Islamophobia, "Clash of Civilizations", and Forging a Post-Cold War Order!

Hatem Bazian [1,2]

[1] Near Eastern and Asian American Studies Department, University of California, Berkeley, 278 Barrows Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720-1070, USA; hatemb@berkeley.edu

[2] Zaytuna College, 1st Muslim Liberal Arts College, 2401 Le Conte, Berkeley, CA 94709, USA

check for updates

Abstract: Islamophobia, as a problem, is often argued to be a rational choice by the stereotypical media coverage of Islam and Muslims, even though it points to the symptom rather than the root cause. Islamophobia reemerges in public discourses and part of state policies in the post-Cold War period and builds upon latent Islamophobia that is sustained in the long history of Orientalist and stereotypical representation of Arabs, Muslims, and Islam itself. The book *What is Islamophobia? Racism, Social Movements and the State*, edited by Narzanin Massoumi, Tom Mills, and David Miller offers a unique contribution to how best to define and locate the problem of demonizing Islam and Muslims in the contemporary period. The three scholars provide a more critical and structural approach to the subject by offering what they call the "five pillars of Islamophobia", which are the following: (1) the institutions and machinery of the state; (2) the far-right, incorporating the counter-jihad movement; (3) the neoconservative movement; (4) the transnational Zionist movement; and (5) the assorted liberal groupings including the pro-war left and the new atheist movement. The UK-based research group correctly situates Islamophobia within existing power structures and examines the forces that consciously produce anti-Muslim discourses, the Islamophobia industry, within a broad political agenda rather than the singular focus on the media. Islamophobia emerges from the "Clash of Civilizations" ideological warriors and not merely as a problem of media stereotyping, representation, and over-emphasis on the Muslim subject. In this article, I maintain that Islamophobia is an ideological construct that emerges in the post-Cold War era with the intent to rally the Western world and the American society at a moment of perceived fragmentation after the collapse of the Soviet Union in a vastly and rapidly changing world system. Islamophobia, or the threat of Islam, is the ingredient, as postulated in Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis that is needed to affirm the Western self-identify after the end of the Cold War and a lack of a singular threat or purpose through which to define, unify, and claim the future for the West. Thus, Islamophobia is the post-Cold War ideology to bring about a renewed purpose and crafting of the Western and American self.

Keywords: Islamophobia; proto-Islamophobia; Clash of Civilizations; Cold War; Orientalism; Samuel Huntington; Edward Said; Sunni Islam; Shia Islam

1. Introduction: From Proto-Islamophobia to the Cold War

The antecedent to contemporary Islamophobia repertoire maybe traced to early medieval Christian representation of Islam, Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an, which at the time was part of the Church's attempt at providing an explanation for the rapid rise of the new religion and loss of territories. While this early period is important, nevertheless I am hesitant and careful not to use the term Islamophobia to refer to or describe the early formative period of Islam and its relations with the Byzantine and Persian Empires, on the one hand, and the rapid Muslim expansion into territories that up to that point belonged to both powers. Methodologically and theoretically, the

period should be studied while taking into accounts all the complex variables at play, including the construction of a negative image of Islam and Muslims that continues to have utility in the current period. Setting aside the Persian Empire since it is not a major concern of this article, I will focus mainly on the Byzantine Empire. Critically, seventh century Byzantine Empire Christianity was, at best, a fractured enterprise and several marginalized Christian sects in the Levant, North Africa and Spain struck amicable relations with the newly arriving Muslims and going as far as participating in war efforts on their side (Levin 2011). This was a function of pre-Islamic Christian contestation centering on the nature of Jesus and the elevation of Christianity into the status of a state religion. Adding to the internally existing debate regarding the nature of Jesus, Islam's arrival into the Levant, North Africa and Spain in a short period challenged the existing Christian narrative of the world and their place in it, which required a scriptural based explanation. Theologically and politically, the leaders of the Church had to provide a scripturally grounded explanation for the massive loss of territory to Muslims, as well as the sizable Christians conversion to Islam in these vast territories.

For some Christians, the arrival of Muslims was viewed through the Apocalyptic literature, which was deployed "to explain the traumatic situation in which they now found themselves and so to provide a model of hope for the future, extending the promise of deliverance to those who stood firm" (Levin 2011). In this view, the Muslims were cast as the "barbarian tyrants" that will be ultimately destroyed and the faithful rewarded. Early Christian views of Islam and Muslims were exclusively and internally constructed with limited or no actual engagement with Muslims, be it theologically, culturally or philosophically. Even in areas that came under Muslim rule, the early contact between Christian and Muslims was limited and not at all theological in nature despite some references to debates taking place during this period. Thus, we find persistent negative or distorted representations ranging from referring to them as "*the scourge of God's fury*", "*pagans*", "*Antichrist*", as well as portraying Muslims as a type of Christian "*heretics*" due to their affirmation of Jesus' Prophet hood but rejection of the trinity (Levin 2011). Another set of negative images focused on the person of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, and referring to him as "*imposter*", "*violent*", and "*lustful*", which were attributes fitting into an already constructed narrative about the distorted origins of Islam and Muslims (Gunny 2004). The early depiction of Islam and Muslims persisted and found more support in Western Europe during and post Crusades periods, which then gets projected and packaged into the negative images of the Turk during the Ottoman period (Setton 1992).

Formative and early relations between Muslims and Christian around the 7th and 8th centuries are complex, multifaceted (Penn 2015) and cannot be adequately covered in this short article but it is important to note that history is selectively mined by the Islamophobia industry to push forth a distorted agenda. Contemporary studies on Islamophobia must take stock of the expansive anti-Muslim repertoire of the early medieval period and the ways that it gets re-deployed to create historical un-disrupted continuities in Muslim-Christian hostilities to inform, regulate and construct modern discriminatory policies or affirm a clash of civilization worldview. The approach to this early period should examine all the sources that bear on the subject and not to exclusively use or over-emphasize Western Christianity sources that represent one dimension of the over-all Christian-Muslim relations. Michael Philip Penn's work, *When Christians First Met Muslims*, is a must read for anyone in interested in understanding the complex multifaceted nature of Christian-Muslim relations and engagement in the Levant and North Africa (Penn 2015).

Locating Islamophobia in history is part of the theorization underway by many scholars in the field and has many iteration and beginnings depending on the period and historical context in consideration. The "*Muslim Question and the New Christendom: Medieval Geopolitical Theologies and the End of Liberalism*", a critical and unpublished paper in the field presented by Professor Adnan Husain on 22 April 2017 at Berkeley's IRDP 8th Annual International Islamophobia Conference, introduces an early historical examination of Islamophobia (Husain 2017). The paper theorized what Husain calls proto-Islamophobia, dating it to the period of the Crusades. Adnan argues that "the new politics of the far right engages in a fantasy of medieval returns and revives Christendom

as an ideal politico-cultural identity". Furthermore, he states that the current Islamophobic trend "recapitulates a central dynamic of the crusading era that created the conditions for the construction of Christendom and its re-ordering and reform through persecution of heretics, Jews, and Muslims within Europe". The key element for the Islamophobia field is that Adnan's work "examines the conscious and structural interconnections between medieval paradigms and re-emerging modern realities", which "allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at work in contemporary Islamophobia and its political logic". Here, Adnan's work takes the scholarship to an earlier period, thus calling it proto-Islamophobia and locating its emergence to possibly as early as the 11th century of the common era.

Similarly, Professor Sophia Rose Arjana's book, *Muslims in the Western Imagination*, traces the construction of a feared and monster image of Muslims far back and much earlier than the current events cycle. In her book, Arjana maintains that "an imaginary Islam that has been shaped over many centuries" and not just as an immediate outcome of the events of 9/11 and the responses to it (Arjana 2015). Arjana's book is not directly interrogating Islamophobia as the main theme but rather examining the long entanglement of Western discourses with a constructed image of a Muslim and Islam monster that serves as the locus for fear and resultant demonization, a much-needed aspect to mobilizing political projects of self-defense and military campaigns. Here, the dating of the phenomenon of Islamophobia into a longer engagement with an imaginary feared Muslim that is not an outcome or a product of contemporary events is an important undertaking.

Taking a de-colonial and world history approach to the Islamophobia, Ramón Grosfoguel locates the emergence of this phenomenon to the critical events arising from 1492 and the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain and the "discovery" of the new world. In a very widely used article in de-colonial studies, "*Epistemic Islamophobia and Colonial Social Sciences*", Grosfoguel defines and locates Islamophobia in the emergence of the modern world and centered on a process of "genocides and epistemicides" committed against indigenous populations, including Muslims and Jews (Grosfoguel 2010). Here, Grosfoguel is arguing that Islamophobia is rooted in the knowledge production of the West which produces the Eurocentric worldviews that are inherently founded upon racial demarcation at the level of the human. Ramón states that: "Epistemic racism in the form of epistemic Islamophobia is a foundational and constitutive logic of the modern/colonial world and of its legitimate forms of knowledge production". Ramón's field of Islamophobia Studies originates in l492 and locates the problem in the formation of the modern Eurocentric world with all the erasures, genocides and sub-humanness that gave birth to it.

In another article, "The Long-Durée Entanglement Between Islamophobia and Racism in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist/Patriarchal World-System: An Introduction", Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants provide a roadmap to Islamophobia from a de-colonial vintage point. The article provides four different ways to think and conceptualize the approach to Islamophobia: (1) Islamophobia as a form of racism in a world-historical perspective; (2) Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism; (3) Islamophobia as Orientalism; and (4) Islamophobia as epistemic racism. Gorsfoguel and Mielants state "that Islamophobia as a form of racism against Muslim people is not only manifested in the labor market, education, public sphere, global war against terrorism, or the global economy, but also in the epistemological battleground about the definition of the priorities in the world today" (Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006).

The engagement with the Islamophobia phenomena without the actual use of the term itself would be easily ascertainable in the work of Franz Fannon, a West Indian psychoanalyst and social philosopher, who wrote several important works focused on the Muslim colonial subject in the post-WWII period. Fanon's work includes *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (Fanon 2008; *Black Skin, White Masks*) which provided "a multidisciplinary analysis of the effect of colonialism on racial consciousness", using his work under French colonial administration. Fanon's most widely known book and published before his death is *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Fanon 2004; *The Wretched of the Earth*), a work that served as a foundational text for de-colonial studies but may be argued as an early work

to examine the impacts of Islamophobia without naming it as such. Fanon's experience and theoretical contribution in the field of colonial studies formed in Algeria, the Global South, may be considered as the precursor to the emergence of the term Islamophobia and the treatment of Muslims and Islam in the Global North. As an enterprise, the colonial project was constructed around Islamophobic epistemic and sought to negate and dehumanize the Muslim subject to rationalize and embark upon a civilizational program and domination.

The post-WWII period witnessed a coalescing of the post-colonial struggles where Islamic oriented parties and organizations took part in the effort to drive colonial forces out but played a secondary role to nationalist forces in the post-colonial period. Furthermore, the emergence of the anti-Soviet Union global coalition after WWII and the discovery of large oil deposits in the Arabian Peninsula determined the Muslim majority states to embrace the Western alliance and place Islam in its service. In the fight against Communism and Arab Nationalism, the Islamic groups and sects aligned themselves with the United States and Western powers. Thus, Islam itself was mobilized in public discourses across the Muslim world to be pro-capitalist, pro-market economy and vehemently anti-communist and anti-nationalist. Islamophobia as a state policy was of limited utility and only emerged in a controlled manner in relations to Palestine but nothing on a grand scale. In reality, the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia Wahabbism, and Sufi groups operated within the same sphere and stuck a strategic alliance to oppose Jamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt, the Arab nationalist movement and the Arab socialist/communist regimes and groups. In retrospect, the 1960s and 70s witnessed an abundance of publications, books, articles, and media materials that focused on Muslims and Islam debating communism and socialism, which was often directed at consolidating public sentiments and support around the state's already crafted pro-Western policies. The period between 1945 and 1979 was very limited in anti-Islam and anti-Muslim discourses or Islamophobia, with the bulk of policy makers, political elites and media discourses focusing on the threat of Arab nationalism and communism and not Islam per say. Here, the stereotypical content of the discourse was particularly anti-Arab and heavily anti-Palestinian while deploying a plethora of Orientalist imagery to rationalize the deployed foreign policy and media coverage, while Islam itself was just in the background and not center stage.

2. Islamophobia and the Clash of Civilizations Thesis

The shift towards Islamophobia and using the Muslim subject as the singular global strategic threat emerged towards the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even though a case can be made that the 1979 Iranian Revolution intensified the negative representation of Islam and Muslims in the West, particularly in the US, nevertheless, the scope of the demonization was not on the same scale that emerged in the post-Cold War era. In the UK context, the appearance of Islamophobia as a concept into the public policy can be traced to the Iranian revolution and the Salman Rushdie affair, which brought an intense focus on the Muslim community due to the perceived or real support for the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's *fatwā* calling for Rushdie's assassination. Certainly, the political leadership and the media discourses at the time were filled with anti-Muslim rhetoric and drawing a distinction between Iran (representing a feared aspect of Islam) and the West. It is not surprising that Edward Said's book, *Covering Islam*, was written to explore the media demonization of Islam and Muslims after the 1979 Iranian Revolution (Said 1997). On the other hand, Said's *Orientalism* navigated the long history of representations, scholarly writing, and stereotyping that often served as a stable source material for the reproduction of Arab and Muslim otherization (Said 1979).

The anti-Iranian and anti-Shia discourses in the Western and Arab press were balanced at the time with constructing a favorable view of the Sunni Afghan Mujhadeen, who had an important strategic function in confronting and bleeding the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (Dreyfuss 2005). Thus, a certain Sunni Jihadi worldview was incubated in the US and Europe that supported, on the one hand, the war in Afghanistan and on the other a readiness to oppose and confront the Iranian revolution, the pretext of defending the eastern gate of the Arab world from the Iranian Shia expansion. This means that between 1979 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islamophobia was given a localized and distinct

anti-Shia aim rather than being an all-encompassing strategy to demonize Islam or Muslims as a single category. Importantly, the focus shifted on the "Dual Containment" in the US foreign policy, a policy fixed on countering the Arab Nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, which included targeting Iran for the Shia revolution and the nationalist Palestine Liberation Organization, Libya, as well as Iraq until it joined the Arab and Western strategy to reverse, counter, and bleed the Iranian Revolution. In this period, the "Islamic threat" specifically meant the Iranian Shia threat and "our" allies were the Sunni Jihadi fundamentalists which encompassed the full spectrum of Sunni oriented groups and sects. Navigating this strategy required a careful cultivation of alliances and constructing a narrative that would resonate and enable the Sunni majority governments to mobilize their intelligence agencies to recruit individuals to participate in the two-front war, the Afghan war against the Russians, and on the Iraqi front opposing Iran. In both cases, the construction of the Sunni Jihadi Islam was the needed "religious" tonic to bring forth foot soldiers into the battlefields in the thousands and unbeknown to then assist the US, Europe, and the Arab and Muslim states in implementing the containment strategy.

The Iran-Iraq war involved a different level of complexity for US foreign policy and followed a balancing strategy centering on containment of both parties and preventing a clear victor from emerging. Arab Nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, which in the 1980s referred mainly to Iran, formed US's Dual-Containment policy and translated into supporting the party that was losing the war and maintaining the balance of power between them and cause a drain their strategic resources. Containment is to cause the diversion of resources wherever possible away from being deployed against the US, Israel and any other regional allies. Thus, Dual-Containment explains the US's readiness to work with Israel to supply Iran with missiles, a policy was subject to a congressional hearing and became known as the Iran-Contra Affair.

The watershed moment for the emergence of Islamophobia, an all-encompassing and undifferentiated in terms of sect and group, is directly connected to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the immediate outcome of the 1st Gulf War, and the Palestinian uprising which provided the stage for problematizing Islam and Muslims as a single threatening subject. The Islamic groups, sects, and organizations played an important role during the Cold War by providing a counter and indigenously framed religious epistemic to counter socialism, communism, and self-determination oriented nationalism, which has proven to be a very successful strategy. However, the end of the Cold War and the shifts into a unipolar world produced contestation and a race at home and abroad to define the emerging "new world order" but, more importantly, a pursuit of opportunities to reshape the US military and economic priorities in the new era.

During this period and post-Cold War, Muslims and Islam become an otherized category in the U.S. with multipronged levels of exclusion and forms of racialized discrimination inflicted upon individuals and groups. The othering process directed at Muslims was unleashed by the political elites that wanted to craft a strategy to contest and maintain power in the post-Cold War, which included a heavy emphasis on the massive military expenditures, which might had been cut after the defeat of the Soviet Union. As the red "evil empire" came to an end, the machinery for crafting a green menace took shape in the form of Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, which provided the needed shift and the use of cultural racism as the basis for differentiation and hostility. Using cultural racism as the basis for the "Clash of Civilization" thesis is the rebranding of the pre-WWII des-credited biological racism and is offered as a signpost for the same sets of racist attitudes and perspectives that were deployed in the earlier biological version.

In this context, Islamophobia is less about Islam or even about Muslims themselves, their lives and hopes but more about the unsureness of the Western societies as a whole. The Cold War created a common framework and presented the "us" as the good side fighting collectively against "them", the communists who represented the evil but the question was what to do afterward and what was the path forward. Targeting Islam and Muslims is the way to define politics, culture, economy, religion, and identity in the post-Cold War period. By magnifying the differences and then transforming them into an existential threat in the mind of the US and Western public, the forging of a fictitious

sense of patriotic unity and purpose is possibly actualized. The U.S. political elites who were suckled on confronting the "evil empire" emerged less confident and unsure about the present and future considering all the global political, economic, and social changes that unfolded rapidly. The use of Islamophobia and demonization of Islam and Muslims serves the perfect diversion for populists politicians who have no real vision for the future and are able to monetize fear to slither their way into seats of power with venomous rhetoric promising restoration and greatness.

Bernard Lewis's "Clash of Civilization" thesis, made popular through the writings of Samuel Huntington, offered the new framing for post-Cold War era by stating: "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future" (Huntington 1993). For Huntington and the many who adopted his framing, the biggest challenge for the West will come from an emerging Confucian-Islamic connection, primarily concentrated around the asserted right to develop and deploy Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical weapons of mass destruction, which is seen as a counter to the Western powers adoption of non-proliferation. In the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, the Western elites and state actors located a new enemy of choice through which the maintenance and extension of military, economic, social, and religious power can be extended. The thesis translates Islamophobia into a foreign policy paradigm and re-orients Western states' policies towards confronting the Islamic-Chinese alliance. Islamophobia becomes the tool needed for birthing the new world order. In an article published in the Nation Magazine, Edward Said called the thesis "The Clash of Ignorance" whereby "Labels like "Islam" and "the West" serve only to confuse us about a disorderly reality". Furthermore, Said stated that "neither Huntington nor Lewis has much time to spare for the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization, or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagogy and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilization. No, the West is the West, and Islam [is] Islam" (Said 2001).

In Chapter One of the book, Huntington uses a quote that goes directly into framing the post-Cold War anti-Islam discourses, which for him serves as the means to define "what we are" at a moment of global change: "One grim Weltanschauung for this new era was well expressed by the Venetian nationalist demagogue in Michael Dibdin's novel, Dead Lagoon: "There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage, their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven". The unfortunate truth in these old truths cannot be ignored by statesmen and scholars. For peoples seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential, and the potentially most dangerous enmities occur across the fault lines between the world's major civilizations" (Huntington 2003, p. 20). The purpose of the thesis is to locate and love ourselves by means of locating and hating what we are not, which for Huntington is represented by the Muslims and Chinese.

Understood correctly, Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis is a call to affirm the worldview of the West, or more accurately the US, by drawing clear distinctions from the Islamic and Sinic civilizations. Here, the Muslim and Islam subjects (as well as the Chinese but this issue will not be addressed in this article) are instruments to forge an internal cohesion in the US that, in Huntington's mind, is missing at present and is needed to maintain and extend America's power and domination. Not surprising, Huntington's follow-up book framed the problem as one of the diversity and asserting that the perceived Western weakness is due to "multiculturalism" which "is in its essence anti-European civilization. It is basically an anti-Western ideology". (Huntington 2004) In "Who are we?", Huntington is framing it as a question and answering it by problematizing the increasing presence of Mexicans in

the US and viewing them as a threat to maintaining the cohesive nature of the country due to various factors that prevent assimilation into the American society. Taken together, "*Clash of Civilizations*" and "*Who are we?*" provide an ideological blueprint for a new conceptualization of the problems that have beset rightwing and conservative agenda since the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements.

Precisely, the emergence of the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis allowed for the state, the far-right counter-jihad movement, the neoconservative movement, sizable segments of the transnational Zionist movement, and assorted liberal groupings including the pro-war left and the new atheist movement to unleash a barrage of Islamophobic discourses to rationalize the new world order and their central role in countering it. Thus, Islamophobia becomes an ideological policy funnel through which international and domestic alliances and coalitions are formed whereby participants use Islam and Muslim subjectivities as the foil to array their varied political, economic and military interests. All the forces mentioned produced materials to saturate political circles, media coverage, and public discourses to the exclusion or marginalization of the voices that are not committed to this framing. The case of Islamophobia is the same as the way that the anti-communist and Cold War period produced horizontal and vertical domestic and international alliances and forces committed to the policy.

The "Clash of Civilizations" thesis is a very narrow, simple, and a one-dimensional view of post-Cold War conflicts in the contemporary world. The world has been far more complex and fluid all along. In effect, Huntington's thesis attempts to define and reduce the sources of conflicts to simply cultural differences between peoples. In this clash, an intense focus on Islam being incompatible with the West and democracy is framed to be the focal point of the post-Cold War era and historical events are mined as a proof for this thesis. Conveniently, the thesis provides a way to examine conflicts through a lens that dispenses with political, economic, military, and environmental stimuli that historically and contemporary caused war and invasions. "The Clash" becomes a reductionist and an irrational analysis of the causes of conflicts in the world and lead "experts" and "think-tanks" inhabitants to call for mining Islamic textual sources and examining Muslim cultural norms to understand "why they hate us" and the best approach to counter them. "The Clash of Civilizations" is Islamophobia writ large and acts as the blueprint that informs and shapes discourses around Islam and Muslims. Huntington's comment that "Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world" nullifies modern history and politics in the Muslim world. (Huntington 2003, p. 29)

3. Islamophobia in the Post 9/11 Period

Bush's framing of "Islam is peace" in 2001 to Trump's unequivocal declaration "I think Islam hates us" in 2016 show the varied discourses of the political elites at the highest levels of the state, which operated to shape media and public attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. This framing by the political leadership in the US precisely illustrates the thesis advanced by Massoumi, Mills, and Miller's book (Massoumi et al. 2017). President Bush's statement about Islam came at the height of the post 9/11 period, the initiation of planning for direct US military deployment in Afghanistan and later-on in Iraq, a policy that needed domestic and international support including from Muslim majority countries. On 16 September 2001, Bush's first White House speech and press conference foray into the "War on Terrorism" topic was problematic in the President's using the term "Crusade" to define the upcoming military mission resulting in a swift and negative response from across the Muslim World. Bush's statement "This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while" needed language modification to assuage concerns across the Muslim World and countries that had already committed to participating in the upcoming war in Afghanistan (White House 2001a). The "institutions and machinery of the state" reflected on the speech and decided it needed an immediate reframing away from "Crusade" to "Islam is peace" which was done in a hastily arranged public event on 17 September 2001, at a D.C. mosque (White House 2001b). Here, the media was an important tool reflecting the priorities and contestations of various forces contributing to public discourse and the framing of the Muslims and Islam in global affairs.

More critically, Bush's global "War on Terrorism" received the needed congressional support, the US public opinion was solidly behind the invasion of Afghanistan, and the deployment of hostile discourses towards Islam did not serve domestic or international strategic political purposes. At the time, the President and the Republican Party were acting from a post-9/11 domestically secure power base and stoking anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments was not needed to consolidate and rally public opinion to their side. On the contrary, the Bush administration made sure to include Muslim voices in their public engagement and Islamic imagery to establish that the "War on Terrorism" was not a war on Islam per say but rather defending shared values against extremism. While a critique of the Orientalist and self-serving aspects of the engagement can be undertaken, this should not distract from the distinct nature of the public discourse strategy itself and the profound difference from the current Trump administration. Pointedly, the deployment of Islamophobia in public discourses is a function of power contestation among political elites in the US and Europe rather than the thesis that it is directly connected to or in reaction to terrorist attacks by individuals professing an affinity to Islam. Clearly, other aspects of President Bush's domestic and international policy choices had distinct Islamophobic features but the public and official statement maintained the "Islam is peace" framing.

Islamophobia emerges more intensely during and in the aftermath of the election of President Obama and not as an extension of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. A New America report entitled "*Anti-Muslim Activities in the United States: Violence, Threats, and Discrimination at the Local Level*" tracked some 757 anti-Muslim incidents across the US from 2012 up to the present day. The report data was collected and classified based on "five categories: (1) Anti-Sharia Legislation, (2) Opposition to Refugee Resettlement, (3) Opposition to Mosques, Muslim Cemeteries and Schools, and (4) Anti-Muslim Actions and Statements by Elected and Appointed Officials, and (5) Media Reports of Anti-Muslim Violence and Crimes" (McKenzie 2018). The report's author, Robert McKenzie, a Senior Fellow at New America and the founding Director of its Muslim Diaspora Initiative, concluded: "Looking at the statistics, it is clear that the rise in these incidents is tied to the election cycle . . . indicating political rhetoric from national leaders has a real and measurable impact". (McKenzie 2018). Furthermore, McKenzie observes "If spikes in anti-Muslim activity only occurred due to terrorism, we would expect to see more incidents following high-profile attacks like the Boston Marathon bombing and Charlie Hebdo, but we didn't. What we do have are folks running for elected office who are using megaphones to talk about how dangerous Muslims are" (Hussain and Saleh 2018). Elections in the US and Europe have witnessed the intensification of Islamophobia and the use of categories or wedge issues to stoke fear and drive it home to the ballot box. Four of the five categories in McKenzie's work are instrumental tools to funnel anger and fear into an electoral strategy and monetize it into votes for the far-right of the Republican Party. Muslims and Islam in electoral campaign are deployed by far-right politicians as a sound producing drum to bring out scores of voters to secure their seats of power and nothing else.

Another piece of electoral puzzle can be found in the work of Dr. Saeed A. Khan and Alejandro J. Beutel, two researchers from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, and a 2014 published report, *Manufacturing Bigotry: A State-by-State Legislative Effort to Pushback Against 2050 by Targeting Muslims and Other Minorities*, which sought: "To empirically measure the attempted disenfranchisement against these various groups, and links between efforts to roll back their rights, we examined bills in all 50 U.S. state legislatures from 2011 to 2013, across six issue areas: (1) Restrictions on abortion rights and access, (2) "Defense of Marriage Act" bills (DOMA) and other bans on same-sex marriage, (3) Right-to-Work legislation, (4) Anti-immigration proposals, (5) "Voter Identification" requirements, and (6) Anti-Sharia/Anti-"Foreign Law" bills (which serve as the report's legislative vehicle to measure Islamophobia)" (Khan and Beutel 2014). Tracking the six different issue areas and analysis of data led Khan and Beutel to conclude that the Republican Party "have the most restrictive legislative agendas across all six (6) issue areas for both laws passed and bills proposed" (Khan and Beutel 2014). More importantly, anti-Muslim legislation had "greatest overlap with strict Voter ID laws and Right-to-Work laws" (Khan and Beutel 2014). Taking the analysis further, Khan and Beutel pointed out that both "types of laws negatively and disproportionately impact African-Americans, women and Latinos", which

translates into an electoral strategy that "if a lawmaker wants to support legislation marginalizing the most people at one time, anti-sharia along with Voter ID and/or Right-to-Work would help to achieve that end" (Khan and Beutel 2014). The key take away is that Islamophobia or anti-Islam and anti-Muslim discourses are part of an electoral strategy deployed at present by the Republican Party, intensify around election campaigns and are a function of framing the domestic political landscape in relations to the Muslim subject, the feared other that is undermining the imagined good society. Here, the Muslim subject makes it possible to intensify the fear, mobilize the rightwing base and use it to maintain or expand power.

A similar dynamic is readily documentable in Austria, France, UK, and other European countries where populist and ultranationalist parties are using Islamophobia as a campaign strategy to drive voters to the ballot box. Austria's ban on Muslim women's veil is a case in point as Adham Hamed, a University of Innsbruck political theory researcher states that "The entire debate is held over Muslim women, rather than in a sincere dialogue with them. Therefore, this law has to be seen in the context of an increase of populist policy making in the framework of the forthcoming elections" (Hayoun 2017). "The conservative candidate Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz is trying to take votes away from the hardline populist right-wing 'Freedom Party' which is very tough on immigration", says Günter Bischof, a history professor at the University of New Orleans and director of the university's Center Austria academic exchange program. "No doubt, such a ban will be popular with the unenlightened nativist electorate of the Freedom Party, just like the idea of 'the wall' was popular with the Trump electorate. We are talking about a fairly sizable segment of the electorate here and there" (Hayoun 2017). "Most probably, the far-right Freedom Party will become one of the coalition parties in the next government, and to me, it will not differ largely if this will take place with the Social Democrats or the Conservatives. Because in regards to Islamophobia, while the discourse may differ, the actual politics does not", Salzburg's Hafez says. "Presenting oneself hard-on-Islam is an essential part of the Western political competition in these days. Even the famous 'leader of the free world,' as [German] Chancellor Angela Merkel has been called after opening the borders, has called for a ban of the full-face veil, which is similarly marginal in Germany" (Hayoun 2017).

Islamophobia is a byproduct of power and electoral contestation between political elites in Europe and the US in the post-Cold War era. In the case of the US, as the Republicans lost the White House to Obama, and the Congress and Senate in the 2008 election, the populist Tea Party strategy was deployed using Islam and Muslims as the foil to drive rightwing anger for a supposed loss of the country. Former President Obama was the ideal target for the rightwing otherization strategy considering the complexities of his identity, past and readily documented connection to Islam through his father. The "taking our country back" moto was born immediately after Obama's election and was laser-focused on Islam and Muslims as the culprits.

Conveniently, the rightwing domestic attacks on Obama as a closet Muslim were mirrored by a demand to correctly reframe the war on terrorism as a war on radical Islam and some demanded a war on Islam itself. President Bush's "Islam is peace" days were long gone and were replaced by a clamoring to demonize Islam and Muslims while entangling all of Obama's agenda. The increasing visibility of Islam and Muslims in America's landscape provided a further opportunity to draw the distinction between the ideal past and the problematic and diverse present represented by the Obama administration.

The demonization of Islam and Muslims becomes the effective electoral strategy and Islamophobia is monetized into the 2010 Tea Party and rightwing votes at the ballot box. The leader of the Birther Movement is settling in the White House with the Alt-right arriving in Washington D.C. riding the Islamophobic ballot box and hitched to the "Clash of Civilizations" cultural racism stage wagon right out of the gate. The mainstream Republicans played along with the bigoted and racist fringe so as to get part of their agenda adopted, but ended-up being devoured by it in the process. More broadly, the current White House is a den of the Islamophobic fringe that slipped its way into the halls of power by combining a toxic mixture of extreme bigotry towards Muslims, refugees, immigrants, and

all minorities with a deep-rooted conspiratorial worldview. Demonizing Muslims was an easy prod used as an instrument to foment fear and drive bigotry into a fever pitch during the election cycle and then monetized into votes at the ballot box.

Let's go back to Trump's statement "I think Islam hates us" and grasp the significant shift away from Bush's framing. On several occasions during the 2016 campaign and on TV, Trump called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States". In the same interview he said that "Islam hates us", Trump also mentioned that "we are at war with Islam". At times when pressed by journalists on the subject of banning Muslims, Trump included radical Islam in the response and then pivoted to demand extreme vetting for immigrants and refugees from the Muslim world, as if none existed at the time. Trump continued "It's radical, but it's very hard to define. It's very hard to separate. Because you don't know who's who". Thus, the inclusion and the constant references to Islam are not incidental but reflect a deep-seated antagonism and open hostility that is shared by Trump's inner circle of advisors and operatives who collectively share the Clash of Civilizations worldview and intend on acting upon it. It's critical to remind everyone that the supposed "Clash of Civilizations" is a highly contested thesis and Trump's inner circle are proposing to test it in the lab represented by the US and the Muslim world.

Stephen K. Bannon, Michael T. Flynn, Jeff Sessions, Frank Gaffney, John Bolton, and other Trump advisors and appointees are ideological advocates of the Clash of Civilizations worldview and are delighted at the opportunity to bring their thesis to the testing ground. Early on, Bannon described the conflict as one of a "long history of the Judeo-Christian West struggle against Islam", while Flynn, the disgraced national security advisor, framed it as "a world war against a messianic mass movement of evil people, most of them inspired by a totalitarian ideology: Radical Islam. But we are not permitted to speak or write those two words, which is potentially fatal to our culture". For Flynn, Islam is a cancer, "a political movement masquerading as a religion and the product of an inferior culture". In a recently released book, Flynn argued that "I don't believe that all cultures are morally equivalent, and I think the West, and especially America, is far more civilized, far more ethical and moral" (Diehl 2016).

The key framing for Trump's war on Islam was expressed most clearly by Bannon back in 2014, when he situated the on-going wars in the Arab World through a historical lens and part of a long struggle between Islam and Judeo-Christian world: "If you look back at the long history of the Judeo-Christian West struggle against Islam, I believe that our forefathers kept their stance, and I think they did the right thing. I think they kept it out of the world, whether it was at Vienna, or Tours or other places (. . .) We're in a war of immense proportions. It's very easy to play to our baser instincts, and we can't do that. But our forefathers didn't do it either. And they were able to stave this off, and they were able to defeat it, and they were able to bequeath to us a church and a civilization that really is the flower of mankind" (Diehl 2016).

Here, it is important to point out the dubious trans-historical claim of a singular and unified Judeo-Christian world, a recent construct that emerges only after WWII. In reality, European history is but a long series of pogroms, death, and destruction visited upon the Jews and other minorities; events like the Inquisition and the Holocaust are the logical culmination of the norm, rather than an exception when history is examined closely. I would maintain that a Judeo-Muslim world is a far more accurate description of history than Bannon's obfuscation and attempt at reading back into history the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict while absolving Christian Europe of its never-ending anti-Semitism that provided the ideological and theological railroad tracks that led to the camps and the Holocaust (Shane 2017).

Islam becomes the new foil through which Trump, Bannon, Flynn, and other Clash of Civilizations warriors make it possible to cleanse the blood that fills the pages of the European and Western history. Islam becomes the all-encompassing problem that threatens and undermines Western civilization rather than the rich and powerful 1% that have pursued a scorched-earth social, economic, military, and political policy that left the 99% behind. Trump and his Clash of Civilizations crew are working to mobilize, mine, and manipulate historical memories to foment a global war which would prove their

thesis if it takes place. Devastation of the world to prove an ignorant thesis is a very high price for humanity to pay.

By positing Islam as the problem, the Islamophobes can mobilize the needed arguments for constant military intervention, strengthening partnership with Israel and frame it as the model to emulate on security issues, express support for autocratic dictators in the Arab world, rationalize torture and restrictions on movements of Muslims and others, impose limits on fundamental freedoms and push for securitization of the Western society itself. Trump is a foreman of the Clash of Civilizations administration intent on pushing for a confrontation with Islam. All that is needed is Islamophobia and the most draconian policies are sanctioned and democracy itself becomes a vehicle for securitization. The post-Cold War looks more like the Cold War but far more invasive, divisive, and costly.

Consequently, Trump's "Make America great again" is precisely a calling for a restoration to an idealized and glorified past where the political, social, and religious order was situated around a singular identity to the exclusion of others. What caused America's weakness, according to the populist Islamophobic rightwing, is the wrong-headed multi-culturalism, political correctness, identity politics, affirmative action, refugees, illegal immigration, and burdensome regulations. Added to this list is the constant blame levied on Mexico, China, Japan, and Europe for cheating America on trade deals or not being fair on the market. Notice that all these facts point to someone or something other than the country's elite, which has plundered the U.S., ravaged the Earth of its resources, conducted endless interventionist wars, and squandered the hard-earned money of hard-working people. The populists mobilize ignorant bigotry to obfuscate the real causes for the country's circumstances. Islamophobia as an ideology makes it possible to push for a "Clash of Civilizations" or cultural racism in order to create the needed urgency to rescue a distant past.

Critically, the divergence in framing the problem and whether to use Islam in the context of terrorist attacks reflects a different vision of America and the West in general. Again, the "Clash of Civilization" thesis plays a prominent role in the framing and posits a fundamental difference between Islam, Muslims, and the West in general and America in particular. In addition, the same "Clash of Civilizations" thesis is seamlessly applied to the Latino population in the U.S. and the demographic threat they pose to white America moving forward. At the core, the demand for specific terminology or use of "Islamic" is intended to draw the clear distinction between the imagined Judeo-Christian America and those that fall outside the constructed religious, racial, and cultural walls.

As such, Donald Trump's demands to frame the problem in relation to Islam is an appeal to a racial paradigm that is masquerading under the rubric of national security and opposition to political correctness. The fight over terminology is rooted in a deeper conceptualization of the problem we face with terrorism and the possible remedies to be deployed to address it. Insisting on using "Islamic" in the context of violent extremism is an important ideological construct for a cluster of individuals and groups who champion Huntington's "Clash of Civilization" worldview. Thus, the problem for this group is defined through unresolvable core differences that are civilizational in nature. If the starting point is a clash between Islam and the West, then every violent act is interpreted and viewed through the lens of an already constructed conclusion.

According to the "Clash of Civilizations", Islam is on a collision course with the modern and progressive West worldview and nothing more is needed other than this distorted argument. The constructed binary fits neatly into this worldview, and no further analysis, studies or evidence are necessary to understand the motive behind any violent act. Islam is held responsible because it is deemed to be the negative opposite of the West, which has all the positive and progressive attributes. Trump's insistence on terminology precedes his arrival to the White House in 2017. As a matter of fact, after the Orlando attack, Trump demanded that we must use "radical Islamic terrorism" or "Islamic radicalism" to point at those responsible while implying that President Barack Obama was soft or possibly secretly involved with the terrorist. In a Twitter post, Donald Trump demanded that President Obama "mention the words radical Islamic terrorism" in reference to the Orlando attacks and to "immediately resign in disgrace".

At the time, the then Republican presumptive nominee, Trump made sure to very quickly wade into the "blame Islam" terrain and again called for restrictions on Muslims entering the country. Trump then attacked his Democratic counterpart by stating that "The bottom line is that Hillary supports the policies that bring the threat of radical Islam into America and allows it to grow overseas". Furthermore, according to Trump, "Clinton wants to allow radical Islamic terrorists to pour into our country. They enslave women and murder gays" (Donald Trump Speech 2016).

In a CNN interview, Hillary Clinton inched closer in Trump's direction by stating that "Whether you call it radical jihadism, radical Islamism, I think they mean the same thing". Clinton clarified by stating "I'm happy to say either. But what I won't do, because I think it is dangerous for our efforts to defeat this threat, is to demonize and demagogue and, you know, declare war on an entire religion. That plays right into ISIS' [DAESH's] hands" (Clinton 2016). Trump's insistence on the terminology comes directly from the Islamophobic and "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, and the recipes fit perfectly into this distorted ideological box. There is no need to look for the causes, stimuli, and factors that motivated a violent act or ascertain the intent behind it. The reason is always simple: Islam is responsible, and there is a mad dash to ascertain the level of Islamic adherence by the perpetrators even when none is found. Islamophobia is an ideological construct used by the advocates of the "Clash of Civilizations" to bring them into the driver seat in the post-Cold War era and have little to do with Islam and Muslims as a religion or a diverse 1.7 billion people living across the world. Finally, the observation of the late South African leader Nelson Mandela is very insightful for the American society: "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man [woman] is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear".

May we all triumph over the ideologically stoked fear and envision an inclusive, just, and peaceful future for all.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Arjana, Sophia Rose. 2015. *Muslims in the Western Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clinton, Hilary. 2016. CNN Staff, Full Video and Text of Hillary Clinton's Campaign Rally Speech, June 13. Available online: https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/13/politics/hillary-clinton-campaign-rally-full-transcript-2016/index.html (accessed on 17 September 2018).

Diehl, Jackson. 2016. Trump's Coming War against Islam. *Washington Post*. December 11. Available online: http://wapo.st/2ht8L75?tid=ss_mail&utm_term=.ad3f868e55da (accessed on 17 September 2018).

Donald Trump Speech. 2016. Donald Trump Speech, June 13. Available online: https://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/transcript-donald-trump-national-security-speech-224273 (accessed on 15 July 2018).

Dreyfuss, Robert. 2005. *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

Fanon, Franz. 2008. *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*. Translated by Philcox Richard. New York: Grove Press. First published 1952.

Fanon, Franz. 2004. *Les Damnés de la Terre*. Translated by Philcox Richard. New York: Grove Press. First published 1961.

Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2010. *Epistemic* Islamophobia and Colonial Social Sciences. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 8: 5. Available online: http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol8/iss2/5 (accessed on 15 July 2018).

Grosfoguel, Ramón, and Eric Mielants. 2006. The Long-Durée Entanglement Between Islamophobia and Racism in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist/Patriarchal World-System: An Introduction. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5: 2. Available online: http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol5/iss1/2 (accessed on 15 July 2018).

Gunny, Ahmad. 2004. *Perceptions of Islam in European Writings*. Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.

Hayoun, Massoud. 2017. In Europe, History—And the Populist Politics Over Muslim Women's Dress-Repeats Itself. *Pacific Standard*, October 5.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affair*, Summer.

Huntington, Samuel P. 2003. *The Clash of Civilizations*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Huntington, Samuel P. 2004. *Who Are We?* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Husain, Adnan. 2017. *Muslim Question and the New Christendom: Medieval Geopolitical Theologies and the End of Liberalism*. Paper presented at 8th Annual International Islamophobia Conference Islamophobia and the End of Liberalism? Berkeley School of Law, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA, April 23.

Hussain, Murtaza, and Maryam Saleh. 2018. Bigoted Election Campaigns Not Terror Attacks, Drive Anti-Muslim Activity. *The Intercept*, March 11.

Khan, Saeed A., and Alejandro J. Beutel. 2014. *Manufacturing Bigotry: A State-by-State Legislative Effort to Pushback against 2050 by Targeting Muslims and Other Minorities*. Washington: Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, November 10, Available online: https://www.ispu.org/manufacturing-bigotry-community-brief/ (accessed on 15 July 2018).

Levin, Paul T. 2011. *Turkey and the European Union*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Massoumi, Narzanin, Tom Mills, and David Miller. 2017. *What is Islamophobia?—Racism, Social Movements and the State*. London: Pluto Press.

McKenzie, Robert. 2018. *Anti-Muslim Activities in the United States: Violence, Threats, and Discrimination at the Local Level*. A New America Report. March. Available online: https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/anti-muslim-activity/ (accessed on 15 July 2018).

Penn, Michael Philip. 2015. *When Christians First Met Muslims*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Said, Edward W. 1997. *Covering Islam*, 1997 Revised Edition. New York: Vintage Books.

Said, Edward W. 2001. The Clash of Ignorance. *The Nation Magazine*. October 4. Available online: https://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance/ (accessed on 15 July 2018).

Setton, Kenneth M. 1992. *Western Hostility to Islam and Prophecies of Turkish Doom*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

Shane, Scott. 2017. Stephen Bannon in 2014: We Are at War with Radical Islam. *New York Times*. February 1. Available online: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/01/us/stephen-bannon-war-with-radical-islam.html (accessed on 17 September 2018).

White House. 2001a. White House Press Conference, September 16. Available online: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html (accessed on 7 July 2018).

White House. 2001b. White House Press Release, September 17. Available online: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html (accessed on 7 July 2018).