THE NEW "OTHER" THE ENDORSEMENT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AMERICAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This paper analyses the complexity of problems American Muslims face with Islamophobia by examining (i) how Islamophobic discourse has become an integral part of the American politics; (ii) how the American political discourse on Islam and Muslims has affected the increase of Islamophobia, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and (iii) how Islamophobia is wielded as a political tool to garner the support of Americans and justify American imperial ambitions including the U.S. invasions and military occupations. Although the 9/11 gave a fresh impetus to Islamophobia, and since then, it has been on the rise, its history is as old as the history of Orientalism in America. Thus, the paper investigates the continuities between received Orientalism and American political rhetoric on Muslims and Islam. After the 9/11, not only did American political discourse manifest Islamophobia but also regulations and laws signed by the presidents targeted Muslims; both are indications of the continuity of accepted Orientalism. Remarkably, the major tenets of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism parallel the Islamophobic political discourse that emerged after the 9/11. Thus, The paper, thereby draws on Said's discourse analysis of Orientalism to indicate how the rise of Islamophobia among Americans and American political discourse (power) about Muslims and Islam post 9/11 are interconnected and inextricably linked. More specifically, political discourse, while reframing the discourse as "us" versus "them," has

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stigmatized Muslims as "terrorists," "extremists," and "enemies." Muslims, moreover, have been categorized on the one hand as "good" Muslims (the exceptions that prove the rule) who serve American interests and imperial policies and "bad" Muslims who are reluctant to serve imperial interests. As this study analytically explains the relationship between Orientalism, an essential tool of the Western colonial mentality, and the American political discourse, which became harsher with anti-Islamic expressions after the 9/11, it shows how American political discourse of Muslims promotes Islamophobia.

Keywords: Religious Studies, Islamophobia, American Muslims, Orientalism, American Politics, Othering.

Yeni "Öteki": Amerikan Politik Söyleminde Islamofobiyi Onaylama

Öz

Bu makale, İslamofobik söylem Amerikan siyasetinin ayrılmaz bir parçası haline nasıl geldiğini, İslam ve Müslümanlar hakkındaki Amerikan siyasi söyleminin, özellikle 11 Eylül terör saldırılarından sonra İslamofobinin artışını nasıl etkilediğini ve İslamofobinin Amerikalıların desteğini toplamak ve Amerikan askeri işgalleri de dahil olmak üzere Amerikan emperyal emellerini meşrulaştırmak için siyasi bir araç olarak nasıl kullanıldığı incelemektedir. "Batılı" kimliğinin öteki algısındaki İslam karşıtlığı, 11 Eylül olayları ile birlikte yeni bir ivme kazanırken, Amerikan politik söylemi de -parallel bir şekilde- İslamafobi üzerinden doğu-batı ayrımını keskinleştirmeye çalışmıştır. 11 Eylül'den sonra Amerikan siyasi söylemi sadece İslamofobiyi bir politika olarak benimsemekle kalmadı, aynı zamanda başkanlar tarafından imzalanan düzenlemeler ve yasalarla Müslamanlar üzerindeki baskının artmasına sebep oldu. Bu Müslamanları hedef alan bu politik düşünce, temel tezlerini Edward Said'in eleştirdiği Şarkiyatçılıktan (Oryantalizm) almaktaydı. Başka bir deyişle, Edward Said'in Oryantalizm teorisinin ana ilkeleri, 11 Eylül'den sonra ortaya çıkan İslamofobik siyasi söylemle paralellik göstermektedir. Bu açıdan makale, 11 Eylül sonrası Müslümanlar ve İslam hakkındaki Amerikan siyasi söyleminin (güç-bilgi-hakimiyet) ve Amerikalılar arasında artan İslamofobinin nasıl birbirine bağlı ve içiçe olduğunu göstermek için Edward Said'in Oryantalizm teorisini kullanmaktadır. Ayrıca, Amerikan politik söyleminin Müslümanları ötekileştirmek için kullandığı anlatım ve kavramların ("terörist", "aşırılıkçı" ve "düşman" gibi) orientalist ve sömürücü Batı geleneğinin devamı olduğunu göstermek için söylem analizinden bir yöntem olarak yararlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslamofobi, Amerikalı Müslümanlar, Şarkiyatçılık, Amerikan Siyaseti, ötekileştirme

Özet

İslamofobi, 11 Eylül 2001'den bu yana Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde ve tüm dünyada yükselişte olan bir olgu haline gelmiştir. Batı'da, özellikle Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde yaşayan Müslümanlar, 11 Eylül'den sonra nefret dolu ve ayrımcı söylemler ve artan şiddet eylemleriyle sıkça karşılaşmaktaldırlar. İslamofobinin artmasını etkileyen pek çok faktör vardır. Bu faktörlerin başında Amerikan siyasetinin İslam ve müslüman algısı yer almaktadır. Amerikan siyaseti 11 Eylül saldırıları sonrası topluma yerleşen korku iklimini besleyerek İslamofobiyi meşrulaştırma eğilimine girmiştir. Bu çalışma, Amerika bağlamında Müslümanlar ve İslam hakkındaki Amerikan siyasi söyleminin İslamofobinin yükselişinde nasıl bir rol oynadığını araştırırken, öte yandan İslamofobik söylemin Amerikan Müslümanlarının dini benlik ve hürriyetlerini baskılayan bir araca nasıl dönüştüğünü göstermeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu minvalde, bu makale 11 Eylül terör saldırılarından sonra ortaya çıkan ve Amerikan siyasetine yerleşen İslamofobik söylemin Oryantalizmden bağımsız değerlendirilmemesi gerektiğini savunurken, aralarındaki ilişkiyi daha da belirginleştirecektir.

Bu çalışmada yöntem olarak söylem analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu makale, Amerikan siyasi söyleminin ve görev süreleri dolan Amerikan başkanlarının (Bush, Obama ve Trump) imzaladıkları yönetmelik ve yasaların Müslümanları nasıl ötekileştirdiğini ve İslamofobik söylemi nasıl normalleştirdiğini söylem analizi yöntemiyle ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca bu İslamafobik siyasi söylem ve imzalanan İslam karşıtı yasaların, Oryantalist bilgiyi nasıl yeniden ürettiği de makalede vurgulanan hususlardandır.

Bu bağlamda makalede, 11 Eylül sonrası medyada yer alan Müslümanlar ve İslam ile ilgili haberler, Amerikan başkanlarının konuşmaları ve röportajları incelenmiştir. Ayrıca makale,11 Eylül'den sonra Müslümanları ve İslam'ı hedef alan İslamofobik siyasi retoriği ve kanunları ve düzenlemeleri ele alan bilimsel çalışmalardan yararlanarak, bunların Müslümanların yaşamlarını nasıl etkilediklerini ve İslamofobinin hem siyasi alanda hem de Amerikalılar arasındaki yükselişini ortaya koymaktadır.

İslamofobi terimi ilk olarak 1925'lerde Fransız oryantalist ve mühtedi Alphonse Étienne Dinet (ö. 1929) tarafından kullanılmış ve 1990'li yıllarda

Müslümanlara ve İslam'a karşı ayrımcılık anlamında yaygınlaşmıştır. Günümüzde bu terim medyada, siyasette ve akademik çevrelerde yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. İslamofobi terimi, Müslümanlara ve İslam'a karşı önyargı ve İslam'dan veya Müslümanlardan korkma olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Runnymede Trust'ta 1997'de İslamofobi üzerine yazılan bir rapora göre İslamofobi, "İslam'dan korkma veya nefret etme ve dolayısıyla Müslümanların tamamından veya çoğundan korkma veya hoşlanmama anlamına gelen bir kısaltmadır." Raporda ayrıca İslamofobinin "Müslümanlara karşı asılsız bir korku ve nefret içeren, dışlama ve ayrımcılık uygulamalarına yol açan bir bakış açısı veya dünya görüşü"ne dayandığı da vurgulanmaktadır.

Müslüman ve İslam karşıtı söylemler, özellikle 11 Eylül'den sonra Amerikan siyasetinin bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Pek çok politikacı, Amerikalıların desteğini kazanmak için İslamofobik söylemleri siyasi bir araç olarak kullanmıştır. Başkan Bush, Obama ve Trump da dahil olmak üzere birçok politikacı, İslamofobik söylemi "biz" ve "onlar" ikili retoriği ile birlikte kullanmışlardır. Bu ikili ve aşağılayıcı söylem, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki oryantalizmin uzun süredir devam eden tarihinin devamıdır. Oryantalizmden beslenen İslamofobik siyasi söylem, İslam'ın genel olarak moderniteyle, Amerikan toplumunun normlarıyla ve özel olarak da Amerikan yaşam tarzıyla bağdaşmadığının altını çizmektedir. Sonuç olarak, Müslümanlar "aşırılık yanlısı" ve "terörist" olarak temsil edilmektedir. Bu açıdan 11 Eylül saldırıları sonrasında siyasilerin benimsediği İslamofobik yaklaşım, oryantalist "biz" ve "onlar" (Müslümanlar) söylemini Amerikan bağlamında yeniden üretmeye ve Müslümanları ötekileştirmeye başlamıştır. Farklı bir ifadeyle, 11 Eylül terör saldırılarından sonra ortaya çıkan Müslüman ve İslam algısı ve orientalist Müslüman algısı arasında organik bir bağ olduğu ifade edilebilir.

Genel olarak Batı'da ve özel olarak Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde var olan İslamofobi, sadece Müslümanlara has bir sorun olarak görülmemelidir. Politikacılar, toplumların İslam ve Müslüman algı ve anlayışını şekillendirmelerine ve toplumları dönüştürmede ve küresel barışı teşvik etmede kilit bir role sahip olmalarına rağmen, bu güçlerini olumlu anlamda kullanma konusunda yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Batılı politikacıların, Batı'da yükselişte olan İslamofobiyi etkisiz kılma hususunda başarısız oldukları ifade edilebilir. Daha da vahimi ise bu yükselişi durdurmak yerine, İslamofobik söylemlerle durumu daha da körüklemişler ve -maalesef- topluma yerleşen İslam düşmanlığını siyasi güç kazanmak için daha etkin bir şekilde kullanmışlardır. Ancak gelinen noktada Batı'da Müslümanları "ekstremist" olarak

etiketleyerek, Müslümanların ve genel olarak İslam'ın karalanmasının, ulusal güvenliği korumanın bir yolu olmadığı, gün geçtikçe daha belirgin hale gelmektedir. Ancak buna rağmen politikacıların, orientalist okumalardan gücünü alan ve Batı toplumlarında yerleşen İslamofobiden kolaylıkla geri dönmeleri, en azından yakın tarihte mümkün gözükmemektedir.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışmanın en temel katkısı, İslamofobik söylemin Amerikan siyasetinin ayrılmaz bir parçası haline nasıl geldiğini göstermesi ve İslamofobinin oryantalizmle olan organik ilişkisini vurgulamak ve "Batılı" kimliğinin karşına konumlanan İslam ve Müslüman tasavvurlarının, 11 Eylül terör olayları ile birlikte Amerikan politik söylemi üzerinden doğu-batı ayrımını nasıl keskinleştirmeye çalıştığını ortaya koymaktır. Bu minvalde Edward Said'in Oryantalizm eleştirisi geçerliliğini hala sürdürmektedir. Said'in *Orientalism* eserindeki temel kaygıları, 11 Eylül sonrası Müslüman karşıtı politikalarının temel motivasyonu olarak hala karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, "ilerici," "üstün" olarak kendini konumlandıran Batı, konu Müslümanlar ve İslam olunca Oryantalizmin ürettiği basmakalıp Müslüman tasavvuru üzerinden nostalji yaşamaya ve bilgi üretmeye devam etmektedir.

Introduction

In 2016, Donald Trump, with his vice-presidential candidate Mike Pence, the former governor of Indiana, ran for president. One year before the election, in October 2015, when I was a new Ph.D. student at Indiana University, Bloomington, a nineteen-year old man (T.B.), an IU sophomore psychology major, attacked a forty-seven-year old Muslim woman in the café she owned. According to the police report, "the Muslim woman was sitting at the café with her 9-year-old daughter when a man began shouting derogatory phrases and ethnic slurs at the woman."[1] The attacker was said to shout discriminatory phrases, such as "white power" and "kill them all," and "then grabbed the woman by her neck and slammed her head into the table. He then attempted to remove the woman's headscarf" in front of her daughter until her husband subdued the attacker.[2] The attacker was reported to be intoxicated. One of my professors stated that he revealed his true personality under the influence of alcohol. This incident is just one of the Islamophobic cases that Muslims in the

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1   Indystar, "IU student arrested in attack on Muslim woman" (Access March 17, 2022); The Washington Post, "Indiana University student shouted 'white power,' attacked woman, police say" (Access March 17, 2022).

2   Indystar, "IU student arrested in attack on Muslim woman".

West face daily. Since then, I have wondered about the motivations behind this sort of Islamophobic incident. Islamophobia is the product of many elements, such as politics, media, literature, arts, history, and so on. In this paper, I hope to unearth one of the major factors of Islamophobia in America, namely its political discourse on Islam, and its relationship with the orientalist portrayal of Muslims and Islam.

Islamophobia has been on the rise since September 11, 2001, in the United States as well as across the globe. Muslims in the West, especially in the United States, have encountered hateful and discriminatory rhetoric and, indeed, numerous acts of violence after 9/11. Various parameters have caused the increase of Islamophobia. Among others, politics has had a major impact on the rise of Islamophobia through the use of a climate of fear that emerged after the 9/11 attacks. The upsurge in anti-Muslim, racist, and xenophobic language can be easily documented in American politics following the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Muslims have always experienced anti-Muslim sentiments and anti-Islamic prejudice in the West long before 9/11. However, the 9/11 attacks dramatically increased Islamophobia in the West in general and in the United States in particular. As Christopher Allen states, the 9/11 events caused "the continued proliferation of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiment and expression."[3] Islamophobic sentiments also have become the norm in American politics after 9/11. The predictable consequences have resulted: Islamophobic discourse used by politicians gives rise to the othering of Muslims and the normalization of Islamophobic sentiments among the American public.

Islamophobic rhetoric in American politics has shaped the American approach to Islam and Muslims and has triggered hate crimes against Muslim Americans. There have been an increasing number of attacks against Muslim individuals, their homes, mosques, and Islamic centers since 9/11. One of the most well-publicized anti-Muslim hate crimes took place in February 2015, when three university students, Muslims of Arab descent, were shot and killed execution-style by Craig Stephen Hicks.[4]

In this study, I investigate how American political discourse on Muslims

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[3] Christopher Allen, "Justifying Islamophobia: A Post-9/11 Consideration of the European Union and British Contexts", *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 21/3 (2004), 1.

[4] The New York Times, "In Chapel Hill Shooting of 3 Muslims, a Question of Motive" (Access March 7, 2022).

and Islam plays a role in the rise of Islamophobia in the American context. I also show the link between Islamophobic rhetoric embedded in American politics that emerged after the 9/11 terrorist attack and accepted Orientalism. I argue that the American political stance on Muslims and Islam is Orientalist and continuous with the Orientalism embedded in American history.

Theory and Method

Edward Said's theory of Orientalism forms the basis for the analysis provided below. While using Orientalist discourse to perpetuate and reinforce Islamophobia, American politicians create a culture of fear to terrorize their own citizens and stigmatize Muslims and Islam as foes to justify their actions in Middle Eastern countries, including the invasions of Iraq and later Afghanistan. Thus, through Islamophobic rhetoric utilized by politicians after 9/11, Muslims and Middle Easterners have become "the current subordinated group" that needs to be marginalized and excluded from citizenship.[5] Moreover, Muslims are labeled as "terrorists," "enemies," and "extremists" in the political discourse. A question naturally arises: is this discourse of Islamophobia new to American politics? Is it a (necessary and natural) consequence of the 9/11 attacks? Although the attacks lent impetus to Islamophobia in the political sphere, American politics has never been foreign to Orientalist depictions of Muslims. In this sense, Islamophobia, which has a long history in the (white) American imaginary, is inextricably linked to modernity, colonialism, and globalization.[6] More importantly, negative representations of Muslims in the political discourse are a continuation of an accepted Orientalism. Said's theory of Orientalism remains relevant to understanding how and why Western countries perceive Muslims and construct the East as "other." According to Said, Western imperial powers reproduce knowledge about the East to situate itself as superior. The process of knowledge formation is based on the colonial discourse of "us" as superior to "them" as inferior other. As Said succinctly puts it, "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike,

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5   John L. Esposito, "Introduction," in *Islamophobia: The Challenges of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, ed. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2011), xxx.

6   Sunaina Maria, "Islamohobia and the War on Terror: Youth, Citizenship, and Dissent," in *The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century: Islamophobia*, ed. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2011), 109-110.

'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal.'"[7] The "Other," moreover, is depicted as uncivilized and lazy.[8] Said further explains the Western perception of the "Orient": "they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or - as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory- taken over."[9] The West utilized prejudiced and biased definitions of the "Orient" to justify colonial invasions. Similarly, Stuart Hall highlights how the West creates binary oppositions to situate itself as superior against the non-West as "'western'=urban=developed; or 'non-western'= non-industrial= rural=agricultural= under-developed."[10] All these binaries the West constructed to serve as a tool for rationalizing European colonialism.

One of the definitions of Orientalism Said offers is "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"[11] Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[12] Said also clarifies the process of knowledge production about the "Orient:"

> One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of the 'mysterious Orient.' This is nowhere more true than the ways by which the Near East is grasped.[13]

Western representations of the East reproduce knowledge in such a way as to limit the possibilities for identity and subjectivity and to produce imagery which reinforces this worldview. In doing so, they all function as a catalyst for

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7   Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1979), 40.

8   Said, *Orientalism*.

9   Said, *Orientalism,* 207.

10 Stuart Hall, "The West-and-the-Rest: Discourse and Power" in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert and Kenneth Thompson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 186.

11 Said, *Orientalism,* 2.

12 Said, *Orientalism,* 3.

13 Said, *Orientalism*, 26.

the manifestation of power relations and the colonial binary discourse of "us" versus "them." In short, Said's postcolonial theory helps us to comprehend the genealogy of Islamophobia and the link between received Orientalism and Islamophobic discourse embedded in American politics.

The method of this study is discourse analysis and narrative analysis to indicate how American presidential discourse on Muslims and Islam and the regulations and laws they signed recreate/reproduce Orientalist knowledge of Muslims and Islam. I examine news articles, American presidents' speeches and interviews regarding Muslims and Islam after 9/11. I have selected articles, interviews and speeches that explicitly mention Muslims or Islam. I also draw on scholarly works which dismantle Islamophobic political rhetoric and laws and regulations targeting Muslims and Islam in the aftermath of 9/11 to highlight how they influence the lives of Muslims and manifest the rise of Islamophobia in the political sphere and among Americans more broadly.

The Scope of Islamophobia and Politics

The term Islamophobia was first used by the French Orientalist Étienne Dinet, and became common in the 1990s to mean discrimination against Muslims and Islam.[14] Today, this term is widely used in the media, politics, and academic circles.[15] Islamophobia is defined as prejudice against Muslims and Islam and the fear of Islam or Muslims.[16] According to a report on Islamophobia written by Runnymede Trust in 1997, Islamophobia "is a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims."[17] The report also emphasizes that Islamophobia is based on "an outlook or world-view involving an unfounded dread and dislike of Muslims, which results in practices of exclusion and discrimination." The Runnymede report offers the seven following features of Islamophobia:

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[14] Jocelyne Cesari, "Islamophobia in the West: A Comparison between Europe and the United States, " in *The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century: Islamophobia*, ed. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2011), 21.

[15] Cesari, "Islamophobia," 21.

[16] Tahir Abbas, "After 9/11: British South Asian Muslims, Islamophobia, Multiculturalism and the State, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23/3 (Summer 2004), 28.

[17] Runnymede Trust, "Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All" (Access July 3, 2022).

> Muslim cultures are seen as monolithic, Islamic cultures are substantially different from other cultures, Islam is perceived as implacably threatening, Islam's adherents use their faith to gain political or military advantage, Western criticism of Muslim cultures and societies is rejected out of hand, the fear of Islam is mixed with racist hostility to immigration, and Islamophobia is assumed to be natural and unproblematic.[18]

It is apparent that these useful characteristics of Islamophobia, which continue to be its core elements,[19] also indicate the "othering" process of Muslim minorities. Generalizations, misrepresentations, and stereotypes about Muslims and Islam are other aspects of Islamophobia. The characterizations attributed to Islamophobia by the Runnymede report are attitudes or beliefs which are accepted by Islamophobes but which are not true. To take but one example, Muslims in the U.S. are not monolithic but dramatically diverse. In addition to African-American Muslims and converts to Islam, Muslims come from seventy-seven countries.[20] Julianne Hammer points out the complexities and different layers of Islamophobia. In her words, it "is not about innate or natural fear of Islam or Muslims. Rather, it is an ideological construct produced and reproduced at the intersection of imperial ideology, political expediency, and the exploitation of nationalist, racial, and religious insecurities."[21] Thus, the concept of Islamophobia is not simply reducible to the hatred of Muslims and Islam. Rather, it is a complex, multilayered attitude toward Islam which is deeply rooted in colonialism's ideologies and Orientalism.

Ibrahim Kalin in "Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism" maintains that the debate over Islam and Muslims in the West "is shaped and largely determined by the secular-liberal ideals of the European Enlightenment, which cannot accommodate a non-Western religion such as Islam. What turns Islam into a distant and marginal member of the multiculturalist world of Western modernity is the narrow scope of the liberal political system."[22]

Moreover, Islamophobia exists not only in political discourse but also in popular culture, literature, the arts, and media both in the past and today.

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18 Abbas, "After 9/11", 29.

19 Abbas, "After 9/11", 29.

20 Zaal, "Islamophobia", 556.

21 Julianne Hammer, "(Muslim) Women's Bodies, Islamophobia, and American Politics". *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42/1 (2013), 29.

22 Ibrahim Kalin, "Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism". *The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century: Islamophobia*. ed. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

As Mayida Zaal pithily puts it, "Muslims in the U.S., and Arabs specifically, have been vilified in images, cartoons, film, and television for many decades (and long before the attacks of September 11th took place)."[23] Similarly, Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg argue that "Muslims have been a foil for an assumed set of American norms and thus are not depicted as part of the 'normal' American landscape" for the past fifty years of American political cartoons.[24] Moreover, Pope Benedict XVI's comments on Islam, which sparked international reactions and controversy, had a considerable role in shaping this debate. In a 2006 lecture at the University of Regensburg in Germany, entitled "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," Pope Benedict quoted a fourteenth-century Christian emperor: "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."[25] At this point, there are many factors that fuel the rise of Islamophobia directly and indirectly. Consequently, Islamophobia has become normalized within American and other Western cultures.[26] In this context, Islam and Muslims are marginalized by an Islamophobic portrayal of Islam and Muslims in myriad ways.

In the aftermath of the attacks, the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) published an important report titled *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001*. The findings of this report are worth quoting at length:

> Islamic communities and other vulnerable groups have become
> targets of increased hostility since 11 September. A greater sense
> of fear among the general population has exacerbated already
> existing prejudices and fueled acts of aggression and harassment
> in many European Member States. At the same time, attempts to
> allay fears sometimes led to a new interest in Islamic culture and
> to practical inter-faith initiatives.[27]

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23 Mayida Zaal, "Islamophobia in Classrooms, Media, and Politics," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 55/6 (March 2012), 556.

24 Esposito, *Islamophobia*, xxxiii.

25 BBC, "Pope Benedict XVI in His Own Words" (Access March 5, 2022).

26 Peter Gottschalk - Gabriel Greenberg, "From Muhammed to Obama : Caricatures, Cartoons, and Stereotypes of Muslims" in *The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century: Islamophobia*, edit by John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 196.

27 Chris Allen - Jorgen Nielsen. Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 9/11, Prepared on behalf of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

The report was the first official EU-wide document that underscores how Muslims have become victims of an increased and prolonged upsurge of both verbal and physical attacks after 9/11. Another EUMC report, published in 2006, notes the following:

> There is a large body of evidence that demonstrates the persistent scale and dimension of discrimination in employment…derived from controlled experiments in employers' recruitment practices ("discrimination testing"), opinion surveys on discriminatory attitudes, and surveys of perceived discrimination by migrants… the data show that not all migrants are equally exposed to racism and discrimination in employment. Muslims appear to be particularly affected.[28]

As these reports state, there was a dramatic increase in Islamophobic trends as well as hatred toward and discrimination against Muslim minorities. According to many surveys and polls, American Muslims in particular have dealt with the rise of Islamophobic incidents since 9/11. A Washington Post-ABC News poll, released in 2006, illustrates that more than half of Americans have negative feelings towards Islam, compared with another survey (24%) conducted in January 2002.[29] The majority of the interviewees (58%) believe that Islam has more violent followers than any other religion. According to another public opinion poll conducted ten years after 9/11—on September 6, 2011—by Eric Marrapodi, CNN Belief blog co-editor, half of Americans feel insecure and uncomfortable when Muslims are around them.[30] Eric Lichtblau also points out the increase of anti-Muslim attacks in America. In his 2006 New York Times article, Lichtblau claims that "Hate crimes against American Muslims have soared to their highest levels since the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001."[31]

(EUMC) (Vienna, 2002). The EUMC report is based on comprehensive country reports from each of the 15 EU member states, as well as data provided by the EUMC's RAXEN network of National Focal Points.

28 European Union Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, Muslims in the European Union, 8, 46. http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Manifestations_EN.pdf

29 The Guardian, "Islamophobia worse in America now than after 9/11, survey finds" (Access June 7, 2022).

30 CNN, "Poll: Many Americans uncomfortable with Muslims" (Access January 28, 2022).

31 The New York Times, "Hate Crimes Against American Muslims Most Since Post-9/11 Era" (Access January 28, 2022).

Over the last twenty-one years since 9/11, American Muslims have continued to deal with anti-Muslim sentiments and bias. According to a report released by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding in collaboration with Georgetown University in 2019, Islamophobia is on the rise in the United States.[32] Moreover, a 2021 report from the United Nations points out growing Islamophobia throughout the world, including the United States. In a March 2021 survey conducted by Pew Research Center, Americans were asked which religious groups in the US experience discrimination. They did think that "Muslims face 'a lot' of discrimination than to say the same about the other religious groups included in the survey, including Jews and evangelical Christians."[33] Given these reports and surveys, it is safe to say that there has been no decrease in Islamophobic attitudes in the United States, but instead that Islamophobia is still on the rise. Islamophobia's continued salience in the United States, in particular, has been fueled by political rhetoric and action.

Islamophobic Political Discourse after 9/11

Anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic discourses have become part of American politics, especially after 9/11. Many politicians have used Islamophobic rhetoric to garner the support of Americans. Islamophobic political discourse underscores that Islam is incompatible with modernity in general, the norms of American society, and the American way of life in particular. Consequently, Muslims are portrayed as representing as "extremists" and "terrorists." In this respect, this approach reproduces Orientalist discourse of "us," and "them" (Muslims) in the American context. To put it differently, "notions of cultural and social identification of the 'Muslim other' stem from an understanding and experience of imperialism and colonialism…Throughout this time, Muslims have been portrayed as 'savage,' 'moronic,' 'small-minded,' or 'fanatical religious militants.'"[34] These colonial representations of Muslims are still present in politics. In this framework, differences are considered threatening.

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[32] NPR, "Study Shows Islamophobia Is Growing In The U.S. Some Say It's Rising In Chicago, Too" (Access January 28, 22).

[33] Pew Research Center, "Muslims are a growing presence in U.S., but still face negative views from the public" (Access January 28, 2022).

[34] Tahir Abbas, "Islamophobia in the United Kingdom: Historical and Contemporary Political and Media Discourses in the Framing of a 21st-Centruy Anti-Islam Racism". in *The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century: Islamophobia*, ed. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65.

Being Muslim does not fit (white, Christian) American identity. Moreover, it is seen as a threat and a challenge to American identity.

It is worth noting that anti-Muslim sentiments are not limited to a particular party in America. At some level, both Republicans and Democrats hold a negative attitude toward Muslims. According to an Economist/YouGov poll released in 2015, suspicion of Islam was much higher among Republicans—74 percent—than Democrats—41 percent.[35] In this sense, Islamophobic political discourse is an issue in both American political parties. Similarly, Democratic and Republican presidents are not substantively different when it comes to laws and regulations affecting Muslims.

During the administration of George W. Bush, Islamophobic rhetoric became an integral part of American political discourse. President Bush launched the "Global War on Terror" in the wake of the 9/11 attacks which explicitly made Muslim "extremists" the target of the US military campaign. In an interview, Hatem Bazian, a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley and leader of the college's Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project, states that "The "global war on terror" doubly re-Orientalized Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians through treating them collectively as being in a realm beyond civilization itself; thus any and all exceptional and violent measures can and may be instituted."[36] President Bush also intentionally conflated Muslims with terrorism.[37] Beyond discursive acts, he signed the U.S.A. Patriot Act in October 2001. Even though Bush stated that this law was intended to be used "to enhance the penalties that will fall on terrorists or anyone who helps them," it gave rise to generalizations and labeled Muslims as foes, and limited their freedom by drawing a distinction between Muslim Americans and other citizens. Evelyn Alsultany lists the ways the Act directly targeted Muslims.:

> [This Patriot Act] legalized the following (previously illegal) acts
> and thus enabled anti-Arab and Muslim racism: monitoring Arab
> and Muslim groups; granting the U.S. Attorney General the right
> to indefinitely detain noncitizens whom he suspects might have
> ties to terrorism; searching and wiretapping secretly, without
> probable cause; arresting and holding a person as a "material

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35 Huffpost, "Muslim Americans Widely Seen As Victims Of Discrimination" Access February 22, 2022.

36 Othering and Belonging Institute, "Hatem Bazian: The Historical Genesis of Islamophobia in the US and Countering Islamophobia" (Access July 20, 2022).

37 Esposito, *Islamophobia*, xxx.

witness" whose testimony might assist in a case; using secret evidence, without granting the accused access to that evidence; trying those designated as "enemy combatants" in military tribunals (as opposed to civilian courts), and deportation based on guilt by association (not on what someone has done).[38]

The act served as a catalyst for the process of othering Muslims in the American context. Muslims were now legitimately treated as "other," and any one Muslim might potentially be a "terrorist." Thus, it is safe to say that American Muslims' lives dramatically changed after the 9/11 events through these laws. Islamophobic rhetoric and policy in the US politics became a crucial part of the War on Terror. Mahmood Mamdani also coined the phrase "good Muslim, bad Muslim" to show how the discourse of the War on Terror used by George Bush and his administration characterizes Muslims as bad Muslims and good Muslims:

> After an unguarded reference to pursuing a "crusade," President Bush moved to distinguish between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims." From this point of view, "bad Muslims" were clearly responsible for terrorism. At the same time, the president seemed to assure Americans that "good Muslims" were anxious to clear their names and consciences of this horrible crime and would undoubtedly support "us" in a war against "them." But this could not hide the central message of such discourse: unless proved to be "good," every Muslim was presumed to be "bad." All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against "bad Muslims."[39]

Mamdani highlights how US policy and politics reframed Muslims as "good" (secular, westernized) or "bad" (premodern, fanatical). In this framework, Muslims who support and embrace US imperial policies are identified as "good" Muslims and friends, while Muslims who oppose them are seen as "bad" Muslims and enemy.[40] According to Deepa Kumar, "The good/bad Muslim typology can be understood as imperial ethnocentric racism

38 Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation After 9/11* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 5.

39 Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 15.

40 Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire: Twenty years after 9/11* (New York: Verso, 2021), 118.

in that it is productive of racialized constructions of 'them' in contrast to 'us' rooted in imperial ambitions;" more importantly, imperial ethnocentrism tends "to see those who are part of colonized or less powerful nation states, or subordinated groups within imperial nations, as inferior. 'They,' whether as friend or enemy, are inferior or subordinate to 'us.'"[41] Given the characteristics of the discourse of "us" versus "them" and the good/bad Muslim typology, it is safe to state that this Orientalist discourse targeting Muslims in the months and years following 9/11 in American politics is a continuation (if also an intensification) of accepted Orientalism. Nathan Lean states that the rhetoric of "bad" Muslims and "good" Muslims made Americans "be skeptical of all Muslims."[42]

The portrayal of Muslims as an enemy has become a norm in politics after 9/11. By labeling Muslims the "new" enemy of the West, the United States (and increasingly the Republican Party) has aimed to replace the Cold War threat of the Soviet Union with Muslims.[43] Juan Cole in "Islamophobia and American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Bush Years and After" demonstrates that there was an interconnection between Islamophobic rhetoric and American foreign policy during the administration of George W. Bush. More precisely, George Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney both nurtured the language of a supposed Islamic enemy—uncivilized, savage, extremist, violent—to justify American aggression.[44] During the Bush administration, Orientalist and Islamophobic representations of Muslims were *norm*alized. Bush, for instance, utilized the word "Islamo-fascism," to link Islam and fascism, and most importantly, this word operates to fuel Islamophobia.[45] The fascists of World War II had long maintained a place in the American political imaginary as the ultimate violent and savage enemy, but also one that the Americans understood to have vanquished. The Bush administration "deeply damaged the image of the United States in the eyes of Muslims, as well as other people" through the invasions and military occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the

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[41] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 118.

[42] Nathan Lean, *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 143.

[43] Esposito, *Islamophobia*, xxxi.

[44] Juan Cole, "Islamophobia and American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Bush Years and After". *The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century: Islamophobia*. ed. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 127-142.

[45] Kalin, "Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism," 8.

assault on the Iraqi city of Fallujah, and the Abu-Ghraib torture scandal.[46] Needless to say, George Bush is not the only Republican presidential candidate to use Islamophobic rhetoric; other Republican candidates, including Donald Trump, John McCain, Mitt Romney, Tom Tancredo, Rudy Giuliani, and Mike Huckabee have embraced Islamophobic rhetoric during the presidential primaries.[47]

Like the Bush administration, the Obama administration also passed new legislation aimed at Muslims. Even though President Bush launched "War on Terror," Obama, as a Democratic president, continued this war—albeit with significant changes in emphasis and tactics—and endorsed many policies Bush initiated. Deepa Kumar calls it "Obama's 'smarter' War on Terror." In her words, "Obama launched a 'smarter' war on terror…the Obama administration built on and deepened the policies developed by Bush…. Just as with the global war on terror where Obama initiated a new rhetorical posture, the domestic war on terror also acquired a more liberal veneer."[48] Even though he vehemently criticized Bush's anti-Muslim regulations, especially his discourse on the war of terror, during presidential election in 2008, Obama did not dismantle Bush's regulations after electing him as president. Instead, he continued the war on terror in a softer, more subtle way. As Kumar highlights, "Obama furthered Bush's policies and the racialized Muslim continued to be targeted by the state… He secured for the president the power to execute US citizens suspected of ties to terrorism without so much as a trial or the apparently unnecessary burden of proof; the cleric and US citizen Anwar al-Awlaki was summarily executed in 2011… He [Obama] signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that not only institutionalized this process but also expanded its use to include US citizens."[49] It is safe to state that President Obama legalized and institutionalized several anti-Muslim regulations, including the assassination of (Muslim) American citizens. To put

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[46] Cole, "Islamophobia and American Foreign Policy Rhetoric," 135.

"In 2000, some 75 percent of Indonesians had a favorable view of the United States. By 2006, it was only 30 percent, and after the invasion of Iraq it had fallen to 15 percent. In 2000, 56 percent of Turks reported a favorable view of the United States. In 2007, it was 9 percent. In Jordan, positive views of the United States fell from 25 percent in 2002 to 15 percent in 2006."

[47] Esposito, *Islamophobia*, xxxi.

[48] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 191.

[49] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 193..

it differently, during the Obama administration, Islamophobia continued to be part of politics. Kumar calls it "liberal" Islamophobia.

During the 2016 presidential election, American Muslims witnessed an unprecedented increase in hate crimes as well as a rise in anti-Islamic rhetoric by politicians. Many incidents of violence and harassment directed at American Muslims were reported. According to Ibrahim Hooper, the spokesman of the Muslim Advocacy group, the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR),[50] reports of hate crimes and bias incidents against American Muslims were at an all-time high in 2015.[51] As stated earlier, political discourse on Islam and Muslims had a significant impact on the Islamophobic attitudes toward Muslims in America during that presidential campaign. Donald Trump, for instance, proposed very divisive proposals in relation to Muslims and Islam, and more precisely many Americans supported his policies and thoughts on Muslims and Islam. Furthermore, Trump's first TV ad aired in 2016. Through this new video, which features dark images of the San Bernardino shooters, who were Muslims, as well as body bags and explosions, he played the fear card with Americans. By doing so, he was garnering the support of many Americans. Trump's proposed ban on Muslims entering the United States had the support of a sizable number of Americans (46%), albeit creating an international uproar and condemnation by President Obama and nearly all of those running for the presidency.[52] The results of 2016 election suggest that Donald Trump was awarded for his anti-Muslim comments by the victory of the presidential election. During his time in office, Trump continued the Islamophobic discourse. Right after the election, Trump signed an executive order fulfilling his promise of a Muslim travel ban in January 2017. During a radio interview in 2017, Trump also stated that "It's not a discussion about Islam as a religion or not a religion. It's about radical Islamic terrorism. We are prepared to be honest about the threat…" in a response to a question about

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[50] CAIR was founded in 1994, and it has worked over the past two decades to advocate for Muslims' civil rights, respond to bias incidents and do outreach and education work to increase Americans' awareness of Islam.

[51] Aljazeera, "US Muslims experience rise in Islamophobia" (Access July 20, 2022).

[52] Rasmussen Reports, "Voters Like Trump's Proposed Muslim Ban" (Access July 13, 2022).

At the end of 2015, among all voters, 46% favored a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States, while 40% were opposed. Fourteen percent (14%) are undecided.

whether Islam is a religion.[53] Like many politicians, Trump reduced Islam to terrorism and constructs binary of "us" versus "them," which is rooted in Orientalist discourse.

Like many politicians, Trump made Islamophobia an integral part of American political discourse on Muslims. Khaled Beydoun calls it "political Islamophobia." In this respect, he elaborates how "political Islamophobia" functions: "the emergence of political Islamophobia is first facilitated by legal and political baselines—deeply embedded in American legal, media, and political institutions—that frame Islam as un-American, and Muslims as presumptive national-security threats. Second, it is enabled by the expansion of modern law and policy that marks Islam as an extremist ideology that spawns 'radicalization.'"[54]

It is worth noting that American politicians took advantage of the climate of fear that emerged after the September 11 terror attacks. According to many surveys and polls, the fear of terrorism had become common among Americans post-9/11. A 2014 NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll revealed that nearly half of Americans (47%) felt "less safe now than" before 9/11.[55] Similarly, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll released in 2015, "Americans' fear of terrorism is at its peak since 9/11.[56] It is clear that fears of terrorist attacks had helped lift Donald J. Trump to a new high among Republican primary voters, according to the New York Times/CBS News poll. Respondents of both surveys say that they had little confidence in the Obama administration's handling of terrorism. Politicians, especially Republicans, had taken advantage of this climate of fear to gain support. In this atmosphere of fear, American Muslims faced many difficulties and discrimination. As mentioned earlier, according to a Rasmussen poll, 66% of likely Republican voters in 2015 favored Trump's proposed temporary ban on all Muslims entering the United States. It seems that the clear beneficiary of this moment of deep anxiety was Trump arguably playing a key role in his 2016 election as

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53 BBC, "What Trump team has said about Islam" (Access March 20, 2022).

54 SSRN, "'Muslims Bans' and the (Re)Making of Political Islamophobia" (Access March 20, 2022).

55 NBCnews, "ISIS Threat: Fear of Terror Attack Soars to 9/11 High, NBC News/WSJ Poll Finds" (Access March 21, 2022).

56 International Business Times, "Americans' Fear Of Terrorism At Its Peak Since 9/11, New Poll Says" (Access March 21, 2022). The poll surveyed 1,275 adults over the phone from Dec. 4-8, 2015. The pool of respondents included 431 Republicans and 384 Democratic primary voters.

president. To increase or revive that fear and anxiety, he has continued to use Islamophobic rhetoric to gain more support.

On the campaign trail, Trump also called for a mandatory registry of Muslims in the United States.[57] He considers all Muslims potential criminals and terrorists. Given Trump's 2016 election victory, a majority of American people to some extent were sympathetic toward his Islamophobic sentiments.

Ibrahim Hooper, of CAIR, and Heidie Beidrich, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project which studies and reports on extremist groups, state that anti-Muslim rhetoric is much worse than it was after 9/11.[58] CAIR, moreover, published a report about violence against Muslim Americans after the Paris attacks in 2015. CAIR mentions that it had "received more reports about acts of Islamophobic discrimination, intimidation, threats, and violence targeting American Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslim) and Islamic institutions in the past week and a half, than during any other limited period of time since the 9/11 terror attacks."[59] The US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), a coalition of leading national and local Muslim organizations, organized a news conference on December 21, 2015. USCMO pointed out growing Islamophobia in America as well as the rising number of hate incidents nationwide.[60]

Conclusion

After the 9/11 attacks, according to many surveys and reports, anti-Muslim sentiments have increased. In particular, negative and stereotypical representations of Muslims by politicians have played a major role in the continued rise of Islamophobia in the American context. In the post-9/11 period several laws and regulations passed which have served to manifest in the legal realm these anti-Muslim sentiments. Many politicians, including Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump, used Islamophobic, discriminatory rhetoric and a binary discourse of "us" versus "them." This binary and derogatory discourse

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[57] The Newyorker, "Trump's Muslim Database Game" (Access March 23, 2022).

[58] CNN, "Muslim Americans: Current Political Climate Worse Than After 9/11" (Access March 23, 2022).

[59] The Guardian, "It's not just Trump – the US is gripped by anti-Muslim hysteria" (Access July 20, 2022).

[60] CAIR California, "U.S. Muslim Leaders Announce Campaigns to Enhance National Security, Address Rising Islamophobia" (Access July 20, 2022).

is the continuity of a long-standing history of Orientalism in the United States. More importantly, this anti-Muslim discourse embedded in politics has resulted in an increase in Islamophobic discrimination, intimidation, bullying and harassment, threats, and violence targeting American Muslims in the United States. Given the fact that during the 2016 presidential election, Islamophobic political discourse became a catalyst for hate crimes against American Muslims in the last few years, the negative and discriminatory attitudes towards Islam and Muslims further marginalize Islam and Muslims. In particular, after 9/11 many politicians in America used overtly Islamophobic and sensationalist rhetoric about Muslims and Islam; moreover, they have conflated a small minority of Muslim extremists and terrorists, including al Qaeda, ISIS and the Taliban, with ordinary American Muslims and, more specifically, have implied that all Muslims are radicals and terrorists. By focusing on isolated cases, Islamophobic rhetoric embedded in politics tends to stigmatize all Muslims as terrorists. This biased approach, which results in reductionism, simplification, and generalization among Americans in their view of Muslims, contributes to Islamophobia as well as revives the fear of terrorism in American society. This anti-Muslim rhetoric places American Muslims completely outside the category of "American," on account of their religion and creates "second class citizenship" for Muslims.

In the West in general and the United States in particular, we cannot consider Islamophobia simply a problem for Muslims. Especially, politicians and policymakers have a key role in enhancing people's understanding of Islam and transforming societies as well as promoting global peace. The grand failure of the Global War on Terrorism, with an enemy vaguely identified as "extremist Muslims" has demonstrated in a most dramatic way that the vilification of Muslims and Islam in general is no way to protect national security. More importantly, we need to distinguish between proponents of terrorism and ordinary American Muslims.

Islamophobic sentiments are common not only in the United States, but also in many countries. In this sense, the issue of Islamophobia will not be eradicated easily or soon. It is crucial to seek creative ways to challenge growing Islamophobia in American society. The first, urgent requirement to expunge this problem is that politicians need to make a decision to push new rhetoric, one that will replace the global war on "Islamist" terrorism, or "Muslim" terrorism with simply a "war on terrorism," since Islamophobia is linked to American foreign policy, as Sunaina Maria maintains. Conflating "Islam" or "Muslim"

with "terrorism" also negatively shapes people's perceptions of Islam. In other words, the use of "Muslim" terrorist or "Islamist" terror is an oblique way of stigmatizing Muslims as terrorists and an excuse for Islamophobic attacks.

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