

Report for ASMCF: Islamophobia beyond borders workshop, University of Aberdeen, 22-24 July 2024.

Following a highly successful one day conference at King's College London in May 2024 (co-organised by Nadia Kiwan and Jim Wolfreys) the University of Aberdeen hosted an interdisciplinary workshop at the Sir Duncan Rice Library on the theme of *Islamophobia beyond borders* from 22-24 July. The workshop's main objectives were to bring together academics and civil society stakeholders to consider the different forms and impacts of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism across France, England and Scotland. The rationale for the workshop was to move beyond methodological nationalism characteristic of much Islamophobia research and furthermore, to ensure that the complexity of the question was captured through interdisciplinary discussion. As such, the workshop brought together scholars from French and Francophone Studies, Comparative Literature, Geography, History, Sociology, Politics, as well as representatives from civil society organisations and the arts sector across England, France and Scotland.

Please see the attached programme for detailed abstracts regarding the programme. All sessions were open to the university and local community with the final two panels being closed to speakers to allow them to discuss plans for a grant application, impact pathways and publications. All panels generated high quality discussions and the length of the workshop (2.5 days) allowed for in-depth intellectual exchange and networking amongst academics and external stakeholders at all career stages.

Outcomes of the workshop

- The workshop was successful in establishing a cross-national and interdisciplinary network of scholars which will now work together to submit an AHRC Curiosity Grant in Round 6 (January 2025), to be submitted by Kiwan as PI. This grant application will involve UK co-leads, an international co-lead, and non-academic partners in order to build momentum and resource for the network, as it looks to apply for more ambitious European level funding in future years.
- A number of workshop speakers have agreed to contribute to a volume co-edited on Islamophobia by Kiwan and Wolfreys (commissioned by Bristol University Press) to be published in 2027.
- **Link to social media post:**
https://x.com/UoA_LLMVC/status/1812774141247787401

We are grateful for the generous support of the University of Aberdeen Grants Academy, the ASMCF, the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, and the Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and the Rule of Law.

Nadia Kiwan and Jim Wolfreys

29 August 2024.



Islamophobia Beyond Borders Workshop

Monday 22nd to Wednesday 24th July 2024

Sir Duncan Rice Library, Old Aberdeen

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Islamophobia Beyond Borders Workshop

Monday 22 July

Lower Ground Floor Seminar Room, The Sir Duncan Rice Library

1.30- 3pm Welcome – Nadia Kiwan, University of Aberdeen and Jim Wolfreys, Kings College London

Panel 1: Electoral Myth-making and the Mainstreaming of Racism

Ibrahim Bechrouri, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, USA : "La gauche française sera antiraciste ou ne sera pas: the impossibility of a New Popular Front" ?

In order to defeat the far right and "Macronie" in the snap parliamentary elections called for late June and early July 2024, the *Nouveau Front Populaire* (New Popular Front) was hastily formed on June 10 as a political coalition uniting the main French left-wing parties, supported by various unions, media outlets, and civil society organizations. Ironically, this union of leftist forces highlighted a number of fault lines within the French left that are preventing, for better or worse, the formation of a big tent party, as exists in the UK and US. These rifts are not only evident between the dominant political parties but also within them, where conflicting political views clash, particularly on addressing issues of racism, Islamophobia, and antisemitism. This contribution will offer an analysis of the way in which the narratives of Islamo-leftism, on the one hand, and Islamophobia, on the other, structure the French left and its relationship to Islam, Muslims, and anti-racism. The goal is to highlight the broader fractures between the racist and anti-racist left, as well as the subtler divisions hindering the emergence of a solid anti-racist mainstream position within the French left. Special attention will be given to the dominant left-wing political parties (*Parti communiste français, La France insoumise, Europe Écologie Les Verts* and *Parti socialiste*) as well as leftist media, with an emphasis on *Mediapart*, which often positions itself as the arbiter (or "*juge de paix*") of progressive forces in France.

Mame Fatou-Niang, Carnegie Mellon University, USA: 'Gaza, the 2024 snap elections and the frenchification of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism'

In this communication, I will offer a first-person account of the days following the (not so surprising) French far right historical score at the 2024 European elections, and Macron's shocking announcement of a snap vote after his party was all but obliterated. I am a seventh-generation French and Muslim woman who has witnessed the rise of anti-Muslim hate in contemporary France, from the 1989 veil affairs to the afterlives of the 2015 attacks. I will speak here about the particular flavour of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments that permeate the current campaign trail, a moment marked by the removal of the vulgar stigma often associated in France with gross display of racism. In the context of the genocide in Gaza and in a country where the Left is now considered the far right, and where the far right has been "normalized," anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hate have become the main driver of politics in France.

Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, Kings College London, UK (online): ‘Dire prophecies: Race and conspiracism in the history of Islamophobia’

This paper critically interrogates the genealogies of racialised conspiracy theories targeting Muslims and theorises their role in the racialisation process. It foregrounds the entanglements with antisemitic conspiracism through an inclusive, diachronic lens. Nineteenth-century discourses racialised Jews as inherently disloyal, alleging their manipulation of finance and media for global domination. Simultaneously, Muslims were constructed as fanatical adversaries to European colonialism, generating anxieties about the potential demise of White Supremacy.

The paper connects these historical narratives to contemporary constructs like Islamisation, Eurabia, and the Great Replacement, which fantasise the West being overwhelmed by Muslim demographics and Islamisation instincts. Beyond mere historical context, these theories are posited as central to the racialisation process, ascribing immutable, inherited traits to Muslims, framing them as existential threats to Western civilisation. The paper argues that racialised conspiracy theories underpin and rationalise systemic Islamophobia, in addition to legitimising terroristic violence in the name of civilisational self-defence. It contributes a theoretical model situating racialised conspiracy thinking within the matrix of structural inequality and racial violence.

3- 3.30pm Coffee break

3.30-5.00pm Panel 2: States of exception? Model minorities, model societies and Islamophobia

Zara Mohamed, Secretary-General, Muslim Council of Britain and Dr Shahzad Amin, Assistant Secretary-General, Muslim Council of Britain: ‘Impacts and Manifestations of Islamophobia’

Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University, UK: ‘Scottish exceptionalism and Islamophobia’

When it comes to the topics of racism and Islamophobia in Scotland, there is a strong tendency to deflect, displace and disengage from addressing these directly. This is often based on claims that Scottish people are warm and friendly, that racism is more of an issue south of the border, or that the serious issue is the divide between Catholics and Protestants. Although there is this strong discourse of Scottish exceptionalism, several decades of research have been carried out on racism - and more recently on Islamophobia - in Scotland including on topics such as racism and housing, health, youth experiences, political engagement, and rural racism. Some contest the presence of Scottish exceptionalism pointing to specific policy initiatives over the years such as One Scotland, Many Cultures, or the current Race Equality Action Plan (2016-2030). (Continued)

Yet, many commentators still point to the lack of specific attention given to addressing racism and the need for a bolder commitment in this area. I consider some of the challenges around addressing Scottish exceptionalism and draw upon my experience in leading the inquiry into Islamophobia that was conducted through the Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia in the Scottish Parliament. I critically reflect on the response to the inquiry recommendations and the ways in which Scottish exceptionalism is playing out amongst politicians, policy makers, and amongst engaged Scottish Muslims.

Sajid Varda, Director of Muslim International Film Festival, London: 'Reflections on the inaugural edition of the Festival' (online)

Tuesday 23 July, Lower Ground Floor Seminar Room, The Sir Duncan Rice Library,

Panel 3: 9.00-11am Gendered Islamophobia

Amina Easat-Daas, De Montfort University, UK: 'Islamophobia, Gender and the Left in the UK and France'

In the wake of the recent elections both in France and across the UK this paper examines the evolving role of the intersections of gender, Islamophobia and the left in the UK and France. Typically, the left has been seen to rely on ethnic minority voters to secure seats, particularly in constituencies where ethnic minorities, including Muslims, are numerous and thus carry the potential to swing seats and change overall political outcomes. This reliance or assumption of ethnic minority support at the polls has a longstanding presence in both the UK and France.

However, growing and globalising Islamophobia increasingly disrupts the links between the left and Muslim voters. Arguably, this unsettling has been borne out in the recent elections, with the UK Labour party losing former strongholds to independent candidates, the rise of Reform UK and the continual growth of Rassemblment National.

This disruption can be loosely categorised along the fault lines of gender, presumed ideological and cultural differences, securitisation and foreign policy in both the UK and France. Drawing on my previous published work around laïcité and its centrality to gendered Islamophobia in France alongside the apparent feminist paradoxes therein, my contribution will explore this in relation to current and ongoing political developments vis-à-vis Muslim voters and the left in both France and the UK. The paper will also bring into focus and problematise the politicisation of Islamo-gauchisme and evocations of Critical Race Theory in The Commons, along with consideration of voter alienation brought about by current left-wing positions in terms of securitisation and foreign policy with a final view to question the implications of these on UK and French politics in future years.

Hanane Karimi, University of Strasbourg, France: ‘Gendered islamophobia as an indicator of the French hegemonic order’

The policy of the new secularism (*la nouvelle laïcité*) encompasses the introduction of laws, bills and regulations aimed at excluding the Muslim ‘enemy’ and Muslim women who wear headscarves, from the public arena, while consolidating the notion of a ‘Muslim public problem’. This policy has been in existence since the passing of the law banning the wearing of religious symbols and clothing in public schools on 15 March 2004. It identifies Muslim women who wear headscarves as rebels against the Republican order and enemies of Republican values. The 2015 attacks in France led to increased securitisation and criminalisation of Muslims, and the 2021 law consolidating the principles of the Republic illustrates well this suspicion-based politics. An analysis of the politics of the new secularism and the arguments justifying the discrimination and exclusion of women who wear headscarves reveals the hegemony of the categories at work. Designated as heretics to the hegemonic order, Muslim women expose a Republican order built on racialised hierarchies, based on belonging and appearance; and a gender-based hierarchy of femininities. This explains why they are excluded from universalist feminist struggles and alienated from hegemonic femininity. The confrontation between two representations of femininity assigns Muslim women who wear the headscarf to a paradoxical femininity in which the terms of femonationalism are explicit. This categorisation is revelatory of the sexist and racist foundations at work in a Republican order that acts as a white, neoliberal and capitalist hegemony.

Assadiallo Doucoure, Sarah Zouak, and Assma Lbaze, Lallab: ‘Lallab: a history of feminist and anti-racist resistance and political organization by Muslim women in France’

Lallab is a feminist and anti-racist organization in France created in 2015 that defends women’s rights by empowering Muslim women to become active stakeholders in the improvement of their political and social power. As a group founded and led by Muslim women, Lallab understands the importance of building individual and collective power. The organization works to understand the various and diverse histories and social, political, and cultural contexts impacting Muslim women in France in order to share and create knowledge, foster resilience, and build cross-movement support. Lallab's structured work enables the organization to reclaim ownership of its own narratives, influence the way institutions address discriminations against its members and other marginalized groups, and mobilize its members and allies to work together to demand and obtain systemic change in the name of a more just society for all. Their struggle is a political and collective response to the patriarchal, racist, colonial, and capitalist system, rooted in the history and legacies of feminist and Muslim women who have fought for emancipation and liberation, thereby making significant contributions to the development of feminist thought worldwide.

Nadia Kiwan, University of Aberdeen, UK: ‘Paris 2024: Femonationalism comes home to the Paris Olympics’

In this paper, I will critically examine how femonationalism has led to the exclusion of French athletes who wear the hijab from competing the national Olympic team. Beyond their removal from the French national sporting community, the hijab ban on French Muslim athletes has also removed the opportunity to be part of a transnational community within the Olympic village, where female athletes from other countries are allowed to wear hijab. The ban on hijabs for Muslim sportswomen has led to international outcry, with condemnation from organisations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and is the latest and high-profile illustration of the ways in which French Muslim sportswomen are marginalised in both elite and amateur level sports across a range of disciplines from basketball, badminton, volleyball, judo and football. In this paper, I will therefore reflect on the French government’s discriminatory practices in the name of gender equality but will also consider spaces of resistance to such patterns of exclusion, via a case-study of the group known as *Les Hijabeuses*, a social movement of female football players who wear the hijab and who have been campaigning for the right to compete in official French Federation matches. The *Hijabeuses* have not only set up their own parallel games - *Les Jeux des Hijabeuses* - but have been able to mobilise support transnationally, including from global sports brands, thus challenging femonationalist Islamophobia from both within the nation and beyond it.

Coffee Break 11-11.30am

Panel 4: 11.30 – 1pm Genealogies of Islamophobia

Nasar Meer, University of Glasgow, UK: ‘Islam, Modernity and ‘what went wrong’ in Hegel, Weber and Gellner’

The relationship between Islam and modernity continues to rely upon an underlying frame in which Christianity is a secularised reference point for European advance. Hegel, Weber and Gellner are in particular three very different proponents of the view that formative periods of Islam locate it ‘in a mould from which it cannot escape’ (Zubaida, 1995: 153). The tempting step therefore is to reverse the telescope and re-read the colonial modern through long standing intellectual developments within Islamic thought, and specifically the endogenous forms of thinking that relocate the dynamic within the purview of Muslim scholarship. I will argue that while this is a necessary move, it is also one that invites its own intellectual hazards, and raises particular challenges for the Sociology of Religion in particular.

Salman Sayyid, University of Leeds, UK: ‘Europeanness and the Last Human’

Methodological nationalism interdicts attempts to understand Islamophobia. It does this by mapping social relations onto nation-state boundaries, thereby reducing societies to nations. Islamophobia has been identified as a transnational phenomenon since at least 2008, but methodologies that take nations as containers of social phenomena continue to hinder any insights from global perspectives. This brings with it a range of conceptual investments, as the nation-state is not only a socio-economic object but also an epistemological project. Methodological nationalism is a marker of existing and aspiring nation-states, flags, and football teams. (Continued)

The dominance of methodological nationalism in social sciences owes much to the collapse of historical materialism, which once aimed to relativise what used to be called "bourgeois science." The remnants of Marxist-inspired analytics can still be found in the field of Islamophobia Studies, (often in decaffeinated form), where Islamophobia appears as epiphenomenal to the workings of barely examined capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism. Viewing Islamophobia merely as an instrument for advancing domination by covert agencies impedes understanding it beyond the surface effect of other, more fundamental processes and positions.

The critique of methodological nationalism suggests the formulation of 'connected histories' and 'connected sociologies' as alternative approaches. These formulations, however, tend to underestimate the extent of the methodological nationalism toolkit by overlooking its epistemological foundation: Europeanness. Methodological nationalism is a product of Europe's development as an episteme. It is difficult to mention Europe without invoking its constitutive outside: the Orient. In the current context, what could be more Oriental than Islam, and what could be more contentious than Islamophobia among the family of racialised governmentalities? The category of religion is as much a part of methodological nationalism as nation, government, society, culture, and language. Islamophobia, from micro-aggressions to genocide, presents not only a social and geopolitical challenge but also a theoretical challenge, for it marks the boundary of the post-Western — its calamities and possibilities.

AbdoolKarim Vakil, Kings College London, UK: 'Flatland Islamophobia'

Why compare three national contexts when we are trying to get away from methodological nationalism? Why, how, and when they matter depends on what we are trying to do, analytically, interpretatively, politically. For the purposes of our discussions towards conceiving a network, its object and tasks, my intervention proposes three lines of consideration. First, that we proceed from some of the dimensions of Islamophobia and their levels of articulation, global, transnational and local, to the identification of contexts (and their diverse scales, territorial, virtual, discursive, organisational). Albeit that the logics of the State, the national, and the Global War on Terror preponderate, Islamophobia is scalarly always nested. Second, and relatedly, that since Islamophobia is palimpsestic, historicist, and always in translation, its logics, including the framings of 'religion' and 'secularism', refer as much to the colonial, Eurocentrism and geopolitics as to the nation. Third, the remaking of the world that naming, researching, mobilising against and combating Islamophobia entails, epistemologically and politically, demands as much reflection on and mapping of network as of context.

**Panel 5: 2 - 3.30pm Julien Talpin, University of Lille, France: UK
Book Launch of *La France, tu l'aimes mais tu la quittes* (Esteves,
Picard, Talpin, Paris: Seuil 2024)**

'Leaving France to flee islamophobia? How French Muslims avoid stigmatization once abroad'

What can the exile of French Muslims tell us about global Islamophobia? Based on our quantitative and qualitative survey of upper-class French Muslims who have moved abroad, I try to explore the transnational experience of islamophobia. While our interviewees left France mostly to flee the direct and indirect experience of islamophobia, they express a relative immunity to the various forms of discrimination and stigmatization once abroad. It is in particular the case for those who landed in the UK, while we know islamophobia is a global phenomenon, also affecting England or Scotland for instance. I'll show that is due to both class and race factors. On the one hand, expatriation often leads to upward class mobility, that leads to minimize the confrontation to and the opinion on the spread of islamophobia abroad. On the other, the texture of islamophobia is linked to the specific national colonial and postcolonial histories. As a consequence, French Muslims are not necessarily targeted by islamophobia abroad, being more external to the specific historical nexus that shapes racialization processes. Put it simply, French Muslims are not associated to the main target of islamophobia in the UK that are mostly from the Indian peninsula, leading them to want to settle abroad and to minimize the diffusion of islamophobia. This research is based on the analysis of a questionnaire (n=1070) and semi-structured interviews (n=139) with French Muslims living abroad, and in particular the sub-sample of those who landed in the UK.

3.30-3.45 Coffee break

**Panel 6: 3.45-5.45pm Patterns of Islamophobia in Contemporary
France**

Fraser McQueen – University of Bristol, UK: 'Literature and the Mainstreaming of Islamophobia'

While attempting to measure the political 'impact' of cultural production is notoriously difficult, there is reason to believe that novels have contributed to mainstreaming Islamophobia in France. A tradition of what I call 'literary great replacements', meaning novels depicting the so-called 'Islamisation' of France, can be traced to at least the late nineteenth century. One of the most famous novels depicting the racist fantasy of 'race replacement', Jean Raspail's *Le Camp des saints* (1973), has cult popularity among both a French and international far right. Indeed, some of Éric Zemmour's earliest publications were novels. Renaud Camus, who coined the term 'le grand remplacement', made his name as a novelist. Vincent Berthelier has demonstrated that Camus's written style, which has over time evinced an increasing fixation with maintaining the linguistic 'purity' of the French language, is indissociable from his obsession with a putative racial 'purity'. (Continued)

Michel Houellebecq's *Soumission* (2015) provides a case study of how the prestige associated with French literary fiction can lend mainstream credibility to racist discourses. *Soumission* depicts the so-called 'Islamisation' of France. However, its narrator describes this, in some respects, as a positive outcome. Despite Houellebecq's history of Islamophobic comments, several reviewers therefore accepted the author's claim that his novel should not be labelled Islamophobic: a reading that only holds if one accepts that a majority of French Muslims would support a so-called 'great replacement'. Houellebecq's novel thus, even if only temporarily and within the confines of literary criticism, normalized the idea that it is reasonable to project such an outcome, implying that such claims only become Islamophobic when presented as harmful to France. While the long-term impact of this discursive shift is difficult to measure, *Soumission* thus provides a case study of literature shifting the boundaries of the 'sayable', helping to further normalize Islamophobia in France.

Kawtar Najib, University of Liverpool, UK: 'From Global Islamophobia to the criminalization of spaces of resistance in France'

Islamophobia is a global phenomenon that can be observed in various parts of the world. The spread of this form of racism – more than open and normalized – is impressive and *glocalized* in the sense that it projects a reality connecting the macro-space of the globe to the micro-space of the body. Indeed, Islamophobia is a spatialized phenomenon demonstrating that global Islamophobia impacts the everyday lives of local Muslims living in a specific context. In France, it also describes a multi-dimensional process since it affects all sectors and places (be it education, workplace, politics, media, justice system, the street, etc.). This country has become an extreme example after crossing many red lines as evidence by significant abusive closures, repressions, intimidations and expulsions. Islamophobia is not only accepted and legitimized in France; it is also legalized as it is legally enshrined in anti-Muslim laws (anti-hijab, anti-niqab, anti-separatism, etc.). French-style Islamophobia is mainly state-run, and therefore any attempt to combat it is incriminated or even destroyed, to the point that we can wonder what spaces against Islamophobia remain in France.

Jim Wolfreys, Kings College London, UK: 'Shibboleths of Frenchness'

This paper examines the role of *laïcité* in the escalation of Islamophobic reaction in twenty-first century France. Following Jacques Chirac's 2002 presidential victory, Republican secularism was recalibrated as a cornerstone of a radicalising mainstream right. This, in turn, allowed the Rassemblement National to exert an influence in repurposing *laïcité* as an element in the 'civilisational conflict' threatening the West. Like the Prevent agenda in Britain, *laïcité* has been used to create public compliance with discriminatory processes. But it has proven more effective than Prevent as a means of identifying 'values' that establish the nation state as both the source and the judge of the public good, values that may also be deployed to distinguish between those who demonstrate fidelity to the nation and those who are unable or unwilling to do so and must therefore be excluded. The radicalisation of *laïcité* along reactionary lines has prompted many to argue that its 'true', progressive meaning has been obscured and needs to be retrieved. (Continued)

Such accounts tend to forget some of *laïcité*'s basic features, notably its role in bolstering the authority of the state as the producer of religious subjects and the final arbiter of the meaning of signs, and the part played by colonial conquest in shaping the forms taken by *laïcité* in metropolitan France. The analysis developed here is based on an understanding of *laïcité* as a set of processes and values that has never been characterised by 'neutrality', an understanding that helps illuminate its role in shaping authoritarian trajectories in contemporary French politics.

Asim Qureshi, CAGE International: A Tale of Two Islamophobias: The necromancy of colonial racisms in the UK and France

The relationship between Muslims under the British empire and the colonial rule of France produced specific relationships with the colonial metropole that established a pattern of behaviour that exists in a continuity to the present day. France's centralised attempt to assimilate its Muslim population into its own violent emphasis on laicite has produced assaults on any manifestation of Islam that is considered to be outside of what is acceptable French identity. Concurrently, the UK has taken a somewhat different approach, attempting instead to own the space of what is considered to be acceptable Islam by controlling its manifestations the institutions of state - either by denying them access, or through regulatory bodies and policies. While the approaches might be somewhat dissimilar in the way are conceived and operationally deployed, they both ultimately treat Muslims as a security risk from the inside - and thus attempt to mimic the same colonial control they once exercised in the corners of the Muslim world.

Wednesday 24 July, Lower Ground Floor Seminar Room, The Sir Duncan Rice Library,

**Panel 7: 9.30-11am Workshop Conclusions and Next Steps:
Islamophobia Research Network Grant Application**

Workshop participant round table with Sabine Freitag, Aberdeen Grants Academy: AHRC Curiosity Grant Application Planning

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

Panel 8: Future Events and Publication Plans (all workshop participants)

Speaker Biographies:

Ibrahim Bechrouri is a scholar, writer and activist whose academic interests center around terrorism, counterterrorism, policing, colonialism, surveillance, race, and Islamophobia. His doctoral dissertation, completed at Paris 8 University and supported by Columbia University, examined the New York Police Department's counterterrorism policies, their impact on targeted communities, and the resistance strategies they deployed against surveillance and over-policing. Dr. Bechrouri currently teaches at the City University of New York where he hopes to inspire and guide students to become critical thinkers and change-makers in their own right.

Assadiallo Doucoure defines herself as a Woman, Black, Muslim, French, Malian, Soninke and from the "Banlieue" (Banlieusarde in french). After studying sociology and discovering several professional worlds, she decided to take a break from her professional career in order to heal and repair the wounds caused by the violence of the salaried working world. In 2023, she took part in the "Echoïques" artistic project, directed by Mame-Fatou Niang, whose aim was to explore the role of sounds, noises and silences in the creation of memorial fabrics. Today, she is co-president of a feminist and anti-racist association, Lallab, whose aim is to make the voices of Muslim women heard and to defend their rights.

Amina Easat-Daas is a Senior Lecturer in Politics at De Montfort University. Her recent publications include the co-edited *Palgrave Handbook of Gendered Islamophobia* (2024) her monograph *Muslim Women's Political Participation in France and Belgium* (2020) and the edited volume *Countering Islamophobia in Europe* (2019). Dr Easat-Daas' wider research interests include the study of French and Belgian politics, Islam and Muslimness in France and Belgium, gendered Islamophobia and the use of the arts in countering Islamophobia in Europe.

Hanane Karimi is Assistant Professor in the Sociology of Islam at the University of Strasbourg (France). She is the Co-holder of the "Freedom of Expression, Religious Beliefs and Identities" axis of the Franco-Quebec Collective Research Chair on Freedom of Expression. Her research focuses on the impacts of islamophobia on French Muslim women in France. She analyses the collective mobilisation regarding the extension of religious neutrality, new *laïcité*. She is the author of " Les femmes musulmanes ne sont-elles pas des femmes?" (Are Muslim women not women?) (Hors d'Atteinte, 2023) and several articles in english: "Overview: Islam and Feminism: Europe" in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, XVIII, 2022; "Constructing the Otherness of Jews and Muslims in France" in *Annual Review of the sociology of Religion*, 13, 2022 and "The Hijab and Work: Female Entrepreneurship in Response to Islamophobia" in *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* , 31(3), 2018.

Nadia Kiwan is Professor of Francophone studies at the University of Aberdeen, UK and founding Director of the Centre for Modern Languages Research. Her research interests focus on European governmental and media discourses about postcolonial migration, secularism, Islam, 'border control', as well the contestation of such discourses, via transnational, and intersectional social movements. She is author of *Identities, Discourses and Experiences: Young People of North African Origin in Contemporary France* (2009); *Cultural Globalization and Music: African Artists in Transnational Networks* (with Ulrike H. Meinhof, 2011); *Secularism, Islam and Public Intellectuals in Contemporary France* (2022) and co-editor with Jim Wolfreys of 'Islamophobia in France', *Modern and Contemporary France* (vol. 31, no. 2, 2023)

Assma Lbaze is the co-president of Lallab

Fraser McQueen is a Lecturer in French Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Bristol. He completed his PhD, entitled 'Race, Religion, and Communities of Friendship: Contemporary French Islamophobia in Literature and Film' in November 2021. It explores Islamophobia and community in contemporary France through a corpus of twelve literary and filmic texts. Fraser's research to date has focused on Islamophobia and community in France, and on how debates around both have been refracted through literature and film. In his more recent work, he has explored the novels of the French far right; the mainstreaming of far-right conspiracy theories in France; ecofascism; the racialisation of discourses around geographical inequalities; and the work of Michel Houellebecq. A common thread in all of these apparently diverse interests is an interest in postcolonial and decolonial studies, and in the difficulties both have had in being recognised as legitimate fields of research in France (whether in the academy or public discourse).

Nasar Meer is Professor of Social & Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow. He was co-investigator of *The Impacts of the Pandemic on Ethnic and Racialized Groups in the UK* (UKRI, 2021-2023) and principal investigator of the *Governance and Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's Refugees* (GLIMER) (JPI ERA Net / Horizon-2020), a Commissioner on the Royal Society of Edinburgh's (2020-2021) Post-COVID-19 Futures Inquiry and a Member of the Scottish Government COVID-19 and Ethnicity Expert Reference Group. He is an elected Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences (FACSS), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (FRSE), and Trustee of the Stuart Hall Foundation. He is currently co-Editor of *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*; co-Editor of *21st Century Standpoints* (BSA and Policy Press) and co-Editor of *Palgrave Politics of Identity and Citizenship Series* (PPICS).

Zara Mohammed is a Master's graduate in Human Rights Law and a Training and Development Consultant. She was elected the first female, first Scot and youngest Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain in February 2021. She is passionate about community change, empowering young people, and improving diversity and inclusion both within her communities and beyond. Since her election Zara has spoken on key issues impacting British Muslims across mainstream media and publications, she was a keynote speaker at the G20 interfaith summit and was featured in Vogue's 25 most influential women in the UK. @ZaraM01

Mame-Fatou Niang is an Associate Professor of French and Francophone studies, the author of *Identités Françaises* (Brill, 2019), the co-author of *Universalisme* (Anamosa, 2022) and the founder and director of the Center for Black European Studies and the Atlantic. She conducts research on economies of the living/living economy, Blackness in Contemporary France and French Universalism. She is an artist-in-residence at the Ateliers Médicis in Paris, working on a project entitled “Échoïques” (Sounds of Silence), a sound tapestry presented in June 2023 at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. In 2015, she co-directed *Mariannes Noires: Mosaïques Afropéennes* with Kaytie Nielsen. The film follows seven Afro-French women as they investigate the pieces of their mosaic identities and unravel what it means to be Black and French in France. In 2021, Mame-Fatou Niang served as the Melodia Jones Distinguished Chair of French Studies at University at Buffalo. She has collaborated with Slate, Jacobin and several news outlets in France. She is currently working on a manuscript tentatively titled *Mosaica Nigra: Blackness in 21st-century France*.

Kawtar Najib is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Liverpool (England). Her research interests centre on the geographies of inequality and discrimination using both quantitative and qualitative methods. She explores more broadly issues of social and spatial justice, and her research expertise focuses on Islamophobia and its spatialization. She is the author of the book ‘Spatialized Islamophobia’ (published in 2021 by Routledge) which brings increased recognition of ‘Geography’ and ‘Space’ in Islamophobia Studies. Previously, she was a Marie Curie Fellow at Newcastle University where she was the principal researcher of the SAMA project (Spaces of Anti-Muslim Acts in Paris and London, funded by the European Commission). She grew up in France where she obtained her PhD on residential segregation in urban neighborhoods.

Dr Asim Qureshi graduated in Law (LLB Hons, LLM), specialising in International Law and Islamic Law. He completed his Ph.D. in International Conflict Analysis from the University of Kent. He is the Research Director at the advocacy group CAGE, and since 2003 has specialised in investigating the impact of counterterrorism practices worldwide. He has published a wide range of NGO reports, academic journals and articles. He has written the books *Rules of the Game: Detention, Deportation, Disappearance* (Hurst, Columbia UP, 2009); *A Virtue of Disobedience* (Unbound, 2019); the editor of *I Refuse to Condemn: Resisting Racism in Times of National Security* (Manchester UP, 2020) and *When Only God Can See: The Faith of Muslim Political Prisoners* (Pluto, 2024). Since 2009, he has been advising legal teams involved in defending terrorism trials in the US and at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Salman Sayyid is based at the University of Leeds and holds a Chair in Decolonial Thought and Social Theory. Sayyid has held academic positions in London, Manchester, and Adelaide. His research and publications focus on rhetoric, racism and historical sociologies. His work has been translated into over a dozen languages. Some of his major publications include *A Fundamental Fear* (a book that, despite being banned by the Malaysian government, is now in its third edition), *Thinking Through Islamophobia* (co-edited with Abdoolkarim Vakil), and *Recalling The Caliphate*. He is the founding editor of the interdisciplinary academic journal: *ReOrient*.

Julien Talpin is Director of Research in political science at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), at the University of Lille. His research deals with the experience of racialisation and mobilisations among French racial and religious minorities. He has recently published *La France tu l'aimes mais tu la quittes. Enquêtes sur la diaspora française musulmane* (Seuil, 2024). He is one of the co-editor of the special issue of *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 'Fighting discrimination in a hostile political environment : the case of France' (46/4, 2023).

Jim Wolfreys is Reader in French and European Politics at King's College London. His research interests include the history of French fascism and the development of an Islamophobic political culture in contemporary France. He has also written about political corruption, social movements and the historiography of the French revolution. His publications include *The Politics of Racism in France* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), with Peter Fysh, *History and Revolution* (Verso, 2007), with Mike Haynes, and *Republic of Islamophobia: The Rise of Respectable Racism in France*, (Hurst/Oxford University Press, 2018). He is co-editor, with Nadia Kiwan, of a 2023 special issue of *Modern and Contemporary France on Islamophobia in France*.

AbdoolKarim Vakil is lecturer in History and Portuguese studies in the departments of History and of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at King's College London. He is a member of the editorial board of *ReOrient: Journal of Critical Muslim Studies*, and of the board of IISRA, International Islamophobia Studies and Research Association. AbdoolKarim is a past chair of the Muslim Council of Britain's Research and Documentation Committee, and former academic advisor to the Muslim Community of Lisbon, Portugal. His publications include the co-edited and co-authored volumes *Thinking Through Islamophobia: Global Perspectives* (2010), *Moçambique: Memória Falada do Islão e da Guerra* (2011), *Al-Andalus in Motion: Travelling Concepts and Cross-Cultural Contexts* (2021); and most recently, the chapters 'The Grammar of Islamophobia' in Salman al-Azami ed., *Media Language on Islam and Muslims: Terminology and Effects* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); and 'Critical Muslim Studies and the Remaking of the (Ancient) World', in Mathura Umachandran and Chella Ward eds., *Critical Ancient World Studies: The Case for Forgetting Classics* (2024) all with S. Sayyid.

Sajid Varda is a British actor, producer, writer and broadcaster with over three decades of industry experience. As Founder / CEO of UK Muslim Film, Sajid founded the charity to combat harmful stereotypes, foster inclusivity and create opportunities for underrepresented talent in the creative industries. He is also the Festival Director of the acclaimed Muslim International Film Festival which launched in May 2024 at London's Leicester Square, aimed at championing diverse and authentic storytelling from around the world. Sajid has contributed as a story consultant to major international film and TV productions, specifically aiming to influence representations of faith and culture. Most recently, he worked on "Ghostbusters - Frozen Empire." Through his production company Rendition Films, his credits include the award-winning US feature film "The Tiger Hunter", British comedy "The Chop" which garnered over 54 international awards and 'MUNA' a co-production with BBC Film. He has played lead roles in both drama and comedy on film and TV. Sajid has served as a jury member including Raindance and BAFTA. He is currently the co-chair of the BFI Screen Advisory Group and a full voting member of BAFTA.

Reza Zia-Ebrahimi is a historian of nationalism and race. His current research analyses the modalities of racialisation of Jews and Muslims in the Western apparatus of representations; and highlights the connection between conspiracy thinking and racism. More broadly, his work aims to retrieve the many points of contact between the histories of antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism, which have been ignored, or deliberately obscured.

Sarah Zouak is a French and Moroccan feminist and anti-racist activist, community organizer, and documentary filmmaker. She is also a mother. Since 2015, she has been the co-founder and director of the feminist and anti-racist association Lallab, which amplifies the voices and defends the rights of Muslim women in France. She is also the founder and director of the Women SenseTour in Muslim Countries, a documentary series that meets 25 Muslim women who combine their commitment to the emancipation of women and girls with their faith in Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Iran, and Indonesia. Sarah Zouak holds a Master's degree in Management from the ESCM business school and a second Master's degree in International Relations and International Program Management from IRIS. She is also a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School in Cambridge (United States) in "Leadership, Organizing, and Action: Leading Change." Sarah has received numerous awards and fellowships for her commitment, including Ashoka Fellow (2021), Top 35 Young Positive Leaders by les Echos (2022) or "Déclic Jeunes" Prize by the Fondation de France.

With thanks to the University of Aberdeen Grants Academy, the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, and the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France for their generous support of this workshop.

