# HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF EUROPEAN ISLAMOPHOBIA

## The Nexus of Islamist Terrorism, Colonialism and the Holy Wars Reconsidered

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This article is a rethinking of the modern trend in the Islamophobia scholarship, which frames European Islamophobia as a post-9/11 phenomenon. Though Islamist terrorism had a notoriety of raising anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments, the bigotry towards Islam, hatred against Muslims and prejudices about their cultural inferiority lurk deep in the history of European colonialism and the Holy Wars. This article suggests an assumption, that is, why Western scholars strive to coin 9/11 as the 'starting point' of Islamophobia. It also explains how demonization of Muslims during the Holy Wars and their dehumanization in the colonial period provided for the emergence of this phenomenon.

KEYWORDS: Colonialism; Holy Wars; Islamist terrorism; Islamophobia; Orientalism; Postcolonial theory.

### INTRODUCTION

A modern scholarly approximation of European Islamophobia is closely related to Islamist terrorism and 'refugee crisis' which triggered anti-migrant and anti-Muslim sentiments in the West. This paper does not neglect the factor of 'refugee crisis' as characteristic of the most current wave of Islamophobia, but envisages the complex phenomenon of migration and demonization of Muslim immigrants as a topic of separate discussion. The article constitutes a Western critique of terming Islamist terrorism as the beginning of Islamophobia.

Religious fundamentalism is believed to have triggered prejudices and actions against Muslims in the West. Some assume that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 gave birth to global Islamophobia. Indeed, those tragic events had a tremendous impact. They changed the discourse of academic and political debates towards a new security narrative and 'terror-based' hatred against Muslims. Gradually, 9/11 came to be known as the 'starting point' of Islamophobia.

A conceptual definition of Islamophobia, however, not only implies the fear of and hostility against Muslims, but it also contains preconceived ideas about their cultural inferiority and the primitiveness of Islam. According to Chris Allen, Islamophobia is a matter of misperceptions expressed in hatred and discrimination.[1] Anti-Muslim and anti-Islam prejudices emerged over the centuries throughout the relations between Muslims and European Christians. It constituted the subjection of the primitively portrayed Orient to the self-proclaimed civilized Occident. Its historical connotations were colonialism and much earlier, the Holy Wars. Following this, the construction of Muslim problem everywhere and also in Europe as a post-9/11 phenomenon undermined the historical context of European Islamophobia. It formed a misconception that terrorist attacks alone were responsible for the negative attitudes towards Muslims and Islam in contemporary Europe.

Though this article acknowledges the impact of Islamist terrorism on the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments globally, it takes a critical stand towards the assumption that European Islamophobia is a post-9/11 phenomenon. Perhaps the political concept of Islamophobia appeared first in modern debates in connection with Islamist terrorism, but hatred towards Muslims and prejudice against their cultural inferiority existed much earlier than the genesis of Islamist terrorist movements. It is crucial to comprehend Islamophobia as a continuing and dynamic phenomenon which was maintained throughout the history of religious wars and cultural hegemonism of the West.

Having said that, this article aims at rethinking the role of 9/11 in fomenting hatred against Muslims and 'historizing' Islamophobia by establishing its nexus with colonialism and the medieval Muslim-Christian wars. It intends to disprove the approach that Islamophobia is a relatively new phenomenon and if there were no Islamist terrorist killings, hatred against Muslims and their demonization would not occur in Europe. With this in mind, the study revolves round the following questions: First, what is the purpose of terming 9/11 a 'starting point' of Islamophobia? Second, how did Holy Wars and colonialism provide for the emergence of this phenomenon?

To address these questions, the research undertakes a discourse analysis of the modern Islamophobia scholarship and European medieval as well as colonial history. Specifically, it overviews post-9/11 academic literature on the issue in order to establish a correlation between the scholarly narratives and their misconceptions about Islamophobia. Also, this paper analyzes the writings of historians on the Holy Wars and critical postcolonial literature referring to the European cultural hegemony. In overall terms, the article looks for the origins of Islamophobia in European history, which helps to draw a line between the relatively young political concept of Islamophobia and the historical patterns of hatred and discrimination against Muslims. It represents a critical reconsideration of three main factors—Islamist terrorism, religious wars and colonialism—in the context of Islamophobia and explains it as a complex phenomenon lurking within the European self-image of cultural superiority and the perceptions of 'primitive other.'

## RETHINKING THE FACTOR OF 9/11 AS STARTING POINT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

A complex approach in the study of Islamophobia is necessary in order to comprehend its character of unfounded hostility against Muslims and Islam, which leads to discrimination against them and to their exclusion. As Chris Allen suggests, different factors have correlational nexus with Islamophobia and they form various contexts,[2] but focusing on some facets of it should not prevent us from perceiving the entire image. There are factors such as Muslim-Christian wars, colonialism, labor migration from Muslim countries, terrorism, and refugee crisis, which at different times have contributed to the rise of European Islamophobia. It is possible to speak of several phases and contexts regarding anti-Muslim or anti-Islam hostility in Europe, but in the end, it constitutes a perpetual 'living' phenomenon. Thus, old and new Islamophobia do not separately exist, but only its grounds and the forms of expression may be different. Then any scholarly approach to shrink the topic or draw boundaries around it should not misrepresent the whole phenomenon of Islamophobia.

Nevertheless, it is common in modern Islamophobia scholarship to treat the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 as a dividing line between new Islamophobia and the traditional hostility against Muslims. Some scholars focused on security in understanding the modern phenomenon in response to the Islamist terrorist attacks, which increased anti-Muslim sentiments globally and particularly in Europe. Tahir Abbas drew the line between the old racial discrimination against Muslims before the rise of Islamist terrorism and the new Islamophobia discourse in the post-9/11 era. He argues that the fear of insecurity raised the fear of Muslims as people, which eventually resulted in their rejection and demonization.[3] Similarly, Halliday and Gilks describe the recent Islamophobic hysteria in Europe in connection with 'war on terror.' In his article, 'Islamophobia Reconsidered', Halliday assumes that Islamist terrorist threat triggered European alarmism. He referred to the rise of prejudice against Muslim 'wickedness.' The boundaries between terrorists and ordinary Muslims vanished. People of Europe started to believe that there were no bad or good Muslims and that all Muslims were to be considered as terrorists. According to Halliday, in the 21st century it is not religious or cultural intolerance that reigns in Europe; but the fear of terror has become a source of the phobia against Muslims.[4] The same perspective of European Islamophobia has been shared by Mark Gilks, who refers to a nexus between security, the fear of Muslims and emergence of social prejudices against them. Gilks examines the socio-political discourses before and after the series of Islamist terrorist attacks which comprised the 9/11 events in the United States and the killings in Madrid and London during 2004–2005. He has concluded that attitudes in Europe towards Muslims were less hostile until this period and the stigmatization of Muslims as potential terrorists has been caused by the fear of insecurity.[5]

The above-mentioned assumptions changed the context of 21st century Islamophobia studies and brought up in the academic debates the issue of security. Authors in their writings lent great significance to 9/11 dissociating the past doings against Muslims from the emergence of terror-based Islamophobia. On the one hand, it is not contentious that 9/11 and successive series of Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe formed a global security dilemma, which intensified the hatred against Muslims. On the other hand, terming Islamist

terrorism a dividing line between old and new anti-Muslim sentiments, or as a 'starting point' of modern Islamophobia is misconception for several reasons.

The first problem that arises is of an inadvertency of historic hostility between the Christian Europe and the Muslim world. Hatred and racial attitudes against Muslims have been recorded throughout the European history starting from the time of Holy Wars and continuing through the colonial and postcolonial periods. The writings of historians such as Thomas Asbridge,[6] James Arthur Brundage,[7] Norman Housley[8] and Matti Moosa[9] describe how disparaging was the portrayal of Muslims by Christian Europe in medieval times. They testify to the earliest forms of Islamophobia. Later on, in the colonial period, the prejudice against 'uncivilized', 'uncultured' groups of people residing all around Europe and the invented image of Orient found expression in the cultural racism against Muslims. Edward Said,[10] Franz Fanon[11] and Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak[12] are amongst those scholars who depicted in their writings the European colonial attitudes towards culturally different people and the ill-treatment meted out to them. Colonization of the Muslim world elucidated that the grounds for their humiliation and discrimination were not rooted in Islam or Muslimness, but in the European self-image of cultural superiority.

Second, ignoring the historical lining in the understanding of anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe and shifting focus solely on the post 9/11 security discourse contested the conceptual merit of Islamophobia. If security dilemma and 'war on terror' prompted actions against Muslims residing in Europe, then it appears, fear-based hatred fueled Islamophobia and not cultural racism or anti-Islam bigotry. In this sense, racialization of Muslims and rejection of Islam lost their significance to the term 'Islamophobia.' Incidentally, the legitimacy of this concept may come under threat. If Europeans only fear Muslims as potential terrorists, then why has the term Islamophobia been coined at all? Such thinking is common amongst scholars who do not favor the concept of Islamophobia. For example, Fred Halliday argues that in contemporary Europe negative attitudes exist against Muslims as people and not towards Islam. He suggests using a more suitable term such as 'anti-Muslimism' than presenting the fear against Muslims as phobia of Islam.[13] Along these lines, Matti Bunzl believes that there is no causal link between religious or cultural intolerance and Islamophobia. According to him, what Europeans fear from it is a growing influence of religion on the public.[14] Others deny the conceptual merit of Islamophobia and argue that the term has been invented by some Islamists to suppress criticism of Islam.[15] This group of scholars take great interest in conceptual rethinking of Islamophobia. They strive to remove the cultural and religious context from the understanding of European hostility against Muslims and Islam. Thus, terror-based 'anti-Muslimism' and a security narrative fit into their approximation. Eventually, speaking of the post-9/11 phenomenon that ignores racial attitudes against Muslims, historically formed stereotypes that facilitate cultural or religious intolerance for Islam and is limited to security prejudice against dangerous Muslim terrorists, supports an argumentation of those scholars who attempt to deny the conceptual value of Islamophobia.

The third problem that emerged as a result of terming 9/11 the 'starting point' of Islamophobia was the supposition that if the Islamist terrorist attacks had not taken place, the Muslims would have woken up in a modern Europe where cultural and religious differences were tolerated and they were not victims of discrimination. A dangerous tendency of such

a narrative becomes more vivid if contemporary Islamophobic literature is taken into consideration. After 9/11, writers such as Michel Onfray,[16] Douglas Murray,[17] and Orriana Fallaci[18] advanced the argument that European security and well-being came under threat because of Muslims. An illustration of a conspiracy theory involving Muslims and their holy war against Europe is Fallaci's book, 'The Rage and the Pride', where she called upon people in Europe to recognize Muslim hostility and the danger of physical annihilation:

> 'I say: Wake up, people, wake up! You don't understand, or don't want to understand, that what's under way here is a reverse crusade. […]A war that they call Jihad. A Holy War. A war that doesn't want the conquest of our territories, perhaps, but certainly wants to conquer our souls. They will feel authorized to kill you and your children because you drink wine or beer, because you don't wear a long beard or a chador, because you go to the theatre and cinemas, because you listen to music and sing songs.'[19]

Though there is a significant difference between the post-9/11 Islamophobic literature and the scholarly approach of Islamophobia studies, both ramifications form a nexus and develop a dangerous trend of false claims. Scholars, who denoted the role of Islamist terrorism in the rise of Islamophobia and ignored other factors as they had not come into existence at all, changed the true conception of Islamophobia. They facilitated the supposition that Muslims were feared and hated in Europe as a result of their wrongdoing, because they had done bad things and endangered the lives of many. Such a stance shattered a crucial assumption that the portrayal of Muslims as terrorists constituted prejudice. Furthermore, speaking of terror-based Islamophobia and the security issue somehow ennobles Islamophobes by portraying them as people who are tolerant towards Islam and are only concerned about European public security. In this sense, the security factor advanced by some scholars or research organizations forms misconceptions about the modern Islamophobic reality and the cultural attitudes of the West towards Muslims. So, it is equally dangerous as Islamophobic literature which appears less deceitful as a background to modern scholarship.

What further contests the scholarly approach of finding a nexus between Islamist terrorism, security narrative and Islamophobia is the absence of academic will to establish similar correlation in the case of Christian terrorism. Scholars of security studies, such as Douglas Pratt[20] and Elisabeth Rohr,[21] proved that religious terrorism was not a Muslim phenomenon and constituted an expression of religious fundamentalism that could be related to other religious identities as well. In recent history, there have been enough examples of Christian religious terrorism as well, which targeted Muslims. For instance, persons who were responsible for terror attack in Norway on 22nd July 2011 [22] and terrorist killings in a mosque of New Zealand in 2019[23] wrote their manifestos which stated a motive based on Christianity and the Bible. Nevertheless, it is always the Muslims who are being portrayed as terrorists. Contrary to this, a popular term for white Christian terrorism is right-wing extremism and not Christian fundamentalism. Thanks to populist politicians and other interest groups, terrorism predominantly remains a factor in Islam. Though recent anti-Muslim terrorism has sufficient grounds for one to anticipate an impact of the phenomenon on security dilemma and the image of Christendom, these events have not received the same treatment as Islamist terrorism. It is impossible to recall any scholarly work in the West that

focuses on white Christian terror or anticipates that such series of events may give rise to terror-based fear of Christians. If one is to ask why, then the hypothetical answer may be found in reverse psychology. Describing a nexus between Christian terrorism, security fear and a rise of anti-Christian sentiments could present Christendom in a bad light and encourage a perception that Christian fundamentalism is as dangerous as any other form of religious fundamentalism. While Western scholars are reluctant to risk such formulations, the correlation has indeed been established in terms of Islamist terrorism. This helped to blur the truth about Islamophobia. Muslims are being portrayed as terrorists because in Western societies they have never enjoyed good opinion about people from the Orient. The cornerstone of anti-Muslim sentiments is not the fear of terrorism, but the European prejudice against their Muslimness, wrong perceptions about the culture and religion of Islam. This is a crucial point that somehow remains unnoticed when contemporary authors address the modern phenomenon of Islamophobia in their security discourse.

Besides repelling the historical context and encouraging misconceptions about anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiments, the fourth problem of terming 9/11 a 'starting point' of Islamophobia rests upon the blurring line between political concept and the phenomenon that merits this term. According to the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA)[24] and some prominent scholars such as Matti Bunzl and Brian Klug, modern Islamophobia discourse is connected with certain events of past decades, which encouraged political activists to focus their attention on the prejudices and actions against Islam and Muslims in European societies. In his book 'Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe', Bunzl argued that Islamophobia had been invented in the end of the 20th century to help describe the phenomenon of anti-Muslim sentiments that were soaring in Europe as a result of global Muslim terrorist attacks. He assumed that a new type of hatred against Muslims gained political importance when anti-Muslim hostility surfaced in the new, supranational and united Europe.[25] On the other hand, Brian Klug stated that Islamophobia was not an invention of some interest groups. It emerged gradually in response to the series of Islamist terror attacks in Europe in the 1990s, for example the 1995 France bombings, when Armed Islamic Group (AIG) played a significant role in the portrayal of Muslims as the enemies of Europe. He stated that eventually the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11th September 2001 drew a timeline spanning past doings and modern hostility against Muslims, which gave a strong impetus to the ultimate coining of the term Islamophobia.[26] Similarly, Erick Bleich, a representative of Middle East Studies Association of North America, considered Islamophobia as a post-Islamist terrorist phenomenon. Nevertheless, he brought certain specifications in the discussion. Bleich named 1997 publication of the report 'Islamophobia a challenge for us all' by the British NGO Runnymede Trust as an initial source where this term appeared for the first time in contemporary discourse. He explained that Islamophobia started to evolve in the 1990s in order to address the presence, dimensions, intensity, causes and consequences of anti-Muslim sentiments in the world. It received the final shape after the terrorist killings of 9/11 which became a dividing line between old anti-Muslim sentiments and modern Islamophobia.[27]

A review of the above-mentioned scholarly assumptions creates confusion about the origin of Islamophobia as a term and the phenomenon that merits it. Authors pointed out that Islamist terrorism started a new era of Islamophobia which soared to its highest point after

9/11. At the same time, scholars referred to this period as the time when the term was coined. In fact, none of these assumptions are entirely true. The political debates about Islamophobia started in the end of 20th century because of increased hostility against Muslims, but the phenomenon described by this concept was characteristic of European societies throughout history. At the same time, Islamist terrorism definitely became an incentive for another wave of anti-Muslim hysteria in Europe and the 21st century political discourse is filled with the term Islamophobia, but this concept is not an invention of post-9/11 political debates. According to Salman Sayyid, the 'enduring appearance' of the term Islamophobia was in 1997 in the Runnymede report, but it developed in France in the colonial context around the 1920s.[28] Thus, neither phenomenon nor the term 'Islamophobia' originated from the time of Islamist terrorism. Furthermore, the Muslim-Christian wars in the medieval period and the Ottoman–Habsburg wars, at times supported by the Holy Roman Empire, Kingdom of Hungary, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Habsburg Spain, testified that anti-Islam hostility had made its presence felt much earlier than the term Islamophobia was coined. On the other hand, it would be wrong to claim that Bunzl, Klug or Bleich did not understand the historical context of Islamophobia. For example, in the same article Brian Klug made a reference that Islamophobia as a factor in discrimination against Muslims and preconceived ideas about their cultural values, affected Muslim communities much earlier than it appeared in the present scholarly and political discourses. Nevertheless, naming 9/11 and, in general, Islamist terrorism as the beginning of a new type of Islamophobia, thus indicating its genesis, serves to erase the boundaries between its existence as a political concept and as a historic phenomenon. Terming 9/11 a 'starting point of Islamophobia' is an invention that faces a question as to why some scholars yet diligently seek to draw a starting line over the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

Perhaps some scholars inexpertly believe that the horror of anti-Muslim sentiments and discrimination against these people became manifest in the 2000s, but others may intend to change the context of Islamophobia studies. This group of scholars question the validity of the concept and confine the topic to recent history, thus preventing the historization of Islamophobia. They use the scale of 9/11 to cover up the past doings against Muslims. With reference to the Freudian defense mechanism,[29] this is a denial of historical Islamophobia, because in the West people are not comfortable with their colonial past. Eventually, scholars who write about terror-based Islamophobia and security against it, also blame Muslims for inspiring hostility against their own people. It spreads a misconception that had there been no 9/11, modern Europe would have been less Islamophobic. An overview of modern Islamophobia scholarship reveals that the purpose of coining Islamophobia as a post-Islamist terrorist phenomenon is to challenge its historical origins and to question the conceptual value of this term.

Nevertheless, this article suggests that drawing an imaginary line between past and present hostility against Muslims or Islam should be avoided in scholarly writings. It acknowledges the factor of Islamist terrorism, but contemplates on Islamophobia as a complex and continuing phenomenon that has its origins in the Muslim-Christian wars of the medieval period until the Ottoman conquest of eastern and central Europe. However, Western scholarship neglects the role of antagonism between the Habsburg dynasty and the Ottoman Empire in the growth of Islamophobia and equates Europe with Western Europe.

In fact, conspiracy theories about Islam, humiliation of Muslims and discrimination against them, which constitute a common illness of modern Europe, can be traced back to the different periods of the past. Though this article envisages the role of Habsburg-Ottoman wars in the historical coining of the word 'Islamophobia', it limits the argumentation to the 11th century crusades and the period of colonialism.

## COLONIALISM AND ITS NEXUS WITH ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia as a political term describing discrimination and hostility against Muslims might have appeared in the late 20th century, but European prejudice against Muslims had all along influenced the imperial projection. The demonization of Muslims is a heritage of colonialism having a historical nexus with Islamophobia. It incited great cultural antagonism between Muslims and Europeans. The Islamic part of the world which could become a leading civilization was subjugated to the process of colonization. Karen Armstrong stated that the European invasion of the Islamic world was not uniform, but it was thorough and effective. They subordinated the entire Orient and Muslims of Africa. It began with the submission of the Moghuls in the second half of the 19th century, when the British rule was established in India through military conquests and colonization continued to engulf one Islamic country after another. Between 1830 and 1915, Algeria, Aden, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya and Morocco were in the hands of either France or Britain. By an agreement the territories of the Ottoman Empire, except modern Turkey, were divided amongst European colonizers.[30] Colonialism did not consist in European military invasions of the Islamic world; it also brought to light the racial attitudes of Europeans towards Muslims, who appalled the former as culturally backward, corrupt and religiously fanatic people. These events had tremendous influence on soaring anti-Muslim and anti-Islam prejudices that defined a new Islamophobic reality in the Occident.

The scholarly efforts to establish a correlation between Islamophobia and the European colonial past derive from the assumption that Islamophobia not only implies the fear of Islam or hatred against Muslims on a religious basis, but it also conceptualizes anti-Muslim sentiments and prejudices against uncivilized Muslim cultural and religious values. At the same time, it implies the superiority of Europe as a whole and of the European cultural heritage. Though there is a trend to establish Islamophobia as a post-Islamist terrorist phenomenon, some scholarly writings are rather influenced by Europe's colonial past. Political attainment of European cultural hegemony provided for the emergence of postcolonial studies that contain a reference to Islamophobia. A group of scholars such as Salman Sayyid, Abdool-Karim Vakil and Nasar Meer considered modern Islamophobic realities as means of reviving the colonial racial attitudes towards Muslims. According to Sayyid, the racial phenomenon of Islamophobia emerged in the colonial context. European imperial experience succeeded in peripheralizing the Orient and portraying Muslims as uncivilized people. He assumed that political supremacy, economic profit and cultural enlargement always stood at the center of colonial expansions irrespective of the time of colonization and identity of the colonizing power. The aspect of culture, at the same time, constituted justification for colonialism. In the perception of colonizers, Muslims were

savages; therefore, they considered it legitimate to teach them European cultural elements. Sayyid noted that political and economic dominance of the European countries helped them to subjugate the Orient, but their belief in European cultural supremacy led to the racial phenomenon of Islamophobia.[31] Incidentally, a peculiarity of this discussion is that the author equated Colonialism and anti-Muslim racism to Islamophobia. In his earlier writings with the co-authorship of Vakil, Sayyid argued that colonial attitudes against Muslims and their portrayal as cultural 'other' were Islamophobic. Muslim religious and cultural affiliation forged 'race' in order to exercise racism. It provided that Islamophobia, which went beyond cultural racism, also included racial attitudes and discrimination against Muslims.[32]

A slightly different approach to studying the colonial origins of Islamophobia has been made by Nasar Meer. The British scholar discussed in his article 'Islamophobia and Postcolonialism: Continuity, Orientalism and Muslim Consciousnesses' how anti-Muslim sentiments found its continuity from the European colonialism to the postcolonial period and lived up to modernity. He argued that the colonial attitudes found reflections in Orientalism by dehumanizing Muslims in the West. Prejudices against 'primitive' Muslim culture constituted the backbone of Islamophobia.[33] However, in contradiction to Sayyid and Abdool-Karim Vakil, who considered colonial racism as an expression of Islamophobia, Meer assumed it to be an explanatory cause of modern Islamophobic reality. In his argumentation, colonialism and cultural racism gave shape to Islamophobia, but they were not the same phenomenon. In his article 'Race and Post-Colonialism: Should one Come before the Other?', Meer advocated the idea that Islamophobia was different from the doings of colonial period. Anti-Muslim racism has been forged by political and cultural relationships throughout the colonial period, which is inherent in the modern Islamophobia discourse, but it could be understood at best as a different phenomenon and not a connotation of Islamophobia.[34]

Though modern scholars discuss different patterns of the correlation between colonialism and Islamophobia, eventually they all agree that colonialism represents the cultural racialization of Muslims that inherently refers to Islamophobia. Thinking in-depth, Sayyid, Vakil and Meer were right in their argumentations. Cultural racism as a form of Islamophobia was an expression of colonialism, but it also subsisted in the postcolonial era up to modernity and fueled present time hostility against Muslims. Decolonization did not bring the racial form of Islamophobia to an end; rather it constituted a genuine ground for discrimination against Muslims in the 21st century. A peculiar heritage of colonialism is a misconception that despite attempts of colonial powers to teach Muslims European values, it was impossible to upgrade their culture. This is a primary indicator of racialization. According to Anna Sophie Lauwers, anti-Muslim racism considers that negative characteristics of Islam are innate in the Muslims, so they cannot change.[35] In this sense, colonialism facilitated the racialization of one's 'Muslimness.' In line with this, the wrongdoing of colonialists and their heritage are well depicted by the authors of postcolonial literature, who seized an opportunity to publish their criticisms of the Occident after decolonization.

A seminal work of postcolonial scholarship that implies Western cultural hegemony is Edward Said's book about 'Orientalism.' His theory went back to the colonial heritage and its role in inventing the false image of 'primitive other' Muslims. He cited: 'One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away.'[36] Said's

criticism of the humiliating attitudes of Western artists and writers towards Islamic culture, to which he gave the name of 'Orientalism', testified that Europe projected an invented image of the entire Orient whose cultural values had been inspired by Islam. He assumed that Orientalism was initially a political invention of the West, which forced even the most creative writers of that age to be cautious as to how they addressed the Orient. For example, Said mentioned French writers Gustave Flaubert and Gérard de Nerval, as well as Scottish novelist Walter Scott, who were constrained by Western politics and followed the vision of familiar Europe and strange Orient.[37] According to Said, the constellation of Orient and Occident also portrayed its division into 'them' and 'us' in which the Occident was economically, technologically, politically and culturally dominant 'Us.' Also, in order to elucidate the postcolonial continuation of anti-Muslim sentiments, Said described the life of a Palestinian Arab in Western society, who had to cope with everyday hatred and discrimination on grounds of his cultural and religious origins.[38] The vision of the Orient as inferior has been built up throughout the colonization period, but it continued to exist even after colonialism came to an end.

The writings of Edward Said have great significance for comprehending the colonial and racial origins of Islamophobia. Though Said applied the term 'Orientalism', the phenomenon that merits it is the same. Stigmatization of Muslims and prejudices against their primitiveness are a source of racial discrimination. It, however, went beyond racism and formed a more complex phenomenon of Islamophobia. An example of this is a modern conspiracy theory, according to which Muslims and Islam have been considered as threat to the Western civilization. Barnor Hesse explained that antagonists of Islam described it as transruptive identity. In this sense, the cultural differences in Islam continue to re-emerge despite all efforts to Europeanize the creed. Europeans fear Islam owing to certain misperceptions that it constitutes a fixed religious and cultural identity of Muslim people; so Muslim presence in Europe may change the Continent's cultural heritage.[39] Roger Brubaker named it Civilizationism. The cornerstone of the conspiracy theory is that Islam is not just a religion but a civilizational identity as well, which threatens Western values such as gender equality, gay rights, free speech etc. Its proponents claim that everything Europe has achieved through cultural progress will be eradicated through the process of Islamization.[40] With this in mind, Islamophobic prejudicial attitudes towards Muslims and anti-Islam bigotry, expressed in conspiracy theories about Islamization of Europe, have been built upon the cultural 'othering' of Muslims, which traces its origin back to colonialism. This also proves that Said's seminal work on 'Orientalism' is a way of understanding modern Islamophobia from the historical perspective.

Although Edward Said laid the foundation of the critical postcolonial theory, he was not the only scholar to unmask Western Orientalism. Postcolonial scholars from Africa and India, who understood the colonial experience at its best, published their critical writings about the false image of non-Europeans fabricated by Western thinkers. A prominent criticism of colonialism belongs to the writer and theorist Franz Fanon, who was born on the Caribbean Island of Martinique under French domination. Fanon made significant contributions to the postcolonial scholarship by analyzing the psychology of colonizers and the colonized in his books 'The Wretched on the Earth' and 'Black Skin, White Masks.' The main subject of Fanon's writings was African people and their resistance against colonizers. However,

an Arabic world at the time was also under the dominance of colonizers. Furthermore, a part of Africa was Islamic, and, therefore, when Fanon described the colonial experience in Morocco, Alger, Egypt or other African countries, he also addressed Muslims and their living as a parallel society. He depicted two different worlds living next to each other. The town of settlers were lit bright and made of stone or steel. The streets of the town were nice and clean —good for the settlers' feet which were never bare, 'except perhaps in the sea; but there you're never close enough to see them.'[41] On the other side, there were villages of colonized people—the negro village, the medina, the reservation. Fanon described them as they were through the eyes of the white colonizers: 'place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute.' No one cares about them, how they live and die, because they are ''niggers'' and ''dirty Arabs''.'[42] Through descriptions of these parallel societies, Fanon denoted a superior image of the colonizers who believed in their supremacy over everything including culture, compared to the colonized people who were portrayed as savages owning nothing at all. According to Fanon, the wealthy living of Europeans and the poverty of natives formed a type of subordination between colonizer and the colonized, in which the colonizer further developed the self-identity as the superior colonial master and native people became the inferior, 'primitive other.' He also argued that such a division impacted the post-colonial psychology of the colonizers who continued to firmly believe in their cultural nobility over the others. Additionally, Fanon referred to the living conditions of natives, which did not improve after decolonization and left traces of colonial experience on their minds. He claimed that in the decolonized world people from former colonies still were under pressure to adopt Western values. They strove to fit the mask of white man in order to deal with insecurity that they felt.[43]

Yet one may wonder what the implication of social and cultural patterns of colonialism, as depicted by Franz Fanon, is for modern Islamophobia. In fact, Fanon, similar to Edward Said, described a phenomenon of 'selfing' and 'othering' which laid the foundation for the cultural racism of Western white people against others. He emphasized that it did not matter who stood on the other side of polarization—a Muslim Arab or African man—they were anyway doomed to wear a label of uncivilized people because Muslims and Africans had never been equals of their colonial Master. This pattern of subordination did not collapse with the institutional death of colonialism. Muslim immigrant suburbs near Paris, Muslim ghettos in Denmark are modern reincarnations of colonialism. The colonial Masters have transformed into modern white European men and women who never see in Muslims a cultural being. In their eyes, Muslims are savages. They assume that Muslims do no good but can only harm Western societies. Eventually, those misperception and stereotypes lead to hostility and discrimination which merit the term 'Islamophobia.'

Such an approximation denotes that the problem lies in the so-called European supremacy and colonization and not in the 'Muslimness' of others. The poverty and humiliation of colonized people were brought upon them by European colonizers. Natives had been robbed, deprived of their freedom and human rights. They were made to suffer as Muslim countries bowed down to the sheer military forces of the West. In this sense, Europeans not only spread lies about the primitiveness of Muslims, but they also went to great lengths to establish that the Orient fell behind the Occident in every respect. This has been depicted well by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her writings on 'subalterns.' Spivak is another

prominent figure amongst postcolonial scholars who criticized Western Eurocentrism. She is a Bengali theorist from India and the author of the essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?.' By 'subaltern' Spivak meant those of inferior ranks, who were deprived of any rights during the colonial era and who fought throughout the colonial times to free themselves from Western oppression. In her essay she gives voices to women, people from the Orient, or tribal people, who can speak but their words are not heard. Spivak unmasks foreign dominant groups—the elite who believe in their own cultural superiority and think it is legitimate to project colonialism. Similar to Edward Said, she also argues that colonialism was predominately a political and economic project, which robbed colonized countries of their wealth, deprived native people of their rights and created the false image of them being uncultured. Spivak emphasizes that the image of 'subalterns', or as Edward Said names them, the 'Other', has been gradually constructed by imperial powers. The 'civilized' Europe turned its colonized subjects into an underprivileged people whose cheap labor enriched the West. In return, Muslims and other subalterns received humiliation and demonization.[44]

In the end, the value of postcolonial scholarship, which depicted the life of formerly colonized people, their fight for equality, is greater than a critic of European colonialism. Edward Said, Franz Fanon and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak historized cultural hegemony of the West, which became an original source of postcolonial or modern time discrimination and phobias against the 'others.' The authors analyzed the colonial attitudes based on their own experiences and perspectives. Edward Said was a Palestinian who encountered discriminative behaviors in Western society and wrote criticisms of colonial and anti-Muslim attitudes from the perspective of the Orient. Fanon and Spivak illustrated colonial and postcolonial experiences with examples of black people, tribal people and women of colonized countries. They developed a concept of cultural 'Other' and 'Subaltern', which could become everyone whose cultural identity was not European by ancestry and birth. In this sense, modern Islamophobia continues also with the cultural and religious othering of Muslims, who are victims of regular stigmatization and denouncement. At the same time, a significant feature of creating the 'Other' or 'Subaltern' is that it is an imposed identity. According to Robert Wistrich, cultural differences are not the cause of othering and of their demonization, but the prejudice that if 'they' are different from 'us', then 'they' must be bad, because 'we' are good.[45] Respectively, the colonial 'Other' became modern time cultural 'other' who were also labeled bad. Though the former subjects of colonization are not colonized anymore, in the new reality they became the natives of modern Third World. They are not accountable to their colonial master, but they remain under the oppression of the West.

Thus, present time Islamophobia is in certain respects the heritage of colonial past. However, the medieval Europe also harbored racial attitudes towards Muslims and anti-Islam bigotry. As Paul Weller explains, Islamophobia is embedded in the historical heritage of a hostile relationship between Muslim and European worlds that has emerged over many centuries and overlaps the factor of religion.[46] An elucidation of this assumption would be the memories of religious wars over the Holy Land, which have been preserved in the writings of historians and which present facts of diabolizing Muslims.

## THE HOLY WARS AND EARLY ORIGINS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Holy Wars describe a series of military conflicts between Muslims and Christians over the Holy Land of Jerusalem, which started with the first crusade called in 1095 by the Catholic pope Urban II.[47] Historiography of Muslim-Christian religious wars depicted great hostility towards Islam and vilification of Muslims; nevertheless, it did not establish its relevance to the modern Islamophobia studies. This may have the following plausible explanations. First, the Holy Wars constituted medieval history and, according to the historical timeline, it is very much remote from the present time. So, scholars could find it difficult to establish a direct causal link between 11th century crusades and modern time Islamophobia. Second, the Holy Wars began on the basis of territorial dispute and were well-founded hostility against Muslims. Recalling the conceptualization of Islamophobia as suggested by Runnymede Trust, the component of 'unfounded hostility' towards Muslims and Islam was missing from the crusades.[48] Thus, it is not an easy task to find a pattern of correlation between Muslim-Christian wars and Islamophobia.

Nevertheless, a comprehensive analysis of crusading chronicles facilitated rethinking of the role of Holy Wars in creating Islamophobia. It should not be excluded from consideration that religious and military confrontations between two worlds were influential in the process of 'othering' Muslims. Historical writings of Brundage, Housley and Asbridge depicted horrific images of the enemy invented by crusaders, which formed a dichotomy of good 'us' and evil 'them.' For instance, historians wrote stories of unspeakable brutality, as told by European warriors, at the hands of Muslims who tortured and slaughtered Christians since they were on a holy mission to free Jerusalem. According to Brundage, crusaders considered themselves as the chosen people honored to rescue the 'Kingdom of God' from heretic Muslims. The crusaders used the epithet of 'dog' to refer to the Muslims.[49] In fact, Christian warriors followed the ideology of the Church, which convinced them in the rightfulness of slaughtering sinful and cruel Muslims, who did not obey God and chose to be idolatrous. Housley noted that Crusaders considered their enemies not only as 'religious others' who were in blasphemy, but also as 'cultural others.' Another epithet for Muslims was 'Saracens' which meant people from the east. Such a reference to Muslims pointed out the European Christian perception of foreign people whose values and traditions were different and primitive compared to the Christian-European civilization.[50] In overall terms, the entire myth of crusading was invented by the Catholic Pope to take Jerusalem under the dominance of the Church. He succeeded in his mission by conjuring up an image of the Muslims as unreligious and culturally inferior human beings.

The Pope's call upon Christians of Europe to liberate Jerusalem from Muslims was an exhortation to religious and territorial war, but it also contained a strategy to demonize Muslims, thus convincing crusaders in the sacredness of their mission. A letter of the European spiritual leader, in which he created prejudices against Islam and its followers, testified to the medieval time incentives for Islamophobia. Christian Pope convinced his soldiers that the Holy Land was in peril by 'a race utterly alienated from God', which was capable of doing unspeakable evil. Thus, 'all who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins.'[51] For further illustration of how Pope Urban II dehumanized the enemy, Thomas Asbridge cited in his

writing the Pope's reference to the inhuman treatment of Christian captives at the hands of Muslims, which endurably establish the image of Muslims as savages. He delineated their behavior with Christians as follows:

> 'The cruelty of these impious men goes even to the length that, thinking the wretches have eaten gold or silver, they either put scammony in their drink force them to vomit or void their vitals, [...] they stretch asunder the coverings of all the intestines after ripping open their stomachs with a blade and reveal with horrible mutilation whatever nature keeps secret.'[52]

On the one hand, such demonization of Muslims could be considered as a strategy of Pope to encourage Crusaders to crush the enemy. On the other hand, he approximated Muslims as a different race which is inferior to the European Christian civilization, and inspired bigotry against Islam. At this point, it may be argued that territorial dispute constituted a plausible ground for the military conflict, but it could not be considered as founded hostility against Islam. The truth is, Pope Urban II not only portrayed a bad image of the Muslims, but he also implied Islam as an evil religion and its followers capable of meting out great brutality. Calling Muslims pagans, he described Islam as paganism and not equal to Christianism. Incidentally, there are several aspects of Islamophobia in relation to Holy Wars, which could not be neglected in the study of this phenomenon.

The very first criterion for establishing a nexus between Islamophobia and the Holy Wars is that prejudices against Muslims must be fomented. Christian Pope ascribed to Muslims such brutalities as could not be committed by a human being. In fact, the revival is never a rightful chronicler of doings of the enemy. Parties waging a war between them always spread stories about the cruelties of the other side, so they seek to portray the war as one between good and evil. For example, in the writings of Matti Moosa, where he described the conflict between Muslims and Christians during the time of third crusades, the bloody doings of the Frankish invaders were seen through the eyes of Muslims. Moosa agreed with the 12th century Muslim chronicler and historian Ibn al-Athir, who told stories of unspeakable Christian crimes which had been etched deep in Muslim memories. According to him, when Franks entered Jerusalem they killed on the way many people including women and children, tortured Muslim captives and started to plunder the city.[53] In the war both sides had stories to tell about the brutality of the other side. Thus, one should consider the possibility that these narratives could be misleading and might not be depicting reality. Catholic Pope and crusaders fabricated lies to demonize Muslims and create prejudice against their inhumanity so that everyone would hate them. If hatred against Muslims were solely based on prejudices, then from the modern conceptual perspective, it would be possible to talk about medieval time Islamophobia.

The second aspect refers to the racialization of Muslims. From the perspective of modern Islamophobia studies, cultural and religious racism constitutes a form of Islamophobia. For example, Salman Sayyid argues that in the present times Muslims have been racialized based on their religion and cultural identity, which he considers to be a measure of Islamophobia.[54] However, 11th century approximation of crusaders and, in general, of Christian Europe for the Eastern world indicated that anti-Muslim racism was not a modern phenomenon and it could be traced back to the Medieval times. It was not accidental that Pope Urban II

had referred to Muslims in his letter as a 'race.' Some may argue that 'race' and 'racism' are relatively modern concepts. It is undeniable that race as a biological term, which is determined by genetic inheritance, skin color and physiognomy, did not exist in the medieval times. However, Geraldine Heng suggests that the term race, which is obtained in the past historiography, could describe a group of culturally different people.[55] In this sense racism as a matter of cultural classification could exist in the Middle Ages. Ann Laura Stoler argues that the era of scientific racism should not influence the exclusion of medieval ages from the history of race, because how Europeans treated Jews and Muslims in medieval times was cultural and religious racism.[56] Following this, the attitudes of crusaders towards Muslims and their portrayal by the Catholic Pope testifies to the racialization of people from the Orient. Muslims were not considered just a military revival in the medieval Europe, but they had been transformed from enemy into non-humans. Pope Urbane II referred to them not as people who had conquered Jerusalem, but as a 'race' of utterly wretched pagans whose cultural behavior found expressions in unspeakable cruelty. Compared to Muslims, crusaders had an image of cultural and religious superiority. They were people of God with a holy mission. It is to mention that racial attitudes towards Muslims did not have solely Islam-based motives. A reference to them as 'Saracens'—people from the east—indicates a pattern of Orientalism in the racial process of 'selfing' and 'othering.' Since the term 'Orientalism' was redefined by Edward Said in the late 20th century, its understanding has been limited to the academic and artistic misperceptions of the eastern world, as shaped by the imperial attitudes of the West. This term, however, deserves more comprehensive conceptualization. Much earlier than European Imperialism, the crusaders already harbored prejudicial attitudes towards the Eastern people. A medieval times Orientalism constituted the racial abjection of Muslims on the basis of geographical origin. Any man from the East would be perceived as a Muslim pagan who stands inferior to the Christian European man due to his primitive culture. Thus, Crusaders who traveled to the Middle East to liberate Jerusalem had an expectation of the enemy from a different race. Religious, cultural and geographical motives of prejudices reflected in the racial attitudes of European Christians towards Muslims. This is a crucial factor in the understanding of the history of Islamophobia.

The third way of establishing a nexus between Holy Wars and Islamophobia is anti-Islam bigotry. Recalling the assumptions of Anna Sophie Lauwers, a discussion about anti-Muslim racism should not overlook the manifestation of Islamophobia as religious or cultural bigotry, which is prejudicial rejection of Islam.[57] In the historiography of crusading there are patterns of anti-Muslim racism and anti-Islam bigotry as well. Though the Catholic Pope did not mention Islam explicitly in his letter and referred to Muslims in the way of demonization, it did not prove that the European sentiments were otherwise. In fact, inhuman portrayal of Muslims implies their cultural and religious identity. For Instance, by the reference to 'race' and paganism, Pope did not mention Muslim warriors in particular, but the entire Islamdom. Even if it could be true that they did torture Christians brutally, the entire people would have to typically bear the stigma of cruelty perpetrated by Muslim warriors. Ultimately, by way of deduction this points to the wickedness of Islam. Pope Urban II describes Muslims as harassers, who are alienated from God. Though he is upset that Jerusalem is under the reign of the enemy, still these epithets do not imply the Muslim warriors, but a group of uncivilized people. If one is to ask what makes Muslims 'alienated

from God' as perceived by the Pope, the answer lies in Muslims being non-Christians. They are portrayed as savages because Muslim cultural and religious identity derives from Islam and not from Christianity. The demonization of Muslims is, therefore, denouncement of Islam, thus constituting anti-Islam bigotry and a form of Islamophobia.

At last, there is sufficient evidence in the European medieval history for one to argue that the phenomenon of Islamophobia was neither coined in the late 20th century nor did it surface at the beginning of 2000s. Furthermore, it can be assumed that even before the colonial masters started to subjugate the East, Europeans had been showing their prejudices against Muslims and Islam. Thus, a study on the origins of Islamophobia in Europe, should take into consideration the medieval confrontations between two religious worlds — Muslims and Christian Europe. Historic misperceptions of the Occident about the inhumanity, cultural backwardness and religious heresy of oriental people should remain in focus in the contemporary discussions on Islamophobia. These factors helped to shape cultural or religious prejudices against Islam, thereby fanning cultural racism and extreme fear as well as hatred of Muslims.

## CONCLUSION

Terming 9/11 and, in general, Islamist terrorism as the 'starting point' of Islamophobia constitutes a common scholarly trend in modern Europe, which eclipses the historical context of Islamophobia and challenges its conceptual merit. Thus, the relevance of inventing the recent origins of Islamophobia, neglecting the historical impacts of colonialism and the Holy Wars on the phenomenon, has been called in question. In order to find the answers, this article undertook a study of modern Islamophobia scholarship and European medieval as well as colonial history. It proved that Islamist terrorism indeed had an impact on the rise of Islamophobia, but terming it as a post-9/11 phenomenon changes the entire scholarly discourse. It facilitates laying the blame on Islamist groups and shutters the guilt of white Europeans. The West is not comfortable with its colonial past and the blame for European cultural hegemony. It is rather simple to generate a misperception that if there had been no Islamist terrorist attacks, Muslims would have been welcomed in European societies. In fact, an analysis of Muslim-Christian wars in the medieval period and colonial as well as postcolonial experience of the Orient reveals the historical origins of Islamophobia. Over the centuries, Muslims have been demonized, humiliated and portrayed as the 'primitive other' who is uncultured and has no value for society. The 11th century crusades and the reference of the Catholic Pope to Muslims as a 'race' being 'alien to God', who are capable of great brutality, prove that European Christians already in the medieval times had a racial attitude towards Muslims as their culture and religion were different. Diabolizing Muslims also constituted bigotry against Islam. In the colonial era, European colonial masters created the perception of 'subaltern' about Muslims, who were stigmatized and deprived of any human rights. Modern conspiracy theories about the threat of Islamization or dangerous Muslims are a heritage of colonial and mediaeval past, when Europeans gave a prejudicial portrayal of primitive Muslim people who were the enemies of Western civilization.

Nowadays, some people in the West strive to forget about its historical wrongdoing against Muslims and protect a fabricated image of the enemy; and therefore, existing Islamophobic reality proves the culpability of Muslims. Some Western thinkers eagerly support it. This is why the onus is on unbiased scholars of Islamophobia studies to prove it differently. It has to be written, rewritten and repeated all the time that Islamophobia is a historical phenomenon that still continues and finds impetus in the European-initiated process of cultural othering.

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