

Media Representations of Islam and Muslims

An international and interdisciplinary conference

Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France (19-20 juin 2018)

'Islamophobia' and 'race' are contested terms in contemporary political and media discourse around the world (Hajjat & Mohammed, 2013; Massoumi et al., 2017; Sayyid & Vakil, 2009). In the case of heated debates in France, for example, academic and/or antiracist arguments – themselves far from homogenous – struggle to be heard, and these terms are often censored more or less explicitly. The absence of official statistics on ethnic and religious diversity in France (Simon, 2008), which purportedly protects minorities from discrimination, also inadvertently makes invisible the social and cultural inequalities that nevertheless exist; and the constitutional establishment of France as a secular state that presupposes equality and freedom leads to problems for the recognition of difference in an increasingly multicultural society (Modood & Webner, 1997; Lentin & Titley, 2011), as well as tensions between the protected values of freedom of expression and freedom of religion (Alicino, 2015).

Similarly, in Francophone and Anglophone academic literature alike, there remains no clear consensus on the definition of either Islamophobia or racism, which, more often than not, continue to be studied separately. In contrast to the political and media rhetoric, however, academic research into these issues from a wide range of disciplines has revealed that systemic and structural discrimination is in fact as widespread in France as they are in other western countries, with non-white people suffering disproportionately in terms of unemployment (Wacquant, 2009), imprisonment (D. Fassin, 2011) and education (Keaton, 2006), while international NGOs (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) have repeatedly criticised the failure of successive French governments to independently investigate police violence and discrimination against ethnic minorities. Contrary to the clash of civilisations thesis and the emphasis on the need for Muslims to integrate and accommodate their religion or culture with 'republican' or 'western' values, studies on the everyday lives and personal opinions of Muslims in France and other European countries have cast doubt on the extent to which any such contradiction exists (Göle, 2015; Massoumi, 2015; Zerouala, 2015), while others have warned against the increasing sacralisation of laïcité as a civic religion (Roy, 2013) and the false dichotomy of anti-sexism and anti-racism when debating issues such as 'the veil' (Bouyahia et Sana, 2013; Delphy, 2008).

Increasingly, effort has been made to supplement research into the characteristics of Muslim people and religious, cultural or political identity, with more of an emphasis on Islamophobia as the result of political practices that disproportionately affect Muslim people (Massoumi et al., 2017), and to supplement quantitative research into diversity with qualitative research into the perception of discrimination (Dubet et al, 2013). Transcending the dominant focus on immigration and integration, and recognising the 'internal exclusion' of non-migrants (Balibar, 2007), as well as the role of religion as a site of cultural politics rather than an apolitical aspect of the private sphere (Fernando, 2014), some scholars have sought to shift attention away from the 'Muslim problem' and onto the 'republican problem' instead. That is, engaging with the inherent tensions and contradictions of the secular state, republican values and 'secular-republican power' (Fernando, 2014; see also Titley et al, 2017), rather than those of French Muslims and what they

eat or wear. Others have located the concept of Islamophobia and the social construction of the 'Muslim problem' in the long-term history of international migration and colonial racism (Bancel et al., 2015; Hajjat & Mohammed, 2013; Poinot et Weber, 2014). Recognising the complexity of the social construction of 'race' and citing discursive slippages between the figure of the 'Muslim', the 'Arab' and other terms, as well as the ways in which Muslims are perceived in racialised terms, some scholars (D. Fassin & E. Fassin, 2006; Mazouz, 2017) have discussed the phenomenon of 'racism without race', using the term *racialization* to emphasise the process whereby certain identities are socially constructed as 'other' and categorised hierarchically (du Bois, 1994; Fanon, 1967; D. Fassin, 2011; Gilroy, 1987; Miles, 1989; Murji & Solomos, 2005), and drawing on cultural and media studies approaches to reveal the ways in which 'race' intersects with gender and class (Anthias, 2012).

Such approaches have also been important sources for critiquing the role of the media in this process of racialization (Cervulle, 2013; Hall et al., 1978; Petley & R. Richardson, 2011; Poole & J. Richardson, 2006; Rabah, 1998; Said, 1997; Tevanian, 2005; 2006). But, as Hajjat & Mohammed (2013: 116) have argued, analyses of media representations, discourses and content (Bertault et al, 2009; Deltombe, 2005; Macé, 2009; Sian et al, 2013) need to be complemented by more sociological accounts of the conditions of media production and the routine practices of journalists, so as to understand the distance between the habitus of professional journalists and elites, on the one hand, and the 'popular classes' on the other, as well as the discrimination experienced by those from ethnic minority backgrounds working within the media industries themselves, and the economic and structural constraints of news agenda setting.

This conference aims to bring together researchers from a variety of disciplines (sociology, information-communication, history, law, media and cultural studies, etc.), from France and from abroad, as well as professionals from the media industry, to further debate and develop our understanding of the media's role in the construction of the 'Muslim problem' – in France and beyond. Because this is an international and interdisciplinary conference, we are keen to receive papers that foreground the contribution that international and interdisciplinary perspectives can bring, and that highlight the different sources, theoretical traditions, methodological approaches and epistemological questions that are raised by researchers working in different fields, so as to provide a reflexive and critical engagement with the efficacy and appropriateness of terms such as Islamophobia, and of hitherto privileged approaches to understanding such processes and practices. As such, papers that are comparative – that focus on such issues in other countries, or on similitudes with other racisms and processes of mediated exclusion – are welcome, as are those that offer historical perspectives on their evolution, and those that combine media analyses with sociological research, or an engagement with interdisciplinary or international literatures, are particularly encouraged. Generally, contributions are encouraged in, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Definitions of, and debates on, terms such as Islamophobia, racism/racialization, mediation/mediatization and media critique.
- Theoretical, methodological and inter/disciplinary approaches and traditions to critiquing media and racism (cultural studies; media studies; postcolonial studies; critical race theory; gender studies; intersectionality; sociology; history; law; international relations etc.)

- Analyses of media content or discourse; media law, policy and regulation; or media practice and journalism ethics.
- Moral panics, media events and controversies over the veil, burkinis, halal meat, school meals, Christmas crèches in public buildings, *Charlie Hebdo*.
- Ethnic diversity, inequality and discrimination in areas such as housing, employment, education, the criminal justice system.
- Liberalism, republicanism, communitarianism, multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism.
- Secularism/s, laïcité, recognition and difference.
- Colonialism, postcolonialism, nationalism, globalisation, terrorism or collective memory.
- 'Race', religion, religiosity, postsecularism, intersectionality and culture.
- Citizenship, rights, inclusion and exclusion.
- The balancing of freedom of expression with the freedom of religion; academic freedom; press freedom.
- Feminism, gender, class, intersectionality, and anti-sexism and/or anti-racism.

Proposals for papers should be sent to [Simon Dawes at \[simon.dawes@uvsq.fr\]\(mailto:simon.dawes@uvsq.fr\)](mailto:simon.dawes@uvsq.fr) by **Friday 16th February 2018. Decisions will be confirmed by **Friday 16th March 2018**. The conference will take place in **19-20 June 2018**.**

Keynote Speakers:

Floya Anthias, Marion Dalibert, Eric Fassin, Abdellali Hajjat, Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, Eric Macé, Narzanin Massoumi and Sarah Mazouz

Organising Committee:

Simon Dawes (CHCSC, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris Saclay, France)

Marion Dalibert (GERiiCO, Université Lille 3, France)

Eric Fassin (LEGS, CNRS / Université Paris-8 / Université Paris-Ouest, France)

Des Freedman (Goldsmiths, University of London, Royaume Uni)

Claire Gallien (IRCL, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, and CNRS, France / Columbia University, États-Unis)

Lise Guilhamon (CHCSC, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris Saclay, France)

Abdellali Hajjat (ISP, CNRS / Université Paris-Ouest, Nanterre, Paris Saclay, France)

Claire Joubert (TransCrit (EA 1569), Université Paris 8, France)

Gholam Khiabany (Goldsmiths, University of London, Royaume Uni)

Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison (CRLD, Université d'Evry-Val d'Essonne, Paris Saclay, France)

Nadia Marzouki (CNRS, France)

Sarah Mazouz (Institut für europäische Ethnologie, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Allemagne)

Marwan Mohammed (ERIS du CMH, CNRS, France)

Aurélien Mondon (University of Bath, Royaume Uni)

Géraldine Poels (CHCSC, Paris Saclay et Institut National Audiovisuel, France)

François Robinet (CHCSC, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris Saclay, France)

Gavan Titley (Maynooth University, Irlande / Helsinki University, Finlande)

Sponsors:

Centre d'histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines (CHCSC), Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (UVSQ), Paris Saclay

Centre for Global Media and Democracy, Goldsmiths, University of London, Royaume Uni

Institut des sciences sociales du politique (ISP, UMR 7220), Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre, Paris Saclay

« Mondialités Islamiques: Interfaces Francophones/Anglophones et Décolonialités » research programme: l'Institut de Recherche sur la Renaissance, l'âge Classique et les Lumières (IRCL, UMR 5186), Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III et l'Université Paris 8

"Poétique de l'étranger", TransCrit (EA 1569), Université Paris 8

RTP « Islams et Chercheurs dans la Cité », EHESS

References:

Alicino, F. (2015) 'Freedom of Expression, Laïcité and Islam in France: The Tension between Two Different (Universal) Perspectives', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, DOI: 10.1080/09596410.2015.1090105

Anthias, F. (2012) 'Hierarchies of social location, class and intersectionality: Towards a translocational frame', *International Sociology*, Vol 28, Issue 1, pp. 121 - 138

Badouard, R. (2016) 'Je ne suis pas Charlie': Pluralité des prises de parole sur le web et les réseaux sociaux' in P. Lefebure and C. Sécaïl (eds.) *Le défi Charlie: Les médias à l'épreuve des attentats*. Paris: Lemieux Éditeur.

Balibar, E. (2007) 'Uprising in the Banlieus', *Constellations* 14(1):47-71.

- Bancel, N., Pascal Blanchard, Ahmed Boubeker (2015) *Le Grand repli*. Paris, La Découverte.
- Bouyahia, M. et Sana, M.E. dir. (2013), *Polysémie du voile : Politiques et mobilisations postcoloniales*. Paris : Éditions des Archives Contemporaines.
- Cervulle, M. (2013) *Dans le blanc des yeux. Diversité, racisme et médias*. Paris, Amsterdam.
- Commission Islam et Laïcité (2006) *Islam, médias et opinions publiques : Déconstruire le « choc des civilisations »*. Paris, L'Harmattan.
- Deltombe, T. (2005) *L'Islam imaginaire. La construction médiatique de l'islamophobie en France, 1975-2005*. Paris, La Découverte.
- Dubet, F., Cousin, O., Macé, E., Rui, S. (2013) *Pourquoi moi ? L'expérience des discriminations*, Paris, Seuil, 384 p., ISBN : 978-2-02-109741-2.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994) *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Dawes, S. (2015) 'Charlie Hebdo, Free Speech and Counter-Speech', *Sociological Research Online*, 20(3).
- Delphy, C. (2008) *Classer, dominer : Qui sont les « autres » ?* Paris : La Fabriques Editions.
- Fanon, F. (1967) *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fassin, D. (2011) *La force de l'ordre: Une anthropologie de la police des quartiers*. Paris : Seuil.
- Fassin, D. & Fassin, E. eds. (2006) *De la question sociale à la question raciale? Représenter la société française*. Paris : La Découverte.
- Fernando, M.L. (2014) *The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Gilroy, P. (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack. The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. London: Routledge.
- Göle, N. (2015) *Musulmans au quotidien : Une enquête européenne sur les controverses autour de l'Islam*. Paris : La Découverte.
- Hajjat, A. & Mohammed, M. (2013) *Islamophobie: Comment les élites françaises fabriquent le « problème musulman »*. Paris : La Découverte.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., Roberts, B. (1978) *Policing the Crisis. Mugging, the State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hepp, A., Stig Hjarvard and Knut Lundby (2015) 'Mediatization: theorizing the interplay between media, culture and society', *Media, Culture & Society*, 0163443715573835, first published on February 17, 2015
- Hjarvard, S. (2008) 'The Mediatization of Society. A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change,' *Nordicom Review* 29(2): 105–134.
- Keaton, T.D. (2006) *Muslim girls and the other France: Race, identity politics and social exclusion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lentin, A. and Titley, G. (2011) *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age*. New York: Zed Books.

- Liogier, R. (2016) *Le mythe de l'islamisation. Essai sur une obsession collective*. Paris, Seuil.
- Macé, E. (2009) « Mesurer les effets de l'ethnoracialisation dans les programmes de télévision : limites et apports de l'approche quantitative de la 'diversité' », *Réseaux*, n°157-158, 2009, p. 235-265
- Massoumi, N. (2015) *Muslim women, Social Movements and the 'War on Terror'*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Massoumi, N., Tom Mills & David Miller (eds.) (2017) *What is Islamophobia ? Racism, Social Movements and the State*. London, Pluto Press.
- Mazouz, S. (2017) *La République et ses autres : Politiques de l'altérité dans la France des années 2000*. Lyon : ENS Editions.
- Miles, R. (1989) *Racism*. London: Routledge.
- Modood T. & Webner P. eds. (1997) *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe*, London, Zed Books
- Murji, K. and Solomos, J. eds. (2005) *Racialization: studies in theory and practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Petley, J. & Richardson, R. (2011) *Pointing the Finger. Islam and Muslims in the British Media*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
- Poinsot, M. et Weber, S. (2014) *Migrations et mutations de la société française, l'état des savoirs*. Paris : La Découverte.
- Poole, E. & Richardson, J. eds. (2006) *Muslims and the News Media*. London: I.B. Taurus.
- Rabah, S. (1998) *L'Islam dans le discours médiatique. Comment les médias se représentent l'Islam en France*. Beyrouth : Al-Bouraq.
- Roy, O. (2013) *La laïcité face à l'Islam*. Paris. Editions Pluriel.
- Said, E. (1997) *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (Fully Revised Edition)*. London: Vintage
- Sayyid, S. & Abdoolkarim Vakil (2009) *Thinking Through Islamophobia: Global Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sian, K, Ian Law and S. Sayyid (2013) *Racism, Governance, and Public Policy: Beyond Human Rights*. Routledge Advances in Sociology.
- Simon P. (2008) « Les statistiques, les sciences sociales françaises et les rapports sociaux ethniques et de « race » », *Revue française de sociologie* 2008/1, Volume 49, p. 153-162.
- Strömbäck J. and Esser F. (2014) 'Introduction: making sense of the mediatization of politics', *Journalism Studies* 15(3): 243–255.
- Tevanian, P. (2005) *Le voile médiatique: Un faux débat: « L'affaire du foulard islamique »*. Paris : Raisons d'agir.
- Tevanian, P. (2006) *Islam & Laïcité: Islam, medias et opinions publiques. Déconstruire les chocs de civilisations*. Paris. L'Harmattan.

Titley, G., Des Freedman, Gholam Khiabany & Aurélien Mondon (2017) *After Charlie Hebdo: Terror, Racism and Free Speech*, Zed Books.

Wacquant, L. (2009) *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Zerouala, F. (2015) *Des voix derrière le voile*. Premier Parallèle.