Ethnic and Racial Studies

'Islamophobia never stands still': race, religion, and culture

Raymond Taras

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Abstract

Islamophobia bundles religious, ethnic and cultural prejudices together even though a narrow definition of the term flags religion as playing the central part. Calls for decoupling religion from ethnicity and culture appear justifiable: religions are increasingly disconnected from the cultures in which they have been embedded. But established political discourse infrequently makes such distinctions and may go further to racialize cultural and religious attributes of non-Europeans through essentialist framing. Islamophobia becomes a cryptic articulation of race and racism even if overtly it appears as religiously-based prejudice. Islam has been culturalized and racialized by its adherents and antagonists alike. Survey data on attitudes towards Muslims confirm such framing: the most common grounds given for experiencing discrimination was race or ethnic origin; religion and belief system were cited less often. Racialization, race and differential racism have become more endemic to Islamophobesã stigmatizing of Muslims, but to categorize Islamophobes as racists is bad politics.

Evolution of the concept

The expansion through immigration of Muslim communities in Europe – whose diverse ethnic backgrounds encompass Turkish, Maghrebi, sub-Saharan African, Iranian, Arab, Pakistani, Indian, and many others – has been accompanied by a rise in anti-Muslim attitudes among established European citizens. A clash-of-civilizations perspective would draw attention to nearly 1,400 years of rivalry between western Christianity and Islam, so the phenomenon of anti-

Muslim sentiments is far older than the concept of Islamophobia, or fear of Islam as a religion and of its adherents.

The first use of Islamophobia as a normative term that advanced disapproving judgements about persons who exhibited discriminatory values and practices towards Muslims, Islamic discourses and their cultural practices probably was made in 1918. A French-language biography of the Prophet Muhammad written by Sliman ben Ibrahim, with illustrations by the prominent Orientalist painter Alphonse-Étienne Dinet, referred to Islamophobia as a negative phenomenon (ben Ibrahim 1918). A more celebrated publication indicting Islamophobia appeared in 1985. Edward Said (1985) compared the pathology to anti-Semitism in that both reflected similar epistemological thinking. Said's method of stigmatizing Islamophobia was by way of an appropriation of the rhetorical strength and accusatory power of the more established pathology – anti-Semitism.

Contemporary use of the term Islamophobia is often associated with its introduction into political use in England by the Runnymede Trust. Set up in 1968 to advise the British government on race relations, the Trust established a Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia in 1997 to investigate discrimination against this group. Its seminal report titled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (Runnymede Trust 1997), served as both a consultative document for the government and catalyst for social consciousness.

The Runnymede report described Islamophobia as 'unfounded hostility towards Islam' (Runnymede Trust 1997, p. 1). It detailed 'the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs' (Runnymede Trust 1997, p. 1). Eight stigmatizing characterizations of Islam comprising Islamophobia were listed: Islam as: (1) monolithic and static; (2) as separate and 'other', not sharing the values of other cultures; (3) as irrational, primitive and inferior to the West; (4) as aggressive, violent and implicated in a clash of civilizations; (5) as an ideology used to promote political and military interests; (6) as intolerant towards western critiques; (7) as deserving of the discriminatory practices towards and exclusion of Muslims; and (8) as making anti-Muslim hostility natural and normal (Runnymede Trust 1997, p. 4). Religious and cultural attributes were identified but a racial component was not.

Contemporary usage of Islamophobia in Europe highlights the spread of hostile public attitudes towards Muslims. It is based in part on a conviction that Europe is in peril because of Islamification, associated both with the increase in the size of Muslim communities as a result of immigration but also with the culture wars that have followed. Many politicians and much of the public believe that the

growing presence of visible symbols of Islam – mosques, minarets, headscarves, *burqas* – contributes to the sense of the Islamification of Europe. In addition, security fears attenuated by terrorist attacks carried out by extremists in the name of Islam often suggest to Europeans that an unbridgeable civilizational divide exists between their 'western' and an alien 'Islamic' world. The Muslim migrant is thus constructed as the carrier of antagonistic values: 'The immigrant is no longer just a classical outsider but also the terrorist within' (Sivanandan 2009, pp. viii–ix).

Islamophobia is more complicated than this imaginary assumes (Taras 2012). It draws from a historical anti-Muslimism and anti-Islamism and fuses them with racist ideologies of the twentieth century to construct a modern concept (Allen 2010). Yet the conviction among some Muslim leaders that today it is Islam that is in peril because it has been constructed as the West's 'Other' highlights how it is part of a stimulus-response model. Defending Islam from threats forms part of a dialectical process that raises fears of each side about the other. One French scholar raised the fundamental question: 'What makes Muslims the ultimate "others"?' Public receptivity to the clash-of-civilizations thesis was based on 'the assumption that Islam as a denomination and Muslims as believers constitute the ultimate cultural "other" that will never be able to cope with democratic and liberal values' (Amiraux 2007, p. 147). The supposed historical incompatibility of European and Islamic values is, therefore, central to the rise of Islamophobia. But as this chapter describes, other anti-Muslim framings have also achieved traction in Europe.

The racialized dimension to Islamophobia

Both deep structures and shallow stereotypes are implicated in the construction of Islam as 'Other'. From the sixteenth century on in the Balkans, invading armies of 'base and bastard Turks' – Pope Urban II's categorization – became proxies for all Muslims (Krey 1921, p. 33). Turkophobia, Orientalism and Islamophobia appear to represent a linear development, but each of these was a discrete phenomenon formed by different contexts (see Curtis 2009). On the Iberian peninsula, the Spanish *Reconquista* in 1492 – the year that Columbus arrived in the Americas – recaptured al-Andalus, the territories conquered by the Umayyad dynasty early in the eighth century. The expelled Arabs and Jews were depicted as peoples with the wrong religion, the indigenous peoples on the new continent as people without religion. Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants (2006, p. 2) contended that:

> These "internal" and "external" conquests of territories and people not only created an international division of labor of core and periphery, but also constituted the internal and external imagined boundaries of Europe related to the global racial/ethnic hierarchy of the world system, privileging populations of European origin over the rest. Jews and Arabs became the subaltern internal "Others" within Europe, while indigenous people became the external "Others" of Europe.

A consequence was, for these authors, that Islamophobia had taken its place as a form of *racism* in a world-historical perspective.

Gordon Allport's (1954) magisterial study, *The Nature of Prejudice*, accorded special attention to the form of prejudice arising from ethnic and racial differences, national characteristics, varied types of religions and religiosity, as well as political biases. Prejudice was often ethnocentrically organized, Allport emphasized. Individual affective and cognitive processes were important in the making of prejudice, but so was social identity.

Xenophobia may be seen as the flip side of ethnocentrism. The first expresses a fear or hatred of foreigners; the second an assertion of the primacy of one's own group in ordering the world. Xenophobia can be grounded in a social reality but, as paranoia, it may also be the product of fantasy. French historian Pierre-André Taguieff (2008, p. 251) offered a nuanced juxtaposition of the phenomenon: 'On the one hand, then, rejection, hostility, aversion – *xenophobia*; on the other, creating distance, cultural deafness, the inferiorization of "others" than us – ethnocentrism.'

Where does racism fit into this taxonomy? For Taguieff, writing of the French experience, xenophobia subsumes racism and even serves as a kind of proto-racism. The term *race* originated in the late fourteenth century and became widely used in the sixteenth, but it did not then have a negative connotation. It was *natio*, an older term, that was employed in the Middle Ages to refer pejoratively to foreigners (Taras 2002, ch. 1, pp. 40–64). In turn, *barbarian* was less a racial than a political and cultural concept.

As a modern phenomenon, racism produced two sweeping ideological constructs: anti-Semitism and anti-Negritude, that is, white supremacy (Taguieff 2008, p. 243). In the first decade of the new century these two racist ideologies have been joined by anti-Arabism, frequently fused with anti-Islamism, in other words, Islamophobia.

What these ideological constructs have in common are, for Taguieff, their origins in three principal cognitive processes. First, they advance an essentialist categorization of individuals and groups in which people's identity is reduced to their community of origin. Second, they

insist on a symbolic exclusion of select groups by stigmatizing them and turning their exclusion into an imperative and absolutes. Third, these racist constructs require the barbarization of select categories of 'others' because they are judged to be inferior and incapable of becoming civilized, educated and assimilatable (Taguieff 2008, p. 261). Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1993, p. 65) summarized racism as the 'strategy of estrangement' demanding that the offender be removed from the territory occupied by the offended group.

Taguieff claimed that racism operated on three levels. Primary racism was the common, even natural, reaction to the presence of a stranger. This reaction could range from mere antipathy to threatening aggressiveness. Secondary racism resulted from conceptualizing reactions to the presence of a stranger into rationalized racism. Xenophobia and ethnocentrism were both rationalized attitudes. Tertiary racism was mystificatory. It assumed the existence of the two preceding levels and built on them by invoking a quasi-biological argument for exclusion (Taguieff 1988). Such a form of racism was a pretext for social engineering of the kind that led to the Holocaust. In a more prosaic form, it consists of hostile attitudes – opinions, beliefs, stereotypes – that lead to stigmatization – insults, threats, hate speech. It includes behaviour and social practices that racialize relations between groups. Racism invites social institutions to perform exclusionary or discriminatory actions. Finally, it comprises ideological discourse, often in a pseudo-scientific guise, that posits opposition between groups, for example, Aryans and Semites (Taguieff 2008, pp. 244–5).

In its efforts to promote the integration of migrants into receiving societies as well as to foster a good-neighbour policy towards regions adjoining Europe (the Mediterranean and Turkey), the EU has enacted different kinds of anti-discriminatory legislation and norms. Racial prejudice has become a key concern. Thus the EU's 2000 Racial Equality Directive required member states that had no national legislation governing racial discrimination to enact the Directive as national law. As the Directive concerned only race, not nationality or religion, many migrant plaintiffs did not qualify for the judicial remedies set forth by the Act. But a measure of standardization among member states had been introduced. Accordingly, one British report on Islamophobia asserted how 'established mantras of anti-racism policy are so difficult to apply when those who deserve anti-racism support and protection happen to be Muslims' (Lambert and Githens-Mazer 2010, p. 53).

The groundbreaking Sri Lankan theorist of race, Ambalavener Sivanandan, went further than EU conceptualizations of discrimination and asserted that the new xenophobia emerging in Europe bore all the markings of old racism – without its genetic assumptions. He

suggested that it is '"xeno" in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism'. He contextualized this concept: 'Racism never stands still. It changes shape, size, contours, purpose, function, with changes in the economy, the social structure, the system and, above all, the challenges, the resistances, to that system' (Sivanandan 1989, pp. 85–90).

An example of xeno-racism cited by Sivanandan was British xenophobic attitudes towards migrants from other EU states, the largest group made up of Poles. They were constructed as migrant strangers even though they were white and physically indistinguishable from their hosts (Sivanandan 2002). As there were no significant religious differences either, racist attitudes towards them could only be the result of racialization, more specifically, a cultural racism. Generally such racialization was more commonplace when religious differences did exist, as in the case of Muslims. At this point differentialist racism may be the more accurate descriptive to invoke.

The interplay of racist discrimination and religious intolerance

The racialization of cultural attributes involves stigmatizing strangers through essentialist framing. Racializing religious markers of identity is intended to do the same. Accordingly Islamophobia can be characterized as a cryptic articulation of the concepts of race and racism even if overtly it appears as a form of religious-based prejudice. In the preceding article Nasar Meer highlights the process of racialization of religious subjects producing Islamophobia.

Other contextual variables need to be considered in the making of anti-Muslim prejudice. Islamophobic discourse in Europe today can be contextualized within anti-immigration and anti-minority narratives combined with an anti-terrorism one. Matti Bunzl (2007, p. 37) put it simply: in the mid-1990s 'Migrants became Muslims, and Europe's Right wing found its target.' To be sure, hostility towards Islam would likely persist even if Muslim immigration had been stopped and Muslim communities deported. Security concerns have become a pretext for articulating deep-seated religious, cultural and ideological fears (Amiraux 2007, p. 149). But racialization of Muslims allows Islamophobia to persist even without a large presence of Muslims, just as anti-Semitism has existed without Jews.

In his short book on the subject, Bunzl (2007, p. 13) noted that the concept of Islamophobia:

> rarely engages religious questions in a meaningful way. Nor does it turn on the issue of race, although it, too, could be seen as a possible valence. What does stand at the heart of Islamophobic discourse is

the question of civilisation, the notion that Islam engenders a world view that is fundamentally incompatible with and inferior to Western culture.

In Britain Tariq Modood (1997) at one point labelled such culturally anchored racism directed at Muslims as Muslimophobia. The term Islamophobia is itself a signifier in that it flags religion as playing a central part in contemporary political debates. In the not-so-distant past, ideological leanings were regularly identified as the basis of citizens' political values. As one scholar highlighted, 'today adjectives like *communist* or *nationalist* are less likely to be associated with an army, a terrorist group, or a peacemaking team than words like "Jewish militant", "Muslim fundamentalist", or "Christian Coalition"' (Marty 1997, p. 10). The end of ideology, already trumpeted in the 1960s, has led to millennium-old religions filling its vacuum.

Both Christianity and Islam have long formed parts of Europe's historical pathways. They share many beliefs and have been 'open to those beyond the original community of believers, since both asserted the universal stature of their religions without identifying any particular people as chosen' (Weitz 2005, p. 19). Beginning in the eighteenth century, European societies came to regard Islam less as a spiritual competitor with Christianity than as a religious threat to rising secularism. Islam was constructed as negative alterity with which Christian and subsequently secular norms were contrasted, defined and valorized.

The secular–religious binary is a familiar cleavage in contemporary European societies. The secular attraction is reflected in post-Maastricht EU norms, even if these reflect pragmatic rather than idealistic reasoning: secularism is a way to transcend squabbling between religions. Furthermore, EU discourse prefers to downplay the part played by religions by treating them as appendages of cultures and ethnicities. In various European states with large Muslim populations, there are parallel attempts to 'domesticate' Islam by putting pressure on Muslims to give up their core beliefs in return for fuller participation in the receiving society. Are these justifiable approaches to take?

Specialists on Islam have spoken out against both (1) fusing religion with culture and (2) juxtaposing Islam with secularism. Mahmood Mamdani (2004, p. 22) identified the logical flaw in treating religion and culture as the foundation upon which political structures emerge: 'By assuming that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it and explaining politics as the consequence of that essence, a civilisation like Islam is reduced to a uniform universal fundamentalist paradigm.' A second fallacy is to regard Islam and secularism as

mutually exclusive when they are not. For Mamdani (2004, p. 47), 'Islamic societies were able to secularize within Islam.' There is a reason why the western tradition has not remarked upon this development: that political Islam encompasses secularism is foreign to the experience of the West where secularization was carried out in opposition to Christianity.

Olivier Roy, a French expert on Islam, has strongly advocated decoupling religion from culture and ethnicity. He contended: 'Religions are more and more disconnected from the cultures in which they have been embedded. Immigration and secularization have separated cultural and religious markers.' Furthermore: 'To identify a religion with an ethnic culture is to ascribe to each believer a culture and/or an ethnic identity that he or she does not necessarily feel comfortable with.' He advised, then:

> Instead of trying to pursue an elusive multiculturalism or to impose an assimilation based on the wrong perception of its 'common values', Europe should stick to its principles:
>
> - To deal with religions as 'mere' religions, not as the expressions of cultures or ethnic groups . . .
> - To recognize the faith communities on the basis of an individual and free choice . . .
> - Ethnolinguistic minorities should not be mixed up with faith communities . . . freedom of religion is not the same as minority rights, although these two could of course overlap (this is why I am not happy with the term 'Islamophobia'). A faith is a choice, while a racial or ethnic identity is, at least in the beginning, a given fact or a label bestowed from the outside. Mixing up these two does jeopardize the way citizenship and personal freedom have been constructed as the basic principles of political life (Roy 2009a, pp. 8–9).

For Roy, the recognition of Islam as a faith, not culture, is crucial to allowing it to play a meaningful role in the private lives of European residents. In this role Islam is placed outside the public sphere in a similar fashion to France's policy of *laïcité* (a religiously inspired term, paradoxically, for secularism). In practice, this separation of religious life in the private sphere from that in the public one may be more rigorously enforced in Islam than Catholicism. This differential treatment fulfils Roy's requirement for the presence of Islamophobia *sensu stricto*: it is discrimination against and hostility towards Islam *qua* religion that constitutes Islamophobia (Roy 2009b, 2009c). As analytically appealing as such a distinction may be, real existing Islamophobia does not sleep when cultural values at odds with 'established' European ones (such as on women's dress codes) appear.

The reality that politicians need to negotiate is of an Islam that has been culturalized both by its adherents and its antagonists.

Lessons from the study of anti-Semitism

Along with anti-Semitism, Islamophobia has become a pervasive phenomenon in European societies. It bundles religious, ethnic and cultural prejudices together, just as anti-Semitism (which involves more than anti-Judaism) does. An arguably scholastic interpretation is that because mainstream Islam professes the inseparability of religious life from politics and identity, any sentiment or action targeting a Muslim must necessarily be anti-Islamic, even if the 'infidel' responsible for it has no awareness of this nuanced logic. In theory, too, Muslims themselves can be Islamophobic – self-loathing Muslims – even if they do not directly attack Islamic beliefs. It may be sufficient that they reject the cultural practices or political orientations that characterize Muslim communities.

Systematic research into Islamophobia is a recent phenomenon. By contrast, the study of anti-Semitism has a long history, it has spanned many different countries and it implicates multiple academic fields. Historians, psychologists and cultural theorists, for example, have shed light on why the Holocaust happened.

Some of the mechanisms that trigger antipathy towards Jews underlie today's hostility towards Muslims. The pioneering historian of the Holocaust, Raul Hilberg, probed beyond the anti-Semitic perpetrators to identify the part played, inadvertently or not, by bystanders. Among these he included helpers and givers; gainers; and onlookers and observers, or what we might call witnesses. Hilberg also wrote of messengers who reported the annihilation taking place. Their influence on events, though minimal when compared to perpetrators, could be positive or negative – or cloaked in ambiguity, as this example illustrated: 'Polish peasants gestured to Jews on their way to Treblinka that their throats would be cut. And that is where they left it, between a warning and a taunt' (Hilberg 1993, p. 216). In a strident variation of Hilberg's triad, another Holocaust historian asserted: 'The Holocaust is a warning. It adds three commandments to the ten of the Jewish-Catholic tradition: *Thou shalt not be a perpetrator; Thou shalt not be a passive victim;* and *Thou most certainly shalt not be a bystander*' (Bauer 2001, p. 67).

This typology has limited applicability to the study of Europe's Islamophobia. While its victims are readily identifiable, its perpetrators are not. One British study noted that those who commit anti-Muslim hate crimes can range from lone wolves to members of loosely affiliated violent extremist nationalist milieux (Lambert and Githens-Mazer 2010, p. 89). They can thus include racist skinheads as well as

the hundreds of thousands who back the British National Front and English Defence League. The category of bystander takes on greater significance in the study of contemporary Islamophobia because, as data presented below suggest, there are many sympathetic onlookers who countenance the expression of anti-Muslim prejudices. The role of traditional and new media in enlarging the pool of Islamophobic bystanders is enormous but is not the focus of this article.

Evidence of anti-Muslim biases

Cross-national survey research has become more comprehensive, sophisticated and encompassing over the past decade. Testing civilizational differences – not just national ones – has become more appealing given both increased research resources and the import of the question. Among the most illuminating data sets are those compiled by the Pew Global Attitudes Project and the Gallup Index. Each has reported increases in anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic attitudes. But often it remains independent academic researchers who produce methodologically the most sophisticated and heuristically the most insightful analyses of public attitudes on xenophobia.

Across Europe a major topic of recent comparative research has been levels and forms of discrimination against Muslims. A cross-national study of discrimination in the EU published in 2008 asked respondents if they felt that discrimination on religious grounds was widespread or not. Forty-two per cent reported that it was fairly high or high in housing matters, and 35 per cent in the educational sphere. Encouraging news was that less than one-fifth of EU citizens claimed that they had been discriminated against on any basis – religion, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin. The most common grounds cited for experiencing discrimination (a 19 per cent tally) was race or ethnic origin (Gallup 2008, pp. 5–6). This result is particularly noteworthy since it indicates that victims feel that they are being racialized; it is not simply a frame adopted by the prejudiced to discriminate.

Significant variations were noticeable in the country data. Almost one-third of French respondents (31 per cent, the highest figure in the EU27 and a full 12 percentage points above the EU27 average) stated that they or someone close to them had experienced discrimination because of their race or ethnic origin. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents in Luxembourg and 26 per cent in Denmark also asserted this. At the other end of the scale were countries where less than one in ten respondents claimed to have personally experienced racial or ethnic discrimination. The lowest proportions were in Malta (five per cent) followed by Lithuania and Poland (both seven per cent).

A full ten percentage points separated the average of felt discrimination in old compared to new member states. About two in ten citizens (21 per cent) from the EU15 stated that they had personally experienced racial or ethnic discrimination, compared to just over one in ten in the twelve new member states (11 per cent). Religion and belief system as the basis for being discriminated against were cited comparatively infrequently – by just 11 per cent of respondents. Only sexual orientation was less frequently reported as the basis of felt discrimination. France again led countries in having the highest reported levels of personal experiences of discrimination based on religion or belief (19 per cent); this was eight percentage points above the EU27 average. At the other end of the spectrum, the lowest proportions of respondents reporting being discriminated against on the basis of religion or belief were in largely Orthodox Bulgaria (four per cent) and Romania (five per cent), as well as predominantly Catholic Lithuania and Italy (six per cent each) (Gallup 2008, pp. 17–18).

It is significant that two mainly Orthodox nations, followed by two mainly Catholic ones, had the lowest reported amounts of religious discrimination. Secular France, by contrast, had the highest reported level of discrimination based on religion or belief system. The presence of a large Muslim minority that may believe that French laïcité discriminates against Islam could be a contributing factor to the country's elevated level of felt discrimination. The notion that a secular state may contribute to greater felt religious discrimination than a confessional one runs counter to the received wisdom of EU elites.

Muslims' experience of victimization is an indispensable counterpart to survey research carried out by independent scholars; the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency located in Vienna has paid particular attention to xenophobic attitudes and hate crimes. An EU-MIDIS survey conducted in 2009 provided additional light on Islamophobia by focusing on the responses of self-identifying Muslims. For 89 per cent of them, religion played a very or fairly important role in their lives (FRA 2009). One in three Muslim respondents interviewed in the 14 EU states where Muslim minorities were surveyed claimed to have experienced discrimination over the past twelve months. Muslims between 16 and 24 years of age reported a higher degree of discrimination while, somewhat unexpectedly, Muslims wearing traditional or religious clothing reported no more discrimination than the general sample. Having EU citizenship or residing in an EU state for a longer period of time was positively associated with lower levels of felt discrimination.

Categories of race and religion were not consistently treated as distinguishable in this research. One in ten Muslims surveyed claimed to have been the victim of a personal 'racially motivated' crime

(assault, serious harassment) at least once in the past year. Of these respondents, 72 per cent attributed the crime to a member of the majority population. One in four Muslims had been stopped by the police the preceding year; 40 per cent believed this was attributable to their minority or immigrant status. There was, therefore, 'a growing perception among Muslim leaders and communities across Europe that they are being stopped, questioned, and searched not on the basis of evidence and reasonable suspicion but on the basis of "looking Muslim"' (IIHR 2004, p. 53; see also OSJI 2009). Perpetrator profiling seemed to play a large part in the general pattern of discrimination.

Discrimination against Muslim minorities was also examined in terms of respondents' ethnic origin and their European country of residence. Of all possible combinations, Muslims from both North and sub-Saharan Africa living in Malta complained most (64 per cent) about discrimination. This result may be misleading given the small sample size for Malta. When we select by large sample numbers, then Muslims of North African origin residing in Italy experienced the highest levels of discrimination – and repeat discrimination – in almost every area identified; these were: (1) when looking for work; (2) at work; (3) when looking for a house or an apartment to rent or buy; (4) by health care personnel; (5) by social service personnel; (6) by school personnel; (7) at a café, restaurant or bar; (8) when entering or in a shop; and (9) when trying to open a bank account or get a loan. North African Muslims living in Spain and Belgium also experienced higher-than-average discrimination.

By contrast, only 26 per cent of this cohort living in France reported experiencing discrimination. Its sub-Saharan co-religionists polled a near-identical percentage (25 per cent). Discrimination reportedly experienced by Muslim groups of different ethnic origins was also uniform – if at higher levels – in the Netherlands and Denmark. In these countries, then, being Muslim regardless of one's racial or ethnic background was subjectively viewed as the basis for being discriminated against. It supports Roy's understanding of Islamophobia as directed against a religion, and it questions the supposedly racializing undercurrent to Islamophobia.

The study of xenophobia, racism and anti-Muslim attitudes has generated the most amount of scholarship in France. We recall that within the EU27 secular France had the highest reported level of experienced discrimination on the basis of religion or belief system. Survey results indicate that *racist* attitudes in the country are also significant. A 2008 national survey found that 46 per cent of respondents acknowledged that North Africans and Muslims were victims of racism, compared to 27 per cent for immigrants in general and 26 per cent for Africans/blacks (CNCDH 2008, p. 296). These

proportions had held steady since a 2002 survey, although Africans/ blacks were now identified more frequently as victims.

This 2008 report noted that actual incidents of racist and xenophobic violence had declined from their peak in 2004. It blamed extremist right-wing movements for 42 per cent of all racist violence (CNCDH 2008). Residents of Maghrebi origin were the primary targets of racist *violence* – 68 per cent of the total – as well as of racist *threats* (60 per cent). About one-third of violence and threats against Maghrebis had a specifically Islamophobic character: Muslim mosques, memorials and believers were the targets (CNCDH 2008, pp. 35–8). The 2010 annual report confirmed that Maghrebis remained the main victims of racism, with the greater Paris region being the most hostile to them. The zeitgeist had become more alarmist in France as well: 84 per cent of respondents in the national poll identified racism as an expanding phenomenon; the increased number of racist acts compared to previous years confirmed this trend (Racisme 2010).

In its 2011 study (the twentieth such annual report), the CNDCH discovered an increase in most indicators of anti-immigrant and racist attitudes. Containing data for 2010, it underlined the fact that 56 per cent of respondents agreed that there were too many immigrants in France – a nine per cent increase on the previous year. Fifty-nine per cent believed that integration of foreigners was functioning very badly. While fewer violent incidents involving racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism were recorded in 2010, the report's explanation that most French citizens rejected violence but not necessarily racist attitudes seemed contrived (Racisme 2011). At best, non-violent racialization was becoming the method of choice in France to express antipathy to 'foreigners'.

We can consider other attitudinal data from France pointing to a distinctive Islamophobic orientation. While 82 per cent agreed that the insult 'dirty black' should be condemned by the courts, the proportion fell steadily for 'dirty Jew' (78 per cent), and 'dirty Arab' (69 per cent). Moreover, while 90 per cent considered refusing to give a job to a qualified black as a serious matter, the number declined to 83 per cent for someone of Maghrebi origin. In addition, 67 per cent said 'it was a serious matter' to oppose a son or daughter's marriage to a black compared to just 58 per cent for someone of Maghrebi background (CNCDH 2008, pp. 316–21).

Islam's status remained low in the religious hierarchy of French respondents. It evoked something positive in only 28 per cent of the national sample, compared to 38 per cent for Protestantism, 39 per cent for Judaism, 50 per cent for Catholicism and 71 per cent for *laïcité*. Less than half of respondents asserted that Muslims form a community apart; nevertheless the figure was twice as high as for

blacks. Maghrebis were thought to form a community apart by 43 per cent of the sample (CNCDH 2008, pp. 302–3). Only 69 per cent agreed that French Muslims are French like everyone else, indicating a failing in the republican model of assimilation (CNCDH 2008, p. 311).

The pathology of racial discrimination in France inclined Ariane Chebel d'Appolonia to inquire whether the republican model of assimilation of migrants is still appropriate given an increasingly diverse society. For example: 'Does the denial of the *category* of "race" undermine the fight against racism?' (Chebel d'Appolonia 2009, p. 268). She pointed out the anachronistic origins of the model, originally developed to deal with the integration of *French nationals* – Bretons, Occitanes, Corsicans – not immigrants. In practice, under the Third Republic it was intended to turn those who were perceived of as peasants – not foreigners – into Frenchmen. But a counter-argument to the shortcomings of the republican model has been that its multiculturalist rival has fared worse. In 2010 and 2011 it was denounced by some of Europe's most prominent leaders: Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron. But it was in France where attacks on diversity itself, not just the multicultural model, became central to electoral politics, as in the 2012 presidential campaign.

Demographic statistics in Europe are inexact, but if it is estimated that France has over three million people of Maghrebi origin, about four million Turks are thought to live in Germany. Attitudinal data from this country can provide a counterpoint to the French case. The German General National Survey (ALLBUS) measuring xenophobic attitudes over the years has regularly asked respondents to identify how markedly the lifestyles of certain groups living in Germany differ from the German one. In 2006 nearly half claimed that Turks somewhat or very much differed; only asylum seekers ranked more non-German in lifestyles. Regarding marriage of an ethnic German with a member of one of these groups, asylum seekers and Turks were neck-and-neck in terms of how unpleasant for a German respondent the prospect of such a marriage was. In turn, German respondents were evenly divided over whether Turks should have all of the same rights as Germans: 29 per cent agreed; 30 per cent disagreed (ALLBUS 2006, pp. 120–4, 128–31).

Since 1994, a sharp increase was noted in the proportion of ALLBUS respondents demanding assimilation from foreigners (just over 50 per cent). This finding was consistent with two other attitudinal trends: that the issue of adapting to the German way of life was now considered very important, and that a Christian denomination was recognized more frequently as a criterion for granting German citizenship (though it remained behind other criteria such as residency in the country, German language proficiency and a

law-abiding record). Significantly, little change was noted between 1992 and 2006 in the proportion of respondents supporting Islamic instruction in schools – around one-third for, another one-third against all religious instruction, and the final one-third in favour of Christian-only instruction (Wasmer 2011).

These survey results reveal a mixture of German circumspection about foreigners and occasional antipathy towards them. Turks and Muslims generally are evaluated in the harsher ways that asylum seekers are – not how patriated Germans, East Europeans or Italians (a proxy for west Europeans) are. In these respects Germans are not exceptional or distinctive in their discriminatory attitudes, in a way that France may be.

Conclusion

Religion, race, ethnicity and culture all constitute variables explaining Islamophobia, but how significant each is in explaining variation in it is impossible to measure, as survey findings we have reported indicate. Racialization as a category fusing these variables can serve as an explanatory device for the pervasiveness of anti-Muslim attitudes. It allows this group to be classified as not just 'Other' but 'inherently dangerous and inferior' (Bleich 2006, p. 17). Racialization, race and differential racism have all become more endemic to Islamophobic stigmatizing of Muslims today than was the case in the past. The character of debates about national identity, migration and multi-culturalism focuses on primordial, civilizational and racial differences more than on civic identity, which had punctuated public discourse before the 2001 terrorist shock.

At the same time, to classify Islamophobes as racists makes for bad politics, if truthful scholarship. It credits perpetrators with a chiliastic, if repugnant, vision and transforms their shallow stereotypes of Muslims as racially different into deep structures. It has the unintended effect of racializing political ideas and movements. The Manichean world view of Islamophobes should not be reproduced by their opponents.

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