



**Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez, (eds.) .- *Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies* (London: Routledge, 2019), 231 p.**

In the last decade, many studies tackled the issue of Islamophobia in Western societies, where Muslims constitute the minority. Muslim societies, however, have been practically neglected as hotspots of Islamophobia. One of the reasons for this is the conspicuous fact that Muslims make up the majority in most of these countries. But can Islamophobia be exclusively explained based on a majority-minority relation? Edited by Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez, *Islamophobia in Muslim Majority*

*Societies* constitutes a first attempt to open a debate about the understudied and undertheorized phenomenon of Islamophobia in Muslim majority societies. The participants in this study demystify this phenomenon in Albania, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, Ethiopia and Australia. Islamophobia does not only define the relationship between majorities and minorities (as it can be observed in Western societies), but more specifically, one between the powerful versus the powerless. While this relationship is often evidenced by antagonizing Westernized Muslim elites versus conservative Muslim masses, Islamophobia in the form of epistemic racism is as much existent within Islamic discourses that are predicated a Eurocentric stance of the world. In this vein, Islamophobia in the Muslim world and Islamophobia in the West emanate from similar ideological and epistemological backgrounds.

In this study, Islamophobia is rendered as anti-Muslim racism. It is about a dominant group of people aspiring to seize, stabilize and widen their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources, rights and definition of a constructed “we.” In Muslim countries, Islamophobia can especially be understood as a way of regulating and disciplining Muslim subjects who are perceived as a glaring threat to the dominant groups in power, thus framing Islamophobia as political.

Enes Bayraklı, Farid Hafez and Léonard Faytre initiate the book by a very important chapter dubbed “Making sense of Islamophobia in Muslim societies” wherein they try to unveil the main dynamics that make sense of Islamophobia in predominantly Muslim societies. By “Muslim societies,” they refer to societies with a Muslim majority population. By accentuating

the ideological and political ruptures between Westernized secular Muslim elites and conservative Muslim masses, the authors explain how Muslims can actually be Islamophobes. They suggest looking at Islamophobia through the lenses of world-systems theory, epistemic racism and secularism. They draw on the concepts of self-Orientalization and self-Westernization to explain how some segments of Muslim societies approach their identity, their tradition and their own world-view through an alien outlook, namely Western Orientalism.

Islamophobia in Muslim majority nation-states has historical genesis dating back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Hatem Bazian from the University of California in the second chapter locates Islamophobia primarily as a “process emerging out and shaped by the colonial-Eurocentric hegemonic discourses dating to late 18<sup>th</sup> century,” which also emphasizes the role of internalization by post-colonial elites (22). Educated and internalized the Western epistemologies with the proclivity of problematizing Islam in the same way the Church was in European history and assigning to it the causes of decline, despotism and backwardness, elites in Muslim majority nation-states ended up making a “modern nation-state” that had embedded in it an anti-Islam “secular theology” while building walls of structural exclusions to keep out the Muslim subject him/herself at the gates of civilization.

Starting from the third chapter, the contributors in this intriguing book try all the harder to substantiate the trope of Islamophobia in Muslim majority states. Rezart Beka traces the extent to which Albanian public intellectuals have utilized global Islamophobic paradigms, like Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, Islamo-communism, the idea of “Islamofascism” or the narrative of a “European Judeo-Christian identity” to apply them to Albania, a Southeastern European Muslim majority country. The role of global Islamophobic themes has been that of providing Albanian public intellectuals with the necessary intellectual tools to frame the issue of Islam in Albania in ways that exclude it from being an essential part of the national identity.

In the same vein, Syed Furrugh Zad Ali Shah from the National Defence University, Islamabad, postulates that Westernized post-colonial secular elites, who have been made to perceive religion and its adherents with bias, suspicion, fear and hatred, and who share similar anti-Islam sentiments, rooted in traditional Western discourses of secularism and modernity, carry Islamophobic prejudices towards Islam in post-colonial Pakistan, a country with a 97 per cent Muslim population and a declared Islamic Republic, aiming at excluding Islam from spheres of dominance. According to the author, the chapter is a precious contribution to the book since Islam in Pakistan has

frequently and enthusiastically been deployed by the state establishment to develop the ideological foundations of the post-colonial polity.

In a contribution entitled “The politics of Islamophobia in Turkey,” Ali Aslan from Ibn Haldun University avers that Islamophobia was central to the construction and reproduction of a modern nation-state in Turkey. Laying bare the dominant years of the politics of Islamophobia in Turkey, which roughly covers the years from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the late 1990s, Aslan focuses on the premise how the secular republican elite deployed Islamophobia in the reproduction of the secular–nationalist nation-state to hold on to power until the late 1990s. The beginning of the 2000s witnessed the victory of the democratic forces and the dismantlement of the Kemalist bureaucratic tutelage in Turkey.

While Aslan tries to apply certain theoretical findings to the Turkish case, Müşerref Yardım from Necmettin Erbakan University and Amina Easat-Daas from Leeds University critically analyze and compare the nature of Islamophobia in satirical cartoons from a Turkish magazine, *Penguen*, and a French magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*. Yardım and Erbakan highlight the similarities and the differences between Islamophobia in Western and Muslim societies through the comparison of these two nationally publications. These leading magazines render Islam as backward and contrary to progressive, liberal Western values, Muslim males as belligerent and sexually vicious, and Muslim females as either submissive or carriers of demographic threat.

In a chapter entitled “Paradoxical Islamophobia and post-colonial cultural nationalism in post-revolutionary Egypt,” May Kosba from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley emphasizes that in the years following the aftermath of Egypt’s 2011 revolution, the country has witnessed a rise in the demonization of al-Ikhwan or the Muslim Brotherhood, adding that the current Egyptian government and its allies have generated a fear of Islamists in the media and in religious institutions, particularly a fear of the Muslim Brotherhood, this fear-mongering narrative has often resulted in Islamophobic language, policies and actions, familiar to those in the West and that have contributed to the rise of Islamophobia in the form of a widespread anti-Ikhwan sentiment; that is, the beginning of an *Ikhwanophobia* in Egypt.

Deina Abdelkader from Harvard University brings to the fore the struggle between the secular and the religious in Egypt in a riveting chapter under the heading “Old wine in new bottles: secularism and Islamophobia in Egypt.” She contends that there is a rift between the religiously/traditionally educated population and the “modern”/secular educated population. So

Hassan al-Banna's awareness of this rift gave him the opportunity to enlist public support directly. Abdelkader postulates that the arguments used by the "secular-liberalists" in the 1920s and 1930s have not changed in Egypt post-January 2011, basically arguing and acting on their assumption that they are the "privileged" holders of the truth politically, socially and economically.

In a manner similar to that of Deina Abdelkader, Sahar El Zahed from the University of California delves into and elaborates on the ways in which popular and widely viewed late-night TV shows, and segments of a presidential speech for various meanings of Orientalism inform the making of Islam and Muslims among the secularized intelligentsia and policy-makers in Egypt. El Zahed argues that some television shows which are led by policy-makers and secularized intelligentsia as seen in the role of TV hosts, producers, directors and owners of TV satellite channels have deliberately constructed a hegemonic discourse that represents "Islam" as a static, anti-modern and backward religion that propagates terrorism and irrationality, and paints "Muslims" as inherently violent, fundamentalists and fanatics. "Muslim Egyptian self-Orientalists," El Zahed avers "could even provide a more significant threat than their fellow Western Orientalists because they are people within the Egyptian community who speak the same language and have the same skin colour" (156).

Mohamed Nawab Osman from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies probes into the confluence of race and religion in understanding Islamophobia in Malaysia. He discusses Islamophobia in the context of Malaysia by examining the historical and contemporary structures of power that enabled the rise of Islamophobia, the factors that rendered Islamophobia increasingly normalized, as well as the manifestations of Islamophobia in Malaysia. Nawab Osman claims that the confluence of race and religion within the Malaysian socio-political domain has resulted in an increasing Islamophobic attitude expressed against Malaysian Muslims, especially on social media, within academic circles and in the legal realm.

In his chapter dubbed "Securitization of Islam in contemporary Ethiopia," Jemal Muhamed from Sabahattin Zaim University accentuates Islamophobia in Ethiopia, a country in the Horn of Africa and a home of multiple religions and Orthodox Christians, Muslims and Protestants. He argues that Islam has been securitized in Ethiopia through the implementation of legislative changes and institutional practices towards Ethiopian Muslims that affect the latter in different ways.

*Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies* ends by a very important contribution by Derya Iner and Katy Nebhan from Charles Sturt University. Their article entitled “Islamophobia from within: a case study on Australian Muslim women,” is an attempt to look into the internal Islamophobia within the Muslim community in Sydney and thereby unpack the intersections between internal and external Islamophobia. Deploying empirical data collected from a series of interviews with Muslims mothers to investigate the impact of Western Islamophobia on these women and their children in Australia, the authors analyze the experiences of these Australian Muslim women to explore the ways in which the intricate nuances of internalized oppression are expressed through inter-communal racism, sexism and criticism of particular “Muslim practices,” which are negatively portrayed within the Western Islamophobic discourse. They explore the ways non-Muslim Islamophobic discourses have infiltrated and influenced Australian Muslim attitudes and their experiences with/towards the hijab, religious practice and religious identification.

Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez’s edited volume *Islamophobia in Muslim Majority* is very interesting in that it will appeal to students, scholars and general readers who are interested in Islamophobia Studies, Racism Studies, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Islam and Politics. This book is a first attempt to shift the discussion to a different context. It is not meant to redefine Islamophobia as such, but rather to look at how Islamophobia plays a role in a context where Muslims are not the minority in a society, but constitute the majority of a society. Surely, this book will be a reference study to gain an insight into the various aspects of Islamophobia in Muslim majority contexts and will encourage further studies and debate in this area.

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