



Defining Islamophobia

When talking about Islamophobia, we mean anti-Muslim racism. As Anti-Semitism Studies has shown, the etymological components of a word do not necessarily point to its complete meaning, nor how it is used. Such is also the case with Islamophobia Studies. Islamophobia has become a well known term used in academia as much as in the public sphere. Criticism of Muslims or of the Islamic religion is not necessarily Islamophobic. Islamophobia operates by constructing a static 'Muslim' identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalized for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts, because Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about the Muslims/Islam.

How can it be a form of racism as Islam is not a race?

Islamophobia is a specific form of racism that refers to acts of violence and discrimination, as well as racist speech, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping and leading to exclusion and dehumanisation of Muslims, and all those perceived as such.

Islamophobia can also be the result of structural discrimination. Islamophobia is a form of racism in the sense that it is the result of the social construction of a group as a race and to which specificities and stereotypes are attributed. These characteristics are considered genetic (for instance "Islam is violent, thus Muslims and their kids are violent").

Consequently, even those who choose not to practice Islam but who are perceived as Muslim are subjected to discrimination. Islamophobia has nothing to do with criticism of Islam. Islam, as a religion, as an ideology, is subject to criticism as any other religion or ideology.

Islamophobia is any act of discrimination against, violence against, or rejection of a person or institution because of his/her/its real or perceived affiliation with Islam.

It is also defined as a **political and media climate** that aims to systematically stigmatise Muslims, thus provoking and encouraging such acts of discrimination and violence against citizens of the Muslim faith.

Islamophobic hate speech is all content -words, sound, video, image- that stigmatise the Muslim community as a whole, or a specific member, while inciting hatred towards Muslims. This content can be private or public (social networks, political speeches, remarks aired on television, ect)

Anti-Muslim arguments are no longer confined to the fringes of society and are now also embraced by some mainstream politicians resulting in growing xenophobic populist discourse. Islamophobia manifests itself through individual attitudes as well as the policies and practices of institutions which vary among member states and over time.

The hostility, fear and hatred of Islam and active discrimination against individuals of this faith often appear through hate speech, violence or ethnic and religious profiling. Muslims

continue to experience discrimination in various areas of social life, including education, employment and housing. Data from most countries suggest that

The universality of Islamophobia

Islamophobia can in no way be summarised as anti-arab racism or anti-migrant hatred. We must take into account the incredible diversity of the Muslim community. While in France, people of Arab and North-African origin are certainly the majority in the Muslim community, such is not the case in England, for example, where Asians are well represented.

Additionally, Islamophobia is a form of racism that first and foremost attacks the religious affiliation of the person. Europe has more and more Muslims who look “European” and who are nevertheless victims of discrimination and violence. Muslim people are usually seen as having a combination of “disadvantages” For example, someone who is a woman, black, Muslim and veiled will be all the more discriminated against and rejected. Similarly if a man is both Arab *and* Muslim.

Muslim women wearing visible religious symbols, such as the headscarf, are particularly vulnerable to discrimination due to the intersectionality of gender and religion and this often results in undue restrictions affecting their lives. Such negative experiences can fuel feelings of isolation within a larger community and hinder inclusive societies.

Underreporting

The extent of discrimination and islamophobic incidents against Muslims often remains undocumented and under-reported. Religious leaders and NGOs have reported the deep uneasiness felt among the Muslim population as well as stigmatisation and marginalisation. Islamophobia can also contribute to a more general disintegration of human values, such as non-discrimination, tolerance, freedom of religion, solidarity and equality

Useful links

<https://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/hate-speech-watch/focus/islamophobia-and-religious-intolerance>

<https://cik.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2017/07/2017.07.25-Law-Report-IT-final-1.pdf>

<http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/>