



## **Fourth Annual International Islamophobia Studies Research Association (IISRA) Conference**

### **Islamophobia Beyond Left and Right**

May 20-22, 2025

University of Granada, Spain

#### **University of Granada Conference Sponsors**

Instituto de la Paz y los Conflictos (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies) &  
Departamentos Estudios Semíticos (Department of Semitic Studies)

#### **IISRA Conference Committee**

Conference Chair: Jasmin Zine

Conference Co-chairs: Elena Arigita, Diego Hidalgo, Nadia Hindi

Conference Committee: Amina Easat -Daas, Schirin Amir-Moazemi

Conference Manager (Granada): Laura Sanchez

IISRA Conference Administrator: Fatima Chakroun

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## DAY I: Tuesday May 20, 2022

**9:00am-9:30am – Registration**

**9:30am-10:00am-(Main Hall) Welcome and Opening Addresses**

Hatem Bazian, University of California, Berkeley, IISRA President.

**Special Opening Address (video):** Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Diego Checa Hidalgo, Secretario Académico del Instituto de la Paz y los Conflictos, Universidad de Granada.

Juan Antonio Macías Amoretti, Director, Departamento de Estudios Semíticos

Jasmin Zine, Wilfrid Laurier University. IISRA Vice President and Conference Chair.

**10am-11am- (Main Hall) Opening Roundtable: Islamophobia Beyond Left and Right**

The opening roundtable considers the conference theme from a transnational and multidisciplinary purview based on the research and perspectives of IISRA board members.

**Moderator: Hatem Bazian**

**Panellists:** Rabab Abdul Hadi, Nadia Fadil, Schirin Amir-Moazemi, Salman Sayyid, AbdoolKarim Vakil.

**11:00am-11:30am Morning Refreshment Break**

**Session 1: (Main Hall) 11:30am-1:00pm –SPECIAL PLENARY SESSION:  
Islamophobia and Policy in Times of Global Crises**

**Moderator: Saul Takahashi**

Ahmad Shaheed, University of Essex, Former UN Rapporteur on Religious Belief and Freedom.

**Biography:** Ahmed Shaheed is Professor, School of Law and Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex, United Kingdom. He directs the Human Rights Centre's Religion and Equality Unit and is currently the Lead for the Human Rights Centre's project on Countering Islamophobia. Ahmed previously served as the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) (2016-2022) and as UN Special Rapporteur on Iran (2011-2016). During his tenure as UN Special Rapporteur as FoRB, he authored reports on religious intolerance (2017), on freedom of expression (2017), on securitisation of religious minorities (2018), on Antisemitism (2019), on Islamophobia (2021), and on religious minorities in situations in armed conflict and insecurity (2022). He advised the UN Office for Genocide Prevention (UNOGP) on the development of Fez Plan of Action against Hate (2017) and on the formulation of guidelines for social media companies on responding to hate (2023). He serves as a member of the Anti-Islamophobia Working Group of civil society actors in the United Kingdom and as a member of the Panel of Independent Experts on FoRB convened by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Marion Lalissee, European Commission's Coordinator on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred.

**Biography:** Lalissee graduated from the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), the College of Europe and University of Toulouse Le Mirail. She served as deputy EU Ambassador to Yemen and Chargé d'Affaires a.i. and held different positions at the EU Delegations to Ghana, Mauritania, Morocco and within the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish-Cypriot community. An experienced EU civil servant, she has significant experience in working closely with a wide range of civil society organisations inside the EU and in the Muslim world. More information on the activities of the European Commission's coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred can be found [here](#).

Khalid Fahad Al-Khater, Senior Ambassador, Director of Policy Planning Department, Qatar.

**Biography:** Dr. Khalid Fahad Al Khater is the Policy Planning Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar. Dr. Al Khater is also the Founder and Director of New Grounds Research, Qatar - a platform for equalizing narratives and supporting critical approach narratives from the region, and for the region.

Corey Saylor, Research and Advocacy Director, Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

**Biography:** Corey Saylor is the research and advocacy director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. He is an expert on political communications, media relations, and anti-Islam prejudice in the United States with over twenty-five years of experience. The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and Washington Post have sought his opinions. He has appeared on outlets ranging from Fox News to CNN, the BBC, and Al Jazeera. Saylor has run successful advocacy campaigns against corporate giants such as American Express, Burger King, and Bell Helicopter-Boeing. He has been active in combatting the Muslim Ban, anti-Islam legislation nationwide, and removing biased and inaccurate materials from law enforcement counterterrorism trainings.

Salma Amazian, Lecturer Assistant (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), PhD Candidate (Universidad de Granada).

**Biography:** Salma Amazian is a researcher on Islamophobia and institutional racism in Spain. She is a PhD candidate in the social, cultural and gender analysis of migration programme at the University of Granada, focusing on the construction of Muslim men as a threat in Spain from a decolonial approach. She has worked for non-governmental and civil society organizations, as well as academic institutions such as the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute and the Open University of Catalonia.

Salman Sayyid, Professor of Social Theory and Decolonial Thought, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds.

**Biography:** S. Sayyid is based at the University of Leeds and holds a Chair in Decolonial Thought and Social Theory. Sayyid has held academic positions in London, Manchester, and Adelaide. His

research and publications focus on rhetoric, Islamophobia and Critical Muslim Studies. His work has been translated into over a dozen languages. Some of his major publications include *A Fundamental Fear* (a book that, despite being banned by the Malaysian government, is now in its third edition), *Thinking Through Islamophobia* (co-edited with Abdoolkarim Vakil), and *Recalling The Caliphate*. He is the founding editor of the interdisciplinary academic journal: *ReOrient*.

## Evren Akgun, Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims (OSCE)

**Biography:** Ambassador Evren Dağdelen Akgün, born in Ankara in 1968, is a career diplomat. She holds a Master's degree in European Studies from the College of Europe, Brugge, Belgium, completed in 1996, and has undertaken post-graduate studies in International Relations at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, Austria, from 1990 to 1992. She earned her Bachelor's degree in International Relations and German Language and Literature from Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, USA, in 1990. Ambassador Dağdelen Akgün's professional journey is marked by significant contributions and leadership roles in diplomacy. She has recently served as a member of the Steering Board for the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. From 2017 to 2021, she served as the Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Bangkok. Her tenure as Deputy Director General of the Department of Policy Planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Ankara from 2013 to 2016 also involved working on mediation and co-chairing the UN Friends of Mediation. She also led the Department of EU Affairs at the MFA in Ankara between 2011 and 2013.

**1:15pm -2:15 pm- Lunch Break**

## Session 2A: (Main Hall) 2:30pm-4pm **European Horizons of Islamophobia I**

**Moderator: Nadia Fadil**

Johanna Looock (University of Leeds)

*Blindness on Islamophobia of the Liberal Democratic Left.*

**Abstract:** When looking for political constructs where Islamophobia is less likely, one might focus on liberal democracies or discourses and politics of the Left, considered to be opposed to racism. Examples may be Switzerland due to a seeming absence of a significant racist history of

colonialism, National Socialism, or ethnonationalism, or Germany due to its acknowledged efforts to re-write its history in opposition to its National Socialist past through denazification, memorial culture, and recent migration policies. Persisting or resurging racism is often presented as a disruption of these liberal-democratic constructs and associated with the Right. However, the restricted association of racism with the Right can facilitate a blindness to racism such as Islamophobia within constructs of liberal democracy and the Left. Therefore, I investigate the possibility or disposition for racism as part of liberal democracy. If Islamophobia can also be traced in politics and discourses of liberal democracy or the Left, one may ask whether the distinction between categories of the Right and the Left is helpful to counter Islamophobia. While markers of the Right and the Left may not add value to distinguish between positions supporting or opposing racism and imperialism, their distinction might carry value to make an ignorance and blindness to Islamophobia outside discourses of the Right visible without claiming that political positions become identical, which might invite the critique that this would mean 'everything is Islamophobia'. Rendering ignorance or blindness to racism in constructs expected to be opposed to it is central due to the danger of the naturalisation of racism, such as Islamophobia through discourses of liberal democracy and the Left. Beyond the examples of Switzerland or Germany, the indicated blindness and disposition must be investigated with a view to Islamophobic underpinnings of the construction of a European liberal order and notion of Europeaness.

**Biography:** Johanna Loock is a PhD candidate at the University of Leeds (School of Sociology and Social Policy). She investigates mechanisms of exclusion and racism, more specifically Islamophobia, within liberal democratic policies of inclusion – such as official German integration policies. Additionally, she explores their role in the reconstruction of a national identity. Johanna associates her work with the field of Critical Muslim Studies and has an academic background in Islamic Studies, Political Studies, Religious Studies, and Geography. She is also a co-editor of the ReOrientations Blog.

Martijin de Konig (Radboud University Nijmegen)

*Freedom, Tolerance and Responsibility – Three Vignettes from the Netherlands about Neoliberal Islamophobia.*

**Abstract:** The figure of the racial Muslim has been interpellating Muslims as good/bad subjects for over decades, if not centuries. Perhaps a bit unusual, this paper takes a remarkable silence about the Bosnian genocide as a starting point to think through how the idea of Muslims as a threat to social cohesion, security and freedom became mainstreamed, and specifically how this idea became a crucial element of the Dutch neoliberal mission to civilize the citizens. I will do

this by foregrounding three vignettes that highlight how some Muslim organizations have responded to how the racial Muslim has been invoked as a potential threat to freedom and tolerance and how 'they' should take responsibility, show how a neoliberal Islamophobia structures the space Muslims can and cannot occupy in the public sphere. The ways in which this occurs in the Netherlands over the last 35 years, shows the importance of neoliberal thinking and practices and how the lines between the so-called political left and right are both blurred and fluid but also become strengthened.

**Biography:** Martijn de Koning is an anthropologist and teaches at the Department of Islam, Politics and Society at Radboud University, Nijmegen. He has been working on themes related to identity construction of Moroccan-Dutch youth, Salafism, Counter-radicalization policies and surveillance, Islamophobia and racialization and activism among Muslims in the Netherlands. Together with Nadia Fadil and Francesco Ragazzi he edited the volume *Radicalization in Belgium and the Netherlands – Critical Perspectives on Violence and Security* (IB Tauris 2019). With Carmen Becker and Ineke Roex he wrote *Islamic Militant Activism in Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany - "Islands in a Sea of Disbelief"* (Palgrave, 2020). He maintains his own weblog CLOSER: <https://religionresearch.org/closer>.

Saaz Taher (University of Toronto Scarborough)

*"Anti-burqa" Campaigns and Visual Politics in Switzerland.*

**Abstract:** This presentation aims to explore the Orientalist representations of Muslim women in the Swiss discursive and visual space, particularly through the anti-burqa campaign that led to the federal initiative adopted in 2021. In Switzerland, recurring public debates on the place of Islam and Muslim women have generated representations often shaped by religious, racial, and gendered stereotypes. This analysis seeks to highlight how federal political campaigns, notably the "anti-burqa" campaign, contribute to a visual and discursive regime that reproduces Orientalism and gendered Islamophobia. This presentation will examine the tensions between representations of Muslim femininity and dominant norms in Switzerland, particularly regarding gender, race, and religion. The study will focus on the discourses and images conveyed through these campaigns, showing how they articulate racial and colonialist logics concerning Muslim women. However, rather than merely reproducing stereotypes, these images can also serve as a space for subversion. The presentation will highlight how diverse collectives of Muslim women redefine their place in the public sphere by confronting these representations and asserting their epistemic agency.

**Biography:** Saaz Taher is a postdoctoral researcher in critical refugee studies and digital storytelling in the Department of Arts, Culture and Media at University of Toronto Scarborough.

She is soon to be joining the Department of Social and Public Communication at UQAM - Université du Québec à Montréal as a professor. Her research lies at the intersection of critical migration and refugee studies, theories of epistemic justice and injustice, critical race theory, feminist epistemologies of the Global South, and feminist critical Muslim studies.

## **Session 2B: (Conference Room A) 2:30pm-4pm** **Examining the Frontiers of Social Media and Digital Islamophobia**

**Moderator:** **Schirin Amir-Moazami**

Matt Sheedy (University of Bonn)

*Flooding the Zone of Meaning: From Muslim Bans to Bombing Muslims and Back Again.*

**Abstract:** Whereas a liberal-left spectrum has traditionally been where rights-based social orders and anti- and de-colonial politics have resided, I argue that two contemporary forces have contributed disproportionately to the failure to realize these ideals—neoliberalism and social media. Neoliberalism undermines public goods like education and work place democracy in favour of hyper-individualism and private solutions. It is therefore counter to cooperative state- and community-centred social projects that are able to extend cultural and religious pluralism as part of a shared civic identity. Social media has followed similar logics, with data mining, algorithmic sorting, and perverse incentive structures monetizing and weaponizing sentiments like anger and fear. At the same time, TikTok became the single largest site showing the real-life horrors inflicted on Gaza, and radicalized countless young people in solidarity with Palestinians. Likewise, popular shows such as *Ms. Marvel*, *Ramy*, and *Mo* are among the most complex and nuanced depictions of Muslim Americans to date, and are staking a claim to an expanded view of what counts as an ‘American’ or ‘Western’ identity. And yet, to paraphrase Evelyn Alsultany, the promise of Muslim inclusion has largely failed. In this paper, I start with Alsultany’s premise that liberal multiculturalism has failed to empower Muslims, and ask what might take its place? Can we speak of heterodox networks like TikTok as sites of resistance? Where does power and knowledge fit into this matrix, and can social networks be a meaningful point of organization and solidarity, especially when considering Trump/Musk’s naked imperial ambitions?

**Biography:** Matt Sheedy teaches in the Department of Religion at the University of Manitoba and in the North American Studies program at the University of Bonn. His research interests include critical social theory, theories of secularism and religion, and contemporary narratives on Islam/Muslims, atheism and non-religion, and Indigenous religious traditions in North



American popular and political culture. Matt's most recent book is *Owning the Secular: Religious Symbols, Culture Wars, Western Fragility* (2021). He is currently working on a book entitled, *Islam According to Google News: How Media Shape the Way We Talk About Religion*.

Kirsten Smeets (Radboud University Nijmegen)

*Islamophobia on TikTok: Transcending Far-Right Boundaries.*

**Abstract:** In recent decades, the European far right has particularly targeted 'Muslim immigrants' as the dangerous Other, resulting in a political discourse that is characterised by Islamophobia. This so-called 'fourth wave' of the far right, has coincided with the ascendance of social media, which have contributed to the mainstreaming and normalisation of far-right ideologies in right-wing politics. This normalisation has created a blur in defining the radical- and the extreme right on the political spectrum, which have led scholars in recent years to adapt 'the far right' as an umbrella term. Islamophobia comes prominently to the fore on the platform of TikTok, where actors in the far-right landscape construct what I have called 'religious contra-identities' of 'The Christian Europe' vs. 'The Muslim Other', as a way to exclude Muslim (immigrants) from Europe. This paper argues, on the basis of a qualitative content analysis of more than 3000 TikTok videos, that the driving forces of this Islamophobia, are not so much restricted to the 'far-right landscape', but that they can be found in societal mechanisms that drive both left and right-wing European politics, such as meritocracy, individualism and a loss of control and identity. It demonstrates that the far-right self-centredness and the instrumentalisation of secularism to exclude Muslims cannot be isolated from the broader societal culture where self-centredness predominates notions of the common good. The far right is a radical implementation of this orientation in which citizens aim at protecting their self-interest, reconstructing a sense of belonging and establishing success, with their *raison d'être* antagonising those who 'threaten their existence'. The far right then, merely functions as an emergency brake to broader societal issues that go beyond the political distinction between left-right.

**Biography:** Kirsten Smeets MA is a PhD candidate at the department of Philosophical Ethics and Political Philosophy at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. As a theologian and a scholar of religion, specialised in Christian ethics and Islam, she does interdisciplinary research on the relationship between religion, violence and inequality, viewed from social and political philosophical thought and theological perspectives. Her current research project focuses on the relationship between the far right, religion and European identity. More specifically, it investigates religious contra-identities in the anti-immigration discourse of the European far right. She will be defending her dissertation in April 2025.

Sujood Momani (University of Limerick)

*I Would Rather be Eroticized Than be Seen as a Threat.*

**Abstract:** Muslim women living in the West and beyond derive from a range of cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Despite reductive characterisations, particularly visible in anti-Muslim discourse, the rise of social media has given Muslim women a platform from which to be heard and seen in ways that were previously unattainable (Ryan 2011). In this regard, Muslim women have discovered novel ways to break boundaries and challenge homogenised stereotypes by expressing themselves using the online space, particularly through the hijab and modest fashion (Lewis 2013; 2015; 2017). Coinciding with an increasing online presence, global brands have recognised modest fashion as a niche market, marking the beginning of the hijabi influencer-brand collaboration relationship, further amplifying the online exposure of Muslim women. Drawing on original qualitative data from fieldwork conducted internationally with Muslim women as social media producers and consumers, alongside a semiotic visual analysis (Barthes 1964;1972; 1977), this paper examines how these hijabi influencers negotiate 'new', socially, and religiously constructed notions of Islamic modesty, while simultaneously trying to align with norms of what is currently deemed aesthetically attractive by Western standards. It discusses the impacts capitalist collaborations are having on Muslim women's interpretations of religiously defined 'Islamic' notions of 'modesty' and performative Muslimness, asking whether these interpretations are challenging Western stereotypes or complicating Islamic notions of religiosity. This paper concludes with a discussion of the utilisation of hijab, by both influencers and brands, and whether this is to be regarded as regressive or progressive for Muslim women living in the West. Theoretically, this paper is grounded in the works of Erving Goffman (1959), Roland Barthes, Edward Said (1978) and Lila Abu-Lughod (2013). Empirically and theoretically, this research extends and enriches current scholarship on Muslim women's self-representation and utilisation of social media, offering novel insights and contributions to the field.

**Biography:** Sujood Momani is a researcher specialising in the self-representation of hijabi influencers and Muslim women on social media. She recently completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Limerick. Her research explores how identity, modesty, and belonging are negotiated online, with particular attention to self-Orientalisation, anti-Muslim narratives and the appropriation of Muslim women's religiosity in Western brand collaborations. Her work critically engages with debates in sociology, media studies, and gender studies, addressing questions of representation, commodification, and power. Dr Momani has presented her research internationally and is currently affiliated with the University of Limerick.

## 4pm – 4:30 pm Afternoon Refreshment Break

### Session 3 A: (Main Hall) 4:30pm-6pm- Civil Rights, Culture Wars, Securitization, and the Paradox of Islamophobia and Islamophilia

**Moderator: Mattias Gardell**

Corey Saylor (Research and Advocacy Director, Council on American Islamic Relations)

*CAIR 2025 Civil Rights Report: Unconstitutional Crackdowns in the United States.*

**Abstract:** 2024 marks a record high in Islamophobia in the United States. For years, CAIR's civil rights reports have told the story of American Muslims being targeted due to their faith since its inception in the wake of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. In 2024, we find a different theme: Muslims—along with Palestinians, Arabs, Jews, African Americans, Asian Americans and others—were targeted due to their anti-genocide and anti-apartheid viewpoints. Employment discrimination was the highest reported category, as employers abandoned prior commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion to punish employees, particularly minorities, advocating against genocide. Education-related complaints steadily increased, as administrators seeking to repress free speech brought about one of the worst educational crises in recent history. Complaints of law enforcement encounters also rapidly increased, as US leaders, particularly university officials, relied on state violence to disperse peaceful protests. In a previous report, CAIR researchers noted that Islamophobia would likely continue to increase unless the US government took immediate action to end attacks on Palestinians in Gaza. In 2024, the government's clear failure to act has brought about the present moment, where the state of Muslim civil liberties - and American civil liberties broadly - is under extreme threat.

**Biography:** Corey Saylor is the research and advocacy director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. He is an expert on political communications, media relations, and anti-Islam prejudice in the United States with over twenty-five years of experience. The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and Washington Post have sought his opinions. He has appeared on outlets ranging from Fox News to CNN, the BBC, and Al Jazeera. Saylor has run successful advocacy campaigns against corporate giants such as American Express, Burger King, and Bell Helicopter-Boeing. He has been active in combatting the Muslim Ban, anti-Islam legislation

nationwide, and removing biased and inaccurate materials from law enforcement counterterrorism trainings.

Baljit Nagra (University of Ottawa) & Paula Maurutto (University of Toronto)  
*Racialized Borders: Muslim Experiences at the Canada/Us Border.*

**Abstract:** While borders have always been contentious, exclusionary, and racialized spaces, the “War on Terror” has intensified these dynamics, enabling nation-states to expand coercive, violent, and militarized border practices. We analyze the “the War on Terror” as a racial project that paved the way for nation states to justify and normalize violence, exclusion and the erosion of civil liberties. This paper focuses on the experiences of Muslims at the Canadian/US border to explore how borders have become critical sites in the “War on Terror,” where states attempt to banish, punish, and discipline Muslim identities. We draw on 95 interviews conducted in 2014–2015 with Muslim community leaders across five major Canadian cities including Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver. The paper documents how Muslims experience increasing restrictions, exclusion, racial profiling, and harassment at the border. It also highlights the strategies of resistance they employ to navigate these coercive practices. Theoretically, we situate the border as both a material and symbolic site of power. Drawing on Foucault’s insights, we analyze how contemporary border practices rely on overlapping modalities of power including sovereign, disciplinary and biopolitical forms of control, converge. These mechanisms of control transform the border into a space where national security is enacted through racialized surveillance and the pre-emptive targeting of Muslim bodies. We also rely on Omi and Winant’s concept of the racial project to understand how the securitization of borders operates as a key mechanism through which racial hierarchies are produced and maintained. The border thus operates not as a mere physical boundary but as an extension of state power that reinforces racial logics and legitimates global security regimes.

**Biography:**

Paula Maurutto is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto and holds a cross-appointment at the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies. Her research is situated at the intersection of urban security and surveillance, crime and punishment, law, social policy and AI. Focusing on preventive security and surveillance, her work interrogates how counter-terrorism practices and border control regimes undermine foundational principles of justice and perpetuate racial projects

Baljit Nagra is an Associate Professor in the Criminology Department at the University of Ottawa. Her research aims to understand how racial discourses are rearticulated in the 'War on Terror'. Both her research and teaching are geared towards racial justice. Her research has been published in refereed journals such as the *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, and the *British Journal of Criminology*. She is also the author of a book titled *Securitized Citizens: Canadian Muslims Experiences of Race Relations and Identity Formation Post 9/11* that was published by the University of Toronto Press.

Kathleen Foody (North Carolina State University)

*Domesticating Islam: Eid, Empire, and the Muslim Subject.*

**Abstract:** In this paper I explore US government attempts to define and demarcate the kind of Muslim who deserves inclusion in US domestic projects, and I follow the permutations and deployment of what I and others term Islamophilia. Islamophilia is distinct from both Right and Left Islamophobia. Islamophobia is, at least in part, a practice of exclusion – both Left and Right Islamophobia suggest Muslims do not belong “here,” Muslims are not sufficiently like “us,” Muslims do not respect “our” values. Islamophilia, on the other hand, is a practice of inclusion – albeit, one with significant limits and requirements. Islamophilia, as I will demonstrate, marks continuing ways of flattening Muslim experiences and identities in order to domesticate Muslims as citizens of both national and international orders. I focus in particular on a history of White House hosted Eid celebrations, marking the end of Ramadan, from the 1970s through the present. I trace the variety of criticisms that eventually arose surrounding these celebrations under Presidents Bush, Obama, and Biden (particularly in light of the war in Gaza), as well as their absence under President Trump. Islamophilia—like Islamophobia—reduces Islam and Muslims to flattened caricatures of “good” against “bad” Muslims. In this paper, I argue that Islamophilia forestalls any political possibility for anti-imperial action, for solidarity, and for critique.

**Biography:** Kathleen Foody is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at North Carolina State University. She earned my Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Religious Studies in 2012. She was previously an Associate Professor of International Studies at the College of Charleston. My research focuses on the study of modern Islam, both as practiced by Muslims and as conceived by non-Muslims. She is specifically interested in how ideas about liberalism and secularism organize debates over appropriate Islamic practice and politics. Her current research examines a series of international attempts to stage Islam for liberal publics.

Jasmin Zine (Wilfrid Laurier University)

*Islamophobia, Muslims, and the New Culture Wars.*

**Abstract:** A culture war is a conflict between different social groups in a struggle to impose their own virtues, beliefs, and practices over society. Both MAGA inspired, “anti-woke,” and ethno-nationalist culture wars revolve around curtailing immigration, multiculturalism, and advancing populism and secularism among other issues. Anti-Muslim ideologies are embedded in these cultural crusades. As anti-Muslim culture wars proliferate, their ideologies circulate within far-right echo chambers inspiring racist conspiracy theories, terrorist manifestos, and genocidal violence. Meanwhile, White racial anxieties and demographic and civilizational fears about Muslims infiltrating, populating, terrorizing, and taking over White nations have found their way into mainstream views and public policies. While Islamophobic ideologies have been the mainstay of right-wing conservatives and far-right politics, with the new culture wars, the political boundaries between right and left are increasingly blurred when it comes to Muslims. For example, Sara Farris (2017) has referred to the alignment of various political actors around “femonationalist” ideals whereby right-wing nationalists, neoliberals, along with some feminists and women’s equity agencies, invoke women’s rights to stigmatise Muslim men and advance their own political objectives. In addition, “liberal Islamophobia” (Zine, 2022) operates as a systemic state practice whereby Islamophobic forms of governmentality are camouflaged within the liberal political mainstream. Here, values of multiculturalism, equity, diversity, and inclusion are espoused and celebrated yet, at the same time, policies and practices are enacted that target Muslims as suspect and illiberal minorities, further authorizing and normalizing Islamophobia. This paper examines contemporary culture wars and the anti-Muslim subcultures that re-purpose these debates within an increasingly fraught and dangerous political terrain.

**Biography:** Jasmin Zine is a Professor of Sociology and Religion & Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her recent book: *Under Siege: Islamophobia and the 9/11 Generation* (McGill-Queens University Press) was named on the Hill Times list of Best Books of 2022. She is author of a major report on the Canadian Islamophobia industry that examines the networks of hate and bigotry that purvey and monetize Islamophobia. She served as a consultant on combating Islamophobia for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Council of Europe (COE), and the Office for the Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ODHIR/OSCE). She is a sought-after media commentator and has given numerous invited talks and keynotes in dozens of countries

internationally. Dr. Zine is co-founder and Vice President of the International Islamophobia Studies Research Association (IISRA).

### **SESSION 3 B: (Conference Room A) 4:30pm-6pm** European Horizons of Islamophobia II

**Moderator:** Amina East-Daas

Marta Panigel (University of Turin)

*The Original Sin: Gendered Islamophobia as Structural Racism in Italy.*

**Abstract:** Gendered Islamophobia is a phenomenon deeply rooted in colonialism and in the Eurocentric Orientalism that has structured the relationship between Western nation-states and the Global South for centuries. While in Italy racism was long equated with the arrival of mass migrations in the early 1990s, recent studies have brought renewed focus on the continuity with the colonial past and its repression. Despite this, the narrative of a non-racist country persists, one in which racism is seen as limited to isolated immoral actions by individuals, or right-wing extremism. On the contrary, culturalist racism based on religion is widespread across the entire political spectrum, making Italy the European country with the highest aversion toward the Muslim population. Islam, the second most widespread religion for about twenty years, remains the only major religion in the Country without a bilateral agreement with the State. Moreover, politicians and journalists from the progressive and radical spectrum, along with certain feminists, are equally complicit in the production and reproduction of racist and Islamophobic rhetoric, policies, and attitudes. Through a qualitative analysis of a large corpus of sources (17 biographical interviews with Italian Muslim women and a critical analysis of essays and narrative works written by Italian women, both Muslim and non-Muslim), this paper aims to investigate two aspects of contemporary gendered Islamophobia in Italy. First, how once “progressive” political parties have begun to follow the right-wing on issues related to immigration, hoping to capture the votes of an electorate increasingly accustomed to racist, xenophobic, and femonationalist arguments. Second, how the repression of both the colonial past and the historical presence of Islam in Europe form an original sin upon which the Islamophobic imprint of Italian politics, both right and left, has been built.

**Biography:** Marta Panighel is a Postdoc Research Fellow at the University of Turin, in the context of the ERC program F-WORD, where she studies the permanence and suppressions of Fascism and Colonialism in contemporary Italy using a feminist ethnographic methodology. She holds a PhD in Sociology with a thesis titled Gendered Islamophobia in Italy. Muslim women between

self and hetero-representation. Her main interests lie in Gender and Postcolonial studies, with a focus on racism, feminisms, Islamophobia, intersectionality, new and old right-wing movements. Together with Marie Moïse, she translated into Italian Sara R. Farris' book *In the Name of Women's Rights. The Rise of Femonationalism* (2017).

Amani Hassani (Brunel University London)

*Erasing Muslim Communities: An Analysis of Denmark's 'Ghetto' Policies.*

**Abstract:** This paper examines Denmark's 2018 parallel society policies – popularly known as the ghetto policies – as an expression of structural Islamophobia enforced through local governance. It analyses these policies in terms of their ethnonationalist roots, as well as their framing of Muslim communities as threats to Danish social cohesion. These policies discriminate by design, as a mechanism to manage and surveil Muslim communities in public housing estates. The ghetto policies have support across the right/left political divide. This paper argues that when it comes to the Danish ethnonationalist policies, there is in fact ideological unity across the political spectrum in the vilification of Muslim community. Indeed, urban policies directed at Denmark's Muslim population reflect a coloniality enacted through public housing policies, aiming to banish and erase Muslim communities from their neighbourhoods. Ultimately, I contend that Denmark's housing policies serve as tools of social control, used to manage its Muslim population, erase their spatial history, and dismantle community life within housing estates. The paper offers insights into how contemporary public housing policies can become an expression of structural Islamophobia in its political aim to manage Muslim social, urban and community life.

**Biography:** Amani Hassani is an urban ethnographer working at the intersection of sociology, anthropology, and human geography. Her research explores the connection between racialisation and spatialisation, focusing on Muslim populations in the Global North. She has written widely on racialisation, Islamophobia, and Muslim experiences in academic and public domains. She is currently a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Brunel University London, leading the research project "The Other's Right to the City: a comparative ethnography of Denmark's ghetto policy." The project examines how processes of racialisation, Islamophobia, and hostile immigration policies shape national and urban politics, manifested through urban renewal policies.



Nikita Zychowicz (University of Leeds)

*Excluding and Including Muslims: Reorienting our Understanding of Islamophobia Beyond Fear, Beyond Exclusion.*

**Abstract:** A very common scholarly narrative on Islamophobia argues that it primarily functions as a systematic excluding of Muslimness, through processes which paint Muslims as the “Other” and as not being compatible with the West. This line of thinking emerges from a school of thought which understands Islamophobia as a form of Fear: fear against Islam, against Muslims, against all that is “Other”. This paper invites us to expand the horizons of our understanding of Islamophobia, by suggesting that we should also see Islamophobia as a system capable of including Muslims. In proposing this argument, the paper finds its roots within the alternative tradition of viewing Islamophobia as a form of racism – in particular, it takes as its theoretical grounding S. Sayyid's conceptualisation of Islamophobia as "racialised governmentality". The paper makes the case that, if we take this framing seriously, then we ought to view Islamophobia as being capable of adopting multiple approaches in the ultimate goal of disciplining Muslimness. To illustrate what we might call "inclusive Islamophobia", we turn to the author's area of specialisation: Islam and Islamophobia in Russia. From as early as Catherine the Great, the Russian state has developed a method to appropriate Islam into its national heritage. On the one hand, this provided Russian Muslims with the freedom to practice their faith, but it also came with severe restrictions on the horizons of political imagination for Muslims in Russia, and on the possibilities for political and religious autonomy. Through this strategy, Islam was brought under state control, giving Russian officials final say on issues such as the construction of mosques and the promotion or restriction of religious movements. Through this discussion of an example of Islamophobia which co-opts yet restricts Muslimness, this paper challenges us to reorient our understanding of Islamophobia beyond fear, beyond exclusion.

**Biography:** Nikita Zychowicz is a young scholar of Eastern European origin based in Leeds, UK. He recently completed a BA in Arabic and Islamic Studies and a MSc in Inequalities and Social Science from the University of Leeds. Zychowicz is presently undertaking a PhD at the same institution, using decolonial discourse theory to analyse Islamophobia in Russia. His wider research interests include the development and entrenchment of Islamophobia in Eastern Europe, global racisms (including Islamophobia and antisemitism), decoloniality, and Critical Muslim Studies. He publishes under the pen name “Nik Zych”.

## DAY II: WEDNESDAY May 21, 2025

### 9:00am Morning Coffee /Tea Refreshments

#### Session 4 A: (Main Hall) 9:30am-11:00am- Islamophobia in Spain/Cataluña and Canada/Quebec

**Moderator: Diego Checa Hidalgo**

Fatiha El Mouali Samadi (Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona)

*Islamophobia in Spain has the Face of a Mujer-Madre.*

**Abstract:** Islamophobia in Spain has deep roots in a complex historical process that has evolved over centuries. The construction of stigmas and prejudices towards the Muslim population has proceeded systemically, whereby various actors have participated to keep collective imaginaries alive and strengthen hate speech. Over the past half-century, the immigration of Muslim women to Spain has sparked a resurgence of the long-standing anti-Muslim apparatus. Muslim women have been the object of a rhetoric that oscillates between victimization and criminalization, contributing to the reproduction of gendered Islamophobia. This rhetoric has legitimized state and regional policies against them, under both left-wing and right-wing governments, perpetuating their confinement in situations of marginalization, vulnerability and precariousness. Such policies have been used to keep these women under control and surveillance by various institutions, especially social services and educational centers. In these environments, Muslim mothers live their motherhood under the constant fear of losing custody of their children. Muslim migrant women, particularly mothers, face a double burden: in addition to dealing with religious and racial discrimination, they must also protect their children from prejudice and islamophobia. This presentation analyzes how gendered islamophobia in Spain is crystallized around the figure of Muslim *mujer-madre*, and aims to make visible the strategies of resistance developed by these mothers to cope with the Islamophobic reality in which they find themselves immersed. It will examine how they implement mechanisms to preserve their cultural and religious identities, including creating community support networks and intergenerational solidarity among Muslim women.

**Biography:** Fatiha holds a degree in Economics and a PhD in Education Sciences (Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, UAB). Technician in the field of immigration, associate professor at the UAB and collaborating professor at the UOC. Activists in different social spaces against racism

and all types of discrimination. Author of several articles published in scientific journals and chapters in collective books.

Salma Amazian (Universidad de Granada)

*Body-Territory and Re-existence: Muslim Communities Facing Securitization in Spain.*

**Abstract:** In this presentation, I will examine how Muslim bodies function as sites of both control and resistance within the context of the increasing securitization of Islam in Spain. Using the concept of body-territory, I analyse how Muslim communities, particularly Muslim men, experience, embody, and resist surveillance mechanisms and security policies in their daily lives. Drawing on extensive fieldwork with Muslim communities, this study reveals how bodies become spaces where colonial power relations materialize, especially through security dispositives (or apparatuses) that mark certain bodies as suspicious or threatening. However, these same bodies also emerge as territories of re-existence, where communities develop strategies to resist, endure, and redefine their ways of being Muslim in a hostile environment. This research highlights the continuities between historical Spanish colonialism and contemporary forms of bodily control, demonstrating how security policies targeting Muslim communities operate through the same colonial matrix of power that historically subjugated Muslim bodies in North Africa. At the same time, it explores how Muslim communities reclaim their bodies as spaces of resistance, generating collective knowledge and practices that challenge dominant security narratives. By introducing the body-territory perspective, this work contributes to decolonial and feminist studies, offering a critical framework to understand contemporary forms of Islamophobia and community resistance.

**Biography:** Salma Amazian is a researcher on Islamophobia and institutional racism in Spain. She is a PhD candidate in the social, cultural and gender analysis of migration programme at the University of Granada, focusing on the construction of Muslim men as a threat in Spain from a decolonial approach. She has worked for non-governmental and civil society organizations, as well as academic institutions such as the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute and the Open University of Catalonia.

Leila Benhadjoudja & David Moffette (University of Ottawa)

*National Distinction, Islamophobia and Minoritization in Quebec and Catalunya.*

**Abstract:** Although Quebec and Catalonia's contexts are different, our research suggests a link between their status as minority nations vis-à-vis the federal state, and their relationship to

racial otherness. Our research focuses on the experiences of Muslim communities and Islamophobia in these two nations, examining how they inform the relationship and dynamics between two white nations, one a minority (Quebec, Catalonia) and the other a majority (Canada, Spain). A major element of interest to us is the discourse of national distinction, which pervades the national narrative and all political spectrums (from the far left to the far right), and the way Islamophobia informs this discourse. In this paper, we will analyze the idea of “distinct society” and the notion of “distinction” used in nationalist discourse in Quebec and Catalunya, across all political spectrums, that the Muslim participants in our research echoed. This discourse borrows different modalities, but it touches on three elements that we will analyze. These include 1) a distinct society because of its language/culture; 2) a distinct society because it embodies progressive values (secularism, feminism, antifascism, etc.); 3) a distinct society because it faces another white hegemony.

### **Biography:**

Leila Benhadjoudja is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her research interests include racism, Islamophobia and feminist anti-racist resistance. Her current research with David Moffette focuses on the experience of Muslim communities in the context of small nations. Her major publications address the themes of Islamophobia and secularism in Quebec, and Muslim feminist resistance. She is also co-founder of the Ottawa Feminist Festival and a member of the BIPOC caucus at the University of Ottawa.

David Moffette trained as a sociologist and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa, Canada. His research interests include Canadian and Spanish immigration policies, the intersections between immigration law and criminal law, borders and bordering practices, racism, and nationalism. His current research with Leila Benhadjoudja focuses on the experience of Muslim communities in the context of small nations.

Chaimae El Jebary Amisnaou (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

*The Protocol for the Detection of Islamic Radicalism and Racial Control in Catalunya.*

**Abstract:** Over the past few years, preoccupations with security and radicalization have become significant in the Spanish and Catalan educational sectors. The Protocol for the Detection of Islamic Radicalism (PRODERAI), implemented in Catalonia in 2015, has been touted to prevent radicalization among young Muslims. However, this protocol generates dynamics of control and stigmatization towards Moroccan and Muslim students. This qualitative research analyzes how

social views about Muslim youth are constructed, and the role played by PRODERAI in the reproduction of a discourse of social control within educational institutions. Through interviews and focus groups with students, teachers, management teams and social work professionals, evidence has emerged on how this protocol contributes to reinforcing educational Islamophobia. In this paper, I show how PRODERAI stems from a racist concept of threat, where institutional actors interpret Muslim practices as signs of radicalization. This issue not only impacts the well-being of young Muslims, but it also shapes their interactions with educators and support groups. In many cases, these professionals find themselves in a position of intermediation between security policies and the rights of Muslim students.

**Biography:** Chaimae holds a graduate degree in Social Work from the University of Barcelona, and is a social worker in public administration, and a PhD candidate in the Department of Theories of Education and Social Pedagogy at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Her research focuses on the process of racialization and social work in Catalonia, analyzing how power dynamics and social structures influence the experiences of racialized people.

#### **Session 4 B (Conference Room A) 9:30am-11:00am- Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism: Genealogies, Epistemologies, and Liberal Denial**

**Moderator:** **Schirin Amir-Moazami**

Esther Romeyn (University of Florida)

*Thinking Islamophobia Through the Prism of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's "Elements of Anti-Semitism," and Cedric Robinson's "Black Marxism."*

**Abstract:** This paper explores this parallel by thinking contemporary Islamophobia through the prism of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's a seminal 1947 essay on anti-Semitism, entitled "Elements of Anti-Semitism," as well as Cedric Robison's analysis of racial capitalism in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983). My analysis is concerned specifically with situating these racisms in the context of formations of capitalism, and with understanding Islamophobia in the context of neoliberal policies of precaritization. In "Elements of Anti-Semitism," Marxist philosophers Adorno and Horkheimer bring the biological racism of the 1930s, and antisemitism as its dominant but not exclusive expression, in conversation with the division of labor and class. Anti-Semitism and fascism, the form of governmentality it prepares the way for, have a specific economic purpose for Adorno and Horkheimer: to conceal domination in production and the reality of capitalist exploitation. Anti-Semitism in the 1930s is a politics of resentment that presents a displacement of political demands for social revolution. Cedric Robison's analysis of racial capitalism meanwhile argued against European Marxists such

as Adorno and Horkheimer who saw race as a by-product of capitalist accumulations and a mystification of class antagonisms that racialization has been an integral constitutive component of the historical development of capitalism. Capitalism is a co-production of race and class. It requires inequality, which racism enshrines. Both Adorno/Horkheimer and Robinson are helpful in analyzing the contemporary political moment, in which analogies with the 1930s abound, not in the least where it concerns the articulation of the “Muslim problem.” As Etienne Balibar has pointed out, contemporary racism articulates a cultural racism, centered not on racial superiority but one based on cultural differences (although genetics brings these biological racial markers back in). There are familiar theories of demographic “replacement,” conspiracies of global cabals and elites (liberals Muslims, Jews) who have unleashed migrant flows to undermine “our” culture.

**Biography:** Esther Romeyn is Full Instructional Professor in the Center for European Studies at the University of Florida. Her research focuses on the mainstreaming of anti-migration rhetoric in the EU and its consequences on EU migration governance, human rights, and democratic backsliding. Her publications converge around an interest in the importance of narratives in ordering political realities and forging collective identities.

Nahed Samour (Radboud University) & Anya Topolski (Radboud University)  
*Liberal Denial and Liberal Complicity in Genocide.*

**Abstract:** Thinking from Europe about the ongoing genocide in Palestine, this contribution aims to clarify the relationship between genocide denial and complicity in a liberal political and legal framework. It examines the denial of both historical and contemporary evidence, as well as existing laws, as a cognitive and deeply ingrained practice. It also creates space to think about the role of emotions, embodiment and instrumentalization of trauma in relation to liberal denial and complicity. This denial has been observed in relation to the general denial of racism by liberals (Kundnani), and more specifically in the context of Islamophobia and antisemitism. In this regard, denial is explored as both an active and passive effort, particularly in relation to the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people, and the role of the myth of the Shoah as exceptional to justify this denial. Complicity, when properly understood, involves actions that contribute (potentially) to the wrongdoing of another agent. Given the substantial investment of European states and their institutions in Zionism and Israeli nation-building, this paper seeks to examine the connection between such involvement and the various dimensions of complicity. These include cooperation, conspiracy, collaboration, collusion, connivance, condoning, consorting, and full joint wrongdoing (Lepora & Goodin, 2013). These aspects are analyzed with respect to intent and individualism, central aspects of liberalism.

## Biography:

Nahed Samour Nahed Samour, Research Associate at Radboud University, has studied law and Islamic studies at the universities of Bonn, Birzeit/Ramallah, London (SOAS), Berlin (HU), Harvard and Damascus. She was a doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in Frankfurt/Main. She clerked at the Court of Appeals in Berlin, and held a Post Doc position at the Eric Castrén Institute of International Law and Human Rights, Helsinki University, Finland and was Early Career Fellow at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg, Göttingen Institute for Advance Study. She has taught as Junior Faculty at Harvard Law School Institute for Global Law and Policy from 2014-2018. From 2019-2022, she was Core Emerging Investigator at the Integrative Research Institute Law & Society.

Anya Topolski is an associate professor in ethics and political philosophy at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Her current research is in the field of critical philosophy of race and focuses on the race-religion intersection in European. Recent articles are: *The Race-Religion Constellation: A European Contribution to the Critical Philosophy of Race* (Critical Philosophy of Race, 2018); *Good Jew, Bad Jew: 'Managing' Europe's Others*. Ethnic and Racial Studies. Ed. James Renton. 2017. Her areas of expertise are: racism, political philosophy, ethics, European identity and exclusion, gender, antisemitism and Islamophobia, political theology, Jewish thought, Arendt, Levinas, Zionism and Judeo-Christianity

Margaretha Adriana van Es (Utrecht University) & Anya Topolski (Radboud University)

*The Constellation as an Analytic Tool to Understand Antisemitism and Islamophobia.*

**Abstract:** The popular assumption that racism is about skin-colour and other phenotypical features keeps fueling debates about whether antisemitism and Islamophobia should be understood in terms of racism, and if yes, how to conceptualise the religious component in these manifestations of racism. Important questions that still need to be answered are: (1) how can we best conceptualise the relationship between religion and other elements that tend to play a role in the racialisation of Jews and Muslims, such as phenotypical features, genealogy, nationality, and so on? (2) How can we conceptualise this relationship in a way that accounts for historical patterns of continuity and change? And (3) how to analytically do justice to the fact that antisemitism and Islamophobia respectively affect a wide variety of people, who sometimes have very similar, and sometimes very divergent experiences? In this paper, we

develop a Walter Benjamin-inspired notion of ‘constellations’ as an analytic tool to understand the complex role of religion in antisemitism and Islamophobia, and to gain a better understanding of racism more generally. We first explain how racism is sustained through phantasmagorical racial figures (such as ‘the Jew’ or ‘the Muslim’). We then examine the historical trajectories of antisemitism and Islamophobia as well as the contemporary experiences of Jews and Muslims in Europe. We show how thinking in terms of constellations helps to explain the versatility of the figure of ‘the Jew’ and the figure of ‘the Muslim’. In so doing, we challenge simplistic distinctions between ‘biological’ and ‘cultural’ racism, and we provide a new definition of racialisation.

### **Biography**

Margreet van Es is an assistant professor of religious studies at Utrecht University. Her research field lies at the intersection of religion, racism, and the politics of belonging, with special focus on Muslims in Europe. She currently studies the material expression of cosmopolitan aspirations in trendy halal restaurants in Rotterdam.

Anya Topolski is an associate professor in ethics and political philosophy at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Her areas of expertise are: racism, political philosophy, ethics, European identity and exclusion, gender, antisemitism and Islamophobia, political theology, Jewish thought, Arendt, Levinas, Zionism and Judeo-Christianity.

## **11:00am-11:30am Morning Refreshment Break**

### **Session 5 A: (Main Hall) 11:30am-1:00pm Islamophobia Beyond Left and Right in France & Quebec**

**Moderator: Amina Easat-Daas**

Ibrahim Bechrouri (City University of New York)

*“Faire barrage”: The Usefulness and Uselessness of “Far-Right” in the French Context.*

**Abstract:** “Il faut faire barrage à l'extrême droite” (“we need to build a dam against the far-right”), is a recurring slogan in French media and political discourse. It suggests that all political forces must unite, regardless of their ideological differences, to ensure that any opposition candidate prevails over a far-right contender in elections. Curiously, this phrase is often uttered by those who themselves promote (and eventually implement) far-right policies,



spread far-right rhetoric, and pave the way for those they designate by the far-right label, in the French context, the Rassemblement National (formerly known as the Front National). Recently, this phrase has been reframed as “building a dam against extremists,” a more insidious formulation that equates the Rassemblement National - a party with roots in the Waffen-SS and torture of colonized subject during the Algerian War of Independence - with La France Insoumise, a traditional left-wing party that has taken relatively principled stances on issues such as Palestine and Islamophobia. This contribution critically examines how the “far-right” label serves the interests of France’s racist and Islamophobic political class, regardless of whether it identifies as right-wing or left-wing. Specifically, I focus on two key aspects. On the one hand, I explore how the “far-right” label allows political parties to secure electoral victories without proposing substantive alternatives to the neoliberal or conservative status quo. On the other, I analyze how the label sanitizes the Islamophobic discourse and policies of other political actors. I then explain why “far-right” may not be a useful category when it comes to understanding Islamophobia in France, as it limits understanding of this phenomenon and obscures its pervasive reach across society and institutions.

**Biography:** Ibrahim Bechrouri is a scholar, writer and activist whose academic interests center around terrorism, counterterrorism, policing, colonialism, surveillance, race, and Islamophobia. His doctoral dissertation, completed at Paris 8 University and supported by Columbia University, examined the New York Police Department’s counterterrorism policies, their impact on targeted communities, and the resistance strategies they deployed against surveillance and over-policing. Dr. Bechrouri currently teaches at the City University of New York where he hopes to inspire and guide students to become critical thinkers and change-makers in their own right.

Souhail Chichah (William’s College)

*Islamophobia: The Common Left/Right Matrix.*

**Abstract:** The Left/Right distinction originates from the French Revolution, where it differentiated between those who defended the existing social order and those who sought to transform it in the name of social progress—notably Human Rights, equality, democracy, and... *secularism* . Today, the Left/Right framework continues to position "social progress" as a key political differentiator. However, using France as a case study, this presentation argues that it is precisely in the name of "social progress", symbolized by *secularism* , that the Left (and the Right) has contributed to the repression of Muslims. A pivotal moment occurred under the socialist government of François Mitterrand, during the Creil headscarf affair (1989), when three schoolgirls were expelled for refusing to remove their veils in class. This incident ignited a national debate on the compatibility of Islam and republican values, setting the stage for the

first legal restrictions targeting Muslim communities as such—restrictions that have only intensified since then. This presentation posits that Islamophobia operates as a cultural hegemony, transcending the traditional Left/Right political divide. At the heart of France’s anti-Muslim policies lies *Laïcité* (French secularism)—the ideological foundation of the Republic—which cuts across political affiliations. By deconstructing *Laïcité*, this presentation will illustrate how French secularism is instrumentalized by the Republic not only to preserve its social order but, more fundamentally, to support its own legitimacy. In doing so, the presentation will challenge the relevance of the Left/Right framework in understanding Islamophobia. Through this examination of French secularism, this presentation will also provide some reflections on how epistemological racism functions as a foundational pillar of global Islamophobia.

**Biography:** Souhail Chichah is a Visiting Lecturer in Arabic Studies and Global Studies at Williams College. In addition to his research on the theory of capital, he taught economics in China, Singapore, Japan, Belgium, and France, where he taught economics of racism at Université de Lyon 2 in the first French Master’s program on Discrimination and Inequality. Apart from his research on the anthropology of whiteness, he is completing a PhD at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in collaboration with Universidad de Granada. His dissertation is titled “Islamic Resistance to Racism: A Comparative Study between France and the US”.

Safa Ben Saad (Université de Sherbrooke)

*Islamophobia in Quebec: at the Crossroads of Two Feminisms.*

**Abstract:** In 2017, as Quebec faced an anti-Muslim terrorist attack, the notion of Islamophobia continued to be refuted in public debate. The court decision handed down two years later neither retained nor discussed the qualification of Islamophobic crime. The term has no legal definition, and acts of hatred targeting Muslims fall under the notion of religious hatred found in the Canadian Criminal Code. Despite this fact, jurisdictions in other provinces have often had to discuss the term. However, the debate surrounding the adoption of Bill 21 to ensure the secular nature of the State clearly shows that Muslim women wearing the headscarf are the target of unabashed hate speech. Pending a decision by the Supreme Court, the lower courts had to analyze, on the one hand, an official position mobilizing the argument of Quebec’s feminist values; and on the other, an intersectional feminist opposition accusing the law of targeting women, and Muslim women in particular. Based on an analysis of the discourses that accompanied the parliamentary debates and legal challenges to Bill 21, we hypothesize that

Islamophobia is a fundamentally feminist issue in Quebec, making the notion a site of confrontation between two visions of feminism.

**Biography:** Saad is a doctor of law and adjunct professor at the Faculty of Law, Centre for the Study of Contemporary Religion, at the Université de Sherbrooke (Canada), where she is also a member of the SoDRUS (Society, Law and Religion) Research Centre. Her research focuses on fundamental rights at the intersection of law and religion, and mobilizes feminist legal theories. She has been conducting research on Islamophobia since 2018, when she organized a major international symposium on Muslims in Canada, and she is frequently called upon by the media to analyze current events related to Islamophobia and hate crimes.

Rayan Freschi, (CAGE International)

*Pacifying the Forgetful Muslim.*

**Abstract:** Both Right and Left proved themselves to be the two complementary faces of White supremacy ; as such, they developed strategies to maintain its predominance. This paper explores how both the Right and the Left sought to erase experiences of Muslim resistance and/or persecution from the tissue of our collective memory to pacify our political behaviour. The erasure of memory prevented us from learning the hard lessons of our recent past. Accompanied by the destruction of our capacity to collectivize that memory, the erasure opened the path to a non-violent and integrationist discourse in the Muslim community in the last two decades ; a discourse inspired by progressive liberals and tolerated by the conservatives. It isolated the French Muslim minority from the global Muslim community, requesting absolute dependency and uncompromising loyalty to the Republic based on the construction of a citizenship framework bound to the so-called republican values. It went as far as questioning and ultimately delegitimizing our rage — conceptualised here as the logical and constructive response against Islamophobia — and condemned any expression of resistance directly inspired by it. It lead to a perfectly pacified Muslim advocacy, forgetful of its past, isolated from other communities of resistance and blindly believing in a culture of reform. Unsurprisingly, this approach didn't usher in any meaningful progress. Its programmed ineffectiveness served a pacifying effect, thereby creating sufficient space for the State to adopt increasingly brutal and violent policies that served to reproduce White supremacy.

**Biography:** Rayan Freschi is a researcher at CAGE International since 2021. A legal jurist, he authored two reports on French Islamophobia since 2020, highlighting the State's violations of Muslim children rights and unveiling the "Systematic Obstruction" policy. He regularly discusses State Islamophobia in international and French media platforms such as MEE, The New Arab,

Memo, Orient XXI or Le Média. A member of the Race, religion, and secularism network, he regularly contributes to academic discussions on Islamophobia. He was a founding member of the Antiracist and Anticolonial Front created in June 2024 to oppose the far-right surge in Parliament.

Jim Wolfreys, (King's College London)

*Islamophobia and the Construction of Political Legitimacy.*

**Abstract:** This paper examines the role played by Republican secularism, or *laïcité*, in the reconfiguration of the political spectrum and the authoritarian Islamophobic trajectory of government policy in contemporary France. Since 2002 *laïcité* has been recast as a cornerstone of a radicalising mainstream right, allowing the far right to exert an influence in repurposing it as a part of a 'civilisational conflict' threatening the West. *Laïcité* has facilitated public compliance with discriminatory processes, allowing 'values' to be identified that pit those who embody fidelity to the nation against those who do not, and who must therefore be excluded. Anti-Muslim policies invoking *laïcité* have united both those seeking to radicalise it along reactionary lines and those seeking to restore its 'true', progressive meaning. But *laïcité* has never been a purely neutral set of processes and values. Today, its role in bolstering the authority of the state as the producer of religious subjects and the source and arbiter of the public good has been pivotal to the intensification of authoritarian initiatives. The accumulated impact of these measures has led some on the radical left to grow critical of the instrumentalisation of *laïcité* and to take a stand against Islamophobia. Efforts to recalibrate France's 'Republican arc' by incorporating the far right and ejecting anti-racists and the radical left, have cast the latter as 'Islamist-leftist' enemies of the Republic. This process of political disqualification has intensified following Israel's onslaught on Palestine. Those who oppose it are labelled antisemites while the Rassemblement National, whose origins and political culture are steeped in antisemitism, has sown, via its backing of Israel, the illusion that these origins and culture have melted away, entrenching its political legitimacy via support for genocide.

**Biography:** Jim Wolfreys is Reader in French and European Politics at King's College London. He is author of *Republic of Islamophobia: The Rise of Respectable Racism in France* (Hurst/OUP, 2018) and co-author (with Peter Fysh) of *The Politics of Racism in France* (Palgrave, 2003). He is co-editor with Nadia Kiwan of a special issue of the journal *Modern and Contemporary France* on Islamophobia (May 2023).

## Session 5 B: (Conference Room A) 11:30am-1:00pm Tracing Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Racism in Disciplinary Frames through Education and Social Work

**Moderator:** Jasmin Zine

Johanna Lems (Complutense University of Madrid)

*Female Muslim Students in the Spanish Education System.*

**Abstract:** This communication presents the findings of a research project carried out during 2023-2024 by research group GRAIS, Complutense University of Madrid. Financed by the Institute for Women (Spanish Ministry of Equality), the study aimed to examine the challenges faced by Muslim students wearing the hijab in Spain's public education system (schools and universities). The analysis –based among others on 26 in-depth interviews with women aged 16 to 45 conducted across different regions of Spain– shows that female students who openly display their Islamic identity are frequently subjected to discrimination both by the teaching staff and their peers. These practices include hijab bans, harassment, derogatory comments about their religion, questioning of their intellectual capabilities, and being steered toward lower academic expectations. The paper explores the impact these interactions have on the educational and professional trajectories of these students, the strategies they employ to cope with or resist these pressures, and the role of their surrounding environment (family, friends, academic community, associations, etc.) in shaping these strategies. In addition to the research results, this communication also seeks to address how the findings have been received by the funding institution and questions the search for support and alliances against Islamophobia within the realm of representative politics.

**Biography:** Johanna M. Lems is Assistant Professor at the Department of Linguistics and Oriental Studies at the Complutense University of Madrid. Member of research group GRAIS ([www.ucm.es/grais](http://www.ucm.es/grais)) and secretary of scientific journal *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* (<https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/ANQE>), Johanna cooperates with the Fundación de Cultura Islámica ([www.funci.org](http://www.funci.org)). She has publications among others in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Race* (Abdullah, 2025) and is the author of *Tomar la palabra. Islamofobia and participación política después del 15-M* (2024).

Nuha Dwaikat -Shaer (Wilfrid Laurier University)

*The Selective Justice of Academia: Islamophobia, Palestine, and the Unspoken Politics of Solidarity.*

**Abstract:** social justice is widely recognized as a foundational value in social work academia, championed within progressive, left-leaning spaces that advocate for equity and the dismantling of oppression across various axes, including race, gender, and economic class. However, a troubling inconsistency emerges when addressing issues affecting Muslims—particularly Palestinians. Despite social work’s commitment to addressing systemic oppression, the silence surrounding the Palestinian struggle, especially the genocide in Gaza, remains pervasive within Canadian academic spaces, including social work faculties. This paper critically examines these inconsistencies in social justice advocacy, using the genocide in Gaza as a case study within Canadian academic institutions. It explores how Islamophobia—both overt and structural—manifests in these spaces, with institutional silence and academic complicity contributing to the marginalization of Palestinian and Muslim voices. While other social justice issues receive significant attention, Palestinian struggles, especially in Gaza, are often excluded from mainstream academic discourse due to political sensitivities, fear of backlash, and entrenched biases against Muslim communities. This silence undermines the professed values of social justice and normalizes Islamophobia within institutions that otherwise claim progressive commitments. Drawing on critical theory and intersectionality, the paper interrogates whether traditional Left-Right distinctions remain effective in addressing Islamophobia. These political binaries obscure how both liberal and conservative spaces perpetuate anti-Muslim bias. The paper argues for the necessity of building new strategic alliances across diverse social movements to combat Islamophobia and advocate for Palestinian liberation. These alliances must prioritize an inclusive, intersectional approach that centers marginalized voices and resists the fragmentation of justice efforts.

**Biography:** Dr. Nuha Dwaikat-Shaer, Assistant Professor at Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Social Work, brings over 20 years of experience in community engagement, social justice, and human rights advocacy. Her research explores settler colonialism, forced displacement, housing rights (particularly in Palestine), equity in higher education, and justice for migrants with precarious legal status. Committed to advancing racial equity, decolonization, and activism, Dr. Dwaikat-Shaer develops inclusive pedagogy and mentors equity-seeking faculty and students. Her work challenges systemic inequalities, fostering resistance and solidarity across intersecting struggles for justice and human rights in the context of global political dynamics.

Amilah Baksh (Wilfrid Laurier University)

*Theorizing Gendered Islamophobia in Social Work Education.*

**Abstract:** Faculties of social work are uniquely positioned within the Western academy as they offer practical training for careers in social work, a field which claims to practice from anti-oppressive, anti-racist and justice-oriented guidelines. Social work education typically prioritizes the development of skills for direct practice over academic research, and espouses progressive values related to equity, justice and more recently, decolonization. In this paper, I build on my previous work that examines how gendered Islamophobia manifests in social work education. Through critical autoethnography, I explore recent developments in the field: a rather disquieting publication in the renowned journal *Social Work* situates support of Palestine as an issue of ideology, locating the more objective and humanitarian stance as a pro-Israeli one, while decrying schools of social work as “spaces rife with indoctrination” which foment anti-Semitism (Farber & Fram, 2024, p.204). The implicit Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian sentiment in the Farber & Fram (2024) piece and the explicit anti-Muslim racism in my experiences as a social work educator, reveals that Muslims and Islam continue to be constructed in opposition to liberal values of equality and freedom. Engaging the concept of Muslims as the exceptional ‘Other’ reveals that even in progressive and liberal spaces such as the social work academy, justice, humanity and care does not extend to Muslims.

**Biography:** Amilah Baksh is a Canadian Muslim woman of Indo-Caribbean descent. She has been a social work educator for more than a decade and is currently pursuing a PhD at Wilfrid Laurier University in social work. Her SSHRC-funded doctoral research uses critical autoethnography and narrative interviews with Muslim women educators to explore gendered Islamophobia in schools and faculties of social work. Amilah is also a practicing social worker, whose practice experience spans child welfare, clinical social work and community organizing at the intersections of race, faith and mental health.

**Lunch Break: 1:00pm-2:15pm**

**Session 6: 2:15pm -3:45pm (Main Hall) PLENARY SESSION Far-Right Narratives, Islamophobia and Palestine in Southern Europe**

**Moderator:** Nadia Hindi

Javier Díaz Muriana (University of Granada)

*Media Analysis of Islamophobia: The Gaza Genocide in the Spanish Press.*

**Abstract:** Islamophobia has functioned as an ideological and cultural underpinning, facilitating the dismissal and, at times, the complete absence of criticism regarding the ongoing genocide in Gaza. This hate speech has created the conditions that have guaranteed Israeli impunity with the protection of its main allies. This dynamic has also contributed to the dehumanization of Palestinians, a critical component of the Zionist project. The demonization of "Palestinian" and its predominance over the homogeneous projection of the Arab and Islamic world represent a recent strategy employed to silence and suppress demonstrations of solidarity and the demand for human rights in Western societies. The Islamophobic narrative underlies the anti-immigration discourse espoused by the extreme right. The media have played a fundamental role in the expansion of this phenomenon, not only by echoing the rhetoric of political and economic powers, but also by popularizing and justifying it. This paper analyzes the influence of Islamophobia in the Spanish press and the role of the media in safeguarding the Zionist project by criminalizing Palestinian identity.

**Biography:** Javier Díaz Muriana is a journalist, director of the documentary *To Exist is to Resist*, and a member of the Andalusian Coordination Group with Palestine. He works as a communication officer at the Arqus Alliance of the University of Granada and has spent the last 15 years working in the field of international cooperation and communication for social change with universities, social organizations, and NGOs. He has lived in Jerusalem and has visited the Gaza Strip up to six times. As a freelance journalist, he publishes in outlets such as *El Salto* and collaborates with the production company *Entrefronteras*. He is the organizational secretary of the Andalusian Journalists' Union.

Antonio Basallote Marín (University of Seville)

*Islamophobia, Zionism and New Far Right: The Construction of Palestinian Enemy.*

**Abstract:** This work examines the inextricable link between the rise of Islamophobia on a global scale and the consolidation of anti-Palestinian racism, primarily promoted by Israel. The main objective is to analyze the increasing prevalence of Islamophobia, particularly in Europe, and its



impact on solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, it explores how Israel, through its institutions and sophisticated public relations apparatus, has sought to frame the Palestinian issue solely as a matter of “radical Islamism” or even “terrorism.” This process has been reinforced by the new far right and the media, both of which have played a central role in disseminating this narrative.

**Biography:** Antonio Basallote Marín is a Doctor in Interculturality and the Arab-Islamic World from the University of Seville, where he is a professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies. He is a specialist in the history of Palestine and Israel. He completed predoctoral research at Birzeit University (Palestinian Territories, 2007) and has collaborated on research and outreach activities with the Alternative Information Center in Palestine and Israel, supported by predoctoral scholarships in 2010 and 2012. In Turkey, he conducted a six-month predoctoral research stay funded by the Turkish government (Türkiye Bursları Scholarship, 2014) at the Institute of Middle East Studies at Marmara University.

Belén Habboob Martos (University of Granada)

*The Role of Islamophobia in the Construction of the Palestinian Population Image. The Case of Granada.*

**Abstract:** The Palestinian people constitute a highly diverse community, encompassing individuals of various religious affiliations, ideological orientations, sexual and gender identities, and ethnic backgrounds. This heterogeneity is particularly significant when considering the approximately 14 million Palestinians residing both within the borders of historic Palestine and in the diaspora. Nonetheless, dominant orientalist, Eurocentric, and androcentric discourses—particularly within the Global North—tend to represent the Palestinian population as a monolithic entity. Such portrayals often reduce Palestinian identity to a singular religious affiliation, predominantly Islam, thereby obscuring the community’s internal plurality and reinforcing reductive stereotypes. This research seeks to analyze the construction of the image of the Palestinian population to Islam within the context of Granadian society. The study is based on a series of surveys administered to members of civil society, with particular attention to variables such as age, social class, gender, and origin. The findings will be critically examined in conjunction with my positionality as a Granada-born individual of Palestinian descent who has experienced multiple forms of discrimination. These incidents frequently stem from assumptions regarding my ethnic and religious identity, whether based on my surname or my explicit identification as Palestinian.

**Biography:** Belén Habboob Martos is Political Scientist and Translator. She is currently PhD researcher at the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Granada. Her research interests include women, political agency, diaspora, identity and refuge around the question of

Palestine. She teaches courses in Social and Cultural Anthropology and Social Work, including “Workshop on Writing in Anthropology” and “Feminist Perspectives and Gender Relations.”

Inmaculada Yuste Martínez (University of Granada)

*Hate Speech Observatory. An Initiative from Granada.*

**Abstract:** The proliferation of hateful content online has been accompanied by an increase in misinformation that can be easily shared through digital tools. This is creating unprecedented challenges for our societies, as governments struggle to enforce national laws at the scale and speed of the online world. Unlike traditional media, hate speech online can be produced and shared easily, at low cost, and anonymously. It can reach a diverse, global audience in real time. The relative permanence of hateful content online is also a problem, as it can resurface and (re)gain popularity over time. Despite these challenges, the Hate Observatory of the University of Granada's Institute for Peace and Conflict aims to be a useful tool for identifying these types of messages and generating a counter-narrative that allows us to defend peace and coexistence, and to prevent, reduce, and detect hate speech and promote the construction of cultures of peace. Understanding and monitoring this hateful narrative across various online communities and platforms is critical to shaping new responses. Meanwhile, the growing use of social media as a weapon to spread divisive and hateful speech has been facilitated by internet companies' algorithms. This has intensified the stigma faced by the most vulnerable communities and exposed the fragility of our democracies worldwide. It has also brought scrutiny to internet operators and triggered questions about their role and responsibilities in inflicting real-world harm. As a result, some states have begun to hold companies accountable for moderating or removing content that may be deemed contrary to established norms, raising concerns about limitations on freedom of speech and censorship. At the Hate Observatory of the University of Granada's Institute for Peace and Conflict, we consider both the monitoring work and the more formative and preventative aspects of offering training in institutes and local public entities to be key points of our performance. Understanding, knowing, and sharing are the tools that will lead us to peaceful coexistence and the defense of a culture of peace in which human rights are respected.

**Biography:** Inmaculada Yuste Martínez is researcher in International Relations and Human Rights. She works in the International Relations Office at the University of Granada and is Secretary of the Hate Observatory of the Institute for Peace and Conflicts. Her research work currently focuses on the extraterritorial application of human rights and the responsibility of non-state actors in human rights violations, as applied to Syrian internally displaced persons camps. She has participated as an expert of the International group of prevention of radicalization in prisons by ACAIP, the largest prison trade union in Spain. She also participated

as an expert in the ToT of Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP), Council of Europe.

Jorge Ramos Tolosa (University of Valencia)

*Judeophobia Yesterday, Islamophobia Today: The Far Right in Southern Europe, Otherness and Transnationality in the 1930s and Today.*

**Abstract:** This research is constructed on the basis of two levels of analysis. Firstly, it studies Judeophobia as a significant transnational phenomenon in fascist political cultures in many areas of Southern Europe in the 1930s. It was employed in the creation of the ‘Other’, or social alterity, as well as in the formulation of fascist concepts of the nation and the construction of national identities, albeit less centrally than in Nazism. Secondly, it demonstrates that Islamophobia is also a fundamental transnational element in numerous Southern European extreme-right or neo-fascist groups of the early 21st century, in terms of otherness and national identity. In fact, Islamophobia is a key discursive axis in current political cultures and in many ways has replaced Judeophobia as the main component for the creation of national identity through otherness. Hence significant parallels can be drawn between these two.

**Biography:** Jorge Ramos Tolosa is Assistant Professor in Contemporary History at the University of València. His main areas of research are Palestine-Israel, Arab-Islamic studies and postcolonial and de-colonial studies. He is the author of the books *Palestina desde las Epistemologías del Sur* (2022), *Una historia contemporánea de Palestina-Israel* (2020), *Palestina. Una història essencial* (2020) and *Los años clave de Palestina-Israel. Pablo de Azcárate y la ONU, 1947–1952* (2019).

### Afternoon Refreshment Break- 3:45pm-4:15pm

### Session 7A: (Main Hall) 4:15pm-5:45pm –Negotiating Diplomacy and Combating Islamophobia in an Islamophobic International Order

**Moderator: Hatem Bazian**

Khalid Fahad Al Khater, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar)

*Diplomacy Amidst a Gaza Genocide: How Muslim States Meet the Challenge of Islamophobia in the International Liberal Order.*

**Abstract:** Since the end of the second world war the function of diplomacy in the international liberal order (ILO) has been perceived as the purview of both individual nation states and alliance groupings such as NATO, the EU, ASEAN and the GCC. However, over the last two decades there has been an increasing recognition of the crisis of the ILO. This in turn is used to explain the rising tide in Europe, North American and other parts of the globe of resurgent populism and nationalism. Explanations for the crisis tend to centre on geopolitics, predicaments within flailing liberal economies, the weakening of the left, and the waning of globalization to capture the world to move towards progress equitably. One increasingly central phenomenon at the heart of this crisis is rising rates of systemic and institutionally reflected racism and in particular anti-Muslim hate. Indeed, in such narratives the international order, legitimacy and progress is threatened by security crises, instability, and an Islamophobic perception that Muslim values and norms threaten the liberal international system and its institutions. Within such spaces small Muslim states, like Qatar, must operate to maximise its national interests – including the constitutional commitment to peace-making and call for an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories as well as the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as well as respect for international law, including laws against genocide and humanitarian law - within a universe that is less than ethically neutral or unaligned. In this paper I will thus seek to address these issues by assessing diplomacy since Israel's war on Gaza commenced in October 2023.

**Biography:** Dr. Khalid Fahad Al Khater is the Policy Planning Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar. Dr. Al Khater is also the Founder and Director of New Grounds Research, Qatar - a platform for equalizing narratives and supporting critical approach narratives from the region, and for the region.

Sheikha Amna Khalid al Thani (Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar)

*The State of Qatar's Initiatives on Combating Islamophobia and Antisemitism.*

**Abstract:** In recent years, conflicts across the world have emerged threatening international liberalism and endangering a peaceful world order. This includes the rise of right wing and nationalist groups gaining popularity and promoting hate speech, xenophobia, and racism. Since the events of October 7th and Israel's the war on the occupied Palestinian territories, there has been an upsurge in prejudices in the form of Islamophobia and Antisemitism around the world bringing these issues to the forefront and expanding the borders of the conflict. Amongst this, the State of Qatar continues to strive for peaceful dialogue, employing its diplomatic leverage bilaterally and multilaterally to progress policy and action. In line with its role as a mediator in

regional and international conflicts, Qatar has used its leverage to bring opposing sides to the table and promote stability. For the last several years, the State of Qatar has drawn the world's attention to the need to combat the dangers of racism, including the contemporary manifestations of the twin hates of Islamophobia and Antisemitism on the global stage in line with its emphasis on solving conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. Through official statements, initiatives, workshops and roundtables, Qatar has made significant efforts in bringing the issues of hate speech and racism to the forefront of priorities in bilateral dialogues, as well as regional and international high-profile meetings and forums. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has held three annual global policy roundtables on Islamophobia and antisemitism starting in 2022, allowing policy makers and academics from around the world to come together to discuss issues and the joint efforts required in setting more unified policy initiatives to combat these challenges and threats. In this Paper I examine the intersection of Islamophobia and Antisemitism in contemporary political and media discourses, with a particular emphasis on Qatar's role in shaping and responding to these narratives. Specifically, how islamophobia and Antisemitism are constructed, reinforced, and contested across different cultural and political contexts, particularly in the Middle East and in the West. The paper will explore Qatar's engagement in global media discourse, including its responses to Islamophobic narratives, and its diplomatic efforts in fostering interfaith dialogue and combatting antisemitism.

**Biography:** Sheikha Amna Khalid al Thani is in the Department of Policy Planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar. Al-Thani's policy and research work focuses on interfaces between Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hate and policies that tackle them in a wider frame of initiatives on combating racism and religious-hate.

Beverley Milton-Edwards (Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar)

*Mediating a Genocide: Islamophobic Tropes and Trust.*

**Abstract:** On October 7 2023 Hamas and other Palestinian Armed Groups launched a highly coordinated attack – Operation Al Aqsa Flood - from Gaza against Israeli targets. By the end of the day the Gaza-based groups had overwhelmed Israeli military and security, killed an estimated 1,200 and taken approximately 250 captives back to Gaza. The Israeli government, led by Prime Minister Netanyahu, hit back hard – not just against the armed groups who claimed responsibility for the attack but the entire 2.3 million Palestinian inhabitants of Gaza. After more than a year of war Israel has killed more than 46,000 Palestinians, more than 100,000 have been severely injured, the population of Gaza has been forcibly displaced – on average between 6 and 19 times – the majority of Gaza's built environment has been reduced to rubble. It is a convention of the international liberal order that war is subject to laws, rules and norms from which a panoply of diplomatic overtures are also assumed. Chief among these

is the function of third-party mediation – both for the management of conflict and its resolution. Liberal theory centres mediation on so-called normative frames of trust, neutrality, and impartiality. In this paper I contend that Islamophobic tropes – particularly centred on the idea that Muslims are inherently anti-Semitic – was directed at Qatar, its leadership and its policies during its efforts to mediate. I will then examine this within the dual frame of the politics of false dialogue and racism.

**Biography:** Professor Beverley Milton-Edwards is a Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar and a non-resident senior fellow at Middle East Council for Global Affairs. Milton-Edwards has authored influential publications on Islamic movements, Islamism and the politics of the Middle East.

Ahmed Shaheed (University of Essex)

*Overcoming Delegitimization: A Human Rights-Centered Approach to Combating Islamophobia.*

**Abstract:** Despite growing affirmations by states and international organisations that they are committed to combating Islamophobia, it is not yet widely accepted by States that they have a human rights obligation to counter Islamophobia. Even when good faith pledges are made to combat Islamophobia, they come with the mandatory qualifier that any such effort would have to respect human rights. This qualified support for combatting Islamophobia discloses the generally held concern, whether explicitly stated or not, that any support for Muslim demands for the recognition of their equal rights as members of the human family, could be detrimental for the rights of others. Thus, pledges made by states to counter Islamophobia are a ‘concession’ they make rather than the discharge of their human rights obligations. This failure to recognise a human rights obligation to counter Islamophobia is at best based on the belief that a liberal democracy cannot accommodate the demands made by Muslims, a belief grounded on the view that Muslims would not make these demands if they were socialised into a liberal democracy. At worst, this reflects a fear that allegations of Islamophobia are a Trojan Horse to undermine western civilization. Consequently, political actors on the left demand that state policies designed to combat Islamophobia be conditioned on promoting gender equality and also be focused on addressing intra-Muslim sectarian conflicts. Similarly, those on the right demand extra diligence on protecting the freedom of speech and western values in any effort to challenge Islamophobia. While protections for gender equality and freedom of expression are absolutely legitimate concerns, not only is a hierarchy human rights being created here, but the fight against Islamophobia is delegitimated. This paper will make the case for a human rights-centred approach to combatting Islamophobia to counter neglect of Islamophobia.

**Biography:** Ahmed Shaheed is Professor, School of Law and Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex, United Kingdom. He directs the Human Rights Centre's Religion and Equality Unit and is currently the Lead for the Human Rights Centre's project on Countering Islamophobia. Ahmed previously served as the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) (2016-2022) and as UN Special Rapporteur on Iran (2011-2016). During his tenure as UN Special Rapporteur as FoRB, he authored reports on religious intolerance (2017), on freedom of expression (2017), on securitisation of religious minorities (2018), on Antisemitism (2019), on Islamophobia (2021), and on religious minorities in situations in armed conflict and insecurity (2022). He advised the UN Office for Genocide Prevention (UNOGP) on the development of Fez Plan of Action against Hate (2017) and on the formulation of guidelines for social media companies on responding to hate (2023). He serves as a member of the Anti-Islamophobia Working Group of civil society actors in the United Kingdom and as a member of the Panel of Independent Experts on FoRB convened by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Ahmad Salem (Zayed University)

*Combating Islamophobia: Can International Organizations Contribute?"*

**Abstract:** This study focuses on the only positive aspect of Islamophobia, namely, its resistance. Specifically, I analyze the identities, motives and efforts of the Islamophobia-combating intergovernmental organizations between 2010 and 2020. These organizations are classified into two major categories in terms of identities and motives: organizations established by Muslim-majority states to serve Islamic causes, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); and organizations with no religious identity established to serve general causes, such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the European Union. Comparing the anti-Islamophobia efforts of these two groups shed light on the similarities and differences between Muslim and other intergovernmental organizations and answer questions on their understandings of Islamophobia and motives to combat it. For example, do they fight Islamophobia a unique phenomenon or as a form of hatred and racism? Do they define their interest in combating Islamophobia in terms of religious, liberalist, humanist, or other principles? Do they expect increased security or material gains? While the efforts of international organizations can be easily dismissed as ineffective in confronting the rising wave of Islamophobia, this study assesses their impacts considering their limited authority and capabilities. They combat Islamophobia through, among other activities, collecting and publishing data, raising awareness, refuting Islamophobic claims, defending counter-Islamophobic arguments, pressuring Islamophobes, lobbying decisionmakers

to take effective measures, and following up on implementing them. Despite a plenty of publications on Islamophobia during the last decade, studies on combating it are rare. For example, the Islamophobia Studies Journal published only one article on combating Islamophobia until 2020. Other journals that address Islamophobia, such as Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs and Ethnic and Racial Studies, published no articles on combating it.

**Biography:** Ahmed Ali Salem is Professor and Associate Dean at College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates; and Visiting Professor and Senior Research Associate at Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University, South Africa. He has a PhD in political science and MA in African studies from University of Illinois, USA. His research interests include mainstream, critical and non-Western theories of international relations; Muslim-Western relations; and Muslim reformist thoughts. He has tens of refereed publications in Arabic and English and presented at tens of international academic fora.

## **Session 7 B: 4:15pm- 5:45pm (Conference Room A) Mapping Asian Genealogies of Islamophobia**

**Moderator: AbdoolKarim Vakil**

Dina Siddiqi (New York University) *Global Islamophobia and Narrating Bangladesh's "Monsoon Revolution."*

**Abstract:** On October 31, 2024 Donald Trump took to X to “strongly condemn the barbaric violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh, which remains in a total state of chaos.” His comments referred to the July uprising/revolution that forced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League to flee to India on August 5. Since then, mainstream and occasionally ‘progressive’ Indian voices have consistently framed the student initiated uprising as an ominous “Islamist” plot threatening secular and minority populations. In similar vein, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention has argued that “some actions of members of the interim [new] government, *as well as mobs aligned with their anti-Liberation War ideology*, show ominous signs of *genocidal intent* towards the Awami League, towards Hindu Bangladeshis, and towards other religious minorities.” How does a student revolt and people’s uprising against a deeply unpopular and extraordinarily violent regime get recast as an Islamist threat? In this paper, I track the entanglements and convergences of progressive, liberal, and right wing discourses. I draw on recent studies of global Islamophobia to show how left and liberal readings of the “revolution” are implicated in assumptions about “Islamically inspired democratic forces” as non-liberal and dangerous. As



might be expected, the Islam/democracy binary can be mapped to a reconfigured politics of colonialism and empire, with contextually specific manifestations. Such frameworks not only render illegible Muslim identities and agency but actively harm non-Muslim populations as well.

**Biography:** Dina M. Siddiqi is Clinical Professor of Liberal Studies at New York University. A cultural anthropologist by training, her research joins critical development studies, transnational feminist theory, and the anthropology of Islam and labor. She has published extensively on global garment supply chains and the cultural politics of Islam, gender, and nationalism in Bangladesh. Professor Siddiqi sits on the editorial boards of *Contemporary South Asia*, *Dialectical Anthropology*, and the *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*. She is also on the board of *Sakhi for South Asian Survivors*. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and a BA from Wellesley College.

Shafat Maqbool (University of Delhi)

*Advaitic Orientalism and the Metaphysics of Islamophobia: Ontological Hegemony, Kashmir, and the Limits of the Left/Right Divide.*

**Abstract:** Theorizations of Islamophobia often focus on its racialized, securitized, and juridico-political dimensions, yet its ontological underpinnings remain undertheorized. This paper interrogates the metaphysical foundations of Islamophobia by introducing the concept of Advaitic Orientalism, which describes how Indian metaphysical traditions construct the Muslim as an ontological Other. Extending Irfan Ahmad's critique of Hindu Orientalism and drawing on Salman Sayyid's theorization of epistemic Islamophobia, I argue that Islamophobia in India operates not only through legal exclusions and political violence but also through a metaphysical imagination that positions Islam as an existential threat to India's ontological selfhood. This ontological exclusion is particularly evident in the colonization of Kashmir, where Advaitic-Shavistic non-dualism has been mobilized to absorb Kashmir into a Hindu cosmological order, rendering its Islamic identity fundamentally incompatible with the Indian nation-state. The radical monotheism of Tawhid is framed as disruptive to Advaitic cosmic unity, legitimizing the erasure of Kashmiri Muslim agency. By engaging Wael Hallaq's critique of epistemic sovereignty and Gregory Lipton's analysis of perennial philosophy, this paper examines how Hindu metaphysical frameworks sustain Islamophobia beyond Right-wing Hindutva politics, implicating liberal and secular narratives in India's anti-Muslim governance. In doing so, this paper contributes to broader discussions on Islamophobia beyond the Right/Left binary, showing how secular liberalism and Hindutva nationalism operate through shared ontological anxieties regarding Muslim autonomy. By shifting the analytical lens from Islamophobia as a contingent political phenomenon to its structural and metaphysical dimensions, this paper

offers a new theoretical framework to understand the intersection of coloniality, metaphysics, and Islamophobia in South Asia.

**Biography:** Maqbool is a faculty member cum doctoral candidate at the University of Delhi, specialising in South Asian Muslim intellectual traditions, critical Muslim studies, and decolonial thought. His research explores the socio-political and cultural history of South Asian Islam, with a focus on memorialization, grief, and the history of emotions in Kashmiri Islamicate traditions, drawing on Urdu and Persian primary sources. His recent scholarship includes a presentation on The Construction of an 'Islamic Other' in the Hindu(tva) Reimagination (2024) at Ummatics Kuala Lumpur and an essay for Traversing Traditions titled "Thinking Palestine Through Islam: The Mirage of Secular Dissent as Epistemic Resistance against Israel" and a forthcoming co-authored paper titled "Atrocity Image and AI Ethics: The Scenes at Rafah Border," in Journal of Humanity and Society (SAGE, 2025). He will also present his work at the 8th Annual South Asia Conference in Dublin (2025).

Danial Mohd Yusof (International Islamic University Malaysia)

*Between Engagement and Alienation: Malaysia, Islamophobia, and Advocating the Muslim World.*

**Abstract:** The modern nationstate is arguably the ultimate manifestation of postcolonial legacy. As a constitutionally defined state with Islam as her official religion, Malaysia is also regularly perceived as advocating for the Muslim world. Islamophobia, in the meanwhile, is a cogent contemporary term that is used to to define a particular aspect of a pattern of reality for the Muslim world – that of discrimination and oppression. Malaysia's advocacy of the Muslim World engages with this phenomenon. Support of Palestinian independence, for example, has always played a dual purpose – the Malaysian government's internal legitimacy of Islam and its external moral credibility as an Islamic or Muslim confessional state in the Muslim world. It captures the imagination of a postcolonial Muslim world exploring its own terms for modernisation and development. Since October 7th 2023 in Gaza and growing international recognition of the Palestinian genocide, Gaza is also seen through various reports to be an enabler of Islamophobia in minority Muslim populations in North America and Europe. In this paper I will problematise the political spectrum of the Left and Right in its reflection on Malaysia and Islamophobia – on the surface, the internationalist approach of PMX (Malaysia's 10th Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim) facilitates his progressive and Muslim intellectual approach with the principles and the values of the Left; but complicates his position in the changing alignment of enforced political alliances between the Malay progressive and conservative for a unity government since 2022, and the conservative Malay Muslim opposition controlled "SG4" (Poorer heartland state governments of Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Terengganu); while also

facing an indifferent non-Muslim minority and a perceived “Islamophobic” non-Muslim dominant partner in government in the guise of DAP (Democratic Action Party). In addition, the spectre of Trump 2.0 may also complicate Malaysia’s external dynamics of engaging with Islamophobia

**Biography:** Yusof is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and Madani Studies, and ISTAC, IIUM. He is also Chief Editor of Intellectual Discourse Journal, IIUM, and editorial board member of the Journal of the Malaysian Parliament and Poligrafi (University of Slovenia). He has been active in policy research and engagement in the fields of PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism) and governance in higher education and also specialises in contemporary political thought. He was also a previously a Chevening and Fulbright Scholar. I am also the designated Director of the soon to be finalised - Centre for Islamophobia and Global Engagement at IIUM.

Sunera Thobani (University of British Columbia)

*Islamophobia and Muslim Presence in Indian Cinema.*

**Abstract:** Studies of Islamophobia have demonstrated how the war on terror institutionalized this as the governing ideology in western and global politics. A phenomenon less studied is the impact of post-9/11 Islamophobic constructs on the cultural politics of South Asian nation-states. This presentation is based on a larger research project studying the representation of Muslims and Minorities in popular culture, my focus here is on the popular Indian film’s depiction of Indian-Muslims in the post-Gujarat genocide (2002) era. Indian-Muslim writers, poets, artists and performers were central to the founding of the Bombay Film Industry (Masud, 2008; Kesavan, 1994); although less acknowledged, this was also the case in the industry’s post-liberalization transformation into Bollywood (Raghavendra, 2016; Mishra, 2002). Studies of this cinema have, for the main, used the concept of the ‘Islamicate’ (Hodgson, 1974) to classify the representation of Muslims into the ‘period-historical’, ‘courtesan’, and ‘the social-reform’ genres (Bhaskar and Allen, 2021), with the post-1990s ‘terrorist’ genre being the most recent addition (Murty, 2009). Critiquing the concept of the ‘Islamicate’ as well as the genre-based approach to the study of the cinematic Muslim, my paper presents a study of the representational strategies deployed in a number of Bollywood films, including *Chak De! India* (Shimit Amin, 2007) and *Raees* (Rahul Dholakia, 2017). Reading the cultural politics of these films in the context of their particular socio-political and geographical contexts, I analyse when and how the figure of the Muslim is featured and how this intersects with depictions of religion, gender, caste and class. Engaging directly with major shifts in the political-culture of the Indian nation-state, I demonstrate how these films’

interventions fracture the Islamophobic constructs of Muslim masculinity which are pervasive in Indian nationalist imaginaries. My argument is that these films present critiques of hegemonic Indian nationhood – secular and Hindu supremacist - from the standpoint of the Muslim characters they depict. Moreover, these films highlight contemporary practices deployed by the state to construct Indian-Muslims as an existential threat to the nation.

**Biography:** Sunera Thobani is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Her scholarship focuses on critical race, postcolonial, diasporic and feminist theory and practice, colonialism, globalization, citizenship and migration, Muslim women, media and the war on terror, and South Asian women's and sexuality studies.

### Day III- Thursday May 22, 2025

**9:00am- Morning Coffee /Tea Refreshments**

**Session 8 A: (Main Hall) 9:30am-11:00am Historical, Discursive, and Cultural Contours of Islamophobia**

**Moderator: Adnan Husain**

Elena Arigita (University of Grenada)

*Muslim Granada and the (In)visibilization of the Islamic Legacy in Spain.*

**Abstract:** The legacy of al-Andalus as an integral part of Spain's historical identity has been a subject of scholarly inquiry since the 19th century. Al-Andalus has also served as a source of inspiration for various intellectual, ideological and artistic projects in line with the different ideologies that inspired narratives of the Spanish national identity for which Islam is framed either as an essential component or in opposition to the Spanish national identity. On the one hand, contemporary historians of al-Andalus in Spain have been trained to critically examine the uses of the past, rejecting both the reimagining of al-Andalus as a model for religious co-existence, and the ideological construction of the Reconquista as mere distortions of a past that ended. On the other hand, over the past two decades, the Islamic past of Southern Europe has drawn increasing interest from scholars exploring the Andalusian trope, particularly through the concept of convivencia and its evocations in contemporary culture. Building on Charles

Hirschkind's *The Feeling of History* - and, more specifically, the sharp critiques that his genealogy of Andalucismo has gained among some Spanish historians - this paper examines the interaction between secular interpretations of the past and the ways in which Islam is made visible at the local level in Granada. In doing so, it explores the local dynamics in the city of Granada and the ways in which intellectual discourses on the Andalusian legacy interact with the lived experiences of a diverse and plural Muslim community that has been present in the city since the 1970s. For this community, al-Andalus is not just a historical past, but a tangible and everyday reality that shapes their identity as Muslims and Spaniards. However, the dominant paradigm of the Reconquista (reinforced by the paradigm of the clash of civilizations) renders the persistence of al-Andalus in the present invisible, thereby obscuring its potential as an inclusive framework for the future.

**Biography:** Elena Arigita is Senior Lecturer of Arab and Islamic Studies at the Department of Semitic Studies, University of Granada (Spain). Prior to the UGR, she worked as language lecturer at the Universities of Cairo and al-Azhar (Egypt), was a postdoctoral fellow at ISIM (the Netherlands) and senior researcher at Casa Árabe (Córdoba, Spain). Her research interests and publications deal with religious authority and institutionalisation of Islam and the politics of inclusion and exclusion of Islam in Spain.

AbdoolKarim Vakil (King's College London)

*Woods, Trees, and Muslimness.*

**Abstract:** That Right and Left are historical, and historically and relationally shifting political categories, is a given. So is their relation to questions of equality, justice and tradition, and with them, to struggles for emancipation, and racial and social justice, even as their alignments and misalignments with identity, faith, and nation, because more densely woven into their discursive traditions, histories and grammars of mobilisation, afford different constraints and resources for conceiving and addressing racism and Islamophobia. Tracking and tracing such histories, and the conjunctural cross-overs and shifts of different actors, parties, formations and policies over time and in different contexts is as interesting and illuminating as any historical work with political intent; and as limited and limiting as the work it is put to. But it is how Muslimness repartitions the ground upon which such categories and ontologies stand, and its orientations are reconstituted, that is decisive. What's Right and Left of ReOrient?

**Biography:** AbdoolKarim Vakil is a Lecturer in the departments of History and of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at King's College London. His research interests are in contemporary history, the colonial and comparative history of Muslims in Europe, and Islamophobia.

AbdoolKarim is a member of the Editorial Board of ReOrient: Journal of Critical Muslim Studies, and of the Board of IISRA: the International Islamophobia Studies and Research Association. His publications include the co-authored and co-edited volumes Thinking Through Islamophobia; Moçambique: Memória Falada do Islão e da Guerra, and Al-Andalus in Motion.

Jacqueline Brinton (University of Kansas)

*Colonial, Missionary, and Orientalist Foundations of Islamophobia in Academic Discourse.*

**Abstract:** Academia is often perceived as left-leaning and progressive, yet critiques of colonialism in the humanities and social sciences frequently fail to acknowledge how deeply embedded colonial ideas remain within these disciplines. In the study of religion, and in particular Islam, colonialism, orientalism, and missionary activity are not separate forces but rather interconnected pillars that have shaped both scholarly and public (mis)understandings of Muslims. This influence is particularly evident in the labels and categories commonly used to describe Muslim communities, such as "modernist," "fundamentalist," and "Islamist." These terms, rooted in colonial and missionary traditions, reflect the imposition of Western ideological frameworks onto Muslim societies. They not only shape contemporary academic and political discourse but also contribute to the justification of violence against Muslims. This paper examines how academic categorizations of Muslims originate in missionary biases and continue to inform contemporary Islamophobia. By tracing the historical coupling of missionaries and empire, I argue that current frameworks for understanding Muslim identity do not fit neatly into left-right political binaries. Instead, they reveal a longer history of Christian-Muslim polemics that shaped the very foundations of religious studies and continue to influence global perceptions of Islam today.

**Biography:** Jacqueline Brinton is an Associate Professor and Chair in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Kansas. Her area of specialty is Islamic Studies and she regularly publishes on the topics of modern Islam, media, and preaching. Her book, entitled Preaching Islamic Renewal: Religious Authority and Media in Contemporary Media was published by University of California Press.

Aliyah Khan (University of Michigan)

*Genocidal Photography in Gaza: Palestinian Women and Intimate Dehumanization.*

**Abstract:** Since the 1948 Nakba, Palestinian women and girls have been subjected to ongoing gender-based violence that accelerated after October 7, 2023. This paper considers the

intersections of criminalization, orientalist fetishization, Islamophobia, gendered shaming, and colonial genocidal erasure of Palestinian women in Gaza through images of their clothing. Recent war imagery from Gaza posted on X/Twitter and Instagram features Israel Defense Forces soldiers rifling through bedrooms of destroyed homes and displaying Palestinian women's lingerie and clothes as macabre trophies on walls, tanks, mannequins, and their own bodies. Accompanying social media photo commentary refers to Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim women with sexualized slurs, mocking the alleged contrast between Palestinian Muslim women's hijabs and modest public clothing, and their lingerie and private marital behavior at home. Moralizing Islamophobic captions and hashtags shared with the images include "kinky jihad," "kinky terrorism," "halal," "haram," and "naughty Gazans." Leila Ahmed, like Franz Fanon, argues that since the nineteenth century, calls for "unveiling" Arab and Muslim women "came already marked with notions of who was civilized and who was not...colonizer/colonized, European/non-European." Nina Berman calls the Gaza photographs "violating intimacies" in "a long line of conquest images" with "performances of masculinity based on humiliation...powering the occupation." I name the performances in and dissemination of these war photographs "intimate dehumanization." The exposure, passive "unveiling," and mockery of Palestinian women's intimate clothing in the simultaneous absence of and military targeting of their bodies, I show, is a performance of gendered colonial dominance over Palestinians through Islamophobia, thus reifying occupation.

**Biography:** Aliyah Khan is Associate Professor of English, and Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is also Director of the U-M Global Islamic Studies Center (GISC). Dr. Khan specializes in postcolonial Caribbean and Muslim literatures, with an interest in Muslims in comics and graphic novels. Dr. Khan's award-winning book *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean* (2020), is the first monograph on the comparative literature and music of enslaved African Muslims and indentured Indian Muslims in Guyana, Trinidad, and Jamaica. Her academic writing, creative nonfiction, and interviews have appeared in many other venues.

**Session 8 B (Room 45) 9:30am-11:00am- Islamophobic Imaginaries:  
Epistemology and Religio-Political Contestations**

**Moderator: Schirin Amir- Moazami**

Mattias Gardell (Uppsala University)

*Provo Politics the Political Impact of Quran Burnings as Performance.*

**Abstract:** This paper explores the political impact of the public Quran burnings in Sweden 2020-2024, basing its findings on ethnographic research and text/image/film material seen through the lens of performance theory and affect theory. The public Quran burning in Granada 1499 preceded the ban of Islam and Muslim culture and the expulsion of the Moriscos, i.e., Christians of Muslim heritage, from Spain. Calling for a New Reconquista, ethnonationalist influencer Rasmus Paludan staged Quran burnings in Swedish underclass areas with visible Muslim presence as a Spectacle to promote his aims of banning Islam and expelling residents of Muslim “background”. Celebrated in the anti-Muslim milieu, the Quran burnings were typically seen as a “fundamental right” by mainstream politicians, left and right. Unsurprisingly, Paludan provoked protests from the streets, some of which turned into violent clashes with the police, notably the “Easter Riots” of 2022. Construing the riots as an “attack on Sweden” the nationalist Sweden Democrats became the largest party behind the political platform of the liberal/rightwing government after the national elections of September 2022. Key measures implemented or proposed to “get Sweden in order”, some of which requires constitutional change, include revoking resident and citizen rights of people whose culture are deemed offensive to “Swedish values”, a concept never defined by law. The nationalist winds that Paludan sought to increase accelerates the transition of Sweden from a welfare to a warfare state and is quite discernible within the Social Democratic and Left parties too. Working with the affective dimension of politics, Paludan’s Spectacle reflects the legacy of the Provo Politics of white racist American “revolutionaries” of the 1970s who saw white Americans as an “occupied people” and adopted a vocabulary and tactics to “fight the System” associated with the radical Left to serve the cause of the radical Right. Out of the cleansing flames of fire, the purified nation will rise again and go “neither left, nor right”, but forward.

**Biography:** Mattias Gardell is the Nathan Söderblom Professor in Comparative Religion, and researcher at the Centre for the Multidisciplinary Studies of Racism. Working with ethnographic methods and text analysis, Gardell explores the intersections of religion, politics, racism and violence. His fields of research include radical nationalism, esoteric fascism, Islamophobia, torture history, the history of racism and religion, fascist culture, politicized nostalgia, and white racist lone wolf tactics.

Kyan Pur-Djandaghi (University of Hamburg)

*Querfront Liaison. Mapping the Common Grounds of German Leftist and Rightist with Iranian Aryanist and Royalist.*

**Abstract:** On July 24, 2024, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Homeland (BMI) closes the Shia Mosque “Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V.” (IZH). More than 800 police officers, some of them heavily armed, are involved in the closure of the IZH.<sup>1</sup> This very ban on



the IZH is justified by the BMI on the grounds that function and actions of the IZH are “against the idea of intercultural understanding”. The successive confiscation of the listed mosque building has put Hamburg’s multi-ethnic Shia communities in shock. Whereas, a broad spectrum of city society has embraced this intervention, with groups on the German left and right, Iranian aryanists and royalists erupting into outright cheers. Significantly, this alliance has been operating together for years as a *querfront* to enforce the closure of the IZH. To this end, joint demonstrations in front of the mosque have been organised, critical articles transcending political camps have been launched in media, and political lobbying for the closure of the mosque has been pursued in the Hamburg Senate. What common ground can unite such an ominous front of a German leftist who is awaiting class revolution, a German rightist who wants to (re-)build an ethno-nationalist, authoritarian state, an Iranian royalist who longs for the accession to the throne of an Iranian majesty from abroad, and an Iranian Aryanist, who imagines a pure historic aryan-iranian race? My proposal seeks to map the affects and imaginaries that fuel such a ‘*querfront liaison*’, to trace the desire for an art of governing in policing Muslimness and confiscating sacred buildings. A thesis on the common grounds is the assumption that these shared practices of Othering contribute to the cultivation of an ideology through which liberal subjectivities of Islamophobia are articulated in modes of silencing the subalterns and securing hegemonic power of the Non-Islamic.

**Biography:** Kyan Pur-Djandaghi is a doctoral researcher at the University of Hamburg. His research areas include social theory and cultural sociology, postcolonial theory, diaspora, governmentality, infrastructuralism, (post-)secularism, critical Muslim studies, qualitative and ethnographic methods of social research. As part of his dissertation project, he is investigating the modes of infrastructurization and governmental securitization of Shia communities in Hamburg and London

### 11:00am-11:30am- Morning Refreshment Break

### Session 9 A: (Main Hall) 11:30am-1:00pm- Palestine Solidarity and Combating Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Racism

**Moderator:** **Saul Takahashi**

Nancy Khalil (University of Michigan)

*The Use and Abuse of Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Bias in the Erasure of Palestine.*

**Abstract:** Since the genocide in Gaza and the rise in reported cases of Islamophobia, college campuses have conflated anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian bias. With protests on campuses across the world calling for their universities to cease contributing to the colonization of Palestine, universities across the country have responded by changing policies to shut down protests for Palestine while simultaneously seeking to specifically serve their Muslim contingencies through different material services such as staff trainings, campus Islamophobia symposiums, hiring staff to serve Muslim students, and creating task forces on Islamophobia for informed direction to address the bias. This paper argues that these efforts emerge, whether advertently or inadvertently, as a part of the long-standing machine that has been using Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bias towards the erasure of Palestine. It then asks where are the cracks in theoretical frameworks on Islamophobia that facilitate the erasure of Palestine, and what are new directions the field of Islamophobia Studies needs to consider to protect itself from such manipulation?

**Biography :** Nancy A. Khalil is an Assistant Professor in American Culture, and Core Faculty in the Program on Arab and Muslim American Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her current research interests include US imams, Muslims and higher education, Muslim seminaries, racialization, and advertising. Her forthcoming book project with Stanford University Press is an ethnography on bureaucracy and religion in the US through a study of who recognizes US imams and how they do so. She previously worked as a Muslim Chaplain at Wellesley College, co-founded the Muslim Justice League, and served on the Board of Trustees for the Islamic Relief USA. She currently serves on the board for Pillars Foundation.

Waqas Tufail (Leeds Beckett University)

*Palestine, Islamophobia and The Policing of Solidarity.*

**Abstract:** Abstract: Since October 2023, universities in the Global North have been at the centre of debates on the limits and promises of solidarity. The ongoing genocidal violence in Gaza, including deliberate scholasticide that has led to the killing of hundreds of students, teachers, academics and the near obliteration of the education system in Gaza, has led to international outrage. In universities in the US and UK and elsewhere, students and staff established encampments demanding their universities divest from weapons manufacturers which have contributed to the genocide, along with demands that universities condemn the attacks on educational institutions and call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. This paper will interrogate the politics of the encampment sites in the UK, examining the impacts of surveillance, media narratives and institutional complicity with police and state violence. The long-standing logics of the 'War on Terror' and attendant Islamophobia, that have for decades framed Muslim communities and solidarity with Palestine as extremist, present a framework through which to

understand and explain the unprecedented backlash against those individuals and groups engaging in anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle. Through a number of case studies, this paper details how students, academics and other pro-Palestine protestors have been met with a range of processes of criminalisation including reports being made to Prevent, the government's counter terrorism programme, surveillance and intimidation from private security, media denunciations, disciplinary action including removal from University courses and threat of prosecution. Most of all, this paper articulates the need for a radical anti-racist, anti-colonial politics that is not only urgent but necessary, within and beyond the University. This resistance must expose liberal institutional Islamophobia – an entrenched feature of media, academia and politics in Western states - and lead to the resurgence of a pro-Palestine movement on University campuses that is unflinching and unapologetic in its solidarity.

**Biography:** Waqas Tufail is a Reader in Criminology at Leeds Beckett University. His research interests concern the policing, racialisation and criminalisation of marginalised communities and the lived experiences of Muslim minorities. Much of his work focuses on Islamophobia, media representations of Muslims, the societal impact of racialised moral panics on criminal justice and social policy and the implications this has for anti-racism. He serves on the board of the International Sociological Association Research Committee on Racism, Nationalism, Indigeneity and Ethnicity and is co-editor of *Racism, Violence and Harm: Ideology, Media and Resistance and Media, Crime and Racism* (Palgrave Macmillan)

Eve Haque (York University) *The Islamophobic Underpinnings of Palestine Solidarity Expression on University Campuses.*

**Abstract:** Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the repression of Palestine solidarity activities on Canadian campuses has been extreme; this repression has been disproportionately borne, in particular, by Palestinian and Muslim members of campus communities. In September 2024, York University's Race Equity Caucus – which is a long standing informal caucus of faculty of colour at the university – published a meticulously researched report, entitled "Surveilled and Silenced" (September 2024) that documented the experiences of racism for faculty, students and staff expressing any solidarity with Palestine. When the original call asking for people to come forward to share their experiences of repression related to Palestine solidarity was sent out in late 2023, the backlash that was expressed to this intended project emerged across the political spectrum from both Zionist as well as self-professed and broadly identified liberal anti-racist faculty members. In this paper, I want to examine in detail this documented backlash to the initiative for this project in order to trace how arguments from the left leaning liberal and right wing Zionist positions are organized. Analyzing letters sent expressing anger at this project, I

argue that that pushback across the political spectrum had common Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian underpinnings. As Jasmin Zine (May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024) has argued, anti-Palestinian racism intersects with Islamophobia through shared stereotypes about terrorism, barbarity and dehumanization, even as anti-Palestinian racism also has its own unique features that distinguish it from Islamophobia. This case study has implications for understanding how repression of Palestine solidarity across Canadian and other campuses draws heavily on the architecture of post 9/11 Islamophobia (Zine, 2024) and therefore how we must organize our own strategic alliances and solidarity efforts in countering this surveillance, silencing and repression.

**Biography:** Eve Haque is the *York Research Chair in Linguistic Diversity and Community Vitality*. She is the co-editor of TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies. Her research and teaching interests include multiculturalism, white settler colonialism and language policy, with a focus on the regulation and representation of Muslim and racialized im/migrants in white settler societies. She has published widely on these topics including *Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race and Belonging in Canada (UTP)*

## **Session 9 B: (Conference Room A) 11:30am-1:00pm- Exploring Everyday Islamophobia**

**Moderator: Nadia Fadil**

Peter Hopkins (Newcastle University)  
*Catalysing Everyday Islamophobia.*

**Abstract:** In this paper, I challenge the assumption that everyday Islamophobia is tied only to mundane, 'low-level' forms of encounter and situate everyday Islamophobia within the broader Islamophobia industrial complex that catalyses its operation. The Islamophobia industrial complex includes the state – and the counterterrorism apparatus funded by it – but also other actors such as the media, far-right activists, politics and politicians, think tanks, right-wing religious groups, and public intellectuals. I explore the cosy relationships between these different actors and how they work in cooperation to fuel the promotion of Islamophobia. As part of this, I point to the diverse sources of Islamophobic rhetoric and to liberal and illiberal Islamophobias (Mondon and Winter, 2020) alongside the increasing mainstreaming of

Islamophobic discourse that are leading to it becoming an increasingly normalised facet of everyday life. My main argument is that everyday Islamophobia should be considered as part and parcel of other forms and types of Islamophobia (rather than being seen as a less significant or more routine form of Islamophobia) with these different types – be it global, structural, spatialised or embodied – being mutually reinforcing of each other.

**Biography:** Peter Hopkins is Professor of Social Geography, Newcastle University, UK. He has been researching and writing about Muslims identities and Islamophobia for over twenty years with specific work focusing on issues of masculinities, intersectionality, and misrecognition. He has co-edited collections such as *Geographies of Muslim Identities: diaspora, gender, and belonging* (Ashgate), *Muslims in Britain: race, place and identities* (Edinburgh), and *Scotland's Muslims: society, politics, and identity* (Edinburgh). He helped establish the first ever Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia in the Scottish Parliament and has a book being published later this year on *Everyday Islamophobia* (Bristol).

Amina Easat-Daas (De Montfort University)

*Islamophobia and the Left – A Political Analysis of France and the UK.*

**Abstract:** There is growing discontent with the left. Historically, the left has been seen as the political home of postcolonial migrants and as such has been able to rely on the support of racialised communities, including Muslims, but now arguably the left is failing the Muslims it once relied upon. Simultaneously, Islamophobia is increasingly mainstream in policy, discourse and interpersonal spheres. Rather than mounting opposition, in recent years the left has increasingly been complicit in the entrenchment of securitisation of Muslimness apparent in the French *état d'urgence* or Prevent in the UK, or in their support of controls of Muslim women's dress in the name of gender equality and secularism. Labour party members have voiced their discontent and concerns regarding growing Islamophobia in the party (LMN, 2021) In 2024 five new independent pro-Palestine parliamentarians in former Labour strongholds (four of whom represent large Muslim constituencies) point to left-wing complicity in Islamophobia, increasing alienation of Muslim voters and subsequent shifts in the political landscape. In the UK, condemning Islamophobia in the left has led to candidates being deselected. Similarly French attempts to challenge Islamophobia are met with accusations of *Islamogauchisme* – an alleged

alliance between so-called 'Islamists' and the left. Although widely accepted academically baseless allegations of *Islamogauchisme* and deselection reduce Muslimness to threatening other, and continue to alienate Muslim voters from the left. This working paper will present initial findings from analysis of British and French political documents, political and media discourse and analysis of policy, with the view to begin to map the state of the left's relationship with Islamophobia along three principal topics: 1) gender, 2) securitisation and 3) impact of foreign policy on Muslim voters, in order to develop an understanding of how left-wing Islamophobia is dramatically altering representative politics in the UK and France.

**Biography:** Amina Easat-Daas is a Senior Lecturer in Politics at De Montfort University. Her recent publications include the co-edited *Palgrave Handbook of Gendered Islamophobia* (2024) her monograph *Muslim Women's Political Participation in France and Belgium* (2020) and the edited volume *Countering Islamophobia in Europe* (2019). Dr Easat-Daas' wider research interests include the study of UK, French and Belgian politics, decolonising politics, Islam and Muslimness in the UK, France and Belgium, gendered Islamophobia and countering Islamophobia in Europe.

James Carr (University of Limerick)

*Islamophobic 'Micro-aggressions' as Markers of Systemic Racism.*

**Abstract:** Research on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland has developed steadily over the past decade (Brooks et al 2023; Carr 2016). Despite this, gaps remain in our understandings of how anti-Muslim racism manifests in Ireland, including in the form of microaggressions. Indeed, despite growing international scholarship on anti-Muslim racism over recent decades, research on this phenomenon as 'microaggressions' remains relatively underdeveloped (Babacan 2023; Chaudry 2021). Drawing on research undertaken with almost two-hundred participants this paper presents new insights on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland as microaggressive acts and in doing so, adds to the emerging international analyses of microaggressions as lived by Muslim communities. It is argued that microaggressions function, sometimes 'subtly', in day-to-day interactions to maintain a racialised social system. In addition to developing insights on anti-Muslim racism as microaggressions, this paper further deepens our understandings of microaggressive acts and their function in systemic racism. Set to this context, this paper concludes with a discussion of *critical racial literacy* as a conceptual tool, arguing for the development of a counter hegemonic racial literacy that moves beyond the superficial, 'obvious'

interpersonal experience to recognise racism as systemic, understand racialisation as processual and motivate a change to anti-racist praxis.

**Biography:** James Carr is an Associate Professor in Sociology, at the University of Limerick. In 2016, James published his first book: *Experiences of Islamophobia: Living with Racism in the Neoliberal Era* (London: Routledge), focusing on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. In addition to scholarly articles, James has published research with the Immigrant Council of Ireland (*'Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and how to respond'*); and (co)authored the European Islamophobia Report for Ireland (2015-2023). In 2022, James was awarded funding from the European Commission for his project: Sustainable Alliances Against Anti-Muslim Hatred (SALAAM), engaging with local authorities to develop anti-racism interventions.

## Lunch Break: 1:00pm-2:15pm

### Session 10 A (Main Hall) 2:15pm -3:45pm – Against Historiographical Islamophobia: Muslimness, Zionism, and the Politics of the Past

**Moderator:** Elena Arigita

Hatem Bazian (University of California)

*Palestine from Columbus' Crusade to Herzl's Zionism and Settler Colonialism.*

**Abstract:** The paper will explore the historical trajectory of Palestine from Columbus' voyages to find an alternative route to India for the purpose of retaking Jerusalem to the rise of Herzl's Zionism sponsored by Western expansionism and colonial divide and rule discourses in the region. How to frame the region's narrative within the broader context of settler colonialism rather than the orientalist and reductionist lens presently at work. By examining the intersections of European early "exploration" of imperial ambitions and the emergence of Zionism, a colonially sponsored movement, the paper highlights how supremacist ideologies shaped the modern history of Palestine. It critically analyzes the impact of early European

exploration motivated by a Crusading epistemic and the subsequent 18th through 20th century political, economic, and theological shifts leading to the current Zionist movement and the unfolding genocide in Palestine. The paper argues that European and American ideological, theological, and political developments laid the groundwork for the ongoing genocide and its continued support among Western elites with the Palestinian indigenous struggle for land, freedom and sovereignty being pushed aside. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the Palestinian quest for freedom from the Western imposition of Zionism, the role played by Christian Zionism and the complexities and the legacies of colonialism that inform, fund and defend the genocide today.

**Biography:** Hatem Bazian is a Decolonial scholar who centers Islam's epistemology in all his work and examines the contemporary world through a global south lens. Dr. Bazian is the leading scholar in the Islamophobia Studies field, having founded the Islamophobia Studies Center, Editor-in-Chief of the Islamophobia Studies Journal, co-founder and current President of the International Islamophobia Studies Research Association (IISRA); advised on the 2021, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief report on Countering Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief, and contributed to the Carter Center 2018 report, Countering the Islamophobia Industry Toward More Effective Strategies.

Reza Zia -Ebrahimi (King's College London)

*The Historiographical Colonisation of Palestine: Zionism, White Innocence and Guilt Transfer.*

**Abstract:** In 2013, Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that 'Hitler did not intend to exterminate the Jews' and that the idea of the Final Solution was suggested to him by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem in mandatory Palestine. This paper examines the archaeology of this claim, and situates it in a successful Zionist historiographical project to transfer the guilt of European antisemitism and the Holocaust onto Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims more broadly. The author identifies three main historiographical movements that contribute to this transfer:

1. The "neo-lachrymose" historiography that emerged in the 1970s, which abandoned previous scholarly appreciation of medieval Jewish-Muslim coexistence in favor of depicting an ahistorical Islam as fundamentally antisemitic.



2. Anti-Palestinian literature that focuses disproportionately on the Mufti of Jerusalem's collaboration with Nazis while downplaying Palestinian resistance to Nazism, effectively making Palestinians responsible for the Holocaust.

3. The theory of 'new antisemitism' which extends this presumed antisemitism to all Muslims, particularly in Western countries, while conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism. The 'new antisemitism' has been at the heart of the structural assault on Palestine solidarity movements across Western plutocracies.

**Biography:** Reza Zia-Ebrahimi joined the History Department at King's College London in 2013. He is a graduate of the University of Geneva, the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford (St Antony's College). Dr Zia-Ebrahimi is a historian of nationalism and race. Focusing on the period from the 19th century onwards, he has extensively worked on the development of racial forms of nationalism in Iran. His current research analyses the modalities of racialisation of Jews and Muslims in the Western apparatus of representations; and highlights the connection between conspiracy thinking and racism. More broadly, his work aims to retrieve the many points of contact between the histories of antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism, which have been ignored, or deliberately obscured.

Adnan Husain (Queen's University)

*Decolonizing the Past: Zio-Orientalist Historiographies of the Levant in Contemporary Islamophobia and Anti-Palestinian Racism.*

**Abstract:** This paper proposes to engage in a critical examination of popular and scholarly narratives about this era of Palestine's history, in particular the recent revival of scholarly studies framing early Islamic history as a colonial process in the formation of the Islamicate empires from Ephraim Karsh's *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (2006) to Stephen Shoemaker's *The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (2018), among others. Informed by Marchella Ward's conceptual frame of "historiographical Islamophobia," the paper will focus on how critiques of modern colonialism and imperialism have been re-mobilized and inappropriately applied to pre-modern modes of conquest, settlement, and empire that collapse a complex and slow process of social and historical change into a violent political reshaping of the Near East, including Palestine. Moreover, the study examines late

antique and medieval experiences of religious identity, conversion, linguistic change, migration, and governance to understand the dynamics of both change and continuity in this era of Palestinian history. In doing so, the chapter may contribute to an understanding of the diverse and layered histories of Palestine and its peoples within late antique and early medieval religion, political formations, languages, and identities, while decolonizing the zio-orientalist narratives that contribute to Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism.

**Biography:** Adnan A. Husain is Director of the School of Religion, Associate Professor of Medieval Mediterranean and Islamic World in the Department of History, and director of the Muslim Societies-Global Perspectives project at Queen's University (Ontario). He is co-editor of *A Faithful Sea: Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean, 1200-1700* and the forthcoming *Identity Polemics: Encounters with Islam in the Medieval Mediterranean, 1100-1300*. He is currently completing a study entitled *The Formation of a Crusading Society: Medieval Roots of Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and White Supremacy*. He is a host a YouTube channel, @adnanahusain786, and podcast, *Guerrilla History* (<https://guerrillahistory.libsyn.com>). <https://www.adnanhusain.org>

Chella Ward (Open University, UK)

*The Ottoman Gap: Islamophobia, the Left and History between Caliph and Caryatid.*

**Abstract:** The Right thinks the British Museum should keep "Lord Elgin's marbles". The Left thinks the Parthenon should get its sculptures back. This opposition around the issue of artefact restitution has held sway at least since Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Elgin stole the sculptures from Ottoman Greece in the early 1800s. It divides Right from Left, colonial from decolonial, bad historians from good. For as long as I have been a historian, I have argued that the Parthenon marbles should be returned to the Acropolis in Athens. I have stood in the British Museum and gazed sorrowfully about the single standing Caryatid, separated from her sisters who held up the roof of the Erechtheion in Athens by thousands of kilometres and more than 200 years. I have failed to notice that the argument for the restitution of the Parthenon sculptures relies on a kind of historiographical Islamophobia: on the Muslim as an interruption to Westernese history. This argument is evident in many historiographical narratives, but it

operates with particular murderousness in Palestine, where the Ottomans because of their Muslimness are positioned as an interruption to Tel Aviv's manifest destiny. The argument for the restitution of the Parthenon sculptures revolves around a seemingly simple question: did Thomas Bruce remove the sculptures legally? The British Museum maintains that he obtained the appropriate firman from the Ottoman caliph, though this is disputed (including by contemporary Türkiye, who point out that no such firman has ever been found). But the idea that the sculptures were lawfully given, even if under duress, has resulted in a historiographical structure that I will call here 'the Ottoman gap'. The Ottomans may have given the sculptures to Lord Elgin, the Left's argument goes, but they had no right to do so. "If, during the Nazi occupation of France in 1940, Hitler had sold the Eiffel Tower to the Americans, would it be OK for the US still to keep it?" writes Kyriacos Kyriacou of The British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles. This paper explores the Leftist historiographical Islamophobia involved in imagining the Ottomans to be a 'gap' between the ancient world and its rightful (nation state, non-Muslim) inheritor, and shows the acts of world-making this historiographical structure is responsible for not just in modern Greece but in the post-Ottoman world (and in Palestine especially).

**Biography:** Marchella Ward ("Chella") is Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University, UK. She is the author of *Blindness and Spectatorship in Ancient and Modern Theatres: Towards New Ways of Looking and Looking Back* (2023) and the co-editor of *Critical Ancient World Studies: The Case for Forgetting Classics* (2024). Her work seeks to unravel the complicity of the classical with Western supremacy, racism, ableism and other injustices, and she is especially interested in using Muslimness as an epistemological tool of insurgency against the Eurocentrism of the classical tradition. She is the co-host of the podcast *Radio ReOrient*, and writes frequently for non-specialists and for children.

## **Session 10 B (Conference Room A) 2:15pm-3:45pm** **Secularism, Race, and the Politics of Islamophobia**

**Moderator:** **Jasmin Zine**

Sharmin Sadaquee (Agnes Scott College) *Secularism as Racism: Opening Remarks.*

As anti-Muslim animus and violence have become significant issues faced by Muslims in many parts of the world, even within societies that are generally considered politically, legally, and culturally modern secular and/or post-secular, it is increasingly important to re-examine Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism and the nature of the scholarship on

Islamophobia. While Islamophobia is a structural form of global racism, one key gap in the existing scholarship is the lack of a thorough discussion on how Islam as a moral-ethical system is racialized and how Muslims experience this in their faith and bodies. By highlighting the contributing presentations of our panel, I aim to provide an overview of our new edited collection, *Secularism, Race, and the Politics of Islamophobia*.

**Biography:** Sharmin Sadequee is the editor of the book *Secularism, Race, and The Politics of Islamophobia*. She is a cultural anthropologist researching Islam and Muslim communities in North America with particular attention to religion, race, law, and secularism. She spent over fifteen years recording the experiences of settler-immigrant and natural-born American Muslims within the US legal and political system and how they push back by engaging in various rights movements. Her ethnographic manuscript is tentatively titled *Governing Muslims: Terror Trials, Islam, and Secular Crisis in the United States*. Her other research examines ethnonationalism, Islam, and environmental sustainability through the lens of a regenerative mosque and Islamic cemetery in the United States. She has received support from the Social Science Research Council, the American Council of Learned Societies, and Shenandoah University's Center for Islam in the Contemporary World. Her work has been published in *Surveillance & Society*, *Anthropology Now*, *The Immanent Frame*, and *The Maydan*.

Saul Takahashi (Osaka Jogakuin University) *Religiosity as a Threat: Muslims in Japan and Denmark*.

**Abstract:** Under the Global War on Terror, the “state of exception” is no longer an exception, but a permanent state of affairs. Nowhere is this more blatant than in the wide array of violative policies that target Muslim minority populations. This chapter focuses on the situation in two countries that have traditionally defined themselves as ethnically and culturally homogeneous: Japan and Denmark. In 2010 a massive leak of internal documents revealed that Japanese police had been conducting blanket surveillance of all foreign Muslims in the country, on the basis that they were potential terror threats. Mosques had been surveilled, people had been followed, and information had been collected with factors such as the level of religious devotion taken as an indicator of potential terrorist inclinations. The media was at least tacitly supportive of this surveillance, and it was later ratified by the judiciary as acceptable and necessary. In 2018 the Danish government adopted the “ghetto” policy, under which particular areas were designated as “ghettos” requiring special intervention. Alongside social indicators, such as crime and unemployment, is the requirement that a certain proportion of residents have a “non-Western background”—in practice, Muslim migrants and their descendants. Ghetto residents are required to put their children in childcare from the age of one, so that they will learn “Danish

values”; and penalties for crimes committed within ghettos may be doubled. Though the “ghetto” terminology has recently been revised, the policies remain the same.

**Biography:** Saul J. Takahashi is a professor of human rights and peace studies at Osaka Jogakuin University. His main research interests include global Islamophobia and human rights in Palestine. Saul worked with refugees at Amnesty International, then served in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2009 to 2014, travelling throughout the West Bank and Gaza and documenting human rights violations. Saul holds an LLM in international human rights law from the University of Essex and also serves as a senior non-resident fellow at the Hashim Sani Centre for Palestine Studies, University Malaya, and as an expert on the global network and on the question of Palestine. Saul is the author of *Human Rights and Drug Control: The False Dichotomy* (Hart Publishing, 2018), and *The Palestinian People Continue to Suffer: Why the UN Can't Solve the Problem* (in Japanese, Gendai Jinbun-sha, 2015). His page on Researchmap is [https://researchmap.jp/saul\\_takahashi](https://researchmap.jp/saul_takahashi).

Dustin Byrd (The University of Olivet)

*The Limits of the Translation Proviso: The Inherent Alien within the Willed-Community.*

**Abstract:** Since the Enlightenment, most Western European as well as the North American countries have moved from an ethnic-based community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) to an intentional democratic willed-community (*Willensgemeinschaft*), wherein the pre-political foundations of historical communities, such as ethnicity, language, religion, shared history, etc., no longer define the citizenry. Rather, “ascribed citizenship,” as Jürgen Habermas describes it, is predicated on the general acceptance of constitutional ideals, values, and principles. Although ascribing to these democratic political ideals, Muslim communities nevertheless find themselves the victims of harassment, discrimination, and terror attacks because they are viewed as being ethnically – and religiously – alien to the White “ethnosphere” of the West. This paper argues two important points that underscore the challenges Muslims face in a post-secular society: (1) a large percentage of Westerners have never accepted the Enlightenment’s divorce of ethnos from demos; such a distinction was merely a philosophical distinction made by elites. (2) Because of this first reality, the possibility of “translating” Islam into a “publicly accessible language,” wherein Islam can enter into the national discourse via secular language, is thoroughly handicapped, for the status of the language – be it religious or secular – is tied to a particular ethnicity that has been rejected as being inherently alien. I argue that a concerted effort to educate Westerners on the concept of the willed community as the

basis of their national identity would be more fruitful for future relations between Muslims and non-Muslims than to attempt to translate Islam into a secular language.

**Biography:** Dustin J. Byrd is a professor of philosophy and religion at The University of Olivet. He specializes in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, psychoanalytical political theory, and contemporary Islamic and Russian thought. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of Ekpyrosis Press and also the founder and co-director of the Institute for Critical Social Theory. He also serves as the editor-in-chief of *Critical Perspectives* (formerly *Islamic Perspective*). His recent publications include *The Dark Charisma of Donald Trump: Political Psychology and the MAGA Movement* (Ekpyrosis Press, 2023), *Syed Hussein and Critical Social Theory: Decolonizing the Captive Mind* (Brill, 2023), and *The Frankfurt School and the Dialectics of Religion: Translating Critical Faith into Critical Theory* (Ekpyrosis Press, 2020). [www.dustinjbyrd.org](http://www.dustinjbyrd.org).

### Afternoon Refreshment Break- 3:45pm-4:15pm

### Closing Roundtable and IISRA AGM - 4:15pm-5:30pm **The State of Islamophobia Studies: The Responsibility of the Intellectual in Times of Genocide and Trump.**

The closing panel offers reflections on the conference themes, presentations, and takeaways by IISRA board members and will be followed by IISRA's Annual General Meeting.

**Moderator:** **Hatem Bazian**

**Panellists:** Amina Easat-Daas, Mattias Gardell, Adnan Husain, Saul Takahashi, Jasmin Zine.