

DEBATING ISLAMOPHOBIA

Casa Árabe, Madrid- May 28th and 29th, 2009

Organizers: Casa Árabe-IEAM and Program of Comparative Ethnic Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley.

Convenors: Gema Martín Muñoz and Ramón Grosfoguel

With the aim of contributing to the in depth debate about the concept of “islamophobia”, Casa Árabe-IEAM and the Program of Comparative Ethnic Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Berkeley (California) are organizing a Conference on this issue to explore the analytic and conceptual value of “islamophobia” and its limitations from an interdisciplinary point of view.

May 28th

9:30: Welcome by the convenors of the seminar, Gema Martín Muñoz and Ramón Grosfoguel.

10-h.-12.15 h. Panel 1: Islamophobia, conceptual clarifications

The first panel will debate whether the term islamophobia is valid or not. What kind of conceptual challenges does it pose? What is the definition or what are the definitions of Islamophobia? We would like to explore the strong points and the weak points of the concept. How is the term instrumentalized by some sectors?

This panel will discuss what kind of discrimination is that of islamophobia: is it discrimination without any racist connotations? Is it a type of racism? If it were the case (or not), how would it be positioned and how would it be related to concepts such as racism and xenophobia? What is the relation between islamophobia and anti-Semitism, racism against black people and other native and colonial populations?

This panel will focus on clarifying and debating the existing definitions of islamophobia and how they are contextualized in a broader semantic field which refers to different kinds of discrimination.

Chair and discussant: Knut Graw.

- 1. Genealogy of the term islamophobia (Salman Sayyid).**
- 2. Proposals to define islamophobia (Abdulkarim Vakil).**
- 3. Islamophobia and Decolonization (Walter Mignolo).**

*15 min. for each presentation

11.10-11.30 h. Coffee break

11.30-12.15 h. Discussion

12.30-14 h. Panel 2: Unconscious discrimination: islamophobic discourses

In this session we would like to discuss the way in which media, political or artistic discourses reproduce unconsciously stereotyped and essentialist forms in the representation of the other.

Chair and discussant: Elena Arigita.

- 1. Islamophobia and sexism: Women in the Western Mass Media (Laura Navarro)**
- 2. Political discourse analysis about the “war on terrorism” (Farish Ahmad-Noor)**
- 3. Religious reductionism in the social sciences (Ramón Grosfoguel)**

13.00-13.15 h. Break

13.15-14 h. Discussion

14-15.15 h. Lunch at Casa Árabe

15.15-18 h. Panel 3: Orientalism and the closure of the epistemic diversity and historiographical narratives.

The relationship between the philosophical/epistemological aspects and the historical processes of Islamophobia. In what moments does Western thinking become a superior category to the other epistemologies in the world? Which are the mechanisms that exclude Islam as a valid and acceptable way of thinking and why is it considered unable to produce its particular forms of democracy or human rights?

Chair and Discussant: Luis Bernabé Pons.

- 1. How does the epistemic closure take place historically? (Nelson Maldonado-Torres)**

2. **Consequences of the epistemic closure on current debates on Islam and democracy, Islam and women, Islam and human rights (Gema Martín Muñoz)**
3. **Islam and Humanism. Islamic philosophical contribution to the European thinking (Nasr Hamed Abu Zayd)**
4. **Historiographical narratives: the discursive strategies of the Moorish subject as “the one who should be expelled” (José María Perceval)**

17-17.20 h. Coffee break

17.20-18 h. Discussion

May 29th

10-13 h. Panel 4: Social exclusion, public debates and violent contexts.

This panel will do a critical analysis of the empirical research that documents the existence of discrimination against Muslims in professional, housing and educational spaces as well as the analysis of some intense debates and violent contexts in Europe that can provide conceptual clarifications.

Chair and discussant: Joan Lacomba.

1. **The Debate around the Law on the Veil in French Public Schools (Vincent Geisser)**
3. **The Dutch and the Face Veil (Annelies Moors)**
4. **Freedom of expression and Islamophobia: the debate on the caricatures in Denmark (Heiko Henkel)**

11.10-11.30 h. Coffee break

11.30-12 h. **Launch EU-MIDIS Data in Focus Report 2: Muslims Survey of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) (Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos)**

12.00-12.45 h. Discussion

12.45-13.00 h. Conclusions and closure of the Conference