Walden University

ScholarWorks

1-1-2019

Toward an Operational Definition of Islamophobia

Amin Asfari
Walden University, aasfari1@gmail.com

Ron Hirschbein

George R. Larkin
Walden University, george.larkin@mail.waldenu.edu

Walden University

ScholarWorks

Toward an Operational Definition of Islamophobia

Amin Asfari
Walden University

Ron Hirschbein

George R. Larkin
Walden University

Toward an Operational Definition of Islamophobia

Amin Asfari
Ron Hirschbein
George Larkin

Abstract

Abstract concepts such as Islamophobia invite operational definitions that prescribe courses of inquiry that eschew the abstract in favor of the concrete. Ideally, such inquiry renders a concept more intelligible by providing conceptual clarity and by prescribing a research agenda. In our view, inquiries regarding Islamophobia should confront 1) how Muslims are identified, or misidentified, 2) whether Islamophobia is a phobia, prejudice, or both, and 3) how Islamophobia must be narrated.

1. Introduction

As Nietzsche quipped, Philosophy is self-confession.[1] When we started this project, we thought we would develop an integrated theory of Islamophobia. We assumed (or hoped) that our theory would be simple, elegant, with systematically interconnected elements—an aid to understanding, predicting, and overcoming Islamophobia. Considerable conversation and reflection revealed we were woefully unprepared to undertake the task. Simply put: We weren't sure what we were talking about. Islamophobia is one of those nettlesome, abstract nouns: Everyone knows what it means—till he or she is asked to define it. Scholars weren't always helpful; they heeded their calling by disputing contested definitions.

The unsettled nature of Islamophobia is no surprise. It's an ambiguous concept, not a thing like a tree. Accordingly, we had no illusions about getting it right by devising what philosopher Richard Rorty called a "final vocabulary"—the last word on a definition.[2] Islamophobia is not an obdurate thing found in nature, an object with precisely definable boundaries that persist regardless of time and place. It's a product of the imagination, an all-too-human invention.

Abstract concepts such as Islamophobia invite operational definitions that prescribe courses of inquiry that eschew the abstract in favor of the concrete. Ideally, such inquiry renders a concept more intelligible by providing conceptual clarity and by prescribing a research agenda. In our view, inquiries regarding Islamophobia should confront the following research agenda:

- Islamophobia is ambiguous, but it is not bereft of meaning. It obviously refers to Muslims or Islamic doctrines; *but how are Muslims or Islamic doctrines identified—or misidentified?* Lacking a clear understanding of Muslim identity, are certain beliefs and attitudes towards Muslims misguided regarding Muslim identity? Islam is a worldwide religion with followers from many races and nationalities; however, the public tends to equate Islam with the Arab world. The evidence suggests that, to many people in the United States, all Muslims are Arabs and all Arabs are Muslims.[3] The two seem inseparable in the popular imagination. Therefore, any action taken by an Arab nation or an individual of Arab descent is assumed to be motivated by an adherence to

1. Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Future Philosophy," trans. Ian Johnston, *Prelude to a Future Philosophy, by Friedrich Nietzsche*, The University of Adelaide Library, 6 Mar. 2014, ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/n/nietzsche/friedrich/n67b/index.html.
2. Richard Rorty, "Ironists and Metaphysicians," in *The Truth about the Truth*, Walter Truett Anderson, ed. (New York: Putnam, 1995), 101-02.
3. See Julita, "Difference Between Muslims and Arabs," *Difference Between*, Sept. 27, 2017, http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-muslims-and-arabs/.

Islam. This confusion has led to the projection of anti-Islamic attitudes towards all Arabs—or anyone who resembles an Arab in the popular imagination.[4] Likewise, when non-Muslim Arabs commit acts deemed unacceptable in the West, the animus towards those actors is directed toward all Muslims. Therefore, negative attitudes towards Muslims might better be described as negative attitudes towards Arabs.

- Is Islamophobia simply a phobia—when a phobia is understood as an irrational fear? Or, is it also a prejudice—an unfavorable bias against a group? Could it be both? Phobia and prejudice are often conflated, but they're not synonymous. Consider: One can harbor prejudices (a priori biases) against old women but not fear them. Our analysis suggests that Islamophobia is both a prejudice and a phobia. Could it be that, in both its ordinary and technical usage, prejudice is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the phobia.

The prejudice—stemming from, and aptly labeled "Orientalism" by literary scholar Edward Said—literally emerges from prejudging those perceived as Arabs. The judgment is seldom based upon personal experience. Instead, it is a social/cultural construction amplified and reinforced by the media. Therefore, any account of Islamophobia must take these constructions into account. 9/11 was not—and is not—represented as an episode perpetrated by a small cabal of fanatics, fanatics denounced time and again by mainstream Muslim clerics and scholars. On the contrary, violent actions are deemed endemic to the theory and practice of Islam—a

veritable credo, the theme of the faith. By way of stark contrast, the violent acts of non-Muslims are deemed episodic. For example, a non-Muslim shooter on the Strip in Las Vegas is viewed as a lone wolf, a madman compelled to act violently due to opaque mental infirmities—an anomalous event. (The shooter's brain was analyzed at a Stanford University laboratory.)[5] However, a lone disturbed Muslim committing the same act in an Orlando nightclub doesn't prompt a comparable forensic investigation. Turning to the prejudicial dimension of Islamophobia, it is presupposed that violent acts committed by Muslims are not anomalous; on the contrary, such acts are viewed as part of a worldwide Islamic terrorist conspiracy—a recurrent theme.

- To paraphrase Nietzsche once again, concepts with a history cannot be defined; they must be narrated. Returning to the example above, a tree can be understood without telling its story. Islamophobia must be narrated—a story that scripts the transition from benign Orientalism to the current form of malign Orientalism—the signature of prevailing media constructions. The public perception of Muslims has changed drastically in recent years. As we have argued earlier, many people equate Muslims with Arabs. The traditional image of an Arab was a Disney-type character emerging from a bottle wafting on a flying carpet amid exotic bazaars and jeweled palaces. The modern image of Muslims—especially Arab men—is, to understate the case, more sinister: "Arab men surface as villains: Bedouin bandits, sinister sheikhs, buffoons, and gun wielding terrorists."[6] However, apparently, the stereotypical Arab woman persists: "As a rule, Arab women are still projected as mostly mute and submis-

4. For example, Sikhs have been murdered in their temple; Steven Yaccino et al., "Gunman Kills 6 at a Sikh Temple Near Milwaukee," *The New York Times*, Aug. 5, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html; and an Italian mathematician was removed from a plane; David Millward, "Italian Mathematician Taken Off Flight After Fellow Passenger Alarmed by His Notepad Calculations," *The Telegraph*, May. 7, 2016, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/07/italian-mathematician-taken-off-flight-after-fellow-passenger-al/.

5. Jose Antonio Avalos, "School of Medicine to Study Brain Tissue of Vegas Shooter," *The Stanford Daily,* Oct. 23, 2017, https://www.stanforddaily.com/2017/10/23/stanford-to-study-brain-tissue-of-vegas-shooter/.
6. Jack Shaheen, "Entertainment Industries Can Changes Negative Stereotypes," *The National*, Sept. 29, 2013, https://www.thenational.ae/entertainment-industries-can-change-negative-stereotypes-1.448135.

sive figures: bundles in black, beasts of burden, exotic belly dancers, and even bombers."[7] A working definition of Islamophobia invites inquiry regarding the factors that precipitated this sea change from benign to malign Orientalism. In our view, psychological, sociological, and economic factors play a determinative role; these factors are seen writ large in media studies.

2. Psychological Considerations

Human behavior sometimes seems strange, but it is not ineffable. Indeed, it is often predictable. A working definition of Islamophobia provides a space for the psychological study of anti-Muslim prejudice and fear. This is not the place to list all the possible explanations of human behavior, but two come to mind: the works of Gordon Allport and theories of Sigmund Freud.

Allport prompts inquiry into the origin and nature of prejudice. In his seminal work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport argues that prejudice stems from stereotyping particular groups.[8] Stereotypes develop because the human brain seeks easy ways to make sense of the constant barrage of stimuli it receives. It is difficult for the brain to take in and process individual actions daily. Thus, it seeks to compartmentalize, and therefore generalize, its responses. This process of generalization forms the core of stereotypes. Rather than attempting to explain individual stimuli in specific contexts, the brain relies upon previous conceptions of stimuli (e.g., thoughts, tastes, or emotions) to explain new experiences.

Let us consider the following scenario: a dog runs at us. If we don't know the dog, never had a dog, but perhaps heard that dogs have a tendency to bite humans, we may decide to run in fear—though the dog may want nothing more than affection. Put another way, simplicity in thinking produces stereotypes, and stereotypes, left unquestioned, produce prejudice.

Psychological causes for anti-Muslim prejudice are numerous and complex. Like other prejudices, we contend that fear of the Other plays a significant role in this type of prejudice. Given that mass Muslim migration into the United States is a fairly recent phenomenon—large influxes of migrants from Muslim-majority countries took place in the 1960s—most American's haven't been exposed personally to Muslims as friends, coworkers, and so on. Like other immigrant groups, Muslim immigrants initially gravitated to small, tightknit communities of other Muslims in order to preserve their identity. Often, Islamic centers or mosques became central gathering places within these communities. Islamic centers are more than places of worship, they provide basic Islamic education for children, as well as places for celebrations, funerals, and social assistance programs, but, most importantly, these places are centers of acculturation and identity formation. However, due to their insular nature, Islamic centers rarely engaged with civic society beyond their fences, preferring to focus internally in order to build strong Muslim identities and networks. Eventually, this insular approach increased the fear and mistrust of this newly arrived group among the existing population.

Interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims remain limited. Shrouded in mystery, this group became a screen for projecting uninformed stereotypes. Stereotypes—to understate the case—shifted from benign to malign in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks. Muslims became the official Other in the United States and abroad. Depictions of Muslims perpetuated notions of dangerousness and incompatibility with mainstream American—and Western—society. This led to the formation of policies that treat Muslims with suspicion and further engraved in the Western mind that Muslims *are* dangerous, they are unlike us!

And what would psychological inquiry be without reference to Freud, the Father of Psychoanalysis, who casts events in a new and disturbing light? Turning to everyday discourse, a vital venue for Freudian inquiry, pundits have long quipped that 9/11 was uncanny. For Freud, quips can be redolent with meaning. Ever attentive to paradox, he suggested that uncanny vexation occurs when one is thrown into a world at once menacingly alien (*unheimlich*—

---

7. Jack Shaheen, "Entertainment Industries Can Changes Negative Stereotypes," *The National*, Sept. 29, 2013, https://www.thenational.ae/entertainment-industries-can-change-negative-stereotypes-1.448135.
8. Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

not at home) *yet* disturbingly familiar. In the aftermath of 9/11, many Americans no longer felt at home in their homeland. Even so, uncanny dread is not solely the product of the alien or unknown. Sudden immersion in the unknown unleashes long-forgotten terror—a painfully familiar terror that bedevils our estrangement.[9] As far as we know, Freud was the first to suggest that the uncanny brings to light what should have remained hidden—long-forgotten childhood terrors that came by night in darkness and febrile dreams.[10] The present became a foreign country on 9/11, reigniting smoldering childhood terror that should have remained hidden. No wonder pundits warn of "the Arab bogeyman."[11] To sum up a Freudian analysis, Americans lived through an event (9/11) that should have never taken place. After all, in America, mass casualties and destruction aren't the norm—we're not a developing nation. As such, Americans felt uneasy about their new reality, and, gripped by fear, they needed two things to survive: (1) a common enemy to unite them, and (2) a strong leader (a parent figure) to shelter them, and to normalize their existence—to "Make America Great Again."

3. Sociological Considerations

Group dynamics are another source of increased anti-Muslim prejudice. In the European context, Muslim-majority nations are close neighbors, but they are often viewed with hostility given the historical tumult between Christendom and Islam, reaching back to the Crusades. Contemporary prejudice against Muslims in Europe stems from the influx of Muslim immigrants, often due to the geopolitical problems in the MENA (Middle East, North Africa) regions. As war continues unabated in many Muslim-majority countries (e.g., Syria and Yemen), many residents are fleeing to neighboring Europe. Subsequently, the influx of these refugees and migrants into European nations is causing a great deal of perceived threat among the local populations—the sudden shift in demographics is unnerving. Notable among these threats is the threat of displacement, the perception that the incoming people will overrun the European countries and alter "European identity."

To best explain Islamophobia, we turn our attention to functionalism, a view of identity, such as race and ethnicity, as being functional and contributing to stability within diverse-group dynamics.[12] In the context of prejudice studies, groups identities functions as markers and enable the powerful group, often the dominant group in a society, to exclude those deemed different or threatening. Specifically, we examine the role of conflict theories in the creation of anti-Muslim prejudice. Conflict theories are intersectional, examining the role of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and class as they combine to produce prejudice. Because Muslims are a religious group, drawing from many ethnicities and economic backgrounds, we contend that one way to marginalize them is through racializing them—a process comparable to nineteenth-century European efforts to racialize Jews, turning an otherwise heterogeneous group into a monolithic one.[13] If Jewishness were viewed as a religious marker, the Jew can convert, and therefore escape the forces of social exclusion, if not extermination. But, a Jew cannot escape his or her identity if it is deemed a racial characteristic. Similarly, recent attempts to racialize Muslims have taken place in the United States and elsewhere. Coupled with the homogenizing and dehumanization processes, policies of exclusion can be succinct and powerful at attaining their objectives.

9. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McClintock (New York: Penguin, 2003), 149.

10. See Nicolas Royle's discussion in *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 24.

11. See, for example, "The Muslim Brotherhood Bogey Man," *The Huffington Post*, accessed Dec. 26, 2016, http://huffingtonpost.com/scot-atran-muslim-bogey-men-egyp_b_817988.html; Khalded Abou El Fadl, "How Hatred of Islam is Corrupting American's Soul," *Religion and Ethics*, Jan. 19, 2017, http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2017/01/18/4606049.htm. and Georgi Ivanov, "Wanted: A New Bogeyman"; Matthew Harwood, "Terrorism's New Boogeyman: Charles Krauthammer and the Toxic Myth of the Lone Wolf," *Salon*, Feb. 9, 2015, http://www.salon.com/2015/02/08/terrorisms_new_boogie_man_charles_krauthammer_and_the_toxic_myth_of_the_lone_wolf_partner/.

12. See, for example, John J. Macionis, "Sociological Theories of Prejudice and Racism," *Sociology Guide*, http://www.sociologyguide.com/ethnicity/sociological-theories-of-prejudice-and-racism.php.

13. Amin Asfari and Ron Hirschbein, "Two Semites Confront Anti-Semitism: On the Varieties of Anti-Semitic Experience," in *Peace, Culture, and Violence*, ed. Fuat Gursozlu (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 106-25.

4. Economic Factors and Mass Media

No discussion of exclusion can be satisfied without asking "Who benefits?" Opportunistic politicians and the popular media find it advantageous to exaggerate and to sensationalize the domestic threat of Arab jihadists. Never mind that highly respected mainstream sources time-and-again demonstrate that the undersized reality of the threat. Testifying before congress, the RAND Corporations' terrorism expert, Brian Jenkins, concluded that, in the aftermath of 9/11, "The data show that the terrorist threat has been diminished, if not eliminated, and the level of risk to individual citizens is minuscule. . . . Only a tiny fraction of the total volume of criminal violence in the United States." Jenkins determines that jihadists have been responsible for 89 domestic fatalities since 9/11 as of January 2017.[14] (Imagine the elation had there been just 89 gun-related homicides in this period.) Reality, however, detracts not at all from the sum of all uncanny fears.

Detailed information can be found in a 2011 report by the Center for American Progress titled "Fear Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America," which reveals that anti-Muslim hate has been lucrative for those who indulge. The report identifies major donors to the cause of Islamophobia, as well as misinformation "experts," grassroots organizations, media enablers, and political players who all participate in, and benefit from, spreading misinformation and hate toward Islam and Muslims.[15]

The spreading of misinformation is necessary to justify policies of exclusion. Homeland security policies that overwhelmingly treat Muslims as potential threats and perpetrators of crime, while often ignoring more widespread and formidable forms of domestic extremism,[16] do

little to encourage goodwill between non-Muslim Americans and their Muslim neighbors. Misinformation is also largely responsible for America's international debacles and expansionist policies.[17]

American strategic interests in the Middle East vary but are largely related to the energy sector. Keeping the region embroiled in conflict and relying upon tyrannical regimes are two of the ways that the United States has maintained its hegemonic presence. Indeed, US presence in the region is often disguised as a means of "promoting democracy" or "ensuring stability." In both instances, Americans are led to believe that the Arab—often a Muslim—cannot accomplish either task alone. The notion of US presence as a civilizing force in the region is one that was exposed by the late Edward W. Said in his famous book, *Orientalism*.[18] Said elucidates the prism through which the Western world has viewed the Near East, or the Orient. Historically, this was done through depictions of the region and its inhabitants as strange, wealthy, and mystical—something of fables. Consider the historical image of the Arab as magical, which has been transformed to the Arab as monster, a being so ruthless, that he or she is worthy of punishment abroad and exclusion at home. While these images continue to circulate in the mainstream media—both conservative and liberal outlets promote these images and therefore legitimize the stereotypes.[19] Elite self-interest continues to trump reality.

5. Conclusion

Our analysis of the multifaceted causal mechanisms of Islamophobia has been a topical one. Considerable work on this subject has emerged in the years since the 9/11 attacks. Scholars have taken various approaches to

14. Brian Michael Jenkins, *Fifteen Years After 9/11: A Preliminary Balance Sheet* (Rand: Santa Monica, 2017), 2-3.
15. Wajahat Ali et al., "Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America," *The Center for American Progress*, Aug. 26, 2011, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/reports/2011/08/26/10165/fear-inc/.
16. See, for example, Kimberly Kindy, et al., "Federal Government has Long Ignored White Supremacist Threats, Critics Say," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 2, 2017, , https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/federal-government-has-long-ignored-white-supremacist-threats-crit-

ics-say/2017/09/02/bf2ed00c-8698-11e7-961d-2f373b3977ee_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ff2db1764807.
17. See, for example, Jonathan Stein and Tim Dickinson, "Lie by Lie: A Timeline of How We Got into Iraq," *Mother Jones*, Sept. 2006, https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2011/12/leadup-iraq-war-timeline/.
18. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).
19. See, for example, Khaled Beydoun, "US Liberal Islamophobia is Rising—and More Insidious than Right Wing Bigotry," *The Guardian*, May 26, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/26/us-liberal-islamophobia-rising-more-insidious.

understanding this new manifestation of an old prejudice—an animus directed at a racial *and* religious minority group. However, to our knowledge, there exists no attempt to view the hatred of Muslims, or those mistaken for Muslims, in an integrated approach. The complexity of Islamophobia demands a theoretically grounded, multifaceted explanation. Considering the issues dealt with here, from sociological, psychological, economic, and colonial perspectives, we hope to bring attention to the myriad ways that students, scholars, and activists can begin to envision and decipher the complexities pertaining to Islamophobia, and to critique the structures that give rise to it as well as other forms of prejudice. Beyond the academic discourse on contested definitions, Islamophobia must be understood, at its core, as hatred and/or fear of Muslims, as well as an attempt to exclude them from public life. We hope that others will engage in discussion of its causes, as well as of ways to ameliorate the collateral consequences of its existence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abou El Fadl, Khaled. "Who's Afraid of the Muslim Brotherhood? How Hatred of Islam Is Corrupting the American Soul." *ABC: Religion & Ethics*, Jan. 18, 2017. https://www.abc.net.au/religion/whos-afraid-of-the-muslim-brotherhood-how-hatred-of-islam-is-cor/10096150.

Ali, Wajahat, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, et al. "Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America." *Center for American Progress*, Aug. 26, 2011. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/reports/2011/08/26/10165/fear-inc/.

Allport, Gordon. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1979.

Asfari, Amin, and Ron Hirschbein. "Two Semites Confront Anti-Semitism: On the Varieties of Anti-Semitic Experience." In *Peace, Culture, and Violence*, ed. Fuat Gursozlu, 106-25. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Avalos, Jose Antonio. "School of Medicine to Study Brain Tissue of Vegas Shooter." *The Stanford Daily*, Oct. 23, 2017. https://www.stanforddaily.com/2017/10/23/stanford-to-study-brain-tissue-of-vegas-shooter/.

Beydoun, Khaled. "US Liberal Islamophobia Is Rising—And More Insidious Than Right Wing Bigotry." *The Guardian*, May 26, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/26/us-liberal-islamophobia-rising-more-insidious.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. Trans. David McClintock. New York: Penguin, 2003.

Harwood, Matthew. "Terrorism's New Boogeyman: Charles Krauthammer and the Toxic Myth of the 'Lone Wolf.'" *Salon*, Feb. 9, 2015. https://www.salon.com/2015/02/08/terrorisms_new_boogie_man_charles_krauthammer_and_the_toxic_myth_of_the_lone_wolf_partner/.

Jenkins, Brian Michael. *Fifteen Years After 9/11: A Preliminary Balance Sheet*. Rand: Santa Monica, 2017.

Julita. "Difference Between Muslims and Arabs." *Difference Between*, Sept. 27, 2017. http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-muslims-and-arabs/.

Kindy, Kimberly, Sara Horwitz, and Devlin Barrett. "Federal Government Has Long Ignored White Supremacist Threats, Critics Say." *The Washington Post*, Sept. 2, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/federal-government-has-long-ignored-white-su-

premacist-threats-critics-say/2017/09/02/bf2ed00c-8698-11e7-961d-2f373b3977ee_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ff2db1764807.

Macionis, John J. "Social Theories of Prejudice and Racism." *Sociology Guide*. Pearson, 2019. http://www.sociologyguide.com/ethnicity/sociological-theories-of-prejudice-and-racism.php

Millward, David. "Italian Mathematician Taken Off Flight After Fellow Passenger Alarmed By His Notepad Calculations." *The Telegraph*, May 7, 2016. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/07/italian-mathematician-taken-off-flight-after-fellow-passenger-al/.

"The Muslim Brotherhood Bogey Man." *Huffington Post*. http://huffingtonpost.com/scot-atran-muslim-bogey-men-egyp_b_817988.html.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Future Philosophy." Translated by Ian Johnston. *Prelude to a Future Philosophy, by Friedrich Nietzsche*. The University of Adelaide Library, 6 Mar. 2014. books.adelaide.edu.au/n/nietzsche/friedrich/n67b/index.html.

Rorty, Richard. "Ironists and Metaphysicians." In *The Truth about the Truth*, ed. Walter Truett Anderson, 101-02. New York: Putnam, 1995.

Royle, Nicolas. *The Uncanny*. Manchester UP, 2003.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House, 1978.

Shaheen, Jack. "Entertainment Industries Can Change Negative Stereotypes." *The National*, Sept. 29, 2013. https://www.thenational.ae/entertainment-industries-can-change-negative-stereotypes-1.448135.

Stein, Jonathan, and Tim Dickinson. "Lie by Lie: A Timeline of How We Got into Iraq." *Mother Jones*, Sept., 2006. https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2011/12/lead-up-iraq-war-timeline/.

Yaccino, Steven, Michael Schwirtz, and Marc Santora. "Gunman Kills 6 at a Sikh Temple Near Milwaukee." *The New York Times*, Aug. 5, 2012. https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html.

COMPOSER INFORMATION

Amin Asfari is an associate professor of criminal justice at Wake Tech College. He also teaches public administration, political science, and research methods courses at several universities. His publications reflect his diverse interests in Islamophobia, prejudice, intergroup conflict, and criminal justice issues. He is working on a coauthored book with Ron Hirschbein explicating the conceptual similarities between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Amin is also the editor of a forthcoming volume titled "Civility, Nonviolent Resistance, and the New Struggle for Social Justice" by Brill.

Ron Hirschbein initiated a program in war and peace studies at California State University, Chico. He has also held visiting professorships at University of California campuses in Berkeley and San Diego, and at the United Nations University in Austria. He has authored five books relating to issues of war and peace.

George Larkin is a Core Faculty Member in the PhD Program in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. Before transitioning to a faculty position, he served as the PhD Program Director for over seven years. George held faculty and administrative positions at the University of West Georgia, Auburn University, the University of Southern Mississippi, the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies, and Concord College prior to his employment at Walden. George received his PhD in Public Administration and Public Affairs from Virginia Tech. He has over thirty years of research, teaching, and consulting experience, George has authored, co-authored, or contributed to numerous consulting reports and academic articles.

Toward an Operational Definition of Islamophobia

A Public Holistic Response

First Composer

This paper discusses the path, along with the hurdles, towards an expanded understanding of Islamophobia. Although operationalization of the term is challenging, the authors admittedly noted the numerous difficulties for constructing such a comprehensive operationalization. Nevertheless, the main contribution of the paper is to foster a scholarly dialogue as to what Islamophobia entails. Given our current political/social/economic situation, the relevance of the paper is spot on. Since the microscope has been placed on the behaviors of Muslims, mostly toward negative ends, this paper counters the widespread narrative by presenting Muslims as victims in many cases. The double standards are also highlighted in the contrast between terrorist cases perpetrated by non-Muslim individuals and those terrorist acts committed by Muslims. Namely, the Las Vegas shooter's brain was examined hinting at a possible mental illness which would explain his behavior, the discussion of white privilege is lost in the discussion among popular discourse. This is especially relevant considering the recent white supremacist terrorist attack of a mosque in New Zealand. Furthermore, the topic of Islamophobia is also accessible in the sense that much of the political spotlight currently in America, China, Myanmar, and Europe focuses on minorities who are deemed the other by political establishments and elites. In terms of intellectual coherence, namely theoretical, I appreciate the inclusion of sociological and psychological paradigms and references to the Freudian concept of the "uncanny," as well as Edward Said's contributions to the study of Muslims. In conclusion, this article engages a myriad of perspectives including the psychological, sociological, economic, and political in a robust interdisciplinary approach to the operationalization of Islamophobia.

Anas Askar is a PhD student in the department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University. His recent research involves how best to relay weather-related information to the public via theoretical frameworks from the social sciences on how people process and respond to uncertainty.