Islamophobia: Definition, History, and Aspects

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Abstract

This literature review draws on the available evidence regarding Islamophobia in the West. Despite the revolutionary ideas in regard to human rights, Muslims are still being persecuted in different countries and mistreated daily. Islamophobia is a current dilemma for Muslims who are suffering from a lot of abuse as a result of misconceptions about Islam in the face of the refugee crisis, some events in the Middle East, terrorism under the pretext of Islam, and prejudicial representation of Muslims in Western media and politics. Consequently, Muslims in the West are frequently misconstrued and affected badly because of their religion. This paper starts by defining the word 'Islamophobia' and tracking its origin. Then it tries to look back in history for the main events leading to the eruption of this phenomenon. Lastly, it sheds light on four aspects of Islamophobia which are violence, prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion.
Keywords: Islamophobia, Orientalism, Racism, Prejudice.

INTRODUCTION

The word Islamophobia can be divided into two parts. The first one, "Islam", refers to one of the monotheistic religions in the world. The second part, "phobia", is a Greek affix used in English words to mean "fear". The word Islamophobia was first used in 1925 by two French writers, Etienne Dinet and Slima Ben Ibrahim, in their book "Accès de Délire Islamophobe"[1]. The word started to be used more frequently after a report named 'Islamophobia: A challenge for us all' was released by the Runnymede Trust in 1997 in the UK[2]. The report gave details about the history of Muslims in the UK, the factors leading to the increase in prejudice against Muslims in the media, and the social exclusion of Muslims resulting in the perception of Muslims as the "Other".

Different resources offer different definitions of Islamophobia. On the one hand, at some point during the Iranian revolution in 1978-1979, the word was used to describe Muslims' fear of Islam[3]. The reason was that during the Iranian revolution, Iranian women refused to wear the headscarf which made some groups react aggressively against these women, resulting

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[1] Chris Allen, *Islamophobia* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 1.

[2] Naved Bakali, *Islamophobia: Understanding Anti-Muslim Racism Through the Lived Experiences of Muslim Youth* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016).

[3] Chris, *Islamophobia. 2*

in a general fear of the religion. The Runnymede Report offers both a short and a long definition. The short one is: 'Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism', and the long one is:

> Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.[4]

As the report suggests, Islamophobia is a kind of racism that divides between the superior group and an inferior "Other". It is the same division Foucault suggests when he traces the rise of racism through the emergence of 'superrace and a subrace'[5]. According to Foucault, for the 'superrace', it is important to keep its race 'pure' even if it requires 'killing' the 'subrace'. By 'killing', Foucault, however, did not literally mean murder. He rather used it to refer to any kind of indirect killing, such as expulsion or prejudice Drawing on Foucault, we can perhaps see how the same logic of prejudice plays out in the context of Muslims experiencing Islamophobia, resulting in not only 'othering' them but also in creating certain distinctions between "us" (non-Muslims) and "them" (Muslims), good (non-Muslims) and evil (Muslims)."[6] However, there is a tendency in the West to refer to Islam to the version of Islam the West created, as Said explains:

> Whenever in modern times an acutely political tension has been felt between the Occident and *its* Orient (or between the West and *its* Islam), there has been a tendency in the West to resort not to direct violence but first to the cool, relatively detached instruments of scientific, quasi-objective representation. In this way "Islam" is made more clear, the "true nature" of its threat appears.[7]

Islamophobia, as Said explained in the previous quotation, is built on a Western version of Islam which is not related to Islam but is related to the way the West justify their fear of Islam. This fear is based on a lack of knowledge and communication from the West which produces prejudice. Prejudice is not innate; rather it grows in hearts due to some acquired beliefs or learnt knowledge[8]. However, Huntington argues that humans need prejudice to create enemies in order to compete with them and to expand one sides' authority over the other[9]. This

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[4] The Runnymede Report, *Islamophobia Still a challenge for us all.* (London: Runnymede Trust, 2017), 1.

[5] Michel Foucault, '*Society Must be Defended', in Lectures at the Collège De France, 1965-76, ed* Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana and François Ewald. (London: Penguin, 2003), 61.

[6] Poynting et al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other.* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology, 2004), 50.

[7] Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World.* (London: Vintage, 1997), 25.

[8] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks.* (London: Pluto Press, 1952, 2008).

[9] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

argument about power, which built the relationship between Muslims and the West, might allow us to better understand some of the main events that will be discussed in what follows.

MAIN EVENTS

In the 7th century, the Islamic state expanded its territories by invading important cities such as Jerusalem and Damascus, which were under the control of Christians. In response to the fall of the Byzantine Empire in the hand of Muslims during the 11th century, Pope Urban II called the first crusade to push Muslims back from what he believed to be Christian lands, especially Jerusalem[10]. Jerusalem is a holy city for Christians because it is where Jesus was crucified, and it is also important for Muslims because of their belief that Prophet Mohammed ascended to Heaven from there. Therefore, there were different battles for control of Jerusalem. The crusades succeeded in taking control over Jerusalem in the 13th century, but between the 14th and 17th centuries Muslim Ottomans took control of the Middle East, the Balkans, and Constantinople.[11] These clashes over power and land between Christians and Muslims were the foundation of Islamophobia.[12] Huntington argues that these clashes were the origin of a 'Clash of Civilization' between Islam and the Christian West that would continue until today. He contends that this conflict exists because both religions are similar in their monotheistic vision, yet different in that Muslims see their religion as the way to manage all aspects of their life by applying Islamic laws; unlike the West, who separate religion from government. As a result of this separation, the West believes that it has achieved 'modernization', while other civilizations are either trying to achieve it or trying to threaten it.

Colonization was another reason for fueling Islamophobia. During the 15th century, the colonial era started, during which the European countries – mainly Britain and France – dominated Islamic countries. Regardless of the time lapse between the Crusades and colonialism, the fear between Muslims and Christians stayed the same. Said argues that the fear from the West toward Muslims during the colonial era was not the fear that the West would be destroyed. Rather, it was the fear of losing the difference between the West and the Orient – where "the Orient" was, generally speaking, equated with "Muslims" in the Western imagination. In other words, he argues that the West wanted to keep a space between "us" and "them" so that the "us" would not be affected by the "them"[13].

According to Fanon, this era of colonization shaped the idea of the superior White who in turn created his own inferior 'Other'[14]. On the idea of colonization, Said argues that the role of this "inferior" was to exist as an object of study to be defined by the colonizer's science, history and arts. In this sense, from the perspective of the superior, the inferior does not exist as a human but rather as a 'problem to be solved'.[15] Said cites some Western thinkers as examples of this way of thinking, such as Leroy-Beaulieu who believed that colonization was a process of giving birth to underdeveloped and weak regions. Before, during, and after colonialism, most

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[10] The Runnymede Trust. *Islamophobia: A Challenge for us All*. (London: Runnymede Trust, 1997).

[11] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*.

[12] Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (London: Penguin Books,1978).

[13] Said, *Orientalism*.

[14] Fanon, *Black skin, White Masks*.

[15] Said, *Orientalism*, 207.

Western thinkers have built their 'knowledge' about Muslims/Arabs based of their imaginations. According to Alsultany, there is a belief for these thinkers that Muslims and Arabs are the same, even though this is far from the truth.16 What is true is that the dominant religion in the Arab world is Islam, but there are other religions too. Conversely, many Muslims are not Arabs: Arabs are part of the Muslim population worldwide. Said observes how, despite this difference, there is a general tendency in the Western imagination to place these groups in the same category, fuelled by depictions in media and even academic scholarship. Moreover, both are often considered to be exotic, primitive, barbaric, and backward. Said refers to such constructions as Orientalism.17 Orientalism emerged from an assumption of White supremacy which gives Western scholarship the confidence and justification to present Muslims/Arabs in such a pejorative way.

Over the centuries, the nature of Islamophobia has shifted. During the history of crusades and colonialism, Islamophobia developed as what Foucault termed 'a subjugated knowledge' which means 'blocks of historical knowledges that were present in the functional and systematic ensembles, but which were masked.'[18] This mask has resulted of Islamophobia, which, instead of being a subjugated or hidden form of knowledge, is now openly legitimated by some Western media, politics and people.[19] As Islamophobia is spreading, the rate of hate crimes against Muslims is increasing. Islamophobia has transformed from a subjugated knowledge into "a-taken-for-granted-knowledge". Some Westerners take it for granted that all Muslims are terrorists. Some parents take it for granted that their children should not be in contact with Muslim neighbors or students. Some Western students take it for granted that Muslim males are violent, and Muslim females are oppressed. Some Muslim students doubt themselves because of the difference between who they are and how the community around them views them.

Religious terrorism also led to Islamophobia. This kind of terrorism exists within all religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism.20 However, there is a general tendency in the West to focus specifically on Islamic religious terrorism. The West constructs a picture of Muslims and Islam which is based on an Orientalist imagination, and not on the reality of who the great majority of Muslims are. What the West typically connects Islam with, is what most Muslims are against.21 The dogmas created by Orientalism about Muslims/Arabs in the West over time have deepened the perception of Muslims as inferior. According to Žižek, this was one of the causes feeding Muslims' outrage over the West: being perceived as inferior does not only give the inferior a definition, it also means there will be some impact on the social existence of the subject.[22] Therefore, this outrage, along with other factors, has been translated into violence by some extremist Muslims. Such violence by some Muslims has been understood

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[16] Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11.* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

[17] Said, *Orientalism.*

[18] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended, 7*

[19] The Runnymede Report, *Islamophobia still a Challenge.*

[20] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[21] Said, *Covering Islam.*

[22] Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections.* (London: Profile Books, 2008).

by the West as an attribute of Muslim people more generally, resulting in an environment of escalating fear of Islam. For instance, research by Ata has shown that the majority of the population in over 50 Western countries views Muslims as 'fanatical, violent, and intolerant'[23].

Facing the same challenges, the fear of refugees occupying Europe is conflated with the fear of Islam. Muslim immigration has replaced anti-Semitism as the major perceived threat for Europeans[24]. For instance, in France 'the word "immigré" is virtually synonymous with Islam.'[25] In Australia, the majority of immigrants are from an Arab or Muslim background, and anti-immigrant racism is the most dominant kind of racism.[26] Furthermore, migrant Muslims are considered unable to integrate in the society they live in.[27] The belief that Muslims/Arabs are 'invading' Europe through immigration has led a large portion of Europeans to fear that Europe will become 'Eurabia' when Arab Muslims' population come to outnumber Christian Europeans.[28] However, history offers counter-narratives of who poses a threat to whom. For instance, such demographic changes were one of the reasons given for the massacre of Bosnian Muslims by Serbs.[29]

The emergence of Taliban and al-Qaeda during the 1980s was another factor contributing to the spread of stereotypes about Muslims. According to Van Linschoten and Kuehn some believed that both al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, and the Taliban, led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, were believed to be one entity because of the similarities between them.[30] For instance, they both emerged to fight the Soviet invasion during the 1980s, funded by Western countries such as the USA and Middle Eastern countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Another similarity is that they both had the vision to create an Islamic state and saw 'Jihad' as part of their identity. 'Jihad' is the Arabic word for 'resistance'. Just like any two languages, there might be a slight difference between the two words. However, they can both be used in the sense that someone is resisting the urge to doing a specific action, which is also one meaning conveyed by 'Jihad'. Someone resisting somebody else's actions is 'Jihad' as well. In Islam, fasting is Jihad because one is resisting the urge to eat. Fighting an 'enemy' to defend yourself or your country is also Jihad. Both the Taliban and al-Qaeda adopted the second meaning, and they interpreted the 'enemy' as 'non-believers'. For them, 'non-believers' are non-Muslims. The two groups agreed on the definition, yet they did not agree on the implementation of 'Jihad'. After the war with the Soviet Union ended, Taliban focused on 'Jihad' in Afghanistan to create an Islamic state. On the other hand, the Taliban was targeting the West, considering it the most dangerous enemy for the Islamic world – especially the USA, whose existence on Saudi Arabian land in order to protect it from Iraqi attacks during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait

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[23] Abe W. Ata, *Us & Them: Muslim-Christian Relations and Cultural Harmony in Australia*. (Bowen Hills Qld: Australian Academic Press, 2009), 86.

[24] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*.

[25] Ibid., 200.

[26] Ghassan Hage, "Continuity and Change in Australian Racism," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 35, no. 3 (2014): 232-37, doi: 10.1080/07256868.2014.899948.

[27] Poynting et al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs*.

[28] The Runnymede Report, *Islamophobia Still a Challenge*.

[29] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*.

[30] Alex Strick van Linschoten, and Kuehn Felix. *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan*. (London: Hurst and Company, 2012).

in 1991, was considered to be a defilement of the Holy Land[31]. As a result, there were different bombings of American buildings by al-Qaeda, such as the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998, and the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001.

More recently is the creation of ISIL or ISIS which stands for The Islamic State in Iraq and Levantine which is the area including Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. Although ISIL was created in 2006 as part of al-Qaeda, leaders of al-Qaeda declared in 2014 that ISIL was no longer connected to them because the ISIL leadership was not following the orders from al-Qaeda. ISIL started spreading its control over land in Iraq following the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, and in Syria during the ongoing civil war in Syria. Besides the war in Iraq and Syria, ISIS started attacking those who were considered "non-believers". These include Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Westerners, basically anyone who is not part of their group. They planned different attacks around the West such as the 2015 Paris attacks[32], the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting[33], the 2017 Istanbul nightclub shooting,[34] and the 2017 Stockholm attack.[35] The list continues, yet the fear of ISIL did not only grow from these attacks, but also from their use of media. ISIL used social media to post videos of the crimes they committed against "non-believers", and to recruit more people.[36] All these attacks were announced on social media and news platforms, from videos of beheading or slaughtering "non-believers" to news of recruiting Westerners to be part of ISIL. These media reports have increased the fear of Muslims and informed the way Muslims more broadly are judged.

As a backlash to such events, the fear of Muslims migrating to Western countries is growing in countries like Australia[37] and Denmark.[38] In Switzerland, a referendum was held to prevent the building of minarets on mosques out of fear that mosques will change the Western architecture of the country.[39] In Germany, there have been rallies in eastern Germany to promote for Islamophobia since 2015. The 'Pegida' group which organized these rallies managed to gather 25000 Germans in Dresden.[40] The next section provides more insight in the backlash Muslims face due to Islamophobia.

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[31] Linschoten, Strick, and Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created.*

[32] Peter, Laurence, "Paris Attacks: A New Type of Terrorism?". *BBC.* November 14, 2015. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34820847.

[33] Richard Pérez-Peña, and Lizette Alvarez, "Orlando Gunman Attacks Gay Nightclub, Leaving 50 Dead," *The New York Times*, June 12, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/13/us/orlando-nightclub-shooting.html.

[34] "Istanbul New Year Reina Nightclub Attack Leaves 39 Dead." *BBC News*, January 1, 2017. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-38481521.

[35] "Stockholm Attack Suspect Known to Security Services," *The Guardian, April 8,* 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/08/stockholm-attack-suspect-arrested-for-terrorist-after-truck-deaths.

[36] Yaakov Hoffman, "Who Is Afraid of Isis? Isis Anxiety and Its Correlates." *Stress and Health* 34, no. 1 (2018).

[37] Poynting et al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs.*

[38] Bülent Diken, *Strangers, Ambivalence and Social Theory*. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

[39] Bakali, *Islamophobia.*

[40] "Who Goes to German Pegida 'Anti-Islamisation' Rallies," *BBC News*, January 13,2015. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-30776182.

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ASPECTS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia has four aspects: discrimination, prejudice, exclusion and violence.[41] The first aspect is discrimination against Muslims. Foucault proposes an explanation for racists' discourse: 'We have to defend society against all the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace'.[42] No matter what the inferior "Other" tries to achieve, he or she will never be considered part of the superior group. One of the reasons for this "otherness" is that some people think that Islam justifies the horrible actions done by those people who bomb themselves to kill innocents[43]. Muslim "otherness" in Western perception is increasingly connected to terrorism. For instance, Ann Coulter, an American columnist, said: "not all Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims"[44]. Statements like these sustain the idea of the barbarism of Islam as imagined in people's minds[45]. Besides being seen as the "Other" in a worryingly large portion of a Western mindset, Islam is perceived as: 'not only incapable of modernity, but also resistant to it'.[46] According to Jackson 'Muslims were now presumed 'bad' until proven otherwise'.[47] The only way by which Muslims can be proven to be 'modernized' is to be 'westernized'.[48]

The second aspect of Islamophobia is prejudice, which can be found in how Muslims are represented in a substantial portion of the media.[49] On the role of media in creating Islamophobia, it follows a selective process of choosing what, how, and who to portray.[50] Muslims are often presented in media as 'wrongdoers',[51] and 'barbaric'.[52] The language these media use to describe terrorist attacks perpetrated by Muslims differs from to those by non-Muslims. Media reports tend to use words such as 'jihad', 'fundamentalist', 'terrorist' and 'radical' when addressing any issue related to attacks by Muslims 'to make Muslims look evil and bad'.[53] The word "fundamentalism" was first used to describe American Protestants or the political right between 1865 and 1910. It then started to be associated with Islam in 1981 when an article written by Anthony Burgess argued that Islam is bloody and violent.[54] Also, the word was used excessively in Huntington's book "The Clash of Civilizations" in different contexts without giving it a clear definition. For example:

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[41] The Runnymede Report. *Islamophobia Still a Challenge for us All.*

[42] Foucault, *Society Must be Defended,* 61.

[43] Yasmin Hussain and Paul Bagguley, "Securitized Citizens: Islamophobia, Racism and the 7/7 London Bombings," *The Sociological Review* 60, no. 4 (2012). doi: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02130.x.

[44] Bakali, *Islamophobia*, 69.

[45] Said, *Orientalism.*

[46] Bakali, *Islamophobia*, 28.

[47] Leonie B. Jackson, *Islamophobia in Britain* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 32, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-58350-1.

[48] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization.*

[49] The Runnymede Trust. *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.*

[50] Said, *Covering Islam.*

[51] Poynting, *Bin Laden in the Suburbs, 50.*

[52] Said, Orientalism, 150.

[53] Bakali, *Islamophobia,* 729.

[54] The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.*

In most countries, fundamentalists winning control of student unions and similar organizations was the first phase in the process of political Islamization, with the Islamist "breakthrough" in universities occurring in the 1970s.[55]

There are different individuals with different religious beliefs who can be part of student unions. Does he mean any student affiliated with Islam is a 'fundamentalist', or students who believe Islam as the way to reform their country, or students with radical Islamic ideology? Another word is "terrorist". Echoing what has been discussed above, McQueeney explains that words such as "terrorist" are only used to describe crimes committed by Muslims.[56] If the same crime was committed by a non-Muslim, this word would not be used. In other words, being Muslim is conflated with terrorism, thus constituting their 'Otherness'. In other words, terrorism is only connected to Islam in the Western imaginary.

There is a tendency in the West to see Islam as violent. This leads to the generalization of any terrorist action done by some extremists to all Muslims and to the religion itself, unlike the way Christianity is perceived. If a violent action was done by Christians, it does not get generalized to the nation or the religious community. For instance, the word "terrorist" was not used when describing the religion of the man or the man himself who bombed the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995[57]. Nor was it used in 2010 to describe Joseph Stack, who crashed into a building in Texas while flying an aircraft.[58] This phenomenon where media try to cover up the crimes of White criminals is called "Whitewashing".

The media has a big role in shaping how good and bad Muslims are constructed: a "good" Muslim is the one who is like "us" in the West, but the "bad" Muslim is the other who refuses to be like "us".[59] Muslim representation in such a negative way happens not only in the news but also in movies. There, Muslims are often represented as violent terrorists and rarely as normal or peaceful people. Bakali analyzed three movies which exemplify this tendency: The Kingdom (2007), Iron Man (2008), and Body of Lies (2008). The three plots of these movies are basically about how the West is more civilized and has a huge role in saving Muslims from a specific danger. In the three movies, Muslim characters were represented as bad, aggressive and stupid. On the other hand, there would be one "good" Muslim character who is helping the Western hero in the movie to accomplish his mission. Bakali concludes that the West loves Muslims when they show similarities to them, whereas the West considers you as "Other" when you are different from them.[60]

As stated earlier, prejudice against Muslims can also be found in the way some academics write about Islam. A lot of stereotypes about Muslims arise in the writings of those who are given a voice to write about Islam without having enough knowledge about it. For instance, Žižek claims that Muslims do not use toilet paper because writing is sacred.[61] Not using toilet

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[55] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations,* 112.
[56] Krista McQueeney, "Disrupting Islamophobia: Teaching the Social Construction of Terrorism in the Mass Media," *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 26, no. 2 (2014): 297-309.
[57] McQueeney, *Disrupting Islamophobia.*
[58] Bakali, *Islamophobia.*
[59] Jackson, *Islamophobia in Britain.*
[60] Bakali, *Islamophobia.*
[61] Žižek, *Violence.*

paper may be true in some countries because some Muslims use water for that purpose. However, toilet paper is used in some countries. Žižek also argues that Islamic societies are backward because they suffer from 'fundamentalism' without exceptions to any country. Huntington, too, argues that the big 'clash of civilization' would be between the West and Muslims, between Civilization and barbarism. 'The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam'[62], is one of the arguments in the book.

Moreover, Said criticized two academics. The first one is Bernard Lewis, who used an old quote from the medieval period to give an analysis of what is happening today in the Muslim world and mind, claiming that his analysis shows that the genes and history of Muslims are the reason for the way Muslims react in specific ways. The same strategy was used by a journalist who claims to be an "expert" on the Middle East: Judith Miller. She wrote a whole book about Islam without any knowledge of Arabic or relating her arguments about Islam to any other Islamic source. Said argues that such a way of writing about Islam comes from the belief that Islam is 'a psychological deformation, not a "real" culture or religion.'[63]

The third aspect of Islamophobia is exclusion, which is found in politics.[64] Some politicians incite people to fear Muslims and to draw a line between "us" and "them". Here are some examples. In 1995, NATO argued that Islamic fundamentalism was posing a serious danger to the West , similar to that posed by communism. The former French president Nicolas Sarkozy mentioned that France will only welcome those who arrive in the country and melt into the French community, regardless of any kind of differences.[65] A past Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, said on TV that 'Islamicism' is a threat to the country.[66] Pauline Hanson, is an Australian politician, who is described as 'a hurtful hating racist' widening the gap between 'us' and 'them'.[67] Some American politicians are also spreading Islamophobia.[68] For instance, the ban that the former president of the US Donald Trump started in 2017 contributed to spreading Islamophobia. He declared that people from seven Islamic countries (Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen) are not allowed to enter the US. Muslims in the UK are accused of having 'split identities' between their religion and British values as argued by a British politician called Nigel Farage.[69]

The fourth aspect of Islamophobia is violence. Racism of extermination is when one race is seen to be dangerous and needs to be eliminated.[70] This can be applied to Muslims who suffered from violence presented in anti-Islam hate crimes, which are more prevalent than anti-

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[62] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations,* 217.

[63] Said, *Covering Islam*, XXXVI.

[64] The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A challenge for us all.*

[65] Jim Cummins, "Intercultural Education and Academic Achievement: a Framework for School-Based Policies in Multilingual Schools." *Intercultural Education* 26, no. 6 (2015): 455-68.

[66] Bakali, *Islamophobia,* 16.

[67] Hage, *Continuity and Change in Australian Racism*, 233.

[68]Areeza Ali, "*The impact of Islamophobia on the Muslim American community: accounts of psychological suffering, identity negotiation, and collective trauma*", Master's Thesis, Smith College, 2017.

[69] Bhutta, Bhutta. "*After Christchurch*: here's how we can end hate speech and Islamophobia." *TIME*. March 22, 2019. http://time.com/5556701/christchurch-mosque-attacks-beating-islamophobia/.

[70] Hage, Ghassan. "The Affective Politics of Racial Mis-Interpellation." *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, no. 7-8 (2010): 112-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276410383713.

Semitism crimes in the UK. They increased by 18% between 2014 and 2015.[71] As has been explored above, Foucault argued that such practices against one race are considered a way of 'killing' it.[72] Practicing violence against Muslims can have long-lasting effects on their psychology, such as a constant fear of being rejected or judged negatively. For example, some Muslim students do not join the Muslim association at their universities to avoid being judged as extremists. Muslim students suffer from stress and from the struggle of belonging as they are lost between who they are, and what society wants them to be. They fear being trapped in either universality (mainstream community) or particularity (Muslim community) and not finding space in between.[73]

CONCLUSION

Negative portrayals of Muslims are everywhere, and all social categories of different ages are exposed to such portrayals. Islamophobia is a problem that is getting worse. We need to find ways to heal rifts and erase suspicion. As a Muslim living in the UK, I never thought I would encounter any Islamophobic incidents. I thought: 'This would never happen to me', but it did. When it did happen the first time, I went home and cried because I felt too weak to reply back to the person who called me 'ISIS'. Now looking back at it, I think I was just too shocked to absorb the idea that he saw me as ISIS. I see myself as a resilient person, a fighter, and a survivor. To that person, I was just someone who wore the hijab and looked like ISIS. At that moment, I refused to believe he mistook me for a group that committed atrocities against innocent people. Later, I realized that the way he saw me stemmed from his ignorance of my religion, culture, and beliefs. The second time I experienced an Islamophobic incident, I replied back, and it felt good. Some people thought it would have been safer if I had stayed silent. They might be right, but I know I did not cry that night. The first time, I wished someone had said something to that person, and the second time I was the one who spoke out.

Muslims are suffering from violence, prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion. They are growing up with the media and other social institutions depicting their religion negatively, and they are seen as 'outsiders' who should be pulled to the 'inside' by different governmental strategies[74]. One wonders whether this "outsider" and "insider" or "us" and "them" discourse could be transformed to one of "we are all in the same circle" or "you are us". It is important to note that the construction of the Other or us and them binary is not built on facts or statistics. It stems from the imagined knowledge of who is us and who is them. One of the keys which could open the dividing door between us and them is listening to who the Other is. Guiding students from different religions and backgrounds to understand the real meaning of tolerance and to be aware of what is happening in the world is another way to open that door.

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[71] HM Government, *Counter-Extremism Strategy*, October 2015. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470088/51859_Cm9148_Accessible.pdf

[72] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended,* 256.

[73] Hage, *The Affective Politics of Racial Mis-Interpellation*, 117.

[74] The Runnymede Report, *Islamophobia Still a Challenge for Us All,* 48.

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