Chapter 2

Islamophobia qua racial discrimination

Muslimophobia

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Introduction

Muslims have been present in Europe since the emergence of Islam itself, in the seventh century CE. There were three main waves of Islam into Europe, starting with the Moorish civilization in Iberia, followed by Muslim Tatars in the northern Slav regions, and then the Ottomans, who moved into the heart of the old continent until the beginning of the twentieth century. Europeans and Muslims also encountered each other as a result of the Crusades and European colonization efforts. Muslim immigrants of the twentieth century represent the fourth Muslim tide into Europe.

In the post-World War II era, Muslims came to Europe mainly as migrants from former colonies and guest workers from less developed countries. In the following decades many more Muslims entered Europe as refugees as a consequence of international wars, civil wars or civil unrest in their homelands. The expanding population of migrants, workers and asylum seekers emerged as a political and social problem in Europe, reinforcing already growing anti-Muslim sentiments. These newcomers were either perceived as temporary visitors or they were avoided; they were hardly ever accepted as a permanent feature of European societies. They were also confined to the margins of society and the ghettos of cities where they had limited contact with the majority.

Europeans started to discover Muslims through events that had an international impact, such as the Iranian Revolution, the Salman Rushdie affair in the United Kingdom, the headscarf affair in France, the 9/11 attacks, subsequent terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, the Danish cartoons crisis, and so forth. Through these developments the passive image of Muslims transformed into one that was aggressive.

This chapter explores the problematic relationship between Muslim minorities and national majorities in Europe through the concepts of Islamophobia and Muslimophobia. Perceptions by host societies of Muslim immigrants, which have not been free of fears and prejudices, have played a significant role in this problematic interaction. In this chapter, I aim to explain the main driving force behind the anti-Muslim sentiments by distinguishing between the concepts of Islamophobia and Muslimophobia. I begin by making a clarification in terminology. In the

second part of the chapter I elaborate on the concept of Islamophobia as religious discrimination and question the role of secularism and religiosity in the reaction against Muslims. The final part of the chapter focuses on the concept of Muslimophobia so as to emphasize the societal dimension of the fear. After all, national majorities have an aversion to those Muslims who have not been able socially and culturally to integrate in the host societies. It is also a fact that the limited contact between Muslim minorities and Europeans resulted in a relationship dominated by ignorance and avoidance. I focus on the significance of Muslims' different identity markers and unfamiliar traditions in boosting anti-Muslim sentiments.

A question of terminology

Because the relationship between Islam and the West has been historically one of confrontation and conflict, it remains to be shaped by mutual hostility, stereotyping, and ignorance. According to the British historian Norman Daniel, little has changed since the eleventh century: "The earliest Christian reactions to Islam were something like those of much more recent date. The tradition has been continuous and alive" (Daniel 1980: 1). The term Islamophobia was coined to define this age-old, though growing, hostility against Islam and Muslims. Although it was first used by the Orientalist Etienne Dinet in 1922, the term became much more prevalent in the 1990s, especially after its use in the much cited report "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All" by a British NGO, the Runnymede Trust (Cesari 2006: 5). Islamophobia could simply be defined as a "modern epidemic of an age-old prejudice towards and fear of Islam" (Sheridan and Gillett 2005: 192). However, there is no consensus on the scope and content of the term and its relationship with concepts such as racism, xenophobia, anti-Islamism, and anti-Muslimism.

Islamophobia might represent the age-old prejudice toward Islam; yet it would be an oversimplification to explain the contemporary hostility toward Muslims entirely through a conflict that dates back to the eleventh century. The Tatar Muslims' invasion of parts of Europe in the thirteenth century does not mean much for Europeans today. Even the much-debated Turkish domination of centuries does not help elucidate contemporary issues. The prejudice toward Islam might be embedded in the collective psyche of some European societies; but the present-day anti-Muslim sentiments are much more contingent. The clash between the West and Islam today is not the product of eternal religious factors; rather, it is fuelled and shaped by a myriad of contemporary issues, though voiced through a religious discourse. Issues of exclusion, segregation, prejudice, xenophobic violence, failed integration, and discrimination are not based on religious issues per se. The problematic situation Muslims face with regard to religious education, dietary laws, clothing, and observance of religious ceremonies seems to be related to their religion, but they are, in reality, social issues that end up having implications in a secular system. In other words, the clash is not between civilizations as Huntington had claimed, but more between lifestyles. The aim should be to figure out the real and material causes at the root of the conflict.

In fact, Europeans are not afraid of Islam as a faith. Their fears do not stem from any discussion based on the Qur'an, Sunna (words and living example of Prophet Muhammad), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), or Sharia (law derived from revelation and the example of the Prophet). The conflict is not over the accommodation of Sharia law in their respective national constitutions. For instance, the controversial issue of the status of women in Islam is less related to Islamic law than to cultural traditions. The vast majority of Europeans could not possibly know that the much-pronounced Sharia law is a modern creation and hence varies with different interpretations based on different readings of the Qur'an. Since there is no threat or pressure on the Europeans to be converted to Islam, the discussions do not question the prophethood of Muhammad, or the revelation of the Qur'an.

The phobia in European societies emanates in part from a fear of rising fundamentalist political movements in the Islamic world. The fundamentalists, in return, justify their actions by invoking Islam. Yet in reality the basis of their actions is not an eternal Islamic code. The driving force is rather the reality of their underprivileged societies at home or marginalized communities in Europe, be it socioeconomic inequality, repression by the political structure, post-colonial issues, racial/religious discrimination, or international conflict.

Islam might be disagreeable in a secular Europe where people do not have sympathy for those who openly assert their faith in the public sphere. However, anti-Muslim sentiments are rarely expressed through a purely religious dimension and Islam is hardly ever the only force at work. It would be misleading to identify Islam as the cause of the phobia and therefore the term "Islamophobia" alone would be insufficient since it assumes the dominance of religious discrimination over other forms of discrimination that may in many cases be more relevant. The fear emanates less from a resurgence of theological conflicts than from a secular and modern form of anti-Muslim sentiment.

While acknowledging the risk of concept-redundancy, the term "Muslimophobia" is needed as a way to emphasize the societal dimension of the fear accompanying Islamophobia, which the latter attributes to part of a trans-historical clash between Islam and Christianity. Islamophobia resembles anti-Judaism while Muslimophobia resembles anti-Semitism (Modood and Werbner 1997: 4). Even though there is fluidity between the two concepts, Muslimophobia is distinct from Islamophobia in the sense that the former targets Muslims as citizens or residents of European countries rather than Islam as a religion. In mainstream politics and media it is not Islam but the Muslims who are in the spotlight. The fear in Europe, in fact, emerges as a group prejudice against Muslims, or even those who are perceived as Muslims as in the case of attacks against Sikhs and Syrian Orthodox Bishops following the 9/11 attacks (Allen and Nielsen 2002). Muslimophobia is a sort of "new racism" which targets cultures, lifestyles and physical appearances of Muslims. It is a phenomenon to be located and researched in the streets of major European cities with large immigrant populations. The subsequent chapters of this book scrutinize the challenges Muslim communities face in a selection of European countries.

Studies confirm the view that in a secularized Europe religious elements do not play a prominent role in anti-Muslim sentiments. According to Richardson's study

on the representations of Islam in the British press, none of the main themes were directly related to Islam as a faith (Richardson 2004: 69-93).[1] Field's analysis on opinion polls shows that anti-Muslim prejudice in Britain emanates from integration issues rather than any religious concern per se (Field 2007). Strabac and Listhaug report that both in West and East European countries the individual and contextual mechanisms and sources of anti-Muslim prejudice are similar to those of anti-immigrant prejudice in general and thus religious factors are not at play (Strabac and Listhaug 2008).[2]

The term Muslimophobia focuses on the real, material, and contingent causes of the reaction against Muslims; it explores to what extent the prejudice emanates from socioeconomic issues, power relations, political issues, international conflicts, etc. Yet it does not leave out the historical legacies that keep on shaping prejudices against Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting. The "Muslim-" prefix stands for those contemporary reactions against Muslims, while the "-phobia" suffix takes account of the imagined, non-historical, essentialist, and irrational fears against Muslim populations.

The "-phobia" suffix of the term has created controversy among scholars (Halliday 1999; Cesari 2006; Mausen 2006) Instead of Islamophobia, Halliday prefers anti-Muslimism, while Maussen suggests anti-Muslim sentiments. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, phobia is "an exaggerated, usually inexplicable and illogical fear of a particular object, class of objects, or situation." Islamophobia or Muslimophobia are part of an unconscious and irrational fear resulting from the presence of Islam/Muslims. They are irrational because the fear is an exaggeration of the real threat. From a psychiatric point of view, phobias are individual pathologies. Islamophobia and Muslimophobia are, however, coined as sociological terms similar to xenophobia and homophobia.

One of the most pronounced objections against such a concept is that it hampers democratic debate by creating a criticism-free zone for Islam and Muslims. Anyone criticizing the principles of Islam and acts of Muslims would be accused of being a Muslim/Islamophobe. It is essential to distinguish between academic discussions of Muslims and Islam, as opposed to discriminatory statements, prejudicial beliefs, and forms of hate speech. A point of view cannot be accused of being Muslim/ Islamophobic just because it criticizes Islam or Muslims. However, even though freedom of expression in Europe is theoretically absolute, it is so only until it is shaped by its context. Every European democracy has legislation on incitement to racial/religious hatred, defamation, and blasphemy that limits the possibilities for exercising that right. Otherwise, under conditions of free speech, people have the right to criticize Islam and Muslims. The terms Islamophobia and Muslimophobia do not target legitimate criticisms such as the denouncement of human rights violations in certain Islamic countries. They are used to cover any ungrounded fear and prejudice against Muslims, their faith, and practices.

According to Maussen, since the term derives from a fear or phobia, it treats those who have Muslim/Islamophobic discourses and ideas as victims of a "mental illness" (a phobia) who should "either be cured of their 'illusions' and 'prejudices', or ... should be punished for maintaining discourses which have already been

'unmasked' as false and demeaning" (Maussen 2006: 102). However, provided that we define Muslimophobia and Islamophobia as irrational fears, and as long as prejudice emanates from fear and perceptions of threat, the negative sentiment against Muslims which contains prejudice and anxiety should qualify as a phobia. The British police officer who says "he would certainly kill an innocent Asian if he was sure he would not be found out" portrays the symptoms of a pathological mind (Modood 2005: 13).[3] The officer's hatred derives from a fear, be it a fear that the "Pakis" (a derogatory term used to refer to Pakistanis) are spoiling the purity of English culture or a fear that they would take over the country. Islamophobia or Muslimophobia might not be phobias proven by psychological research or recognized by psychiatrists; nevertheless they are useful metaphors to denote the gravity of the situation.

Islamophobia qua religious discrimination

Secularization theories suggest that the complicated interaction of modernization, urbanization, industrialization, and rationalization processes has weakened the influence of religious institutions, resulting in a decline of religious values and practices in societies. Unsurprisingly, secularization started first in the most advanced industrial countries.[4] European societies experienced a decline in religious values, practices, and beliefs in the second half of the twentieth century. The steady decline in religious participation and belief in Western Europe since the 1960s is documented in the declining levels of church attendance and church membership (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 86).[5]

On the other hand, the decline in religious participation across the whole continent does not necessarily mean that Europeans have abandoned their religious beliefs completely. According to Davie, Europeans are in fact "believing without belonging" (Davie 2000: 3). As churches lose their importance, people who are in search of the meaning of life, practice their religion through an individualized spirituality in the private sphere. There might be a decline in the adherence to religious institutions but new beliefs such as the New Age spirituality are emerging in Europe. Secularization in essence stands for the differentiation between religious and secular institutions, and the declining impact of religious institutions at the societal level. Psychological secularization, which implies the differentiation of these two realms at the mental level, is as important. "Compartmentalization can be thought of as the psychological parallel to macro-level differentiation between religion and the secular" (Halman and Pettersson 2006: 34). In other words, as people differentiate their religious orientations from views on social issues, religion becomes more and more a private matter.

Meanwhile, religiosity remains the main identity marker among Muslim immigrants in a somehow secularized Europe. According to Norris and Inglehart's "existential security axiom," one of the sources of religiosity is the need for a sense of security and certainty. People who feel at risk for themselves, their families, and societies, search for religious assurance and become more religious than those who live in a safe and secure environment (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 13). Those who

are not covered by the social security net, as well as minorities and the elderly, tend to retain their religiosity. This is a significant point in explaining the high level of religiosity among Muslim immigrants in a secularized Europe. Muslim immigrants are far worse off than any other group, particularly in employment, education, and housing opportunities. Unemployment rates among Muslims are almost twice as high as those of non-Muslims. Among all other religious groups, Muslims are the poorest. Since first-generation immigrants came to Europe primarily for economic reasons, their concern was to find a job and survive. Under such socioeconomic conditions it is inevitable that Muslims would search for religious assurance.[6]

Against such a background, the nature of opposition that Muslims face during their search for public space in European countries appears as "an uneven three-cornered contest between a secular hegemony; a Christianity which, albeit in a diluted way, still gives to most people their understanding of divinity and moral conduct, yet is fading as an organized religion" and Islam which has been seeking accommodation in the European sociopolitical landscape for decades (Modood 1994: 72).

As a consequence of the challenges between opposing forces, Muslims face a two-sided reaction for expressing their religiosity in the public sphere: on one side, a secular-liberal opposition for seeking openly to pursue spirituality and religious practices in twenty-first-century Europe, while on the other, the antagonism of Christians over theological and philosophical principles.

For liberals, the Muslim identity of immigrants became more disturbing at a time when religion was privatized and individualized. Growing numbers of Europeans who separate their private religious views from their opinions on social issues, perceive this as a prerequisite of a democratic liberal system and expect Muslims to internalize this type of compartmentalization. Besides, secularism in Europe is not only a lifestyle but also a political matter. Religion has been perceived as a problematic topic for its alleged compatibility problems with modern and liberal values and institutions. After all, for centuries Europe suffered much from religious clashes and eventually surpassed them by clarifying the boundaries between public and private spheres with regard to the practice of religion. The contemporary intrusion of Islam into the public realm would be the dissolution of the political system. Demands of Muslims on a variety of topics such as places for worship, properly slaughtered (halal) meat, Islamic instruction in state schools, the wearing of a headscarf, religious holidays, etc., challenge the system. Therefore, Muslims should not ask for privileges for representation and resources. Religion in general and Islam in particular "should be kept at home, in the private sphere" (Toynbee 2001).

Nevertheless, a value-free secularism does not exist in any of the European countries, including France where the Republic is called the Enlightenment Church. European societies, though secular to varying degrees, still hold deeply embedded religious elements which have an enduring effect on contemporary cultural values. The entire cultural heritage of a country, including its religious traditions, is reflected in the value orientation and institutions of that society. Cultural change on a wide array of value orientations, including family, marriage, gender relations, tolerance for differences, and professional life, is path-dependent. In any society

the dominant religious traditions are transmitted to the next generations through forms of cultural socialization such as mass media and the education system, even for those who are devout secularists or who belong to minority religions. Even in Protestant countries where religiosity is at very low levels, the embedded religious elements have an enduring effect on the worldviews and cultural values. The much-cited words of an Estonian who explains the difference between the worldviews of Estonians and Russians through society's religious background reveals this fact remarkably: "We are all atheists; but I am a Lutheran atheist, and they are Orthodox atheists" (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 17). Accordingly, the Christian values embedded in the identity of European societies enjoy default recognition. Even though many secular/liberal Europeans may not be aware of this Christian heritage—which some take for granted in their daily routine—Europe's Christian legacy has its mark on the continent's values, institutions, practices, public discourse, and even public holidays. Many European countries have established Catholic and Protestant Churches. Furthermore, in the post-World War II era, Jews were incorporated as fellow citizens and the Christian civilization transformed into Judeo-Christian civilization. Jewish religious institutions and values became a part of the existing framework and discourse. Many European states granted privileges to Christianity and Judaism in a number of ways, from public funding of schools to varying degrees of tax exemption. Yet they have been reluctant to accommodate Islam with similar institutional arrangements. As a result, the boundary remains quite stable against Islam, something which becomes clearer in times of confrontation.

The permanence of Judeo-Christian discourse, values, and institutions verifies that a strict ideological secularism does not exist in Europe. As Parekh points out, "contrary to what liberals imagine, [European] public life does not and cannot rest on a uniform view of public reason" (Parekh 2006: 189). Berger goes further by questioning the secularization process: "Modernity is not necessarily secularizing; it is necessarily *pluralizing"* (Berger 2008: 23). Indeed, what we see in Europe is, rather, a pluralism that is able to accommodate different worldviews and values including those of secular/liberal, Judeo-Christian, other faith and non-faith communities at the same time. This is promising since it is a reminder that Europe has the cultural background and social mechanisms essential to extend recognition and accommodation to Muslims unless they bring unreasonable demands to this already established secularized Christian system.

Coming to the other corner of the contest, the clash between two divine religions (Christian and Muslim) has been a very controversial issue. The objective here should be to identify the anti-Muslim prejudice of devout Christians as stemming from faith-related issues. Grand narratives entangled with historical myths and theological fantasies have, for a very long time, watered down reasonable discourse on this issue. Narratives such as "Crusades," "Jihad," "Clash of Civilizations," "Islam vs. West", do not explain the divergence between the doctrines of the two faiths and the consequent implications of this divergence. They are, rather, the fabrication of a juxtaposed Islam and West through a timeless antagonism. Moreover, such rhetoric cannot justify the underlying reasons for anti-Muslim prejudice on the part of Christians in contemporary Europe.

Earlier reactions of Christians toward Islam based on biblical exegesis contained disputes over Muhammad's claim for prophecy and the nature of the revelation, condemnation of Islam's denial of the Trinity, and criticism of the Islamic understanding of Heaven, among other things. Yet until the twelfth century, the European Latin Christendom was almost entirely ignorant about the Islamic doctrine. Theologians classify 24 different misconceptions about Islam (Southern 1962: 14). After the first series of contacts between the two religions, the ignorance had transformed into an imaginative creativity based on myths about Islam. As a result of deformation of religious notions, a "religious mythical view of Islam" emerged almost entirely in contrast with Islamic teaching (Waardenburg 1998: 12). Western images of Islam contained imaginative fabrications "such as the legend that Muhammad trained a dove to peck grain from his ear while pretending to receive revelations from it" (Zebir 2000: 25). Muhammad was depicted as a "liar," "impostor", and even a "magician," Muslims as "heretics," and Islam as a "Christian heresy." Needless to say, the anti-Islam discourse has had a political-ideological backdrop which served for the creation of a conservative European/ Christian identity against the Muslim "other." Christendom and Islam were two distinct religious systems, but more importantly they represented two different societies that were each, in turn, viewed as the "other." With its expanding military power, Islamic faith was the strongest oppositional force for Europeans. In short, Muslims were "heretics" but not purely for theological reasons.

On the other hand, Christianity, which was born out of Judaism as a separate faith, had doctrinal conflicts with the latter. "The Parting of the Ways" became an antagonism with time—an antagonism based on religious notions. From its very beginning Christian doctrine discriminated against Jews on the grounds of purely religious matters such as the Jewish calumny of Mary and Christ. Christianity determined the social inferiority of Jews for being collectively responsible for deicide, the killing of Jesus. This perception remained as part of the official doctrine of the Catholic Church until the Vatican absolved the Jews of deicide in 1965. If today we speak about a dominant Judeo-Christian culture in Europe, with Jewish religious institutions and values spread all over the continent, then we can claim that religious prejudice is no longer a strong social force, although anti-Semitism qua racial discrimination might still be alive. And if the "scapegoats" of Christianity, from pre-Christian to Constantinian Christian age and from the Middle Ages to twentieth-century Europe, can find more than an accommodation and recognition in a secular Europe, there should be prospects for Muslim "heretics" as ignorance for their religion dissolves through increasing dialogue.

Meanwhile, following the Second Vatican Council which abandoned the Catholic Church's traditional exclusivist stance against other religions, interfaith dialogue between Islam and Christianity has flourished. Various Christian and Protestant Churches in Europe have participated in this dialogue. Even though it took slightly longer to change the perceptions of lay Christians, the tension between Islam and Christianity as two faiths has relaxed.

Yet it is a common belief that Christians, by definition, are more prejudiced toward Muslims than seculars are. Unfolding the relationship between religiosity

and prejudice, Allport and Kramer back in 1946 concluded that "there is something about religion that makes for prejudice and something that unmakes prejudice" (Scheepers, *et al.* 2002: 242). In other words, the relationship between religious commitment and prejudice is controversial and not necessarily positively associated. For instance, researchers found that Christians who are frequent church-goers tend to be less prejudiced than infrequent to moderately frequent attendees (Scheepers, *et al.* 2002: 244). A survey on ethnic minorities in Britain found that "people who said religion was important to them were much less likely to say that they were prejudiced against ethnic minorities and Muslims" (Modood, *et al.* 1997: 134). Fetzer and Soper's study on the public support for state accommodation of Muslims' religious practices in France, Germany, and Britain suggests that the religious and political divide is not between Christianity and Islam but rather between "culturally conservative" religionists, and "culturally liberal" secularists (Fetzer and Soper 2003: 250) .[7] In addition to not holding prejudices toward Muslims, religiously active Christians support government policies for the accommodation of Muslims. In a twenty-first-century Europe, moderate Christians do not blame the Muslim immigrants for being "heretics"; apparently there are many contemporary issues at play, hi short, the challenge that Muslims face during their search for public space in a secularized Europe is dominated less by a clash between two religions than a secular opposition that acts with a reflex of protecting the very basis of the liberal and secular system from an unfamiliar faith that is perceived to be growing in assertiveness and visibility, and demanding recognition and accommodation in the European public sphere.

Islamophobia qua racial discrimination: Muslimophobia

After World War II and with the discrediting of race as a scientific category, the classical definition of racism based on somatic and biological differences lost its validity and the concept of "new racism" emerged in academic and political discourses (Barker 1981; Gilroy 1987). Accordingly, there has been a shift from more traditional markers of race to newer markers of cultures that are recognized as different, incompatible, and inassimilable. The otherness of "the other" is attributed to different norms, standards, customs, values, ethics, upbringing, and forms of socialization.

New racism assumes that religion is not just a private matter but it is rather about belonging by birth to a community. Even though religion is not an innate characteristic like race or sex but something acquired during an individual's lifetime, it came to be perceived by many as an identity gained at birth. Since identity, to a great extent, is about perceptions, the view of the dominant group is determinant and thus one cannot simply disengage from one's faith group by renouncing the religion. That is why, regardless of their private contemplation, people are crudely classified as Hindus or Muslims in India, and Protestants or Catholics in Ireland. Hence, a Muslim in Europe who is not practicing the religion still might be targeted as a Muslim because of that person's alleged connection to the community. This leads to the issue of the racialization of religion.

Religion and cultural traits can be the basis of racialization in the case that a common descent is believed to exist for members of a cultural group. The racial difference is perceived to emerge in religion, tradition, or lifestyle, instead of nature or biology. Modern anti-Semitism is an apparent example of cultural racism. "Jewishness" does not represent a biological category as race, yet through the course of history Jews have been racialized. In the modern era, Jews were excluded and discriminated against, not on the grounds of religious matters but rather because they were perceived as aliens threatening the national identity of European societies with their transnational religious identity. Even those who had converted to Christianity were not fully accepted by Christians since their Jewish identity was perceived as an ethnic/racial identity. Another example would be the massacre of Bosnian Muslims by people who shared the same language and culture. The latter slaughtered innocent Muslims because of their racialized identity that represented an ethnic "other."

Muslims in twenty-first-century Europe are facing a similar racialization. The concept of Muslimophobia is very similar to anti-Semitism in the sense that both stand for prejudice and discrimination against an outside group defined in a combination of religious and ethnic terms.[8] Muslims came to represent an ethno-racial group as a result of being essentialized as a monolithic identity. The belief that they belonged to the transnational, multi-ethnic community *ummah* transformed Muslims into a racial group. Muslims are perceived as an "imagined community" who believe they share a common legacy and future around common values. Brown suggests that "the idea of the *ummah* and that of the nation are remarkably similar" (Brown 2000: 79). As the perceived incompatibility between Europeans and Muslims dominates public discourse, and hostilities against the latter are on the rise, the racialization of Muslims becomes reinforced. Racism, after all, is a social construction based on the subjective perceptions of host society members that may emerge without an objective reality of a different race.

This new form of cultural racism does not emphasize the differences as explicitly as the blatant prejudices of old racism.[9] As Allen puts it, it is more about "the inferences and attitudes of everyday life rather than high-profile and widely publicized violent attacks and infringements" (Allen 2006: 96). It contains a disguised and covert version of old-fashioned prejudice. This subtle prejudice is widespread, particularly among the young, well-educated, and liberal groups who perceive Muslims as a threat to the values and norms of their society but do not express it explicitly because anti-blatancy is an established norm among those groups (Meertens and Pettigrew 1997: 55). For instance, Karakasoglu, *et al.* found out that German media does not present any open racism but latent racism appears in a myriad of ways. Muslim families are frequently reported in the press "in a negative context, like an example of failed integration, a criminal deed committed by a migrant or a migrant group, school failures of migrant students etc." (Karakasoglu, *et al.* 2006: 156). In the Netherlands, one of the countries where multiculturalism has deep roots, blatant prejudice is not socially acceptable, whereas subtle prejudice happens under cover. The shift in the manifestation of prejudice is accompanied with the change in the group it targets. Pettigrew's studies show that the Dutch

have more prejudice against Turks than Surinamers, and the French have more prejudice against North Africans than Asians (Pettigrew 1998: 84). These examples indicate how prejudice is shaped increasingly by cultural rather than racial traits. Even though the racially divergent traits of Surinamers and Asians are supposed to be more pronounced, the Muslim identity of Turks and North Africans provokes a larger amount of prejudice against them. As the non-white minority groups such as African-Caribbeans and Asians become increasingly culturally assimilated in the host societies, the biological-racial discrimination they face is being transferred in the form of cultural racism to other groups such as Arabs, Turks, and non-white Muslims who are perceived to be culturally different (Modood 2005: 38).

Nevertheless, it is still a rather controversial issue whether anti-Muslim sentiments in the contemporary European context represent racial discrimination and whether Muslimophobia qualifies as racism. Wieviorka defines racism through opinions and attitudes embodied in prejudices; and behaviors and practices of discrimination, segregation, and violence (Wieviorka 1995: 37). The manifestation of these attitudes and behaviors appears in a number of studies and reports. To cite a few: in one of its General Policy Recommendations, the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reported that Muslim communities are subject to prejudice, which "may manifest itself in different guises, in particular through negative general attitudes but also to varying degrees, through discriminatory acts and through violence and harassment" (ECRI 2000). The European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia's report *Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia* provides examples of residential and educational segregation all over the continent (EMCRX 2006). The report concludes that Muslims "experience various levels of discrimination and marginalization in employment, education and housing ... In addition, they are vulnerable to manifestations of prejudice and hatred in the form of anything from verbal threats through to physical attacks on people and property." The much-cited report of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997) provides evidence of prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and violence that Muslims have been facing across European societies. There is more than enough evidence indicating that anti-Muslim sentiments do represent more than a legitimate anxiety against the intrusion of an alien culture. In short, Muslimophobia qualifies as racism with all the characteristics of prejudice, discrimination, segregation, and violence contained in older racism, and with the structural and institutional mechanisms which reproduce that hostility.

As a form of differentialist racism, cultural racism rests on the assumption that the differences between cultures are irreconcilable and the culture of the racialized group is perceived as a threat to the host society. Muslimophobia emerges as a sort of new racism which targets Muslims based on their identity markers like culture, lifestyle, and values. One might question and criticize the principles of Islamic doctrine, let alone Islamic ideology. Islam can also become subject to satire and mockery in a liberal democracy. Yet, even though Islam as a religion or as an ideology may be criticized, the "new racism" emerging in European societies primarily targets Muslims and not their faith. Wieviorka clarifies the nature of this new racism:

> To dislike Islam to the point of violence, for example, is racist, if Muslims themselves are constructed as a natural category, and their behaviour, real or imagined, is presented as informed in some way or another by an essence, by innate attributions or an almost genetic cultural heritage. (Wieviorka 1997: 142)

Muslims are victims of racism just because of their appearance, values, norms, and lifestyle, just as the black people in America were discriminated against because of the color of their skin. This new form of racism may be connected to religion, but to the extent that Muslims are conceived as part of an immutable category based on ethnicity and birth, it is predominantly racial.

In fact, the problem with Muslims has not been their religious character so much as their unfamiliarity to Europeans. Human history has a long record of exaggerated fear over things that are incomprehensible, unknown, or unfamiliar. Strangers provoke fear as they are perceived to have habits and values alien to the dominant group and are therefore avoided, alienated, and segregated as much as possible. Contemporary European perceptions of Muslims, who have been viewed as aliens for decades, have followed a similar psychological and social route. The "other" culture is a menace that cannot exist within the society and should thus exist outside it. Segregated Muslims receive little recognition from the host societies, which is attributable to the unfamiliarity, ignorance, and insensitivity of Europeans for Muslims' concerns. This ignorance and unfamiliarity fueled a kind of hostility, a sort of racism resting on the assumption that Muslims with unfamiliar traditions and alien values do not belong to contemporary Europe. Sivanandan calls this racism, "xenoracism"; it is a type of racism "which cannot tell a settler from an immigrant, an immigrant from an asylum seeker, an asylum seeker from a Muslim, a Muslim from a terrorist" (Sivanandan 2006: 2).

Studies indicate that negative or positive views are strongly associated with the amount of knowledge of Muslims and of direct contact with them. According to contact theory, contact reduces prejudice against foreigners by enhancing knowledge, reducing anxiety and increasing empathy (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008: 922). Surveys conducted in European countries indicate that prolonged and personal contact reduced prejudice against foreigners (Myers 2005: 541). German attitudes toward Turks, Dutch attitudes toward Surinamers and Turks, French attitudes toward North Africans and Asians, and British attitudes toward West Indians and Asians improved as a result of personal contact.[10]

Interestingly, many Europeans are, more often than not, unaware of the biased nature of their attitudes and beliefs. For instance, during the Salman Rushdie affair, Muslims who found the concerned book offensive, said they were as much offended by the fact that no one in Europe seemed to understand the reason why they were offended (Brown 2006: 308). A lack of familiarity and exposure to Muslims aggravates the prejudices, which eventually triggers racism. As Modood points out, "in the European context cultural racism or culturalism directed to a racialized or racially marked group may involve an antipathy to the group because it is perceived to be an alien culture rather than merely an inferior one" (Modood 2005: 11).

The core of alienation is a belief in the incompatibility of Muslims' foreign values with liberal, secular European values. The incompatibility argument focuses particularly on issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization, including polygamy, gender roles, the wearing of headscarves, circumcision, arranged marriages, and homosexuality. In Chapter 4, Daniel Faas refers to the citizenship tests in some federal states of Germany where Muslim applicants are asked controversial questions on gender equality, homosexuality, honor killings, and domestic violence which indicate stereotypical understandings of Muslims. Norris and Inglehart claim that "The central values separating Islam and the West revolve far more centrally around Eros than Demos" (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 134). In particular, the status of women in Islamic culture is a highly controversial issue. Yet again, a prejudiced perception dominates Western views on Muslim women, and this happens through a stereotyped juxtaposition of two cultures, one inherently liberal and one inherently oppressive. Kundnani gives a perfect example of how sexism is associated with Muslims, while its occurrence among white Brits in British society is overlooked:

> [F]or example, the epidemic of domestic violence which infects all sectors of British society, and includes two women every week being killed by their partners, receives less media attention than the problem of "honour killings" carried out by Muslims. It is right that the specific justifications, which Muslim men use to legitimize violence against women is exposed. But this should not be done in such a way that combating violence against Muslim women is seen as fighting against a culture, while combating violence against white women is seen as a fight for rights. (Kundnani 2007: 40)

Religion and culture per se do not explain the presence or absence of democracy, human rights, liberties, etc. Universally recognized and accepted norms and values are not under the monopoly of any culture or society. Women's rights as an extension of human rights are a universal value and thus cannot be claimed by any particular culture. Therefore the belief that the situation of Muslim women can be explained through their religion or culture ignores the structural problems Muslim women face as part of an alienated group in Europe, in everything from education to housing opportunities, from post-colonial issues to power structures. It simply justifies differences through an essentialist cultural perspective which remains from the phenomenon of what Said called "Orientalism." This Orientalist perspective fuels racism towards Muslims on the grounds that they are different, incompatible, and inassimilable because of their particular norms, standards, customs, values, ethics, and forms of socialization.

Conclusion

The natives of twenty-first-century Europe still have a hard time recognizing that Muslims are a permanent feature of European societies. For decades Muslims were perceived as guests who would someday leave the country. They were confined

to the margins of society and the ghettos of cities, with limited contact with the majority. Different country cases explored in the second and third part of this book, unveiling Muslimophobia and Islamophobia in Europe, indicate how the diversity and richness of Muslim communities have become obscured by generalizing discourses and blanket policies.

Religion had its role in the alienation and segregation of Muslims; nevertheless, the challenge Muslims face during their search for public space in Europe is dominated less by theological conflicts than by a defensive reflex on the part of secular-liberals to protect their system from a code that is unfamiliar. In other words, Islamophobia qua racial discrimination called "Muslimophobia" is much more dominant than Islamophobia qua religious discrimination. Identifying the real causes of the fear against Muslims is significant in the sense that it will help develop effective and sustainable policies.

From the outset, there is a need for more face-to-face contact, interaction, and dialogue between Muslims and host societies so as to remove prejudice, alienation, and marginalization. The contact thesis, which encourages greater interaction between different communities, has been recommended by anti-racists since the 1970s. However, European societies still lack proper contact based on firsthand experience with Muslims and non-Muslims. This should be the initial step to alleviate Muslimophobia

At present, the gradual recognition of Muslims and the institutionalization of Islam are happening along with discrimination and hostility. But Europe has the cultural background and social mechanisms which enable the accommodation of different worldviews and values. A number of policies have been designed to accommodate the demands of Muslims in the existing secularized structure of Europe. Even though policies are shaped at the national level in most of the European countries, the visibility and recognition of Muslims is de facto happening at the local level. Muslims increasingly get involved in local and community-based activities, which enhances their contact with the local community and facilitates the dialogue between Islamic leadership and municipal authorities.

Local governments of major European cities have been more adaptive than national governments in accommodating major demands of segregated Muslims. As a result of negotiations with Muslim communities, local governments find pragmatic solutions to controversial issues from the slaughter of animals to the use of the headscarf, from the erection of mosques to burial yards. *The Economist* magazine reports a number of local initiatives, defining them as the "absorptive power of local democracy" where "Muslims and non-Muslims [are] learning to rub along, through the trade-offs of local politics" (December 4th, 2008). To cite a few: in the Brussels suburb of Molenbeek, slaughterhouses have been built for the slaughter of animals during the feast of Eid al-Adha; in Leicester, Islamic burial practices are permitted; a number of French and German cities are providing lands for the erection of mosques; the city of Lyons has introduced a meatless menu to be served at primary schools taking into account Muslim students' desires for halal meat; all over Europe, Muslim representation in city councils is growing. In Chapter 5, Modood and Meer touch upon the multicultural education programs

at the local level in Britain, describing these local initiatives as "municipal drift." Nevertheless, the current level of local interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims is not sufficient for a public recognition of Muslims that is free of racism. Muslimophobia can be tackled successfully only if this limited dialogue process is backed by national multiculturalist policies that penetrate into societal perception, public discourse, and the sociopolitical landscape.

Notes

1 The themes include: military threat of Muslim countries; threat of political violence and extremism; threat to democracy posed by authoritarian Muslim political leaders and parties; and social threat of Muslim gender inequality.
2 The authors claim that their finding based on survey data from 30 European countries is the first statistically significant evidence about the increased level of anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe based on a large cross-national sample (Strabac and Listhaug 2008: 281).
3 Excerpt is from a BBC TV Documentary, *The Secret Policeman*, in which hidden cameras record a residential training course for policemen (Modood 2005: 13).
4 Norris and Inglehart explain the "American exceptionalism" to the secularization theory through the persistent socioeconomic inequalities in the United States. Even though the United States is one of the most developed countries in the world, it has high socio-economic inequalities with a relatively weak social security net failing to cover various segments of society. As a consequence, many people who experience existential insecurity feel vulnerable and end up showing high levels of religiosity (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 106).
5 World Values Survey measures religious participation by a question widely referred to in the literature: "Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?"
6 The picture is changing for the second and third generation Muslims. As the socio-economic conditions of European-born Muslims improve, they get less involved with religion. Prayer statistics indicate that the levels of secularity of West European Christians and European-born Muslims are converging. According to Malik: "In Germany only 4 per cent of the European-born Muslims and not more than 6 to 8 per cent of the beurs, French-born children of North African Muslim immigrants, pray regularly or fairly regularly" (Malik 2001: 103). Yet, this trend does not change the fact that the visibility and assertiveness of those Muslims who are practicing their faith is rising in Europe.
7 The study measures public support to state accommodation by asking respondents for their view on state aid to separate Islamic schools in Britain, wearing of a headscarf in the state schools in France, and instruction about Islam in state schools in Germany.
8 Yet the relative weight given to religious and ethnic terms has varied throughout history. Anti-Semitism qua religious discrimination, which is in fact anti-Judaism, has transformed into anti-Semitism qua racial discrimination as a result of the secularization process initiated with the French Revolution. The racialization of anti-Semitism had been stronger mainly because the Jews were recognized as a "people" much earlier. However, for Islam the boundaries between racial and religious hatred have become blurred. For instance, in a time when historical Islamophobia was explained through religious hatred, the medieval image of Moors was racialized (Brown 2000). Throughout history, Islamophobia and Muslimophobia have been inextricably intertwined.
9 Blatant prejudice is associated with old racism with its emphasis on fear, envy and hatred. The prejudice is close and direct. By contrast, subtle prejudice which is cool and indirect is associated with modern racism. It involves the denial of positive emotions

rather than the expression of negative emotions in which the cultural differences of the minorities are emphasized. Those who hold subtle prejudice refrain from crude and direct expressions; they prefer a covert approach, which is more socially acceptable.

10On the other hand, prejudice does not reduce with any kind of contact. According to Allport, the contact should be supported by authorities, should be on an equal basis and requires cooperation between group members with a common goal (Allport 1954). In fact, Europeans have less prejudice against those Muslims who have similar socioeco-nomic status with themselves.

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