Channel Ten News, 2012). This instance of reporting could be considered an example of manifest Islamophobia expressed by the Australian news media.

Latent Islamophobia can also be identified in the reporting of this event. Despite the fact that leaders of the Australian Muslim community's 25 most prominent organizations condemned the protests as "unacceptable and un-Islamic" (Olding, 2012), such statements were significantly underreported compared with the protests themselves. It is indicative of how entrenched news values are in respect to prioritizing negativity, controversy, and conflict that the article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* concerning the Muslim leaders' denouncement of the protests carried the headline "Muslims

inundated with messages of hate" (Olding, 2012) rather than a more positive headline such as "Muslim leaders condemn protests."

Media coverage of Muslims not only shapes the views non-Muslims hold about Islam but it is also blamed by Muslims for what they perceive as their social exclusion and the publics' negative attitudes towards Islam (Rane, et. al., 2011; Yasmeen, 2008). Muslims in Australia express a lack of trust in the mass media. One particular study that surveyed 428 Muslim Australians found that of all social and public institutions, respondents expressed the lowest level of trust for the mass media with 29 percent stating they had "no trust" and another 36 percent with "very little trust" in the media (Rane, et. al., 2011). The same study also found that 57 percent "strongly agreed" and another 26 percent "agreed" that "the mass media are the main source of negative attitudes towards Muslims" (Rane, et. al., 2011).

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Over the past 50 years, international migration has become a growing phenomenon. Muslims account for 27 percent (over 60 million people) of all international migrants. The top ten destination countries for Muslim migrants are Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, France, Jordan, Pakistan, the United States, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Syria (Pew Research Center, 2012). Hence, Muslims are more likely to migrate to another Muslim-majority country than a Western country. However, the arrival of Muslim asylum seekers has evoked negative reactions in many Western countries and some of the 44 industrialized countries that receive asylum seekers have responded far less humanely than others.

Australia is one of the industrialized countries that has adopted increasingly extreme policies aimed at deterring asylum seekers from reaching its shores at the expense of human rights and obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Over the past five years, Australia has received just over 50,000 applications for asylum, ranking it 15th among the 44 industrialized countries overall, 19th in terms of per capita rankings, and 15th in terms of GDP rankings (UNHCR, 2013). Most of Australia's asylum seekers come

from Muslim-majority countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Egypt (UNHCR, 2013). Since the trend of Middle Eastern asylum seekers began in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the government's policies have included the outright refusal to allow boats carrying asylum seekers to land on Australian shores, excising the migration zone to restrict the lodgement of claims and access to legal rights, mandatory detention in isolated facilities that have been implicated in various human rights abuses, offshore processing in detention centers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, and, most recently, a policy of using the Australian Defence Force to prevent asylum boat arrivals and even driving them back to Indonesia. Disturbingly, this central policy of the current government's "border security" initiative, officially known as "Operation Sovereign Borders," positions asylum seekers as a threat not only to Australia's security but to its very sovereignty.

Australian political leaders have also dehumanized asylum seekers through the routine use of such labels as *illegals*, *queue jumpers*, and *boat people* as well as claims that asylum seekers bring disease, pose a security risk, and present a demographic threat and an economic burden (Phillips, 2013). Furthermore, a large segment of the Australian media have not challenged the government's policies and have unquestioningly repeated the political rhetoric on asylum seekers (Klocker and Dunn, 2003; Pedersen, et al., 2006). Also noteworthy is that the Australian media coverage that humanizes asylum seekers by informing about the legitimacy and legality of their claims are significantly underrepresented. Thus, a necessary counterweight to the prevailing discourse on asylum seekers as illegitimate and undeserving is lacking (Rane, et al., 2014).

As a consequence of this absence, Klocker (2004), using a social constructivism framework, found that overall 92 percent of Australians used negative descriptions to describe asylum seekers. In particular, 82 percent of the respondents used the term "illegal immigrants" while 79 percent used "unlawful" to describe asylum seekers; this is strongly reinforced by political and media discourses on the "illegality" of asylum seekers (Klocker, 2004; Klocker and Dunn, 2003), when in fact, there is nothing illegal about seeking

asylum under international law. Furthermore, 44 percent characterized asylum seekers as “terrorists” (Klocker, 2004). Significantly, respondents stated that the people seeking asylum are the “undesirable ‘other’ who should be excluded” and whose “way of life were not keeping with Australian norms” (pp. 3–11).

Related to this are respondents’ descriptors including “misogynists,” “intolerant,” “fanatics,’ “fundamentalists’ militant,” and “alien.” These labels are typical stereotypes of Islam, according to Dunn (2001). Klocker reports that 50 percent of respondents stated that their negative perception of asylum seekers came as a result of the events of 9/11. One of her respondents wrote: “They chose to destroy all documentation identifying who they really are—if they are genuine refugees, why? Perhaps they are ‘al-Qaeda’ or Taliban members?” (Klocker, 2004, p. 12). Accordingly, Klocker concludes that the overwhelming negative responses from the study’s respondents derive from the negative political and media framing of the asylum discourse and from the propagation of the negative construction of Islam and Muslims as the menacing *other*. However, it needs to be noted that the negative discourse about asylum seekers occurred well before the events of 9/11. In her maiden speech in Parliament House, the former One Nation senator Pauline Hanson articulated:

> . . . for too long ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debate [on immigration and multiculturalism] by the major parties. I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. Between 1984 and 1995 40% of all migrants coming into this country were of Asian origin. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. Of course, I will be called racist but, if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A truly multicultural country can never be strong or united (Hanson, 1996).

Poynting and Mason (2008) note that while Hanson's rhetoric was at that time specifically about Asian migration to Australia, some of her mantras were adopted into policy by the former Prime Minister John Howard and his conservative government with the *Border Protection Bill* (1999) along with the new visa schemes. Howard, in fact, successfully campaigned with many of Hanson's stances, including uttering her famous line: *I can invite who I want into my home*. Unfortunately, as Poynting and Mason (2008) point out, Hanson's stances were not silenced; in fact, her themes were promoted in the public sphere by the "negative political leadership" of Howard (Krongold, 2006), subsequent governments, and media discourses. Hanifa Deen, a prolific writer on issues related to Islam and Muslims in Australia comments: "I have witnessed a wave of 'Islamophobia' drift across the country and seen this poison infect our policy of 12 mandatory detention for asylum seekers, as the word 'refugee' becomes synonymous with Muslim" (2003, p. 272).

On 26 August 2001, one of the most troubling events in asylum discourses occurred, otherwise known as the *Tampa* affair. Over 438 asylum seekers were found on a sinking ferryboat, the *Palapa I,* after a storm damaged their vessel. Eventually the Norwegian vessel, the *Tampa,* received the Mayday distress call and rescued the asylum seekers. They attempted to bring them to the shores of Australia at Christmas Island in line with maritime conventions and the wishes of the asylum seekers. However, Australia adamantly refused entry into its water, threatened the Norwegian captain Arne Rinnan with prosecution of people smuggling if he persisted on entering Australian waters (Marr and Wilkinson, 2005). When Rinnan refused their command, Australia sent the Australian Navy to prevent further passage. Throughout the affair, the Australian government repeatedly asserted that the asylum seekers *will never set foot on Australian soil*. Finally the dehydrated and very ill asylum seekers were taken in and processed by New Zealand, Nauru, and Papua New Guinea. According to Gary Rundle (2001) Australia's response to the *Tampa* affair, reveals "some very dark corners of the Australian psyche" (p. 6).

As a consequence of this affair, Australia's harsh asylum seeker policy came about in the form of the Pacific Solution (Buchanan,

2003) where no asylum seekers arriving by boat were allowed to land on Australian shores and had to be processed at detention centers in some of the island nations in the Pacific Ocean, namely Nauru and Papua New Guinea. The *Tampa* situation coincided with the barrage of media attention on the serial gang rapes of young women by a Lebanese youth gang in Western Sydney. As Betts (2001) suggests, such prominence and fear mongering unfortunately led the general populace to generalize one group of Lebanese youth to mean all Middle Eastern people. This, by extension, resulted in the negative portrayal of asylum seekers, with a large Muslim group on board the *Tampa*, as those who are *sexual predators* and who would make Australia less safe with their arrival.

Thus, when 9/11 occurred and with large groups of asylum seekers from Iraq and Afghanistan, there was public fear and moral panic about the “Muslim illegal boat people” “queue jumpers” wanting to “invade our space,” “change our way of life,” or as Hanson articulated that, because “many of these people are Muslims” there is “a lack of respect for the Christian way of life that this country’s based on” (Doherty and Jacobsen, 2001, p. 7). A few months later, when another leaky boat carrying asylum seekers wanted to land at Christmas Island, the leadership under John Howard accused the asylum seekers of throwing their children overboard. This accusation was found to be completely false, but it did not stop the government and its supporters declaring “(we) don’t want people like that in Australia” as Howard told the Melbourne *Herald Sun* (Ludlow and Hamilton, 8 October, 2001, p. 1).

Explicitly, the political leadership also expressed links between terrorism and asylum seekers. For instance, Marr and Wilkinson (2003) remark that particularly after 9/11, the former Prime Minister John Howard often used vague rhetoric about whether he was waging war on boat people or waging war on terrorism. The authors also found that this was prominently propagated by talk back radio where announcers asserted that asylum seekers were associated with the 9/11 terrorists. Marion Maddox (2004) agrees and succinctly summarises the “us” and “them” rhetoric:

> The story seemed tailor-made to build up the picture of asylum-seekers as “Them,” a “sort of people” wholly alien to “Us,” treating even their children in cavalierly self-interested ways “We” could never comprehend or countenance. It was the latest twist in the line of inference and allusion which linked Muslims, suburban teenage criminals, international terrorists, fundamentalist theocrats and desperate asylum seekers together as “Them.” Spelling out the connections could only have weakened a set of associations that thrives between the cracks of conversation. (p. 6)

The reality, as Maddox (2004) explains, is that the political leadership and the media are well aware that racism is morally wrong and, thus, may not explicitly make manifest accusations that all Muslim men are rapists or terrorists; not all Muslims are queue-jumpers or child abusers. However, by consistently conveying implicit messages of *those people* or *people like that* Howard, like others, absolves himself of being racist as he is referring to specific *people who are like that* (see Tia Mendelberg’s (2001) *The Race Card* for a robust discussion). Moreover, his repeated *implicit* rhetoric made it evident that when he was talking about *them* he was referring to Muslims (Maddox, 2004). Unfortunately, neither the opposition or public opinion polls disapproved of his Machiavellian tactics.

As a result of the persistent Islamophobia due to hysteria created by the political leadership and media discourse, Australia is willing to be in breach of international law including the UN Refugee Convention, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), International Maritime Organization (IMO), and Australia’s Criminal Code (Commonwealth). Moreover, according to Julian Burnside, “The truth of our treatment of refugees is deeply shocking. Innocent people are locked up in dreadful conditions and for an indefinite period. . . . The truth is uncomfortable for the major political parties:

they conceal it in doublespeak in the hope that it will be all right" (2006, p. 18).

Australia is also in breach of human rights conventions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In 2013, Australia was found in breach of 150 violations of international law by the UN Human Rights Committee. In its 2014 and 2015 reports, Australia's treatment of asylum seekers has also received scathing criticism from the independent Human Rights Watch. The report asserts: "Successive governments have prioritized domestic politics over Australia's international legal obligations to protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. . . . Too often, the government has attempted to demonize those trying to reach Australia by boat . . ." (p. 292).

Significantly, the Islamophobic propaganda about asylum seekers as seen by the political and media discourses and confirmed by respondents from Klocker's (2004) study or the Essential Report (2010) is surrounded by hysteria, gross exaggerations, and false information (Pedersen, et al., 2005). Despite harsh criticisms from independent human rights organizations as well as numerous UN Human Rights committees, the demonizing and vilification of asylum seekers is evidently connected to the discourse on Islamophobia and has paved way for the general populace to state that the government was not harsh enough in its treatment of asylum seekers. Indeed, about three-quarters of the Australian public say they are concerned about asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat, and 58 percent favor the policy of processing asylum seekers offshore rather than in Australia (Oliver, 2013).

CONCLUSION

As Rane, Ewart, and Martinkus (2014) discussed, the main drivers in the pejorative treatment of asylum seekers in the Australian context are the pre-existence of orientalist and Islamophobic attitudes among the general public, the willingness of political leaders to exploit public prejudices and misconceptions, and the absence of

media prepared to challenge government policy and public perceptions. When the media do not sufficiently fulfill their role as a watchdog on society's institutions of power, influence, and authority, political responses to asylum seekers may exploit pre-existing fears, anxiety, and misconceptions. Under such conditions, negative attitudes toward asylum seekers become further entrenched and consequently reinforce negative government policies on asylum seekers. As Krongold (2006) aptly argues: "A discursive framing of asylum seekers and by association their Australian Muslim brethren as the demonised 'other' was juxtaposed against the white teleology of nationhood to produce the most explicit attack on multiculturalism since its inception" (p. 8).

This chapter has contended that the persistence of Islamophobia in Australia requires an understanding of the relationship between media coverage, government policy, and public opinion. We have used the asylum seeker debate as a case study to examine the relationship between these three factors. Australia's response to Muslim asylum seekers exhibits significant Islamophobic tendencies, which seem to be pre-existing prior to the emergence of political discourse and government policies hostile to asylum seekers at the turn of the century. The media's unwillingness to challenge government policy and tendency to adopt anti-asylum seeker political discourse appears to have resulted in increasingly hostile policies toward asylum seekers, which in turn tends to reinforce anti-asylum seeker attitudes among the Australian public.

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Chapter 7

Intersection of Sexism and Islamophobia

Laura Navarro

Media Construction of "Muslim Woman"[1]

Information on television is presented objectively, unlike in literature or films. Thus, by claiming to champion objectivity and report *real* news, the informative discourse of the mass media conceals their important role as *builders of realities* and, consequently, their key role in the processes of imagination—and social construction—of the communities to which they belong (either national or transnational). This chapter goes in-depth into these processes, through the study of the discursive strategies that reveal ethnic differences and, in particular, the dominant representations of Muslim women in the Spanish and French mass media.

While depending on the ideological color of the government in power, it is possible to observe changes in the way the media construct certain events related with Islam and the Arab world; there exists a continuum in the mass media representations about *what is taking place in the world* that transcend the interests of any political party in power. This paper analyzes these dominant discourses, without addressing other minority discourses that undoubtedly exist, and that constitute a less distorted and stereotyped vision than that examined in this article; for instance, many discourses constructed by media created by some migrant communities in Europe (Navarro, 2014), especially those by Muslim women, like Natalia Andújar, co-founder of the website *webislam.com*.

Several authors have studied the dominant media discourse in news on Arabs and Muslims, including Rabah (1998), Geisser (2003), and Deltombe (2005), in France, and Martín Muñoz (1994, 2000), Corrales (2002), Navarro (2007, 2008), van Dijk (2008), and López, et al. (2010), in Spain. However, the most studies on this subject have been published in English. Noteworthy examples

include the work by Said (1997), Siddiqi (1997), Karim (2000), Poole (2002), and Richardson (2004). Practically, all these studies highlight the otherization caused by establishing *us and them* oppositions, assigning positive elements to *us* and negative elements to *them*, as well as treatment in the media that instead of facilitating better knowledge of *others*, exacerbates feelings of rejection and incomprehension.

Many of the above mentioned authors have also studied in-depth the relationship between discourse and power. For example, Said examined how and why the mass media (especially in the US, Britain, and Israel) constantly reduce Islam and Muslims to a series of stereotypes and generalizations that merely portray this religion as monolithic, as a threat and danger to the West, and as a violent and irrational religion. Martín-Muñoz has highlighted the persistence of an *agreed cultural paradigm* that Western societies have forged on the Arab and Muslim *Orient* "based on a culturalist interpretation of Islamic societies explained from an essentialist and ethnocentric perspective, thus preventing the comprehension of much more plural and changing political and social realities than what normally seems to be the case" (2005, p. 206). In two of my own studies (2007, 2008), I have also underlined the important role played by this Orientalist discourse in the legitimization of hegemonic military policies (applied for many years in the Middle East), as well as in the legitimization of police and military immigration policies, which have largely been responsible for the deaths of thousands of people on geostrategic borders, such as the southern US border and the southern European border.

Nevertheless, although these studies have contributed to research on the social reproduction of racism, most of these studies also have the same shortcoming: the space dedicated to the image of the *other woman*. Virtually all these studies focus on the image of Muslim men and ignore the specific representations of Muslim women. This chapter examines in detail these images, which have been studied less. To this end, I will first focus on the dominant representations of *Muslim woman* in the Western media in general—and in Spanish mass media in particular—in order to highlight the specific characteristics of the image of the female Muslim *other* and

analyze, from a gender perspective, the symbolic mechanisms legitimizing certain Islamophobic thoughts and practices. Afterwards, I will look specifically at the treatment of *l'affaire du voile* (the veil affair) by the French media based on a consideration of the *overlapping* or *interlinking* of sexism, racism, and classism.

These analyses are also based on two premises: the notion that audiences are able to actively appropriate media texts (Morley and Chen, 1996), and that the media do not construct representations on their own but instead belong to the mechanisms that maintain the existing hegemony, i.e., institutions that participate in the economy, culture, public opinion, and social mobilization and that, according to Antonio Gramsci's thesis, allow to intellectually, morally, and politically manage society without having to resort to physical violence to obtain the consensus of the majority. This complex system of building social consensus—through which dominant images of *other men* and *other women* are also constructed—is a fundamental explanatory factor for understanding the social and cognitive processes that allow us to unconsciously absorb racist, classist, and/or sexist representations (and even thoughts and practices). These images are neither the same in all geographical contexts nor fixed or immutable because they change with specific historical and social contexts.

In Spanish society, for example, historical conflicts with Muslims, especially Moroccans, have been decisive in the social reproduction of racist stereotypes and prejudices regarding Islam and the Arab world (Martín-Corrales, 2002). Likewise, fears (Delumeau, 2002), the disproportionate need for security, and lack of communication (Vázquez, 2004) can exacerbate such distorted visions of the *other*, as do culturalist visions of history and the politics of Arab and Muslim societies, mainly transmitted through the education system (Martín-Muñoz, et al., 1998) and also, as will be discussed later, through the dominant mass media discourse. Thus, today different converging factors imbue the dominant Spanish collective image of Islam and the Arab world with essentially negative characteristics, many of which are not new, e.g., the laziness, cruelty, lechery, male chauvinism, and fanaticism of Muslim men.

MUSLIM WOMEN: VICTIMS OF THEIR OWN CULTURE AND A THREAT TO OURS?

Are the characteristics historically used to describe Muslim women the same as those applied to Muslim men? Martín-Corrales (2002) mentions some characteristics that have been historically attributed to Moroccan women in particular and to Muslim women in general. These include ignorance and submission, but also—albeit with different levels of intensity according to the historical period—sensuality. This sensual image of Muslim women is, to a certain extent, a continuation of the thesis put forward by Nash (1984). Since the first mass media institutions appeared in the late nineteenth century, women of other cultures have been represented, according to Nash, as exotic and sexually active women (in postcards, labels, on alcoholic beverages, etc.), in contrast to the bourgeois model of the *domestic angel*.

Later, this conception was transferred to the twentieth century, since, as described by Lutz and Collins (1993) in their analysis of numerous articles published in the middle of the last century in the magazine *National Geographic*, women of other cultures were almost absent from politics and were only portrayed as mothers and nice consumable objects, a perception accentuated by nude images of women. In the 1980s and 1990s, Lutz and Collins observed that these women were still shown as the refuge of the cultural tradition of the country through images in which they wore traditional clothing while men copied the Western model. Thus, progress was identified as something masculine and tradition as something feminine.

As regards the stereotypes of ignorance and submission associated with Muslim women and prevalent in the Spanish collective imaginary, if we take into account the dominant representations transmitted in the hegemonic media discourse, today these stereotypes seem to have been reinforced. The main characteristics of these representations, that will be described bellow, are based on the results of the analysis of the sample studied in my doctoral thesis (Navarro, 2007) and, specially, on the results of an in-depth study by Gema Martín-Muñoz (2005). Although this study is based on a sample of 417 articles published in the Spanish

press between 1995 and 1997—before important events such as the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and March 11, 2004—its main conclusions are particularly relevant, not only due to its rigor, but because this is one of the few studies currently available on this subject in Spain.

PREDOMINANCE OF CULTURALIST PERCEPTIONS

According to Martín-Muñoz (2005, p. 208) news on Muslim women "is dominated by the culturalist presentation and interpretation of Islam." In fact, the discrimination of these women (an issue that attracts special media attention) tends to be explained almost exclusively according to theories on Islamic culture. For example, when referring to *the rights of Muslim women*, the news discourse tends to focus on symbolic and religious issues such as the use of the veil or the role of Islam, thus eluding more important matters relating to the equality of these women, such as rights to education or public freedoms.

This dominant culturalist perception of Islam also leads to "ethnocentric perceptions that make it very difficult to understand dynamics that do not reproduce our construction of modernity and our feminist secular model" (Martín-Muñoz, 2005, p. 209). These are biased visions also hindered by the fact that many experiences of women in non-Muslim countries during long periods are considered to be exclusive to Arab countries. In fact, until the 1960s in Spain, if a father or husband murdered his daughter or wife for reasons of adultery or for having sexual relations before marriage, this was considered an attenuating circumstance in the penal code. In short, and as in the case of the dominant media representations of Muslim men, the situations and processes reported in the news are largely explained as a consequence of Islam itself, rather than the result of specific political and socioeconomic situations.

Martín-Muñoz also considers that these visions are far removed from social reality because they fail to take into account the conscious and deliberate adhesion of millions of women to their Islamic identity. In fact, they are not differentiated according to the criterion of Islamic women (with veil) as traditional and mentally

retarded women vs. Westernized women as modern women, which is the image the mass media appear to transmit. On the contrary, the sociological reality shows that although a distinction is made between traditional and modern women, “the latter are distributed between Islamist and non-Islamist women. And the factor distinguishing traditional women from modern women is not the veil [. . .], but whether or not they have had access to education” (2005, p. 210). Nevertheless, these modern Islamist women are largely absent from the mass media.

Bearing in mind that much of the textual strategy in ideological production is not dictated by what is really said but by what it is not said, it is important as well to highlight the type of information and images that tend to be omitted. The mass media do not only exclude modern Islamist women but also, in general, the socially and culturally diverse communities of Muslim women living in Spain. These women are not only housewives, mothers, and Muslims (the simplified image transmitted by the media) but also students, researchers, entrepreneurs, domestic workers, artists, politicians, volunteers, activists, etc. In this respect, it is also not accidental that the media do not report on the evolution of pro-human rights movements (including women’s rights and freedoms movements) that exist in some Arab countries, such as Egypt and Morocco. Although the concept of the sexual emancipation of women has not reached these countries in the same way that has reached Europe, changes are taking place, fueled mainly by women’s associations and NGOs.

DOMINANT REPRESENTATIONS: PASSIVITY, VICTIMIZATION, AND THE VEIL

The news analyzed mainly presents Muslim women in three ways: as passive women, as victims, and as veiled women. Their passivity stems from the fact that they are not portrayed as individuals who work or seek media attention but as “victims, in family relations or illustrating a specific cultural landscape” (often linked to Islam), “instead of as a source of information on important events in their communities.” In short, they are portrayed as “observers rather than

as active participants in their community" (Martín-Muñoz, 2005, p. 210). Their role as victims is basically reflected through the recurrence of news stories describing conflicts (e.g., the Afghan or Algerian conflicts), and through news stories on the veil, the imprisonment or exclusion of these women, all symbols of "the relations and limitations of women in the lands of Islam" (2005, p. 211).

I have also observed that most news stories or articles mentioning Muslim women tend to refer to violence against women (outside and inside our borders), focusing mainly on issues such as stoning, female genital mutilation, or polygamy (Navarro, 2008). The repetition of, and the way of informing about these themes exacerbates victimization and associates the practice of Islam with the discrimination of, and physical violence against women. In fact, most television news and reports on these issues do not usually explain the political, economic, and educational factors that fuel intolerable practices, such as stoning or ablation, consequently fostering—as mentioned before—the perception that Islam is ultimately responsible for this situation, as well as the perception of Muslim countries as uniformly intolerant and anti-democratic.

Another strategy that accentuated the stereotype of Muslim women as passive and submissive women is that whenever the issue of *women in Islam* is discussed or reported, women are hardly ever given the chance to express their opinions; hence, they are deprived of preferential access to this discourse, a source of power comparable to social resources as important as wealth and education. Sometimes, when Muslim women appear as active sources of information, they are normally *Westernized* women (who do not wear veils) and they almost never belong to Islamist movements. Interestingly, this practice contrasts with the general tendency to choose photographs of "anonymous and passive veiled women interpreted from a culturalist and traditionalist perspective" (Martín-Muñoz, 2005, p. 213) to accompany information on Muslim women.

As regards the third dominant representation—veiled women—the monolithic interpretation of this garment is striking: "as a sign of mystery (Orientalist historical interpretations), or as a sign of

submission and oppression (traditionalist interpretations)" (Martín-Muñoz, 2005, p. 211). In fact, women who wear veils are normally portrayed as *lacking individual or personal attributes*. In contrast, whenever Westernized Muslim women are represented, "similarities with Western culture are emphasized and their individual professional status is mentioned" (Martín-Muñoz, 2005, p. 211) suggesting that women who wear veils have no responsibilities or professional filiations.

Thus, the dominant informative discourse tends to represent the veil as the ultimate symbol of the exclusion of women but also not normally reflect its multidimensional character. It should be remembered that there are different types of veil—ranging from veils that cover the whole body to small headscarves—and that they are used for different reasons; some are imposed by national law or by the family while others are used simply due to the inertia of tradition. Veils do not have the same meaning for women who wear it (or refuse to wear it) in different contexts (Touati, 2006) and they are also actively used both consciously and politically as a symbol of identity and/or political vindication. They can even be used by women to optimize their scarce resources and thus achieve a certain level of prestige or a better marriage, or as a means of social mobility; or simply because they believe in God.

Boumedienne (2007) describes an interesting example of how the French mass media tend to present the veil as an absolute *scarecrow* in terms of ghosts and stereotypes of Islam: In August 2006, when the British authorities decided to keep airplanes grounded at Heathrow airport in order to dismantle a series of terrorist attempts, liberation.fr (the web page of the French newspaper *Libération*) announced *attempted attacks* which it described as *Islamist*, and could not find anything better to illustrate its article than the photograph of a veiled woman with one hand pushing her baby's pram and the other carrying a small child in the corridors of Heathrow airport.

The fact that many educated and working Muslim women have started wearing veils voluntarily in recent years "is not only difficult for the West to accept, but even irritates it because it undermines the traditional interpretation that it clings to so acrimoniously" and,

therefore, the mass media conceal this fact or simply ignore it (Martín-Muñoz, 2005, p. 211). Thus, women associated with having a Muslim identity or directly involved in Islamist militancy are largely absent from news on *women in Islam*.

THE ANTI-VEIL LAW: SEXISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA INTERLINKED

After France approved the law prohibiting the use of *ostensive* religious signs in state schools (better known as the *anti-veil law*), French feminists, anti-racist militants, as well as the political parties and civil society actors took a stance and two points of view quickly emerged: on the one hand, the defense of women's rights and gender equality was used to justify the law (an argument supported first by political groups and later by associations and feminists); and, on the other hand, the denunciation of discriminatory aspects of the law and opposition to the exclusion of girls from schools prompted opposition of the law (from anti-racist militants and also feminists).

According to the analysis presented in the issue of *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* entitled "Sexism and racism: the French case" (Benelli, et al., 2006), the dominant point of view in the public debate and media in France was the first point of view described above, which justified the law based on the defense of *women's rights*, ignoring claims identifying the racist aspects of the law and in spite of the fact that, as indicated by the authors, this law affected—and continues to affect—mainly the Muslim community (comprising principally immigrant men and women from Maghreb countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, former French colonies, as well as their children born in France), with clear racial implications fueling division and discrimination. I will later examine the origin and social implications of this law, in order to analyze in greater depth the mechanics behind the *interlinking* of sexism and racism (that is, belonging to various disadvantaged groups), from both a material standpoint and, more importantly, in terms of its discursive and symbolic dimension by analyzing the political and media treatment of this law.

GENESIS OF THE LAW

As shown by the authors of the above-mentioned issue of *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, the promulgation of the French anti-veil law (in March 2004) was the result of a long and complex process that started in France in 1989, when the use of headscarves by secondary school girls was starting to become a *problem*:

September 1989: Three girls were temporarily expelled from a school in Creil (Oise) after it was considered that their headscarves represented an alleged *attack on secularism*. The French Minister of Education at the time closed the debate by reminding the French Council of State of legislation in force at the time. The Council responded as follows: “female students enjoy ‘freedom of conscience’ and therefore the ‘right to carry religious signs,’” “only proselytism and the interruption of school activities are grounds for expulsion,” and headmasters are invited to “evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis” (quotes cited in Benelli, et al., 2006).

September 1994: Controversy reared its head following a circular by the new French Minister of Education aimed at school headmasters, defining the headscarf as an “conspicuous sign in itself” that reveals a “proselytist attitude” (cited in Benelli, et al., 2006) (unlike the Christian cross or the Jewish kipa). The circular invited headmasters to prohibit the use of headscarves in state schools.

July 1995: After being asked to declare on the exclusion of 18 pupils in Strasbourg, the French Council of State concluded that girls wearing Islamic veils or headscarves cannot be prohibited from doing so or automatically expelled. Once again, the Council ruled that no sign can be considered *conspicuous* by nature and that, pursuant to the 1905 law on the separation of church and state (popularly known as the *Law on secularism*), no religious sign may in itself be in opposition to secularism.

However, the position adopted by the French Council of State was harshly criticized by the defenders of secularism, which they considered to be under threat; they did not so much oppose the proselytism of certain girls as the presence of any girl wearing a headscarf in state schools, regardless of their attitude. The only way the opponents of headscarves could avoid the Council of State’s interpretation was to pass another law through Parliament. To do so,

in 2003 they reminded the Union of Islamic Organisations of France (UOIF) that headscarves could not be worn in identity card photographs. Consequently, the pro-law (or *secular*) lobby rekindled the debate, launching a campaign mainly advocating women's rights. The new law was eventually approved in 2004, restricting the freedoms guaranteed by the 1905 law.

THE DISCOURSE LEGITIMIZING THE LAW

While the law was being drafted, a public discourse began in favor of the law and gradually became the dominant discourse (Benelli, et al., 2006). In this process, male politicians suddenly discovered that they were staunch feminists and that the arguments postulated by militants who already supported the new law were accompanied by criticism of the oppression suffered by young women in the *quartiers* (neighborhoods in the suburbs of large French cities). I will now examine how the use of headscarves by female secondary school students gradually became a problem.

Firstly, as from January 2001 media coverage of collective transgressions committed in these neighborhoods intensified. In 2002, after the so-called *March by women from the quartiers* (organised by *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* to denounce violence in these neighborhoods), the spokeswomen of this association began to receive coverage in the media and greater political support. At the same time, other instruments were launched to prepare this law. On the one hand, organizers of the *March by women* joined the pro-law lobby, and on the other, Jacques Chirac set up a commission *to apply the principle of secularism* presided by Bernard Stasi. In September 2003, the Stasi Commission began its public hearings and soon declared that: "Equality between men and women [. . .] is an important element of the republican pact" and "the State cannot remain impassive if this principle is attacked" (Stasi, 2004, p. 35). The commission also declared that young women living in the *quartiers* suffer "harassment from political-religious groups" and that they suffer violence from young men who force them to "lower their eyes on seeing a man" and wear "clothes that are concealing and asexual" (pp. 101–105).

Although the Stasi Commission recognized the exclusion, unemployment, and racial discrimination suffered by French descendants of migrants originally from Maghreb countries, it considered that the main problem was the visibility of Islam. According to Benelli, et al. (2006, p. 7), “the denunciation of the place of women in Islam and in the *quartiers* will hereinafter be at the core of arguments in favour of the law.” Schwartz, one of the main authors of the Stasi Commission, even criticised “actions *against* secularism,” which are increasingly numerous, especially in the public sphere, referring to women who wear headscarves in public (Lorcerie, 2005). Thus, women wearing headscarves become gradually, in the French popular belief, like the evils that threatened the Republic and its values.

As regards media coverage of this process, the arguments of opponents of the law did not receive the same amount of coverage in the mass media. Firstly, the opinions of girls wearing headscarves were largely ignored. Little attention was given to the voice of political, trade union and associative representatives, secular organizations, and associations that opposed the law, or feminists who emphasized the need to support young women who wore headscarves at state schools *at all cost*. The media gave much more coverage to men and women who invoked the dignity of women to justify the exclusion of such women. In contrast, while the few conflicts in schools received excessive media coverage, situations of peaceful coexistence among teachers and female students wearing headscarves went unreported by the main media (press, TV, and radio). In short, most media focused on the civilization problem (through debates on “religion vs. secularism” or “Islam vs. West”), without addressing the real challenges of the debate like the specific problem caused by female students wearing headscarves in class and the consequences for students expelled from school.

THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Fear has been expressed about the concern that social mobilization would focus on racism rather than on sexism, thus conferring the

oppression of women, once again, secondary importance. Natalie Benelli, et al. (2006) try to overcome these fears (which are, nevertheless, very legitimate) by analyzing the *interlinking* of both forms of oppression: sexist oppression and racist oppression. Delphy (2006) examined this interlinking, claiming that the discourse on *women's rights* was instrumentalized by the supporters of the law for racist purposes because although the law refers to *conspicuous religious signs* in general, in practice it affects a specific sector of the population: the Muslim community resident in France, formed mainly by immigrant men and women from Maghreb countries and Sub-Saharan Africa, former French colonies, as well as their descendants born in France.

Also, the strategy of addressing sexism present in the homes of *others*—in this case, Arabs, Muslims—has two destructive implications: on the one hand, a clearly Islamophobic implication because this strategy helps consolidate belief in the existence of racial differences and, more specifically, plays a key role in the construction of the violent and abusive *essence* of Muslims (as demonstrated by Guénif-Souilamas and Macé, 2004). On the other hand, a sexist implication because it relativizes and even conceals masculine domination in *our* home, as well as elements present in the entire patriarchal system.

The (re)emergence of the social figure of *Islamic women* (silent, manipulated victims) in the debate on the use of headscarves in state schools is neither the product of chance nor the reflection of a particular obsession of France. The social figure of *Muslim woman* (rooted deeply in the history of power struggles between neighboring civilizations) underpins a dual system of oppression: the system that classifies persons as inferior due to their *race*; and the system that condemns them as inferior for reasons of gender.

Benelli, et al., (2006, p. 9) ask, "Which elements would underpin one or several forms of feminism that refuse to choose between anti-sexism and anti-racism and oppose one more justifiably than the other?" Houria Bouteldja, a member of the *Blédardes* collective, provides certain clues to answer this question. In an interview with Christelle and Delphy (2006) in the same issue of the magazine *Nouvelles Questions Feministes*, she describes her career as a

politically active feminist and anti-racist, emphasizing her experience of both sexism and racism, as well as the way in which this experience had influenced her feminism. She describes her feminism as *paradoxical* because she has to protect *Arab women* from real sexism in her community (and sexism on the part of French society) and, at the same time, defend *Arab men* from racism when they are accused of being sexist by nature.

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, the Western mass media analyzed tend to construct an image of Muslim women using a discourse dominated by the notions of passiveness and victimization. The same media, albeit in a minority of cases, also portray a seemingly positive image of *liberated Muslim women*, closely linked to their Western-style clothes and/or their economic success, which tends to erode the social, cultural, and economic diversity of Muslim women. On the other hand, the reductionist perception of Muslim women as only victims of the *male chauvinistic violence* of Islam or Islamic fundamentalism—promoted by dominant media representations—tends to hinder the acceptance of other more complex perceptions; like perceiving that refusal of the right to voluntarily wear headscarves may also be a manifestation of intolerance. These Orientalist representations also fuel prejudices such as considering that women are submissive simply because they wear an Islamic veil (when this really depends on their use of this garment because, as we have seen, this can be very diverse) or only recognizing Muslim women who copy our culture or dress codes as valid intermediaries (thus hindering comprehension of this extremely complex cultural reality).

Islamophobia and Market Journalism

Journalists' responsibility not to exacerbate these simplistic perceptions that hinder comprehension and intercultural coexistence acquires greater importance if we acknowledge that stereotypes regarding the discrimination of Arab-Muslim women is today one of the most effective instruments for demonizing their societies and

also an extremely forceful instrument for legitimizing culturalist theories such as those claiming that Muslim immigrants, due to their religion, cannot *join* European societies. In order not to favor culturalist explanations of the discrimination of Muslim women, journalists should give more consideration to other (legal, educational, political, and economic) aspects when reporting on the situation of these women. As Martin-Muñoz concludes: “Why is it not reasonable to think that in Muslim societies, as has occurred in most European countries, social change and the deterioration of patriarchal structures is due more to democratisation, development and the possibility that these societies have to define themselves without having to be defined by the West?” (2005, pp. 214–215).

I am not suggesting that we should ignore the tremendous injustice in many of these countries. However, it is important to recognize the pernicious effect of only emphasizing, dramatizing, almost always generalizing and failing to contextualize the negative aspects of the situation of many of these women, because the reality is multiple and diverse. So many converging factors influence the construction of essentialist representations of Muslim women that this Islamophobic discourse cannot only be changed by ensuring journalists are responsible when reporting. In fact, these factors include not only interests and the journalistic ethics of news professionals, their ideology, and their training on subjects such as Islam, the Arab world, and immigration, but also dominant journalistic practices such as available time, the news agenda, the prevalence of emotion over explanation, the preference for institutional sources of information, the political and economic interests of media companies, etc. (Navarro, 2007). Structural factors closely linked to the globalization of communications and its subsequent effects on information and on informative procedures are also extremely important (Bourdieu, 2000; Castells, 1997).

In short, structural factors are so complex that the wide variety of discourses on the media system in general is less dependent on changes in traditional media discourse than on identifying the necessary conditions to ensure that the discourses of other social collectives have an equivalent presence in the public arena (Saez, 2008). Hence, the importance of supporting the access of immigrant

women (and especially Muslim women) not only to the mass media but also to so-called Third Sector media (also referred to as community, free, or alternative media, which do not belong to the commercial or public media sectors), and also of somehow counteracting the US monopoly on film distribution circuits and news agencies.

Islamophobia and Sexism

Finally, I would like to highlight that the media discourse analyzed in this study is inextricably linked to one of the most important forms of Islamophobia in Spain and France today, a discourse that is based on the imagination and construction of the social figure of the *Muslim woman*. In other words, as stated by Ramírez (2006), “neocolonial sexism” is the best resource available to fuel Islamophobia. This sexism is similar to what was known as *colonial feminism* in the colonial period (nineteenth century and early twentieth century) when the condition of colonized women was used to make colonized men primitive and, in short, confirm the basic idea that Muslim women were submissive and weak and that Muslim men were authoritarian and aggressive. Islamophobia today appears to still be based largely on the perception of the women of *other men* and is especially visible in the criticism of the situation of Muslim women who wear headscarves and who seem to be in need of salvation.

However, this particular racist discourse does not occur only in the West. According to a comparative analysis of Western and Eastern political and media discourses (Nader, 2006), the assessment of the intentionally favorable treatment reserved for women in the group to which they belong, is accompanied by a devalued interpretation of the way in which *other men* treat *their women*. Thus, while headscarves are seen in the West as a sign of the submissive nature of Muslim women, in Muslim countries, pornography, prostitution, and lack of respect for women in the mass media are referred to by the heads of Muslim states to systematically criticize Western countries and their citizens. In these discourses, there is not a real concern for *the condition of women* but rather the

will to defend a geopolitical space in which the West seeks to maintain its *position of superiority* and the Orient strives to challenge that position.

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Chapter 8
Whose *Jihad*?

Stéphane Lathion

Re-conceptualizing Islam and Citizenship to Face Islamophobia

When approaching questions related to the Muslim presence in Europe, I have always sought to be pragmatic regarding the ambition to improve conditions of coexistence, by proposing concrete leads. My privileged perspective is political, in the noble sense of the term; it takes into account cultural, spiritual, historical, and legal elements related to the rights of individuals participating in the rule of law. The starting point for my reflection on the Muslim presence in Europe is the relationship of the majority with its minorities. Thus, it is not Muslim culture, the Arabic language, or Islam as a religion that spurred my interest, but rather relations between majority and minority groups. After nearly twenty years spent observing, engaging with, describing, and analyzing the transformation of the Muslim presence in Europe, I arrived at the conclusion that if we truly want to reduce the tensions with and misunderstandings of Islam and Muslims, the best approach would be to stop talking about it (at least to change our focus), to stop seeing Islam where it is not present; where there is, in fact, only custom, tradition, *ordinary* racism, chauvinism, and biased instrumentalization based on fragments of text taken out of context.

More importantly than being followers of a religion, Muslims living in Europe are first and foremost individuals who benefit from a legal system that guarantees the respect of their dignity and the exercise of their individual freedoms, all the while requiring in return the exercise of civic duties vis-à-vis the state and their fellow citizens. It is only secondly (or even thirdly) that religious affiliation should become relevant and assume a more or less important place in the daily life of the adherent. It is crucial to highlight here that nothing in European constitutions prevents anyone from believing or not believing or from practicing their faith within the limitations

sometimes imposed by the legal framework in place. There is nothing in the European legal framework that is incompatible with the known practices of Islam. For decades, a number of Muslim thinkers (including the Indian poet and intellectual, Mohamed Iqbal, as early as the 1930s), and today researchers such as Dilwar Hussein in the United Kingdom, Abdennour Bidar in France, Farid Esack in South Africa, and Amina Wadud in the United States, remind those of their fellow Muslims who tend to forget it, that the West, whether it be in its institutions, the enforcement of laws, the respect of human dignity, or the pursuit of justice, is more Islamic than many nations that lay claim to the Prophet of Islam (Lathion, 2010).

The transformation of the Muslim presence in the West, along with the effects of globalization in Muslim-majority societies and the growing tensions stemming from this forced coexistence should push intellectuals and Muslim religious scholars to rethink the usage of ambiguous religious terms. In fact, *ummah, sharia,* and *jihad* have multiple interpretations, which can lead to misunderstandings that complicate coexistence and the forging of a climate of trust in contemporary societies—*ummah*: inclusive view (monotheist, all humanity), restricted view (Muslims only); *sharia*: general understanding (path, way), restricted understanding (corporal punishment); *jihad*: great jihad (ethical effort to become a better Muslim), small jihad (self-defense, legitimate violence). It is no longer enough to remain silent in the face of those who exploit the ambiguity of words in order to continue to feed misunderstandings and mistrust; one must have the honesty to denounce them (all of them, Muslims and non-Muslims alike).

To support the claim that the best way to reduce mental blocks, fears, and the rejection of anything with the slightest connection to Islam is to be more creative than to simply talk about it, my argument is organized into three parts. Firstly, I discuss the ambiguity of the word *jihad* to illustrate the argument about the challenges of the use (and abuse) of religious vocabulary. Secondly, I present a brief overview of the two distinct periods of the evolution of the way we have discussed Muslim realities and their transformation over the last thirty years. Finally, based on the arguments in the previous two sections, I propose concrete steps toward reducing tensions and

making all concerned actors aware of their responsibilities: politicians (local, regional, and national), journalists, social workers, public administrators, teachers, and Muslim community workers and religious leaders.

FROM WORDS TO ACTIONS; FROM HUMANITARIAN *JIHAD* TO VIOLENT *JIHAD*

The debate over the interpretation of the revelation is not new. Since the first written copy of the Quran was completed in 634, two years after the death of the Prophet, there has been no ceasing in the Muslim world of explaining and interpreting this text. The Arabic word commonly used to designate this Quranic exegesis is *tafsir* (plural, *tafasir*), which means explanation, interpretation. The study of these various *tafasir* of the Quran is an essential part of Islamic education and attempt to illuminate the meanings of Quranic verses according to an approach that may be, notably, linguistic, metaphorical, or historical. This is where one of the most crucial problems of early Islamic times appears: What status to accord to the text, and to different readings of the text? What margin of interpretation is accorded to the believer? These questions are not specific to Islam, but, rather, are asked in all religions when thinking about authority (both religious and political).

The sanctification of the Quran becomes problematic once it allows the justification of acts that are contrary to the spirit of the text, the heart of the spiritual message of the three monotheisms: respect for human dignity; respect for the environment on which the survival of the Creation depends; love, mercy, knowledge, and so on. The word *jihad* illustrates the possible abuses of a religious terminology that is instrumentalized in the service of motives that are not very spiritual. Throughout the history of Islam, different opinions, understandings, and interpretations of the term *jihad,* on the basis of Quranic verses which are sometimes very explicit, have informed the debate on the meaning of this word.

This very theoretical theological debate most importantly has very real and contemporary consequences. It is not uncommon to hear Muslim religious leaders speak of *jihad* in their public

statements and deliberately play on the ambiguity of the word. Take, for example, a public speech given a few years ago in Geneva by Hani Ramadan (director of an Islamic center and a recognizable and influential figure in Muslim communities in Switzerland) on the subject of the situation in Palestine. He spoke of *jihad* when discussing the situation in the Near-East in front of an audience of thousands of people, at the Place of Nations, in front of the United Nations Office at Geneva. After a journalist's critique, he justified his statements, explaining that, in his usage, *jihad* refers to the great *jihad*, the ongoing ethical effort that all believers must make in view of self-improvement and to become more pious. How could he believe, or expect us to believe, that he did not realize that 95 percent of those who were listening that day would not understand that, but would believe that he meant the small *jihad*, the interpretation that legitimizes violence in the name of defending Muslim peoples oppressed by the West?

Jihad literally means "effort towards an identified goal"; the Arabic word does not refer to the idea of a *jihad* war (it is the word *harb* that means "war" in Arabic). However, it is indeed the idea of holy war that currently dominates understandings of *jihad* even though, today, the distinction between two kinds of *jihad,* great and small, is increasingly accepted. The former is one's personal effort that every believer must undertake in the search for moral and religious improvement, while the minor *jihad* is more aggressive and would justify legitimate defense in the case of an enemy's aggression. The indications of what scholars understand as *legitimate defense*, *aggression*, or *enemy* are so vague that the door remains open to distinctions of Self and Other and justifications of the use of violence. We speak of peaceful verses because they prescribe the forgiveness of offenses and demand the promotion of Islam through persuasion, not force.

For example, this is the case in some verses revealed in Mecca, where Muslims were in a minority, even difficult, position. Muslims were thus advised to avoid associating with idol worshipers, to be discreet in their practices, and patient in their faith. Later, in Medina, when the Prophet was the ally of several Jewish tribes and hoped for their conversion, and needed to politically manage the city, he called

for patience, tolerance, and forgiveness, because it is God who will judge and punish in the final judgment. For *jihad* against disbelievers, Muslims are meant to strive by pen, tongue, hand, media and, only if inevitable, with arms (Vahide, 2006). The question remains confused, at least: What and when can be considered the inevitable? What and when is defense legitimate? The attitude of prudence and reserve can be explained by the context of the inferior and precarious position of the Muslim community in its early days.

There are, indeed, the "polemic" verses that are sufficiently clear passages of the Quran to establish the possibility of a warrior doctrine of *jihad*. In such cases we find the notion of a defensive war, of legitimate defense: *fight those who fight you*, however, with, the limitation: *do not transgress* (Quran, 2: 190–191). Therefore, defensive war is permitted and in the name of justice, *jihad* can become, in the reflections of the religious scholar, a right, or even a duty. Nevertheless, not everything is permitted; Tariq Ramadan nuances the application of aggressive verses by affirming that: "*Everything in the message of Islam calls for peace and coexistence between people and nations. In all cases, one must prefer dialogue over silence and peace over war*" (Ramadan, 2002; translated from the French). For this Swiss author, it is possible to highlight three principles that must guide any act of *jihad*: firstly, to defend and promote justice; secondly, to seek to establish peace among humans; and thirdly, to lash out only at those who are stakeholders in the conflict, and never at innocents or nature. The Quran notes: *Do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness* (Quran, 5: 8).

We see here the problem that can arise: Both extremists identifying themselves with Al-Qaeda or other fundamentalist movements and the most peaceful Muslims use the term *jihad*. Thus, it is not surprising if the word elicits a sense of embarrassment, fear, and rejection from the non-Muslim. The negative connotation of violence attached to the word since the attacks of September 11, 2001, is evident, and fed by various academic and fictional works (e.g. Filiu, 2006). The interpretation of legitimate violence is not unfounded and, even if it represents only very minority strands of Islam, it exists and thus possesses a very strong attraction (and is

thus a nuisance). Furthermore, its supporters find their justification in classical literature: *Jihad* does indeed mean armed conflict in the context of the expansion or defense of Islam. This misconception of *jihad* may be the result, rather than the cause, of the rise in terrorist attacks carried out around the world by Muslims who claim that their actions are *jihad* in the name of Allah and the Quran. The universality of Islam, like with Catholicism, implies a legitimation of spreading the faith; certainly not by all means, but certain contemporary Muslim exegetes allow themselves shortcuts that do not truly respect the spirit of the revelation.

In its early days, the Muslim community did not hold war as a primary value nor objective, but the acts of the Prophet in his political role and as a military leader in Medina left a cautious opening for the use of arms and violence for the good of the community. After his death, the Quran prolonged this moral validation of war (Flori, 2002). Then, starting in the ninth century, *jihad* became codified as the notion enabled the religious legitimation of conquest and the expansion of Muslim empires. Since this period, one can scarcely find a trace of a peaceful doctrine of *jihad*; the warlike interpretation seems to have definitively prevailed. We can see here the closing of the door to *ijtihad*. Thus, it is important that Muslim scholars tackle this problem and offer interpretations, credible options, to adherents who are uneasy regarding certain passages of the sacred text that legitimize the use of violence, to instead emphasize a peaceful vision of effort in the way of God.

Thus, this problem is not new; we can even affirm that it is recurrent in Muslim societies since the early days of the revelation, through the period of expansion, and into the early twentieth century. All scholars have considered *jihad* as a fundamental religious duty (a sixth pillar), an ideal, a divine command; and since the Middle Ages, Muslim philosophers and theologians like Al-Ghazali (deceased in 1111) have risen up against a literal reading of *jihad* to propose, instead, a more ethical reading: "*It is compassion that pleases God, not flesh and blood . . ., one can be a warrior of jihad without leaving one's home*" (Bousquet, 1955, translated from the French). Nonetheless, the dominant interpretation remains that which is advised by a literal reading of the Quran. This is a reading that

justifies, in a way that is unacceptable in our time and in our democratic societies, the use of violence against those not sharing the same beliefs.

Furthermore, even if in every age jurists and thinkers have emphasized the limitations of *jihad* (understood as holy war) by insisting on the notion of legitimate defense, that holy war must be understood as the response to an attack; how can there be surprise at the negative perception of the word *jihad*? Indeed, at what point can we consider ourselves attacked and, consequently, feel that a response is legitimately authorized? Here we can observe the ambiguity of the definition of what is a holy war. Certain criteria do exist: 1) non-combatants are not legitimate targets; 2) religious belief alone cannot make someone a potential target of an attack and, according to the Quran: *There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion* (2: 256); 3) Muslims can and must live peacefully with their neighbors, without ruling out self-defense and the preservation of sovereignty; *And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah* (Quran, 8: 61).

This theological and political debate that was certainly very central in the early days of Islam has lost none of its interest for groups opposed to established authorities or simply poorly adapted to their societies that find in this argument the mobilizing elements to attract new *combatants*. Thus, even today, Islamist groups approach texts in a literal way to justify their conflict, their so-called *jihad*, and their crimes. Bin Laden's discourse also fits within this logic of a global *jihad* against the West, as symbolized by the United States, but also against the enemy within, the corrupt governments of the Muslim world, first and foremost that of Saudi Arabia (Bonney, 2005). *External jihad* has been waged against foreign occupiers of Muslim lands (Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine) and *internal jihad* has taken place historically with the Iranian revolution's removal of the Shah, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, the overthrow of the Sudanese President Jaafar Nimeiry, and the ongoing struggle against the Saud family. For the last several years, in the heyday of Al-Qaeda, a thesis of a permanently offensive *jihad* has been developed and has been used to legitimize terrorist attacks against the West which have resulted in the deaths of civilians.

TRANSFORMATION OF A PRESENCE . . . AND OF A DISCOURSE

From 1980 to 2000, the primary goal for intellectuals was to explain what Islam is, convey the multiple realities of Muslim worlds, and highlight common ground, shared values, and theological proximity, all of which was framed by a historical perspective that permitted a step back from the emerging tensions in Muslim societies (civil war in Algeria, the Gulf wars, and conflicts in Chechnya and in the Balkans), as well as in big European cities (scarf affairs in France, burnings of Salman Rushdie's books in the United Kingdom, and immigration and consequences of family reunification throughout Europe). Since then, conflicts related to the failures of integration have multiplied and repeatedly reinvigorated the interest of different social actors (media, politicians, Muslim community leaders, and so on). My first book (Lathion, 1999) is a good example of this approach; it provides a historical overview of the links between the Muslim world and Europe, the gradual settlement of Muslim populations in European cities, and the necessity of reflection on modes of coexistence. The works of Nielsen (1999), Dassetto (2000), Cesari (1997), Ramadan (1995, 1999), Lewis (1994), and Bistolfi and Zabbal (1995), among others, are also representative of this period and are helpful in understanding the evolution of the Muslim presence in Europe.

The second period, from 2000 to 2010, featured key events such as the tragedy of September 11, 2001; the horrors of the Madrid bombings in 2004 and in London in 2005; and, finally, the Swiss vote banning the construction of minarets in November 2009. During this period, nuance became crucial; emphasizing the differences between Muslim-majority contexts and European societies and clarifying the social reach of certain religious practices, in an effort to alleviate fears provoked by the growing visibility of *Islamic* elements in the public sphere. The attacks on New York, Madrid, and London challenged everyone, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to rethink how we talk about Islam and Muslims. It became imperative, first of all, to address the tensions related to this presence and to the demands of certain communities, which were

perceived as provocations likely to challenge coexistence. Likewise, it became necessary to highlight the diversity of Muslim communities as well as the many ways of being Muslim in the twentieth century. To accomplish this, one of the chosen approaches was to give voice to the silent majority in order to confirm that the integration of individuals was progressing and that there were not as many problems as there seemed to be.

In Switzerland, the GRIS (Research Group Islam in Switzerland) report commissioned by the Federal Commission against Racism (CFR) in 2005 perfectly illustrates this approach (GRIS, 2005). The results confirm the findings of many researchers elsewhere in Europe about the scarcely religious concerns of Muslim populations for whom integration was not going too poorly, and that, if problems persisted, human assets, political and socioeconomic, cannot be contested. We must also recall the comments of observers of the violent riots in Paris in 2005, or more recently, in 2011 in large cities in the UK about the maturity and civic-mindedness of the majority of youth in *difficult* neighborhoods (Kepel, 2013, Suleiman 2012). Furthermore, since the mid-2000s, the political participation of youth born of immigrant parents has been growing and the number of elected local representatives who are Muslim is on the rise as well. The process of integration, of the modification of the European social landscape is in progress. Europe, like the rest of the world, must face the challenge of pluralism exacerbated by globalization that stimulates movements of populations. Religious belonging is just one aspect of their human identity and, if the Muslim population is silent about it, it is because it does not want to express itself about an element of private life, and one that is not necessarily as important nor as problematic as that of daily life as a citizen.

Two of my books, which are based on my thesis research, are revealing in illustrating this second phase (Lathion, 2003a, 2003b). Many other researchers have also proposed pertinent frames of analysis to better understand the new dynamics in play today in Europe. The works of Dilwar Hussain in England, Mallory Schneuwly Purdie in Switzerland, Brigitte Maréchal in Belgium, and Olivier Roy in France are examples of this (see the very exhaustive data base of Eurislam on www.eurislam.info). Therefore, precisely because since

2001 we have been submerged in more or less pertinent information about contemporary Muslim realities, when we speak of Islam today, misunderstanding can no longer justify the fears that this religion engenders. However, despite these efforts to explain this new reality and the multiple challenges it supposes, one must admit that the situation has not improved and, on the contrary, suspicion, misunderstanding, and rejection remain very present among the non-Muslim population. Yet, as soon as a problem arises, a challenge issued, or a demand made, a culprit must be found, and another Muslim becomes the scapegoat, the guilty party according to all indications. He is thus perceived as being so different, so incapable of integration that he will always inspire such fear. Worse still, it is not an Unknown who scares us, but rather the *other* whom we believe we know and who still inspires fear and rejection.

CONCLUSION: WHO WILL TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE OF WORDS?

Islam is essentially perceived through the demands and the speeches of a very small minority, which, according to its accusers, is likely to fundamentally challenge European values in the name of a faith denounced as aggressive, swaggering, or at best inflammatory, according to various media (i.e., press, Internet, radio, television, and cinema). All of these images and religious words feed the real and understandable fears regarding the realities of Muslim worlds, but, at the same time, they are parasitic on local debates as they feed on these fears to invent the menace of a Muslim invasion of the West. We saw this clearly in Switzerland, first in 2004 during the campaign for a facilitated naturalization, then in 2009 with the minaret ban voting, and more recently in 2014 in the context of the votes on immigration and for the *burqa* ban in the Italian part of the country.

As we can see clearly, the responsibilities are multiple and shared by non-Muslims and Muslims alike. On the one hand, journalists, politicians, and intellectuals stir up fears by preying on various tragic facts and lived situations from the other end of the world in order to maintain the fear of the stranger, of the

fundamentalist, of the powerful terrorist, and so on. On the other hand, rare are those Muslim religious leaders who dare to go beyond the simplistic affirmation that any illegal action has nothing to do with Islam, and that Islam is a religion of peace, love, and mercy. This is no longer enough to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding that grows deeper every day.

To remedy this situation, it needs to be understood that the maturity of a society is measured in its capacity to recognize the plurality of ways in which one can conceive of existence and open the way to greater freedom in adhering to, changing, or rejecting any religious affiliation. Citizenship, civic-mindedness, and respect for others are the most basic common denominators for imagining a shared future. Much like how religious belonging is no longer a great rallying point in Europe, but rather a source of divisions, it is thus more useful to push it into the background in order to privilege a sense of civic belonging. This is a civic belonging which defends the rights of all religious communities, as well as those of atheists and agnostics, to occupy their place in the public sphere. This civic engagement is understood as a social contract between the individual and the state; it is a contract that specifies the rights of all —a citizen cannot simply enjoy the democratic benefits of the rule of law without also accepting to assume the associated responsibilities.

We are thus, to my understanding, in a new stage in which we must reflect on the best way to improve the situation and reduce the recurring and increasing tensions produced by mutual misunderstandings. Furthermore, in the context of economic crisis, the effort required to imagine positive relations with the Other seems great. If we accept that the religious referent is not so fundamental for the majority of citizens, whatever their religion, it will be much easier to insist upon a civic citizen dimension for all. A civic or legal framework is more inclusive than it is exclusive. Rather than focusing upon what differentiates individuals (Self–Other), we must emphasize what unites them: the status of citizen guaranteed by the rule of law that recognizes, at least in theory, the same rights and responsibilities for all. The advantage of such an approach is to quarantine the instrumentalization of religion for ends that are scarcely spiritual and thus pulling the rug from under the feet of

extremists on all sides. Thus, political, media, and religious excesses can be denounced and the emergence of a citizen stance in different religious communities may be encouraged and facilitated. This does not mean denying all religious referents, but preventing their excessive use.

Therefore, speaking less of religion and putting more emphasis on civic-mindedness is also the demand of many Muslims who do not see themselves as merely members of a religion, and would like to see themselves considered first and foremost as individuals, professionals in their fields, parents, fans, and, according to the context, believers and possibly practitioners of a religion. Beyond the state regulation of Islam, the management of Muslims in society, it is the place of religion in the public sphere that must be questioned, along with the equality of all citizens in terms of their relationship with the state. The issue, then, is for public authorities, as well as citizens, to reflect on the best way to conceive the management of cultural and religious pluralism.

The approach that seems the wisest consists in working toward the emergence of a climate of trust strong enough that the majority of European Muslims feel comfortable to criticize, even denounce (as has already occurred in different mosques and holy sites), the statements and acts that are likely to violently and illegitimately challenge their new living environment. The question is not, as we have seen, to deny the realities of concrete problems related to the Islamic referent, but rather to no longer take Islam/religion as a scapegoat for socioeconomic problems that put a strain on Europe. Rather, it is not merely the visibility of Muslims, but the place of religion in the European public sphere and the terminology used to talk about it that must reconsidered.

How to reconcile religious rhetoric and vocabulary with a secular and plural context? This is the challenge posed to the various actors involved, be they journalists, politicians, administrative staff, health professionals, and Muslim religious and community leaders, among others. I propose here three concrete proposals that may help in gradually reducing the real tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims in contemporary Western societies:

a) Encouraging intra-community debate within multiple Muslim communities: One fundamental issue for the coming years is in the capacity of Muslims to accept an authentic intra-community debate recognizing the diversity of practices, and textual interpretations (respecting the legal framework in place), in order to be better prepared to assume the consequences of denominational pluralism. The more serious problem facing European Muslims is perhaps more linked to intra-community differences than to differences with the non-Muslim population. However, to achieve this, we would have to have a bold taboo-free intra-community debate in order to become aware not only of a theoretical and glorified diversity of Muslims in the twenty-first century, but of a very real heterogeneity that should not be perceived as a threatening division, or a definitive and dangerous *fitna* (the Arabic word *fitna* has many shades of meaning, mostly referring to a feeling of disorder or unrest. The term has been used to describe divisions which occurred in the early years of the Muslim community. In modern usage, it is used to describe forces that cause controversy, fragmentation, scandal, chaos, or discord within the Muslim community, disturbing social peace and order). On the contrary, as an opportunity to act as independent individuals and as citizens who are responsible for their choices, their values, and for the common good.

b) No longer putting religion where it does not belong: We need to speak less of Islam and Muslims, and instead privilege the terms of *citizens* and *civic-mindedness*. The settlement of individuals of Muslim denominations in all European countries for over half a century, along with the gradual transformation of this presence, has had undeniable consequences in terms of integration, housing, town planning, and religious visibility. Whether highly visible or more subtle, these modifications of the living environment necessitate a redefinition of relations between different social actors (individuals, state, associations, and religious institutions). This evolution has not been problem-free, but if we observe it closely, this transformation of the Muslim presence in Europe has not gone too badly. Certainly, tensions persist and have increased throughout the past ten years,

but I remain convinced that if we become aware of mistakes made and if we dare to change our perspective, it is possible to make improvements. The issue is to stop talking about Islam and Muslims, and instead emphasize the citizen, and his or her civic duty. Too often, we use and instrumentalize religion to justify actions and practices that are more cultural, traditional, or ethnic, rather than specific to Islam.

It has become necessary for European societies to propose education for Muslims (religious and community leaders), as well as for non-Muslims working with Muslim populations (teachers, health workers, administrative staff, integration workers, police officers, social workers, and so on). Whether it will be in the context of ongoing education offered by universities, or classes offered by public administrations, such training facilitates the reduction of mutual misinformation of different actors in a professional context that encourages the sharing of experiences and of daily practices, with differing perspectives, encouraging a more nuanced and pragmatic knowledge of the various pitfalls of the Muslim presence in the West. Likewise, training modules for Muslim community leaders are likely to provide them with new solutions to better manage and better respond to the questions of their fellow Muslims about their daily lives in European societies.

c) No longer using religious terms like *jihad* outside of their context: Once the use of religious terms hinders dialogue and better mutual understanding, it seems wise to find a way around this pitfall. In practice, today in Muslim-majority countries and in non-Muslim media and discussion around the world, *jihad* means *war*. We must be imaginative and creative in insisting on the content of the word, or of the concept, rather than focusing on its form in multiple and sometimes contradictory interpretations. Thus, it seems crucial that Muslim thinkers and theologians emphasize the contextual element of the revelation in order to reduce the opportunities of extrapolation of verses which, taken literally, can, in the eyes of fundamentalists, justify any and all violence. It is no longer adequate to remain silent in the face of those who play on the ambiguity of words to continue to feed misunderstanding and mistrust; it is crucial to have the

honesty to call them out. This is a real challenge for any believer to encourage a new Muslim theology and offer new perspectives to encourage the emergence of collective responses to global and complex problems facing societies. There are Muslim intellectuals and politicians who try to propose solutions to reduce misunderstanding and fears between Muslims and non-Muslims. They should be given more space in the public debate.

The report *Contextualising Islam in Britain* (Suleiman, 2012) is particularly relevant because it emphasizes the necessity for Muslims to rethink the significance of the concept of *ummah*. According to the authors of the report, it is necessary to return to a more complex, more encompassing concept of the term. What is proposed is to remember the vision of the Community at the time of the Prophet Mohammad; this included Muslims, Christians, Jews, and the pagan communities of Medina. An exclusive understanding that rigidly separates Muslims from non-Muslims can only strain relations between communities. An open, plural, flexible, and inclusive community can, on the contrary, tear down this myth of a monolithic bloc and allow the opening of positive energies at the institutional level, as well as among individuals, in order to lead to concrete actions to improve coexistence and transcend our differences.

In this construction of coexistence, imams are not only religious leaders, but also *facilitators* of integration. It is crucial that they become aware of their social responsibilities. Religious discourses emphasizing the difference between Them and Us (*ummah*), and between believers and non-believers, is no longer acceptable when they simultaneously promote the respect of democratic values. Religious leaders and Muslim associative representatives should be able to stop using such categorizations because it clearly discriminates non-Muslims and nowadays that will not help to reduce tensions and Islamophobic reactions. To promote a pluralist society that is respectful of differences, it is important to emphasize civic action (originating from the religious point of reference for some), rather than remaining stuck on an archaic and exclusive religious rhetoric.

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Chapter 9
Understanding Islam and Islamophobia Today

Nazeem Goolam

It has happened again! Paris, January 7, 2015. *Charlie Hebdo* offices are attacked, 12 dead. France is a country which prides itself on the principles of *liberte*, *egalite*, and *fraternite*. But most Muslims in France will tell you they are not treated like brothers/sisters, they are not treated as equal citizens, and they are not free to practice their religion. Where are their human rights and human dignity? Who can blame them for their violent and, in my honest view, fully justified reaction to the denigration—once again in Europe—of God's Final Prophet on earth? This trend is bound to continue if the West continues to disrespect Islam in this way and in any other way. I have already discussed "*Islamophobia and disrespecting the sanctity of Islam as a threat to world peace*" (Goolam, 2009). It is high time the West practices what it purports to preach.

It was an attack by Muslims who have tolerated enough of some of those extremists in the West who continue to blatantly disrespect and defame Islam in the name of freedom of speech, of those extremists in the West who find pleasure in blaspheming, inciting hatred, and causing provocation. Tolerance, like patience, is not unlimited. What in the world has happened to the most basic, simple value of life called *respect* and the most fundamental of all human rights called *human dignity*? Or do we live in a world in which human rights flourish, but human dignity perishes! As I write, the caricature of Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace, blessings, and salutations always) has yet again appeared on the front cover of the latest *Charlie Hebdo* magazine.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF PEACE AND VIOLENCE

Islam emanates from the root word *silm* meaning "peace". Some of the commonest misunderstandings regarding Islam today revolve around this most fundamental—not fundamentalist—concept. In

particular, regarding the idea of *jihad*, the true meaning of the word is founded on the concepts of peace, non-violence, and tolerance and nowhere in the Quran has the word *jihad* been used to connote war in the sense of launching an attack or an offensive (Khan, 2002). The word *jihad* is derived from the root word *juhd* which means “to strive” or “to struggle” and to exhort oneself to the utmost to achieve one’s goal. The actual word for war in Arabic is *qital.* Indeed, Khan argues that all the teachings of Islam are founded on the principle of peace. Jihad is essentially, therefore, a peaceful struggle and one form of this struggle is through *da’wah* (propagation/ communication of the Final Message of Allah to the human race). The Quran declares: *Do not yield to (listen to) the unbelievers, but fight them strenuously (vehemently) with it* (25: 52).

Peace and Non-violence

In Islam, the notion of violence (and terrorism) is so obviously unfounded that *prima facie* it stands to be rejected. With reference to verses of the Quran *Kill them wherever you find them* (2: 191), they should not give the impression that Islam is a religion of war and violence. Verses such as these should be interpreted in a narrow, restrictive manner and refer to those who have unilaterally attacked the Muslims. This verse does not convey a general command. All the teachings of Islam are based on the principle of peace (Khan, 2002). According to Khan, non-violence ought never to be confused with passivity or inaction. On the contrary, it is a more forceful action than that of violence. Islam is a religion of non-violence. On numerous occasions, the Quran declares that Allah does not approve of violence or *fasad* because this is an action which results in the disruption of the social system, often causing huge losses and damage in terms of lives and property. Inextricably linked to the idea of non-violence is the concept of patience (*sabr*). The entire spirit of the Quran is in consonance with the concept. In the context of a potentially violent situation, patience implies a peaceful response or reaction, while impatience implies a violent response.

In the context of war and the command of war in Islam, it should be made abundantly manifest that *there is no aggressive or*

offensive war in Islam. Islam allows only a defensive war and that, too, only when it is the last resort and there is no other option (Khan, 2002). There are indeed verses in the Quran which convey the command to launch an offensive or to engage in battle (*qital*). However, the special circumstances which justify the compliance with this command need to be carefully examined and understood. Firstly, the Quran states: *Fight for the sake of Allah those who fight against you, but do not be aggressive* (2: 190). Secondly, the Quran emphasizes the point that war should be undertaken in order to defend one's community and where one has been attacked first. In any event, all efforts *must* be made to avert war first and only when such avoidance has become impossible should battle be resorted to in self-defense. Only peaceful interaction will give Muslims the kind of intellectual stimulation and variety of experience which they must have if they are to tread the path of progress and benefit the exchange of ideas (Esposito, 2002; Khan, 2002).

Tolerance

The United Nations has stated that the ability to be tolerant of the actions, beliefs, and opinions of others is a major factor in promoting world peace. Tolerance is a foundation of sound emotional intelligence; it is not an act of compulsion (Khan, 2002). It is a positive principle of life and expresses the noble side of a human being's character. Of course, the question of relevance today is to what extent a group or religious community ought to accept or tolerate the outright disrespect and disdain for Almighty Allah? To what extent can one tolerate absolute freedom of expression? What are the limits of freedom of expression?

It happened with the cartoon publications in 2006 and it happened again recently in South Africa when a student magazine published inflammatory and blasphemous statements and pictures in respect of Christianity. *Just as patience is not unlimited* (once well-stated by Yasser Arafat in respect of the Palestine question) *so too tolerance is not unlimited.* Since we live in an age of doubt and spiritual darkness, it is no wonder that the level of disrespect being exhibited nowadays toward religions in general, and Islam in

particular, has become so rampant as a result of the idea of absolute freedom of expression that it amounts to intimidation, victimization, provocation, the incitement of hatred, and blasphemy. Such a situation makes it very difficult for the ordinary (Muslim) person to be tolerant of this behavior.

THE IDEA OF *JIHAD*

Jihad denotes the exertion of one's power in the path of Allah and encompasses the struggle against evil in whatever shape or form it may arise. The renowned sixth century Hanafi jurist Al-Kasani states that in terms of the *Shari'ah*, the word *jihad* is used to convey the expending of ability and power on the struggle in the path of Allah by means of life, property, words, and other means. In the same vein, the Pakistani scholar Mawlana Mawdudi, explained that *jihad is not war, but a struggle; a struggle in the name of Allah along the path set by Him*. In Islam, the primary purpose of the human being on earth is to fulfill his or her duty to Allah, the Supreme Being; to strive and struggle in the enjoining of good (*ma'ruf*) and the forbidding of evil (*munkar*). No doubt, then, that the word *jihad* has been described as the most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam.

Although different Muslim scholars have distinguished various categories of jihad—wars of public interest and wars against polytheists and apostates—one can struggle or strive to further Allah's purpose primarily through four types of jihad, namely: jihad of the heart (faith), jihad of the tongue (good speech), jihad of the hand (good deed), and jihad of the sword (holy war). The first three categories comprise what has been termed the *greater jihad*, that is, the struggle to purify oneself and to submit fully to Allah. The fourth category refers to the *lesser jihad*, which is warfare. It is this lesser jihad that I am here examining.

The Quran and Ahadith on Jihad

The Quranic verses on jihad were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina because the enemies of Islam refused to leave the Muslims in peace, notwithstanding the fact

that the Prophet and his followers had migrated to Medina. In such conditions, it was imperative to defend themselves and the cause of Islam and the recently established capital of the Islamic state. According to Doi (1992), the first verse revealed concerning jihad was the following: *To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged, and verily Allah is Most Powerful for their aid* (22: 9). Johnson (1997) adds that the warrant for jihad, in the sense of defensive warfare or military action, can be traced to the permission given to the first Muslims in Medina to fight back against those who broke their solemn pledges.

Allah speaks: *Will you fight against them who violated their oaths, plotted to drive out the Messenger and took the initiative by first attacking you. Do you fear them? Nay it is Allah whom you should more justly fear if you believe* (9: 13). The treatment to be meted out to such people is very clear: *If they withdraw not from you, and do not offer you guarantees of peace and do not restrain their hands. Seize them and slay them wherever you come across them. In their case we have provided you with clear authority against them* (4: 91). But perhaps the most oft-quoted Quranic verses in respect of jihad are the following: *Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you. But do not transgress limits for Allah loveth not trangressors. And slay them wherever you find them and drive them out from where they have driven you out. For tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. . . . Fight them until God's religion reigns supreme. But if they cease God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful* (2: 190–193).

Sayyed Qutb too, after examining the theory of war and peace in Islamic international law, concludes that peace is the rule while war is the exception. Qutb argues that one should only resort to war in order to achieve one of the following objectives: to uphold the rule of Allah on earth, so that the complete submission of human beings would be to Him exclusively; to eliminate oppression, extortion, and injustice by instituting the Word of Allah; and to achieve the human values that are considered by Allah to be the aims of life and to secure people against terror, coercion, and injury.

Thus, while some may regard jihad as the most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam, perhaps the word *salaam* is the most

glorious word, concept, value, and idea in the vocabulary of Islam. As regards the *ahadith*, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that *The one who fights so that Allah's Word becomes superior is striving in Allah's Path* (Ibn Hajar, 1996, p. 452), and that *Use your property, your tongues, and your lives to strive against the polytheists* (Ibn Hajar, 1996, p. 450).

The Doctrine of Jihad in Shaybani's *Siyar*

The great Muslim jurist Muhammad Al-Shaybani wrote, in the eighth century of the Christian era, a major work entitled *Kitab al-Siyar al-Kabir*. This was the first major work of its kind on the law of nations and international law, and was written 850 years before the so-called father of international law, the Dutchman Hugo de Groot (also known as Grotius), wrote his famous *De Iure Belli ac Pacis* (On the law of war and peace). The term *siyar* literally refers to the conduct of the state in its relationship with other communities.

Shaybani accepts the juristic division of the world into the *dar-al-Islam* (abode of peace) and the *dar-al-harb* (abode of war), as well as the idea that a perpetual state of war exists between the two. Shaybani paid particular attention to rules that set out the peaceful interaction between the two territories. In respect of warfare or military action between the two territories, Shaybani followed the example of his teacher, Imam Abu Hanifa, arguing that Muslims should not attack the unbelievers simply on account of their lack of faith; they should be attacked only if they show themselves to be a hostile threat. His interpretation of the Quranic verse 2: 190 is that only defensive jihad against them is permissible. His conception of jihad is thus fundamentally one of defensive war for the faith.

JIHAD TODAY AGAINST WESTERN DOMINATION

In a world dominated by a godless capitalism, materialism, and consumerism, a world drowning in Western culture and a lack of moral values, Muslims are being robbed of their culture and their options of being governed according to their own wishes and to live in a more just society and world. Furthermore, the declaration by the

United States and its allies of a *war against terror* is seen by Muslims, and is in fact, nothing less than a *war against Islam*. In this climate, it is not difficult to understand the call for a global jihad. In this regard, explaining the strategy of Osama bin Laden, Esposito (2002) writes:

> In 2000 Bin Laden announced the formation of the World Islamic Front for the Jihad against Jews and Crusaders, an umbrella group of radical movements across the Muslim world, and issued a *fatwa* stating that it is the duty of all Muslims to kill US citizens and their allies. The title of the organization summed up the man and his view of the world. Muslims were under siege, their lands occupied in a world dominated by their historic enemies, militant Christianity and Judaism. All true Muslims had an obligation to heed the call to a global *jihad,* a defence of the worldwide Islamic community. Global politics were indeed for Bin Laden a competition and *jihad,* a clash of civilisations between the Muslim world and the West, between Islam and a militant Judeo-Christian conspiracy. Foreign influence and intervention in the Islamic world had once again underscored the traditional division of the world into the land of Islam (*dar-al-Islam*) and the land of warfare (*dar-al-harb*). Because of Western abuses, the entire world has been divided, he claimed, "into two regions—one of faith where there is no hypocrisy and another of infidelity, from which we hope God will protect us." (p. 21)

Today Osama bin Laden is gone, but the World Islamic Front grows in stature. In the present global climate there is, I would argue, no need for an offensive jihad. In the context of the declaration of war against terror or war against Islam, it is merely a defensive jihad that is called for. There can be no question that the jihad is just and justified. The only possible point of debate may be on the means employed. But does this really matter; in a world in which there no longer seem to be any rules of international law or, more correctly stated, where the very people who drafted them do not abide by such rules? It would seem not.

In 2002 Judge Richard Goldstone, the former chief prosecutor for UN war crimes tribunals, accused the US of violating international law in its anti-terror campaign. He stated that the Bush government was picking and choosing which international agreements it would honor, while expecting the rest of the world to abide by all of them. Judge Goldstone feared that the September 11, 2001 attacks would mark the start of a decade of US regression in respect of international law. It is no wonder then, that the United States opposed the creation of the International Criminal Court and, along with Israel, has not yet ratified the new Arms Trade Treaty.

As regards Bush's then promised action against Iraq, with or without UN approval, Goldstone said: *What will happen one day when somebody does it back to them?* Goldstone added that such violations could undermine the Geneva Convention's principle of reciprocity, which may be summed up as *you treat my people decently and I will treat your people decently*. Goldstone also referred to the hundreds of prisoners of war taken from Afghanistan and held by the US without trial in Guantanamo Bay. Of course, their rights in terms of the Geneva Convention were clearly violated by the United States. This is a good opportunity for the West to go back to basics as far as international law is concerned, and have a look at the father of modern international law, Hugo de Groot and his *De Iure Belli ac Pacis.* Of course, they could learn much from Shaybani —the *Siyar,* as we have seen, was written 850 years before De Groot's work—concerning the treatment of prisoners in times of war.

Since Goldstone's statement, things have only got worse. The crimes against humanity are becoming war crimes. One thinks of the treatment of prisoners in an Iraqi jail earlier in 2004 and November 2004 horrific scenes in a mosque in Fallujah. One thinks of the horrific, inhumane, and inhuman torturing of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. I can couch it in no other terms but the following: when a *kafir* or infidel enters a *masjid* with his shoes on, uses vulgar language in this holy place, and then takes the blood of an unarmed Muslim, there can be no further degradation, not only of Islam but also, of human dignity. They are fully aware that the rules of engagement allow the use of force only when faced with a hostile act, hostile intent, or hostile threat. But, of course, they simply

disregard the rules of international law and international humanitarian law as they please. In this environment and under these conditions an offensive jihad is, I strongly believe, fully justified.

Muazzem Begg, incarcerated for 3 years on Guantanamo Bay, said recently (Al-Jazeera, 2014) that ISIS (or ISIL), al-Nusrat, and many other jihadi groups are a result of the interrogations and tortures perpetrated by the CIA at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, *inter alia*. In the same breath, investigator Feinstein's report (December 11, 2014) confirms the horrendous, inhumane, and unconscionable torture methods used at Guantanamo Bay and the Abu Ghoraib prison. It is worth bearing in mind that the stated purposes of the United Nations are: to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect of principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; to achieve international cooperation; and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. The US is clearly not interested in any of these purposes. In fact, it simply ignores them at will.

It does begin to seem that the only way forward is through a strict interpretation of the verses on fighting in the Quran. It begins to seem that the only way forward is to seize them and slay them wherever you find them. And since the Quran is replete with repetition for the sole purpose of emphasizing important issues, two of these verses should be repeated here. First: *If they withdraw not from you, and do not offer you (guarantees of) peace and do not restrain their hands, seize them and slay them wherever you find them. In their case we have provided you with clear authority against them* (4: 91). And, secondly: *Fight in the Cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever you find them and drive them out from where they have driven you out. For tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. . . . Fight them until Allah's religion reigns supreme. But if they cease Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful* (2: 190–193).

Is there any means—other than jihad, be it defensive or offensive—left to achieve a just world order? I have said that the

most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam is *jihad* (struggle) and that perhaps the word *salaam* (peace) is more glorious still. After all, the purpose of the struggle is the attainment of peace, both temporary peace in this world and eternal peace in the next world. But is the time for *convivencia* and civilizational dialogue a thing of the past? We shall wait and see.

The phobia about things and people which are or have an Islamic connection has reached a peak in the last few years, particularly in Europe. So the immigration of Muslims to Europe is seen as a threat of eventually being overwhelmed, both culturally/religiously and numerically. The sight of a minaret, the sound of the *azaan* (call to prayer) irritates most (fundamentalist) Westerners (Goolam, 1999). Consequently, therefore, the building of a *masajid* (mosques) is often opposed and contested at every opportunity. Recent protests in Europe have once again exhibited intolerance and extremism in this regard.

We have seen the banning on the wearing of scarves, face veils, and body veils—the scarf, *burqa*, *niqab*, and *jilbab*—in a number of European countries in varying degrees. This ban clearly violates the basic human rights to freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Considering the verses of the Quran in this regard, it seems to me that the essential purpose of the Divine Command is that women should avoid seeking the attention of the opposite sex. The strange contradiction in Western society—and most parts of the world—is that women nowadays go all out to seek male attention and then expect men to be oblivious of it and to suppress their natural inclination.

In the case of *Leyla Sahin* the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) argued that “the principle of secularism was the paramount consideration underlying the headscarf ban” and suggested that the requirement that women wear a headscarf was inconsistent with the value of equality. In the case of *Dahlab* the ECHR reiterated that the headscarf cannot be reconciled with the principle of equality and added that the headscarf appeared to be imposed and can also not be reconciled with the idea of tolerance. The ECHR held that the ban pursued the legitimate aims of protecting the rights and freedoms of others, public safety, and public order and that the ban was

necessary to protect religious harmony and neutrality. On the face of it, to the lay Muslim, the bans precisely mean the contrary.

These two cases did not elaborate—at least the majority judgment in *Dahlab*—and significantly so, on why or how the wearing of a headscarf conflicts with equality and tolerance. In an important dissenting judgment, Judge Tulkens questioned how the majority judgment simply accepted that the ban was necessary to protect secularism or achieve equality without any explanation, substantiation, or evidence. Tulkens criticized the majority view that wearing a headscarf was a negative practice as a paternalistic approach and argued that the principle of gender equality could never justify prohibiting a woman from following a freely adopted practice.

Dominic McGoldrick (2006) notes that the headscarf ban has a disproportionate effect on Muslim women and, in fact, results in their being treated unequally. If fairness means not the identical treatment of persons, but rather that persons ought to be treated with equal concern and respect, then, certainly the headscarf ban—and consequently a *niqab* or *jilbab* ban—is unfair, unjustifiable, and simply unreasonable. It was Aristotle who wrote, a long time ago, that the equal treatment of unequals (meaning here different people) amounts to inequality or unequal treatment?

Brems and her colleagues (Brems, et al., 2013) have argued that the Belgian law banning the *burqa* is founded on erroneous assumptions, assumptions which lack factual basis. They say that the ban does not serve its stated purpose, it is disproportionate and it denies procedural justice. In a related article (Chaib and Brems, 2013) they embark on a critical assessment of the ban from a human rights perspective and conclude that the reasons proffered for the prohibition can at most justify only a limited set of contextual bans, not the nationwide bans that are in place.

In yet another article on a related issue (Brems et al 2013), the writers examine the bans from a procedural perspective. They strongly criticize the bans in France and Belgium as violations of freedom of religion and of freedom of expression. They state why procedural fairness is crucial for achieving minority justice. First, it overcomes the lack of trust in the authorities and secondly, it gives

the perception that minorities are not being marginalized and it conveys a message of inclusion. They list four criteria according to which people evaluate procedural fairness, namely *participation, trustworthiness, neutrality, and respect. Participation* or *voice* represents the needs of peoples to express their own views; *trust* refers to authorities being sincere, caring, and not prejudiced; *neutrality* requires judges to be honest, unbiased, transparent, consistent, and accurate; while *respect* refers to the dignity and equal treatment of all.

The approach of the ECHR was clearly inaccurate in that they failed to adduce factual evidence, failed to find a suitable remedy, nor did they prove that the remedy—the ban—would be effective *vis-a-vis* the problem at hand. They relied merely on assumptions which were erroneous. Banning the face veil disrespects the Muslim woman's freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and is, moreover, a *neo-colonial form of paternalism*. They would have done well to develop their *curiosity* for others and they would have done even better if their curiosity was *fed by facts*, to be fed by *correct* historical and empirical information.

What does Europe and the West fear? That the wearing of scarves and veils is a cause of and serves to increase *terrorism*? And what is Europe's rationale? That by outlawing scarves and veils this *terrorism* will decrease? On the contrary, such *disregard* and *disrespect* for Islam and its teachings will only cause further marginalization, further alienation, and more hatred of Western law and its authorities. This causes angry young Muslim people in Europe and elsewhere—including South Africa—to take up arms against what they see as the perpetrator.

In South Africa today, we still suffer from inequality. In a 1999 court decision a judge argued that to say that a prohibition on the *azaan* (call to prayer) infringes a Muslim's right to freedom of religion is *too dramatically stated*. I repeat my argument I raised then in an article (Goolam, 1999), saying that if the *azaan* constitutes a nuisance or disturbance to some, then the striking of bells equally amounts to noise pollution in the minds of others. This would amount to equality of treatment in respect of all noises, nuisances, and disturbances emanating from religious buildings/structures.

Another relevant example is the understanding, scope, and application of the right to *freedom of expression*. This was never an absolute right, even in the most secular of countries. But many secular *extremists* (the French Charlie Hebdo is but one example) fail to understand the limitations on this human right in religious societies. They fail to understand that while satire is acceptable, blasphemy is certainly not. The right to free speech goes hand in glove with the responsibility not to use that right to harm, incite, provoke, or to hurt the feelings of others.

All these fears of the Western world are resulting in them applying double standards in respect of basic and fundamental human rights. Excerpts from one of my early academic papers entitled *Cultural relativity and human rights* (Goolam, 1995) are quite worthy of repetition, and indeed emphasis. I stated there that human rights must serve to effectively protect the human dignity of individuals, that is, the "quality of being worthy or honourable." It was Paul Sieghart who said that the *hallmarks of democracy are pluralism, tolerance, and broadmindedness*. The Western world is either ignorant of this or simply refuses to abide by these precepts, in particular when dealing with its Muslim citizens. In so doing, it is disregarding and disrespecting the human dignity of a large portion of its citizenry.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There can be little doubt that Europe and the West are failing their Muslims (Ramadan, 2014). The Western world must not expect the Muslim world to succumb to its own (often godless) values, even in Europe; the Western world must stop its hostility, hatred, prejudice, discrimination, and disrespect toward Islam and its followers. Disrespecting Islam will continue to have dire consequences. Maybe the West has already gone too far. In Iraq the shelling of the tomb of Imam Hussein, grandson of Prophet in 2004 was perhaps the final straw. The wanton disrespect of Islam and its culture does call for a concerted response. Muslims can no longer sit back, arms folded and think the situation will improve. We as Muslims must take the responsibility to preserve the glory and beauty of Islam ourselves. I

believe that the disrespect of the sanctity of Islam is a threat to world peace.

Islamic countries today cannot call themselves a force for the cause of Islam (*fi sabeel Allah*). Is it any wonder, then, that we see so many groups taking up the cause, the latest aptly called Islamic State? But perhaps the West's fear of Islam is understandable. Muslims cannot forget the treatment meted out to them in Andalusia and Spain as a whole. Perhaps the West does fear the return of Nabi Eesa (Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him) at the eastern minaret of the Ummayad Masjid in Damascus. I end with a glorious *hadith.* The pen is most certainly mightier than the sword. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that: *The ink of the scholar is greater than the blood of the martyr.*

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