

## **A Critical Enquiry of Racism ‘within the idioms of religion’ in America**

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American attitude grew more intolerant towards Islam and Muslims after 9/11 developing a different type of racism defined as ‘Islamophobia’. Insisting that no single explanation effectively reported for the range of American racism, the paper proposed to establish a link between racism and Islamophobia. The study was qualitative and analyzed the data within Fredrickson’s concept of racism as scavenger ideology, reviewing researches from twentieth century scholarship. It claimed that racism as a manifestation of anti-Islam prejudice had sustained in the history of America. Islamophobia as an ideological war is brought forward to justify Western particularly American racism in the backdrop of 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is not a new concept but a fabrication of the old animosity. The study offered a historical record of racism through which an inclusive account of Islamophobia was elaborated. It concluded that the entwined concepts spelled new life and ideology construction embedded in religious fear around the globe. It is significant as it will fill the gap in the contemporary research by examining the question of Islamophobia in relation to racism in a substantive manner.

**Keywords:** racism, scavenger, Islam, Islamophobia, Twentieth century, America

History of America reflects religion as a cudgel to dominate the ‘unbelievers’. Controversies with Catholics, Jews and Muslims in the name of faith had sustained in America for centuries. However, apprehension of Muslims proclaimed overt resentment exclusively for Muslims and Islam after 9/11 terrorists attacks on Twin Towers in New York. The situation developed a phobia of Islam recognized as Islamophobia. The dangerous proposition during US election 2016 that God elevated and settled Trump to the premier office in America further strengthened the concept. On the eve of November 8, 2016, a number of supporting proclamations appeared on media declaring ‘Trump: president by the sovereign intervention of God’, ‘The Trump victory... not really the work of man, because man chose Clinton’, and ‘Trump’s victory...less the work of man, and more of an act of God’; ‘believers voting for biblical principles’.

Trump’s victory followed by reports of assault on Muslims made the contemporary climate in America a continuation of broad gamut of Islamophobia. Mr. Trump’s public statement (in the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, after a mass shooting in California, and attack on club in Orlando June 26, 2016 to bar Muslims from entering America until he worked out ‘what the

hell was going on' have been consistently defended by the Republicans as an apprehension of Americans' 'safety'.

Conviction in Trump's victory as divinely ordained resulted in Muslims victimization around the world strengthening the concept of Islamophobia in the West and America. American constitution claimed asylum to the persecuted, however, 'religious discord' continued a part of its social order. Concept of Islam as a monolithic and static religion remained a 'recurring' phenomenon of closed views', as a new form of racism wrapped in the religious discourse. Therefore, readers require acquaintance with historical and social development of racism within the particular context of religion in American history. This study discusses the global circumstances pertaining to the varying nature of racism, which have ultimately transformed it into Islamophobia.

### Method

The present study was qualitative in nature and critically evaluated the previous literature on the subject of racism and Islamophobia to establish their relationship. It adopted Fredrickson's concept of racism as scavenger ideology to assert that racism gained its 'power from its ability to pick out ideas and beliefs from other set of values and belief in specific socio-historical context' to validate itself (2002, p.8). Religion replaced the biological and cultural notions and was utilized as the main constituent to rationalize racism.

#### Reworking the Oriental Concept

Articulated more with reference to religion than science, racism has been regarded by social scientists as an ideology existing in various forms of bias, prejudice, notions of exclusion, hostility and conflict. Scholars referred to its changing nature according to the global circumstances. It is defined as 'new racism' (Barker, 1981, p.23-24), a 'plague' that contaminated human society (Garcia, 1986) or 'cultural racism' (Modood, 1997, p.155). Closely connected to xenophobia, racism finds context in 'religious intolerance' as well (Lopez, 2011, p.2). However, its constituents are hatred, discrimination and bias positioned in the privileged category against the socially and culturally deprived class.

Racism reworks the Oriental concepts viewing its opponents as 'other'. Likewise Islamophobia as 'a form of racism as well as unfounded fear of Islam' positions Islam as 'other' (Marranci, 2004, p. 105):

*a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia motivated by unfounded fear, mistrust, and hatred of Muslims and Islam...manifested through intolerance, discrimination, unequal treatment, prejudice, stereotyping, hostility, and adverse public discourse (OIC in 2011).*

At the macro level of society, racism represents historical evolution within the fields of philosophy and culture. Far beyond the boundaries of science, genealogy and physiology, it is categorized 'as [a] set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices used to justify superiority or inferiority of social group to others' (Open Education Sociological Dictionary, 2012).

Before 19th century, scientific evidences justified race theory emphasizing an indispensable unity of the human race. Fredrickson (2002) provided historical account of its continuously changing course tracing its history from Greeks, Romans and early Christians when Jews religious practices aroused prejudice. Conversion to Christianity was a 'hereditary sin' yet soluble (Fredrickson, 2002, p.9). However, Jews' acceptance of Christianity reduced hostility against them (2002, p.18). Since Christianity shared a common foundation with Judaism, it was pointless to allege Jews for their ancestry or blood. Moreover, few Jewish communities were encouraged to wage war against Muslims to secure the Holy Land during 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century led to huge massacre of Jews. Muslims

were conceived as a 'threat to Christendom' whereas Jews appeared undisruptive and somehow helpful (Fredrickson, 2002, p.19).

During 16th century Moorish culture and Muslim religion came under a fierce assault in Spain stimulating a rebellion. Exiled from Spain entire 'Morisco' population (Muslim converts to Christianity) started living in close connection to their old culture and religion transferring 'the notion of infidel Muslim as a menacing figure' to America (Gomez, 2005, p.155). Literacy among slave Muslims made them a threat and hazard to the 'white enslaves' (Gomez, 2005, p.155). Thus Western racism scavenged religion as a significant difference to counteract and subdue Muslims and Jews.

One million Asians from China, Japan, Philippines and India were reported to have migrated to United States between 1850 and 1930. Presence of Asian immigrants and their assimilation into society was reckoned as 'the greatest threat to Western Civilization and the White Race' in the second half of 19th century rising restrictive laws such as 'The 1850 Foreign Miners Tax' and 'The Anti-Coolie Act 1862' enacted to restrict Chinese immigrants in USA barring them from owning real estate business in California in 1872 (Prashad, 2006). Openly hostile to its Asians, immigrants' fear overlapped cultural differences. American society was also influenced by the establishment of 'Black Nationalist Islamic Community' in 1913.

Muslim migration changed America's population throughout 19th century. Tobin and Groeneman (2003) conducted their study to identify 'prejudice against Catholics, Blacks, and Asians widespread and violent in the history of this country' and the horrors of American racism continued (p.7). They found that during 1980's, 'public rhetoric about Jews' in America grew coarser. In 1924, 'the Asian Exclusion Act and the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act allowed only a trickle of 'Asians' to enter the nation' (Tweed, 2017).

Since the foundation of American Islamic Propaganda Movement in 1893, America experienced various Islamic Movements focusing mostly retention of African-American Muslims' rights. Imitating 'White Canadian Policy', the immigration Act 1897 restricted 'immigration from the Ottoman Empire under the overarching category of restrictions on Orientals' (Jones 2004). Rise of various Movements such as 'Ahmadiyah Movement (1921)', 'The Universal Islamic Society' (1926), 'The First Mosque of Pittsburg' (1928), and 'The Islamic Brotherhood' (1929) expanded Muslims in America 'as the biggest single ethnic group' (Jones, 2004).

Political agenda stimulated differences in opinions since leaders manipulated Islamic philosophies to their benefits. Amidst them was Noble Drew Ali (founder of Moorish Science Temple of America 1931), who deviated from 'religious orthodoxy' and formulated his own practicing system claiming to be the prophet (messenger). Meanings of the word 'prophet' as messenger endowed him benefit of doubt though it rose in a palpable conflict to the idea of Last prophet-hood. The preachers as well as followers assimilated liberal views of Islam mingling its orthodox beliefs into American ideals. However, during that period such Islamic Movements and Black Civil Movements in America joined hands to protect Black and Muslim African-Americans against 'white Protestant Americans' threatening its solidarity and integrity (Jones, 2004). Their slogan was to build 'a righteous nation that would be independent of whites'.

One of the movement's factions was Dr. Fard's *The Nation of Islam* the same year (Tweed, 2017). 'Fard's unexplained disappearance in 1934' and endorsement by Elijah Muhammad led to the conversion of underprivileged 'disenchanted' African Americans into Islamic faith. His most significant conversion was Malcolm Little into Islamic faith. Malcolm used X with his name to indicate the 'lost

African heritage' thereby rising as a prominent figure of Islamic faith resisting racism (Tweed, 2017, p.4; Hamilton, 2015, p.1). His conversion shaped his radical beliefs about American people as 'the product of a genetic experiment whose time on Earth was coming to an end' (Afterward 9/11 attacks were understood as the coming back of '*The Nation of Islam*') (Hamilton, 2015, p.2).

Injustice to 'Blacks' and Muslims in American society structured Malcolm's strategy to encounter the system that produced racism (Hamilton, 2015, p.4). Unfortunately, Elijah Muhammad claimed prophet hood denying Islam's divine rule that made status of Islam and Muslims dubious. Presently Americans are more familiar with Islam translated through such movements, which has deteriorated the true character of Islamic religion (Bright, 2001, p. 25; Yeoman, 2002). 'Elijah Muhammad's death followed a rip in the movement raising formation of 'American Muslim Mission' that preached common and familiar Islamic practices. However, this group was condemned by 'The Nation of Islam' for being unorthodox.

Emergence of Ku Klux Klan (in the wake of American Civil War 1866) had become a source of demonstration for white Southerner American States. Its members intimidated black republican leaders who were reconstructing and establishing 'political and economic equality for blacks'. Primary goal of Ku Klux Klan was to re-establish white ascendancy. It deprecated immigrants, blacks and all labour by bombing and violence in the country. It used terrorism against individuals or groups they opposed (O'Donnell, 2006). Stanford encyclopedia documented the meeting between Ku Klux Klan and Malcolm X as an attempt (on Malcolm's part) to get a separate land for 'Black American Muslims'. Muslim non-support in the Civil Rights Movement in the South also resulted from a bargain with Ku Klux Klan to save mosques from being 'disturbed' (Clegg, 1997).

Historian Schmatz reported Malcolm X meeting with Nazis (NAP) and speculated that anti-Semitism brought the two groups in bonding. Race segregation was a mutual concern of Malcolm X's meeting Nazi leader Rockwell to form a coalition. Since media was under Jewish control, the protest of both groups was destined to failure. Common beliefs prevailed among 'white' Christians to support violence and persecution of Blacks, Muslims as well as non- Muslims.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King voiced those problems overtly bringing Black and Muslim Africans at one page against slavery. As a result, Islam rose as a dominant American religion. African Americans rejected 'Oriental Exclusion Act 1920' devised to ban Muslim immigration. Afterward, Malcolm abandoned 'The Nation of Islam' due to its radical religious stance and discovered that Islam preached equality of human beings. He was convinced that racism had tarnished American spirit. He pondered over his state of being Muslim while dictating his autobiography to Haley in 1964:

*I did many things as a Muslim that I'm sorry for now. I was a zombie, then-like all Muslims-I was hypnotized, pointed in a certain direction and told to march*

He (1964) reflected upon extremism as a force driving religious followers to a wrong path. Thus, along with the narratives of African slavery, Africans Muslim struggle for freedom remained a marked feature of 19th century America.

Nationalist movement in Germany encouraged 'a cultural-coded variant of racist thoughts'. 'Pseudo-science of race hygiene' was used to find 'physical distinction between Jews and Germans' bearing 'anti-Semitism' (Hilberg, 1967, p.118). As a part of the 'immigration movement', Jews had migrated from various places of the world in the beginning of 1900s and entered America to establish businesses there. Orthodox in faith, they founded Zionist Movement in America and rose as strong supporters of Socialist party. In 1940, they were 3.7% of the entire American population.

'Anti-Jewish sentiments' were closely associated with a 'general disposition of social intolerance' (ADL's 1998). During 1920's, Ku Klux Klan, Ford's anti-Semitic published literature, Coughlin's controversial anti-Semitic speeches stimulated attacks on the Jewish community in America (Sloyan, 2007; Pawlikowski, 2017). Hatred of Jews based on religious and socio-cultural differences with Europe kept their status unsubstantiated until the modern epoch (Hilberg, 1967, p.111). US State Department irrevocably established a strict quota system (Hilberg, 1967). Gurock (1998) explored that immigrants were required 'to prove they were not likely to become a public charge'. Concepts of anti-Semitism and xenophobia in America strengthened in 1930's. Jefferson's oxymoronic use of maxim 'Divided we stand, united we fall' revived the classic concept of racism (Lewis, 1990).

Creation of Israel in 1948 brought Palestinian refugees to America. 'McCarran-Walter Act 1952 relaxed the quota system established in 1924' allowing more Muslim immigration (Tweed, 2017). 'Muslim migrants' escaped 'oppressive regimes in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria; and South Asian Muslims, as far as from Pakistan to settle in America. By 1990s, Muslims had established more than 600 mosques and centers across the United States' (Tweed, 2017). Stereotypes of Arabs as 'terrorists' continued as a concurrent phenomenon since 'Middle East tension of 1970-1980, Oklahoma City bombing 1995 and Persian Gulf crises 1990' long before 9/11 disaster. However, hostility against Muslims gave rise to Islamophobia as another form of racism after 9/11 (Sayyid, 2011; Musharbash, 2014). Extremist incidents strengthened the image of Islam as 'incompatible' with human rights (Langman & Morris, 2003; Gilles, 1997; Huntington, 1996). Equating a one point six billion Muslims on earth with a race based on religion and fearing them turned the situation quite morbid.

### **Discrimination Based on Religion**

Being skeptical of an ideology is fine but to coagulate it as the foundation of hatred and fear appears unfounded. Religion as a part of evolution of racism in America had previously provided reason for difference between 'Negro' and 'American' by Father Divine (1940's). It categorized people on the basis of religion labeling them 'Asiatic Muslims', 'Moorish Americans' etc. Though Father Divine's own followers rejected those notions, nevertheless, the power of being American prevailed in the society at much higher level. Congress representative Dawson of Pennsylvania reinforced that 'racial prejudice was implanted by providence for wise purpose' (Wood, 1970, p.2).

Sociologist Frederick Hertz used the phrase 'race hatred' in 1920's, signifying discrimination and bias. 'Religious persecution and racial persecution' reciprocated each other (Benedict, 1942, p.142). Benedict (1942) emphasized that 'race persecution' did not compel researchers to investigate the origin of 'race' (p.147). For a comprehension of 'race conflict', therefore, 'conflict' and not 'race' should be investigated (Benedict, 1942, p.151).

Ancient belief had already accrued since the advent of human civilization that supported climate producing 'varieties of mankind' and 'intermixture of different ethnic groups' (Benedict, 1942, p.20). It developed the idea of ethnic group bearing definite characteristics. Recent studies referred to that as a creation of new race concept based on ethnicity where not physiological but social behaviours were associated to various ethnic groups. He called 'intermixture' the cause of high civilization (Benedict, 1942, p.79). It might be assumed that as a community, founded on the intermingling of various races, American natives feared Muslims of surmounting and bringing destruction to their land. Muslims experienced an 'intermixture' repression from Europeans, which 'stimulated their suppressed instincts' (Benedict, 1942, p.79). Racism thus was conceived as an abstract notion inapt for scientific investigation; a 'religion, a belief which can be studied only historically' (Benedict, 1942, p.97). Benedict's proclamation of racial prejudice in America scavenged the development of

strong emotional behaviour which was 'psychologically complex' and required in-depth understanding in economic, social and historical context (1942, p.168).

### **Racism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Racism in late 20th century world went far beyond its understanding in terms of Whites and Blacks. The concept evolved over times as a 'catch-all' in Social Sciences (Stocking, 1966). Pioneer in rejecting 'theory of evolution' as a foundation of race, Boas (1989) also looked at racism as a result of 'culture and tradition' (p.66). Despite its socio-cultural and religious presentation, scholars attempted to enquire and determine the causes of racism in economic spheres as well. Marx (1975) identified the problem of 'importation of slaves' as the 'supply of labour' which shaped the notions of race and racism in the modern think tanks. He looked at racism as 'an issue...for the structures of the social world' (1975, p. 915). Hall (1980) found problems in Marxist conception of racism which adhered exclusively to economic structures and argued that 'economic relationship' did not explicate 'the variety of racial practices and its persistence across the economic changes taking place in societies such as US' (1980, p.308). He (1980) proposed an understanding of the historic development system of 'racial slavery' and 'racial practices in US society' (p.320). Hence, scavenging economic structure, racism leveled path for its existence.

Miles (1982) identified politics, class and specific ideologies forming racial conflicts. His study of race and racism was based on its 'analytical and objective status...a basis of action' (Miles, 1982, p. 42). Miles (1982) viewed race and racism as human construction; an ideology that belonged to and was shaped by the powerful group in society. Tracing the process of 'Racialization' in the interaction of immigrant communities, he concluded the struggle and fight of a class through racism not race 'the modality' (Miles, 1982). Frye's (1983) research corroborated Miles. He named racism a 'bird cage'; a finely wrought cage rightly termed as a 'political construct' (pp.1-16). These researchers focused political and economic circumstances; bringing forth entirely a changed concept of racism in contemporary era with specific agenda. With socio-cultural and religious constituents, racism scavenged politics and economics principles to justify its existence.

Through 'superiority' elevating itself at social structural levels, racism by 'social arrangements' strengthened the notion of 'superiority' (Pinderhughes, 1989). Wieviorka (1995) referred to 'the dual logic of racism-of inferiorization' that was 'subordination and exclusion'. Not limited to segregation and violence, 'institutionalized racism in America' provided 'a better understanding of the journey from race to racism'. Wieviorka (1995) connected racism to 'factors fixed'. Religion as a major 'fix' component developed the arguments of racism. 'Race' explained nothing; 'it is something that must be explained' (Ignatiev, 1995, p.87).

### **Media Propaganda against Islam through**

Media reinforced the image of Islam as backward, intolerant, ancient and incompatible in late nineteenth century. Cinema movies such as 'True Lies 1994', 'The Human Shield 1992' and 'Execution Decisions 1996' represented Arab Muslims as monolithic and violent creatures (Keen, 1986).

Social scholars penned down religion as an essential facet 'of a genealogy of the race concept' in the late twentieth century (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991). Although notion of racism patronized by Marty and Appleby could not produce any 'workable definition', however, it raised anti-Islamic suspicion and warning among the readers (Said, 1991). Recognition of 'African Americans' as 'Muslims' was a miscalculation of 'the longstanding antagonism of Islam to Christian America' (Shaban, 1991).

Muslims were alleged for 'violence' against 'Catholic Croatians' (Huntington, 1977, p.255). Evans (1980) and Lewis (1990) offered evidence to view Islamic world as Ham's descendents. 'Whites' were enslaved by Arabs and Moors but not as regular racial practices customary to European disposition of slavery who relied on biblical references of black skin to be 'hewers of wood and carriers of water' (Lewis, 1990). Biblical influence triggered concept of 'white Christians' and its 'other'.

Albanian, Bosnian, Turks, Armenians, Chechnian and Tatars were quoted to show the world Muslim violence particularly against their respective governments that enhanced the political aspect of racism. Westerners envisioned Muslims habitual of bloodshed. Muslims' projection as 'antagonistic' with its 'other' in the form of Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Hindu, Chinese, Buddhist, and Jews started appearing frequently in every discourse.

New economic and political realities shifted the concept of Racism from 'interpersonal race based prejudice... towards institutional, historical and structural dynamics' into 'perpetual social advantages of the dominant social identity group, that is, white people in America' (Wellman, 1993,p.2). At psychological forums, long chain of psychoanalytic theories helped to comprehend the dynamics of racism in late twentieth century (Fanon, 2001; Frosh, 1989; Rustin 1991; Kovel 1995; Altman, 2000).

Esposito (1999) explored an anticipated conflict of Islam and the West by posing questions to 'the incompatibility of Islam and democracy' (p.3). Discussing Islamic fundamentalism as a possible threat to American stability, he investigated 'the vitality of Islam as a global force and the global history of its relations with the West' (Esposito, 1999, p.5).A case study of Muslim countries and major Islamic movements demonstrated a 'diversity' of orientation in all global spheres with specific emphasis on 'Salman Rushdie affair, the Gulf war and the New World Order' creating problems for the Muslim world and visualizing Islam and America as binaries in the contemporary era.

Religion was explored 'as a historical category...to be applied as a universal concept' in relation to racism (Asad, 1993). Religion endured 'radical' charges- 'from totalitarian and socially repressive to private and relatively benign' (Asad, 1993). Asad (1993) investigated racism as a debated topic, 'a construction of European modernity' concluding its conception as an integral part for creating differences that generated bias against other cultures.

### **Islamophobia**

Racism was further defined as 'the routinized outcome of practices that create or reproduce hierarchical social structures based on essentialized racial categories' extended to global level 'from Negrophobia to Islamophobia' (Omi & Winant, 1994). Stereotype image of Muslims as 'exotic easterners' was re-enacted under the horrors of 9/11 destruction' giving it new meaning (Said, 1994). As a reproduction of phobia, it generated actions towards a specific individual group and ideology.

Girr (1995) introduced the concept of 'eurocentrism' in 'skyscraper'; tall buildings which in the late 20th century disturbed American society for their being out of Americans needs. The tall architecture of buildings was victim to strong terrorist attacks wounding American proud ideology of being 'invincible'. During the same period, 'markers of race' re-established 'the most violent racism' against Muslims in the form of socio-religious nature (Werbner & Modood, 1997). Werbner (1997) defined racism 'grounded in the fears of social and economic description elicited in the complex relationship of Islam to West'. This relationship played a pivotal role informing modernity and

capitalism in West. Dependent on 'histories of imperial conquest', Werbner and Modood (1997) called it 'Islamophobic racism' bringing racism and religion in discourse as dependent variables.

### **Huntington Portrayal of Islam**

Huntington (1997) portrayed a frightful image of Islam in ethno-political context announcing 'Muslims' with 'problems living peaceably with their neighbours' (p.256). Twenty first century America was perceived 'marching under new but often old flags' leading 'to wars with new but often old enemies' (Huntington 1997,p. 20).The 'fault line conflicts' situated Muslims against its 'other', in the global world politics (Huntington, 1997). Huntington analyzed 'Muslim' participation in 'twenty-six of fifty ethno political conflicts in 1993-1994' to show 'only two intra-civilizational and two inter-civilizational conflicts' where West was involved (pp.256-257). He articulated words 'Muslims' and 'Islam' with explicit abhorrence to show the involvement of civilizations in 'ethno political conflicts' (1997, p.257).

However, Huntington (1997) himself confessed that extensive research was needed to investigate Muslims' involvement in far more conflicts by the end of twentieth century (Huntington, 1997, p. 262). He highlighted 'Muhammad' (SAW) as 'a hard fighter and a skilful military commander' and called the origin 'violent...stamped in the foundation' of Islam (1997, p. 263). His description of Islam, Muslims and focus on a single aspect of Muhammad's (SAW) personality was rightly so the 'ethno-political' expression of racism (1997). Life of Muhammad (SAW) exemplify 'a unified' and august picture of the Prophet as an individual. His (SAW) life struggle indicated words of conciliation, peace and harmony at first step to show the positive picture of Islam. Wars during his life time or after were waged on provocation by his opponents (Siddiqu, 1995). Renowned European scholar Hart (1978) documented the name of Muhammad as the first individual who alone was successful on religious as well as worldly borders.

### **Fundamentalism and Racism**

Association of word 'fundamentalism' with Islam was strongly refuted by Said (1997). His argument connected the word with other religions such as 'Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism' (1997, p.xvi). Afterwards, Runnymede Trust Report (1997) fore-grounded the 'closed view of Islam' as oppressor of women that was considerably different from the treatment that other religions and cultures devised for women. Muslims themselves had 'an instrumental or manipulative view of their religion rather than to be sincere in their beliefs, for their faith is indistinguishable from a weapon' (The Runnymede Trust Report, 1997).

Conscious efforts to relate fundamentalism to Islam tarnished the face of Islam in the eyes of an 'average reader' who viewed both as one and 'the same thing' (Said, 1997). Perpetuating its threatening aspect instigated fear of it. American Academy of Arts actively published research works on fundamentalism. Researcher such as Daniel Pipes confessed that he knew 'Islam for the appallingly dreadful thing that it is'; a threat to the world particularly the West. Fear against Islam 'hark[ed] back to age-old grievances' (Said, 1997). 'Ever since the Middle Ages and some part of the Renaissance in Europe, Islam was believed to be demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity' (Said, 1997).

Corlette (1998) also rejected Huntington's description as more a work of 'normal human beings racist to the extent that they act discriminatorily on their ethnically prejudicial beliefs or attitudes...based on ethnic stereotyping' (p.23).He described ethnic stereotypes through 'Cognitive Behavioural Theory of Racism' emphasizing the cognitive role in exposing 'ethnic prejudice... a mental state one has about another' (1998, p.25). Corlette (1998) did not describe the positive or negative

aspect of mental state. However, he rejected the primitive notions of racism and replaced the word 'racial' by 'ethnic'. He emphasized the 'intentionally shared experience' of ethnic groups differentiating them from others (1998). The term seemed more relevant to the psychological condition; a phobia that replaced all cultural differences with religion.

### **Fear of Islam and Muslims**

Religion, a vibrant element of culture had always been hard to neglect. 'Fear of unknown' placed immigrants in controversy and prejudice as they were believed to 'sponge off' the host society (Krutmeijer, 1998). Krutmeijer (1998) discussed racism as a phenomenon with two perspectives; racism as 'individual, psychological, pathological condition' and racism as 'a social problem' (p.40). His study confirmed the previous scholarly suppositions about racism caused 'due to fear... about foreigners' based on cultural ignorance. The complexity of racism was dismantled in the wake of 9/11 attacks conceived and categorized as fear of Islam and all the Muslims were assumed to create problems for Muslim immigrants in America.

Matar (1999) traced association of Muslims with cruelty, tyranny and deception long before 9/11 attacks, with additional labels such as 'sexually over driven, emotionally uncontrollable and religiously superstitious. Reinforcement of stereotypical Muslim images and identification of Jews with 'Museum' strengthened the process of 'racialization of diverse population of Muslims... in to one racial group' in 20th century America (Agamben, 1998).

Winant (2000) asserted the 'static state' of racism and called race a 'significant sociological theme'. The concept of 'New racism' brought forward 'the increasingly covert nature of racial discourse' and 'the avoidance of racial terminology' (Bonilla -Silva & Lewis 1999; Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Identity markers such as skin, colour, language and religion were utilized as the foundation of racism (The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain Commission 2000, pp.59-60). Lobbies were created internationally isolating Muslim countries and communities equating them with terrorist in the global transition of ideologies. Racism was viewed as 'systematic genocide'. At times 'less exclamative', racism found outlet in various forms as a noteworthy facet of life. It was often been referred to 'a new word for an old fear'.

### **Conclusion**

The present study conclude that from the historical exile of Spanish 'infidel' Muslim population to American territory to 9/11 terrorist attacks, racism functioned against Muslims. Journey from biological notion to the status of social construction, woven altogether in economic, psychological, social, political and pathological tangles, world scholars agreed upon a common definition of racism as a mental state and a manifestation of bias and hatred of an inferior group. It was identified as a 'social problem' and 'ethnicity' in the contemporary situation perpetuated by inequalities in society. Its ascendancy blurred geographical boundaries.

It also revealed the virtual presence of racism in almost every discourse of life and its emergence in the form of Islamophobia due to its power of scavenging in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. A systematic review revealed that racist ideologies based on cultural differences existed long before 20th century; religion was an integral coming of age part.

Thus, 'ethnic affairs policies' imply the progression of 'existing patterns of racism' in western societies. 'Racial purity' is the main objective behind each controversy. A shift from overt to covert racism and transition from 'anti Asian and anti-Arabs' to 'anti-Muslim racism' signified an entire process of racialization developing a thorough understanding of racism. 'To stop being Muslim' has

become the survival strategy and a mainstream American deliberation. In fact religion is harmonized and enclosed in a crucial contour when developed into the practical equivalent of 'race'.

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