
Islamophobia in the United States: A Reading Resource Pack

by Rhonda Itaoui and Elsadig Elsheikh



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The purpose of this publication is to enhance the utility of existing academic research on Islamophobia in the United States for a wide range of stakeholders interested in challenging this global phenomenon.

Introduction

THIS READING RESOURCE PACK provides a thematic overview of current academic research on Islamophobia in the United States in the form of peer-reviewed academic journal articles and books. This effort brings to light the wide range of research on Islamophobia produced in the last few decades. In doing so, the authors wish to highlight trends in knowledge production around this topic and draw attention to any areas in need of further development where contributions can be made.

While definitions of Islamophobia have been offered by a range of researchers, scholars, and community organizers grappling with the evolving nature of anti-Muslim sentiment around the world, the Haas Institute defines Islamophobia as “a belief that Islam is a monolithic religion whose followers, Muslims, do not share common values with other major faiths; is inferior to Judaism and Christianity; is archaic, barbaric, and irrational; is a religion of violence that supports terrorism; and is a violent political ideology.” As defined, Islamophobia forms the basis of an ideology that views Muslims as a threat to “Western” civilization. Furthermore, Islamophobia is contingent upon the construction and reification of a homogenized Muslim “other” who should be viewed suspiciously, scrutinized, dehumanized, and excluded from “Western” or “Judeo-Christian” societies.

Islamophobia is expressed in prejudicial views, discriminatory language, and acts of verbal and physical violence inflicted upon Muslims, and those perceived to be Muslim. Islamophobia has manifested in a policing regime that engages in the profiling, surveillance, torture, and detention of people along racial/ethnic and religious lines and has justified the militarization of foreign policy as well as an unprecedented expansion of security apparatuses that impact all peoples.

As emphasized by the many readings cited in this reading resource pack, Islamophobia is not new. Rather, Islamophobia in the US is part of a deep-rooted demonization of Islam and Muslims that pre-dates the tragic September 11, 2001 attacks. Some scholars argue that Islamophobia is connected to “colonial empire building” which racialized and dehumanized Muslims, in order to justify the occupation of Muslim lands. In the US, Bernard Lewis’s 1990 article, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” most notably introduced the argument that there was a “clash of civilizations” between Islam and the West. This set up of an “us vs. them” dichotomy between Islam and the West that has only intensified in the last few decades. Following the 9/11 attacks, this racialization and demonization of Muslims in the US has normalized Islamophobic rhetoric and resulted in organized, well-funded Islamophobia movements across the country and around the world.

The purpose of this publication is to enhance the utility of existing academic research on Islamophobia in the United States for a wide range of stakeholders interested in challenging this global phenomenon. These stakeholders may include activists, civil rights organizations, community workers, counselors, students, researchers, and policy-makers. In providing the community with a shorthand summary of publications about Islamophobia, we aim to categorize existing work, encourage a robust expansion of these debates, and establish a framework for the synthesis and summary of anti-Islamophobia research across the globe.

As a part of the Haas Institute’s larger body of work that exposes and challenges Islamophobia, this reading resource pack identifies academic publications that document, critique, provide counter-narratives, and suggest solutions to Islamophobia in the United States and beyond.

The reading resource pack catalogs more than 430 citations on the study of Islamophobia in the US, organized under these 10 main themes:

- Theorizing the Field
- Politics and Foreign Policy
- Legal System and National Security
- Mainstream and Digital Media
- Othering, Discrimination, and Hate Crimes
- Gendered Dimensions
- Health and Community Well-being
- Geography and the Public Space
- Counter-narratives and Strategies
- Young American Muslims and Belonging

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

- Frequently cited
- Critical perspective
- Recent perspective

In addition, reading recommendations are provided within each area, listed in alphabetical order.

This work is undertaken utilizing the “othering and belonging” framework of the Haas Institute, which we believe provides a critical analytical lens in our research, advocacy, and policymaking efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable society.

In response to the experiences of Muslim Americans and the Muslim community at large, we seek to counteract all forms of discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to expose the power structures that generate them, in order to ultimately foster a more inclusive world. The Haas Institute suggests this reading resource pack be used as a companion resource for training and education on the study of Islamophobia, and how to counter it.

In an effort to expand the geographical focus of this publication, the next edition of this reading resource pack will focus on documenting anti-Islamophobia research in the Asia-Pacific region.

Theorizing the Field

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS in Islamophobia research are evident in cross-disciplinary definitions and conceptualizations of anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. In an attempt to describe the phenomenon of Islamophobia, a wide range of researchers have critiqued the social construction, othering, and racialization of Muslim identities in the US. These bodies of work include historical contextualization of Islamophobia and intellectual engagements in diverse fields of theoretical analyses, such as racialization/racism, Orientalism and de-colonial, anti-imperial, and deconstructionist frameworks. In doing so, these works highlight how Islamophobia operates within both historical and current global processes of colonialism and imperialism. In addition, recent efforts provide a range of descriptions, definitions, and measures of how Islamophobia operates and manifests in the US.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Said, Edward W. [Orientalism](#) New York, NY: Vintage Books (1978).

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

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

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

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Ernst, Carl W. *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, (2013)

Professor Carl Ernst in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is the editor of this collection of five critical essays which deconstruct the concept of Islamophobia from a range of standpoints. This includes informative, contextual chapters, as well as empirical commentaries and case studies. Ernst's introductory chapter provides a valuable critique of the complex, intricate nature of Islamophobia. Namely, he emphasizes that anti-Muslim prejudice is constructed by a range of media outlets and political institutions. Thus, this book highlights the need to approach the subject of Islamophobia from a variety of angles, reflected in the diversity of the essays. In the first chapter, Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg trace the history of British and American views towards Muslims between 1687 and 1947. The second chapter by Kambiz Ghanea Bassiri contextualizes the exclusion of Muslim Americans within a wider intolerance towards minority groups such as Jews, Black Americans, and Catholics in the US. In the third chapter, Edward Curtis draws connections between anti-Muslim sentiment in the US with twentieth century racism against African American Muslims, which he argues has shifted towards brown foreigners in the post-9/11 era. Julianna Hammer brings readers' attention to the gendered components of Islamophobia, particularly the experiences of victimization among Muslim women from members of the public and the media. Most importantly, this chapter sheds light on the global and interconnected nature of media stereotypes of oppressed Muslim women in Islamophobic discourses. Finally, Andrew Shyrock contextualizes the long history of Islamophobia in Western societies and wider hostile beliefs around nationalism, citizenship, and a rejection of minority identities. Collectively, the chapters in this book provide an insightful and diverse source of information on the intensifying nature of Islamophobia in the US.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Garner, Steve, and Saher Selod. *"The racialization of Muslims: empirical studies of Islamophobia."* *Critical Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2015): 9-19.

Steve Garner, head of Criminology and Sociology at Birmingham City University, and Saher Selod, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Simmons College (USA), provide an overview of the 2015 Special Issue on "Islamophobia and the Racialization of Muslims" published in *Critical Sociology*. Drawing on their combined expertise in social and racial theory, they frame racialization as a useful theoretical concept for explaining and understanding anti-Muslim sentiment in the US. Namely, they draw on the range of scholarly works that explore Islamophobia as a form of racism towards Muslim populations in the US and Europe. This opening article highlights the lack of academic engagement with racialization when discussing Islamophobia, and the equally weak presence of fieldwork-based studies with Muslim subjects. Garner and Selod therefore draw connections between racism, racialization, and Islamophobia to highlight the utility of racialization in understanding Islamophobia. They do so by theorizing the core elements of racism, discussing the limits of exploring Islamophobia without a racial lens, and providing a historical overview of racialization. The article therefore reveals how Muslims are racialized through religious/physical signifiers in the US and advocates the re-thinking of race and "fluid racisms" that change in form across time and place. This article and the larger Special Issue in *Critical Sociology* provide important perspectives for those interested in theorizing Islamophobia, particularly as a form of racism in the US.

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Politics and Foreign Policy

THERE IS A GROWING BODY of literature that draws our attention to how Islamophobia is both shaping and being shaped by US domestic and foreign policy. With a particular focus on US politics following the September 11 attacks, a wide range of scholars have interrogated the politics of fear around Islam that has occupied the nation. These works focus on connecting anti-Muslim rhetoric in politics within a broader history of colonialism and anti-Muslim foreign policy decisions. A majority of the readings listed draw on the War on Terror and violent interventions in Muslim-majority countries, as well as support for regimes hostile towards Muslims such as the militarist Israeli government, as an extension of Islamophobic policies. In the context of the War on Terror, many scholars highlight how Islamophobic politics have been implemented in efforts to counter radicalization via “Countering Violent Extremism” (CVE) programs, which further discriminate against Muslims. Finally, key works trace the impact of anti-Muslim politics on general anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, and anti-Muslim attitudes around the US.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Kundnani, Arun. *[The Muslims are coming!: Islamophobia, extremism, and the domestic war on terror.](#)* Verso Books (2014).

Arun Kundnani brings forth his expertise on racial capitalism, Islamophobia, surveillance, and political violence in this book, based on three years of research in the US and UK. His commentary on the expanding domestic efforts of the War on Terror in both nations provides a powerful critique of the Islamophobic motives of anti-radicalization and counter-terrorism models in both contexts. He emphasizes that these models have been the primary lens through which Western societies have viewed Muslim populations by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Within the book’s nine chapters, he highlights that on both ends of the political spectrum, Islam and Muslims have been framed as the enemy who are blamed for extremism and radicalization. Accordingly, he brings our attention to how the West has failed to account for political and social circumstances at the root of radicalization while ignoring the ways in which Western states themselves have been involved in the radicalization process. This book situates Islamophobia as a form of structural racism, and as a fundamental tool for shaping the practices of the War on Terror, particularly discriminatory national security policies towards racialized Muslim communities. Kundnani provides an insightful analysis on the consequences of the political activities of the War on Terror on intensifying Islamophobia in the West. This includes the way the War on Terror has been used to not only violate the rights of Muslims, but also to demonize any actions taken to remedy these violations (such as political activism). Finally, the book highlights the way the War on Terror has been utilized to justify the ongoing surveillance, discrimination, and violence against Muslims in the United States.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Kumar, Deepa. *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*. Haymarket Books (2012).

Deepa Kumar, an Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Rutgers University, captures the critical political context of colonialism in how Islamophobia manifests in the West. Building on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Kumar traces the historical development of Islamophobia as a vital part of Western empire-building from the Middle Ages to the recent War on Terror. The first section of the book describes the historical context of anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe among political and religious elites who established the foundations of racism, Orientalism, and what is now Islamophobia. The book then explores the capture of Muslim lands during European colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which Kumar emphasizes was later replaced by American domination following World War II. Kumar argues that this colonial domination has continued to racialize Islam and Muslims, as a political tool to maintain authority over Muslim lands. Kumar therefore situates the politicization of Islam as a recent phenomenon that coincided with the decline of the Soviet empire, which translated into recent periods of US foreign policy, namely the War on Terror. The third key section of the book draws attention to how these ideological discourses of Islamophobia have been institutionalized in the American domestic context. In particular, Kumar stresses that the War on Terror justified the expansion of the military industrial complex, and interventionist foreign policy in the Middle East. She argues that the maintenance of fear around Islam has justified the violation of Muslim, and particularly Arab/Asian American, freedoms. Kumar's fundamental political analysis highlights how a long history of racist and anti-Muslim ideologies have been used to sustain colonial and neo-imperial domination of Muslims. This is both across the globe through both foreign and domestic policy, and within the US via the post- 9/11 "Islamophobia network"—a global network that coordinates anti-Muslim activities and provides financial and intellectual support to members across national boundaries. This network has terrorized Arabs and Muslims as the "enemy within" via efforts such as "Stop the Islamization of America." This is a fundamental reading for understanding the connections between colonialism, the War on Terror, and Islamophobia.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Nagel, Caroline. ["Southern Hospitality? Islamophobia and the Politicization of Refugees in South Carolina During the 2016 Election Season."](#) *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 3 (2016): 283-290.

Caroline Nagel, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of South Carolina, draws links between anti-Muslim sentiment and widespread southern opposition to refugee immigration in the lead up to the 2016 presidential election. Specifically, this essay outlines Republican opposition to the resettlement plan for 10,000 refugees by the Obama Administration. She points out that conservative politicians gained momentum and support in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris, as well as the mass shooting in San Bernardino, California. The paper begins by arguing that the federal government's efforts to depoliticize refugee settlement since the 1990s was overtaken by rising Islamophobia after the 9/11 attacks. She then outlines how anti-refugee, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant sentiment has gained particular traction among white conservative voters in the South who perceive numerous threats to the country's social, economic, and moral order. Although Nagel acknowledges that anti-refugee sentiment is not restricted to this particular region, she emphasizes the particular vulnerability of the South to Islamophobic and anti-refugee political rhetoric. She also brings attention to the lack of advocacy for refugees or religious tolerance in the region that could counter anti-Muslim and anti-refugee sentiment. This article highlights the impact of Islamophobic politics on anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim sentiment, reflected in the proposals of anti-Sharia laws across the majority of US state legislatures, as well as with every Republican governor in the US opposing refugee settlement in 2015. Overall, this is an important piece that emphasizes the need to understand the dialectic relationship between Islamophobia and anti-refugee sentiment in the US. Further, it reveals the influence of politicians on potentially limiting resettlement of people from the Middle East due to Islamophobia and fear of terrorism.

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Legal System and National Security

THIS BODY OF LITERATURE is centered on exposing the dialectic relationship between Islamophobia and the US legal system. In highlighting the way Islamophobia both influences, and is influenced by, the law, the listed academic pieces highlight the deficiencies of anti-discrimination legislation in protecting the rights of Muslim communities in the US. Topics covered by the research to date focus on (i) the legalized othering of Muslims, (ii) anti-discrimination laws, and (iii) anti-terrorism policies. In the first instance, key works shed light on the recent rise in both proposed and enacted anti-Sharia and anti-refugee legislation across various US states that legalize the othering of Muslim communities, as well as the restriction of their legal rights and ability to immigrate to the US from Muslim countries. Secondly, recent contributions critique the inadequacies of existing anti-discrimination laws in protecting American Muslims from various forms of discrimination based on their religious identity. Finally, the discriminatory impacts of anti-terror policies and models such as de-radicalization, countering-terrorism efforts, and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) are critiqued and unpacked.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Beydoun, Khaled A. *“America, Islam, and Constitutionalism: Muslim American Poverty and the Mounting Police State.”* *Journal of Law & Religion* 31, no. 3 (2016): 279-92.

In this “State of the Field” essay, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Khaled Beydoun seeks to identify and introduce the experiences of poor and indigent Muslim Americans in the War on Terror. In doing so, Beydoun aims to bring to the forefront, narratives of how the War on Terror’s discriminatory policies have negatively impacted Muslim communities that occupy a range of intersections. These intersections include poor, Muslim, and immigrant populations; Black Muslims in impoverished urban spaces where structural police violence is pervasive and poor, but outwardly devout Muslims in spaces where Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policing is practiced. According to Beydoun, these are the experiences that have been pushed to the furthest margins of the grand narrative of American Islam, and thus absent from debates in the existing literature. Beydoun tackles this by examining three new books on American Islam and the so-called “Muslim Question” emerging in societies around the globe, demonstrating what these texts say—and do not say—about race and poverty in the study of American Islam. In doing so, this essay provides two key arguments: First, that poor and working-class Muslim-American communities are targeted most intensely by both Islamophobes and the intensifying suspicion of the state, and second, that race and poverty influence exposure to state surveillance. The latter, he argues, results in a more detrimental impact of state policing on poor and working-class Black Muslim communities. This piece thus challenges the perception of Muslim America as an economic model minority, shedding light on how Muslims who face poverty are also disproportionately targeted by counter-radicalization policing. In bringing attention to the way that anti-terror policing intersects with previously established forms of racialized state policing, Beydoun highlights that it is imperative to integrate narratives of race and poverty into scholarship on Islamophobia, particularly perspectives that deal with the legal discrimination against Muslims in the US.

CRITICAL INSIGHT**Yaser, Ali. “[Shariah and Citizenship—How Islamophobia Is Creating a Second-Class Citizenry in America](#)” *California Law Review*, no. 4 (2012): 1027.**

In this article, Yaser Ali addresses anti-Muslim and anti-Sharia rhetoric by highlighting the way Islamophobia affects the law and Muslim citizenship in the US. Situating the perceived threat of “Sharia Law” as the “third phase of Islamophobia” in the US, Ali highlights the way anti-Sharia Law movements and Sharia Law bans undermine the legal status of Muslim communities. This article frames anti-Sharia Law bans, such as the Oklahoma’s [“Save our State Amendment.”](#) within a longer history in which law reinforces racism towards Arabs and Muslims. These Islamophobic laws threaten to isolate and alienate Muslim communities across the US, which Ali stresses, deprive American Muslims of citizenship as a vehicle for practical rights and political activity. The article begins with an historical overview of Islamophobia in America, broken down into three periods: (i) pre-9/11; (ii) period immediately following the 9/11 attacks; and (iii) the period that began during the 2008 presidential campaign. After providing an overview of Sharia Law, and how anti-Sharia Law movements like the one in Oklahoma use Islamophobic rhetoric to vilify Muslims, Ali draws on Oklahoma’s Save our State Amendment to emphasize how institutionalized Islamophobia deprives American Muslims of using their citizenship to access practical and legal rights. The concluding section of this paper proposes a number of policies for systematically responding to the campaign of Islamophobia, including public education on Sharia Law, demanding that public officials take a stronger stance denouncing Islamophobia, and finally, the need for a stronger Muslim voice in the media that humanizes Muslims and allows them to define their own narrative. This article provides a fundamental overview of the negative impacts of Islamophobia on the US legal system, as well as Muslim-American rights to identity, political activity, and legal status.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES**Elsheikh, Elsadig, Sisemore Basima, Lee Natalia Ramirez. “[Legalizing Othering: The United States of Islamophobia](#).” Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, University of California, Berkeley: Berkeley, CA. (September 2017).**

This report was published by the research team in the Haas Institute’s Global Justice Program. Its main purpose is to critically analyze all anti-Muslim legislation and bills introduced from the years 2010-2016 in state legislatures across the nation. Specifically, this report sheds light on the anti-Sharia movement—part of the more organized, “second phase” of Islamophobia in the US since 2010. In an attempt to uncover the far-reaching impact of anti-Muslim bills on Americans and the US legal system, this comprehensive report is divided into a few key sections. Firstly, it unmasks how anti-Muslim/anti-Islam movements have (i) propelled the adoption of federal measures (2002-2017) and (ii) utilized electoral politics and state legislatures (2010-2016) to disproportionately legalize the othering of Muslims across the US. Secondly, this report discusses the findings of the [United States of Islamophobia Database](#)—a comprehensive research tool developed by the Global Justice Program that identifies and provides detailed information of all anti-Sharia bills introduced in all 50 US state legislatures from 2000 to 2016. In analyzing these bills, the report uncovers the main themes, patterns, trends, and impacts of anti-Sharia legislation in the US. In tracing the origins of these anti-Sharia bills, this report visually maps the states in which they have been proposed and enacted, while exposing the deeper networks of anti-Muslim forces and movements working hand-in-hand to materialize these discriminatory bills. Finally, the report concludes with a series of recommendations to challenge the legal discrimination of Muslims in the US, such as proposing inclusive movements and cross-sectoral and coalition building efforts across racial and religious lines. This report provides a vital source of evidence-based research and findings on not only the discriminatory effects of anti-Sharia legislation, but, more deeply, the problematic structural impact of far-right anti-Muslim movements on the US legal system and American democracy more generally.

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Mainstream and Digital Media

THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA, particularly mass news media and technology, in shaping Islamophobia has been a growing area of concern since the 9/11 attacks. Various perspectives problematize the way the media, across various mediums such as news, film, and literature, negatively represent, racialize, and demonize Muslim-American identities. The impact of such constructions of Arabs and Muslims on negative stereotypes and experiences of discrimination among Muslim-American communities are captured in these academic pieces. These works therefore provide critical perspectives on not only the way the media “mediates” public opinion broadly, but also how negative media representations contribute to, and legitimize, the othering of American Muslims. Finally, a new and emerging body of academic discussions deal with the impact of technology on Islamophobia more broadly, including perspectives on how social media has been used to both exacerbate and challenge negative mainstream news media representation of Muslims. The following readings are useful resources for those interested in the media impacts on public opinion broadly, as well as to understand racism in the media and how mainstream media has contributed to discrimination against Muslim communities.

Annotations

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Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam: How the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world* (2ND Edition). Random House, 1997.

Edward Said, founder of the academic field of postcolonial studies, provides a groundbreaking overview of how images and representations mediate the perception of Islam across a range of contexts in the West. Said begins with an overview of the prevailing Western and American hostility towards the Middle East, as well as the reciprocal hostility of the Middle East towards the West. He does so by tracing how historical events, and political developments in the Muslim world, such as the Iranian Revolution, have been exploited to portray Islam with increasing hostility and belligerence since the 1981 edition of this book. Said's first chapter, “Islam in the News,” revisits the subject of Orientalism—namely that Western studies of the Middle East have offered negative “representations” and images of the Middle East. These images often reflect a political power structure of colonial dominance over the Middle East by Europe. In doing so, he highlights how the majority of American society from 1974 onwards have had an image of Islam that has been largely shaped by negative media coverage of crises related to the Middle East and Islam, predominantly presented from an Americentrism perspective. The final chapter, “Knowledge and Power,” focuses on how research and writing about Islam, the Middle East, and the Arab world has been produced within an overwhelming academic infrastructure that supports and perpetuates a distorted view of Islam. Said argues that the “experts” from these segments of the US academic community work with the media to influence and shape public policy, as well as legislative debates about the Middle East and “Muslim world.” This book provides an insightful analysis of the political and organizational factors that govern the fabrication of the American representation of Islam, and namely, how these factors combine with important events to shape the American psyche towards Islam and Muslims.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Alsultany, Evelyn. *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11*. New York, NY: NYU Press, 2012.

Evelyn Alsultany, Associate Professor in American Culture at the University of Michigan, provides a valuable critique on the politics of “positive representation” of Muslims in mainstream US media after 9/11. She highlights the way these positive representations have been used to mask Islamophobia as part of a larger effort to prove that the US is now a “post-racial” society where racial inequality is no longer a concern. The first two chapters examine hit television dramas such as *24*, *The Practice*, and *Law and Order*, to explore the notion of “ambivalent racism,” which refers to anti-Muslim racism that is more acceptable in liberal multicultural societies within an exceptionalist logic that frames the Muslim terrorist as a national security threat. Chapters three and four highlight the gendered sympathies towards Muslim women in these positive portrayals, where women are objects of pity, in need of saving by Western feminism. In contrast, Muslim men—the male terrorist—are not afforded such political victimhood and constructed as the enemy. Chapter five critiques “anti-hate crime” public service announcements issued after 9/11 which, according to Alsultany, standardize acceptable templates of diversity and places “good vs. bad Muslims” within these parameters. Namely, the “good Muslim” is represented as one who is committed to familiar tropes of American national culture, through loyalty to the nation or government, rather than their loyalty to Islam. Overall, Alsultany uses these cases to explain the concept of “simplified complex representations,” or representational strategy that eschews history, ignores politics, and denies the severity and persistence of institutionalized racism, in order to produce the ideological fiction of a “post-racial” society. This book provides a critical engagement with the way positive media representations depict the US “post-race racism” that has been directed towards Arab and Muslim Americans since 9/11.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Chao, En-Chieh. *“The-Truth-About-Islam.Com: ordinary theories of racism and cyber Islamophobia.”* *Critical Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2015): 57-75.

In this journal article, En-Chieh Chao, Assistant Professor of Sociology at National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan, interrogates the way Islamophobia manifests in online spaces, highlighting how digital debates over Muslims reflect broader American racist discourses about Muslim communities. Drawing on the outcry surrounding the reality show *All-American Muslim* (AAM) as the case study, this article emphasizes the way cultural racism towards Muslims in American society is reproduced in opposition to AAM’s representation of “everyday Muslims” on-screen. Commencing with an overview of racialization and post-Civil Rights racism in the US, the article discusses Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism and problematizes the way the media represents Muslims in the US. This is examined in relation to the way racial politics are embodied and performed within different kinds of media, such as reality television. With a primary aim to examine the logic of Islamophobia embedded in reactions to AAM posted online, the article draws on a content analysis of 1,139 online comments posted between November 2011 and March 2012 on five influential news websites regarding stories about the (i) airing of AAM, (ii) the advertisers’ withdrawal, and (iii) the cancellation of the program. The article highlights that there were two seemingly opposing discourses within these online comments: the anti-bigotry discourse and the anti-Islam discourse which, according to Chao, reflect mainstream American ideas of what racism and religion are and should be. In doing so, the article highlights the way in which the AAM controversy reveals that even when the media attempts to counter stereotypical representations of Muslims, the potential audience can still reject it due to larger forces of racism. Chao’s perspective thus enhances our understanding of how anti-Muslim sentiment is materialized in Islamophobic online commenting and hate speech, while representing wider Islamophobic discourses and attitudes.

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Othering, Discrimination, & Hate Crimes

FOLLOWING THE 9/11 ATTACKS, researchers have increasingly examined the effects of anti-Muslim sentiment, rhetoric, and attitudes on the everyday experiences of belonging, citizenship, and safety among American Muslims. This wide body of literature on the American Muslim experience has captured a range of ethnographic, case study, and empirical data on the effects of anti-Muslim discrimination. Sites of Islamophobia include educational institutions, law enforcement, the workplace, and the US legal system. Recent perspectives also shed light on the resilience and coping strategies of Muslim communities in the face of anti-Muslim discrimination, which is an area in need of further research and engagement. The following academic readings highlight the way in which Islamophobia manifests in everyday experiences of discrimination and violence towards Muslim communities in America.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Cainkar, Louis A. *Homeland insecurity: the Arab American and Muslim American experience after 9/11*. New York City, NY: Russell Sage Foundation (2009).

In this book, Louise Cainkar, sociologist at Marquette University, provides significant insight into both the immediate and long-term impacts of 9/11 on Arab communities living in the US. With an aim to represent authentic and everyday experiences of Arab Muslims in Chicago, Cainkar sheds light on their experiences of “de-Americanization” within a broader historical context of Islamophobia. Namely, the book traces how Arabs and Muslims have been racialized and othered in the decades leading up to the 9/11 attacks. The main analysis of this book is based on ethnographic observation, in-depth interviewing, and oral histories of respondents in the Chicago area between 2002-2005. The accounts reported in this book raise awareness of how stereotypical discourses and social processes of Arab and Muslim exclusion in the US were internalized by respondents in the wake of the attacks. Namely, the respondents in Cainkar’s study specified that they felt fearful and unsafe in everyday spaces. They also noted experiences of discrimination. These narratives bring to light the negative effects of internment, surveillance, ethnic profiling events, and legislation on the everyday lives of American citizens of Arab ancestry. Arab Americans are most vulnerable to these negative effects, particularly those who visually fit the stereotype and image of the “terrorist.” Muslim women in *hijab* are most vulnerable to discrimination and attacks in everyday spaces. Interestingly, Cainkar also discusses how in the wake of these challenges, the community mobilized productively following 9/11 through social and political activism, including alliance-building with non-Arab and non-Muslim groups. Examples of this included “opening doors” to mosques and institutions via Mosque Open Days or inter-faith and open community events. This book provides a critical and localized engagement with how 9/11 continued the social and political marginalization of Muslim Arab Americans that was previously established by government and media institutions to justify profiling. Despite that this book exclusively focuses on the experiences of Arab Muslims in the Chicago area, the specific examples of persecution and prejudice captured in Cainkar’s analysis provide significant insight into the impact of the 9/11 attacks on Arab Muslim experiences of national identity in the United States.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Helbling, Marc, ed. [*Islamophobia in the West: Measuring and explaining individual attitudes*](#). Routledge (2013).

This edited collection of book chapters by Marc Helbling draws on a wide range of survey data across various Western contexts to theorize Islamophobia. This volume aims to engage more critically the issue of Islamophobia by moving beyond the national setting, and drawing in research on Islamophobia from multiple countries. Helbling takes this global approach in order to identify patterns in how Islamophobia is characterized in the West. The book is organized in four sections, with the opening part examining how Islamophobia might be measured via various surveys. The second section covers the scope of Islamophobia by reflecting on public debates, attitudes, and reactions in four Western contexts: the UK, Norway, Sweden, and Spain. The following section attempts to grapple with the origins and effects of Islamophobia, including the impact of the 9/11 attacks on public opinion and parliamentary debates in the 2009 Swiss referendum to ban minarets. The final section of the book questions whether the treatment of Muslims has been different to other outgroups in the West. This includes specific cases across Holland, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden from a range of perspectives including political science and sociology. Across all case studies, it was found that negative public attitudes and perceptions towards Muslims and Arabs existed across all national contexts long before the 9/11 attacks. However, the multidisciplinary perspectives in these sections trace the effects of media and politics on intensifying rates of hate crimes and discriminatory actions towards Muslims in the West. The collection of essays in this book provide two main contributions to the study of Islamophobia. First, Helbling highlights the value of survey-based research for unpacking the complexities of an issue like Islamophobia. Second, it demonstrates the need for interdisciplinary engagement in various national contexts in order to truly expose the scope and extent of Islamophobia as a global issue.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Husain, Altaf, and Stephenie Howard. [*“Religious Microaggressions: A Case Study of Muslim Americans.”*](#) *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work* 26, no. 1/2 (2017): 139.

Altaf Husain and Stephenie Howard, both from Howard University's School of Social Work, critically examine the impact of religious microaggressions against Muslims in America on social work policy, practice, and education. The article is divided into four major sections, beginning with a discussion on the impact of religious microaggression followed by an in-depth examination of the religious microaggressions specifically faced by Muslims in America. The main themes of these religious microaggressions identified in this article include: the assumption of religious homogeneity, constructing Muslims as alien in their own country, the pathology of the Muslim religion, and endorsing religious stereotypes of Muslims as terrorists. The third section contextualizes these religious microaggressions within the framework of the history and roots of anti-Muslim bigotry in the United States in four main periods: (i) the late 1800s to World War II; (ii) World War II to the Iranian Revolution; (iii) the Iranian Revolution to September 10, 2001; and (iv) post-September 11, 2001 to 2015. The article stresses the need for social work practitioners to not only confront their own biases toward Muslims, but also be prepared to assist those facing anti-Muslim racism. This includes Muslims and other people of color who are not Muslims that still face Islamophobic microaggression, such as South Asians and Arabs. Further, the authors stress the pivotal role of social worker educators in ameliorating the harmful impact of microaggressions in the lives of Muslim students and scholars. The authors suggest providing safe spaces in the classroom for students to discuss views about Muslims, as well as discussions among social workers on how to best address microaggressions faced by Muslim clients. This article provides useful insight into how Muslims in America now face religious microaggressions due to the racialization of religion, while providing social work practitioners and educators with the tools to assist victims of Islamophobia in the form of religious microaggressions.

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Gendered Dimensions

A RANGE OF SCHOLARS have enriched existing discussions on Islamophobia by bringing attention to the gendered dimensions* of anti-Muslim bigotry. Stemming from a range of disciplines, these works highlight how Muslim men and women encounter anti-Muslim discrimination uniquely, across particular spaces that distinctly target each gender in different ways. Primarily, these perspectives highlight the vulnerability of Muslim women who display racial indicators of “Muslimness,” such as wearing a *hijab* or *burqa* in public space, and various public and private institutions. Drawing on the overall vulnerability of women in the public sphere, these perspectives on Muslim women bearing the brunt of Islamophobia in everyday spaces highlight the general propensity for patriarchal structures to control and dictate women’s dress and appearance. On the other hand, Muslim men are noted to experience discrimination within a politicized frame of securitization, anti-terror policies, and the overall criminalization of Arab and Muslim men post-9/11. The forms of discrimination faced by Muslim men documented relate to racial profiling, policing, and border control in spaces such as airports where Muslim men are perceived to be a security threat. The following readings highlight these gendered dimensions of Islamophobia across a range of spaces, and constantly require contributions to expand and enrich these debates.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Naber, Nadine. “Muslim first, Arab second: A strategic politics of race and gender.” *The Muslim World* 95, no. 4 (2005): 479-495.

In this thought-provoking piece, Nadine Naber brings attention to the way in which the racialization of Islam has led to the deployment of a specific identity category, “Muslim First- Arab Second,” among Arab-American Muslims in San Francisco. In doing so, Naber aims to explain why these youths opt for the “Muslim first” identity, and how this identity is both gendered, and feeds into wider politics of race in the US. The “Muslim first, Arab Second” identity refers to the way Muslim youth have prioritized their Muslim identity as a framework to maintain old allegiances with their immigrant communities while simultaneously transforming perceived dominant racialized-gendered regimes of power embedded within their Arab culture. The central analysis in this article is based on the findings of Naber’s interviews with fifteen second-generation Arab-Americans who identified as “Muslim First, Arab Second,” living in the Bay Area from 1999 to 2000. The article begins with a discussion of “everyday experiences and identity formation,” followed by an engagement in “intergenerational differences: masculinity, femininity and marriage” among the youth interviewed. Naber then explains how opting for “Muslim First” was used to “craft a politics of gender” as well as “design a politics of race” that transcends the culture of their immigrant parents within US multiculturalism. Specific to Islamophobia, Naber highlights how a “Muslim first” identity is constantly conditioned or regulated by a range of factors, particularly the racialization of Islam in State and corporate media discourses following the Iranian revolution. Other factors included navigating a highly-charged environment of racial and identity politics in San Francisco. Interestingly, the youth interviewed proactively deployed “Muslim first” as a counter discourse to cultural expectations of their parents, through which they felt they could more freely perform a politics of race, gender, and identity. Naber provides early insight into how second-generation Arab-American youths interviewed in the early 2000s prior to 9/11 have grappled with multiple competing and often racist representations of Arabs, Middle Easterners, and Muslims.

* This publication adopts a binary gender definition of male/female to document the specific dimensions to Islamophobia that operate within this perceived gender binary. We acknowledge the fluidity and various definitions of gender and wish to encourage research that accounts for individuals that identify outside of this gender binary.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Perry, Barbara. [“Gendered Islamophobia: Hate Crime against Muslim Women.”](#) *Social Identities* 20, no. 1 (2014): 74-89.

In this article, global hate crime expert Barbara Perry draws attention to the particular vulnerability of Muslim women to anti-Muslim hate crimes. The article emphasizes the need to understand the multiple subject positions that women occupy with respect to cultural identities and gender. Namely, Perry explores the intersectionality of religion, race, and gender that makes Muslim women so exposed to complex patterns of bias-motivated violence. The article draws on four Western nations—the UK, Australia, Canada, and the US—that reflect this pattern of intersectionality. First, the article outlines the long history of anti-Muslim imaging and racialization, particularly in the media, that have led to the othering of Muslims in Western contexts. Perry then proceeds to provide a broad overview of gendered hate crime and violence against women, which is identified as an area in need of further research. Specific to Muslim women, the article draws on stereotypes and characterizations that inform violence against this cultural group including: sexualized and assailable bodies, women in need of salvation, and Muslim women as terrorists. The article proceeds with a robust discussion of the impacts of gendered Islamophobia on Muslims women’s sense of belonging and how they engage in spaces. This includes rethinking their visibility and altering their performance of gender and religion in accordance with what they recognize is socially acceptable. This article emphasizes the need for public and academic debates to attend to the intersectionalities of these forms of violence and consider not just gender, but sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, and other crucial identities that may shape the risk of violence.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Budhwani, Henna, and Kristine R. Hearld. [“Muslim women’s experiences with stigma, abuse, and depression: results of a sample study conducted in the United States.”](#) *Journal of Women’s Health*, 26, no. 5 (2017): 435-441.

Associate Professor Henna Budhwani and Assistant Professor Kristine Hearld from the University of Alabama provide important insight into the detrimental effects of racism, discrimination, and stigma on the mental health of Muslim women living in the US. In doing so, they explore the associations between internalized stigma, exposure to violence, experience with sexual abuse, and depression in Muslim women. The article begins with an overview of stigma, as well as the connection between mental health, minority stress, low socioeconomic status, and abuse. It then provides a conceptual background on existing, yet limited empirical and demographic studies on Muslim mental health in America. The focus on Muslim women in this article is thus based on the premise that Muslim women are particularly vulnerable to depression due to heightened experiences of religious discrimination and internalized stigma in the United States. The article analyzes data collected online in late 2015 from 373 women who self-identified as Muslim, were at least eighteen years old, and residents of the United States. The authors found statistically significant associations between depression and exposure to sexual and physical abuse. Most notably, there was a connection between depression and internalized stigma, which was measured through heightened vigilance. For example, the American Muslim women surveyed in the study reported routinely bracing themselves for insults, avoiding certain social situations or places, monitoring their physical appearance, and censoring what they say or how they say it. This article provides valuable insight on the negative impacts of Islamophobia on mental health, as well as the possible implications of internalized stigma on how Muslim women interact with or access the healthcare system.

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Health & Community Well-being

A RECENT BODY OF LITERATURE connects Islamophobia to negative health outcomes of Muslim communities facing discrimination. These perspectives draw on previous works around the impacts of racism on health to highlight the negative impacts of stigmatized Muslim identities on the mental and physical health of Muslims, which ultimately result in health disparities. Namely, key contributions highlight the way Islamophobia increases stress-related outcomes such as depression, anxiety, paranoia, and fear, all of which impact the overall wellbeing of Muslim communities in the US. Further, key works focus on how Islamophobia manifests within healthcare settings, and the way in which negative experiences limit the way Muslims navigate and access the healthcare systems. There is a need for further research in this area in order to capture the multiple dimensions of Islamophobia and Muslim identity, as well as understand the relationship between Islamophobia and health at the structural level. An example of such work could be an investigation into the impacts of negative media coverage on the health outcomes of American Muslims. These readings highlight the opportunity for researchers to examine the health effects of Islamophobia, and the intersection of various forms of discrimination, such as gender, race, and class.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Rippy Alyssa, and Elana Newman. [Perceived religious discrimination and its relationship to anxiety and paranoia among Muslim Americans.](#) *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 1, no. 1 (2006):5–20.

In this article, Alyssa Rippy and Elana Newman from the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma attempt to provide an early documentation of the effects of perceived discrimination on the mental health of Muslim Americans following the 9/11 attacks. The analysis is based on 152 questionnaire responses of Muslims living in Oklahoma in 2005, including both first- and second-generation Muslims across a wide range of ethnic groups. This article provides an overview of the background literature on the way perceptions of discrimination differ among individuals as well as on the effects of discrimination and hate crimes on the mental health of subjected minorities. In highlighting the lack of research on these connections for the US Muslim community, the authors critically examine perceived discrimination and its association with subclinical paranoia and anxiety among their Muslim respondents. Results of the survey presented a statistically significant relationship between perceived religious discrimination and subclinical paranoia; however, perceived discrimination and anxiety were not related. The authors suggest that perceived discrimination among Muslim Americans is related to the expression of increased vigilance and suspicion, which could lead to social withdrawal or isolation within their group. This could also be interpreted as avoidance or escape from discriminatory social situations or negative social interactions. This vigilance was reflected on a group level, where participants reported an increased perception of societal discrimination since the attacks of 9/11 compared to a moderate perception of an increase of personal discrimination faced individually. This early contribution to Islamophobia and health verifies that Muslims face race-related stress, which produces aversive psychological symptoms. Overall, these findings emphasize the negative impacts of perceived discrimination on Muslims in America including increased paranoia, social withdrawal, or isolation from one's racial, religious, or ethnic group.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Samari, Goleen. “Islamophobia and Public Health in the United States.” *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 11 (2016): 1920-25.

In this article, Goleen Samari, a postdoctoral fellow with the Population Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin, calls for a public health perspective on the implications of Islamophobic discrimination on the physical health of stigmatized Muslim Americans. The article contextualizes this argument through an overview of the expanding climate of Islamophobia in the US, followed by a connection between experiences of religious and racial discrimination among Muslim Americans to health disparities. Samari does so by problematizing the negative influence of stigma and discrimination on health via the disruption of several systems, including individual (such as stress reactivity and stereotype threat), interpersonal (such as interpersonal relationships) and structural (institutional policies and media coverage) processes that are known determinants of health. Presenting Islamophobia as an opportunity to examine the intersecting health effects of various forms of discrimination, Samari urges public health researchers to place Islamophobia on the discrimination and health research agenda. She particularly encourages structural-level research on the impacts of Islamophobia and its various “moderators/mediators” such as race, ethnicity, and visible religiosity on the physical and mental health of Muslim Americans. The article proposes a range of research directions for those interested in the link between Islamophobia and the social determinants of health. This includes more research on Islamophobia and physical health, further analysis of racial and non-racial discrimination, the effects of moderators and mediators for stigma, discrimination and health, as well as a deeper understanding of the way structural stigma impacts Islamophobia and health. Overall, Samari stresses that public health research should explore the multilevel and multidimensional pathways linking Islamophobia to population physical and mental health.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Martin, Mary Brigid. “Perceived discrimination of Muslims in health care.” *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 9, no. 2 (2015): 41-69.

In this article, Mary Brigid Martin, a certified Transcultural Nurse and Nurse Educator, explores the crossover of anti-Muslim discrimination from society to the healthcare setting. This paper therefore aims to ascertain the extent of perceived anti-Muslim discrimination in US healthcare settings and the types of discriminatory behaviors Muslims report in the American healthcare setting. Additionally, the author aims to uncover care preferences among Muslim Americans that may inform culturally congruent care practices and to test a newly developed instrument designed to measure anti-Muslim discrimination in the healthcare setting. The main findings of the article are drawn from an online survey that was administered from January to April 2012 with 227 self-identifying Muslims living in the US who had reported a healthcare encounter since 9/11. The survey included a new fifteen-item tool, the Health Care Discrimination Scale (HCDS), which measures anti-Muslim discrimination across items like healthcare cultural safety, patient perception of fair treatment, and respect for identity, in addition to another set of scales allocated to patient/family cultural needs. Overall, the findings of this study reflected that anti-Muslim discrimination crosses over from society to the healthcare setting in the United States. Nearly one-third of subjects perceived that they were discriminated against when accessing healthcare services. Being excluded or ignored was the most frequently reported type of discrimination, followed by problems related to the use of Muslim clothing, offensive or insensitive verbal remarks, and problems related to Islamic holidays, prayer rituals, and physical assault, respectively. Interestingly, reported perceptions of anti-Muslim discrimination were found to be higher after the Boston Marathon Bombings, which is connected to an overall increase in attacks against Muslims following media reports of terror attacks supposedly perpetrated by Muslims. In specifying the implications of these findings for practice, education, policy, and future research, this article provides a significant perspective on how Islamophobia is being experienced in the healthcare space by Muslim patients.

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Geography and the Public Space

IN LIGHT OF INCREASED DISCRIMINATION against Muslims in the public sphere, researchers have initiated discussions around the spatial aspects of Islamophobia. Perspectives to date have highlighted the way oppositions to Muslim bodies, sites, and institutions in public space are reflective of a deeper exclusion of Muslims from national belonging, and therefore the US, broadly. Earlier perspectives also note the way in which Muslim lives, identities, and sense of belonging vary across spaces and contexts across the Western world. Key works account for the way in which the spatial exclusion of Muslims surfaces in various experiences like racial profiling in airports, attacks in the street, or vandalism against Muslim sites of worship. The opposition to the presence of Muslim buildings such as mosques, or Muslim bodies in public space via verbal or physical attacks, highlight how Islamophobia excludes Muslims from accessing and taking ownership of spaces around the city. This is particularly exacerbated by Muslim symbols or visibility, such as a visible Muslim identity or an identifiable Muslim site. The contributions listed in this section highlight the need for deeper engagement in the spatial dimensions of Islamophobia and provide opportunity for researchers to address the intersection between Islamophobia, public space, and various social indicators like gender, race, and class.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Falah, Ghazi-Walid, and Caroline Rose Nagel, eds. *Geographies of Muslim women: Gender, religion, and space*. New York, NY: Guilford Press (2005)

This editorial collaboration between Professor Ghazi Walid-Falah from the University of Akron, Ohio and Professor Caroline Nagel from the University of South Carolina gathers a series of articles on the geographies of Muslim women and their everyday lives. With a central theme on how Islam frames the lives of Muslim women, it provides an explicitly geographical perspective that includes contexts such as Morocco, Somalia, Afghanistan, Britain, and the US. Three main themes structure its twelve chapters: gender, development and religion; geographies of mobility; and discourse, representation, and the contestation of space. Most of these chapters are based on case studies outside the general boundaries of Arab culture, which is most commonly associated with Islam. Collectively, they provide trenchant feminist critiques of policies and practices as well as discursive representations, such as media images, that impact Muslim women in various geographies around the world. This book therefore intersects the subjects of gender and space with Islam and explores the way in which Muslim women's lives and experiences differ greatly across and within local contexts. Namely, it emphasizes the spatiality of the social relationships that produce gender in various international contexts. Focusing on Islamophobia, the final chapter critiques the way in which the representations of Muslim women in American media influence both cultural perceptions of Muslims, and geographical relationships between the Muslim world and the West. Specifically, Nagel draws attention to the way images of the Muslim woman are connected globally between debates in Europe and the US, particularly when problematizing the headscarf and the ability for Muslims to assimilate or belong in both Europe and the US. The geographical perspectives in this book provide rich empirical insights into gender, space, and Islam, while capturing the complexity and diversity of Muslim women's experiences across a variety of geographical contexts.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Cainkar, Louise. [“Space and place in the metropolis: Arabs and Muslims seeking safety.”](#) *City & Society* 17, no. 2 (2005): 181-209.

Louise Cainkar, a sociologist and Associate Professor of Social Welfare and Justice at Marquette University in Milwaukee, depicts experiences of Islamophobia among the Arab American through a unique photo essay that captures the evolution of this community over the last 100 years and the significant impact of 9/11 on increasing attacks and vandalism against Muslim sites. The article aims to document the struggle of Arab Americans in locating safe spaces in Chicago. By visually representing the role of Arab and Muslim communities in the last 100 years of urban life in Chicago, this ethnographic research highlights the impacts of the 9/11 attacks on Arab Muslims in metropolitan Chicago, including attacks on persons and property. The research firstly highlights the long-standing history of racialization and othering of Arab Americans as “non-white invaders” in Chicago, despite their racial categorization as “white” for legal purposes. Further, in drawing on photographic evidence of mosque vandalisms, as well as protests to mosque development, the article draws our attention to the spatialized aspects of Islamophobia, including the greater occurrence of property attacks in suburban locales of Chicago where Arabs and Muslims are a visible minority. Additionally, the article provides early commentary on the gendered impacts of Islamophobia, emphasizing the particular vulnerability of women to personal attacks in the public space. This photo essay provides an engaging historical overview of the Arab and Muslim communities in Chicago, and creatively illustrates the increased racialization of these communities post-9/11 that have led to the various hate crimes and experiences of Islamophobia documented by Cainkar.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Considine, Craig. [“The Racialization of Islam in the United States: Islamophobia, Hate Crimes, and “Flying while Brown”.](#) *Religions* 8, no. 9 (2017): 165.

Craig Considine, a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Rice University, reveals how the racialization of Muslims interact with Islamophobic discourses and incidents in the United States, particularly in the experiences of brown bodies traveling through airports around the nation. The article begins with a comprehensive overview of Islamophobia in the US, including the rise of Islamophobia during the War on Terror and the expansion of institutionalized Islamophobia via the “Islamophobia industry,” as well as various policies and initiatives at the state and federal level. It then explains the study methodology of news media content analysis, followed by a critical examination of the intersectionality of race and Islamophobia. Finally, the findings of the study are presented, highlighting the way in which the racialization of Muslims—via stereotypes, symbols, and images associated with Muslims and Islam—has led to an increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes, and discrimination against those “flying while brown.” In focusing particularly on research-based evidence and current events that point to the racialization of Islam, the author reveals the way in which brown bodies, both Muslim and non-Muslim, are targeted with such racialization as they travel in various public spaces. It situates these incidents of Islamophobia within a history of racial profiling against Muslim citizens, particularly South Asians in the post-9/11 era, and connects this history to contemporary examples of discrimination against Muslims traveling with domestic airlines in the US. These examples include heightened security screening on the belief that ethnicity or national origin increases passengers’ risk of carrying out an act of terrorism and the removal of Muslims and passengers who others perceive to be Muslim from domestic airlines. This paper sheds light on the way in which racism against racialized Muslims and non-Muslims in the US plays out at the social/interactional as well as institutional level, to ultimately control and limit the way in which these brown bodies occupy public and private spaces.

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Counter-narratives and Strategies

OVER THE LAST DECADE there has been increased interest in employing strategies and approaches to countering Islamophobia across a range of contexts. The following articles provide commentaries, case studies, and recommendations for various anti-Islamophobia efforts that can work against the structural and everyday discrimination faced by Muslim-American communities. The following list of readings specifies strategies for countering Islamophobia in areas like social media, legislative lobbying, intergroup contact, interfaith dialogue, social activism, as well as in various institutional contexts. Such settings may include education, the workplace, and in therapeutic practice. These perspectives also draw on a range of strategies employed by Muslim individuals who provide counter-narratives to the Islamophobic stereotypes they are subjected to. Examples covered in the following readings include the use of comedy, poetry, self-representation, and insisting on inclusion in the American polity and social life through appropriation of what signifies "the mainstream." This area of research is in its preliminary stage, and would benefit from deeper engagements and practical solutions for implementation across a range of settings.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Love, Erik. "[Confronting Islamophobia in the United States: Framing Civil Rights Activism among Middle Eastern Americans.](#)" *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, no. 3/4 (2009): 401-25.

In this article, Erik Love, a PhD Candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara, suggests three likely avenues for advocacy organizations to confront Islamophobia. The article firstly introduces "racial formation" as a conceptual framework for understanding Islamophobia in the US. This is supported by an overview of the racialized history of American communities with ancestry in North Africa, Southwest Asia, and the Middle East, followed by a discussion on the roots of Islamophobic discourses in the US, such as pop culture stereotypes, discriminatory state actions, and bigotry. In doing so, the article discusses anti-Islamophobia civil rights activism within the historical context of organizational responses to other forms of racialized discrimination in the United States. Love traces the way several organizations have worked to confront the problem of Islamophobia at the national level since the early 1980s, engaging in political lobbying and electoral activism, providing legal assistance, and publishing research detailing trends in hate crimes and discrimination. This article suggests three possible models for the organizations to counter Islamophobia in the US. The first model is based on African American civil rights organizations of the 1950s to 1960s, characterized by civil disobedience and large-scale, visible protest actions. The second possibility proposed is to form coalitions based on pan-ethnic identities. The last model is the most realistic option that has already been implemented by existing Muslim rights organizations. It is focused on legal activism, cooperation with law enforcement, and legislative lobbying, without claiming access to remedies that target particular racial groups. In critiquing the effectiveness of all three models, the article highlights the need for further research on countering Islamophobia, particularly on the complex and interconnected role of Middle Eastern American identity, the role of the state in post-civil rights movement America, and the fluctuating social dynamics of Islamophobia.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

McGinty, Anna Mansson. [“The ‘Mainstream Muslim’ Opposing Islamophobia: Self-Representations of American Muslims.”](#) *Environment & Planning A* 44, no. 12 (2012): 2957-2973.

Anna Mansson McGinty, Associate Professor of Geography and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Milwaukee, critically engages in how self-representations of the “mainstream Muslim” and “American Islam” have been employed by Muslim Americans to resist Islamophobic discourses. The notion of “mainstream Muslim” as a counter narrative serves a twofold purpose, firstly to challenge stereotypes and Islamophobic claims as well as to insist on inclusion within the American polity and social life through the appropriation of powerful notions of what signifies “the mainstream.” The paper’s analysis is based on a series of seminars within a collaboration project between the University of Milwaukee and a Muslim women’s organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The article is organized in three parts. First, it provides a description of the “combating Islamophobia project” and a discussion on the politics of representations of Islam and Muslims in the West. The second part explores Muslim self-representations as counter-narratives via the identity of “mainstream/moderate Muslims” and “American Islam” that stress the compatibility and reconciliation of Muslims with American political and social life, rather than symbolic links to foreign Muslim populations or organizations. The final section reflects on the possibilities and limitations of the “mainstream Muslim” identity as a counter-narrative to combat Islamophobia and critiques how scholars themselves participate in the production of certain representations that frame Muslims as the “other.” As expressed by the leaders in this collaboration project, “American Islam” can be connected the dominant conception of “mainstream American values” like equality, mutual respect, tolerance, and freedom of belief. Overall, this article highlights the way counter-narratives are used to challenge the polarization of Muslims in the US through focusing on a politics of belonging and integration.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Beck, Elizabeth, Moon Charania, Ferdoos Abed-Rabo Al-Issa, and Stéphanie Wahab. [“Undoing Islamophobia: Awareness of Orientalism in Social Work.”](#) *Journal of Progressive Human Services* 28, no. 2 (2017): 58-72.

In this article, social work researchers in Atlanta, Bethlehem, and Portland explore the need for health service providers and educators to decolonize their practice by “undoing” and countering Islamophobia. In advocating the use of the term “Islamophobia,” the authors urge social workers to more explicitly acknowledge the relationships between colonization, imperialism, empire, whiteness, othering, and structural violence. The term Islamophobia brings attention to the distinct traceable history that demonizes people of color through Orientalist imagery, while being a process built on hegemonic views of race and religion that serves imperialism and white supremacy. Social workers are thus encouraged to consider the impacts of these historical and structural processes on lives of Arab/Muslim/brown people, while bringing attention to the intersections of ethnic and religious oppression within Orientalism. Arguing that a social worker’s ability to interrupt Islamophobia is strengthened by an understanding of the historical record and theoretical tenets of Orientalism, the authors offer linkages between Orientalism and Islamophobia. The article provides a literature review that situates the contributions of the social work discipline to literature related to Arabs, Arab descendants, and Muslims, pointing to examples of Orientalism within this body of work. The final parts of the article then move to a discussion of “undoing Islamophobia.” Three guidelines are provided for undoing Islamophobia in social work practice. First, the authors provide ideas to help identify Orientalism because of its “ubiquitous, obscure, normalized nature” (p. 67). Second, they emphasize the need to explore linkages between Orientalism and hegemony because it is not enough to remediate racism without rejecting the processes that strengthen it. Last, they provide strategies associated with postcolonial studies to provide a framework for resisting and challenging Islamophobia, based on a rejection of hegemony and whiteness. This perspective draws attention to the way in which theories around Islamophobia, namely Said’s Orientalism, can be applied by service providers or educators in their professional practice to confront, “undo,” and counter Islamophobia.

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Young American Muslims & Belonging

FOLLOWING THE 9/11 ATTACKS, several attempts have been made to capture the impact of anti-Muslim discrimination on young American Muslim identity formation, and ultimately, their sense of belonging in a post-9/11 world. The following perspectives focus on issues of freedom of speech, citizenship, national belonging, and process of identity negotiation across various settings in an increasingly hostile anti-Muslim climate. These settings include educational institutions such as schools and college campuses, as well as everyday public spaces. In critiquing the developmental consequences of living in a post-9/11 world, the listed readings engage with how anti-Muslim government policies, social relationships, and media representations negatively affect youth development and identity formation in the US. Overall, there is an ongoing need for research that sheds light on the challenges facing young Muslims in navigating various settings. In particular, a discussion of the tangible impacts of this Islamophobia on their multiple identities and experiences of citizenship in the US will enrich this body of work.

Annotations

FREQUENTLY CITED

Sirin, Selcuk R, Fine Michelle. [Hyphenated selves: Muslim American youth negotiating identities on the fault lines of global conflict.](#) *Applied Developmental Science* 11, no. 3 (2007): 151–163.

Selcuk Sirin, Professor of Applied Psychology at New York University, and Michelle Fine, Professor in Critical Psychology at City University of New York, provide critical insight into the developmental consequences for Muslim youth living in a post 9/11 world. In this article, the authors provide a theoretical and empirical analysis of “hyphenated selves,” or multiple identities, to capture how young Muslim-American young men and women cope with living during the War on Terror. The study provides findings from a multi-method, exploratory research focusing on Muslim-American youth, ranging in age from twelve to eighteen and residing in the New York metropolitan area. The study explores (i) the challenges of being young, Muslim, and American, (ii) the ways Muslim-American young men and women negotiate their gendered identities, and (iii) the difficulties faced at home and within Muslim communities as these youths try to find their unique voices. Notably, the study finds that young people anticipate anti-Muslim sentiment in their daily life, feeling forced to contend with the press of media produced and socially legitimized (mis) representations. The authors note that the way in which young men and women negotiated their identities was different. While young men perceived “Muslim” and “American” as two almost contradictory parts of their hyphenated selves, young Muslim women felt more empowered to take the best of what both worlds have to offer. This is attributed to young women seeing and living in a much more fluid, intertwined world where “Muslim” and “American” are complementary “currents,” each offering its own opportunities and challenges. Although these young Muslim women “walk under the shadow of the stereotype of the “oppressed woman” because of their choice to wear a hijab, they also recognize that in the US they are choosing to wear it, and, hence, they feel empowered by the choice itself. Overall, this piece provides comprehensive data to demonstrate the way in which anti-Muslim government policies, social relationships, and media representations negatively affect youth development and identities, but also how young Muslims, particularly women, build strategies of resilience in the face of these challenges.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Aidi, Hisham. *[Rebel music: Race, empire, and the new Muslim youth culture.](#)* New York, NY: Vintage books (2014).

In this book, Hisham Aidi, a political scientist and lecturer at Columbia University, explores Muslim youth identity and music in the context of Islamophobic politics. Namely, Aidi discusses how Muslim youth culture across the globe embraces various forms of music as a means of protesting, proclaiming identity, and building community. Primarily, Aidi demonstrates how music, particularly hip-hop, as well as rock, reggae, Gnawa, and Andalusian have been utilized to express a shared Muslim consciousness in face of War on Terror policies. Organized into twelve chapters, the book draws on interviews with musicians from the banlieues of Paris, the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, the park jams of the South Bronx, and the Sufi rock bands of Pakistan. It draws on narratives across these contexts to address a range of issues like the rise of the global far right, the spread of the War on Terror, and cultural fusion of music across the globe. Most powerfully, this book exposes the way in which music is employed by Muslim youth in Europe and the US to challenge religious and political categories. Aidi further addresses how governments have tapped into these trends, as countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, France, and the US have begun monitoring music tastes among youth, especially in fringe urban areas, to calculate the power this music might have to undermine and challenge the status quo. Most interestingly, Aidi uncovers how the United States and other Western governments have used hip-hop and Sufi music to “de-radicalize” Muslim youth abroad. Aidi’s interdisciplinary study offers a rich historical analysis, and qualitative ethnography that creatively draws on Muslim youth music culture, shedding light on their perspectives on war, prejudice, and national identities across the globe.

RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Maira, Sunaina Marr. *[The 9/11 Generation: Youth, Rights, and Solidarity in the War on Terror.](#)* New York, NY: New York University Press (2016).

Sunaina Marr Maira, Professor of Asian American Studies at UC Davis, documents the response of Afghan, Arab, and South Asian American youth, to their reality of intensified scrutiny and racist surveillance during the War on Terror. The book draws on an ethnographic study of fieldwork from 2007 to 2011 in the Bay Area with college-aged youth between eighteen and twenty-three. Drawing on interviews and participant-observation, the book offers insights into how these youth mobilize politically in response to Islamophobia. She focuses on the way they mobilize through building coalitions across and within racial and ethnic categories. These coalitions focus on civil and human rights, as well as issues of sovereignty and surveillance during the War on Terror. Framing Islamophobia within a long history of the imperial warfare state, Maira situates the post-9/11 repression of these youth as an extension of suppressed Arab-American activism in what has been called the “long war against terrorism.” Overall, the book speaks to broader questions of justice, accountability, belonging, and violence that these young people grapple with. This is a significant study for enhancing understanding of post-9/11 experiences of Islamophobia, and the proactive measures, strategies, and activities Muslim-American youth are engaged in to reclaim their rights within the discriminatory context of scrutiny and surveillance in the War on Terror.

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