

Manijeh Daneshpour & Iman Dadras
Alliant International University
mdaneshpour@alliant.edu
Iman.Dadras@alliant.edu

- Definition of Islamophobia: It is a neologism first coined in the 1990s to refer to global perceptions of Islam in negative and pejorative terms and to discrimination against Muslims for reasons of racial hatred and prejudices.
- In this view Islam is perceived as
 - a monolithic block
 - static and unresponsive to change
 - it is viewed as separate and “other”
 - it does not have values in common with other cultures
 - is not affected by other cultures and does not influence other cultures
 - is seen as inferior to the West
 - it is considered barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist
 - Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a “clash of civilizations.”
- The dichotomy between “Islam” and the “West” started when Europe had to reconcile the ideas of the Enlightenment with seeking to colonize the outside world. European colonial thought felt that it had to provide moral and ethical justification for the political domination and economic exploitation of other nations. They created a duality between “civilization” and “barbarism,” the concept of race and the principle of European cultural superiority over “other cultures.” Colonialism became a moral obligation and a historical mission that sought to civilize “wild” or backward peoples at the same time that it denied nations any capacity to evolve and progress. Consequently, there was a tendency to consider that the concepts of progress, dynamism and modernization were values inherent in European culture that had to be universally imitated.
- The best Muslim is one that visibly ceases to be one, hence the tendency to distinguish between “good Muslims” and “bad Muslims.”
- Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices against Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society. Anti- Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.
- Discrimination and contempt for the culture and identity of a people are the perfect breeding ground for hatred and radicalization.