

# Islamophobia in Europe



The Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley, formerly the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, is a vibrant hub of researchers, community leaders, policy-makers, artists, and communicators that advances research, policy, and work related to marginalized communities. It engages in innovative narrative, communications, and cultural strategies that attempt to reframe the public discourse around marginality and inclusion and respond to issues that require immediate and long-term action.

**This Reading Resource Pack was developed by researchers from the Othering and Belonging Institute, the University of Salzburg, Austria, and the Center for Islam and Global Affairs at Istanbul Zaim University, Turkey as part of their efforts to document and counter global Islamophobia.**

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# Introduction

**THE OTHERING AND BELONGING** Institute has long believed that the “othering and belonging” framework provides a critical perspective to build a more inclusive and equitable society. In response to the experiences of Muslims across the globe, we seek to counteract all forms of discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to expose the power structures that generate them and ultimately foster pathways toward a more inclusive world.

As a part of the Othering and Belonging Institute’s larger body of work that exposes and challenges Islamophobia, this reading resource pack identifies academic publications that document, critique, provide counter-narratives, and suggest solutions to global Islamophobia. This work utilizes the “othering and belonging” framework of the Othering and Belonging Institute to provide a critical analytical lens in our research, advocacy, and policymaking efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable society.

In response to the experiences of Muslims worldwide, we seek to counteract all forms of discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to expose the power structures that generate them and ultimately foster a world of belonging. The Othering and Belonging Institute suggests this reading resource pack be used as a companion resource for training and education on studying Islamophobia and how to challenge

discourses and actions that discriminate against Muslims in Europe.

This reading resource pack provides a thematic overview of academic research on Islamophobia in Europe through peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles, books, and relevant publicly available dissertations submitted to universities worldwide and published over the last few decades. This edition follows and expands on the previous 2018 publication on Islamophobia in the United States. In doing so, the resource seeks to highlight trends in knowledge production around this topic and draw attention to any areas needing further development where contributions can be made. Due to a lack of sources in native European languages, there remain a few countries within the region with minimal academic research on Islamophobia, highlighting the need for academic analyses and case studies to understand the phenomena in these relevant contexts.

While definitions of Islamophobia have been offered by a range of researchers, scholars, and community organizers grappling with the evolving nature of anti-Muslim sentiment around the world, the Global Justice Program at the Othering and Belonging Institute defines Islamophobia as “a belief that Islam is a monolithic religion whose followers, Muslims, do not share common values with, and inferior to, other major faiths; is

archaic, barbaric, and irrational; is a religion of violence that supports terrorism; and is a violent political ideology.”

Furthermore, Islamophobia is expressed in discriminatory laws, administrative policy, judicial activities, and public actions of state officials that single out Muslim persons or the observance of Muslim faith or customs for unequal or differential treatment, including laws that are neutral on their face but have a disparate harmful impact or are or tend to be applied unequally to people of Muslim faith or the observance of Muslim faith or customs. Additionally, Islamophobia is expressed in prejudicial views, discriminatory language, acts of verbal and physical violence inflicted upon Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, and the collective punishment and dehumanization of Muslims.

Islamophobia has manifested in a policing regime that engages in the profiling, surveillance, torture, and detention of people along racial/ethnic and religious lines and has justified the militarization of foreign policy and an unprecedented expansion of security apparatuses that impact all peoples.

As emphasized by the many readings cited in this pack, Islamophobia is wide-reaching across the region, varying in its origins, manifestations, and impacts on Muslims across many European countries.

This publication aims to enhance the utility of existing academic research on Islamophobia in Europe for a wide range of stakeholders interested in challenging this global phenomenon. These stakeholders may include activists, civil rights organizations, community workers, counselors, students, researchers, and policymakers. In providing the community with a shorthand summary of publications about Islamophobia, we aim to

categorize existing work, encourage a robust expansion of these debates, and establish a framework for the synthesis and summary of anti-Islamophobia research across the globe.

To expand the geographical focus and document global inquires and research on Islamophobia, we are releasing two reading resource packs together: the one in your hand covers Europe, and the other covers the Asia-Pacific region.

The reading resource pack catalogs **346** citations on the study of Islamophobia in Europe, organized under these 10 main themes:

- Theorizing the Field
- The War on Terror and Securitization
- Citizenship and National Identity
- Mainstream and Digital Media
- Othering and Discrimination
- Gender and Sexuality
- Geography and the Public Space
- Counter-Narratives and Strategies
- Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia
- Social Mobility

In addition, this reading resource pack annotates three key readings under each theme, subjectively selected under three main criteria:

- Introductory Text
- Frequently Cited
- Critical Insight

# Theorizing the Field

**EDWARD SAID** (1935-2003) was among the most widely known intellectuals in the world and one of the co-founders of the field of post-colonial studies. He was best known for his book *Orientalism*, considered one of the foundational texts for the study of Islamophobia. *Orientalism* describes the way Western cultural, academic, and imperial projects have crafted a dehumanizing representation of “the Arab” as an exotic and barbarous Orient. By decoding the body of writing that compares a “civilized” West to a “backwards” Arab world, *Orientalism* provides one of the earliest critiques of stigmatized Muslim identities and the way in which Orientalists exploited the negative stereotypes of Eastern cultures as a justification for colonial ambitions.

Furthermore, and following the publication by the British anti-racist think tank Runnymede Trust in 1997, which introduced the phenomenon of Islamophobia to a wider audience, more scholars started discussing the concept of Islamophobia. The multiplicity of scholarship covering Islamophobia in the European context has become widely conceptualized as a form of racism. From early on, social scientists from different disciplines have discussed how to conceptualize and measure Islamophobia alongside concepts such as racialization and othering. Often, Islamophobia has been discussed in a comparative perspective with other European formations such as anti-Semitism and anti-Black racism. The body of scholarship includes different theoretical approaches to understanding Islamophobia including prejudice studies, racism studies and post-colonial and decolonial studies. For example, scholars have theorized the agency of Islamophobia from a social movement perspective beginning with state institutions to the far-right, the neoconservative movement, the transnational Zionist movement and assorted liberal groupings including the pro-war left, and the new atheist movement.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books (1978).

The book is organized in three parts, beginning with “the scope of Orientalism,” whereby Said surveys the development of the field of Oriental Studies, and focuses on how Muslim Arabs came to be perceived as “the Orient” by the West. The book then interrogates the “orientalist structures and restructures” through which Orientalism was systemized and disseminated as a form of “specialized knowledge.” The final section, “Orientalism Now,” highlights the way in which nineteenth century Orientalist works inspired the twentieth century body of knowledge that further stigmatized the Muslim and Arab world. Overall, Said critically exposes how Western studies of Islamic civilization has consistently served as cultural discrimination and used as a justification of empire. He asserts that since at least the period of European colonialism in the seventeenth century, the Orient has been seen as the “other,” who is cast as irrational, psychologically weak, and in need of salvation.

Based on these critiques, this book is considered one of the most significant texts in the study of East-West relations. Thus, it is a foundational text for theorists and scholars interested in Islamophobia studies and has inspired much of the later works cited and listed in this reading resource pack.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

Allen, Chris. *Islamophobia*. Routledge, 2010. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Chris Allen foregrounds the origins of the concept of Islamophobia from the late 1990s and thereafter, and expands its utility. The text is among the first authoritative texts, published in 2010, that considers the manifestations and consequences of Islamophobia, when at the time literature specifically addressing Islamophobia in a comprehensive way was limited. Allen discusses the crucial role of the media, takes a global perspective on the positioning of Muslims and also discusses historical (dis-)continuities of Islamophobia to answer the question, if Islamophobia was something old or an entirely new phenomenon. Ten years later, Allen presents a follow-up study based on more than 100 interviews in his book ‘Reconfiguring Islamophobia: A Radical Rethinking of a Contested Concept’ (Palgrave 2020) which critically rethinks elements of the political and academic debate discussing the relationship between racism and Islamophobia.

## CRITICAL INSIGHT

Hafez, Farid. "[\*Schools of Thought in Islamophobia Studies: Prejudice, Racism, and Decoloniality.\*](#)" *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 4.2 (2018): 210-225.

In this article, Farid Hafez theorizes different approaches in the study of Islamophobia/anti-muslim Racism, or in what has become known as Islamophobia Studies. Hafez identifies three different theoretical strands within Islamophobia studies rather than the commonalities they share. In broad terms, he speaks of three "schools of thought," identified in the academic literature on Islamophobia. The first conducts research on Islamophobia in the context of prejudice studies, the second is informed by racism studies and also sometimes draws on the postcolonial tradition, and the third contributes to the second through the addition of a decolonial perspective. Hafez discusses literature both focused on Islamophobia in Europe and globally. As a co-editor of the book 'Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies' (Routledge, 2019) his work provides local contextual nuance and a sound introduction to the main theoretical assumptions within the broader literature discussing Islamophobia today.

## Reading List

1. Allen, Chris. [\*Reconfiguring Islamophobia: A Radical Rethinking of a Contested Concept.\*](#) Palgrave Pivot (2020).
2. Bleich, Erik. "[What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept.](#)" *American behavioral scientist* 55, no. 12 (2011): 1581-1600
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6. Hafez, Farid. "[Unwanted identities: the 'Religion Line' and global islamophobia.](#)" *Development* 63.1 (2020): 9-19.
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# The War on Terror and Securitization

**THE WAR ON TERROR** that the United States government initiated, with the British government's support, following the September 11 attacks, has created a globalized narrative for a transnational war in the name of national security. Such a narrative embraced by many governments across the globe creates a lasting impact on those deemed to be the "other" or the "enemy" within, hence, the securitization effects. Critical scholarship has interrogated the implementation and effects of policies that focused on the surveillance of Muslims and their communities, border control and the rhetoric of Fortress Europe, and the crime-terror-nexus within the urban metropolises of Western Europe and also as a divide between Eastern and Western Europe. Many academics also focused on the institutionalization of suspicion and criminalization of Muslims via so-called deradicalization programs such as the infamous British PREVENT or the Dutch countering violence and extremism policies, which further discriminate against Muslims. This field of work discusses the impact of these policies have on different aspects of individuals and communities such as schooling, citizenship, healthcare, civil society or psychological vulnerability.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

**Kundnani, Arun.** [\*The Muslims Are Coming!: Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror\*](#). Verso Trade, 2014.

In *The Muslims Are Coming*, Arun Kundnani, presents a comprehensive critique of counter-radicalization strategies in the US and UK. Kundnani brings together his expertise on racial capitalism, Islamophobia, surveillance, and political violence based on three years of research in both countries. Kundnani presents a critique of the Islamophobic motives of counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism projects and reveals how these perspectives have shaped the lens through which “Western societies” have viewed Muslim populations by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Kundnani shows how the image of the foreign terrorist has transformed to become the “homegrown terrorist,” how Muslims have become the object of surveillance in secret programs, and the larger debate about Muslims in Europe. It also shows, how the security apparatus in both countries has been increased in number and how this new system has led to discrimination and violence against a minority group, whose political activism is demonized. Kundnani reveals how on one side, Western governments have failed to account for political and social circumstances at the root of radicalization while blaming the victims. In this book, Islamophobia is seen as a form of structural racism, and as a fundamental tool for shaping the practices of the War on Terror, particularly discriminatory national security policies towards racialized Muslim communities.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

**Fekete, Liz.** [\*A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe\*](#). London: Pluto, 2009.

Liz Fekete’s book *A Suitable Enemy* presents an analysis of European Union immigration, asylum, race and security policies. Long before the so-called the “refugee crisis” with the influx of people from war-torn Syria started in 2015, Fekete argues that simultaneously, when the EU introduced selective migration policies, it closed its borders to asylum seekers, who were the first victims of the expansion of the security state which then targeted and impacted Muslim communities across Europe. Fekete showed how essentially anti-terrorist legislation has been used to evict undesirable migrants, how deportation policies commodify and de-humanize the most vulnerable and how these go hand in hand with existing and evolving forms of racism, particularly Islamophobia, which she understands as a form of xenoracism, a non-color form of institutionalized racism. She argues that this is the New McCarthyism that criminalizes speech. Fekete also shows how Islamophobia today is legitimized and mainstreamed not only by the political right, but also with the help of some of liberals and white feminist discourses. Fekete also shows the way youth resist these policies.

## CRITICAL INSIGHT

Rexhepi, Piro. “[Mainstreaming Islamophobia: The Politics of European Enlargement and the Balkan Crime-Terror Nexus.](#)” *East European Quarterly* 43, no. 2-3 (2015): 189-214.

In this article, Piro Rexhepi examines Islamophobia not as an exclusive feature of far-right politics in Europe but as a constitutive part of mainstream European Union enlargement processes. Additionally, for a long time, scholars centered on Islamophobia in Western Europe, and Rexhepi turned the focus to the East of Europe. Rexhepi investigates EU commission and parliament reports as well as enlargement strategies to examine security practices and policies that stem from policy debates on what he calls the “crime-terror nexus.” Rexhepi contests that Muslims are outsiders from the Middle East or North Africa, often depicted as alien invaders by focusing on the Western Balkans’ Muslims. He interrogates the securitization and border practices that mark and produce Muslim populations in the Western Balkans as suspect communities in need of disciplinary violence under the promise of EU integration. Rexhepi thus shows how the EU securitization and enlargement policies in the Western Balkans creates an explicit and implicit linkage of Muslims in the Balkans with organized crime and terrorism. He sees this in the shift of EU enlargement debates from the 1990s, which were predominantly framed around post conflict and (post)socialist instability, toward increased concerns over organized crime and terrorism that has accompanied the integration of Muslim majority countries. Rexhepi also demonstrates how EU securitization measures influence the local policing of what are acceptable Islamic practices, which frequently results in the establishment of suspect communities and the depoliticization of Muslim communities by relegating Islam only to the private sphere.

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# Citizenship and National Identity

**AS BELONGING REQUIRES** mutual power, access, and opportunity among all groups and individuals within a shared social context, the question of citizenship and national identity is tightly connected to discourses of belonging. Within the scholarship on Islamophobia, works listed in this category all deal with the questions of “Who is part of us?” and “Who is the enemy?” These discourses take place frequently in the context of immigration and have not halted even with the second and the third generation of Muslims as part of European society. Instead, narratives of a white Europe and nation states dominate. Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism is instrumentalized in creating narratives on national identities following a historical continuity of other discourses of exclusion such as anti-Semitism. When Muslimness is seen as an impediment to national cohesion. The works cited in this section demonstrate several examples of diverse geographies, the danger, and the further marginalization and alienation the Muslim population feels. Attempts to form civic identities instead of national identities go unnoticed when the belonging discourses concentrate not on the contribution of citizens to the common good of a society but on their ethnicity, race, and religion; based especially within the far-right politics and nationalist sentiments in conceptions of white supremacy.



## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

**Jackson, Leonie B.** [Islamophobia in Britain: The Making of a Muslim Enemy.](#) Springer, 2017.

In this book, Leonie Jackson critically considers the definition of Islamophobia and how so far scholarship has approached it. She considers the first systematic study of Islamophobia by the UK think tank Runnymede Trust problematic. She explains that when Runnymede describes Islamophobia as a “wrong perception” to be corrected by Muslims, this feeds into the dichotomy of “good Muslims” and “bad Muslims” constructed today by Islamophobes to discipline, assimilate, strip Muslims’ agency, and govern Islam. Subsequently, Jackson explains the usefulness of a comparative perspective which looks into the similarities of Islamophobia and racism as a discourse of exclusion and explains the intertwines of race and religion and how these operate in everyday policies and discourses in the example of the UK. Jackson argues that the cultural shift in racism includes a change from overt (flawed) expressions of perceived biological superiority towards understanding culture as an intrinsic and inescapable marker of a person’s behavior so that it becomes almost a pseudo-biological category. This is also the reason why Islamophobic discourse defines Muslimness as a psychological category that affects a person’s actions. This again is seen as a cause of problems in the social context of the UK where cultures mix and hence Muslims are requested to assimilate to avoid tensions. Jackson examines such discourses through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) which sees social relations centrally constituted by racism, giving those who ascribe to whiteness privileges and benefits within the economic-material system. Studying Islamophobia through the prism of CRT requires employing intersectional excavation to unearth the “unnoticed aspects” of Islamophobia, such as how Islamophobia is produced in the “business as usual” discussions. By deconstructing the discourses around the minaret ban in Switzerland, the cartoon controversy in Denmark, the LGBTQ debates in the Netherlands, and the hijab bans in France, Jackson shows how such “construction moments” function as events offering space to intentionally generate narratives of Muslims and Islam being antithetical to “Western values.” These narratives imply a contrast between Muslims and non-Muslims and are thus used to define national identity based on the idea of “who to fear” since Muslims are an impediment to national cohesion, which Jackson calls a “project of national culture chauvinism.”

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**Abbas, Tahir.** [“After 9/11: British south Asian Muslims, islamophobia, multiculturalism, and the state.”](#) *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 21, no. 3 (2004): 26-38.

Tahir Abbas authored this article a couple of years after 9/11 and brought in contextual evidence from the UK to argue how Muslims and Muslim communities have been affected by the post-9/11 “war on terror” discourse. Even though the article was published almost 20 years ago, and some of its claims regarding the UK’s legislation on discrimination will be subject to revision based on developments that have taken place since, Abbas makes a solid case to show how Muslims are in the center of attention as the racialized other while Britain attempt discursively frame an imagined “Britishness” collective identity based on ethnicity and categorically leave the Muslim population out of the narrative. The article offers parallels to struggles faced by Muslim minorities both in the current time as well as in other European geographies within societal discussions on multiculturalism and citizenship. Abbas elaborates on the discursive framing of Islam in the media – relevant in the context of post-9/11, as well in the post-ISIS-era – and how that contributes to the categorization of Muslims as the Other. The otherization is, as the article shows, highly based on racialization of Islam and treating of Muslims as one unidentified mass, leading to the various ethnic Muslim groups in UK to be considered as one cultural entity whose practices are all the same. At the same time, as the society is, with the lead of political actors, revisiting its understanding of Britishness and Englishness, within the “war on terror” discourse Muslims’ loyalties are questioned, and they are out-grouped. As Abbas argues, this leads to either reactive identities or to coercive self-disciplining to become “good Muslims” to be accepted by the society. The phenomenon of a dichotomy between “good Muslims” and “bad Muslims” has since been written by academics extensively and is still relevant in today’s context wherein CVE and other governing measures are forcing Muslim citizens to negotiate their religious identities and the performance thereof.

## CRITICAL INSIGHT

**Meer, Nasar.** [“Misrecognizing Muslim consciousness in Europe.”](#) *Ethnicities* 12, no. 2 (2012): 178-196.

Nasar Meer’s article deconstructs in this article the three most common ways in which he sees Muslim identities – or what he calls “Muslim consciousness” – misrecognized by either academics, public intellectuals, political actors in public discourse. For Islamophobia studies, the question of identity is often time in focus as Muslim identities are narrated and imposed externally and further used in construction of negative stereotypes and political arguments on imagined collective sense of selves for Muslim citizens. The three misrecognitions from Meer’s analysis are the Euro-Islam narrative which he argues wrongly places too much focus on theological aspects and too little on social ones, the “Eurabia” hypothesis which

posits an alleged Islamization of Europe marked by demographic panic, and the Muslim subject who cannot and will not integrate, and as such Meer argues that Muslim claims for cultural accommodation in multicultural societies are seen as exceptional, lacking national pride and identification and thus insist on an antithetical cultural identity to that of the host society. Meer again stresses the importance of acknowledging how Muslims are involved in the society from the perspective of their civic identity while their religious identity is either being recognized, accommodated or its value negated. The common fallacy of all the three narratives is that Islam's role in constructing Muslim identity is seen as determining, as it should be seen as instructive, making the Muslim identity into a quasi-ethnic sociological category. Meer stresses that opportunities for self-definition can only be upheld through such an understanding be it when they are striving to reconcile their faith and citizenship commitments or acting as political subjects claiming their rights.

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# Mainstream and Digital Media

**THE REPRESENTATION OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS** has been studied very intensively, especially by scholars of media and communication. The high percentage of negative perceptions towards Muslims in Europe, especially in countries with very tiny minorities below one percent, reveal corporate media outlets are identified as primary sites of (re)producing racialized stereotypes of Muslims and often have negative representations of Islam that exacerbate, to a different degree, an Islamophobic climate in many European countries. Specifically, those media outlets' representations of Muslims and Islam are overwhelmingly associated with national security, the war on terror, radicalization, and isolation. Researchers long before 9/11 have contested the media by negative stereotypes representing Islam and Muslims as backward, violent and dangerous. As the scholarship reveals, there is little difference between more liberal or left-leaning and right-wing or conservative mainstream media in the coverage of Islam and Muslims. The body of scholarship that has been produced covers different areas from traditional news media to film and digital space, especially the emerging influence of social media. In Europe, where some states have anti-blasphemy laws, issues of free speech and hate speech are often discussed within this specific context. Some of the literature discusses the (lack of) agency of Muslims in media coverage at the backdrop of asymmetric power-relations. Many of the works cited discuss longtime patterns of structural and institutional racism that inflected on European racialized groups that is today extended to Islam and Muslims.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

Saeed, Amir. "[Media, Racism and Islamophobia: The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media.](#)" *Sociology Compass* 1, no. 2 (2007): 443-462.

In this article Amir Saeed examines the representation of Islam and Muslims in the British press. The central argument of this article is that the representation of Muslims in British press follows a pattern of how previous ethnic minorities have been represented in the British press along racialized notions of otherness. Saeed shows how Muslims have been portrayed as an "alien other" in the media. Themes of "deviance" and "un-Britishness" shape the framing of Muslims similar to other racialized minorities.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

Poole, Elizabeth. [Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims.](#) Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002.

Elizabeth Poole authored one of the most cited works on media representation of Islam. In her case study of the British case, she uses content analysis audience reception with post-modern and post-colonial informed perspectives. Her study predates questions about the portrayal of Muslims post-9/11 and deals with the Guardian, The Times, and also the tabloid press Sun and Daily Mail between the years 1994-97. Poole shows how people of Islamic faith have been "Islamized" by the media, mentioning their religious affiliation much more often than is the case with non-Muslim people. One chapter is dedicated to how print media coverage of Islam and Muslims impacts public opinion formation based on targeted focus groups with diverse groups. An important observation by Poole is that left leaning papers such as the Guardian as well as conservative ones such as Rupert Murdoch-owned Times are not so far apart in their coverage of British Muslims, be it in quantity as well as quality. In her preface, Poole includes an analysis of media coverage in the aftermath of 9/11 by examining the coverage in the six weeks following the terrorist attacks by the Guardian and the Times. Here, she finds large differences between both newspapers; while the Guardian showcased a large variety of views, the Times was much more problematic in creating a "Muslim problem." Generally, Poole observes a "tabloidization" of newspapers across the political spectrum.

## CRITICAL INSIGHT

Bangstad, Sindre. [“Inclusion and exclusion in the mediated public sphere: the case of Norway and its Muslims.”](#) *Social anthropology* 21, no. 3 (2013): 356-370.

Based on in-depth interviews with a number of Muslims in Norway who had been active in the mediated public spheres, Sindre Bangstad elaborates on the inclusion and exclusion of Muslim voices from the discourse on Islam. He shows that the existence of a hierarchy of preference among Norwegian liberal media editors includes and privileges the voices of individuals of Muslim background engaged in critiques of Islam. Bangstad thus discusses issues of power-relations and critically engages with liberal media that creates a distinction between the “good” and the “bad” Muslim subject. Bangstad argues these media outlets often exclude Muslims who are not prepared to engage in a critique of Islam itself and shows, how this “good Muslim bad Muslim” dichotomy is construed alongside their stances vis-a-vis the power system. The author problematizes the media coverage of Islam and Muslims from the perspective of Muslims themselves, gives a voice to the marginalized and shows how presumably democratic societies lack a culture of inclusion and produce a liberal nationalism that marginalizes and excludes certain voices that question hegemonic positions.

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# Othering and Discrimination

**DUE TO ISLAMOPHOBIA** being widely recognized by scholars as cultural racism, much of the research concentrates on one hand on the issues of patterns of prejudice towards Muslims and on the other hand subjective identity of Muslim citizens as reflected in the context of anti-Muslim attitudes in their respective societies. The underlying premise of othering and discrimination experiences of European Muslims have created involuntary identities without recognizing the dynamic identities of Muslims that intertwine between race, ethnicity, religion and citizenship, only emphasizing the racial otherness which at the same time is discursive constructed as a threat to the imagined racial homogeneity of European nations. This process of racialization is connected to the image of the Other so tightly, that even convert Muslims - citizens of their respective societies and who in no logical way could be localized within the otherwise usual frame of immigration - experience discrimination due to their ethnic and racial identities being misrecognized by their religious affiliation. Apart from “white converts” who have the racial privilege of “passing” if they don’t mark their Muslimness in any visible way, the intersectional discrimination of Muslims and simultaneous requests to integrate/assimilate to become as secular as possible poses finally the question, how does a Muslim person of color ever stop being a “Muslim” in the public in racialized societies?

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

Meer, Nasar. [“The politics of voluntary and involuntary identities: are Muslims in Britain an ethnic, racial or religious minority?”](#) *Patterns of prejudice* 42, no. 1 (2008): 61-81.

Nasar Meer’s article extensively argues for the necessity to recognize “Muslim” as an involuntary identity category to be compared to other such categories like race and ethnicity. Based on research of British legislation, he deconstructs the ways in which various bills/acts related to racist hate crimes or incitement to hatred have failed and see Muslims only through a so-called “normative grammar” of race, and hence not needing to be included in the legislation for the same right of protection Jews and Sikhs have. Meer underlines the fallacy in discourses surrounding Muslims as hate crime victims, wherein the right to religious freedom as discrete rather than intersectional with the right to anti-discrimination, as he holds that the former has to do with practicing of religion but the latter is connected to the on-going processes of racialization of Islam and Muslims who then become victimized for hate and hostility that target Muslims and persons perceived as Muslims for their “inherent” characteristics which the perpetrators perceive to be “true” for each Muslim, regardless of their ethnic background, based on Islamophobic hate speech. Since such acts are motivated by the victim having “looked Muslim” it is clear, that for Meer, “Muslim” does not fall under the category of a voluntary identity but he calls for treating “Muslims” as a quasi-ethnic-religious category which is negotiated out of socially contingent operations or race and racism.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

Theo Goldberg, David. [“Racial Europeanization.”](#) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 2 (2006): 331-364.

David Theo Goldberg, a South-African professor and a director of University of California Humanities Research Institute, authored this widely cited article in 2006, and it remains timely today. The article does not directly deal with Islamophobia studies, but it offers important insights into the historical trajectories of racial thinking in Europe and explains how Europeans have used the image of the enemy – the Black, the Jew, and the Muslim – for centuries in order to form the racial contours of contemporary European self-conception. Goldberg defines the Holocaust as the epitome of race in European history yet criticizes how this has made other categories of racialization “disappear” from Europeans minds. Hence, colonization is seen as something external, not something that’s a part of European history, unlike the Holocaust and issues of anti-Semitism. While colonization and its racial past is forgotten, Goldberg emphasizes its effects on the modern Europe. By attempts to overcome the trauma of the Holocaust, Europeans are trying to make race disappear and leave it

“buried in the rubbles of Auschwitz.” In today’s Europe, an illusion of homogeneity is created to differentiate the Different to maintain the Same; heterogeneity across the continent is recognized but those with national borders not. In this manner, Europe is being racialized while the avoidance of race is in its best an implication of the project’s racist nature. Hence, even second and third generation immigrants fall victim to the idea of “born in but not of the society,” which results from Europe’s anxiety and unwillingness to accept the fact that it and its nations are far from being racially homogeneous. The racisms differ according to the national and local context, he says, while the different experiences of Empire or immigration history impact the ways in which race is used to empower Europe’s self-imagination as white and Christian.

### CRITICAL INSIGHT

**Moosavi, Leon.** [“The racialization of Muslim converts in Britain and their experiences of Islamophobia.”](#) *Critical Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2015): 41-56.

In this article, Leon Moosavi tackles the relation between Islamophobia and racialization of Islam looking into the very specific ethnic group of Muslims; “white” converts. He approaches the topic by explaining the importance in addressing manifestations of Islamophobia in a society of not only looking at numbers in explicit hate crime or discrimination statistics – whose absence is by some critical voices taken as evidence for the nonexistence of Islamophobia – but recognizing the way in which subtle Islamophobia is manifested in everyday encounters as microaggressions and in negatively affected family relations, in particular in the case of converts. Moosavi argues that convert Muslims, upon choosing Islam, lose their “whiteness” and privileges that come with such a social attribute. In the case of Islamophobia this means that by the process of re-racialization, “white” converts become racial Others as their former “white” bodies become now marked with by an inherent difference that normally is prescribed only upon life-long, brown Muslims since Islam is constantly discursively framed as a non-white religion in the society. As Moosavi subscribes to the definition for Islamophobia as a form of racism, he maintains that converts thus become targets of the same sort of concealed discrimination and hostility as those who he calls life-long Muslims. This is particularly clear in comparison when converts who carry no visible markers of their Muslim identity report that they barely encounter Islamophobic attitudes. Moreover, Moosavi maintains that convert Muslims who are visibly Muslims detect forms of subtle Islamophobia more easily than life-long Muslims since they on one hand have more regular contacts with non-Muslims and on the other hand have experienced being treated as “white” as well. Examples of such subtle Islamophobia are accusations of being traitors of their nation/race or being regarded as “foreign” – particularly in the case of women who wear the headscarf – and hostility that come along with it.

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# Gender and Sexuality

**EVER SINCE FRANCE IN 2004** became the first country to officially ban headscarves in public schools, scholarly work deconstructing the discourses in the political and public arena underlying these bans and anti-hijab attitudes have been blooming. Today, more than 20 EU countries are in one way or the other affected by bans for headscarves and face veils. The female Muslim body has been put under the spotlight to symbolize not only the alleged unwillingness of Muslims to integrate - as the scarf is constructed as an absolute antipode of everything that Europe and “the West” is supposed to present and cherish as values; secularism, enlightenment, commitment to human and women rights as well as sexual freedom (e.g., see Said’s Orientalism). The scholarly work on the gendered aspect of Islamophobia is hence much concentrated around the topic, either from the perspective of the society as in analyses of political debates around bans or media representations of Muslim women, or, from the perspective of Muslim women’s subjective experiences struggling with Islamophobic attitudes in everyday lives or with structural limitations put on them by the states. With the acknowledgement of intersectionality within the feminist framework, the research has also been expanded to include aspects of ethnicity and race to highlight the way in which Islamophobia is also recognized as a form of racism. Researchers have however also recognized the male perspective of gendered Islamophobia. The reading list includes hence works that look into the ways in which male Muslim bodies are especially within the context of War on Terror perceived as a threat for security, which due to racialization of religion and Muslims also has put many men of color under the radar for only “looking Muslim.” Moreover, within the past years political and public debates on refugees have problematized the sexuality of the “Muslim man” as noncompatible with “Western values” and for instance discussions around “grooming gangs” have constructed “dangerous Muslim bodies” that pose a threat for the “Western woman.”



## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

Chakraborti, Neil, and Irene Zempi. "[The veil under attack: Gendered dimensions of Islamophobic victimization.](#)" *International review of victimology* 18, no. 3 (2012): 269-284.

Chakraborti and Zempi have co-authored several research works including books and articles on the issue of gendered Islamophobia and its implications in particular for veiled Muslim women. This article is the first one and it sets the scene for their further research, especially the book *Islamophobia, Victimisation and the Veil* (2014, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), by building on previous theoretical research on postcolonialism and cultural racism and finally pinpointing gaps in empirical research that they later would fill with their consecutive fieldwork. Chakraborti and Zempi start by defining the veil worn by Muslim women as a key symbol of Islam and Otherness and as an object of the "public gaze," drawing parallels to the notion of "Orientalist gaze." They argue that in the post 9/11 climate, the veil and its wearers became a threat in the eyes of the public who sees multiculturalism and the Muslim identity as exclusive to the British national identity. The authors emphasize that Islamophobia is a form of cultural racism is hence used in order to define notions of "Us" and "Them." Important from the perspective of gendered Islamophobia is for Muslim women, they argue, that the general hostility against Islam and the victimization they experience affect the women's self-image and feelings of security, hence forcing them in the public domain of the street to rethink how to move in the city and claim their spaces in areas which are for them safer than the others. Finally, the authors note that the assumptions about Muslim women being oppressed will together with the Islamophobic treatment of these women only reproduce the gendered hierarchies the Islamophobes' claim to fight against. When the veil is thus regarded by the "public gaze" separately from the women themselves and their inner world, it is used to create female Muslim bodies with identities similar to the passive female bodies produced under the "Orientalist gaze" in the colonial period.

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Bilge, Sirma. "[Beyond subordination vs. resistance: An intersectional approach to the agency of veiled Muslim women.](#)" *Journal of intercultural studies* 31, no. 1 (2010): 9-28.

In this article, Sirma Bilge discusses the fallacies of both the feminist as well as the post-colonial frames that are used in the West to describe Muslim women and their veiling. She starts by pointing out that the so called "clash of civilizations" discourse which has already for two decades been used to otherize Islam and Muslims, is not about cultural or political opposites, but is a question of gender equality and sexual freedom which have come to mark the Western civilization as modern and liberal, and Muslim societies as sexist and

homophobic even. Within this context, Muslim bodies and their visibility in the public space are the target of debates about to which extent the accommodation of Muslims' religious practices in Western societies can in fact be "a step backwards." Hereby Bilge argues that it is – without considering intersectionality – common to resort to "single-issue politics," i.e., in the case of headscarf/face veil in the public, the approach is to opt for women's rights, while immigrants' rights are seen as a threat to the former which results in demonizing the veiled Muslim bodies. Bilge's core argument however is that alternative frames can be assembled. For Bilge, one of the core ideas to take from this text is the conception of agency. Whether the Muslim woman is pictured in a submission narrative or in the resistance narrative, both being embedded in colonial subjugation, she criticizes the lack of acknowledgement for religious subjects. The submission frame of feminist discourse is connected to epistemic privileges, wherein the women are accused of false consciousness, and within the "contemporary economy of legitimate knowledge" to support are called "Islam experts"/ "native informants" whose stories about the veil fit the idea of a "Good Muslim" who unveils herself as a result of Western liberation. In the resistance frame of postcolonial discourse, however, empiricists tend to read into the narrations of the women motivations based on the researchers own anti-imperialist agenda, which results in replacement of religious motivations by explanations based on political consciousness. The article's argument can be concluded in her critique that while postcolonial readings are maintained, narratives about veil should not result in instrumentalized reductionism, and that religious, non-resistant agencies are given space.

### CRITICAL INSIGHT

**McKanders, Karla M. "Gender, Islamophobia, and refugee exceptionalism." In *Arabs at Home and in the World*, pp. 126-157. Routledge, 2019.**

This book chapter, by Karla McKanders, offers a refreshing and timely perspective into gendered forms of Islamophobia. Much of the academic work in Islamophobia studies focus on presenting Muslim women as a particular vulnerable group due to their "visibility" as Muslims, and the question how Islamophobia affects Muslim men and men perceived to be Muslim only finds marginal attention. In this contribution, McKanders argues that single, young Muslim men seeking asylum in Western countries such as Germany, Canada, and USA, are being discriminated against through policies that facilitate the governance of immigration according to state interests, which are tainted by Orientalist ideas and Islamophobic politics. This has become evident in particular after the increased refugee influx resulting from the civil war in Syria and the emergence of ISIS. As the author explains, Muslim men have been in the center of societal and political debates, carrying the stigma of a "threat," criminalized Other. In the context of refugee regimes, the stigma created by such discourse disqualifies these young Muslim men from the need of protection. Not at least is the discourse alone to blame, as states define their own vulnerability assessment criteria for asylum oftentimes leaving young, single, Muslim men out. Hence, even if they make it through the assessment of UNHCR and end up waiting for resettlement in a refugee camp, they are not necessarily considered as "deserving" of protection by host countries' admission quotas. At the same time,

the image of the threatening Muslim man is presented in dichotomy with Muslim woman without agency, who is pictured as a victim, be it due to her own “minority culture,” i.e., the “Islamic” oppression executed by men, or some brainwash procedures that have turned them into being radicalized. Within these discourses, the only Muslim men who are seen as “deserving” of protection are those with families or members of the LGBTQ+ community. Such categorizations, McKanders maintains, are the result of an interplay between gendered Islamophobia and homo-nationalism – both frames contributing to presenting Western countries as modern, human rights oriented in opposition to the backward non-Western, Muslim majority societies.

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# Geography and the Public Space

**WHILE IDEOLOGICAL**, Islamophobia targets Muslim individuals and builds on generalizations, stereotypes, and misrepresentation, yet the structural aspects of Islamophobia also need to be taken into consideration, since both feed into each other. The works listed in this category hence deal with issues of legal measures, policies, political discourse, questions of moral compasses surrounding these such as secularism and liberalism. Moreover, included are also Muslims' subjective experiences related to Islamophobic policies and restrictions concerning their freedom of religion, including bans on minarets and the headscarf. These are (as has been noted in other chapters of this bibliography) taken by the non-Muslim majority society as symbols of Islam and embodiment of all the things considered problematic in the Muslim presence in European societies. However, even as bans are considered to reflect the public attitudes and state positions towards the role of Muslim minorities in their respective countries, studies show that in some cases Islamophobia and Islamophobic governance measures on Islam exist without even a significant Muslim presence in a country. The works of this chapter demonstrate how in different local contexts "public controversies" surrounding Islam and Muslims' religious practice are dealt with and how states accommodate and facilitate or actively work against carving the space for Muslim identities in European societies. Finally, a growing number of academic works exploring Islamophobia from the perspective of geography, understanding the public space not only occupied by public controversies and political discourses on secularism, but as an urban space that is shared by citizens. The perspectives in this section's articles hence also shed light on the way how this *space* is perceived by Muslims either as safe, friendly, or dangerous depending on their lived bodied experiences of Islamophobia as spatially organized.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

O'Brien, Peter. *The Muslim Question in Europe*. Temple University Press, 2016.

The title of the book authored by Peter O'Brien alludes to parallels in questions between the current treatment of Muslims as a minority in Europe and that of Jews in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries referring to the famous "Jewish Question." Muslim religiosity, especially the kind which manifests itself to the outside, is an integral part of the popular discourse just the same as it has in other parts of Europe, forming itself into something we might even call the "Muslim Question." The "issues" are hence in the need of being dealt with governance and integration policies. In his book, O'Brien offers an overview of the most debated controversies including Muslim practices and their place in the public space as well as the political philosophies surrounding discussions on terrorism and secularism, the latter being used as one of the "isms" that the West represents. O'Brien considers critically the alleged "clash of civilization" thesis and argues that it is more about clashes within the Western civilization, an ideological bricolage, as "isms" are trying to claim their superiority over another. These "Western values" are mirrored against Islamic practices such as that of the headscarf, and at the same time, "natives" are not criticized for not adhering to them out of any reason that might be, but Muslim citizens are especially in the need of being "trained" to internalize them. Hence, O'Brien argues, Muslim citizens just like non-Muslim citizens inhabit the common space of fragilized values within European societies where both groups can exploit the public philosophies for their own goals and interests in political action. The book hence sheds light onto the ideological inconsistencies behind debates surrounding headscarf bans, mosque/minaret bans and other visible markers of Islam and within which the Islamophobic discourse is seen as antipodal to the normative poles of "liberalism," "nationalism," and "postmodernism" against which they are being scrutinized.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford University Press, 2003.

In this groundbreaking work, Talal Asad aims to understand "the idea of the secular" as an epistemological category in order also to understand the political doctrine of secularism. He approaches this concept indirectly by discussing theories of liberalism, the nation state, modernity, human rights discourse and notions of "European identity." Asad understands "the secular" as both formative of and a consequence of Western historical narratives of collective being. He argues: "A secular state does not guarantee toleration; it puts into play different structures of ambition and fear. The law never seeks to eliminate violence since its objective is always to regulate violence." Hence, tolerance does not inevitably emanate from secular political orders. Asad shows that secularism has helped to foster or even create

forms of violence. The author reveals in his genealogy how “the sacred” was constructed as a domain alongside the formation of something called “the secular.” Although his work is not narrowly focused on Islam in the public sphere, his work is a sound basis for understanding the way Islam is negotiated in Europe’s public sphere today. Asad discusses the nation-state and civil society in relation to power politics and does not assume like Habermas that the public sphere would be a space of persuasion and rational debate.

### CRITICAL INSIGHT

**Najib, Kawtar.** *Spatialized Islamophobia*. Routledge, 2021.

Kawtar Najib did her PhD at the University of Franche-Comté on socio-spatial inequalities and residential segregations in urban neighborhoods before becoming a lecturer in Human Geography, Social & Spatial Inequalities Geography and Planning at the University of Liverpool. In her book *Spatialized Islamophobia*, she demonstrates the spatialized and multi-scalar nature of Islamophobia and presents groundbreaking insights into the recognition of the significance of spatial dimensions in the emergence of anti-Muslim racism. By delving into diverse sources of data, encompassing existing quantitative databases as well as direct testimonies from victims of Islamophobia, the study is conducted across the two major European capitals of Paris and London. Najib presents fresh materials to the realm of Islamophobia Studies, contending that Islamophobia is a phenomenon intricately intertwined with space across multiple interconnected spatial levels: ranging from the global and national scales down to the urban, neighborhood, and individual levels, both physically and psychologically. Through these investigations, the book introduces and advances the novel concept of “Spatialized Islamophobia,” which examines not only the overarching global, national, and urban aspects of Islamophobia, but also delves into infra-urban, embodied, and emotional manifestations of Islamophobia. The book is positioned at the crossroads of Human Geography, Sociology, Politics, Racial Studies, Religious Studies, and Muslim Studies.

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# Counter-Narratives and Strategies

**WHILE MUCH OF THE WORK** around Islamophobia Studies concentrates on identifying the problematic discourses and policies in European societies that contribute to the marginalization and demonization of Muslim minorities, the works listed under this topic offer insights into a solution-driven approach that Muslims and non-Muslims can employ in their everyday lives in the fight against Islamophobia. The studies touch upon the question of citizenship and identity, as Muslims are frequently accused of either false loyalties or the unwillingness to integrate and hence their ability and intentions to be part of the society as participating members is undermined if not completely denied. Sometimes, Muslims are even required by the majority society to provide counter narratives, especially in cases of so-called terror attacks, yet the refusal to condemn is by scholars also seen as part of the bigger counter narrative as Muslims by that show that they cannot be forced into the role of a “suspect community” to take the blame and act as scapegoats for all atrocities committed by other Muslims. These generalizations are part of the misrecognition of Muslim consciousness and dynamic identities. Some of the counter-narratives and strategies Muslims then employ include social media campaigns and carving of Muslim spaces on the internet, mobilizing and protesting anti-terrorism legislation that reduce civil liberties. Moreover, classroom-based interventions challenge dominant narratives that can either be transmitted in schoolbooks or circulated in everyday communication among students.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

Law, Ian, Amina Easat-Daas, Arzu Merali, and S. Sayyid, eds. [Countering Islamophobia in Europe](#). Springer International Publishing, 2019.

This book by four prominent Islamophobia studies scholars from Europe uniquely contributes widely to the understanding of dominant Islamophobic narratives, their local contexts as well as the counternarratives that can be used by Muslim individuals, the civil society as well as state actors to challenge them. The book is based on gathering best practices from experts and anti-racist practitioners across the continent, and includes empirical findings from eight union member states. The book summarizes the findings from each member state, including dominant Islamophobic narratives and the counternarratives specific to each local/national context and then moves to a synthesis of a conceptual categorization of the counternarratives. The importance of identifying the counter narratives and their function for Muslim agency lies in the definition of Islamophobia by S. Sayyid that the authors follow, meaning the undermining of the ability of Muslims as Muslims to project themselves to the future and hence also marginalizing them from the polity. The authors identify as a major issue in the implementation of counternarratives that these are primarily employed by civil society actors and highlight the comparative gap in concrete counter-Islamophobia actions at the state level. However, as they argue, the state should be more active in empowering counternarratives, as the actor creating the narrative is key in determining how effectively it will affect the public attitudes. However, the most crucial factor in pushing counternarratives forward, the authors note, is still the acknowledgement of Islamophobia's existence, not only on the grassroot level but also in structures. Without calling Islamophobia out and publicly recognizing it as a problem, counternarratives will find no resonance.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

Frisina, Annalisa. "[Young Muslims' Everyday Tactics and Strategies: Resisting Islamophobia, Negotiating Italianness, Becoming Citizens.](#)" *Journal of intercultural studies* 31, no. 5 (2010): 557-572. (43).

Annalisa Frisina, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Padua, Italy, argues in this empirically based article, that the everyday participation of young Italian Muslims, second generation immigrants, expresses their wish to be recognized and acknowledged for their Italian identity and legitimize their presence in the Italian society, which is marked by Catholicism as a romantic idea of a unifying identity. Frisina explains the four tactics and strategies undertaken by these youth she observed during her fieldwork, clearly defining tactics such as space-making for temporary independence and strategies as comprehensive challenging of dominating power relations. Visibility tactics refer to resistance tactics relating

to one's outer appearance such as the hijab or the "image" of oneself; one might in everyday interactions be proactively raising awareness about the veil or present oneself as a "moderate Muslim." The former targets the culturalist frame and the latter that of a security frame, both within which the youth find themselves imposed to, struggling for recognition. Individual promotion tactics again are employed by those with enough cultural capital such as public speakers and influencers, as they take over the "role of the foreigner" yet be stuck in "tokenism" as religious differences are used to advance the majority's claims for inclusion without giving them anything more than temporary value. Local and national inclusion strategies are characteristic for actors who identify themselves as democratic citizens and are active in the civil society and hence on a daily basis challenge the power relations. These youth use their religious identity to claim social inclusion based on a civic identity instead of a religious one, including building alliances with other minorities for a common political consciousness. Lastly, through global movement strategies the youngsters become part of social change by claiming justification for multiple loyalties whereby Islam is seen as ethical inspiration and feelings of belonging refer to larger groups beyond the Muslim community of even the nation. On this level, the young Italian Muslims manage to challenge even global structures of oppression.

### CRITICAL INSIGHT

**Housee, Shirin.** "[What's the point? Anti-racism and students' voices against Islamophobia.](#)" *Race Ethnicity and Education* 15, no. 1 (2012): 101-120.

The article starts with a strong autoethnographic anecdote about the author's experience as a young A-level student in the 1980s when she and her schoolmates organized an anti-racist activist campaigning group, prompted by a fatal arsonist attack against a black teenager's house party in southeast London. Today, Shirin Housee applies anti-racist goals towards social change both on the macro and micro level of the school environment and beyond. Housee points out that the pioneering multicultural policies of the British education system of the 1970s and 1980s were not enough, as they were easily accused of tokenism. As she maintains, from the perspective of Critical Race Theory the anti-racist agenda should not only concentrate on the curriculum contents, but also the structures within which the schools function as well as the interpersonal behavior in the classroom, acknowledging and valuing the voices of people of color. Housee reports in her article about her students' observations on Islamophobia in the media and how they relate to the continuing patterns of stereotypes in representations of Muslims. For her, critical anti-racist education should take into consideration the socio-political impacts of Islamophobia, and challenge the (mis)representations on masculinity, femininity, and religiosity, as well as the question of loyalties that Muslim youngsters are faced with in their everyday lives. By involving the class together in the discussions relating to race relations and questions of social justice, Housee believes it will empower the students to rise against racism and understand that a shared problem such as prevailing Islamophobia in the society means also a shared responsibility to fight against it.

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# Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

**IN THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC DISCOURSE** on Islamophobia, comparisons of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have provoked heated debates. The academic discourse has also touched on this issue, an example being Edward Said's *Orientalism*, where he alludes to connections between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia by speaking of anti-Semitism as Islam's "strange secret sharer." Many academics have taken this as a starting point to interrogate the genealogy of a European white, male, Christian identity at the backdrop of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, which both merged in the "Oriental other." Given the central place the Holocaust has in today's self-perception of the European political elite, this comparison is also highly politically charged. Some of the scholarship interrogates the possibilities and challenges of comparing both phenomena, while others use both concepts in a discussion with racism and processes of racialization at the hands of a white, Christian, male dominant culture. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are discussed to the backdrop of questions around secularism, multiculturalism, minority-majority-relations, Christian sovereignty, colonial and post-colonial governance of minorities, the role of the nation state, far-right movements and white identity.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

Hafez, Farid. “[Comparing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: The state of the field.](#)” *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 3 (2016): 16-34.

In this article, Hafez reviews debates that started in the European academic and policy-oriented literature as early as 2003 with a study commissioned by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (then EUMC, today: FRA) and which discussed the similarities between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Scholars in various fields began a debate that compares and contrasts anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Hafez also shows how this debate has been conducted separately in the Anglo-Saxon UK and in German-speaking academia. Hafez surveys the state of the field of the comparative approach to studying Islamophobia and anti-Semitism simultaneously and also presents some central topoi and associated questions. It aims to highlight primary insights that have been gained from such a comparison, including how this comparison has been discussed and criticized, and what similarities and differences have been identified on which levels. It questions which epistemological assumptions were made in taking such a comparative approach, and which political discourses—especially regarding the Holocaust and the conflict in Israel/Palestine (which are not part of this paper)—have shaped this debate in many forums, including academia. Furthermore, this paper discusses which possible aspects of comparative research on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have not yet been explored, and where there could perhaps lay more possibilities for further investigation.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

Bunzl, Matti (ed.). [Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds old and new in Europe.](#) Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007.

This booklet is based on an article that originally appeared in the *American Ethnologist* (2005, 32.4) under the title “Between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Some thoughts on the new Europe” and includes several responses to Bunzl’s article by Dan Diner, Brian Klug, Paul Silverstein, Adam Sutcliffe, Esther Benbassa and Susan Buck-Morss. Bunzl discusses the rise of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia at the beginning of the twenty-first century through historical and anthropological lenses. He tries to understand both phenomena in a historical and cultural sense and questions the analogizing of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Rather, he suggests to locate the two phenomena in different projects of exclusion; anti-Semitism as an attempt in the late nineteenth century to police the ethnically pure nation-state and Islamophobia as a formation of the present, marshaled to safeguard a supranational Europe. Bunzl concludes in presenting Islamophobia as “the defining condition of the new Europe.” The responses offered by the other authors critically discuss Bunzl’s thesis from different perspectives and show the various takes on the comparative study of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia both as phenomena and analytical categories.

## CRITICAL INSIGHT

Meer, Nasar. [“Racialization and religion: race, culture and difference in the study of antisemitism and Islamophobia.”](#) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36.3 (2013): 385-398.

Nasar Meer has published extensively on Islamophobia and Postcolonialism and anti-Semitism in Britain and in this paper critically examines the absence of an established literature on race and racism in the discussion of Islamophobia and parallels this with the similar absence of race and racism in the discussion of anti-Semitism. Meer intervenes in this debate to locate the contemporary study of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia within the fields of race and racism studies, something which has since dominated the study of Islamophobia. Meer problematizes the extent to which discussions of the racialization of Jews and Muslims remains unrelated to each other or is explored in distinct silos as a series of internal debates. By harnessing the explanatory power of long-established organizing concepts within the study of race and racism, his introductory text to a special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* makes a historically informed, theoretical and empirical contribution to aligning these analytical pursuits.

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# Social Mobility

**MUSLIMS IN EUROPE** are suffering exclusion and discrimination due to multiple layers of othering. Structural racism and discrimination in the job market, in the workplace, in educational institutions, and in the sphere of political participation reduce Muslims' social mobility and their access to equal opportunities. However, at the same time, the Islamophobic discourse in Europe typically claims, in line with so called "replacement theories," that Muslim population growth (both through alleged hyperfertility and mass-migration to the "West") means that they will dominate demographically and economically over the indigenous majorities, as the conspiracy of "Eurabia" of a specific Muslim replacement claim. Processes of racialization and the aspect of gendered Islamophobia are evident factors in forming obstacles for both Muslim males and females in accessing equal opportunities and striving in their roles as active citizens. Although one of the common arguments in Islamophobic discourses in Europe is Muslims' unwillingness to integrate and preference not to work but live from social support, the structural racism and discrimination corner Muslims into unemployment. The articles in this section highlight how for instance the war on terror and the subsequent securitization policies impact Muslim youth already in schools as well as the important aspect of austerity as larger policies connected to political economy impact Muslim populations who already due to racial capitalism have been pushed to remain in the margins of the society.

## Annotations

### INTRODUCTORY TEXT

**Ali, Nadya, and Ben Whitham. “[Racial Capitalism, Islamophobia, and Austerity.](#)” *International Political Sociology* (2020).**

In this article, Nadya Ali and Ben Whitham examine Islamophobia through the lens of political economy. The central argument of the article, “austerity is a program of racialized and gendered violence, and Muslims have become one of its central victims” (p.18) is shown through an empirical study that includes interviews and focus group discussions with male and female UK Muslims. The article demonstrates how the intersection of race, gender, religion, and class forms what the authors call “austerity Islamophobia” that is embedded in structural racism but manifests in everyday experiences. The authors explain the connection of colonial past and racial capitalism and then move towards the empirical part of their study, which shows experiences of Islamophobic micro-aggressions, abuse, and discrimination. These take place on the same social level as lived experiences of political-economic effects of austerity do; oftentimes in racialized geographical spaces that are marked by economic factors and the question, who amidst the “struggle for survival” is seen to benefit the most from the economic structures of austerity. The authors demonstrate the connection between colonial past, racial capitalism, and austerity policies and how these together with processes of racialization have led to depicting the impoverished white majority as the “deserving poor” whereas the UK Muslims are seen as the “undeserving poor.” Experiences of austerity are shown to be connected also to the gentrification of London boroughs, while Muslim populations are pushed to the outskirts where they, and especially in the context of gendered Islamophobia the Muslim women, experience more abuse and harassment.

### FREQUENTLY CITED

**Adida, Claire L., David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort. “[Identifying barriers to Muslim integration in France.](#)” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107, no. 52 (2010): 22384-22390.**

In this article, the authors show how an equal access for immigrants and their descendants to the labor market results in better changes in economic integration and can therefore be considered as a significant factor of social mobility. The article is based on a quantitative study and offers a solution to problems faced by other similar studies in determining the motivation of bias in discrimination in labor markets. While discrimination by employers towards immigrant job applicants has been well determined by previous studies, these studies have not been able to clearly signify whether the motivation of bias has been the religion or the ethnicity/race/country of origin of the applicant - acknowledging hence the important nature of intersectionality. However, Adida et al. determine in their study

that there is an obvious “Muslim disadvantage” for second generation immigrants in French labor markets. To rule out the possible influence of the ethnic/racial background as connected to the country of origin, the authors’ mock applicants were members of the Christian and Muslim communities originating from Senegal whose immigration to France historically dates to the same time period with equal conditions. Importantly, for the “Muslim” female candidates even applications with a picture without a headscarf did not make a difference, which is a strong indicator for discrimination based on purely religious identity that from any application was possible to determine according to the applicant’s name. Following another statistical study on the economic conditions of second-generation immigrants in France, the authors conclude that such households with Christian tradition are significantly better off financially than those from Muslim backgrounds and that Christian immigrants generally have better support networks - connections to the Church - and can hence more easily gain access and the trust in French job markets. Such findings have a significant importance in showcasing the structural obstacles that Muslim immigrants have in social mobility in European societies.

### CRITICAL INSIGHT

**Gholami, Reza. “[Critical race theory and Islamophobia: challenging inequity in higher education.](#)” *Race Ethnicity and Education* (2021): 1-19.**

In this article, Reza Gholami offers a critical insight into the study of Islamophobia in the context of education. He argues that the recent trend of analyzing Islamophobia conceptually as equivalent to racism is insufficient as it overlooks the aspects of Muslims’ everyday experiences on discrimination and abuse which he proposes should be regarded not solely through the lens of racialization but considering also processes of “religification.” Such are related to Muslims’ religiosity, without any connection to race. Connecting this to the context of Higher Education, Gholami argues, attempts by previous studies on Islamophobia in universities has failed to see the issue of underrepresentation of Muslims amongst UK students, what he calls the “Muslim awarding gap” and their campus life experiences. Gholami advocates for the usefulness of Critical Race Theory as an approach in tackling the underlying structural problems. For instance, he notes that interest convergence hinders white elites from allowing advances in racial equality and that apparent developments such as internationalization programs to include more students of South-East Asian origin are in fact entangled in economic exploitation. Another CRT concept, interest divergence, again is connected to securitization of Muslims by programs such as PREVENT which advance the marginalization of minorities for the benefit of the white majority. Gholami further makes the case that the aspect of religification imposes a certain monolithic “Muslimness” on individuals who are then due to its hostile nature forced to foreground their identity and strategize their identity performance only to be tolerated in secular spaces (both epistemologically and performatively) of higher education. Hence, Gholami argues that tackling the problems underlying Muslim students’ experiences on *being Muslim* in the context of higher education cannot be solely based on racism from the perspective of BAME as it is understood in the specific context of the UK.



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The Othering and Belonging Institute brings together researchers, community stakeholders, and policy-makers to identify and challenge the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society in order to create transformative change.

