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FROM ISLAMOPHOBIA TO NEO-ISLAMOPHOBIA: A STORY OF THE ENEMY IMAGE OF MUSLIMS

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ABSTRACT

The Islamophobia is more often considered a new label for an old concept -Orientalism, which was later called Neo-Orientalism since it portrayed the Islam as a threat to Western civilization. Orientalism refers to Eurocentric hatred for the Arabo-Muslim population, which has now grown to hatred for all Muslims, transforming the socio-political order into an Islamophobic one. Primarily, this transformation has constructed image of Muslims as enemies of the West with rampant change in its patterns of manifestation, challenging the recent research findings aimed at exploring the antecedents and nature of Islamophobia. This study peeps through history to evaluate Muslims' enemy image and attempts to map its impact on contemporary anti-Muslim state. The findings showed three Islam/Muslim-related phobias: religious, political, and civilizational, which resulted in enemy image of Muslims and justified wars against them. The study concludes that Islam/Muslim-related phobia and the ensuing global war on terror, combined with media influences, have transformed this image into arch-enemy, altering old notion of Islamophobia into neo-Islamophobia. Neo-Islamophobia become a globalized phenomenon and has transformed the prevailing social and political order of Western societies into an Islamophobic one. Based on this notion, a 'new world order' is in the making.

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INTRODUCTION

This study deals with a complex phenomenon that has been discussed in public and policy debates ever since the first Runnymede Report, released in 1997, that termed it as Islamophobia after identifying a new reality-anti-Muslim prejudice that it claimed had increased significantly and swiftly in the West in recent years. It pointed out that while this phenomenon has been in

West for millennia, it has just grown more explicit, extreme and dangerous in every section of Western media and society (Conway, 1997, pp. 1-11). This report declared Islamophobia "a challenge for us all," and second similar report issued by Runnymede Trust twenty years later in 2017, confirming it "still a challenge for us all," as it has now manifested as "anti-Muslim racism" and has become more complex and entrenched in Western societies (Elahi & Khan, 2017, p. v & 1). These reports demonstrate the changing nature of Islamophobia, which has spawned a significant literature, yet it is still debatable as to what the term now signifies. This study makes an effort to look at construct both historically and contemporarily to determine its various hues & forms. Theoretically and methodologically, it is desirable to begin by explaining that how the term Islamophobia is viewed in the existing literature and what phenomenon it represents.

The Construct: (Neo) Islamophobia

The extant literature presents a variety of perspectives provided by experts from various fields and backgrounds who studied the phenomenon. Practically all the perspectives have one thing in common: Islamophobia is essentially a hostile attitude against Muslims and Islam. Many scholars have accepted Orientalism to understand this attitude; for example, Bleich (2011, p. 1582) claimed that "Islamophobia is new word for old concept" (Orientalism), while Beydoun (2018, p. 28) considered it the modern progeny of Orientalism. Moreover, Edward Said viewed Orientalism as a Eurocentric hostility towards the Arabo-Islamic population (Iqbal, 2020, p. 4). Yet, neo-Orientalism is something more than just prejudice against specific segment of Muslim populations, as it has come to target everyone who appears to be a Muslim. For instance, Sikhs are nearly identical to Muslims in their appearance; thus, have been the target of Islamophobic attacks in West since the tragic incidents of 9/11 (Sian, 2014). If one accepts that Islamophobia is just Orientalism with a new name, one could contend that new Islamophobia has surpassed the old one since it now manifests as reaction to problematization of Muslims' identity (Sayyid, 2014, p. 14).

Islamophobia is considered "a contrived fear or prejudice" promoted by existing "Eurocentric & Orientalist global power structure" that targets a real or imagined Muslim threat (Cherkaoui, 2016, p. 6). Naming this phenomenon "neo-Orientalism," Kerboua (2016) defined it as "the neoconservative construction of Islam and the Muslim world as a social and existential threat to what neoconservatives and right-wing actors call the Western world and civilization" (p. 8). Amin-Khan (2012) studied the manifestation of new Orientalism in media and concluded that they take the shape of racial and gendered stereotypes, as well as demonized cultural images of Muslims, all under the assumption that Western culture is superior to Islamic civilization. He explained that Western intellectuals, like Bernard Lewis, Samuel Huntington, and others, and journalists initially promoted this Orientalism "to serve political and ideological function of rationalizing US imperialism and Western hegemony in the world". It has now morphed into "new style of governance in West," that was adopted by right-wing politicians like Donald Trump, who used Islamophobia as a full-blown political strategy to acquire power (Tariq & Iqbal, 2023a, p. 9).

This kind of governance turned the political and social order that was in place in the United States into one that is Islamophobic, making hatred for Islam and everything associated with it the collective behavior of the society as a whole. This new societal phenomenon was named "neo-Islamophobia" by Tariq and Iqbal (2023b), which raises the question of what makes neo -Islamophobia different from the old one. Theoretically, the term Islamophobia refers to a form of prejudice and/or racism that is directed at Muslims and Islam (Conway, 1997; Elahi & Khan, 2017). While prejudice and racism practically appear to be opposite sides of the same coin since prejudice refers to an "attitudinal bias," when it manifests, it becomes the "behavioural bias" (discrimination), and the two together constitute the basis for racism (Rosado, 1998, pp. 2-3). It appeared that racism is the most manifested type of prejudice and was defined as "a form of racial discrimination that stems from conscious and unconscious personal prejudice"-made up of likings and dislikings (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 329). Allport (1954) argued that prejudice is "a feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on, actual experience" (p. 6).

While furthering on prejudice, he defined racial/ethnic prejudice as "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization" (Allport, 1954, p. 9). Its expressions can be directed toward a group member or the group as a whole. Counting on this, "Islamophobia" may also refer to a hostile attitude towards Muslims based on dislike or hatred for Islam and all that it represents. Although the construct "neo-Islamophobia" refers to a similar attitude, based on an image of Islam and Muslims as "enemies" threatening Westerners' well-being and even the survival of the West; however, its prevalence may not be found essentially as an attitudinal manifestation of an individual, but as consequence to social and political order (Tariq & Iqbal, 2023a). It is important to note that an "enemy image" cannot be only based on dislike or hate because it always carries risk of violence and destruction and, as a result, is a matter of survival and existence (Luostarinen, 1989, p. 125). These notions distinguish "neo-Islamophobia" from traditional "Islamophobia," as both terms represent different reasons for same Islamophobic attitude.

Consider the phenomenon of Islamophobia, in which people experience hatred or dislike for Muslims as a result of their identity as "other," the outgroup. When this "otherness" turns into enmity, Islamophobia gives way to a neo-phenomenon in which hatred or dislike for Islam and everything associated with it becomes the new normal; this phenomenon was termed as the neo-Islamophobia by Tariq and Iqbal (2023b). These facts, however, prompt the question of "how" enemy images are formed. Otherness and enmity are two identity-making as well as identity-reversing concepts/processes with many similarities. Many groups often constitute societies; some are perceived as "others," or outgroups, and as distinct from the dominant ingroup; nonetheless, not all are necessarily considered enemies, yet an enemy is essentially an "other." The process of othering completes at a point where the categories of "self" and "other" are unequivocally clear and become exclusive. On the other hand, this illustrates how the first step in creating an enemy image is the creation of an "other" who is different in terms of the gender, beliefs, social class, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, culture, and so on (Tariq & Iqbal, 2023b).

Vuorinen (2012) documented the conceptual framework for creating an enemy image and demonstrated that this process could not begin without a perception of a particular (out)group (in this case, Muslims) as different from the dominant (in)group (in this case, Westerners), which results in a preliminary division into "us" and "them" (p.2). Accordingly, the difference is a matter of fact. In contrast, the otherness is the matter of discourse, whereby undesirable characteristics of "the self" are projected onto outgroup, which is deemed distinct or different and, as a result, becomes the negation of "the self." From that point forward, "they" (the outgroup) become the personification of everything "we" (the ingroup) do not want to be or dare to be heavily scrutinized in globally. What is viewed or accepted as normal for them can no longer be included in the image of "us"; a counter-image develops as "the self" is defined increasingly as negation of "the other." However, if "the other" is perceived as threatening at a certain point, it can readily be transformed into an "enemy." While the long-standing enemy may evolve into an "arch-enemy"- a standing threat that appears ever-present (Vuorinen, 2012, p. 2).

This study looks into the story of the Muslim enemy image within this conceptual framework, looking at how and when it was created and why. For instance, present-day perceptions of Muslims in the West, who are regarded as "others" and, in some countries, such as the United States, as no less than "enemies," particularly after President Trump's declaration of "Islam hates us." The process of othering is most typically initiated by encounter between civilizations with no prior history of interaction or understanding. However, it can also occur between groups that have lived in constant contact and communication (Tariq et al., 2021). According to Lewis (1994), Europeans and Muslims have been neighbours since the seventh century, when Muslims arrived in medieval Europe. This points to fact that the first enemy image of Muslims originated during the early formative phase of Islam when they were deemed to represent a new religious ideology and culture and viewed as threat to preexisting ideologies and cultures, especially Christianity and Christian culture. Therefore, the following section looks into how early medieval religious fears and anxieties contributed to construction of Muslims as religious enemies.

Religious Phobia

Islam emerged in the seventh century as a new religion deemed different from and a challenge to existing faiths. Since it contradicted the Christian pre-Islamic narrative centered on the nature of Jesus and the elevation of Christianity to the level of a state religion (Bazian, 2018), Church elders perceived Islam as an imminent existential threat to Christianity and presented it as a false religion. They initiated a polemical discourse targeting the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Quran and the tenets of Islam. Saint John of Damascus (675–750 AD), one of most prominent priests of his time with a considerable following (Meyendorff, 1964), weaponized polemical words and images to the frame Islam as a bundle of Christian heresies. He often manipulated injunctions from the Qur'an. He developed his arguments on "lack of authority" of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), contradicting Islamic doctrines and customs to Christianity, and the abnormal attitude of Muslims towards women (Chase, 1958, p. xxxii). He criticized

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for allowing "polygamy," "concubinage," and "divorce" (Green, 2015, p. 49).

He presented him as the "pseudo-prophet," "hypocrite," "liar," and "adulterer" (Meyendorff, 1964, p. 120) to paint the picture of him as "false prophet" (Janosik, 2016). All of what John had written against Islam, such as in "De Haeresibus" and "Heresy of the Ishmaelites," tends to prove Islam as "heresy" of Christianity or a "pagan cult," on one hand. The other demonstrates a malicious attitude towards Muslims per se that seems to be primarily based on his intense hatred for Islam (Janosik, 2016; Rhodes, 2009). The Valkenberg's account of John's anti-Islam polemics revealed that these were the earliest Christian reflections on this new phenomenon (currently known as Islamophobia), which had been the most influential pieces for a long time; thus, John of Damascus and other early medieval polemicists may be viewed as the architect of earlier prejudices against Muslims and Islam (Janosik, 2016, p. 93). One way to express a prejudiced attitude is through negative othering discourse. John of Damascus, expressed his hatred towards Islam by referring to the Muslims with ethnic names like"Saracens," since he believed that their traditions and practices were distinct from and in opposition to those of the Christians.

He criticized Muslims who did not observe the Sabbath, not be baptized, eat forbidden foods, and consume any wine following the commands of the Quran. Also, he described circumcision as a "barbaric practice" (Janosik, 2016, pp. 110-111). These were the earliest claims by the Church that tended to categorize Muslims as being distinct from Christians and Jews. Instead, earlier Syriac writers' frequent use of religio-ethnic terms like "Arab," "Arabian," "Hagarene," "Ishmaelite," ""Saracene," "Son of Hagar," "Son of Ishmael,"" "pagan" about Muslims (Penn, 2015, p. 19) reflect their perception of Muslims as "religious others." These aspects point to the fact that the first marker of Muslims' "otherness" was their religion. This otherness turned into enmity when Muslims founded Islamic state and civilization on former eastern and southern banks of Mediterranean, which was regarded as a significant penetration of Islam in Christian Europe. The Muslim conquests that began in Spain and reached over Iberian Peninsula in the seventh century, eventually reaching Italy in early eighth century, terrified Orthodox Christian (Kumar, 2012).

Muslims ruled new populations, the majority of whom were persuaded by Muslim social and cultural norms and readily embraced Islam and Muslims' ways of life. The ease with which these conquests were made and speed with which significant number of Christians converted to Islam caused Muslim culture to flourish and European society to fall apart, ultimately leading to a profound change in the societal values (Wheatcroft, 2005). As Islam proceeded to spread quickly, both socially and spiritually, Christians felt a huge sense of loss and dread. As a challenge to Europe's social and spiritual survival, Orthodox Christians started to define Muslims as both internal and external enemies of Europe (Quinn, 2008; Wheatcroft, 2005). Perhaps, it was the fear of Islam that made the Church elders prejudiced towards Islam. It was predicted, Muslims were "barbarian tyrants" who would "boast over their victory, reinforcing a binary worldview of "us vs. them."how they have devastated and destroyed the Persians,

Armenians, Cilicians, Isaurians, Cappadocians, Africans, Sicilians, [and] the people of Hellas" (Levin, 2011, p. 37).

John of Damascus was the one who nurtured the heresy syndrome through insertions like Muslims as an "arrogant soul of the enemy, the sons of Ishmael," and as a "race born of a slave," which resulted in the early notions of Muslims as "Others" and later as "enemies" that persisted in Western imaginations throughout history and even to present day (Wheatcroft, 2005, p. 92). While studying the tale of Christian-led enmity towards Muslims, Daniel (1960) came to the conclusion that although Christians had always been aggressive and xenophobic toward Muslim communities, their fear of the "enemy people" had given them a sense of solidarity (p. 10). Perhaps, it was the fear of the Islam that made the Church elders prejudiced towards Islam. Of course, the underlying message was that the religion of Islam is a rigid progenitor of the violence that threatens the survival of other ideologies and sociopolitical systems. This attitude can be seen in their negative othering discourse directed at Muslims. For instance, Saint Eulogius, a ninth-century priest from Spain, otherized Muslims by stating that our servants are now ruling us and that they put our religion as well as culture at risk (Tolan, 2002).

It was his intense hatred towards and fear of Islam that drove him to dehumanize Muslims by emphasizing the distinction between the Christian 'us' and the Muslim 'other,' and also to turn this 'Other' into an enemy by saying that "Saracens (Muslims) are savages, beasts, not men like us (Christians)" (Tolan, 2002, p. 94). However, the perception of Muslims as a common enemy was sharpened and reinforced in the 1071, when Seljuk Turkish armies toppled the Christian Byzantine Empire—also known as Eastern Rome and in response to the military and political threats posed by Turk forces, which had already taken over Anatolia's sparsely populated areas, the Byzantine Emperor, Alexios I Komnenos, called for the military support from Pope Urban II (Asbridge, 2012; Pierson, 2009). The Pope responded with a call for Christian crusades (holy wars) against Muslim despots, framing them as the "enemies of God" and pledging to "restore lost Jerusalem" (Daniel, 1989b, p. 3 & 7). The Church elders authored the well-crafted propaganda based on negative othering discourse, defining Muslims as "implacable enemies" and followers of a religion determined to usurp and extinguish Christianity, with no hope of reconciliation, to justify violence against Muslim enemies in the name of holy wars (Daniel, 1989a).

The assertions that "Islam is a violent religion," "promote coercive forms of the conversion," "grew by the sword," and is linked to increased "sexuality" and perverted practices, as well as that it is irrational, "incapable of democracy, essentially untrustworthy, and anti-scientific," were among the key constituents of this othering discourse (Bouma, 2016, p. 67). The crusade propaganda of church elders like Pope Urban II bathed the whole region with blood, resulting in the fall of Jerusalem in July 1099, which he dreamed of but could not survive to see. In addition, Peter the Venerable of Cluny (1092-1156), one of most influential and learned priests of the twelfth century and whose verbal martial art and moral support for Crusaders' military campaign paved the way for Christianity's triumph over Islam. He came to see that Islam is an

ideology that cannot be defeated only by physical force; as such, it must be fought on moral and intellectual grounds (Iogna-Prat, 2002; Kritzeck, 1964; Resnick, 2016). This drove him to travel to Spain in 1142-43, where he commissioned a five-member team to translate Islamic literature into Latin with the financial support of Roman Emperor Alfonso VII (Kritzeck, 1964; Resnick, 2016).

Peter had the Qur'an translated into Latin in 1143 by Robert of Ketton, an English monk who was well-versed in Arabic and convinced "with entreaty and a high fee" to assist in opposing "the vile heresy of Mahomet" (Quinn, 2008, p. 40). This translation was entitled "Lex Mahumet Pseudoprophete" (The Law of Pseudo-Prophet Muhammad) (Ghani, 2012) and is commonly regarded as the first-ever translation into any European language that introduced the Qur'an to Europe (Mingana, 2012). For centuries, its inscriptions, were far too polemical and designed to make it appear a heresy of Christianity and Judaism, inspired and influenced people (Ghani, 2012, p. 79). In his marginal manuscript notes on the Qur'an, Peter referred to it as "insanity," "impiety," "ridiculousness," "stupidity," "superstition," "lying," and blasphemy (Tolan, 2002, p. 156). Peter convinced his Christian readers that the Qur'an is a demonic scripture that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) created with the help of Christians, Jews, and heretical doctors, weaving the fables and trifling songs of the heretics together to concoct a "wicked scripture" (Resnick, 2016).

He claimed that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) combined good and evil to form a "monstrous cult," "similar to animal Horace described with a human head, a horse's neck, and feathers" (Tolan, 2002, p. 158). In his polemical work the "Summa Totius Haeresis Saracenorum" (A Summary of the Saracens' Entire Heresy), Peter attempted to prove that Muhammad (PBUH) was a false prophet and that Islam was a summation of Christian heresies. To malign the Prophet (PBUH) and the religion he preached, Peter utilized polemical references for him such as "god of the Moslems," "drunkard," "epileptic," "heretical monk," and "nefarious man" (Kritzeck, 1964, pp. 17, 18, & 32). He portrayed the image of Prophet (PBUH) as "an illiterate Arab schemer and epileptic whose rise to power was tied to cunning, murder, and warfare, and whose religious statements were a facade for seizing political power" (Quinn, 2008, p. 40). Such portrayals of Islam, along with the shifting political landscape of Europe, began to alter European perceptions of Muslims from religious rivals to potent political foes. On other hand, the crusading impulse, which remained a vital force in Europe and was focused on a holy war to win Jerusalem, was diverted to a defensive struggle against Turkish aggression in thirteenth century.

However, by the century's end, the crusades failed to stop Turkish forces from establishing the Ottoman Empire (Setton, 1989, p. xvii). This sent a wave of fear among the Orthodox Christian hierarchy, which was considered the spiritual arm of European political powers at the time. As a result, the General Council of the Church was convened in Vienne, France, between 1311 and 1312 AD in order to devise a strategy for dealing with Muslim enemies (Tariq, 2022; Tariq & Iqbal, 2023b; Weiss, 1952). Denouncing the crusades, luminaries at the Council argued that there were other ways to the battle enemies besides going to war. For example, Roger Bacon

(1214-1294) called for studying the Saracen language to defeat them intellectually, if not as religiously. Raymond Lull (1235–1316) advocated for the critical study of Muslim culture and a rational demonstration of Christianity to nonbelievers (Kalin, 2004, p. 157). The Council thus proclaimed Islam a "theological heresy at the level of morals and practice" (Iqbal, 2010, p. 84). It resolved to set up Oriental language chairs at European universities, including "Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon, and Salamanca" (Said, 1978, pp. 49-50).

The decision signifies a major shift in Europe's attitude towards Islam; at the very least, it was regarded as a true religion after earlier dubbing it a false religion. In addition, this decision marked the beginning of a new age in European culture known as "the Renaissance," which greatly limited papal authority and prevented the Church from fomenting holy wars. Thus, hostility toward Islam changed direction (Frassetto & Blanks, 1999). There appeared to be two opposing views of Islam during the Renaissance period in Europe: Europeans disliked Islam as a religion yet oddly well-liked Islamic civilization (Kalin, 2004). Islam was no longer regarded as a formidable ideological adversary in Europe's changing political landscape, especially since the Ottoman Empire took Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire's capital, in 1453. (Lumbard, 2009, p. xii). These facts illustrate the end of heresy syndrome triggered by religious phobia, which at first caused Muslims to be seen as religious "others" and then as enemies when they established the first Islamic kingdom. On the other hand, these facts signal the start of the political phobia that propelled the anti-Islamic discourses and practices (such as the ban on religious noise, etc.) that gradually characterized Muslims as political enemies in early modern Europe.

Political Phobia

While turning the pages into the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, which was the time when the Ottoman and the European empires were at odds, Vitkus (1999) discovered that Europeans saw Turks as formidable "enemies" both militarily and politically, but not religiously. They were perceived as the bigger external and internal threats because the Ottoman Empire was expanding into European regions, such as the victories of Turk forces from Athens (1459) to Vienna and Cyprus (1571), which posed military and political problems for European States. As Turks began to rule Europe, Africa, and Asia, they exploited vast markets for commercial gains and promoted Islamic ways of life. Still, they did not force others to embrace this religion, preferring to allow them to live with their existing religious ideologies. In contrast, European monarchs had less to offer for indigenous people about basic needs like food, jobs, security, social and religious freedom. As a result, a sizable proportion of European residents relocated to Ottoman Empire controlled areas in pursuit of basic amenities of life like food, safety, and money.

Compared to earlier Christian migrations to Islam, this trend of a mass exodus of European natives to Ottoman Empire presented more serious cultural and social challenges for orthodox Christians (Lewis, 1994). Nonetheless, Pope Nicholas V (1447–1555) was terrified by challenges posed by the ever-expanding Turk empire, and he called for a joint crusade to defeat them and

rescue Byzantium. In contrast to the medieval crusades, the eminent Christian philosophers, theologians, polemicists, painters, and many others who saw Turks as enemies of Europe were the authors or designers of the propaganda used to justify wars against them. Interestingly, this propaganda remained unchanged from its basic lines from medieval past, as it gradually recycled and reinforced historically constructed fear stereotypes of Islam and Muslims (Bisaha, 2004). Overall, there was a complex mix of expressions of fear and hate for Islam and its sacred figures. One of the most prominent figures of the Reformation, Martin Luther, for example, expressed his hate for Islam by portraying it as a religion engulfing the Christian world (Green, 2015, p. 53).

Other polemicists of the time also presented Islam as a religion that was hateful of women, violent, lascivious, and barbarous. This gave way to varied points of view that primarily saw Turks as an imminent threat to the survival of Europe's sociopolitical spheres, which tended to cast Muslims as political enemies Similar to this, Iqbal (2020) argues that numerous painters have shown Islam and its Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in gray, including Alexander Ross (1688), William Percy (1574–1648), and Luca Signorelli (1450–1523). Such a negative portrayal of Islam was, however, aimed at painting Turks as threats to the survival of European society and culture and so to justify war and violence against Muslims (Allaire, 1999; Bisaha, 1999; Green, 2015). Lauro Quirini, a Venetian Renaissance humanist of the mid-fifteenth century, voiced his heightened apprehensions to Pope Nicholas V after the fall of Constantinople in the hands of Turks. Portraying Constantinople as the last city that preserved the ancient Greece's living language and culture, he framed its collapse as the colossal loss of Greek literature and heritage.

As such, he presented the image of Turks as a "barbaric, uncultivated race, without established customs or laws, living a careless, vagrant, arbitrary life" (Bisaha, 2004, p. 67). According to Bisaha (2004), Quirini appears to be lumping Turks along with ancient religious-ethnic groups to which Christians bore no resemblance. He categorically validated the primitive value judgments of the ancient Greeks and Romans that pitted "civilized" Christians against nomads or those presumed to be nomads. Although humanists and, other scholars, and polemicists did not use physical force to defeat Turks, their assertions of the intellectual power undoubtedly contributed to the growth of a generalized hatred for Muslims, and justified and legitimized violence against Turks. Turkish dominance in Europe, however, was short-lived, as they lost political and military power over European countries after the second failed siege of Vienna in the late seventeenth century (1683), which Lewis (1994, p. 180) further described as the end of the thousand-year-old threats from the Islam to the Christian world. Tariq and Iqbal (2023a, p. 11) that explained the beginning of the Christians' threats to the Islamic world through the colonization.

While studying the colonial discourse about Muslim subjects, Edward Said (1978) identified symptoms of Eurocentric hostility towards the Arabo-Islamic population within this discourse and termed it "Orientalism." He described Orientalism as the specialized discourse that, by positioning western culture against "the Orient" as a surrogate and even "underground self,"

enabled Western culture to gain identity and power (Said, 1978, p. 3). This discourse caused two opposing groups to emerge: "the Occident" (people from West) and "the Orient" (people from Arabs and Near Eastern parts), ultimately creating "us" and "them" syndrome nuanced form of anti-Muslim sentiment. It ominously labelled the Orients as "Others." Perhaps around this point in Islam's history, the perception of Muslims as foes started to fade. However, they survived in Western imaginations as "others," reflecting Islamic culture. This otherness turned into enmity once again with the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 (Kumar, 2010; Roberson, 2005). This time, prejudice towards Muslims was sparked by the cultural fear, making them cultural foes.

Cultural Phobia

The facts reported in the sections above show that Muslims have historically been seen as one of the greatest threats to religious, cultural, political, and imperialist powers of the West. This stage dates back to the early Middle Ages and has continued throughout twenty-first century. In Middle Ages, European powers waged religious wars against Muslims because Islam posed ideological threats to the survival of Christianity. At the same time, between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they clashed with the Ottoman Empire as it constituted serious threats to sociopolitical continuity of Europe. Following the fall of Ottoman Empire, they expanded into many Muslim majority nations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to pursue imperial ambitions. During this time, Muslims were not viewed as religious rivals or political enemies rather "cultural others" with negative features such as "laziness, aggression, violence, greed, sexual promiscuity and deviance, female masculinity and male effeminacy, bestiality, primitivism, innocence, irrationality" that Westerners do not want to be or dare to be (Loomba, 2015, p. 115).

This long-standing otherness again turned into enmity in the late twentieth century with the overthrow of Iran's Reza Shah Pahlevi, a staunch US supporter, and the Islamic revolution in Iran, which was viewed as a revival of Islam. At the time, the United States was at war with the Soviet Union. It was the Cold War that divided the world into communism and capitalism; resurgent Islam presented new ideological threats to the West that began to replace Islam with Communism and to transform Muslims' image from "Other" to "new enemy" of the West (Gasher, 2002; Kumar, 2010; Poole, 1999; Roberson, 2005). According to Green (2015), the West has allegedly declared war on Muslims, and the United States has become a major imperial force, wielding its economic and political sway over the many Middle Eastern nations. Even though Muslims presented no serious threats to the West, the way they were perceived to be. Also, the propaganda used to fight these threats was more systematic and devastating than ever before, possibly due to the propagation of anti-Islam narratives through the machinery of representation—mass media—which publicized them to the point of the broad acceptance and reactions.

However, it largely remained unchanged from its core components since the early Middle Ages. As a case in point, The Wall Street Journal from the US described the Iranian revolution as a "return to an extreme fanatic form of orthodoxy in Islam, which is anti-Western in nature"

(Shuja, 1982, p. 62). Alternatively, the British journalist Peregrine Worsthorne stated that "as recently as the beginning of this (twentieth) century, the Mohammedan world was seen as an alien force that Christendom had every reason to fear." These remarks were reprinted in The Wall Street Journal (Shuja, 1982, pp. 61-62). If one critically looks at these comments, it becomes evident that the West has inherited the perception of Islam as an ideological force threatening the existence of Western civilization. Said (1981), for example, conducted a landmark study on how Muslims were covered in the US media prior to and following the Iranian hostage crisis (1979–1981). The study found that Muslims were increasingly portrayed as threatening "other" as part of Western perspective known as Orientalism, views Islam as "evil" and Christianity as "good."

Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis (1993, 1996), which reframed Islam and supporters as an existential threat to the West, modernized this long-standing binary schematization by warning that Islam has bloody borders (Beydoun, 2023, p. 14). Ever since, dire predictions have fueled fears of a potential "clash of the civilizations," portraying Islam as the "political," "civilizational," as well as "demographic" threat (Esposito, 2016, p. vi). With the emergence of al-Qaeda, ISIS and Osama bin Laden, the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States in 2001, the subsequent 7/7 bombings in London in 2005, as well as strikes in Madrid, Bali, and other regions of Europe and many Muslim nations, the fear of Islamic threats spread throughout the world and went viral. Also, these events led to a global war on terror, which "displaced Communism as public enemy number one" and gave way to reorienting the whole of Islam as the "enemy race," reviving plans for a new world order (Beydoun, 2023, p. 62). Beydoun (2023, p. 62) believes the War on Terror to be a modern extension of the old Crusades against Muslim enemies.

The impact of this new crusade went beyond that of previous ones since it targeted Muslim communities around the world. The US-led anti-Islam campaign following 9/11 fueled this crusade, while Western media fanned its flames to the extent that it has now come to appear as a global phenomenon. George W. Bush's remarks days after 9/11 would suffice the notion, when he declared that this new American crusade would be the "world's fight." A fight that has turned its guns on Islam and its adherents anywhere and everywhere (Beydoun, 2023, pp. 37-38). Since then, Western politicians have portrayed Islam as a destructive force and Muslims as main drivers of terror and insecurity in the world. The media relentlessly propagated anti -Islam narratives, resulting in increased hate reactions from Muslims across the world. As per to Green (2018), presuming that all Muslims are somehow responsible for terrorism leads to a society where discriminating against and targeting Muslims is acceptable. This is true of the US society, that has been saturated with hatred for Islam and everything it stands for, particularly after 9/11.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reports seems to support this premise, showing a 1600% increase in hate crimes against Muslims, including verbal abuses and physical attacks on individuals and places of worship in the US, amid 2000 and 2001 (Oswald, 2005, p. 1776). This percentage, however, declined in years that followed, but it did rise again in response to the

politicization of Islam by Western politicians and its publicization by media. A study findings revealed that the United States has become an Islamophobic nation, with Muslims being more likely to be victims of hate crimes due to their religious identity. It analyzed 3153 news reports published in US press from November 2016 to January 2017. It suggested that new social order is founded on Islamophobic thoughts and actions, which it dubbed as neo-Islamophobia. Explaining further, it concluded formation of the new style of governance adopted by some leading politicians, such as Donald Trump, who used Islamophobia as a political strategy to gain power, portraying Islam as a political religion and a source of terrorism and its adherents as terrorists.

The outcome was creation of a society that marked Muslims as enemies of Western civilization (Tariq & Iqbal, 2023a) by establishing a social, political and cultural order. Unlike traditional Islamophobia, the neo-Islamophobia has no geographical bounds; it manifests anywhere and everywhere. India, for instance, has now become global epicenter of Islamophobia. Beydoun (2023), Narendra Modi regime's imperial vision of Hindutva—Hindu supremacy which views Muslims as a foreign caste must be expelled from Indian territory over any means necessary -has made Indian society an Islamophobic one where Muslims have been subjected to mob and vigilante violence, state policies that equate Islamic identity with foreignness and terrorism, and cast them as the very enemies of the Modi regime. Perhaps neo-Islamophobia is more than just a social order, as these facts indicate that it is now taking on the character of a 'new world order' based on Islamophobia, having crossed Western borders. Beydoun (2023), however, attributes this globalization of Islamophobia to American-led new crusade, the war on terror as it has linked Muslim identity to terrorism, causing Islamophobia to spread across borders and intersections.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings from this study point out that the term "Islamophobia" refers to a hostile attitude towards Muslims based on the perception of Islam as a religious, political, and cultural threat to the West. A "perceived threat" causes a "fear" response, an underlying the cause of all "phobias" since fear generates "hate" feelings, which are the foundation of this attitude against Muslims (Pratt, 2016, p. 33). These feelings are also expressed in linguistic behaviours that put Muslims in the psychological category of "other," positioning them as the different, inferior, foreign, or not belonging to or threatening the West (Brons, 2015). When the threat perception associated with Islam takes on the nature of survival and existentialism, this otherness turns into enmity. So Islamophobia changes its character to "neo-Islamophobia," where a climate of hate towards Muslims and Islam with or without the attitudinal negative posturing of the individuals sets in, and can activate collective violence against Muslims, such as wars (Tariq & Iqbal, 2023a).

The findings further revealed that the prime example of the "enemy" in US today is Muslims and that this enmity is as old as the Islamic faith itself because Islam has been a source of fear and insecurity in Western imagination since it arrived in the West (Beydoun, 2023). However, it was observed that as circumstances changed over time, so did the nature of the perceived

threat from Islam. This study identified three distinct types of Islam-centred-phobias that led to the perception of Muslims as the enemy of the West throughout the entire history of Islam. The first of these was religious phobia, was found to be a significant factor in the construction of the early threat perception of Islam and image of Muslims as "Islamic others" and then as "religious enemies," which originated religious wars against them. This phobia originated in response to early loss of Christian believers to Islam and the loss of Christian areas to Muslims, and it formed early medieval perceptions of Islam as a false religion and Muslims as enemies of Christianity.

Muslim communities in India were recently singled out and scapegoated as disseminators of the coronavirus, which infuriated Hindu extremists, increased the already terrifying violence directed towards Muslims, and made the lives of Muslims in India a hell (Beydoun, 2023, p. 118). On the one hand, these facts speak about an Islamophobic social and political order in the country. At the same time, on other, it demonstrates that when the state drives Islamophobia, it sets a political and social climate for people to follow, which manifests neo-Islamophobia often embedded in policies, laws, media narratives, and intellectual discourse. The second was a political phobia, which emerged with the rise of Ottoman Empire by the end of the thirteenth century and changed the perception of Islam from a religious threat to a sociopolitical threat since it was viewed as a religion whose adherents' rise to power was only intended to gain political hegemony. Thus, Muslims were no longer alleged as religious enemies of Christianity but rather as political enemies of West, which also helped to justify wars against the Ottoman Empire.

After Ottoman Empire collapsed following the second unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683, the political phobia seemed to have vanished, but European challenges to Islamic others in the form of colonialization of Muslim nations continued. The third was civilizational phobia, that arose in response to the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 and led to the perception that Islam posed a threat to the survival of Western civilization, changing how Muslims were perceived as enemies. After 9/11, it resulted in a global War on Terror that proved to be more devastating for Muslims than earlier ones since it targeted Islam, its followers anywhere and everywhere. This was a mediated phenomenon that has now rewired and distorted Western cognitive frameworks to the point where any information they get is slanted against Islam, leading them to perceive Muslims as the "arch-enemy" of Western civilization. As a result, Islam has been connected with terrorism, and Muslims are regarded as terrorists not only in the West but also throughout the rest. For instance, India, after United States, has now become a global epicenter of Islamophobia.

These societies are prime examples of an Islamophobic social order where people are forced to hate Islam and everything that it stands for, leaving Muslims open to verbal and physical aggression. These facts illustrate the dynamic nature of Islamophobia; it first developed into neo-Islamophobia to reflect an Islamophobic social, political and cultural order in the West, and it is now evolving into a new global order based on Islamophobia. Based on the preceding discussions, this study concludes that "Islamophobia" refers to the phenomenon of fear and

hatred for Islam and Muslims. This phenomenon has a historical origin, as it first emerged in Western imaginations with rise of Islam in seventh century, problematizing their presence in West and their identification as religious "others" with diverse cultural and ethnic origins. Also, it was found to be dynamic and growing phenomenon, changing its nature as situations changed. Consider how establishment of first Islamic kingdom and its expansion into Europe transformed this "other" into a religious enemy of Christianity and sparked holy wars against Muslims.

Later, this enemy image changed into a political enemy to wage wars against the Ottoman Empire's emerging sociopolitical challenges. Then, this image has morphed into an enemy of Western civilization to launch the global War on Terror to target Islam and its practitioners everywhere. Now, this phobia and the ensuing war, combined with media influences, have made Muslims into an "arch-enemy" by connecting Islam with terrorism and making Muslims into terrorists not just in the West but also around the world. As a result, the prevailing social order in some Western societies, like United States, has become one marked by a widespread disdain for Islam and Muslims. This phenomenon has been termed as neo-Islamophobia as being an order of the system. However, findings of this study establish that neo-Islamophobia has gone beyond Western borders, engulfing non-Western civilizations such as India. This shows that 'new world order' based on Islamophobia is taking shape. Since neo-Islamophobia thus shows growing trends, the researchers recommend more similar studies in other social contexts, too.

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